

The Pocono Resort Economy: Economic Growth and Social Conservatism, 1865-1940

IN THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY, Pennsylvania was known for its coal mines, steel mills, and machine shops. But in a scenic corner of northeastern Pennsylvania, the Pocono mountain region, something new emerged. A service economy of hotels and boarding-houses began catering to the vacation needs of New York and Philadelphia. The Poconos achieved economic growth without the strife of industrialism. The resort economy did not require huge, distant corporations, nor massive infusions of capital and labor. No bitter strikes erupted, and no strange languages were heard. The Poconos retained a rural, nativist character that has persisted almost until the present day. The making of a resort economy within the framework of a small-town culture is the theme of this essay.

The Pocono Mountains and their foothills include Monroe and Pike Counties and parts of Wayne and Carbon Counties. The region is well-positioned for tourism, about ninety miles west of New York City, across the Delaware River from New Jersey, and another ninety miles north of Philadelphia. Yet a resort economy came late—after the Civil War.

The reasons are varied. To begin, the Poconos lacked mineral springs, the chief asset of inland resorts before the Civil War. Rich Americans who sought health and fun traveled to spas such as Saratoga and Silver Springs. Other Americans went to the shore. Long Branch and Cape May in New Jersey as well as Bar Harbor, Nahant, and Newport (a vibrant commercial port during the colonial era) in New England were all born as resorts in this early period. Some antebellum New Yorkers took steamers up the Hudson River to the Catskill Mountains, celebrated by Washington Irving and pictured by the

The author acknowledges the financial assistance of the Faculty Development Fund of East Stroudsburg University. In addition, he thanks the staff of the East Stroudsburg University Library and Vertie Knapp and Janet Mishkin of the Monroe County Historical Society.

Hudson River School of Romantic artists. Still other Americans, in an experience unique to the Romantic era, sought the sublime, the natural sight that would elicit amazement and awe; hence, the great appeal of Niagara Falls.¹

By contrast, glamour was lacking in the Poconos, a land of farmers and lumberjacks. Farming was not particularly profitable. The region had some good farm land along the flatlands of the Delaware River and the foothills, but not enough. On the whole, population stayed sparse; no large towns developed. The largest town to emerge was Stroudsburg, the seat for Monroe County. With its sister town of East Stroudsburg, it had a population of about 6,000 in 1900.²

A temporary source of wealth lay in the virgin forests of hemlock, poplars, and pine. Commercial lumbering began in the eighteenth century, peaked in the middle of the next century, and gradually declined. Farmers cut trees in the winter; in the spring and summer, they floated log rafts to sawmills down the Delaware River or farther to Philadelphia. Although the original forests were largely gone by the 1870s, the wood culture persisted. By producing specialty wood products such as clothes pins, hoop poles, railway ties, and mine props, some farmers continued to supplement their incomes until after the turn of the century.³

Another doomed industry was tanning, which used bark from hemlocks and oaks. In their heyday, the Pocono tanneries had to import hides from distant South America. But here, too, decline was inevita-

¹ The literature on early resorts includes Floyd Reinhart and Marion Reinhart, *Summertime: Photographs of Americans at Play, 1850-1900* (New York, 1978); Harold F. Wilson, *The Story of the Jersey Shore* (Princeton, 1964); Henry W. Lawrence, "Southern Spas: Source of the American Resort Tradition," *Landscape* 27 (1983), 1-12; Robert S. Conte, "The Celebrated White Sulphur Springs of Greenbriar: Nineteenth-Century Travel Accounts," *West Virginia History* 42 (1981), 191-221; and Richard A. Savage, "Bar Harbor: A Resort is Born," *New England Quarterly* 18 (1977), 11-22.

² Thomas H. Knepp, *The Poconos: A Handbook and Guide to Pennsylvania's Vacationland* (Stroudsburg, 1971), 41.

³ Carroll B. Tyson, *The Poconos* (Philadelphia, 1929), 74-79; John C. Appel, ed., *History of Monroe County, Pennsylvania: 1725-1976* (East Stroudsburg, 1976), 48, 54, 80-82. See also two articles by Robert M. Brooks in *Monroe County Sunday Herald*, April 22, 1979, and April 26, 1980.

ble. As with wood products, the tanning industry lingered. One tannery in East Stroudsburg survived until the 1920s.⁴

The depression of the 1870s hastened declining production, affecting tanneries, sawmills, and farms. The Monroe County census tells the story. Between 1880 and 1900, population increased from about 20,200 to 21,200, but the gain was all in the Stroudsburgs, where a small manufacturing boom doubled the population to 6,000. On the whole, the rural townships suffered population erosion. Barrett Township, once a center of logging and tanning, dropped from 1,150 to 845. Pike County lost more. The 1880 census recorded 9,663 residents. The next four censuses recorded population decreases. The 1880 figure was not surpassed until 1960.⁵

The coming of the railroads was somewhat fortuitous. In the 1850s, the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad, commonly called the "Lackawanna," went through Monroe County to connect the Scranton coal fields with New York City. By contrast, Pike County had no railroad. The southern part of the county relied on the Lackawanna station in East Stroudsburg; the northern part had the Erie Railroad's Port Jervis station in New York State. Rail links between the Poconos and Philadelphia were at first indirect, involving a connection between the Pennsylvania Railroad and the Lackawanna in New Jersey. By 1902, however, the Pennsylvania and Lackawanna lines were jointly running a daily train from Philadelphia to Monroe County.⁶

Farmers had never made much money from the region's stony soil. At first, they had supplemented their income with lumbering. When this industry faded in the late nineteenth century, farmers discovered a new winter occupation, cutting ice on frozen lakes for urban iceboxes. In the 1920s, the refrigerator ended this little ice age.⁷ It made little

⁴ Roger Dunning, "Monroe County's Tanneries," unpublished manuscript, 1968 (Monroe County Historical Society [hereafter, MCHS]); Tyson, *The Poconos*, 79-84; Appel, *History of Monroe County*, 53-54, 87.

⁵ For statistics, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Commerce, Bureau of Statistics, *Pennsylvania Statistical Abstract*, 1969 (Harrisburg, 1970), 15-16; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census (1880) of Population* (Washington, 1880). See also Appel, *History of Monroe County*, 175.

⁶ Appel, *History of Monroe County*, 51-53; Knepp, *The Poconos*, 37-39.

⁷ Vertie Knapp, "The Natural Ice Harvesters of Monroe County, Pennsylvania," unpublished manuscript, 1972 (MCHS).

difference. Farmers had long before discovered the far more profitable sideline of boarding city people during the summer.

Here was a classic case of the meeting of supply with demand. In the years following the Civil War, industrialization had swollen the urban middle class. Numerous managers, professionals, and technicians had leisure time, income, and access to railroads. They went on annual vacations to the countryside or to the shore. Husbands stayed a few weeks. But their families as well as schoolteachers, unmarried women, and widows often spent the summer. By the eve of World War I, an observer commented on the now obligatory vacation for middle-class America by noting that play clothes had not existed in the 1860s. Outdoor recreation had been so unusual that even millionaires had worn old clothes.⁸

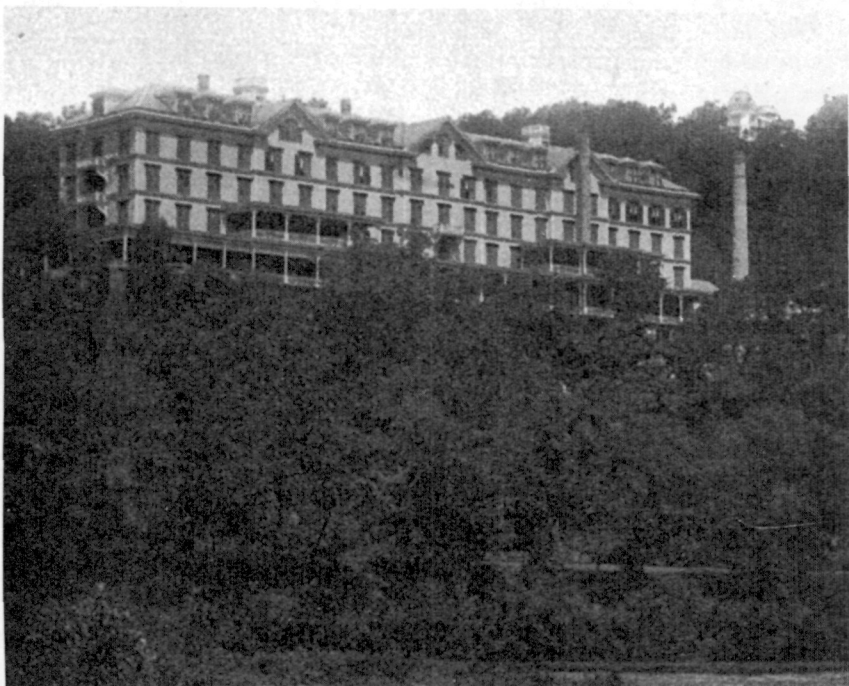
The few pre-Civil War resorts could not meet this new demand. New boardinghouses and hotels, large and small, sprang up along the Atlantic Coast from Maine to Florida. They also appeared in mountain country—in the White Mountains of New Hampshire, the Berkshires of Massachusetts, the Adirondacks and Catskills of New York.⁹ The Poconos were particularly fortunate, being able to tap both the New York and Philadelphia markets. They were also fortunate because logging and tanning had not eroded the region's natural beauty; a second growth of trees had covered the denuded areas. The lakes, the winding streams, and the waterfalls continued to charm and attract visitors.¹⁰

The first Pocono hotels had served travelers, lumberjacks, tanners, and raftmen. They evolved into inns for fishermen and hunters, where city men could "rough it" in masculine camaraderie. The Criswell House in 1876 advertised choice cigars and fine liquors. One fisherman in 1942 recalled the primitive conditions in Barrett Township's Albert House: bathing with pitchers of cold water and dipping into the creek. Below the swimming hole, signs "men" and "women" separated the

⁸ William Frederick Dix, "American Summer Resorts in the Seventies," *The Independent* 70 (1911), 1211-15.

⁹ Foster Rhea Dulles, *A History of Recreation: America Learns to Play* (New York, 1965), 148-53, 201-3.

¹⁰ John W. Harshberger, "Nature and Man in the Pocono Mountain Region of Pennsylvania," *Geographical Society of Philadelphia Bulletin* 13 (1915), 66.



The Kittatinny Hotel overlooked the Delaware River. Antoine Dutot started building Delaware Water Gap's first resort hotel in 1829. Later owners expanded the Kittatinny. The Brodhead brothers razed it in 1892, erecting the building seen in this photo. The Kittatinny was past its prime when gutted by fire in 1931. Courtesy of Monroe County Historical Association.

facilities.¹¹ More important than the hunting-fishing crowd was the family trade. Philadelphians of both sexes were first reported at the village of Delaware Water Gap in 1820. But although the Kittatinny, the first of the village's resort hotels, opened in 1832, the stagecoach journey was tedious. The resort era had to await the coming of the railroads in the 1850s.¹²

After the Civil War, comfortable hotels and boardinghouses appeared in the Delaware Valley or Minisink, the forty-two-mile strip along the meandering Delaware River from Port Jervis to Delaware Water Gap. The southern two-fifths were in Monroe County; the rest

¹¹ Charles Thompson, "History of Creeks Adjacent to Bright Creek," unpublished memoir, 1944 (MCHS).

¹² Robert B. Keller, *History of Monroe County, Pennsylvania* (Stroudsburg, 1927), 264-66.

in Pike. The Delaware Valley was part of the foothills rather than the Pocono Mountains proper. Not heights but waterfalls, lakes, rolling terrain, irregular brooks, and mountain laurel attracted city people. An added bonus was bathing and boating in the Delaware River. The biggest draw was outside the village of Delaware Water Gap, and it was the gap itself, an opening in the Blue Ridge Mountains for the Delaware River. In an age when natural phenomena such as Niagara Falls were often the only tourist attractions, when people traveled for miles to see a sunset, when travel brochures advertised common streams as though they were mighty torrents, the gap was worth seeing. Nonetheless, by 1914 growth was ending in the Minisink.¹³ Referring to Milford's resorts, a travel writer of the 1920s suggested the best days were long past.¹⁴ Vacationers were preferring the Pocono Mountains proper where the newer resorts were increasingly located.

The Poconos were not mentioned in a travel guide written after the Civil War.¹⁵ The take-off period, when Pocono resorts became a major business, occurred roughly the two decades after 1888. Alfred Mathews in his history of the Poconos (1888) listed 55 hotels and boardinghouses in Monroe County.¹⁶ In 1909 over 200 hotels and boardinghouses advertised in the Lackawanna promotional booklet. In addition, Pike County had 139 places in 1906.¹⁷ Wayne County had a handful. Its soil was richer, and its farmers had less incentive to change occupations. Not until the 1930s did Wayne County contribute to the Pocono vacation economy.

Although the years of the take-off coincided with the decline of the earlier primary industries, lumbering and tanning did not leave without traces. Some of the men they had enriched invested in resorts. For example, Ike Stauffer, lumberman and so-called king of the Poconos,

¹³ William F. Henn, *The Story of the River Road: Life Along the Delaware from Bushkill to Milford, Pike County, Pa.* (Dingmans Ferry, 1975); Roger Dunning, "Growth and Variety of Monroe County Resorts," unpublished manuscript, n.d. (MCHS).

¹⁴ Tyson, *The Poconos*, 65.

¹⁵ John B. Bachelder, *Popular Resorts, and How to Reach Them* (Boston, 1874).

¹⁶ Alfred Mathews, *History of Wayne, Pike, and Monroe Counties, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1886).

¹⁷ Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad, *Mountain and Lake Resorts on the Lackawanna Railroad* (New York, 1909). For Pike County, see George F. Fluhr, *Pike County: Highlights of History in Northeastern Pennsylvania* (Shohola, 1975), 11.

and his daughter opened the Laurel Inn.¹⁸ Henry Price of the Mountain House was the son of a lumberman, who had bought 1,100 acres of choice timberland in Barrett Township, erected a saw mill, and rafted his lumber down the Delaware River. With the profits, he erected fine buildings and cleared a farm. Henry assisted his father, fought in the Civil War, made Wintergreen oil for about five years, and finally erected a hotel on his father's land. Samuel Peters of the Gonzales House in Bushkill was the son of another farmer-lumberman. He built his hotel in the 1870s on the old homestead where he had been born and reared.

In some cases, money from the primary industries financed urban educations for children who eventually turned to innkeeping. Before 1900 the second largest place in Pike County was the High Falls Hotel in Dingmans Ferry. Its founder was Dr. Philip F. Fulmer, the son of an entrepreneur who was a shopkeeper, tanner, and banker. After graduating from Lafayette College and the University of Pennsylvania Medical School, Dr. Fulmer returned home, practiced medicine, and ran the tannery. In 1866 he bought an inn with seventeen bedrooms, which he enlarged for 200 guests. The well-educated Fulmer was quite successful in bringing the hotel to the attention of city people. In 1881 an observer noted the heavy patronage of clergymen and physicians.¹⁹

Before World War I, the New Spruce Cabin Inn was one of the largest in Barrett Township, and the only one that served liquor. Its owners were the Price brothers, Wesley and Milton, sons of a leading lumberman and rafter. Wesley had been educated in public and private schools. Milton had worked in New York City for a drug firm. In 1887 they erected a boardinghouse on the old homestead for wealthy New Yorkers, who came to fish and hunt.²⁰

Nineteenth-century Pocono innkeepers were usually natives of the region. The Brodhead family, who owned the two fanciest hotels in Delaware Water Gap (the Kittatinny and the Water Gap House),

¹⁸ Emma LaBarre Miller Waygood, *Changing Times in the Poconos: 1882-1972* (Bethlehem, 1972), 68.

¹⁹ "High Falls Hotel," *Mountain Echo*, Sept. 3, 1881.

²⁰ Biographical detail in *Commemorative Biographical Record of Northeastern Pennsylvania* (Chicago, 1900).

traced their Pocono origins to the eighteenth century. Other old families still prominent today, such as Price, Huffman, and Peters, ran some of the early places. After the turn of the century, outsiders became more important as innkeepers, especially in the larger establishments. John Purdy Cope, who owned the Water Gap House until it burnt in 1915 and then purchased the Kittatinny, came from Atlantic City. Arthur Lederer, a New York shipper, catered to German Americans in his Forest Park. Struck by anti-German paranoia, Forest Park closed during the war. Afterward, Lederer sold the buildings and some of the land to the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU), which created Unity House. Another thousand acres was sold to the Socialist Peoples' Educational Camp Society, which erected Tamiment Camp. The most famous outsider was probably C.C. Worthington, retired industrialist and builder of Buckwood Inn, who in 1913 helped to launch the Professional Golfers Association. By the 1930s, few of the typical Pocono names appeared in the hotel listings. One economic trait that remained constant through all these years was individual ownership. According to the 1923 edition of *Hotel*, multiple ownership was rare. Large chains were absent in the Poconos.²¹

Intense competition marked the resort business. Entry was easy, especially at the low end. A farmer with extra rooms could take in city people during the summer. His wife and children could attend to the guests while he continued to till the soil. In the 1910 census, owners of eighteen boardinghouses in Barrett Township identified themselves as "farmers."²² Even larger places, resort-hotels as opposed to farmers' boardinghouses, did not have prohibitive start-up expenses. Whether small or large, all could advertise in the Lackawanna Railroad's promotional booklets. First printed in the 1890s, these booklets, with their pictures and blurbs, made the consumer aware of the wide range of choices.

Local competition aside, the Pocono resorts had competition in other states. As early as 1881, local promoter Jesse Graves admitted in the

²¹ For Cope, see Elizabeth D. Walters, "The Kittatinny: Pioneer Summer Resort of Monroe County, Pennsylvania," unpublished manuscript, 1968 (MCHS); for Lederer, "Union Workers' Summer Spa Built Into Resort Complex," *Pocono Record*, March 3, 1969; for Worthington, see Dunning, "Growth and Variety of Monroe County Resorts."

²² U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the Population (1910)*, Pennsylvania: Monroe County, microfilm reel T624-1376 (National Archives).



The Cliff View Cottage was in Cresco in the Pocono Mountains proper. Its turn-of-the-century owners farmed and took in summer guests. What differentiated the Cliff View from other boardinghouses was its scenic double veranda. The Cliff View was operating in the 1970s. The building still stands today. Original is a color post card. Courtesy of Monroe County Historical Association.

Mountain Echo, a booster newspaper, that tourists could find greater attractions elsewhere. The Caldono waterfalls were no Niagara, the Delaware River no Atlantic Ocean, he wrote. Nor did Mt. Minsi compare to New Hampshire's Mt. Washington. But instead of "excess," Graves added, the Poconos, especially the Delaware Water Gap area, had variety. Moreover, he bragged, the air was healthy, and mosquitoes and malaria were absent—probably a slap at the Jersey shore.²³

After the turn of the century, when consumer tastes shifted to the Pocono Mountains proper, the lack of "excess" remained a problem. Mountains only by courtesy, the Poconos can be better described as a

²³ Editorial, *Mountain Echo*, July 9, 1881.

high tableland. The highest points stand only about 2,000 feet above sea level. The visitor who looks for lofty vistas will find New York's Adirondacks far more impressive, Vermont's Green Mountains more scenic.

Local boosters compensated with hyperbole. In a pamphlet (1930) celebrating the founding of the Stroudsburgs, the author called the Poconos the American rival to Switzerland and the water gap the "eighth wonder of the world."²⁴ The famous Baedeker's travel guide had less enthusiasm. Its 1893 edition omitted the Poconos altogether from its list of mountain resort areas and gave the Delaware Water Gap resorts an unimpressive half page. The 1909 edition was similar, except for an additional page on the Delaware Valley resorts in Pike County.²⁵

Of course, man-made objects could always make people forget nature's shortcomings. After the Civil War, immense hotels were built at older seaside resorts such as Long Branch and Cape May and also at the inland resorts of Saratoga and the White Mountains. In the Poconos, smaller Victorian structures—with their panoply of turrets, gables, verandas, and mansard roofs—appeared. Cute and charming, they lent a distinctive flavor to Mt. Pocono Township, where many were found. Made of local wood, most have long since burnt to the ground. By contrast, in the 1920s, Atlantic City and the Catskills had hotels twice the size of anything in the Poconos.²⁶ Those who equated quality with size would have been disappointed in Pocono resorts.

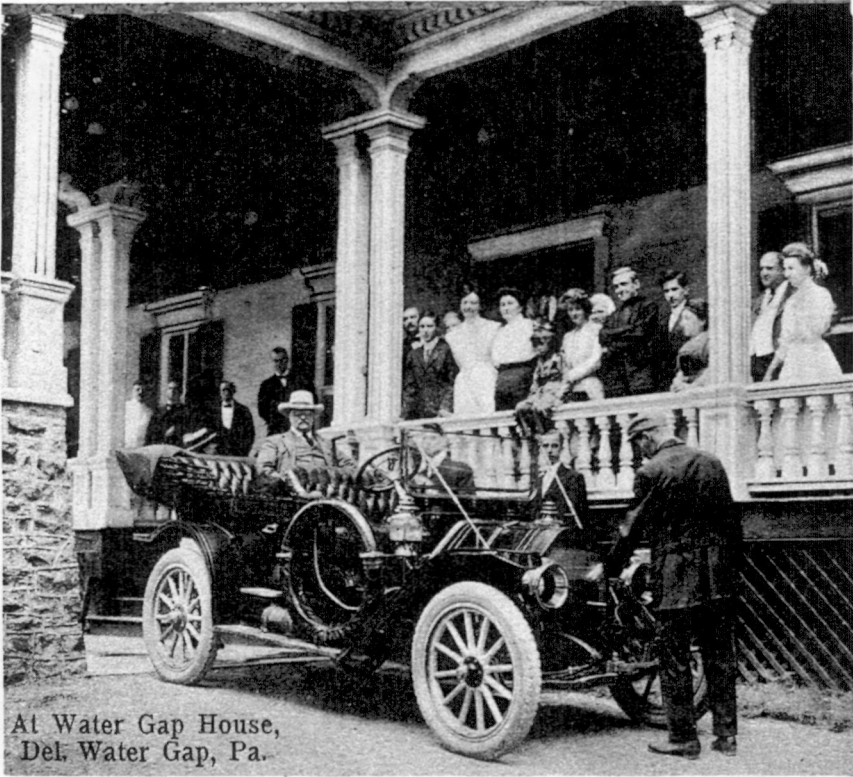
Winter sports came to the Poconos around the time of World War I. By the 1930s, skiing, winter carnivals, and hockey games were routine. Yet snow fell irregularly. The Poconos could not compete with New England and upper New York State until after 1945 with the introduction of artificial snow.²⁷

²⁴ R.E. Kintner, *History of Monroe County and the Stroudsburgs As It Is Today* (Stroudsburg, 1930), 25.

²⁵ Karl Baedeker, ed., *The United States . . . A Handbook for Travelers, 1893* (New York, 1893). The 1909 edition was published in Leipzig.

²⁶ Howard Johnson, ed., *United States and Canada Hotel Book* (Baltimore, 1923); Rinhart and Rinhart, *Summertime*, 24.

²⁷ Ian Ackroyd-Kelly, "The Near Country: The Historical Geography of the Pocono Resorts," *Pennsylvania Geographer* 25 (1987), 22.



At Water Gap House,
Del. Water Gap, Pa.

Former president Theodore Roosevelt stopped at the Water Gap House on August 2, 1910, while driving through Pennsylvania. Opened by Luke Brodhead in 1872 and rebuilt by John Purdy Cope in 1908, the Water Gap House was the area's leading hotel when fire destroyed it on November 12, 1915. Original is a post card. Courtesy of Monroe County Historical Association.

America's countryside has often attracted artists. In Bar Harbor, Maine, artists arrived first, publicized the scenery, and in the 1850s summer tourists were coming regularly.²⁸ The Hudson River School of the early nineteenth century did much to publicize the Catskills. Important summer colonies of artists grew up in Connecticut at the Cos Cob School, and at Stockbridge and Lenox in the Berkshires.²⁹ Hundreds of painters and artists flocked to the White Mountains. The

²⁸ Savage, "Bar Harbor: A Resort is Born," 11-13.

²⁹ Richard Guy Wilson, "Nineteenth-Century American Resorts and Hotels," in Wilson, ed., *Victorian Resorts and Hotels* (Philadelphia, 1982), 18.

more successful artists often resided at the hotels, an integral part of the hotels' attraction.³⁰ In this climate of nature worship, the Delaware Water Gap was not forgotten. But too few artists came to make a school.

Cleveland Amory in his retrospective look at the great society resorts says nothing of the Poconos. America's gilded elite and their camp followers went to Newport, Long Branch, Saratoga, Tuxedo Park. The splendor and vulgarity of the gilded age—huge summer mansions, bejeweled women, men with diamond-studded tie pins—were foreign to the Poconos. Nor did the Poconos offer "sin." At Saratoga, a race track was laid out in the mid-1860s and a gambling house built in 1870. Gambling was legal at Long Branch until 1897. The nearby Monmouth Park race track never closed down. The press in 1910 reported an illegal gambling den for swells at Narragansett.³¹ By contrast, the Poconos were saintly.

The obvious attractions of the Poconos were the location, the weather, and the scenery. Only a few hours from New York and Philadelphia, the Poconos are 10 to 15 degrees cooler in temperature. The climate is among the driest in the eastern United States. Still another attraction is the subtle beauty. Travel writers have noted the beauty of the mountain laurel and rhododendron and the charm of the winding mountain paths and the many streams and brooks.³² In sum, the Pocono region was pretty, pleasant, and convenient, but not spectacular. To attract potential travelers, the Poconos needed some promotion.

As early as the 1870s, various Pocono individuals and interests tried to spur travel to the region by writing about the natural beauty and repose of the Poconos. In 1870 Luke Brodhead published *The Delaware Water Gap, Its Scenery, Its Legends and Early History*. Owner of the Kittatinny Hotel, which overlooked the Delaware River, Brodhead portrayed the water gap as mysterious and awe-inspiring. He wrote of

³⁰ Donald Keyes, ed., *The White Mountains: Place and Perceptions* (Hanover, 1980), 54-55.

³¹ Cleveland Amory, *The Last Resorts* (New York, 1952); "Dread Exposure," *Daily Record*, Aug. 8, 1910.

³² Amy Oakley, *Our Pennsylvania: Keys to the Keystone State* (New York, 1950), 139-46; Wallace Nutting, *Pennsylvania Beautiful* (Framingham, 1924), 72; Tyson, *The Poconos*, 110-11.

young guests who teased about love, searched for Indian relics, went on carriage rides, and visited scenic sites. More lasting was the *Mountain Echo*, a tourist journal born in 1879 and surviving until the early 1920s. Distributed to seashore resorts, urban information bureaus, advertisers, and vacationers, it contained ads, local history, names of guests, and their amusements. It projected the image of guests having a wonderful time. During the 1880s, the *Mountain Echo*'s frequent references to single young ladies and dancing made Delaware Water Gap resorts seem like a center for Victorian swingers.

Both the Erie and the Lackawanna Railroads publicized the Poconos in passenger booklets with slick compendia of pictures, enticing prose, and practical information on the resorts. The Lackawanna publicity was occasionally fanciful. In 1900 it published the *Sculpture of the Elfs*, a tale of the elfin king who created the Poconos and its beauties for his bride. A reference to Rip Van Winkle on the first page suggests a belated attempt to create an aura for the Poconos like the one long enjoyed by New York's rival Catskills. The epilogue was down-to-earth. Aside from the usual scenic pictures and overblown descriptions, it saw virtues in the relatively low mountains, claiming they would not increase nervous conditions, while curing throat and chest troubles.³³

The Buffalo Exposition of 1901 drew business from the Poconos; the following year saw the founding of the Monroe County Mountain Resort Association. It remained under the tutelage of the Lackawanna Railroad, which paid for most of the ads in New York and Philadelphia newspapers until World War I, when government regulations stopped railroads from advertising.³⁴ In the 1920s, a publicity bureau under a full-time director, William Caley, distributed maps and brochures, sent news releases to urban newspapers, and promoted sports. Golf and tennis tournaments, speed boat races, and winter sports became annual events. In 1930 the publicity bureau sponsored a commemora-

³³ Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad, *Sculpture of the Elfs: A Story of the Delaware Water Gap and Pocono Mountains* (Chicago, 1900), 1-15. The last Lackawanna Pocono booklet that the author is aware of was published in 1940.

³⁴ "Resort Keepers Organize," *Stroudsburg Times*, May 1, 1902; "Resorts Keepers Meeting," *ibid.*, Oct. 23, 1902; "Resort Owners Plan For A Big Season," *Morning Press*, March 27, 1918.

tion of Stroudsburg's founding and held the first horse show; in later years, it sponsored the Laurel Queen pageants.³⁵

A chronic lack of funds bedeviled the publicity campaigns for the Poconos. Pennsylvania was one of the few states that did not promote tourism. By contrast, as early as 1868 the state of Florida was promoting itself. In the 1890s, Vermont's Department of Agriculture tried to attract summer tourists, and in 1911 the Vermont legislature established a bureau of publicity. In the early 1930s, New York was spending \$10 million on promotion. Pennsylvania lagged far behind. Because Pocono tourism was peripheral to the state's highly industrialized economy, local innkeepers found it difficult to persuade the state legislature to promote the region. In December 1932, the Monroe County Chamber of Commerce asked the state legislature to allow counties to levy a tax for local advertising. It noted that St. Petersburg, Florida, had recently raised \$200,000 by such a method.³⁶ The Chamber of Commerce failed, later asking the public for donations to pay for publicity booklets. In the summer of 1933, after the National Weather Service stopped reporting Pocono temperatures to cities, hotelmen paid for this publicity themselves.

The lack of an appropriate slogan or nickname for the region also discouraged promotion. In 1910 "Boom Monroe" was floated as a slogan and soon forgotten. More successful was calling the Poconos a "playground"—a label that often appeared in promotional literature before World War I. By the 1920s, the Poconos had become the "picturesque playground." In 1931 the Mountain Resort Association decided this was too long and coined "Skyland Resorts," another fiasco.³⁷ After World War II, the apparently permanent and apt nickname of "the Near Country" came into usage.

The region also needed a distinctive name, for before the 1930s "Poconos" was used in its strict sense for the Pocono Mountains proper.

³⁵ Keller, *History of Monroe County*, 226-27; Kintner, *History of Monroe County and the Stroudsburgs*, 61.

³⁶ "Hotel Owners To Advertise Resorts Here," *The Record*, May 7, 1932; "Few Resort Owners Aid County Survey," *ibid.*, Dec. 16, 1932; Paul S. George, "Passage to the New Eden: Tourism in Miami From Flagler Through Everest G. Sewell," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 59 (1981), 440-63; Andrea Rebek, "The Selling of Vermont: From Agriculture to Tourism," *Vermont History* 44 (1976), 14-27.

³⁷ "Boom Monroe Is Now Slogan," *Daily Record*, March 10, 1910; "Hotels of County To Be Known As Skyland Resorts," *ibid.*, April 30, 1931.

Pre-World War I ads in the *New York Times* advertised "Pennsylvania Mountains, the Stroudsburgs, Delaware Water Gap." The problems were obvious. "Pennsylvania Mountains" could apply to any high spot in Pennsylvania. "Delaware Water Gap" might be confused with the state of Delaware; "Stroudsburg" confused with any of the hundred or so place-names in Pennsylvania that end with "burg." In 1931 a resident wrote to a local newspaper that outsiders were starting to refer to the whole area as the "Poconos." Luke Brodhead's granddaughter responded that "Poconos" was geographically inaccurate, the water gap being in the Blue Ridge chain. Regardless of what purists might have thought, the use of the term "Poconos" for the whole region gained greater currency in the 1930s.³⁸

In the end, the development of the region depended on neither slogans nor nicknames; rather, the real appeal of the Poconos lay in the particular niche it occupied, a point rooted in its social structure. Having no coal mines and few factories, the Poconos attracted few of the eastern and southern Europeans that filled much of Pennsylvania. Monroe County was conservative, wary of new ideas, and strongly nativist.³⁹ At the turn of the century, the county had a homogeneous and "old-stock American" cast. Indeed, the 1900 census reported that less than 4 percent of Monroe County's people were foreign-born.

The Poconos aimed at a clientele that was middle-class, northern European, refined but not stuffy. Unlike Ocean Grove, the Methodist resort on the New Jersey shore, the Poconos did not ban liquor, close on Sunday, or frown on dancing and card playing.⁴⁰ Yet the crass would have been bored. They would have missed Niagara Falls's circus atmosphere of acrobats and traveling fakirs. They would have sighed for the glitter of Atlantic City, famed for its outlandish amusements as well as its brassy bars and brothels. Atlantic City was a new town. Created by Philadelphia businessmen after the Civil War, it had no staid traditions. Its residents had all come from elsewhere to seek

³⁸ Letters to Editor, *ibid.*, May 7 and 12, 1931.

³⁹ It was perhaps no accident that the county produced A. Mitchell Palmer, U.S. Attorney General during the Red Scare of 1919. On Palmer's Monroe County roots, see Stanley Coben, *A. Mitchell Palmer: Politician* (New York, 1963), 7-8.

⁴⁰ Charles Parker, "Ocean Grove, New Jersey: Queen of the Victorian Methodist 'Camp Meeting' Resorts," *Nineteenth Century* 9 (1984), 19-25; Wilson, *Story of the Jersey Shore*, 51.

their fortunes. Although Atlantic City occasionally went through the motions of being respectable, virtue and propriety invariably lost out to vulgarity.⁴¹ By contrast, a Wilkes-Barre reporter wrote in 1895 that he liked the Poconos because he had little to do except enjoy nature and take walks.⁴²

The Poconos had a concern for its social climate. Another reason for the founding of the Monroe County Mountain Resort Association in 1902 had been to exclude tuberculosis patients. The resort men did not want the public to associate the Poconos with sickness, and they succeeded. Few sanitariums located there.⁴³ Other undesirables were allegedly low-class people. The *Times-Democrat* once noted that the region was morally clean and that resort proprietors were honest and God-fearing. In a publicity brochure of 1922, the Milford Chamber of Commerce bragged of the absence of "clap-trap cheap amusements" and of anything "vulgar or shoddy." Blue laws on Sunday amusements and gambling were enforced. In 1929 two New York City women were arrested in Stroudsburg for wearing shorts.⁴⁴

Xenophobia was not uncommon. Turn-of-the-century newspapers referred to white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant strangers by name. Immigrants remained anonymous aliens—for example, "Poles" or "Jews" with "unpronounceable names." Italians were "dagoes." A local Italian was once described as having "more than the usual intelligence of the people of his nationality" and his wife as being "much more attractive than most women of her nationality." In 1909 the Lackawanna Railroad used Italian immigrants at its local stone-crushing quarry. More than once, the *Daily Record* complained about the "dagoes" fighting, gambling, drinking, and making passes at local women.⁴⁵ When New York City's Alfred Smith ran for president in

⁴¹ Charles E. Funnell, *By the Beautiful Sea: The Rise and High Times of That Great American Resort, Atlantic City* (New York, 1975).

⁴² "A Place of Rest," *Stroudsburg Daily Times*, Aug. 30, 1895.

⁴³ "Resort Keepers Organize," *Stroudsburg Times*, Jan. 16, 1902.

⁴⁴ "Monroe County As A Health Resort," *Times-Democrat Christmas Number*, 1915; Milford Chamber of Commerce, *Milford and Its Environment Including All of Pike County, Pennsylvania* (Milford, 1922); "Shorts Appear On Highways Of East Borough," *The Record*, July 31, 1930.

⁴⁵ See, for example, "Foreigners' Strike Of Short Duration," *Daily Record*, July 1, 1909; "Tony Liga Is On Trial For His Life," *ibid.*, Sept. 26, 1911; and "Nettie Liga Is Afraid Of Italians," *ibid.*, Sept. 28, 1911.

1928, the *Morning Sun* constantly identified the Democrat with big city corruption. Monroe County had never voted for a Republican presidential candidate, not even Lincoln, but in 1928 it preferred Herbert Hoover. Generally, New York City was seen as the home of corrupt Tammany Hall and of "garlic-eating aliens."⁴⁶ Some of this hostility was no more than culture clash, a fear of the seemingly wicked behavior of the "foreigners." In an age when the very respectable neither drank nor gambled, the "foreigners" supposedly did both and did it noisily. They obviously were not Methodist men.

Not coincidentally, before World War II Poconos innkeepers invariably had northern European names, the exceptions being the Italians of Canadensis village in Barrett Township and the Bushkill Jews. The Caprioli, the Brentini, the Comazzi, and the Tambella families catered mostly to northern Italians, providing their particular cuisine of polenta and gnocchi. Primo Carnera (the boxer) and Vincente Minelli (the director) are remembered as guests. Whatever old-stock Americans may have felt, money made for understanding. When the Comazzis purchased Villa Brentini in 1918, they depended on a local merchant who gave credit in the winter and was repaid in the summer.⁴⁷

Likewise, economics made for toleration of the few Jewish places. Although ostensibly secular, both Unity House and Tamiment had a Jewish flavor. The ILGWU that operated Unity House for its members was mostly Jewish. In the 1920s, it advertised Unity House only in Yiddish publications.⁴⁸ Tamiment Camp had a socialist orientation, but New York City socialists were usually Jews. Ben Josephson, the Romanian immigrant, who ran Tamiment until its sale in 1965, later recalled the neighbors' ostracism in the 1920s. But both resorts contributed to local charities, purchased from local merchants, and in general boosted the economy. After World War II Josephson became a director of a Stroudsburg bank.⁴⁹ A smaller Jewish resort was the Bushkill

⁴⁶ "Gotham, A Summer Resort," *The Record*, April 8, 1931.

⁴⁷ Lawrence and Clotilda Wile, interview with author, Feb. 22, 1989.

⁴⁸ Morris Sigman to George Oliver, June 24, 1927, Collection #6, Box 6, ILGWU Archives (Cornell University).

⁴⁹ "Ben Josephson Reminiscences," transcripts of tapes recorded in Spring 1976, Box 3, Ben Josephson Papers, Tamiment Collection (Bobst Library, New York University) (hereafter, Tamiment Collection).

Falls Villa, operated by the Friedman brothers and advertising Jewish cuisine.

Anti-Semitism was most vividly reflected in the restricted policies of the gentile resorts. Before World War I, occasional ads noted that Jews were unacceptable. In 1906 a Delaware Water Gap resort added insult to the proverbial injury by advertising in the phone directory that it was "Free from Hebrews and tuberculosis patients."⁵⁰ In the 1930s, anti-Semitism became more pronounced with many places noting their Christian-only policy. According to ads in the Lackawanna booklets, twenty-three resorts were "restricted" in 1939, double the figure for 1933. In fact, the real number of "restricted" places was higher, because some were less blatant in their bias. A former employee of a resort that did not openly discriminate told the author of an unofficial quota for Jews. Of course, anti-Semitism was by no means a Pocono phenomenon. Many resorts elsewhere also banned Jews.

Christian churches were strong in the Poconos. Victorian social life revolved around their varied activities. Church-sponsored picnics, excursions, lectures, and fairs also had the effect of defining the boundaries of tasteful fun. Presbyterians, Lutherans, and especially Methodists were very active. Among Victorian Americans, Methodists were probably the most opposed to drinking, gambling, dancing, and theater-going. It was no accident that Barrett Township, a Methodist bastion, had only one resort that served alcohol.⁵¹

Moral control of the resorts was not difficult because the industry was dominated by native resortmen who answered to their small-town neighbors. Outside owners and leaseholders stayed only during the summer and probably were too busy to socialize. Besides this social constriction, liquor was the key to control, for its absence would discourage prostitution and gambling. Most resorts did not serve it. In 1911 only sixty-six establishments in Monroe County, including restaurants and bars, sold alcohol. The community kept these places in line by threatening to revoke their licenses for any violations of local norms. The active temperance movement would have gone further. One headline in the *Daily Record* read "Liquor Traffic Scored.

⁵⁰ "Advertisement Vexes Jews," *New York Times*, June 18, 1906.

⁵¹ Appel, *History of Monroe County*, 117-21.

Prominent W.C.T.U. Worker Held Large Audience at Court House for Hour and Half.”⁵²

Temperance propaganda was not aimed at the resorts, but at local residents. Yet, whether the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) realized it or not, a dry Poconos likely would have been less profitable. Prohibition would have made the Poconos a country version of Ocean Grove, New Jersey, or Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, Methodist seashore resorts that specialized in ultra-clean fun. The Poconos would have been too staid, and many knew it. Locally elected judges decided on liquor licenses, and they tried to effect a compromise that would keep alcohol while firmly supervising its sale and consumption. In 1911 Judge C.B. Staples publicly stated that well-supervised, licensed places were preferable to prohibition, though he also conceded that wives often wrote that husbands were spending their earnings in bars. He warned that he would “summarily” deal with houses that did not meet the law’s requirements. Later in the same year, he warned hotel keepers to refuse liquor to minors and to the intoxicated.⁵³

The judge was not orating to satisfy anxious housewives and the WCTU. In March 1911, he revoked the license of the Maple Grove House in Bushkill, one of the better-known places, which had catered largely to the summer crowd. At a court session, many witnesses claimed that it had sold liquor on Sunday “to minors and to men of known intemperate habits and also that there had been gambling on the premises.”⁵⁴

Another means to contain “sin” was refusing new liquor licenses—the rule for several years before the war. Aside from the expected opposition of the WCTU and local clergymen, owners of “dry” hotels also came out against new licenses. In 1911, when Harrington Mills on behalf of the new Buckwood Inn at Shawnee applied for a license, I.R. Transue and H.A. Croasdale, who both came from old families and ran dry places, testified they saw no need. Although Mills had a long record as a hotel manager in Washington and elsewhere, and

⁵² “Liquor Traffic Roundly Scored,” *Daily Record*, Oct. 14, 1910; “Five New Applications For Licenses,” *ibid.*, Feb. 28, 1911.

⁵³ “All New Licenses Have Been Refused,” *ibid.*, March 28, 1910; “Hotel Keepers Given Warning,” *ibid.*, Dec. 24, 1910.

⁵⁴ “Bushkill Hotel License Revoked,” *ibid.*, March 31, 1911.

although the Buckwood's owner was C.C. Worthington, who had lived in the area for more than a decade and who was an international businessman with plants in four countries, the court was not impressed. It denied the license. John Purdy Cope of the fancy Water Gap House also asked for a license. Luke Brodhead, who had built the Water Gap House, had stipulated in his will that it remain forever dry. Cope argued that circumstances had changed. The court did not agree.⁵⁵

In 1919 America's dry forces won the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution. But soon the nation had second thoughts, and the Poconos were no exception. Faced with a hollow victory, local Prohibitionists formed the Law Observance League, which in 1924 issued *The Monroe Citizen*, a periodical that denounced bootlegging, corruption, and moral decline, and associated alcohol with interracial sexual union. One issue complained of the white women in Stroudsburg who deliberately sought black males. These strictures were aimed at the local community, for the resorts seemed to have obeyed the dry laws. The occasional raid did not net any of the established places. In 1932 the county detective closed a house in Analomink, run by a black woman in a manner described as "high, wide, and handsome." Neighbors had called it the "Cotton Club." Whether it was a bordello or an illegal drinking club was not reported, nor is it clear if the complaints against the house stemmed from the alleged goings-on or the color of the owner.⁵⁶ In any case, most resorts had been dry even before Prohibition. If guests wished to drink, they either brought their own liquor or went to local speakeasies.

The Great Depression helped to relax standards. Repeal of Prohibition was popular. Resort interests and the *Record* fought to legalize non-amateur Sunday baseball. The semi-professional games had helped to attract guests, a welcome sight during the early 1930s. When a county-wide referendum favored Sunday baseball, the churches had lost another battle. Even the staid Quaker-run Inn at Buck Hill Falls relaxed, allowing patrons to play bridge. In the 1930s, slot machines

⁵⁵ "Witnesses Heard in Liquor License Case," *ibid.*, March 27, 1911; "No New Licenses In This County," *ibid.*, March 28, 1911. See also Elizabeth D. Walters, "The History of the Water Gap House, 1872-1915," unpublished manuscript, 1969 (MCHS).

⁵⁶ "Resort Ordered Closed," *The Record*, June 17, 1932.

caught the attention of county detectives.⁵⁷ Still, the Poconos remained relatively tame. Pennsylvania's tough liquor laws, which survived until the 1960s, severely curtailed Sunday drinking.

Outside religious groups also contributed to the Pocono image. In 1902 orthodox Quakers from Philadelphia established Pocono Manor. The Hicksite branch of the Quakers established The Inn at Buck Hill Falls in Barrett Township. The Quakers were respectable and socially very conservative. Pocono Manor advertised for people "who prefer comfort and refinement to extravagance and ostentation." Before World War I, Buck Hill forbade liquor, dancing, and card playing. It did not allow automobiles until 1916. Even in 1932, the nadir of the Depression, Buck Hill refused to attract a few extra guests by permitting fireworks on July 4. Many Quakers were rich. Building summer homes—modestly called "cottages"—on the Buck Hill grounds, Quakers were to a large extent responsible for the economic boom in Barrett Township. By 1914 the Buck Hill complex contained some 125 recently built cottages. The following year, a local publication gave its imprimatur, when it boasted that Buck Hill had brought in a very desirable clientele.⁵⁸

If the extent of local press coverage is a reliable guide, The Inn at Buck Hill Falls had become the leading resort of the postwar era. It advertised convention facilities, 300 bedrooms, and a wide range of activities ranging from drama to golf and tennis. Opera singers and symphony chorals entertained. Dancing was now allowed. Buck Hill was big and exclusive, requiring references, preferably from former guests.⁵⁹ The social conservatism, the emphasis on culture and breeding, did not necessarily mean stagnation. The Inn at Buck Hill Falls and Pocono Manor evolved into year-round resorts by pioneering winter sports in the Poconos.

⁵⁷ "Hotel Association To Fight Blue Laws," *ibid.*, Dec. 19, 1932; "Words Without Music," *ibid.*, Dec. 29, 1932; and *ibid.*, Jan. 24 and 26, 1933; and "Monroe County Joins State In Favoring Repeal," *Morning Sun*, Nov. 8, 1933.

⁵⁸ Peggy Bancroft, *Ringed Axes and Rocking Chairs: The Story of Barrett Township* (Mountainhome, 1974), 210-16; George C. Hughes, ed., *The Bells: Ringing the Message of Progress in Monroe County and Tributary Country* (East Stroudsburg, 1915), 84. For Pocono Manor, see *Pocono Inn*, 1907 (n.d.).

⁵⁹ *Convention Facilities of the Inn at Buck Hill Falls* (1930?).

Quaker success inspired imitation. In 1928 some Buck Hill regulars who had tired of its stuffiness opened Skytop Lodge nearby. Skytop was secular, and very exclusive. Even today, it has a rigid dress code. The muscle-shirted Harley-Davidson crowd is not welcome.⁶⁰

Lutherans also built in the Poconos. In 1926 New York City Lutherans of the Missouri Synod established Lutherland in Tobyhanna Township. They chose the site of the Pocono Pines Assembly, a locally inspired Presbyterian resort that had gone bankrupt. Lutherland contained a summer camp for young people, cottages, a hotel, and a convention center. Before the Great Depression, there was a plan for a cross-shaped church with a glass top to shine nightly for airplanes. Other Lutherans built a summer home colony in Paradise Falls.⁶¹

The Great Depression meant hard times. The low point was 1932. The local press with its usual boosterism tried to be optimistic, reporting that the Poconos had had a better season than the shore, the Catskills, and Maine. But instead of the old assertions that attendance records were being broken, there were notices of sheriff's auctions. In reaction to dwindling business, Pike County's resorts tried to prevent private homes from offering accommodations. In October, a columnist in the *Record* concluded that Pike County had its worst season on record. Pike County's Chamber of Commerce was moribund, abandoned by 90 percent of the boardinghouses and hotels.⁶² Monroe County's Chamber could no longer pay the salary of its executive secretary. Buck Hill ran a deficit and cut salaries by 25 percent. Camp Tamiment lost money on its dining and lodging facilities. It refinanced its mortgage to reduce its liabilities. Many resorts advertised price reductions.⁶³

Nevertheless, the Poconos remained obsessed with standards. The increased restrictions on Jews might have been an attempt to imitate

⁶⁰ Oakley, *Our Pennsylvania*, 146; Tyson, *The Poconos*, 101; William Malleon, interview with author, June 19, 1989.

⁶¹ Waygood, *Changing Times in the Poconos*, 44-48; Keller, *History of Monroe County*, 45-67; the Reverend George Ammon, interview with author, July 13, 1989; the Reverend Rudolph Ressimyer, interview with author, July 19, 1989.

⁶² "Resort Season Here Better Than Shore, The Catskills Or Maine," *The Record*, Sept. 28, 1932; "Pike County News," *ibid.*, Oct. 3 and 29, 1932.

⁶³ "Report of Camp Tamiment to People's Educational Camp Society, 1932," Box 2, Folder 6, Tamiment Collection. For Buck Hill, see Edward Jenkins, interview with author, July 28, 1988.

the genteel anti-Semitism of the great society resorts.⁶⁴ Publicity took on a highbrow air. In 1930 the Monroe County Publicity Bureau and the Chamber of Commerce sponsored the first annual Pocono Horse Show. The Poconos were not horse country; horses and judges came from elsewhere. The only reason for such an event, aside from bringing in business, was to lend the glamour of horse shows to the Poconos.

The next year, the Chamber of Commerce and the Monroe County Publicity Bureau sponsored the Laurel Queen Pageant. This was a clever means to combine a beauty contest—a novelty of the 1920s—with one of the area's great natural assets, the mountain laurel that attracted nature lovers when it bloomed in June. The lack of state funding for publicity meant that expenses were met through ticket sales to the pageant's grand ball. The effect was to give the community indirect control over the event.⁶⁵

The Laurel Queen Pageant was no Atlantic City-style, Miss America contest. To begin, it lacked suspense. A judge no less exalted than Governor Gifford Pinchot himself chose the winner in advance. He picked the daughter of a political crony, a high school senior at a suburban Philadelphia private school. The princesses of her court were college women from across Pennsylvania and adjacent states. Only one attended the local state teachers college. All of the women had northern European names. Quite obviously, the pageant's goal was not to honor native pulchritude, but to publicize the Poconos. The Laurel Queen and her court stayed in the Poconos for about a week, their presence being the pretext for parties, dances, and dinners. But no cheesecake pictures were taken; indeed, photographers were chased from hotel pools when the women were present. The editor of a Stroudsburg newspaper explained that the Poconos differed from Coney Island, obviously meaning that the pageant was not for common types. The grand finale was the crowning of the queen in a field of laurel. The promoters were pleased. They repeated the pageant in the following years, making it more upscale. In the first year, none of the women had been drawn from exclusive schools. In 1936 two contes-

⁶⁴ Amory, *The Last Resorts*, 48.

⁶⁵ *Morning Sun*, July 24-28, 1930, *passim*.

tants were attending Columbia University and the University of Pennsylvania; the queen was a student at Wellesley.⁶⁶

Despite these publicity campaigns, resorts were generally losing popularity because of changes in life styles. By making Americans mobile, the automobile had eroded the habit of staying in one resort for the season. Vacationers could travel around and banish boredom with daily changes of scenery and experiences. In 1930 the *Morning Sun* referred to Delaware Water Gap's decline. Although it gave no reasons, they are easy to see. Delaware Water Gap's resorts were near to each other, to the railway station, and to the Stroudsburgs. These were assets of the pre-automobile age. The Pennsylvania Power and Light Company dealt a major blow in 1924 when it created Lake Wallenpaupack. Boat races once held on the Delaware River were soon moved to the lake. Then came the disaster of the Great Depression. The Lackawanna publicity booklets are telling. The 1917 edition had twenty-five advertisements for Delaware Water Gap resorts. The 1933 edition had nine, and the 1939 had only four.

Even during the darkest days of 1930s depression, the resort economy did not collapse. Monroe County suffered less than other parts of the state because its economic fortunes were not tied exclusively to farming and manufacturing. Within the region, more than one attempt was made to use the resorts as a cushion. To replace unwanted New York and Philadelphia summer labor, a state program trained local residents in resort work. When the ILGWU rebuilt Unity House after a fire, it was asked to use Pocono contractors. In 1933 the union helped a local bank by opening an account.⁶⁷ None of Monroe County's banks failed, although two merged and another avoided collapse through absorption.⁶⁸

The effect on employment was mixed. From the start, the resort economy had meant jobs. The censuses of 1900 and 1910 listed

⁶⁶ *The Record*, May-June, 1931, passim; *Program for Laurel Blossom Time in the Poconos*, June 15-21, 1936.

⁶⁷ Harvey Huffman (a Stroudsburg attorney) to David Dubinsky, Oct. 4 and 11, 1933, Collection #2, Box 171, ILGWU Archives; Huffman to Dubinsky, March 7, 1935, Collection #5, Box 49, *ibid.*, "Words Without Music," *The Record*, Oct. 13, 1931; "Words Without Music," *ibid.*, Feb. 1, 1932.

⁶⁸ Frank B. Michaels, "History of Banking in Monroe County, Pennsylvania," unpublished memoir, 1949 (MCHS).

servants, chambermaids, laborers, and other resort-related “blue-” and “pink-collared” workers. Higher-paid specialists such as musicians and social directors were hired only for the season, and they probably came from the cities—like the guests. The resort economy in fact could not arrest the population decline in Pike County. Summer wages would not support a family. Aside from resort proprietors, locals who gained the most were students who worked summers, housewives who supplemented family income, and the lucky few who were year-round caretakers and maintenance men.

The spillover effects of the resorts were more important. Stroudsburg’s banks provided mortgages and operating capital. Local merchants sold food and supplies. After the turn of the century, when gas lamps and outhouses were obsolete, Stroudsburg firms electrified buildings and installed modern plumbing. In 1928 a still-surviving custom mattress firm started to supply the resorts. In addition, vacationers patronized souvenir shops and outdoor stands. They provided most of the summer income for cinemas, groceries, and gas stations. Moreover, the area’s prestige attracted summer homeowners, causing a rise in real estate values. The construction and maintenance of summer homes provided high-paying jobs. During the building boom in Barrett Township, the number of carpenters had increased from five to thirty-three in a decade. As an added bonus, summer homeowners paid real estate taxes, but used public services only in the summer; their children did not attend local schools.⁶⁹

Ben Josephson once said that women ran the resort business.⁷⁰ Resorts did give opportunities to women. Persons who objected to women in the professions and business often accepted them as resort owners and managers. A fair number of places had women owners, although in many cases they were widows carrying on the family business. In the boardinghouses, wives were co-partners, who looked to the guests, while the husbands ran the farms. If husbands were incompetent, wives ran everything.

Novelties and modern necessities came to the Poconos through the resort economy. They would have come sooner or later. Because of

⁶⁹ Keller, *History of Monroe County*, 368. For statistics on carpenters, see 1900 and 1910 federal censuses. See also Morris Jacobson, interview with author, Dec. 12, 1989.

⁷⁰ See note 49 above.

the resorts, they came sooner. In 1893 the first telephone in the region connected the Peters House in Bushkill with the East Stroudsburg train station. The Brentini boardinghouse had the first phone and the first gas lights in Canadensis. In Cresco, the need to impress city folk led to the painting of houses and the removal of hogs from the streets.⁷¹ Before World War I, local government did little in the way of community improvement. As a result, resort interests led the better road campaign; in Delaware Water Gap they paid to oil streets. City vacationers started the first forest fire association in Monroe County. Likewise, the Barrett Civic Club studied public health, sought to prevent speeding, and erected public signs and street lights. The club's original president and vice-president were the wives of Barrett's leading hotel men.⁷²

In return, the residents gave up little. Elsewhere in Pennsylvania, steel mills and coal mines had required a massive immigration. In the Poconos, change and economic growth did not demand a large, permanent influx of strangers. The smaller, family-owned places relied heavily on relatives or on locals, who often were high school students. Outside help invariably left after the summer. The 1910 census, taken in the spring before the season started, revealed only twenty-six non-family workers in ten Delaware Water Gap resorts.⁷³ In addition, residents controlled the resort proprietors instead of vice versa. Through the publicity campaigns of the 1930s, they reinforced the upright image of the Poconos. A lifelong resident wrote that it was once said that the Poconos catered to "the newly wed and the nearly dead."⁷⁴ But the residents may not have minded. Less business may have been the price for assuring that the Poconos stayed Christian, middle-class, and refined.

In any case, after World War II, the Poconos could not keep up old standards. More Jewish-owned resorts such as Pocmont, Barrow Lodge, and Lynn Lake Lodge opened. The blatant anti-Semitism of the once gentile resorts gradually faded. Tamiment, which had seemed

⁷¹ For the Peters House, see the "telephone" folder in MCHS; for Brentini, see Bancroft, *Ringin' Axes*, 246.

⁷² Bancroft, *Ringin' Axes*, 295-96.

⁷³ See note 22 above.

⁷⁴ Waygood, *Changing Times in the Poconos*.

so anomalous with its Jewish, Socialist, and New York connections, made history of sorts. Its profits helped finance New York City's left-liberal establishment. Its summer shows were the proving ground of the classic 1950s television hit "Your Show of Shows." Danny Kaye, Sid Caesar, Imogene Coca, and Woody Allen performed there early in their careers.

The Poconos have become more democratic. New state parks offer camping and have created the poor man's vacation. The Poconos Speedway (opened in the 1960s) stands in sharp contrast to the horse shows of the 1930s. The honeymoon hotels with their red, heart-shaped bathtubs and Roman baths suggest the vast changes in America and the Poconos since the 1930s. In recent years, attempts have been made to introduce gambling at the resorts. But here residents have drawn the line. As of this writing, their stiff opposition has succeeded in defeating the outside gambling forces. Again, they have tried to avoid the route taken by Atlantic City. Like their grandparents, today's residents believe in protecting their social environment.

East Stroudsburg University

LAWRENCE SQUERI

