

## *Two Lockouts in Pennsylvania*

### *1873-1874*

THE industrial history of Pennsylvania after the Civil War is characterized by a series of problems and crises that shaped the development of the new economy.\* There is no single pattern in this process, for each area faced its own difficulties and resolved them in a different way. Moreover, the social structure within which industry emerged differed between regions and affected the various patterns and sub-patterns of economic development.

Soon after the 1873 depression started, two lockouts occurred in coal mining areas. One involved the giant Cambria Iron Works in Johnstown, the other the mine operators in Tioga County. The issues were the same: the coal diggers had turned to trade-unionism for self-protection. Both areas were semirural and isolated from the major centers of Pennsylvania industry. The employers in both Johnstown and Tioga County, furthermore, had constructed a seemingly all-powerful system of social control. Still, the outcome was different. The reasons for these dissimilar results offer certain insights into the many-sided character of industrial development after the Civil War.

Readers of the *New York Times* in 1874 learned that the Cambria Iron Works in Johnstown was "the finest iron works in the country and one of the glories of Pennsylvania industry." There was much truth in this observation, for by 1873, just twenty years after the firm was founded, it was already a huge enterprise. Built on the main line of the Pennsylvania Railroad, seventy-eight miles east of Pittsburgh, the Cambria Iron Works owned about forty thousand acres of valuable mineral lands in the region surrounding Johnstown and nourished itself with needed supplies of iron ore, semibituminous

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coal, and limestone. The company displayed a degree of vertical integration rare at the time, and used these raw materials in a complex that included four modern blast furnaces and forty-two double-turn puddling furnaces. The Johnstown company, not surprisingly, produced more iron rails than any other of the nation's eighty-odd rail factories. In 1871, for example, 160,373 tons of wrought iron, mostly rails, came from its furnaces. In that same year, it opened one of the country's first Bessemer steelworks. A firm as large and well-integrated as the Cambria Iron Works needed a huge labor force, including coal and ore miners, blast furnace operators, and rolling mill hands. In good times, when the demand for iron rails was brisk, six thousand men and boys worked in the Johnstown mills and mines. By any standards of the day, the Cambria Iron Works was a large and efficient industrial organization.<sup>1</sup>

Contemporaries marveled at the scope of the Johnstown company and praised it and its general manager, Daniel J. Morrell. Albert Bolles, a close student of American industry, for example, called the firm "a magnificent enterprise," while popular biographer and lecturer James Parton told an audience at the New York Cooper Institute that Morrell irrefutably proved that "a king of business is a king of men." Parton said that Morrell was "a judge of men who knows how to pick the men he wants and keeps them by treating them as he would like to be treated in their place."<sup>2</sup> Others reiterated this theme. In his exhaustive study *The Coal-Regions of America*, James MacFarlane insisted that men like Morrell were "greater benefactors of our race" than "those who bestow millions on the starving and destitute." Morrell illustrated "all that capital, enterprise, and science" could do "for the prosperity of a country." "What greater blessing," MacFarlane asked, "can be conferred on a locality, in a material aspect, than the building of a vast industrial centre" such as Johnstown's Cambria Iron Works?<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Saward's Coal Circular*, n. d., reprinted in *Frank Cowan's Paper*, Dec. 24, 1873; Special Correspondent, Johnstown, Apr. 14, 1874, *New York Times*, Apr. 21, 1874; Cambria, Johnstown, Apr. 16, 1874, *Chicago Times*, Apr. 20, 1874; Pennsylvania Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Second Annual Report, 1873-1874* (Harrisburg, 1875), 254-287; James MacFarlane, *The Coal-Regions of America* (New York, 1873), 176-178; and Victor S. Clark, *History of Manufactures in the United States* (New York, 1929), II, 16, 71, 77, 82, 99, 150, and 232.

<sup>2</sup> Albert S. Bolles, *Industrial History of the United States* (Norwich, Conn., 1881), 209, and James Parton, "Kings of Business," *New York Tribune*, Oct. 15, 1874.

<sup>3</sup> MacFarlane, 176-178.

In and near Johnstown, the Cambria Iron Works and little else counted, for the iron mill, almost of necessity, dominated the life of that city and its environs. For one thing, it so towered over nearby mining and manufacturing companies that local and regional competition was almost nonexistent. Like many other semirural manufacturing and mining enterprises, furthermore, the Cambria Iron Works could attract its labor force only if it supplied it with certain necessities. The company built and owned most of the houses, stores, schools, and even libraries that dotted the Johnstown landscape.<sup>4</sup> As a consequence, it held almost unexampled economic and social power in the region. Morrell, finally, was not an absentee owner, for he lived in Johnstown and tried to model the community in his own image. He said he wanted to create "a civilized, intelligent, Christian community" and not live "in the midst of ignorant and turbulent savages." Moreover, since the American worker was free and "subject to no fetters of class or caste," he deserved to "live in a house not a hut" and to "wear good clothes and eat wholesome and nourishing food." At least in Johnstown, Morrell concluded, industry and labor alike would be "organized into a distinct American system."<sup>5</sup>

The conception that Morrell had of a model industrial community allowed for company-sponsored schools and libraries, but there was little room for trade-unions in Johnstown. For one thing, the labor force grew so rapidly that the stability needed for permanent labor organizations hardly existed. During the prosperous years before 1873, only the skilled puddlers and coal miners had unions. The puddlers belonged to a branch of the Sons of Vulcan, but no record exists of successful bargaining by that union.<sup>6</sup> The coal miners, however, were more fortunate, and after starting a local union in 1871 successfully negotiated a sliding wage agreement with the company under which the wage of the coal digger rose or fell according to the price of iron rails in New York. Although the union fell apart in June, 1873, the wage agreement remained intact through the fall months of that year.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Parton, "Kings of Business," *New York Tribune*, Oct. 15, 1874.

<sup>5</sup> "Speech of Daniel Morrell," n. d., *Iron Molder's Journal* (April, 1875), 295-296. See also Parton, "Kings of Business," *New York Tribune*, Oct. 15, 1874.

<sup>6</sup> *Vulcan Record*, I (Summer, 1874), 24-25.

<sup>7</sup> Trampled Down Miners, Johnstown, to the editor, Mar. 30, 1874, *Workingman's Advocate*, Apr. 11, 1874.

The center of the semibituminous coal industry after the Civil War was in Tioga County, Pennsylvania. Since most of these valuable coal deposits were near the town of Blossburg, contemporaries referred to the Tioga product as "Blossburg coal." As early as 1792, coal had been mined in Tioga for local use, and, starting in the 1840's, began to be shipped out of the region. From then on, Tioga County and Blossburg coal grew in economic importance. The output of coal increased steadily, and in 1871 no less than 815,079 tons came from the Tioga mines. In 1873, according to James MacFarlane, "few other places in the United States" had turned out so much bituminous coal "from within the same limited area."<sup>8</sup>

The importance of Tioga County as a coal-producing area turned on two fundamental economic considerations. First of all, Blossburg coal was a much-desired fuel because it had "a wider range in its uses than any other kind of coal." Entirely free of sulphur, semibituminous coal had an enormous heating power and made "a good hollow fire." Puddling furnaces found it useful, as did blacksmiths and ironsmiths. Blossburg coal, however, was most valuable for generating steam in stationary engines and locomotives, and both the railroad and iron industries eagerly bought up supplies of Tioga coal. Apart from having an extremely useful product, the Tioga region had another economic advantage, for it lay on the New York-Pennsylvania border and so was near the expanding industries and railroads of western New York. A valley adjacent to the Tioga River reached northward and made this New York market easily accessible. After 1840, a railroad ran through the valley and connected Blossburg with Corning, New York, and, later and more importantly, with the western division of the Erie Railroad. Blossburg coal, therefore, had a nearby market, and the demand for semibituminous coal went up as industrial enterprise increased in western New York. Most of the puddling furnaces in Troy and Albany used Blossburg coal, as did the large Syracuse salt companies. More than half of Tioga's coal, however, went to such western New York railroads as the Erie, the New York Central and Hudson River, and the Rensselaer and Saratoga.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> MacFarlane, 126, 134, and 151.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 134-138, 151-159, and table on p. 158. See also Edward A. Wieck, *The American Miners' Association* (New York, 1940), 44.

Three firms—the Blossburg, the Morris Run, and the Fallbrook Coal companies—owned and operated all the Tioga coal mines in 1873. Unlike the Cambria Iron Works, these companies each had absentee owners, for, just as the market for Blossburg coal lay in western New York, so did the initiative and capital that built up the Tioga mining industry. The three companies had their offices in Watkins, a shipping town on Lake Seneca, Corning, and Syracuse, and the owners had almost nothing to do with the everyday running of their firms. That job was turned over to managers and supervisors who lived in the small mining villages.<sup>10</sup>

By 1873, the Tioga coal industry had located itself in four tiny towns near the city of Blossburg and was functioning smoothly and efficiently. Since the entire region except for Blossburg was covered with a heavy forest of hemlock and hardwood timber, it was expensive to start mining operations there. Beginning in 1860, however, when the market for Blossburg coal increased rapidly, each of the companies cleared some land, brought in mining equipment and coal diggers, and built small villages near the deposits. A number of company-built and company-owned highways and railroads connected these towns with nearby Blossburg and with the major railroad in the region, the Blossburg and Corning Railroad. In 1860, the Fallbrook Coal Company, which owned this railroad, built the town of Fallbrook and twelve years later, in 1872, started a second village called Antrim. In the meantime, Morris Run was built by the Morris Run Coal Company, and the Blossburg Coal Company established the village of Arnot. Starting such towns was costly, for the companies had to construct houses, stores, roads, schools, churches, saw mills, and other nonmining units, as well as mine shafts and coal chutes. According to James MacFarlane, the Morris Run Coal Company, for example, spent half a million dollars exclusive of the cost for mining equipment. The expense was nevertheless essential, for it was the only way to start up the mines and bring in the necessary labor force.<sup>11</sup> In spite of the costs involved, the companies proceeded apace. In 1873, Antrim, only a year old, already had twelve hundred residents. The other towns, Morris Run, Fallbrook,

<sup>10</sup> MacFarlane, 141, 143-144, and 146.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 138-150, and Pennsylvania Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Third Annual Report, 1874-1875* (Harrisburg, 1876), 162-169.

and Arnot, each housed around two thousand persons.<sup>12</sup> Most of the coal miners were European immigrants. Some were English and others were Irish, German, French, and even Swedish, but the great majority came from Wales and Scotland.<sup>13</sup>

A kind of industrial feudalism and paternalism permeated the entire atmosphere of the Tioga mining towns. The three coal companies dominated and controlled the social and economic institutions of the region, and the degree and character of their power astonished even contemporaries. Property ownership lay entirely in the hands of the coal companies, which claimed full and final authority in the use of their land. W. S. Nearing, the superintendent of the Morris Run Coal Company, told an official of the Pennsylvania Bureau of Labor Statistics that every man (meaning, of course, the company owners) had "a right to do what he would with his own" property and that dissatisfied workers were "at liberty" to move out of the "jurisdiction" of the coal companies.<sup>14</sup>

In their policies, the Tioga companies treated these towns as private property and considered them only as adjuncts to the successful mining of a commercially useful product. Land was rented, not sold, to the miners and, at the same time, the companies refused to rent land to other businesses. This policy gave the operators a special kind of power. During an extended lockout in the Tioga region in 1865, the local coal operators had pushed through the state legislature a bill that made it possible to dispossess a worker from a company-owned house on only ten days' notice if he failed to fulfill the terms of his labor contract.<sup>15</sup> All the Tioga miners lived in company houses, and no house or tenement in the region was rented on

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*; MacFarlane, 141, 143-144, and 148-150; and D. W. Knight, manager, Fallbrook Coal Company, to the Deputy Commissioner of Labor Statistics, Dec. 2, 1873, printed in "Labor Troubles in Tioga County," Pennsylvania Bureau of Labor Statistics, *First Annual Report, 1872-1873* (Harrisburg, 1874), 480-481.

<sup>13</sup> Unidentified letter from an official of the Miners' and Laborers' Benevolent Union of Tioga County to the Pennsylvania Bureau of Labor Statistics, n. d., printed in *ibid.*, 479-480. See also D. W. Knight, Fallbrook, to the Deputy Commissioner of Labor Statistics, Dec. 2, 1873, printed in *ibid.*, 480-481.

<sup>14</sup> "Interview with W. S. Nearing," *ibid.*, 488-490; D. W. Knight, Fallbrook, to the Deputy Commissioner of Labor Statistics, Dec. 2, 1873, printed in *ibid.*, 480-481; James MacFarlane, Elmira, to T. J. Bigham, Harrisburg, Jan. 10, 1874, printed in *ibid.*, 500-503; and John Siney, St. Clair, Pa., to the editor, Feb. 8, 1874, *Workingman's Advocate*, Feb. 21, 1874.

<sup>15</sup> The entire set of events that led to the passage of the "ten-day eviction law" is clearly and carefully described in Wieck, 162-172 and 287-293.

"any terms that . . . leave the occupant anything but a tenant at will to be dispossessed at ten days' notice."<sup>16</sup>

The power to dispossess was only one part of the so-called "Tioga system." The coal firms also exercised their authority in other ways. John Siney, the president of the Miners' National Association, insisted that the operators "only allow the house of God to be used for such purposes as they see proper."<sup>17</sup> The roads and highways entering the four towns were often closed to unwelcome visitors. Superintendent Nearing insisted that none of the roads was "a highway for the public." The companies had built the roads, he went on, and company officials therefore had the right to chase anyone from them who was "distasteful to the manager." If the person refused to leave, he could be arrested "as a trespasser."<sup>18</sup> Nor was this all. The coal firms also owned all the stores that sold provisions and equipment to the miners, and though the workers were free to purchase goods elsewhere, company officials discouraged such efforts. Not one of the companies allowed merchants and shopkeepers to build competing stores in its towns, and miners who bought foodstuffs and wares from neighboring farmers and traveling peddlers were often fined, discharged, "or else forced to carry back the foods to where they got them."<sup>19</sup> Local Blossburg merchants, as well as businessmen from outside of the Tioga region, were not welcome in the mining towns. A sample agent from the Corning Glass and Bottle Factory tried to sell some glassware in Morris Run, but the mine superintendent warned him: "I strictly forbid you from coming here again to sell anything. This is private property and you are a trespasser." To cite another of many similar examples, a Blossburg shoemaker who went to Fallbrook was advised by an official that miners buying shoes from him would lose their jobs.<sup>20</sup>

The companies also forced their workers to buy in company-owned stores by extending store credit to them between monthly payments

<sup>16</sup> "Testimony of Fallbrook coal miners," Dec. 24 (?), 1873, Pennsylvania Bureau of Labor Statistics, *First Annual Report, 1872-1873*, 482-483.

<sup>17</sup> John Siney, St. Clair, to the editor, Feb. 8, 1874, *Workingman's Advocate*, Feb. 21, 1874.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, and "Interview with W. S. Nearing," n. d., Pennsylvania Bureau of Labor Statistics, *First Annual Report, 1872-1873*, 488-490.

<sup>19</sup> "Testimony of Fallbrook and Morris Run coal miners," n. d., *ibid.*, 482-485, and John Siney, St. Clair, to the editor, Feb. 8, 1874, *Workingman's Advocate*, Feb. 21, 1874.

<sup>20</sup> Numerous affidavits, including those used in the text, appear in Pennsylvania Bureau of Labor Statistics, *First Annual Report, 1872-1873*, 494-497.

of cash wages. If the purchases of a miner fell below the amount of credit granted him, he received the difference in the form of "a 'bogus' money . . . stamped out of 'gutta percha'." Coal diggers who preferred legal tender to company currency found that the company money was discounted at ninety per cent of its face value. Ten dollars in store currency was worth only nine dollars in actual cash. At the store, however, miners could buy goods for the full value of the company money.<sup>21</sup> Nearing admitted that the companies "promoted" patronage of their stores and thereby "kept" the miners "from going out where they could get access to liquor and indulge in drunkenness."<sup>22</sup> "The operation," wrote a state official who disagreed, "amounts practically to a tax . . . on the workmen for the privilege of buying from whom they please."<sup>23</sup>

Apart from discounting store credit at less than its face value, the coal firms drew income from the miners in two other ways. First, although tax assessors, collectors, and supervisors were publicly elected officials, the companies deducted road, school, county, and state taxes from monthly wages and then sent the money on to the authorities.<sup>24</sup> Money was also taken from the miners through a system of fines. "It is and always has been the custom in all this coal region," said D. W. Knight, the manager of the Fallbrook Coal Company, in 1873, "for the manager to make rules for carrying on the work." The miners, therefore, paid fines for "misdemeanors which, in the manager's opinion, merit punishment." The worker who misbehaved or was otherwise troublesome and "unruly" in the eyes of one of his supervisors received the following note: "We shall charge your account \$\_\_\_\_\_ for damages to property (or drunkenness and fighting) upon the \_\_\_\_\_th inst. Should you remain in the com-

<sup>21</sup> Unidentified letter from an official of the Miners' and Laborers' Benevolent Union of Tioga County to the Pennsylvania Bureau of Labor Statistics, n. d., printed in *ibid.*, 479-480; D. W. Knight, Fallbrook, to the Deputy Commissioner of Labor Statistics, Dec. 2, 1873, printed in *ibid.*, 480-481; *Mahoning Valley Record*, Dec. 20, 1873, reprinted in *ibid.*, 481-482; "Testimony of Fallbrook, Morris Run, and Arnot coal miners," *ibid.*, 482-485 and 492-493; and James MacFarlane, Elmira, to T. J. Bigham, Harrisburg, Jan. 15, 1874, printed in *ibid.*, 500-503.

<sup>22</sup> "Testimony of W. S. Nearing," *ibid.*, 488-490.

<sup>23</sup> John Tomlinson made this observation after a careful study of the way the companies discounted their currency. It is discussed in *ibid.*, 489-490.

<sup>24</sup> "Testimony of Fallbrook and Morris Run coal miners," *ibid.*, 482-485, and John Siney, St. Clair, to the editor, Feb. 8, 1874, *Workingman's Advocate*, Feb. 21, 1874.



pany's employ, this will be a legal collection." If a miner refused to pay the fine, he lost his job, was evicted from his home, and then was "sent down the road."<sup>25</sup> While company spokesmen insisted that this system was essential for the efficient operation of their enterprises, many miners complained that supervisors frequently abused their authority and imposed arbitrary, unnecessary, and harsh fines. One miner told of being fined for beating a mule. Another complained that his firm made him pay fifteen dollars for holding a dance in his home.<sup>26</sup> "If two children differ," John Siney wrote, "their father is fined and the money appropriated to the company's use." Siney and the miners were convinced that in the Tioga region there was "no law or justice but the law and justice made by the Superintendent[s]."<sup>27</sup>

Whatever critical judgment may be made of the behavior of the Tioga coal operators, in the prosperous post-Civil War years their system of social and economic control worked. In spite of the complaints of the miners, the entire region was free of any labor difficulty between 1865 and the fall months of 1873. No strikes occurred, and trade-unions did not flourish.<sup>28</sup> After an extended visit to the Tioga towns in 1873, John Tomlinson, the deputy commissioner of the Pennsylvania Bureau of Labor Statistics, concluded that "the state of things" was "a very great anomaly in the midst of a free country." He declared that the operators had created "absolute personal government in the midst of a republic."<sup>29</sup>

The social and economic structures of Johnstown and the Tioga coal region were similar in most respects. There were three firms in the Tioga area and each was absentee-owned, but little else was different. In both areas, the entrepreneurs exercised great economic power, which created and dominated a well-integrated social structure. Almost no institution in either Johnstown or the Tioga towns

<sup>25</sup> This material is enclosed in D. W. Knight, Fallbrook, to the Deputy Commissioner of Labor Statistics, Dec. 2, 1873, Pennsylvania Bureau of Labor Statistics, *First Annual Report, 1872-1873*, 480-481.

<sup>26</sup> Unidentified letter from an official of the Miners' and Laborers' Benevolent Union of Tioga County to the Pennsylvania Bureau of Labor Statistics, n. d., printed in *ibid.*, 479-480, and "Affidavit of unidentified miner," *ibid.*, 494-497.

<sup>27</sup> John Siney, St. Clair, to the editor, Feb. 8, 1874, *Workingman's Advocate*, Feb. 21, 1874.

<sup>28</sup> James MacFarlane, Elmira, to T. J. Bigham, Harrisburg, Jan. 15, 1874, printed in Pennsylvania Bureau of Labor Statistics, *First Annual Report, 1872-1873*, 500-503.

<sup>29</sup> Tomlinson's observations were made during a conversation with W. S. Nearing. *Ibid.*, 488-490.

was free of entrepreneurial influence of one kind or another. Trade-unions were either weak or nonexistent, and company-owned services thrived. The traditional sense of independence and self-reliance so closely associated with the "American dream" was absent. The employers seemed powerful enough to meet any challenge from discontented and disgruntled workers. When the 1873 depression led to labor difficulties in both Johnstown and Tioga the managers in both localities reacted in the same way, using all their resources to suppress a demand for trade-unions. There was no reason to suspect that the results would be different.

Soon after the "panic" began, the market for iron rails fell away, and the Cambria Iron Works faced serious economic difficulties. The Johnstown firm adjusted to the situation by lowering costs, cutting production, and laying off workers. Wages dropped. At first, they were cut ten per cent, and then in mid-November a further cut of twenty-one per cent was announced. The sliding scale of the coal miners was revised downward. Finally, the company paid the entire new wage in store goods and credit rather than cash. Company officials advised dissatisfied men to find other jobs, and told the rest to accept the new wage or face unemployment.<sup>30</sup> The Cambria Iron Works thus sought to weather the early months of the depression. Its actions, however, irritated the coal and iron ore miners, who reorganized their defunct union as a local of the newly established Miners' National Association. Within a short time, four hundred miners had joined.<sup>31</sup>

The owners of the Cambria Iron Works refused to accord any recognition to the Johnstown local. Several times during the winter of 1873 and 1874, union representatives pleaded with company officials for a wage increase, but in each instance they were put off. Finally, in February, 1874, the company resumed paying cash wages and a month later restored part of the wage cut. The iron workers, who had not complained about company policy, received a wage

<sup>30</sup> Trampled Down Miners, Johnstown, to the editor, Mar. 30, 1874, *Workingman's Advocate*, Apr. 11, 1874; *Pittsburgh Post*, Nov. 1, 1873; *Frank Cowan's Paper*, Nov. 26, 1873; and *Johnstown Tribune*, n. d., reprinted in the *Workingman's Advocate*, Feb. 7, 1874.

<sup>31</sup> Trampled Down Miners, Johnstown, to the editor, Mar. 30, 1874, *Workingman's Advocate*, Apr. 11, 1874.

increase of at least seventeen per cent, but the wages of the dissident and union-conscious coal and ore miners rose less than eight per cent. There were rumors that the company wanted to destroy the union. In mid-March, after the miners held a large protest meeting and demanded an equitable wage increase and threatened to strike, Morrell and his associates closed down the entire Cambria Iron Works.<sup>32</sup> *Frank Cowan's Paper*, a Pittsburgh weekly, insisted that Morrell had punished his men "for creating trouble to the company," while the Pittsburgh *American Manufacturer* said that men like Morrell had taken "advantage of the present condition of things." Since the demand for iron rails was low, it mattered little whether or not the firm remained in operation. Market conditions favored the "course adopted at Johnstown . . . no employment or no unionism."<sup>33</sup>

It was much the same story in the Tioga mining towns. The demand for semibituminous coal sagged badly, and income fell off. The three companies withheld cash wages, and for three months the coal miners subsisted on store credit. In late November, 1873, the firms offered the men one month of back wages in cash if they signed an agreement not to ask for any more cash until the following May.<sup>34</sup> The miners rebuffed the offer. They appointed a committee of eleven to meet with the operators, formed a local union called the Miners' and Laborers' Benevolent Union of Tioga County, and planned to affiliate with the Miners' National Association.<sup>35</sup> The three companies, working together, reacted quickly to such a threat to their so-called "Tioga system." Nine union leaders were fired, and when the rest of the miners remained firm, the operators ordered them to leave either the union or their jobs.<sup>36</sup> On December 11, the companies posted the following notice near each of their mine shafts and ordered the workers to answer it within two days:

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*; *Johnstown Tribune*, Mar. 18, 1874, reprinted in *Frank Cowan's Paper*, Mar. 21, 1874; *Johnstown Tribune*, n. d., reprinted in *Iron Age* (Mar. 26, 1874), 11; *Workingman's Advocate*, Apr. 11, 1874; and *Pittsburgh Gazette*, Mar. 31, 1874.

<sup>33</sup> *Frank Cowan's Paper*, Mar. 21, 1874, and *American Manufacturer*, Apr. 30, 1874.

<sup>34</sup> "Testimony of Arnot Miners," Pennsylvania Bureau of Labor Statistics, *First Annual Report, 1872-1873*, 492-493. See also "Testimony of Morris Run Miners," *ibid.*, 484-485.

<sup>35</sup> "Testimony of Fallbrook and Morris Run Miners," *ibid.*, 482-485.

<sup>36</sup> "Testimony of Arnot Miners," *ibid.*, 492-493. See also "Testimony of W. S. Nearing," *ibid.*, 488-490, and the *Mahoning Valley Record*, n. d., reprinted in *ibid.*, 481-482.

*First*, Are you a member of the Union of miners proposed in Tioga County, Pennsylvania, or any society of similar character?

*Second*, Are you willing and do you pledge yourself not to join any such society?

*Third*, If the party is a member, he will be asked: Are you willing and do you pledge yourself to dissolve your connection with such society without delay and not to join the same again?

The miners were told that unless they answered the questions properly they would have to "settle their accounts and vacate our houses."<sup>37</sup> When the workers demurred, the operators closed the mines. More important, they ordered the miners and their families to leave the company-owned houses within ten days.<sup>38</sup> It was mid-December, and the miners had been without cash wages for a few months. The operators undoubtedly believed that the men would surrender quickly and unconditionally.

The Cambria Iron Works had little trouble in defeating the new miners' union. Soon after the lockout began, the company offered its men their jobs back if they signed a new contract in which they forswore trade-union membership and accepted the final authority of the firm's managers with regard to wages and working conditions. Under the new contract the company could fine workers for violations of all sorts. Men guilty of "dishonesty, drunkenness, [and] insubordination," of "quarrelling," of "stealing" company-owned timber or coal, of damaging company-owned houses beyond ordinary wear and tear, and of "destroying or injuring any property of the company . . . [by] careless or reckless conduct" would be fined the first time and discharged after the second offense. Dismissal, furthermore, meant immediate eviction from the company-owned house, and the discharged worker was listed publicly as "not employable" by the Cambria Iron Works. A repudiation of labor organizations of all kinds was also written into the contract:

. . . Any person . . . known to belong to any secret association or open combination whose aim is to control wages or stop the works, or any part

<sup>37</sup> "Company Questionnaire," Fallbrook, Arnot, Antrim, and Morris Run, Dec. 11, 1873, enclosed in A Victim, Arnot, Pa., to the editor, Jan. 27, 1874, *Workingman's Advocate*, Feb. 14, 1874. The questionnaire was reprinted in the Pennsylvania Bureau of Labor Statistics, *First Annual Report, 1872-1873*, 483.

<sup>38</sup> *Mahoning Valley Record*, n. d., reprinted in *ibid.*, 481-482, and "Testimony of Fallbrook, Morris Run, and Arnot Miners," *ibid.*, 482-485 and 492-493.

thereof, shall be promptly and finally discharged. . . . Persons quitting work, or inducing or attempting to induce others to quit work, . . . shall forfeit whatever wages may be due . . . to such . . . persons absolutely.<sup>39</sup>

The managers of the Cambria Iron Works rejected compromise of any kind, waited the workers out, and whipped up hysteria against the new union. When John Siney arrived in Johnstown to plead for the miners, Daniel Morrell refused his request for arbitration.<sup>40</sup> Efforts by the locked-out iron and steel roll hands to discuss the issue with Morrell also were fruitless. Sending them a copy of the new contract, he simply told them, "An 'explanation' on your part is not deemed necessary."<sup>41</sup> In the meantime, Morrell talked and acted vigorously against the union. After charging that the miners planned violence and were going to blow up the mines, he deputized and armed one hundred "special policemen" and told them to protect company property. Even though Siney complained that Morrell had hired "bloated rascals" and "supplied them with rotgut whisky and weapons," the company remained adamant.<sup>42</sup> Morrell charged that the miners sent him "Ku-Klux" letters that warned him "to prepare for death." He complained that the new union—"this secret Union, this mysterious power, this veiled Gorgon"—"threatened, insulted, assaulted, and almost murdered" the men who supported the company.<sup>43</sup> When the miners held a ball to raise needed funds, company officials telegraphed state authorities that a riot was imminent.<sup>44</sup> Morrell continually harped on the danger of the union and claimed that hundreds of men "dreaded to go to work for fear of suffering violence." The *Johnstown Tribune*, a local daily newspaper, sup-

<sup>39</sup> "Rules and Regulations of the Cambria Iron Company," Apr. 6, 1874, printed in *Iron Age* (Dec. 31, 1874), 14-15.

<sup>40</sup> Trampled Down Miners, Johnstown, to the editor, Mar. 30, 1874, *Workingman's Advocate*, Apr. 11, 1874.

<sup>41</sup> "Statement of D. J. Morrell, general manager, to the Iron Heaters and Rollers," Johnstown, May 4, 1874, printed in the *Cooper's New Monthly*, I (July, 1874), 11.

<sup>42</sup> *Raftsmen's Journal*, Apr. 22, 1874, *Cooper's New Monthly*, I (July, 1874), 10-11, and "Speech of John Siney in Union Hall, Johnstown, Pa., on the Ninth of May 1874," *Workingman's Advocate*, May 30 and June 6, 1874.

<sup>43</sup> Special correspondent, Johnstown, Apr. 14, 1874, *New York Times*, Apr. 21, 1874, and "Mr. Morrell on Trade Unions," *Iron Age* (July 16, 1874), 14.

<sup>44</sup> "Capital and Labor," *Miner's National Record*, I (November, 1874), 12. A company of militia was alerted in Pittsburgh but not sent to Johnstown.

ported him, and argued that "labor writers and orators are, one and all of them, apologists for crime."<sup>45</sup>

The Cambria Iron Works attracted nation-wide attention in its struggle against trade-unionism. The *New York Times* called Daniel Morrell "a hero," and a number of important national business weeklies encouraged the Cambria Iron Works in its battle against the "pernicious and debasing" labor unions that were "instruments of oppression . . . possessed of a giant's power." *Iron Age* advised its readers that Morrell's new contract, a model agreement, was "the easiest and best means" for solving labor troubles, for it told the worker that he could not "serve two masters." To deny him a job for belonging to a trade-union hardly violated "the rights of man." "Desperate diseases," *Iron Age* explained, "require desperate remedies." "The trade union evil," it concluded, "must be rooted out or its noxious growth will poison our political, industrial, and social systems, give us anarchy for order, and drive capital out of manufacturing and into other and safer investments."<sup>46</sup>

The locked-out workers, too, found some outside encouragement and support. In nearby Pittsburgh, the *National Labor Tribune* printed advertisements advising men not to work for the Cambria Iron Works.<sup>47</sup> John Siney and John James, the national leaders of the Miners' National Association, scathingly attacked the Johnstown managers. James said they were asking the workers "to give up all their citizen rights and make the Cambria Coal and Iron Company lords and rulers over them." Siney visited Johnstown twice during the lockout, and each time publicly challenged the company to submit the issues to an impartial referee.<sup>48</sup> At the same time, the *Iron Molder's Journal* and *Cooper's New Monthly* called Morrell "a worse slave driver than any that cracked the whip in the palmy days of negro slavery," and condemned his company as "one of the most . . . soulless corporations in the United States."<sup>49</sup>

<sup>45</sup> "Mr. Morrell on Trade Unions," *Iron Age* (July 16, 1874), 14, and *Johnstown Tribune*, n. d., reprinted in the *Cooper's New Monthly*, I (July, 1874), 10.

<sup>46</sup> *New York Times*, Apr. 21, 1874; "Capital vs. Unionism," *American Manufacturer* (Apr. 30, 1874), 3; and *Iron Age* (May 7, 1874), 14, (July 16, 1874), 14.

<sup>47</sup> Cited in "Mr. Morrell on Trade Unions," *ibid.* (July 16, 1874), 14.

<sup>48</sup> John James, Indiana, to the editor, Apr. 24, 1874, *Workingman's Advocate*, May 9, 1874, and John Siney, "Speech . . . in Union Hall . . .," *ibid.*, May 30 and June 6, 1874.

<sup>49</sup> "The Cambria Iron Works," *Iron Molder's Journal* (June, 1874), 357-358, and *Cooper's New Monthly*, I (July, 1874), 10.

In spite of this outside interest and support for both the miners and the company, the success or failure of the lockout depended to a large extent on local conditions in Johnstown. There the company had the overwhelming advantage. The nonstrikers in Johnstown offered the miners little support. A local minister attacked Morrell and his policies, but that was all. There is no record of similar criticism by other nonstrikers.<sup>50</sup> Morrell and his associates, furthermore, took advantage of the craft distinctions of the men they employed. Soon after the lockout started, they reopened the iron mill and offered jobs to those old employees who would sign the new contract. They also brought in men from the outside. The mill and furnace men resumed work, and production soon started up again. Finally, the firm effectively weakened the strikers by bringing coal into Johnstown from distant areas, thus demonstrating that it could dispense with the services of its discontented coal miners. The miners were isolated and powerless; it was only a matter of time before they would admit defeat.<sup>51</sup>

Protests by the miners were of little consequence. They persuaded a number of new workers not to take employment at the mill, but they could not prevent the company from bringing in supplies of coal from other areas. Pathetically, they pleaded with the men who mined this coal. "Do not let a few dollars earned at our expense . . . cause you to act against principle and against the fraternal ties which should exist between workingmen everywhere. . . . Brothers, whether you are Union men or not, remember that our defeat, which you are directly contributing to, means your defeat, our success, your success. . . . Refrain from sending any more coal, and do not let any one call you demoralized niggers." The Miners' National Association was too weak to enforce the demands of the Johnstown miners, and the local union gave up the fight.<sup>52</sup> In late July, 1874, the *Johnstown Tribune*, which had sided with the company through-

<sup>50</sup> *Iron Molder's Journal* (August, 1874), 11.

<sup>51</sup> Johnstown Miners, Johnstown, "To the Coal Miners Whom It May Concern," May 14, 1874, enclosed in John James, Cleveland, to the editor, May 26, 1874, *Workingman's Advocate*, June 6, 1874; John James, Cleveland, to the editor, May 4 and June 2, 1874, *ibid.*, May 16 and June 13, 1874; and "Mr. Morrell on Trade Unions," *Iron Age* (July 16, 1874), 14.

<sup>52</sup> Johnstown Miners, "To the Coal Miners Whom It May Concern," May 14, 1874, enclosed in John James, Cleveland, to the editor, May 26, 1874, *Workingman's Advocate*, June 6, 1874.

out, announced the end of the lockout, reporting that the Johnstown workers had "completely rejected" the "principle of trade unionism." The workers had learned that they had no right to interfere with the management of the Cambria Iron Works. "Their money," wrote the *Tribune* of the workers, "did not build it."<sup>53</sup>

The locked-out Tioga County miners faced problems similar to those in Johnstown, but local conditions in the Tioga region worked to their advantage and success. The Tioga lockout lasted nearly three months. Although the miners were evicted at the start of winter, except for a few of the Swedish coal diggers they all held out.<sup>54</sup> "If the company waits for fifty years," one angered miner wrote, "I am certain that the miners now out of work will never sign such an infamous document."<sup>55</sup> Some of the men and their families left the Tioga region for other mining areas. A few actually returned to Scotland.<sup>56</sup> The great majority of them, however, stayed on in the Tioga region to challenge the power of the coal companies. They contended that their employers were forcing them "to put on a badge of absolute serfdom by signing an agreement not to do what we have as clear and complete a right to do as they have to organize their companies."<sup>57</sup>

In the beginning, the operators were as stubborn as the coal miners. "We are justified in our proceedings . . . to our consciences and before God and man," insisted a Fallbrook Coal Company official.<sup>58</sup> W. S. Nearing declared that the companies would never "permit any workmen's organization to exist on their property."<sup>59</sup> When John Siney visited the region and intervened in behalf of the locked-out workers, company officials refused him permission to speak in local schools or churches. Siney finally addressed the miners from a platform erected near a railroad station. Only after much difficulty could

<sup>53</sup> *Johnstown Tribune*, July 31, 1874, reprinted in *Iron Age* (Aug. 6, 1874), 5.

<sup>54</sup> "Testimony of Fallbrook Miners," Pennsylvania Bureau of Labor Statistics, *First Annual Report, 1872-1873*, 482-484, and James MacFarlane, Elmira, to T. J. Bigham, Jan. 15, 1874, printed in *ibid.*, 500-503.

<sup>55</sup> A Victim, Arnot, to the editor, Jan. 27, 1874, *Workingman's Advocate*, Feb. 14, 1874.

<sup>56</sup> James MacFarlane, Elmira, to T. J. Bigham, Harrisburg, Jan. 15, 1874, printed in the Pennsylvania Bureau of Labor Statistics, *First Annual Report, 1872-1873*, 500-503.

<sup>57</sup> "Testimony of Fallbrook Miners," *ibid.*, 482-484.

<sup>58</sup> James MacFarlane, Elmira, to T. J. Bigham, Harrisburg, Jan. 15, 1874, *ibid.*, 500-503.

<sup>59</sup> "Testimony of W. S. Nearing," *ibid.*, 488-490.



he arrange a conference with some company officials, but at this meeting they simply reiterated their opposition to the union.<sup>60</sup> Similarly, efforts by John Tomlinson, of the Pennsylvania Bureau of Labor Statistics, to bring about a compromise also failed. Tomlinson advised both sides to give in a bit. He told the operators to rehire the discharged miners and withdraw their hostility toward the union. At the same time, he urged the miners to accept the right of the companies to hire nonunion men and to have "free and exclusive [and] lawful and just management of the collieries." Tomlinson also offered a scheme of arbitration for the peaceful settlement of grievances. The miners accepted all his recommendations, but the coal operators turned him down, rejecting "any interference on the part of any public officer of the State."<sup>61</sup>

Officials of the Bureau of Labor Statistics criticized the Tioga operators, but had little influence on them. T. J. Bigham, the head of the bureau, minced no words. To one of the operators he wrote that their companies were run by "madmen" and that their actions "cut them off from all public sympathy." "If the miners are willing to work," Bigham told the officers of the Fallbrook Coal Company, "let them work. When they actually strike will be time enough to turn them out." His advice fell on deaf ears.<sup>62</sup> The operators undoubtedly believed that the eviction of the union miners and their families in the middle of winter and at the start of a serious business depression would create such hardship that the union would collapse and the men would return on company terms.

The operators, however, had entirely misjudged "public" sentiment in the Tioga Valley. Herein lay one significant difference between the Tioga trouble and the crisis in Johnstown. The central, determining factor in the Tioga lockout was neither the stand of the miners nor that of the operators. It was the behavior of the non-mining population in Tioga County. In a perhaps unexpected manner, the power of the coal operators was decisively checked by the

<sup>60</sup> John Siney, St. Clair, to the editor, Feb. 8, 1874, *Workingman's Advocate*, Feb. 21, 1874.

<sup>61</sup> The recommendations by Tomlinson appear in detail in Pennsylvania Bureau of Labor Statistics, *First Annual Report, 1872-1873*, 490-492. The acceptance of the recommendations by the miners is noted in *ibid.*, 487. The operators' reaction is described in *ibid.*, 492. The statement rejecting state intervention is from James MacFarlane, Elmira, to T. J. Bigham, Harrisburg, Jan. 15, 1874, *ibid.*, 503.

<sup>62</sup> T. J. Bigham, Harrisburg, to James MacFarlane, Elmira, Jan. 10, 1874, printed in *ibid.*, 499.

residents of Blossburg and the farmers of the area. Local businessmen in Blossburg, possibly antagonized by the refusal of the coal operators to allow them to trade freely with the miners, together with other townspeople aided the evicted miners and their families. The Blossburg Odd Fellows Society raised funds for them. An eminent Harrisburg lawyer was hired to test the eviction proceedings in court. Nor was this all. Blossburg residents and some farmers housed the homeless miners and their families. When there was no more available room, a row of tenements was built out of common rough slabs. Finally, 2,577 Blossburg citizens, "among them large numbers of the most prominent men (business and otherwise) of the county," petitioned Governor John Hartranft and his attorney-general to "interfere to secure the enforcement of the laws and the protection of these people from these oppressions." After visiting Blossburg, John Siney wrote of the close relationship between the miners and the townsfolk: "So deep is the sympathy that the business community of the 'city of refuge' entertains for them, that all aid within their power . . . is extended to the refugees."<sup>63</sup>

Another development further weakened the Tioga operators. In Johnstown, the Cambria Iron Works was able to start up its mill without its miners by bringing in supplies of coal from other regions. The Tioga companies could not begin operations again without bringing in new miners. In spite of the severity of the depression and the large number of unemployed miners, the operators found it hard to attract workers. John Siney and the Chicago *Workingman's Advocate*, a labor newspaper that circulated in the western states, both pleaded with coal miners to stay away from Tioga County. The operators, wrote the Chicago weekly, opposed labor unions "for the same reason that the Southern planter was opposed to the education of his chattel."<sup>64</sup> Siney made the same point. "Nowhere," he wrote, "has the same oppression been imposed since the day that the whip was wrenched from the hand of the slave driver of the South." In Tioga, he went on, "it is an issue whether the white workingmen of America shall be placed in a worse condition and treated with less

<sup>63</sup> James MacFarlane, Elmira, to T. J. Biggam, Harrisburg, Jan. 15, 1874, printed in *ibid.*, 500-503; "Petition of Blossburg Citizens," n. d., *ibid.*, 503-504; and John Siney, St. Clair, to the editor, Feb. 8, 1874, *Workingman's Advocate*, Feb. 21, 1874.

<sup>64</sup> "The Tioga Outrage," *Workingman's Advocate*, Feb. 21, 1874.

respect than ever the Negroes of the South were treated by their masters."<sup>65</sup> The success of his plea cannot be measured, but by the end of January, 1874, almost two months after the lockout had started, only five new miners worked in the Tioga mines.<sup>66</sup>

In spite of the structural rigidity of the "Tioga system" and the power that was thought to inhere in that system, the operators lost out to the miners. Blossburg's citizens checked part of their power. The system itself discouraged outside miners from working there. Siney insisted that the operators were "indignant that the good citizens of Blossburg . . . befriended the sufferers" and claimed that they "grieved" because they could not make the nonminers "their victims as well."<sup>67</sup> When business picked up somewhat in March, 1874, three months after the lockout had started, the operators admitted defeat and recognized the union. Meeting with a committee of strikers, they withdrew the disputed questionnaire. Soon after, the coal miners resumed work, and celebrated the success of their new union.<sup>68</sup>

Tioga and Johnstown each went its own way following the lockouts of 1873 and 1874. Trade-unionism entirely disappeared in Johnstown, and the power of the Cambria Iron Works went unchallenged during the entire depression period. When a large number of rail orders came in in 1875, the company put its men on a seven-day week. A year later, the wages of unskilled laborers fell to seventy-five cents a day, and skilled miners earned only half as much as before the depression.<sup>69</sup> Daniel Morrell nevertheless still talked of his "American system," though he admitted that American industry had to "exact some temporary sacrifices" to guarantee "general prosperity and true national independence."<sup>70</sup> In the eyes of many trade-unionists, however, Morrell personified the tyranny of the all-

<sup>65</sup> John Siney, St. Clair, to the editor, Feb. 8, 1874, *ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> A Victim, Arnot, to the editor, Feb. 8, 1874, *ibid.*, Feb. 14, 1874.

<sup>67</sup> John Siney, St. Clair, to the editor, Feb. 8, 1874, *ibid.*, Feb. 21, 1874.

<sup>68</sup> Pennsylvania Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Ninth Annual Report, 1880-1881* (Harrisburg, 1882), 308.

<sup>69</sup> *Frank Cowan's Paper*, Jan. 16, 1875; *Workingman's Advocate*, Mar. 20 and July 17, 1875; *Iron Molder's Journal* (September, 1876), 79; and Whitefoot, Gallitzen, Pa., to the editor, Sept. 2, 1876, *National Labor Tribune*, Sept. 9, 1876.

<sup>70</sup> "Speech of Daniel Morrell," *Iron Molder's Journal* (April, 1875), 295-296.

powerful entrepreneur. Calling him "a canting hypocrite," the *National Labor Tribune* noted, "He can sing of our country, but he can also lash his workmen like a slave driver." The *Iron Molder's Journal* wrote of Johnstown, "If there is a town in Europe to compare with it in the actual serfdom of its inhabitants, we have failed to hear of it."<sup>71</sup>

Conditions were somewhat different in the Tioga mining towns. When John Siney visited them in December, 1874, almost nine months after the triumph of the trade-union, company officials were at first reluctant to allow him to speak. Permission was finally granted, however, and the subsequent meeting, Siney wrote, "was literally packed with our own men." "The change in Tioga County," he concluded, "appears . . . almost miraculous, comparing times now with one year ago."<sup>72</sup> Within a few years, the miner's union in Tioga County disappeared, but its disintegration had little to do with the so-called "Tioga system." Hard times and the prolonged severity of the depression were responsible, for it was difficult to maintain a union when its members worked as few as four or five days a month, and when union funds had to be spent to feed hungry families.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, and *National Labor Tribune*, Mar. 10, 1877.

<sup>72</sup> John Siney, St. Clair, to Friend James, Dec. 25, 1874, printed in the *Miner's National Record*, I (January, 1875), 42.

<sup>73</sup> See, for examples, *National Labor Tribune*, Feb. 6, 1875; A Miner, Fallbrook, to the editor, Dec. 17, 1874, *Miner's National Record*, I (January, 1875), 45; *ibid.* (March, 1875), 75; Pennsylvania Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Second Annual Report, 1873-1874*, 435-436; *Third Annual Report, 1874-1875*, 162-169.