The place of the Pennsylvania anthracite region in American history has been fixed for nearly a century. The Molly Maguire conspiracy, the miners' strikes of the 1870's and 1902, the Lattimer massacre, a railroad president who believed himself one of "the Christian men to whom God in His infinite wisdom has given control of the property interests of the country," and, looming behind all these, the anthracite coal trust have become stock types of nineteenth-century capitalistic oppression and labor resistance. A region of company towns and stores, child labor and mine disasters, starvation wages and squalor, race wars between successive waves of immigrants; they are all familiar enough.

From the perspective of the mid-twentieth century, however, things that were not present in the society of the anthracite region appear no less significant than things that were. Instead of a simple melodrama of ruthless bosses and embattled workingmen, the story is one of groups, classes, institutions, and individuals so equivocally related as to be mutually unintelligible and quite heedless of each other. The region had plenty of groups, classes, institutions, and notable personages, to be sure, but it is hard to find among them
any functional design of reciprocal rights and duties, the nuts and bolts which pin together a stable social order.

Geology was partly to blame. The anthracite region is an irregular area or discontinuous series of areas broken by mountain ridges and coalless farming valleys, altogether some four hundred square miles scattered over eight counties, reaching from a wide southern base north of the Blue Mountain, between the Susquehanna and Lehigh rivers, nearly a hundred miles northeastward along the broad Wyoming and narrow Lackawanna valleys. In 1825, the whole region was still wilderness, broken only by upland farms and a few market villages and hamlets. In the course of the nineteenth century these quiet communities were overrun by industry as drifts and shafts were drilled into the coal outcrops and underlying seams. Some two hundred new settlements, from remote mine patches to the metropolis of Scranton, with “its newness and its roughness—its helter-skelter way of doing things—its ups and downs—its push and enterprise—its rapid growth and busy hum—its work-a-day dress—its grime and smut and business air,” sprang up among the hills.1 Carbondale, the first coal town of the northern field, had only fifty people in 1828, five years later some 2,500 lived there, and by 1850 nearly 5,000.  

2 Pottsville, a hamlet of a few houses and taverns in 1825, by 1831 numbered more than five hundred houses among “the stumps in the street showing that but yesterday a dense forest and impassible swamps existed”; by 1845 it was the southern anthracite metropolis with more than 5,000 inhabitants.9 And here and there, in no regular order, new clusters of houses and shanties kept appearing. Nanticoke grew from a village to “a full blown town” within the five years after 1868 and, as soon as the depression of 1873-1880 was over, shot up from 3,000 to 8,000 people in another three years.4 By 1900, the population of the entire region approached one million.

Since coal mining caused almost all this growth, the villages and towns were strewn, by the caprice of the worn and upended strata,  

1 Scranton Daily Times, July 14, 1873. Unless otherwise indicated, all newspapers cited were published in Pennsylvania.

2 Carbondale Northern Pennsylvanian, Jan. 17, 1833; Carbondale Advance, July 14, 1860.  


4 Wilkes-Barre Record of the Times, Apr. 2, 1873; Aberdare (Wales) Tarian y Gweithiwr, Dec. 20, 1883. The author wishes to thank Dr. Alan Conway for the references to Welsh newspapers.
between the barren ridges and along the narrow valleys: the Schuylkill and Little Schuylkill rivers; Nesquehoning, Mauch Chunk, Mahanoy, Shenandoah, Shamokin, Swatara, and Wiconisco creeks; Warrior Run, Sugar Notch Run, Nanticoke Run, and Laurel Run; Locust Creek, Mill Creek, Norwegian Creek, Silver and Black, Beaver, Wolf, and Panther creeks; Roaring Brook, Lost Creek; and the broad Susquehanna itself. It would have been difficult to impose a tidy human plan had anyone tried to do so.

In time, each of the disconnected coal fields of the region came to be economically unified within the sphere of influence of one or another of the half-dozen anthracite-carrying railroads. This produced only a slightly broader localism, however, within what colloquially remained the anthracite regions: Schuylkill and Lehigh to the south, Wyoming and Lackawanna to the north. The north-south grouping had begun, in fact, as early as the original settlements of “wild Yankee” farmers from Connecticut and New York, and “Pennamites” and Pennsylvania “Dutch” from the south, a distinction long marked in dialect, folk customs, and domestic architecture. Industrialization perpetuated the division as the southern fields looked to Philadelphia for capital and a market; to Schuylkill and Lehigh operators and miners alike, the Wyoming-Lackawanna field, with its New York orientation, was a remote and unfamiliar place at best and a cutthroat competitor at worst. Even the anthracite coal combination, the trust which after 1873 imposed an uneasy cooperation on the whole industry, never quite touched this petty regionalism.

Community ties were weak, even within towns and villages. Apart from a nucleus of shopkeepers, professional men, and what passed for old families in the few places in the Wyoming Valley that dated from the eighteenth century, the population of most mining towns was too mobile, too transient, too quickly gathered and easily scattered again. The burning of a coal breaker, exhaustion of a mine or abandonment of an unprofitable one, the bankruptcy of a company could at any time disperse a settlement of several hundred. In 1855, two shafts were sunk at the new village of Jessup; halted by the panic of 1857, Jessup fifteen years later was described as one of the de-

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5 Wilkes-Barre Record of the Times, Apr. 29, 1876; Hans Kurath, A Word Geography of the Eastern United States (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1949).
serted villages of the Lackawanna Valley, with two crumbling build-
ings where once had been “depots, machine and repair shops, stores, hotels, new dwellings, extensive coal crackers, etc.” Jessup later revived, declined, and revived again, but each time it underwent a permanent turnover of much of its population. Frequent depressions in the anthracite market reduced not only the wage rate but work itself to “short time” of so few days each month that, unless the work was carefully spaced, the working force at a mine was apt to lose heart and move away. “Short stoppages are best for men & mules,” a mining official advised; “in long ones they get demoralized and scatter.” In Schuylkill County in the depressed year of 1850, it was estimated that almost half the mineworkers had left, some for the Wyoming or Wiconisco valleys, others for Maryland or even California. A generation later, one could observe in the Lackawanna Valley the same hard-times derangement:

The slack time at the mines is causing quite an exodus of people. A feeling of unrest pervades the minds of many, and the shorter the time at the mines the stronger the fever for travel. Before resumption takes place a fair percentage of those now here will emigrate wherever the best inducement is offered.

The great strikes or suspensions of the late 1860’s and early 1870’s, and again in the late 1880’s and in 1900 and 1902, had the same effect; if some strikers went only to the next county, perhaps more sought out the bituminous regions of the Midwest and Far West, or returned to the Old Country. Even a small local strike could nearly depopulate villages such as Glen Lyon and Wanamie in 1899, when hundreds of miners cleared out for the West and other distant places. This was crippling for communities no less than for em-

6 Carbondale Transcript, July 13, 1855; Scranton Morning Republican, June 18, 1872; Scranton Republican, Jan. 4, 1905.
7 William R. Storrs to Samuel Sloan, Nov. 30, 1883, Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad Company (Coal Department) Papers, Lackawanna Historical Society, Scranton, Pa. See also R. C. Luther to C. E. Henderson, July 17, 1890, Philadelphia & Reading Coal and Iron Company Papers, Reading Anthracite Company, Pottsville, Pa.
8 Pottsville Miners’ Journal, Mar. 16, 1850.
9 Scranton Republican, May 9, 1888.
11 Scranton Republican, Aug. 24, 1899.
ployers, who sometimes lamented that "the best men have of course gone" while the poorest and least reliable sullenly hung on.\(^{12}\)

Strikes and depressions merely intensified a continual movement in and out of the region. Skilled men left to try their luck in western, southern, or South American mines or ironworks, perhaps as foremen, superintendents, or even owners; hundreds of Welsh Mormon converts from the Lackawanna Valley went to Utah in the 1870's and 1880's; ordinary men took several years' savings back to Europe or out to a western farm, some of them returning after a time; and fresh immigrants arrived, even during hard times, to join friends in the region.\(^{13}\) On occasion, such as when mine operators looking for labor at the end of a suspension found the skeptical miners continuing to depart, the tides of migration caused concern.\(^{14}\) But ordinarily the unsettled state of society in the region—in a clergyman's words, "restless, migratory, and sometimes violent"—was too familiar to be remarkable.\(^{15}\) Indeed, even within the towns of the region, since housing leases customarily expired on April 1, a yearly "flliting" of "about every tenth family in town"—so it was estimated in Scranton in 1884—occurred on that day. One could never be quite sure in that hill country whether wagons or sleighs would be needed for the move. For conservative German immigrants it was "the dreadful ordeal of 'moving day'"; if some Americans and Irishmen were "never so happy as when they are . . . preparing to move" to a better house, others saw only a barbaric restlessness fatal to "the spirit of contentment of the poorer people."\(^{16}\) But, for the most part,


\(^{15}\) Pottsville Miners' Journal, May 27, 1865.

\(^{16}\) Pottsville Amerikanischer Republikaner, Apr. 7, 1871; Scranton Daily Times, Apr. 3, 1874, July 16, 1880; Scranton Republican, Mar. 31, 1884; Scranton Tribune-Republican, Mar. 31, 1913.
no more attention was paid to the incessant coming and going, except
that of the "detestable" Gypsies or "menacing" tramps, than to the
occasional vertical movement of somebody's house down into an old,
caved-in mine.17

It was also taken for granted that most of the people in almost
every locality were immigrants. Welsh and English miners, Irish
laborers, and Germans of various occupations entered the region at
the start of mining in the 1820's, and continued to come, along with
Italians, Poles, Slovaks, and other Eastern Europeans—colloquially
"Hungarians"—after 1870. The coexistence of several ethnic groups
in even the smallest mine patches seemed less noteworthy than the
occasional altercations among them. Competition between unskilled
Irish laborers and skilled Welsh or English miners for work, German
and Irish militiamen brawling at a muster, barroom fights between
Welshmen and Germans or Irishmen and Italians, one-day "race
wars" between Magyars and Slovaks, gangs of Irish or Welsh boys
beating a hapless "Hungarian" or hooting at a Chinese laundryman,
Slavic peasants-turned-laborers stoning a Jewish peddler, the dyna-
miting of a "Hungarian" boarding house, German or Italian
"carousing" on the Yankee Sabbath, American constables arresting
the riotous celebrants of a Polish wedding or christening—only on
such occasions, which were frequent enough, and of course on the ex-
posure of Molly Maguire or Mafia conspiracies, did relations between
ethnic groups seem to pose a problem for society.18

Intergroup conflict was nevertheless rarer than newspaper ac-
counts suggested. In fact, native Americans sometimes congratu-
lated themselves that most of the turbulence of this poorly policed
region occurred within particular ethnic groups, and that the for-
eigners were "respectful and often polite" toward "their superiors."19

The Molly Maguire episode of 1859–1875, in which Irish laborers
were convicted of murdering British and American miners and super-
intendents, was quite exceptional. In the early years it was more

17 Pottsville Miners' Journal, May 18, 1867, Dec. 25, 1869, Mar. 23, 1872; Scranton
Republican, Jan. 25, 1883, Sept. 24, 1894, Jan. 3, 1903.
18 Pottsville Miners' Journal, July 31, 1830, May 27, 1848, July 8, 1865; Pottsville Weekly
Miners' Journal, Apr. 11, 1884, May 1, 1885; Wilkes-Barre Demokratische Wächter, Feb. 24,
1871; Wilkes-Barre Record of the Times, Sept. 25, 1872; Scranton Republican, May 13, 1858,
19 U.S. Industrial Commission, Report (1901), XII, 656; Scranton Republican, Apr. 26, 1894,
July 7, 1907.
usual for Irish navvies—"the Far-downs and the Connaught men"—
to riot on payday among themselves, or, after 1895, for the Black
Hand to be reported extorting money from its Italian countrymen.
Americans or Welshmen or Germans of course reprobated such be-
havior, but they were slow to take responsibility for it—after all, as
a mine operator said in 1867, "Every man . . . must take care of
himself"—unless the safety of "the better class of citizens" was
threatened, business was disrupted, or law enforcement became a
burden to the taxpayers.20 It was enough to prosecute or perhaps
mob a few foreigners—the usual "hue and cry to hang some one"—
in order to teach American decorum to the others.21 But all too often
immigrants who were harassed by reckless or predatory countrymen
had no one to turn to for protection but their own ethnic spokesmen
or arbitrators, perhaps some figure known to Americans only as a
rather sinister "King of the Huns" who might be hardly better than
an extortionist himself. Members of ethnic outgroups were all too
apt to be "beyond the reach of law and lawlessness alike."22

If intergroup conflict was not the rule, neither was the melting pot.
The usual social relationship between ethnic groups in the region
could better be described as a state of mutual ignorance and indiffer-
ence, shading off to ignorance and contempt. A harmless cultural
trait like the Welsh immigrants' circuitous manner of speaking, for
example, was misunderstood by blunter Americans. To one of their
employers, Welshmen seemed "apt to be a little tricky, & to lie a
little more or less gently, as it suited their purposes."23 They were
accused in the 1870's of "bearing malice, and of being clannish, or of
'keeping together.' 'I think,' [said] a Scotsman, 'that that is why they
keep up the Welsh language.'"24 A generation later, when they all
spoke English and had American manners, a friendly observer still

21 Scranton Republican, June 17, 1890, Nov. 12, 1900, Mar. 19, 1907, July 19, 1908.
22 Pottsville Amerikanischer Republikaner, June 2, 1871; Shenandoah Herald, Sept. 25, 1873; Scranton Republican, Mar. 10, 1886, Apr. 26, 1889, Nov. 6, 1895, Sept. 12, 1903, Dec. 3, 1904; Pottsville Weekly Miners' Journal, Sept. 29, 1882, May 11, 1888. The phrase is Prof. David M. Potter's.
saw little prospect of their merging with American society. For their part, the evangelical Welsh never lost their old-country scorn of the Catholic Irish, "the most barbarous people on the continent." Similarly, the "real Germans" considered the native Pennsylvania Dutch, whom they could admire for still speaking German, to be, perhaps by the same token, lamentably unprogressive and illiberal.

In their turn, after 1900, Polish-American children derided the Orthodox Russians, "the so-called Huns," however timid and inoffensive, as people who "do not worship God." Such misapprehensions went as deep as the everyday humor of the region, in tales like that of the Scotchman indignant at a "Dutchman" he had been set to work with: "I tell't tae gang awa' wi' the barrow an' spill thae stanes, an' the creature just glowered at me."

Men of different groups did work together: the Welsh miner with an Irish "butty" or laborer or, later, the Irish miner with a Slavic laborer (whom he perhaps called Mike O'Brimsky, Matthew Morecabbage, or simply "No. 1198") were familiar types. Even in the mines, however, the earlier or more skilled nationalities were generally separated in occupational status from those who came later or lacked useful skills, and they sought to perpetuate their advantage. As a mining official observed, the Welsh "are clannish and the best places at their disposal are given to their friends." In time, the older groups tended to leave the mines altogether. Many American-born children of immigrant miners went into more promising occupations—learning another trade, seeking "a broader field of operations in the West, or else crowding into the professions or engaging in mercantile pursuits"—and thereby lost acquaintance with the later arrivals among the mineworkers. Furthermore, a minority of

25 Scranton Republican, Jan. 13, 30, Feb. 6, 1897.
26 Aberdare (Wales) Gwladgarwr, July 2, 1870.
27 Pottsville Amerikanischer Republikaner, Mar. 5, 1869; Wilkes-Barre Record of the Times, Sept. 16, 1878.
28 Stewart Culin, A Trooper's Narrative of Service in the Anthracite Coal Strike, 1902 (Philadelphia, 1903), 44.
29 Scranton Daily Times, Jan. 26, 1881.
30 Wilkes-Barre Record of the Times, July 8, 1874; Pottsville Weekly Miners' Journal, Dec. 29, 1882, Apr. 30, 1886.
31 Storrs to Sloan, Aug. 21, 1871, Lackawanna Papers.
32 Wilkes-Barre Record of the Times, Feb. 21, 1872; Scranton Republican, Jan. 25, 1892; U.S. Industrial Commission, Report (1901), IX, 596.
the Germans, almost no Italians, and hardly a single Jew ever worked underground in the mines at all; in their other occupations they lived in different social compartments from the British, Irish, and Slavic mineworkers. The usual pattern of settlement within towns and cities—the Welsh and Irish of Hyde Park in Scranton and the Germans of the South Side, the neighborhoods called Scotch Hill, Welshtown, Shanty Hill or Cork Lane or Paddy's Land, Nigger Hill, Dutch Hollow, Hesestadel, Little Italy, Hungarian Hill, Polander Street—embodied this vertical division of local society into ethnic fragments. The population might shift, Italians filling up the Scranton Little England, and Shenandoah changing from heavily Welsh in the 1860's to "that great Polish city" only twenty years later, but the peoples did not mix.\textsuperscript{33}

The immigrants maintained a great array of societies—Hibernians, Sons of St. George, True Ivorites, Caledonians, Harugari, Liederkranz, Grütli Verein, Mazzini or Vittorio Emanuele societies, Polish Alliance, Slovak Union, and so forth—carrying on the customs peculiar to their respective homelands, or rather to similar communities of their fellow countrymen elsewhere in America. One might commend them for, as a German said in the 1850's, "breaking up the uniformity of American life," but they also compartmentalized American society even on the Fourth of July, when everyone paraded, from the Father Mathew Temperance and Benevolent Society and the Turnverein to, at a suitable interval, the Patriotic Order Sons of America and the American Protestant Association.\textsuperscript{34} If St. Patrick's Day was a favorite time for a Welsh eisteddfod, it was only because the Irish holiday forced the mines to stand idle each year.\textsuperscript{35} Both the Welsh and the Germans went in for singing societies, but until the 1890's Germans hardly ever attended an eisteddfod—what would they have made of the long-winded adjudications of Welsh poetry in the strict meters?—nor did Welshmen take part in what some of them considered the "Bacchanalian feast" of a Sangerfest, except when a William Watkins called himself Conrad Lutz for the day.\textsuperscript{36} Even this

\textsuperscript{33} Pottsville \textit{Weekly Miners' Journal}, Feb. 17, 1882; Scranton \textit{Republican}, June 21, 1900.
\textsuperscript{34} Pottsville \textit{Jefferson Demokrat}, July 12, 1856; Scranton \textit{Morning Republican}, July 3, 1874.
\textsuperscript{35} Scranton \textit{Republican}, Mar. 19, 1895.
\textsuperscript{36} \textit{Ibid.}, Mar. 18, 21, 1892, May 26, 1893, June 2, 1900; \textit{Cambrian} (Cincinnati, Ohio), V (1885), 30.
sotto-voce harmony began only two or three generations after the German and Welsh communities of the region were established, by which time, presumably, many of the choristers were American-born.

The lack of social intermixture can be measured in the county marriage records beginning in 1886. Of the Welshmen who got married in Lackawanna County in 1886, about 80 per cent married women born in Wales or of Welsh parentage; among the Irish the proportion marrying with their own ethnic group was at least 94 and probably nearer 100 per cent; among the Germans about 92 per cent; and even among English immigrants at least 40 per cent and perhaps considerably more. Twenty-five years later, in 1910, there were no longer many persons born in these countries getting married in Lackawanna County, but immigrants from Austria, Hungary, Poland, Italy, and Russia were marrying almost without exception within their respective groups. These distinctions carried over almost intact into the next generation. Schoolteachers and employers alike tended to classify the American-born by their parents’ nationalities.

Virtually no effort was made to bridge the ethnic chasms in society. The most notable exception was a certain cordiality shown the small German-Jewish communities, in such forms as frequent newspaper articles explaining Jewish holidays and customs to Americans; often enough written by the local rabbi, to be sure, they became something of a tradition in their own right. Anti-Semitism troubled the region hardly at all, except perhaps in the 1870’s and 1880’s when Polish Jews began peddling there.

Until well after 1900, however, newspaper editors were oblivious of any need to promote assimilation of immigrants, and even then their comments seem inspired more by the stock editorials in their metropolitan exchanges than by the situation around them. Certainly no practical means were suggested. Not until about 1905 did the public school boards or teachers assume that Americanizing chil-

37 Lackawanna County Marriage Dockets, County Court House, Scranton, No. 1-4 (1886), 93 (1910).
38 Luther to James E. Roderick, Mar. 27, 1901, Reading Coal Papers; Scranton Republican, Dec. 15, 1908.
40 Scranton Republican, Mar. 20, July 9, 1908.
dren of diverse cultures was part of their task. In the 1890's, several free private kindergartens set about teaching foreign children "English and cleanliness" and "a clearer citizenship and identification with our American people." Visitors were gratified to see the pupils, for all their "intense marks of race peculiarities," becoming as "handsome and sweet" as American children. But not until school attendance was made compulsory in Pennsylvania, some years after the first law on the subject in 1895, did children of many of the ethnic groups even attend school, either public or parochial, after they came of working age—say nine or ten years old. Although between the late 1870's and early 1900's some public-school boards conducted elementary night schools for working children, the coal-breaker and mine boys were often so boisterous and inattentive that the authorities thought the schools "dismal failures." During prolonged depressions or strikes, the regular day schools were thronged by idle slatepickers and youthful muledrivers, who disrupted the recitations perhaps oftener than they learned anything themselves.

Consequently, the schools, which the few educated foreigners found inferior in any case, lacked even the merit of social egalitarianism. In the city of Scranton hardly one per cent of the number of children who started public school in 1880 managed to graduate twelve years later; most of the few high school graduates there and elsewhere were girls. In the elementary schools, children of foreign parents might heavily outnumber those of American parentage, but the proportions were reversed among the minority who proceeded to the grammar and high schools. The Catholic parochial schools and several private academies—the latter mostly for boys—by no means closed the educational and social gap between the children of the local "aristocracy" and those the latter were said to scorn as "the

42 Ibid., Nov. 30, 1893, June 8, 1897, Oct. 24, 1899, July 2, 1904.
43 Ibid., Mar. 3, 1897, Dec. 11, 1902; Peter Roberts, Anthracite Coal Communities (New York, 1904), 167-184.
44 Scranton Daily Times, Feb. 6, 1878; Scranton Republican, Dec. 14, 1892.
45 Scranton Daily Times, Feb. 10, 1876; Hazleton Sentinel, Dec. 13, 1880; Scranton Republican, Mar. 15, 1903.
46 Wilkes-Barre Demokratische Wächter, Nov. 17, 1858; Wilkes-Barre Record of the Times, Sept. 25, 1878.
47 Scranton Republican, Dec. 14, 1892, Nov. 11, 1908; Culin, Trooper's Narrative, 42.
dirty Irish and Welsh."

At a time when as many as a quarter to a half of the immigrant workingmen could not so much as sign their names to a payroll—even among the English and Welsh, though the Germans and Scots did better—the schools had hardly begun to improve their children's chance for integration into American society.

Nor were the churches very useful in this social mission. In the anthracite region as elsewhere in America, the principal social function of a church was the exact opposite of integration; it provided as stable an institutional nucleus as possible for a discrete ethnic community. Even this was difficult enough in view of what a Welshman called "the unsettledness of the members, the great amount of movement, and failure of business enterprises." Exceptions to the general lack of social communion between ethnic groups, like exceptions to other rules, attracted undue notice at the time. County Bible societies, for instance, reported at length the travails of distributing the King James version among poor but ungrateful Catholic immigrants, and in the 1890's Presbyterians home missioners converted a few score Italians and Chinese and sought out Protestant Hungarians.

But the main tendency was anything but ecumenical. Even within the Catholic church separate parishes were established for each nationality as soon as possible after the start of its immigration, and yet riots and lawsuits over parish property set Poles against Lithuanians, Galicians against Slovaks, and Uniate Greek against Roman Catholics, culminating in the secession, which started at Scranton in 1897, of the independent Polish National Church.

Since none of the local or regional anthracite-miners' unions of the nineteenth century managed to survive more than a few years, they too failed to harmonize ethnic differences as they would have had to

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48 Scranton Daily Times, Aug. 21, Nov. 4, 1876; Roberts, Anthracite Coal Communities, 156.
49 Signatures of 201 miners, Lackawanna Coal and Iron Company, 1871, Scranton Papers; signatures of naturalized citizens, Lackawanna County Alien Files, No. 1-1073 (1878-1882), No. 2401-3000 (1887-1888); Wilkes-Barre Demokratische Wächter, Nov. 17, 1858; Scranton Morning Republican, Aug. 16, 1873.
50 Carmarthen (Wales) Seren Cymru, Oct. 18, 1880.
51 Scranton Republican, Nov. 30, 1882, Dec. 1, 1890, June 29, July 13, 1891, Apr. 21, 1898, Aug. 28, 1899.
do in order to introduce collective bargaining, and thereby help stabilize the economy and society of the region.\(^5^3\) Although the Workingmen’s (or Miners’ and Laborers’) Benevolent Association of 1869–1875 transcended ethnic mistrust—and the economic rivalry of the several “regions”—with mounting success, the men had to be appealed to as members of English, Welsh, Irish, and German blocs no less than as fellow workers at particular mines. Ultimately, the union’s strike of 1875 collapsed amid bitter recriminations by the “hungry, foolish dupes” of each nationality against the others.\(^5^4\) Even after 1900, when the United Mine Workers of America brought “old” and “new” immigrants together, once again each local was a carefully arranged alliance of distrustful ethnic groups.\(^5^5\)

The alliance of certain groups within one or the other political party was also more a source of friction than of amalgamation. The Democratic party maintained a running squabble between its Irish and German factions for what each considered its due share of city and county nominations, on the principle that “if Germans refuse to support Irishmen, of course Irishmen will refuse to support Germans, and . . . neither will be elected.”\(^5^6\) The Republicans balanced the claims of a solid Welsh bloc against an uncertain German contingent after the Civil War.\(^5^7\) As early as 1874, Poles dominated a ticket in Mahanoy City, and by the 1890’s the older party leaders everywhere had to admit Italians, Lithuanians, and other new-immigrant politicians, “garlic councilmen” though the latter might be.\(^5^8\) This sort of politics and local government had even less relevance to solving the economic and social problems of the region than to harmonizing ethnic factions. In 1874, Welsh mineworkers might desert a Republican candidate who happened to have commanded the militia during their strike three years before, and in 1878 Terence V. Powderly of


\(^5^4\) Scranton *Morning Republican*, Jan. 9, June 10, 1875; Pottsville *Miners’ Journal*, May 21, June 4, 1875.


\(^5^7\) Scranton *Daily Times*, Jan. 30, 1883; *Scranton Republican*, Aug. 21, 1885.

\(^5^8\) *Shenandoah Weekly Herald*, Feb. 21, 1874; *Scranton Republican*, Apr. 9, 1897; Roberts, *Anthracite Coal Communities*, 316–327.
the Knights of Labor was elected mayor of Scranton on the Greenback-Labor ticket in a general working-class reaction—Irish, Welsh, and Germans together—against the armed suppression of the railroad and mine strike of 1877. Powderly, however, proposed no more thoroughgoing local reform than appointment of “friends of labor” to the police force; his re-election in 1882 represented merely an opportunity for one of the Democratic factions, recently under the cloud of embezzlement convictions, to return to city hall.\(^{59}\) The politics of the region seldom came closer to a stand upon important principle than when local “taxpayers’ associations” sought to “secure the county from the burden of taxation” for schools, bridges, poor relief, pay raises for firemen, and other projects whereby politicians might be plotting to defraud the public.\(^{60}\)

Distinctions between social classes were much less precise than those between ethnic groups. To a great degree, of course, social classes were ethnic groups. Most obviously, the working class in or about the mines and other industries was composed of certain immigrant nationalities and their children. Among them there were individuals who got rich as contractors, or as wholesale liquor dealers, or as bankers handling foreign remittances, businesses in which they enjoyed the advantage of dealing with laborers or customers of their own group. But even such persons did not thereby gain entry into the upper social class of Scranton, Wilkes-Barre, or Pottsville. Andrew Casey, Frank Carlucci, and Michael Bosak might be recognized as leaders of the Irish, Italian, and Slovak communities of Scranton, but their credentials were evidently not valid across ethnic lines.\(^{61}\) Foreign origins were somewhat less of a social barrier for immigrant Welsh mine operators and German brewers and lawyers, and no bar at all to the rise of notable English, Scottish, Canadian, and even Irish immigrants like John Jermyn, Thomas Dickson, William Connell, and John Handley from working-class beginnings to millionaires’ fortunes and social status in the American community of

\(^{59}\) Wilkes-Barre Record of the Times, Dec. 16, 1874; Scranton Daily Times, Jan. 8, 1877, Feb. 22, 1882; Scranton Republican, Feb. 9, June 12, 1878.

\(^{60}\) Scranton Sunday Times, Jan. 10, 1875; Scranton Daily Times, Oct. 22, 1881; Scranton Republican, Nov. 13, 1877, Aug. 25, 1903.

\(^{61}\) Scranton Republican, May 18, 1890, Nov. 1, 1903, Nov. 29, 1904, May 6, 10, 1909; Scranton Tribune-Republican, Jan. 16, 20, 1911.
Such individuals apart, the upper-class was virtually limited to native Americans.

This class shared, as far as it was able, the manners and customs fashionable elsewhere at the time. As early as 1851, the "wit, beauty and grace" of Pottsville were arrayed at cotillions; in 1869, the Pittston Social Union, made up of "the elite of East and West Pittston," achieved a "thoroughly select and brilliant" Dress Soiree; the gifts displayed at a Scranton society wedding in 1870 were said to be worth $12,000; and there were resolutely exclusive men's clubs as early as the 1870's in Wilkes-Barre, Scranton, Pottsville, Pittston, and Carbondale, and plebeian imitators even in overgrown mining patches like Mahanoy City.

By the mid-1880's these towns had their regular annual seasons of balls, masquerades, concerts (well attended for their "social tone"), art lectures and exhibits, "brilliant private parties" for boys and girls home from college or finishing school, and numerous "at homes" in the mansions along the River Common in Wilkes-Barre, on "Quality Hill" in Scranton, or on Mahantango Street in Pottsville.

Although to those involved, and no doubt to the envious or uncomprehending masses, all this activity signified great éclat, the resident upper-class of the region was, even by American standards, severely middle class. It numbered some of the independent mine operators, foundry, shop, and store owners, the resident corporation superintendents, canny retired farmers and land speculators drawing tonnage royalties from the lease of their "coal estates," local bankers, real-estate developers, leading lawyers and doctors, and the like. There were indeed millionaires among them by the late nineteenth century. But, in a sense, the uppermost social class of the anthracite region did not live there, infrequently visited it, and played no part in its high society. They were the capitalists, chiefly New York and Philadelphia men, who controlled the dominant railroad and mining corporations of the region. None of the highest officials of the Dela-

63 Pottsville Miners' Journal, Feb. 1, 1851; Pittston Gazette, Dec. 16, 1869, Jan. 6, 1870; Carbondale Advance, Mar. 5, 1870; Shenandoah Weekly Herald, Feb. 7, Dec. 26, 1874; Wilkes-Barre Record of the Times, June 17, 1874; Scranton Morning Republican, Aug. 24, 29, 1874.
64 Scranton Daily Times, Apr. 27–28, 1876; Wilkes-Barre Record of the Times, Jan. 1, 1886; Scranton Republican, Feb. 12, 1888, Nov. 18, 1890, Nov. 9, 1896, Dec. 30, 1899.
ware, Lackawanna & Western, the Erie, the Central of New Jersey, the Lehigh Valley, the Reading, or (except in 1869-1884 when Thomas Dickson was president) the Delaware & Hudson graced local society. The family of William R. Storrs, the general coal agent of the Lackawanna, might be seen at the annual New Years’ balls of the Scranton Bachelors’ Club, but not the line’s president, Samuel Sloan, nor such directors and major stockholders as the New York merchants, bankers, and entrepreneurs Moses Taylor, Percy R. Pyne, William E. Dodge, and John I. Blair, for whom mine shafts were named but who had greater economic interests and social concerns far from the coal region.65

This headless society misled itself on that score as it may still mislead readers of novels set in the region.66 In Scranton from the era of the miners’ strikes of 1871 and 1877 down to 1916, no name was more portentous of economic and social eminence than that of William W. Scranton, son and nephew of the founders of the Lackawanna Iron and Coal Company for whom the city itself had been named. He was the incarnation of the gentleman vigilant for social order—or, from the opposite point of view, of the “local tycoon”—when he led the citizens’ posse which fired on a mob—or a strikers’ march—in 1877.67 His mansion, when his father Joseph H. Scranton built it in 1869, was called “the most remarkable structure in this part of Pennsylvania. . . . It overlooks the vast iron works of the town, and will serve for centuries to illustrate to future generations the make and style of the men whose successes under difficulties have been the greatest and most striking of the age. . . .”68 So it continued to do, but rather deceptively. Joseph Scranton, though president of the company, had been subordinate, since the panic of 1857, to the New York City Bank group which also controlled the Lackawanna Railroad. After his death in 1872, his son did not succeed him, as he supposed his experience in the mills had prepared him to do, but perforce accepted the superintendency under a president in New York

65 Scranton Republican, Jan. 2, 1890, Jan. 2, 1897.
66 Such as the “Gibberville” upper class of doctors and Cadillac dealers in John O’Hara, Appointment in Samarra (New York, 1934).
67 Pa. Committee Appointed to Investigate the Rail-Road Riots . . . in July 1877, Report (1878), 769–770; Scranton Daily Times, Oct. 18, 1877. See also Carbondale Advance, May 20, 1871.
68 Pittston Gazette, Apr. 22, 1869.
who was not a technological expert. William Scranton's faded letterbooks still glow with his pride in steelmaking, but, although he resigned and started his own Scranton Steel Company in 1881, within ten years the older company bought this out; he had no choice thereafter but to confine himself to managing the local waterworks, begun as only a subsidiary family interest. In fact, neither “Scranton of Scranton” nor anyone else in the “Barony of Scranton” was able to keep the merged Lackawanna Iron and Steel Company itself from moving away to Buffalo in 1901, though it seemed “the end of the world for this community.”

Exceptions to the rule of outside control, as to other rules, have been more memorable. There were self-made coal magnates who were fairly free of railroad control even in the Wyoming and Lackawanna valleys, men such as Charles Parrish of Wilkes-Barre, John Jermyn of Jermyn, and Orlando Johnson of Priceburg. In the Schuylkill region, many smaller operators maintained a proud though usually poor independence until the Philadelphia & Reading Coal and Iron Company assumed control in the 1870’s. The Lehigh operators kept their sovereignty longest, most notably Ario Pardee of Hazleton and Eckley B. Coxe of Drifton. Coxe, profiting from the land speculation of his grandfather Tench Coxe, was the one-man upper-class of the isolated and, by his edict, saloonless village of Drifton, where he lived as an industrial feudatory, and leading Democrat, with his wife, as lady of the manor, visiting the sick and poor among their working people, who, it was said, “fairly worshipped” them. But in more typical mining villages, like nearby Eckley—in 1863 “a vast collection of shanties”—or in such larger towns as Shenandoah, inhabited almost wholly by men working for absentee corporations, the “upper-

69 Scranton Papers, 1857-1916.
70 Scranton Republican, July 1, 1909; Scranton Tribune-Republican, June 2, 1910, Feb. 5, 1912.
72 Clifton K. Yearley, Jr., Enterprise and Anthracite: Economics and Democracy in Schuylkill County, 1820-1875 (Baltimore, 1961), 57-93.
74 Scranton Daily Times, Dec. 22, 1877; Wilkes-Barre Record of the Times, Nov. 1, 1878; Wilkes-Barre Record, May 14, 1895.
most social strata," so a visitor noted, "are yet to be formed." Even in the more urbane Pottsville, the tendency in the 1870's, as the Reading moved into mining, was to lose what upper-class there had been; many of "the most wealthy inhabitants have removed," an editor observed, "and few new ones have come to take their place." Neither absent capitalists nor the resident élite displayed much noblesse toward other classes in the community. This is not to rehearse the well-worn story of ruthless exploitation of labor in the anthracite region, which is overdrawn in most particulars, although not in all—the story of child labor, especially of the mine and breaker boys from the 1850's until after 1900, still horrifies the reader of old newspapers. But the ruthlessness of indifference and economic expediency was more to blame than the "rapacious greed" with which employers were sometimes charged. By the 1850's, the market required that any slate in the mined coal be removed at the breaker after the coal was crushed. Until late in the century, there was no practicable way to pick slate except by hand. Around any coal breaker, plenty of boys between five and twelve years of age could be hired for this task. Now and again, a local editor might deplore the plight of small children perched for ten hours a day astride the moving coal "ways," scrabbling for sharp bits of slate, beclouded with coal dust, and stumping home after dark "like little old men," but their fathers' unsteady wages of $1.50 or $2 a day—or was it their "bestial" thriftlessness and cupidity?—made the boys' daily earning of thirty-five or forty-five cents necessary to their families. And then many breaker boys were "sons of fathers who were killed in the mines, and their scanty earnings are frequently the support of a widowed mother or of brothers and sisters younger than themselves, so that their employment has more of kindness than of cruelty in it." If a breaker boy fell into the rolls or a "nipper" was run down by a trip of loaded cars in the mine and was crushed to a gruesome

76 Pottsville Weekly Miners' Journal, Jan. 10, 1879.
77 Scranton Republican, Mar. 20, 1904.
78 Wilkes-Barre Record of the Times, Mar. 11, 1874; Wilkes-Barre Luzerne Union, Aug. 11, 1875; Scranton Republican, Feb. 16, 1878, Feb. 20, 1887; Scranton Tribune-Republican, Apr. 8, 1910; Theodore Roosevelt, "The Coal Miner at Home," Outlook, XCVI (Dec. 24, 1910), 904.
79 Wilkes-Barre Record of the Times, Oct. 31, 1877.
death, it could usually be shown that he had been "out of his place in disobedience of positive orders, and that the injury was the result of the boy's recklessness." 80

Who was to concern himself with such obscure cases of misfortune and how? "During the past week," it was reported at Wilkes-Barre in 1876, "nearly one boy a day has been killed, and the public has become so familiar with these calamities, that no attention is given them after the first announcement through a newspaper or neighbor." 81 When the delegates to a Sunday School convention at Scranton in 1874 visited a mine, they watched "with much interest" the "barefooted, black-faced urchins . . . picking slate from the dusky diamonds," and then went down into the mine to hear a lecture on "the wonders of the Great Creator," namely fossils of extinct plants and animals which the discerning might find in a lump of coal. 82 At any rate, most of the working boys were only foreigners' children. 83 Effective reform finally came after 1903, when Pennsylvania prohibited breaker work by boys under fourteen and mine work under sixteen; within a few years, slate picking was perforce mechanized. 84

Other abuses likewise crept in somewhat inadvertently. Company stores and houses were relatively few except in the early years, when both miners and operators lacked credit or cash, and in isolated places where mine labor would not go unless houses and stores were provided. 85 The large corporations generally avoided them as a nuisance, necessary to attract poor new immigrants and in such case perhaps useful to the company as well: "Living in Co Houses we control the labor," a Lackawanna official suggested in 1882. 86 But he

80 Whiting to James Dougherty, Sept. 11, 1883, Reading Coal Papers; Wilkes-Barre Luzerne Union, Sept. 8, 1875; Scranton Republican, Mar. 13, 1879, Feb. 18, 1880, Nov. 15, 1885, May 7, 1891.
81 Wilkes-Barre Luzerne Union, Jan. 12, 1876.
82 Scranton Morning Republican, June 13, 1874.
84 Scranton Republican, May 20, 23, 27, 1903, Aug. 20, 1904.
85 Carbondale Northern Pennsylvanian, Aug. 8, 1833; Pottsville Miners' Journal, July 30, 1842.
86 Storrs to Sloan, June 7, 1882, Lackawanna Papers. See also Joseph J. Albright to Christopher R. Robert, May 16, 1860, ibid.
also believed that home ownership made their older hands "the best workers and best citizens, and . . . the last to go into strikes" more surely than would the threat of eviction from a company house or debt to a company store. 87 Although the Reading Company in the 1880's rented some 3,000 houses, it also provided miners' trains at low fares so that its men and boys working at remote shafts could live, as many of them preferred, in larger communities like St. Clair or Minersville. "It makes better people," an official said, "to live with the schools and churches." 88 It was the independent operators, such as Pardee, Coxe, and G. B. Markle in the Lehigh region, who customarily rented houses to their men and kept company stores—with their habitual "confusion and rattletabang, and above all, the dirt"—and often enough took advantage of their monopoly. 89 "I am fully aware of the importance & justice of getting the hands to spend their money at the stores of those who employ them," a mining superintendent assured one operator in the early years. "The cash system was proved here long enough . . . to show that the Employer had no advantage from it." 90 But at corporation mines such abuses seem to have been the doing of foremen who had a storekeeper in the family, a situation which from time to time the corporations tried to stamp out in their own interest as well as that of the men. 91 Over the years, the cry for abolition of company stores came oftener perhaps from small private shopkeepers than from the workingmen. 92

In general, the labor policy of the major mining companies was the product of a genuine spirit of autocratic benevolence—a desire on the part of the owner to protect his own view of the common interest in which he felt his employees should share—rather than the product of an embattled tyranny. Given the fierce competition among the mine owners themselves, they assumed that they had no choice but to resist collective bargaining (except with the W.B.A. in 1869–1873), keep control over wages, and even employ small boys in the mines and breakers. But their letters show them also quite conscious of a need to foster the morale of their employees by at least listening graciously to their grievances and sometimes even granting “their requests—not demands”—as long as it could be done without compromising company authority.\(^{93}\) They also recognized that a low wage rate and “short time” would drive away their best men. In fact, the large corporations, though directed from New York or Philadelphia, were probably freer from petty strikes than the less efficient independent operators, who were more apt to try to balance their books by squeezing wages from time to time. It was indeed fortunate for the region that control by a few outside corporations led to the further step of their combining in 1873 to check competition and thereby maintain some minimum level of coal prices and wages. After 1898, the dominance of J. Pierpont Morgan over the combination both strengthened it and in 1902 induced its members to accept collective bargaining with the United Mine Workers, to the reasonable satisfaction of both capital and labor thereafter. Trust control was, notwithstanding local individualists who had been grumbling about it since the 1830’s, the first practical step toward solving the basic economic problems of the region and, as a by-product, stabilizing its society.\(^{94}\)

The communities of the region failed miserably to cope with matters left to their own resources and initiative. The hazards of the mines cast up an annual burden of hundreds of crippled men or destitute widows and orphans, and frequent depressions in the coal

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trade made massive unemployment almost as troublesome. Neither the private charity of the fortunate classes of each locality nor the public relief disbursed by the local poor boards, nor yet the rudimentary welfare arrangements of mine operators and other employers, could cope with poverty on this scale.

Public relief consisted basically of herding chronic paupers, including children and the insane, more or less promiscuously together at the county or city poor farms, some of which, in spite of sporadic reform, were so filthy and verminous as to be officially condemned as a "scandal" and "a disgrace to the state," where "the most cheerful sight . . . was a store room full of coffins."\(^95\) Casual outdoor relief, though restricted by state law, was also doled out at the monthly open meetings of the poor boards, but in such tiny amounts—two, three, four, or five dollars a month to an aged couple or a widow with several children—as to be hardly worth the trouble and shame of applying for it. Of twenty-one applicants at one poor-board meeting in the desperate depression winter of 1877–1878, eleven were rejected, though unemployed and destitute, for being able-bodied or having relatives somewhere who, if found, might conceivably support them, or for refusing to go to the poor farm.\(^96\) Some suppliants were clearly more worthy, like Bridget Ruane of Scranton, widowed by a mine accident and left with seven children, the oldest a one-legged boy of fourteen, surely "one of the most deserving cases that had been reported"; she was allowed four dollars a month.\(^97\) Few miners or other skilled workingmen with the least hope of ever finding a job would "beg for such a paltry piece of charity."\(^98\)

Private charity was hardly more munificent. "Where are the charitable ladies," a Wilkes-Barre paper asked in 1861, who should take charge of the "squallid, ill-clad children" seen begging on almost every corner?\(^99\) In 1874 a "soup house" operated by the ladies

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\(^96\) Scranton Morning Republican, Nov. 14, 1877.

\(^97\) Scranton Daily Times, Dec. 6, 1879.

\(^98\) Scranton Morning Republican, Nov. 22, 1876; Scranton Republican, June 7, 1884, July 4, 1891; Gibbons, "Miners of Scranton," 923.

\(^99\) Wilkes-Barre Luzerne Union, Nov. 27, 1861.
did offer “a nutritious meal to the poor, free from all temptations of alcoholic drinks,” namely “a plate of soup or cup of coffee and a roll of bread for the very moderate sum of ten cents.”

Dorcas Societies repaired old clothing for the poor, carriages distributed provisions for “a bountiful Christmas dinner” to penniless families “known to be deserving,” and in the 1870’s Congressman Hendrick B. Wright gave away “nice fresh bread . . . piled up like ranks of cordwood” to all comers each Christmas. In the pit of depression the ordinary unemployed might be helped by some combination of private and public relief funds raised for the occasion. The first of these, at Pottsville in 1842-1843, distributed $156.53 among 130 families; twenty-five years later the Benevolent Association of Pottsville spent $632.55 to relieve sixty-seven families. In the winter of 1855, Scranton philanthropists dispensed $702.55 to the “suffering poor,” and managed to balance the account by recovering $124.86 from them later in the year. In 1877, after delegations of the unemployed virtually threatened the Scranton city council with looting if they were not given “Work or Bread,” a more elaborate scheme of city work relief, supported by private subscription, was hastily improvised by ninety-three “leading men.”

Usually the charitable were so fearful of “impositions” by the undeserving, who might “beg for a cake of soap, and . . . pawn it for a glass of whiskey,” that they gave as little as possible—seven cents an hour for work relief at Wilkes-Barre in 1877 and only one dole of flour, beans, and pork per family at Scranton—and returned as soon as they could to the poorhouse system. Poor boards sometimes spent a lump sum to send a needy immigrant family back to the Old Country, though some taxpayers grumbled that nobody lavished free cruises on them. Private citizens made it their business to ferret out “all who are unworthy of support,” such as one Mary Lawlor of Shenandoah, “an able-bodied woman” who during three

100 Wilkes-Barre Daily Record of the Times, Nov. 10, 1874.
103 Scranton Lackawanna Herald, Dec. 22, 1855.
104 Scranton Daily Times, Mar. 14, 19, 1877.
105 Ibid., Mar. 19, 20, 30, Apr. 2, 4, July 17, 1877; Scranton Republican, Mar. 14, 1878, Apr. 10, 1890, Apr. 19, 1897.
106 Scranton Republican, May 6, 1889.
months of 1882 had been given a total of $16.25 in relief—"an expensive luxuary," as a taxpayer put it.\textsuperscript{107} At Scranton in the 1890's, a private Board of Associated Charities took over aspects of relief with which the public authorities could not cope under Pennsylvania law, but this Board, too, emphasized the unmasking of "monstrous impositions" by persons "not entitled to relief" almost as much as actual aid to the deserving.\textsuperscript{108} What was even more important than niggardly charity in the cities was the fact that few of the small towns and villages where most of the working class lived had any organized private charity at all. The only certain "poor man's friend" in the region was the culm heap, "picturesque" when swarming with men, women, and children gleaning bits of refuse coal.\textsuperscript{109}

"Why do bands always play '[Down in a] Coal Mine' returning from a funeral?" an editor mused in 1872.\textsuperscript{110} Death in the mines was an everyday matter. For the scores of families suddenly bereft of husbands and fathers by a major mine disaster, beginning with that at Avondale in 1869, special funds were raised from both within and without the region. In its six years of operation, the Avondale Relief Association distributed $170,000 among 73 widows, 156 children, and a few others.\textsuperscript{111} To these funds some of the corporations judiciously contributed "for the sake of the moral effect upon the men."\textsuperscript{112} (The companies likewise gave land and occasional small sums to orphans, populated largely by children of mine casualties, and to workingmen's churches, hoping thereby to effect "a good feeling between Employers and Employed . . . so that as well as being humane, it will pay.").\textsuperscript{113} But most mine accidents happened one at a time; the odd victim could expect nothing as of right from his employer, who in practice paid, if anything, only the one hundred dollars or so that would avoid a law suit, local juries being certain to decide against a

\textsuperscript{107} Pottsville Weekly Miners' Journal, Sept. 15, 1882.
\textsuperscript{108} Scranton Republican, Jan. 3, May 12, 1894.
\textsuperscript{109} Scranton Daily Times, Apr. 26, 1873, Feb. 5, 1878; Scranton Morning Republican, Dec. 9, 1876.
\textsuperscript{110} Scranton Daily Times, Nov. 15, 1872.
\textsuperscript{111} Wilkes-Barre Record of the Times, Dec. 25, 1875; Mar. 12, 1886; Pittston Gazette, July 6, 1871; Scranton Republican, Sept. 9, 1896; Scranton Tribune-Republican, Nov. 10, 1911.
\textsuperscript{112} Joseph H. Scranton to Sloan, Sept. 10, 1869, Scranton Papers.
\textsuperscript{113} Storrs to Sloan, Mar. 1, 1881, Lackawanna Papers.
corporation. "So far I do not recollect," the Reading Coal and Iron Company's general manager wrote in 1886, "a single case in which we have finally been compelled to pay damages." During the quarter century after Avondale, however, the Reading and several other large corporations set up their own modest benefit funds for accident victims, to which both they and their employees regularly contributed. The annual cost of the fund to the Reading was "undoubtedly less," it estimated, "than the costs of suits and payments for damages . . . if no such provision had been made." Injured men might also be given a pass over their employer's railroad to go to a city hospital, and in 1882 Moses Taylor of the Lackawanna Railroad made the bequest (unfortunately unique in the region) of a hospital, opened ten years later, for injured miners of his company. But the benefactions of corporation directors were more likely to go elsewhere, notably to colleges like Lafayette, Lehigh, and Princeton.

Domination of the principal industries of the region by New York and Philadelphia corporations, however, ground the faces of the poor no more harshly than exclusive control by the sort of local magnate who was content not to "pose as a philanthropist" would have done. Beginning in the 1870's, a few small hospitals were organized by local doctors with rather meager private funds and intermittent state aid to care for injured miners and others. The only other charitable institutions were a few private and Catholic orphanages—an early one established at Scranton in 1871 was expressively named "The Home for the Friendless"—refuges for "misguided women" and their infants, evangelical "rescue missions" for drunkards and derelicts, the YM and YWCA and the Salvation Army, Eckley B. Coxe's Drifton School of Industry (1879), and Boys' Industrial


115 Wilkes-Barre Record of the Times, Aug. 30, 1871, Jan. 22, 1876; Scranton Republican, Mar. 5, Apr. 24, 1884, June 3, 1887, Aug. 1, 1896; Pa. Secretary of Internal Affairs, Industrial Statistics (1887), B. 19, (1890), E. 7172; Roberts, Anthracite Coal Communities, 266-273.

116 Whiting to Directors, Feb. 11, 1885, Reading Coal Papers.

117 Scranton Republican, Apr. 1, 1882, Nov. 1, 1892, May 4, 1895.

118 Ibid., Oct. 22, 1873; Carbondale Advance, June 22, 1872.

119 Scranton Tribune-Republican, May 25, 1912.

120 Scranton Daily Times, June 8, 1874; Wilkes-Barre Record of the Times, May 16, 1877; Pottsville Weekly Miners' Journal, Nov. 2, 1883, Apr. 5, 1889; Scranton Republican, July 3, 1893, Nov. 2, 1895, Feb. 1, 1897, May 27, Aug. 13, 1905.
Associations at Scranton and Wilkes-Barre in the 1890's for the self-improvement of poor working boys.\textsuperscript{121} But local men of property, organized in taxpayers' associations, systematically opposed public support of such projects. Although corporation officials were among the leaders of the associations, they seem not to have wrung every possible advantage from their economic overlordship of the region. The corporations periodically discouraged their employees, especially their foremen, from serving on borough and city councils and school boards, as in 1899 the Lackawanna found some forty employees of its mining department were doing; they feared loss of working time would cost the company more than any tax relief it might gain through this channel of political influence.\textsuperscript{122}

In the anthracite region as elsewhere, the poor were usually left to their own devices. The benefit concert for a crippled miner was a familiar institution among the Welsh.\textsuperscript{123} In the 1880's and 1890's, miners organized their own mutual-relief associations, or "keg funds" (originally supported from the ten cents refunded the miner for his empty powder kegs).\textsuperscript{124} The same secret fraternal lodges as elsewhere, from the Odd Fellows to the peculiarly ethnic orders, provided their members with a little insurance. And of course in each ethnic community the church mustered what charity it could through benefit bazaars, fairs, \textit{Kirchen-Picnics}, and other money-raising ventures characteristic of most American churches.\textsuperscript{125} But toward the end of the nineteenth century the pitiful inadequacy of self-help only grew more evident among the thousands of single men from Eastern Europe who worked in the region. Intent upon saving every possible penny, huddled into filthy boarding houses, and eating the cheapest food even at the risk of scurvy, the "Hungarians" got a reputation for heartless inhumanity for refusing to take responsibility for a sick


\textsuperscript{122} Storrs to William H. Truesdale, May 12, 1899, Lackawanna Papers. See also Whiting to Franklin B. Gowen, Sept. 17, 1878, Reading Coal Papers.

\textsuperscript{123} \textit{Scranton Republican}, Dec. 13, 1878, Sept. 29, 1892.

\textsuperscript{124} \textit{Ibid.}, Jan. 6, 10, 1881, Nov. 15, 1903.

\textsuperscript{125} Wilkes-Barre \textit{Demokratische W"achter}, Oct. 13, 1871.
countryman or one killed in the mines. "Dead man no good" was the only reputedly Slavic folksaying known to American newspaper readers of the 1890's.

That the integrity of the family decayed any faster in the anthracite region than elsewhere in America can hardly be asserted. During the early years of any ethnic group in the region, when most of the immigrants were men, many a family's ties had to stretch across the ocean for a time, not infrequently ending in bigamy or a husband who had vanished when wife and children arrived. Looking after a houseful of male boarders strained the patience and sometimes the fidelity of some immigrant wives. Here the wife of a crippled Welsh miner was tempted to elope with a sounder bread-winner; there a Polish girl, after rebuffing thirty-six proposals, married a countryman with six hundred dollars which it turned out he had borrowed. The Slavic immigrants of the 1880's and 1890's were notorious for odd cases of wife-selling and near-polyandry, which got into the courts and the newspapers. But once the customary family life which all groups had known in the old country became possible, even for "the Poles and Huns," the family, like the church which supported it, was as conservative as any social institution could be in the circumstances. Immigrant husbands might discover that "in this country a man is not a woman's boss; she can do as she chooses"; still their families were large—as late as 1900, about nine children was the average in one district, even among English, Welsh, and Irish immigrants of long residence—and the divorce rate was below the national average. Desertion was "appallingly frequent" by the

127 Dundaff Republican, July 13, 1831; Pottsville Demokratische Freiheits-Presse, Nov. 29, 1849; Pottsville Miners' Journal, Oct. 27, 1855; Hazleton Sentinel, Aug. 1, 1867; Pittston Gazette, July 30, 1868.
129 Ibid., Sept. 12, 1892; Pottsville Miners' Journal, Apr. 14, 1849.
130 Scranton Republican, Dec. 14, 1882, Nov. 4, 1886, Oct. 21, 1890, Apr. 18, 1893.
132 Roberts, Anthracite Coal Communities, 68–73; Scranton Republican, July 29, 1908, Dec. 10, 1909.
1890’s, so the poor boards complained, though they were quick to suspect collusion between “wife deserters and fake relief applicants.”

The children of immigrants and native Americans alike provoked wider concern. For youths of 16 to 20 to be hanging about the street-corners nightly until 10 o’clock was “rowdyismus von nichtsnutzigen jungen Bengeln,” to German eyes in the 1860’s. In Pittston, the gangs of juveniles aged eight to sixteen were known as the “‘Irish boys,’ or boys of Irish parents,” who “often-times beat peaceable boys,” made rude remarks to ladies, and stole from farmers’ wagons. In Scranton, where even schoolboys carried revolvers, they disturbed the peace with “yelling and hooting—throwing stones—firing pistols—insulting residents of [the] neighborhood—beating children—challenging the boys of the German school to come out and fight.” “Little girls with long dresses” were also on the streets after dark, “assuming all the airs of finished flirts” and presumably going from bad to worse at “ten cent hops.” By the 1890’s, it seemed ever more certain that “the tendency is toward hoodlumism” among the “boys and girls who nightly promenade the streets.” Some children, it was said, were started on their downward path by over-indulgent parents whose solicitude led them arrogantly to assume their own superiority; others no older than infants roamed the streets, neglected while “mamma is at the festival and papa is at the saloon”; some parents of “wayward roughs” even egged them on in their neighborhood “factional fights” waged with stones and clubs. “The coming generation,” whether because of lax discipline or “the modern boy literature,” promised to be no better than “a community of robbers.”

134 Wilkes-Barre Demokratische Wächter, Mar. 4, 1863. See also Pottsville Miners’ Journal, June 8, 1844; Pottsville Amerikanischer Republikaner, Oct. 4, 1867.
135 Pittston Gazette, Feb. 16, 23, 1865; Scranton Daily Times, May 23, 1877, June 9, 1879, Apr. 16, 1880.
136 Scranton Daily Times, Dec. 11, 1873, June 15, 1876; Scranton Republican, Oct. 13, 1885.
137 Wilkes-Barre Luzerne Union, Aug. 31, 1870; Scranton Republican, May 22, 1877; Scranton Daily Times, June 9, 1879.
138 Scranton Republican, June 22, 1895.
139 Ibid., June 21, 1885, Dec. 14, 1891, Feb. 4, 1895.
140 Ibid., Feb. 14, 1887.
No doubt, the cry "what has become of parental authority?" was not peculiar to the anthracite region nor to the generation of the late nineteenth century. But unruly youths were an obvious case of the general social disorder toward which the economically successful were more complacent. If a local industrialist in the 1860's blamed "the great difficulty to secure just the right man for an important trust" upon a mysterious mania among modern young men for "fast horses, fine wines, good Liquors, Choice segars," at least occasionally a preacher or editor—perhaps an immigrant from a more conservative tradition—saw the industrial America of the nineteenth century as in "an anomalous condition of society," where employers and public officials took no more responsibility for the lives of workmen than for so many horses or mules. But even clergymen and editors seldom paused to formulate theoretical justifications for the prevailing economic individualism, like those which occupied a few intellectuals elsewhere. Abstract encomiums for selfishness as the source of "all the improvements of the present age"—or, for that matter, criticism of individualism as subversive of brotherhood—can be turned up by the diligent historian, but the divine-right theory of property imputed to President George F. Baer of the Reading in 1902 was seldom put any more coherently than in an 1894 commencement orator's text: "faith, hope, charity . . . and the greatest of these is business." A few in these valleys lamented that "progress has swallowed an independent agricultural people," whose only vestige was a weak local government, perhaps suited to farmers but incompetent now even to police "the drunken men who monopolize the public highway" on payday. It was in this context of near-anarchy that vigilantes, sheriff's posses, the corporations' "coal and iron police," the militia, or even the army were so often called upon to impose a desperate, eleventh-hour order, as at Lattimer in the Lehigh region in 1897 when sixty-five deputies shot down fifty-five of a

141 Ibid., July 27, 1891.
142 Joseph H. Scranton to William E. Dodge, Aug. 17, 1867, Scranton Papers; Scranton Wochenblatt, Mar. 3, 1870.
143 Scranton Evening Times, Aug. 30, 1883; Scranton Republican, June 1, 1891, June 21, 1894; Mark Sullivan, Our Times: The United States, 1900-1925 (New York, 1926-1935), II, 425.
144 Shenandoah Herald, Jan. 26, 1871; Scranton Daily Times, Nov. 16, 1876; Scranton Republican, Nov. 24, 1891.
crowd of unarmed strikers; one could easily blame the trouble on "aliens who are out of sympathy with our laws," and ignore the impotence of law itself.  

The dominant note was, of course, optimistic in spite of present disorders: "Our people are not acclimated yet in the new order of things, and the old habits and moralities fail to fit the new situations." "The wonder is that . . . it is not ten times rougher, ten fold more crude in all the amenities of life. . . . These come in their own good time." Fortunately for the job of getting coal to market, even the classes hardest pressed usually endured submissively. "What a spectacle is offered," an editor remarked in the dark year of 1878, "by the quietness and perfect good order of people, thrown out of work and all but starving, . . . patiently waiting during the past summer. . . . The chief influences of American life are wholesome and vital, and tend to national prosperity." Faith in individual success, too, was always possible when an occasional breaker boy managed to rise to the dignity of schoolteacher, priest, mechanical engineer, mine superintendent or operator, Congressman, or even, in the case of Joseph Jermyn, millionaire's heir, so fast were some fortunes made. That a boy's ambition for a skilled miner's "plenty of work and good wages" was more likely to bring him back at last, old, asthmatic, and perhaps half-crippled, to end his days slate-picking in the breaker once more, was simply one of the vicissitudes of life.

The mobility of a liberal economy was never lacking in the anthracite region—immigration and emigration, settlement and unsettling of communities, the climb to better jobs, property, and social standing for many individuals. Headlong industrialization, damped by depression and then rekindled again, kept the people on the move for a century. But such mobility was hardly conducive to an organic social structure. The instability of the local community, the cultural discontinuities between ethnic groups, the failure of social classes to

146 Scranton Daily Times, July 17, 1873, Oct. 8, 1878.
147 Pottsville Weekly Miners' Journal, Sept. 24, 1880; Wilkes-Barre Record, Aug. 15, 1900; Scranton Republican, Jan. 5, 1887, Dec. 14, 1895, May 18, 1909; Scranton Tribune-Republican, July 1, Aug. 23, 1912.
148 Gibbons, "Miners of Scranton," 923; Wilkes-Barre Record, July 14, 1896.
accept reciprocal responsibilities—in such ways unbridled economic progress undermined social order. Some of the parts of a social structure were present, but not the structure itself. No institution or group dominated society: neither an arrogant élite; nor imperious corporations ruling by the Winchesters of the coal and iron police; nor domineering labor unions; nor purposeful voluntary associations; nor insidious Molly Maguire conspiracies; nor the constituted authority of mayors or sheriffs; nor yet a vigorous church, school, or family, although in one way or another all groups from time to time attempted to impose an order satisfactory at least to their own interests. But this voluntarism, in failing to achieve any encompassing order, only furthered the social disorganization which the Industrial Revolution wrought in the anthracite region and elsewhere in nineteenth-century America.¹⁴⁹

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