

find a better way of life? Those who were complacent and satisfied with their position in life have stayed in Mexico. All the oral histories in the book speak to the courage and resiliency of those *mojados* who entered the United States in search of opportunity.

The stories in and of themselves are compelling. They describe the dangers of crossing the border, of depending on *coyotes* or guides who are interested only in the money. Most of the stories relate the loneliness and sadness of leaving family behind. Not surprisingly, many of the immigrants advise those who would think about immigrating north to reconsider because it is difficult and life in the north is not what it appears to be.

But there is more to these stories than hardship and perseverance. More important are the common themes in these narratives that are never directly stated, but are evident throughout. Indirectly these themes speak to the determination to better oneself with limited resources and opportunities. They speak to the optimism that tomorrow will be better and to the willingness to work hard for a just reward. Most important and evident in almost every interview is an unbending faith in God.

The interviews also reveal a nostalgia for Mexico, while at the same time a comfort in living in the United States. The stories stress the importance of community and family and the patriarchal nature of Latino families, in some cases for better in others for worse. Finally, the stories of second-generation Mexicans show how being raised in the United States contributed to the creation of a generation with a dual identity. Most of the children interviewed exhibit a strong Mexican identity yet are decidedly American in both culture and expression.

It is a pity that the majority of the Latino immigrants who would appreciate this book will in all probability never read it—they are too busy living their lives. And, anyway, they are all too familiar with the story. It will tell them nothing new. Nevertheless, it is invaluable to us because it is our story. It is the story of America and will remind us of things that we should not forget.

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The Face of Decline: The Pennsylvania Anthracite Region in the Twentieth Century. By THOMAS DUBLIN and WALTER LICHT. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005. viii, 275p. Appendices, notes, selected bibliography, index. Cloth, \$65; paper, \$24.95.)

This important book examines the history of the anthracite coal industry of northeastern Pennsylvania from its origins in the eighteenth century through the peak period of World War I to its ultimate decline in the late twentieth century. Employing an impressive array of manuscript and published sources, carefully

supplemented by over one hundred oral interviews and surveys of current and former residents and their children, the authors describe in detail how the mineworkers, their families, and their communities struggled mightily with the decline and collapse of their primary industry. Dublin and Licht argue persuasively that the people of the anthracite industry were failed by their corporate employers, their union (the United Mine Workers of America), and their government. Without much help from the institutional support systems, the mineworkers and their families initiated a number of strategies to cope with economic decline and, in many instances, were able to survive and retool once the mines closed.

This is a superb multidimensional study, which a short review cannot adequately describe. The collapse of the anthracite industry in the late 1940s and 1950s caused many former employees to seek industrial jobs in northern New Jersey or in the Philadelphia area. Some commuted weekly to their jobs while others moved their families near their new employment. Many chose to remain in the anthracite region, experiencing long-term unemployment offset only partially by wives and other family members working at low-wage, nonmining jobs. Children were encouraged by their parents to complete high school and, if possible, to attend college as a condition for securing their livelihood outside the region. Despite being uprooted, the authors reveal somewhat surprisingly that those who departed—whether parents and/or children—stayed diligently connected with their relatives and former hometowns.

With workers and regional economies today facing similar problems of industrial decline, the issue emerges as to what should be the institutional response to the collapse of an area's primary industry. The authors contrast what happened in anthracite with the similar death of the British coal industry. There the militancy of the National Union of Mineworkers along with the mildly socialist policies of government ownership, national welfare, and land-reclamation programs provided meaningful public assistance to miners and their communities, substantially cushioning the shock of mine closings. Other Western European nations likewise assisted their miners with decent social safety nets. Further comparison between the collapse of anthracite and regional and economic decline elsewhere in the United States in recent decades offers some interesting differences, such as the absence in the anthracite region of the chronic poverty that exists in the bituminous coal counties of Appalachia.

In spite of regional differences, one powerful lesson for workers emerges from the examples of industrial and economic collapse in the United States during the past half century. With very few exceptions (notably the auto industry), American workers should not expect much in the way of assistance or support once their jobs disappear. Like their anthracite counterparts of an earlier era, workers today face industrial and regional decline very much on their own.

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