Export: A Patch of Tapestry Out of Coal Country
America. By Helene Smith.

(Greensburg, Pa.: McDonald/Sward Company, 1986. Pp. 227, foreword, bibliography, index, illustrations. $15.99.)

There is little new or different in this volume that would interest scholars of coal-mining communities, yet Helene Smith does present a brief historical fabric of life in a Western Pennsylvania coal town with the general reader in mind. Export, named for the first coal to be exported in the area, was a typical coal-mining community. This volume traces the changes that have occurred in this town from the opening of coal mines to the advent of large-scale mining and the subsequent closing of the mines. Included within this framework are the various people who inhabited the town and made the transition from an agricultural to an industrial society. It is the story of how coal changed people's lives, weaving what Smith calls "a tapestry called Export" (p. 8).

The book is divided into five parts, each one focusing on a period in Export's history. The first part briefly reviews some of the most important elements of Export — coal, transportation, immigrants, and miners — and also explains how coal was created in this particular area. The second part centers on the native inhabitants of Westmoreland County and the waves of white settlers that migrated to the headwaters of Turtle Creek. As is common in local histories, the author laboriously chronicles each founding family's heritage and indicates their contributions to the future community of Export. One early settler, Judge Thomas Mellon, father of banking magnate Andrew Mellon, is important to this study. Smith frequently utilizes quotations from his diary to portray life in Export. In probably the best chapter, "We the People," a second wave of whites arrive in Export. They are immigrants from Europe brought to mine coal. In a general sense, Smith shows how these people came to Export and how they displayed their ethnicity. The third part stresses the creation of a community. One chapter is devoted to the various religious denominations in the town and the evolution of the school system. Another chapter discusses economic developments, particularly the four coal-mining companies that operated in Export, and a view of life and labor for the miners. The fourth part is a detailed examination of a violent and lengthy (sixteen months) county-wide coal miners' strike in 1910 and some of the small businesses that existed following the incorporation of the borough. The fifth part concerns the future of
Export after the closing of the mines. Smith maintains that the community will not die like so many other coal towns; there have been several efforts to maintain a diverse economic base.

There are some problems in this book. This volume was written to help commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of Export in 1987, and it should focus on that community, but much of the book provides general background on immigration, Indians, coal mining, and life in a coal town, to name a few. While these generalities are important, their relationship to a history of Export should be better integrated. Numerous and lengthy quotations disrupt the narrative flow and could be easily paraphrased or avoided. Population figures for the community are not revealed until the last chapter, and there is no attempt to determine the number of European immigrants who came to Export. In addition, there is no mention of the traditional ethnic patches that characterized coal-mining towns. The numerous illustrations supplement the text and help to provide a glimpse of the community, but many are not dated. There is little examination of management's decision to cease mining coal and its economic impact on the town. Despite these shortcomings, this volume will prove useful to the general reader interested in such communities.

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By William H. Pease and Jane H. Pease.


This ambitious and detailed study focuses on Boston and Charleston during the Jacksonian era. The book is topically arranged, contains fifteen chapters, and comprehensively compares activities and institutions in both urban centers: i.e., political life, public policies, municipal institutions, economic and financial environments, class attitudes and structures, and voluntary associations. The authors advance the theses that Bostonians subscribed to the commercial values of the merchant middle-class and that Charlestonians endorsed the value system of plantation society.