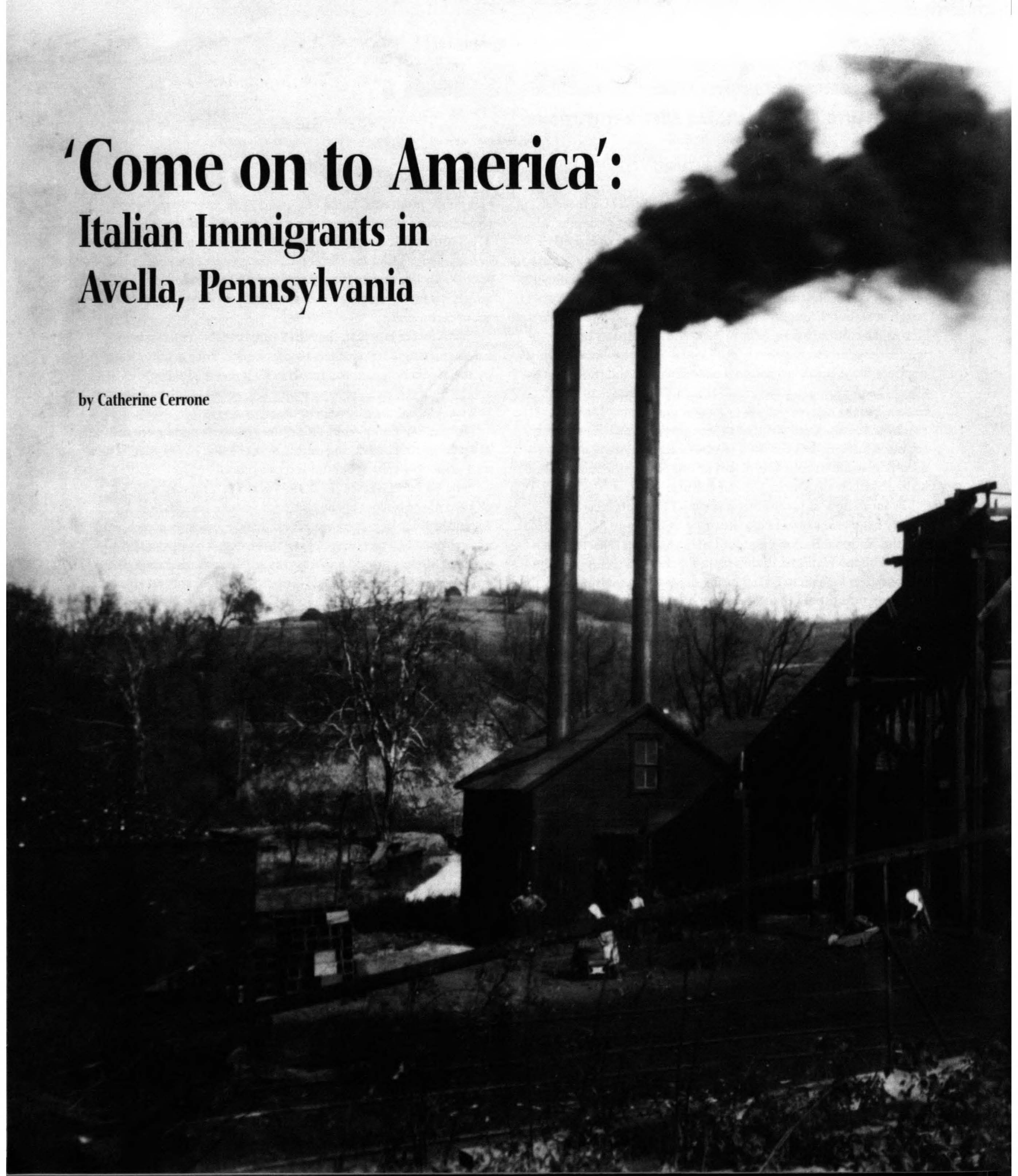



'Come on to America': Italian Immigrants in Avella, Pennsylvania

by Catherine Cerrone





Mother always praised the United States so much: 'Come on to America, you'll see it, how nice it is.' So when I got off here, when we wake up in the morning, I said, 'Let's look over America, and see what it looks like.' So we pull the drape and look out and all we see was a pile of mud!

— Louise (Bogo) Fioroni

LOUISE BOGO was 12 years old when she arrived by train in the coal town of Avella, Pennsylvania. She and her siblings had come from the small village of Belluno, in northern Italy, to join their parents, from whom they had been separated for seven years. Louise's father, typical of many Italian immigrants of the turn of century, had worked on different labor gangs, traveling from town to town, wherever work was available. When he was able to find steady work in Avella as a loader in one of the area's coal mines, he called his wife over from Italy. She helped out by taking in boarders. They could not bring their children over until they had saved enough money to pay their way. Louise recalls arriving in Avella in the spring, "in the night, with a lantern and mud up to your knees."¹

Catherine Cerrone is the Italian-American Program coordinator at the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania. Her research in Avella is part of an ongoing documentation of Italian life in Western Pennsylvania. Many Italians found work in mines such as the Donehoo mine, *left*, closed in 1926 and now the site of a strip mining operation.



Avella-area coal miners, *above*, gather outside a company building. Many nationalities worked side by side — circled in the photo by Dorothy Yurnick Tonini and labeled “Dad,” is Joe Yurnick, of Hungarian extraction. Although different nationalities often lived next door to each other in Avella, *opposite*, the area in the foreground was called Italy Hill due to its concentration of Italian families.

The year was 1907, and Avella — mud streets and all — was a choice destination for hundreds of Italian and Eastern European families like the Bogos, who came mainly to work in area coal mines. This article focuses on Italian immigrant life in Avella, and mainly explores the ways in which those immigrants maintained ties to the “old country” while adapting to the new world around them. It also addresses the factors — both physical and social — that ameliorated a sense of community in Avella, both within the Italian population and among other immigrant groups. Although formal studies of coal-mining towns are numerous, relatively little literature exists on rural Western Pennsylvania coal towns (also called “camps” or “patches”). This scarcity of written documentation about Avella’s post-frontier history as an immigrant community elevates the importance of oral histories and raw census data as principal research tools for this article. Another aspect of the research, one of general concern to many scholars in their studies of immigrants, is that only people who remained in the region could be interviewed. The experiences of those immigrants who returned to Italy, or who moved far away, could not be taken into account.²

Avella, in Washington County, has a population today of about 1,300.³ It lies in the Cross Creek Valley next to the West Virginia border, about 40 miles southwest of Pittsburgh, partly in Cross Creek Township and partly in Independence Township. It was originally settled by Englishman Alexander Wells in 1772, and soon after by other English and Scotch-Irish families, such as the Doddridges and Manchesters, Vances, Campbells, and Browns.⁴ Before that, Native Americans had inhabited the area for centuries, taking advantage of plentiful springs, hills, and valleys for hunting and camping sites. (In fact, Native American legacy in the Avella area has long fascinated local residents, and nearby Meadowcroft Rockshelter, on the property of Meadowcroft Museum of Rural Life, a site of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, contains the earliest known archaeological evidence of civilization in North America.⁵)

The early Europeans controlled the land in the spirit of the American frontier; most were farmers, though some were also tradesmen and entrepreneurs. In the late 18th century, for example, Alexander Wells established a grist and saw mill in what is now Avella. Thomas Patterson did the same a few miles up the north fork of Cross Creek. Avella became an important center for local commerce. Flatboats filled with flour were floated down Cross Creek to the Ohio River, to be transported to major ports. By 1900, farms belonging to S.S. Campbell, W.J. Brown, and the Miller family covered the site of present-day Avella.⁶ The cadence of life in this farming community is reflected by newspapers of the day, which report on broken threshing machines and the weight of home-grown apples.⁷

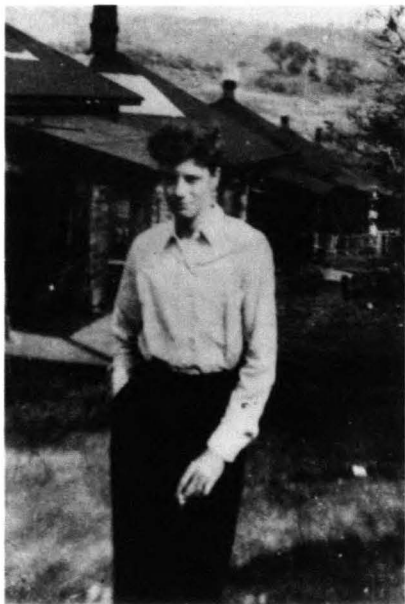
By the time construction of the Wabash Railroad commenced, just after the turn of the century, all of the land in and surrounding Avella was owned by the Campbells, Browns, Millers, and other families descended primarily from the original settlers. Over the next few years, a flurry of land sales accompanied the progress of the railroad, setting the stage for the impending coal

boom. The *Washington Observer* reported in 1903: “There is no abatement in the inquiry for coal lands in this and adjoining counties, and sales are made as fast as principals can make terms. The greatest activity is in Washington and Greene Counties where about 10,000 acres changed owners the past week at the best prices ever named for this class of property.”⁸ The railroads provided a means to transport raw materials from the area to distant industrial sites, while the mines created jobs for laborers that ushered in a wave of immigration. The Western Pennsylvania countryside was transformed.

Avella was established as an unincorporated village once the railroad was completed in 1904.⁹ For 50 years, Avella was the focal point of social activity, business, and commerce for area mining families. The first makeshift quarters for workers sprang up around the various mines that dotted the landscape, but Avella had the post office, established in 1903, and a bank, Lincoln National, which closed during the Depression in 1931. The first passenger train passed through Avella on July 2, 1904, and passenger service continued through the early 1930s, providing links to Pittsburgh, Wellsburg, Steubenville, and Mingo Junction.¹⁰ The Wabash Hotel, next to the Avella station, was owned by an Italian immigrant family named Safara. It was a favorite watering hole for travelers, as was De Phillip’s bar. Morris Morasky, owner of a clothing and appliance store in town, sponsored the Avella Soccer team, which went on to win the National Junior Championships in New York in 1939. The town had a small creamery and milk station in its heyday, as well as a theater, jewelry store, and the popular Avella Gardens, which housed a roller skating rink, swimming pool and open air dance pavilion for the town. According to one old-timer, Avella in its 1920s prime was “a rip-roaring town.”¹¹

The first Italian immigrants to the Avella area were men. They worked as transient laborers and many were recruited by contractors’ agents to build the Wabash Railroad through the Cross Creek Valley in 1901. Horse-operated plows, picks and





shovels were used to dig the railroad bed, so there was a demand for cheap immigrant labor. The men would be "brought by ship to New York City, then by rail to either Burgettstown or Wellsburg, and then 'walked out' to the various labor camps along the railroad right-of-way."¹² A 1903 newspaper account of the continuation of the Wabash line into Greene County reported on the Italian labor employed: "In the morning there will arrive from Pittsburg some 25 Italians who have been

secured to start the work. The Italians...have been employed by the same concern of the construction of the other portions of the Wabash line and will arrive in Washington shortly after 8 o'clock. They will immediately be taken to the scene of the proposed operations and just as soon as possible set to work." A local lumber company built "shanties for the accommodation of those laborers who will be placed at work with pick and shovel."¹³

The Washington County Coal Co. opened the first large mine in 1906 at Cedar Grove.¹⁴ Others opened in the Avella area shortly afterward: Duquesne Coal and Coke Co.'s Duquesne Mine, just west of Avella; the Donehoo Mine, just east of Avella, owned by the Pittsburgh and Southwestern Coal Co.; Pittsburgh Terminal Coal Co.'s Meadowlands or P & W Mine, just south of Avella; the Pryor Mine, a small outfit located just west of the Duquesne mine and owned by the Pryor Coal Co.; and the Burgettstown mine, opened near Patterson Mills by the Leach Farm Coal Company. Further west, near Penowa, the Penobscot Mine, owned by the Avella Coal Co. flourished, as did the Jefferson Mine, operated by the Jefferson Coal and Coke Co., and the Waverly Coal Co.'s Waverly Mine.¹⁵ Also scattered about were a number of "gum-boot" mines, which were smaller operations run by individuals. Once the coal was mined, it was shipped on the Wabash Railroad to Pittsburgh and other cities for mainly industrial use. By 1909, Washington County — with over 11 million tons of coal loaded at the mines for shipment — ranked fourth behind Westmoreland, Allegheny, and Cambria counties in bituminous coal production in the state.¹⁶ And Pennsylvania led the nation in bituminous coal production.¹⁷

Many Italians were able to make the transition from work on the railroads to unskilled jobs in the coal mines, usually as loaders at the tipples. Italians, in general, were used to working outdoors in Italy, and many avoided work underground if they could.¹⁸ Some of the northern Italians, who had experience working in stone quarries and iron mines in their native land, were cutters. By 1910, there were about 200 Italians living in Cross Creek and

Independence townships.¹⁹ They came, for the most part, from the Piedmont and the Tyrol regions in northern Italy, and from Tuscany, the Abruzzo, and the Marche regions in central Italy.²⁰ Later, in the 1920s, several Sicilians settled in the Avella area.²¹ The overall population of the two townships in 1910 was about 2,000, with over 50 percent being native-born Americans.²² The majority of immigrants were Austrians and Slovaks. However, the Tyroleans, one of the largest groups to immigrate to Avella, may have considered themselves Austrians at this time rather than Italians, since they were ruled under the Emperor Franz Joseph and not King Vittorio Emanuele.²³ Detailed census records are not available after 1920, but a history of the Cross Creek Valley written in the 1970s cites the Italians as the immigrant group who "over the years...out-numbered those coming here from any other single European country" to the Avella area.²⁴

Italians were not the most populous ethnic group in the Avella area in 1920. That distinction belongs to ethnic Slovaks from Russia, Austria, and Hungary, nearly all of whom had arrived during the years of the Italian influx, for many of the same reasons. Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Scotch, and Germans were also present.²⁵ However small in number the Italians might have been, they immediately distinguished themselves as entrepreneurs, setting up small bakeries, butcher shops, and grocery stores. In many cases, the Italian men worked in the coal mines, while their wives ran small stores or confectionaries out of their homes. This was the case with miners Sam Gallo and Vince Romano, and brick layers Steve Odesio and Steve Gianotto. One miner, George Frangulli, had his 15-year-old daughter oversee their family's grocery. Steve Fioroni, who married Louise Bogo, was a photographer in town, while Louise ran their boarding house and confectionary. The 1920 U.S. Census counted 13 Italians (out of about 250 total) with small businesses in the Avella area. A Russian Jew named Louis Riso ran a dry goods shop, but Italians otherwise dominated immigrant ownership of the town's small businesses.²⁶

A steady income in the coal mines, often supplemented by small, family-run enterprises, was a step toward financial stability for Italian immigrants and provided the means to call other family members over. The Immigration Commission of the U.S. Congress published a report in 1911 on a "representative" coal town in southwestern Pennsylvania with more Italians than Avella but with a similar ethnic concentration and location. The report concluded that "Italians, North and South, show a greater tendency to save than any other race represented in the community."²⁷ The town's 950 Italian immigrants produced 86 percent of the foreign postal money orders issued in the community, and annually transmitted about \$45,000 to Italy through the local national banks, presumably to pay taxes on land, purchase land, and assist family members in coming to the United States. Interestingly, the Italians in this representative coal town, earning an average \$1.89 a day, ranked last in earnings among all immigrant groups — from 14 to 27 cents less a day than the Polish, Hungarians, Slovaks, and Lithuanians.²⁸

Although wage figures aren't available for Avella, those cited in the report are assumed to be roughly similar. Retired Avella



Opposite: Art Torboli poses in front of the Duquesne patch, c. 1940. Above: Elio Cecchini with a "crabmolder," a hauling machine he used in the Duquesne Mine.

miner Elio Cecchini remembers the Italian miners who picked wild asparagus and dandelions to spice up their omelettes. "Those Italians," he recalls, "liked to save money and make money."²⁹ A longstanding member of Independence Township's business community noted in 1903 that Italians who built the Wabash Railroad "were good cash customers with our merchants."³⁰

Art Torboli and his sister Mary Ann spoke of the self-reliance practiced by the immigrants. "If you didn't have a garden, if you didn't can stuff, if you didn't go hunting, you didn't have nothing."³¹ Growing vegetable crops and hunting was a way of life brought to rural Western Pennsylvania not only by Italians, but by Eastern Europeans as well. Practically all of the immigrants to Avella had come from rural villages, and were accustomed to depending on their own resources for sustenance.³² The reality of life in Avella in the early 1900s made carrying on these traditions a necessity.

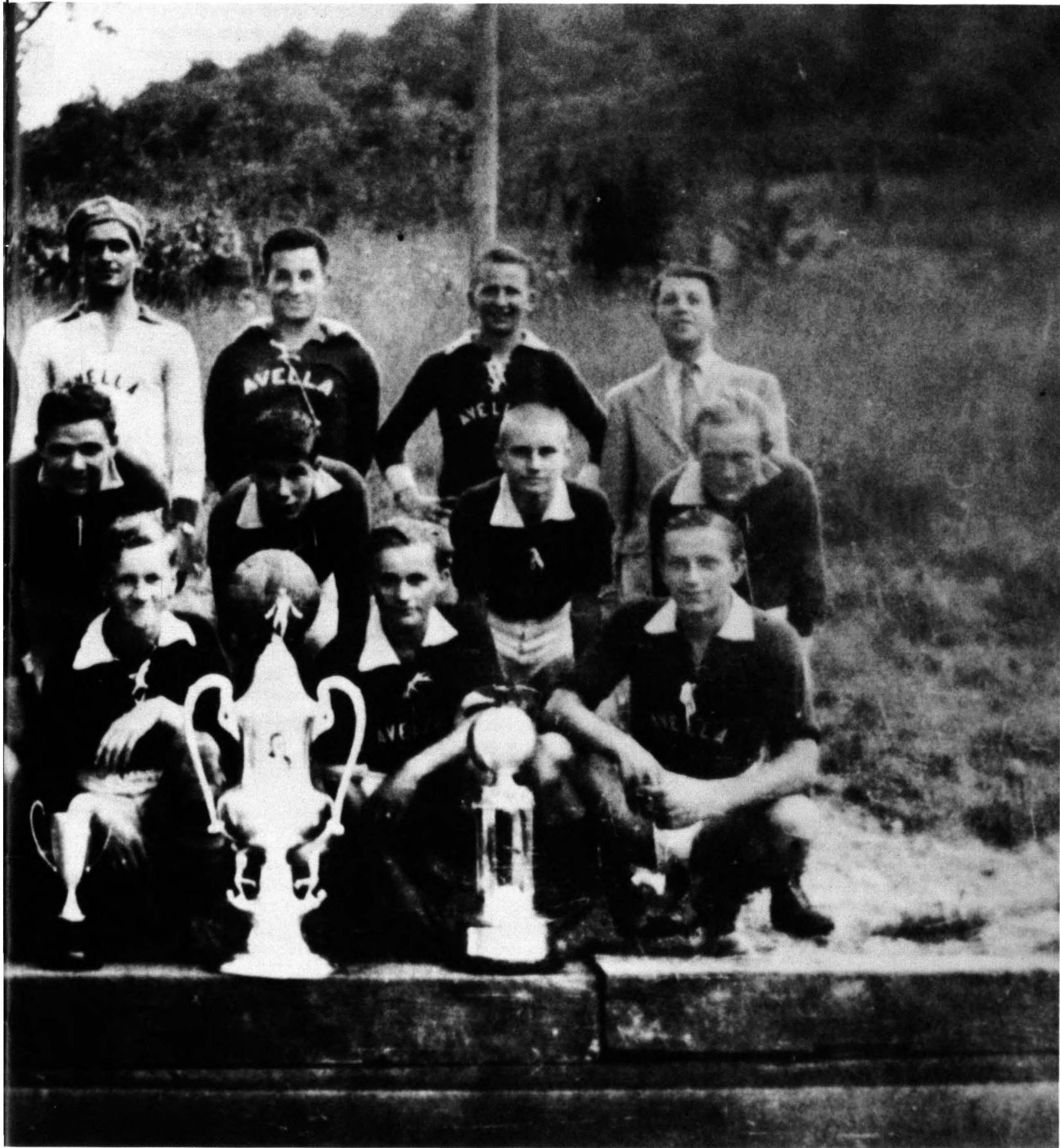
By 1909, Avella and its surrounding coal towns had established enough of a Roman Catholic immigrant community to form a mission. Mass was said once a month in local halls and theaters until the immigrants could raise enough money to build a church. The first, in 1917, was St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church. It was "a tremendous undertaking [for these] poor people in a new land."³³ The Italian and Eastern European immigrants seemed to appreciate the gains that could be derived from working together and "getting along."

The Italian community was well-enough established in Avella before the 1930s to form a mutual benefit aid society called La Stella Polare (Polar Star) Club. Italian immigrants built the unusual white stucco structure in a vernacular style reminiscent of a rural Italian farmhouse. The society, typical of most Italian fraternal organizations of that day, technically was organized to provide insurance benefits for members. However, the social activities offered by the club were a major incentive for membership, including weekly dances, bocce games on its gravel courts, and later bowling when members of the club added an alley to the original building in 1938. The club's most popular activity, however, was the Columbus Day celebration. Avellans today remember that they celebrated with a parade, complete with fireworks, a band, floats, and townspeople dressed up as Columbus himself and as Indians. The whole town took part in the festivities. "That was the style back then," reflects one Italian. "Everybody'd get together — Polacks, Italians, any of them. I don't care what you was, as long as you could play the cards and dance."³⁴

That the Polar Star Club chose to celebrate Columbus Day in such grand style says a great deal about the way Italians saw themselves in Avella. It was an opportunity to show both American patriotism and ethnic pride. The Italians did not, for example, hold religious *feste* in Avella. This would have been a clear manifestation of the "old country," and would have set them apart from the other immigrant groups around them. Many Italian communities in Western Pennsylvania during this period celebrated *feste* for their various patron saints; in fact, these celebrations were an integral part of the immigrant tradition. Why Avella's Italians

The Avella Soccer team, made up of boys from the community's different ethnic groups, went on to win the National Junior Championships held in New York in 1939.







Avella's Italian immigrants built the Polar Star Club, *opposite*, as an informal benefit society, though it was perceived more as a social club. The building's strong vernacular style captures the unique character of Avella's Italians. Members, some holding American flags, gathered for the above photo, c. 1930.

chose not to carry on the festival tradition is not entirely clear. The most likely reason is that Italians came to Avella from many different regions, so there could be no consensus for a formal celebration of a specific patron saint. Another factor is that northern Italians, in the majority among the Italian immigrants, often were associated with anti-clericism.³⁵ Furthermore, the Roman Catholic Italians did not have their own parish, and it was the church in any given community that usually sponsored *feste*. This suggests that the limited resources of the Italian community might have facilitated their interdependence on the other immigrant groups since they all had to pull together for the greatest gain.

Sometime in the 1930s, the Columbus Day festivities in Avella were reduced to a polenta dinner at the Polar Star Club on the eve of Columbus Day. The dinner, complete with chicken and home-made wine, was a highlight of the town's yearly social calendar, so popular that "anyone who had moved away from Avella came back for that dinner."³⁶

Food was indeed one of the most tangible ways Italians in Avella held on to their culture. The harder the fare, the more popular. Rabbit — hunted, skinned and prepared by the immigrants — was often served in a stew over polenta. Polenta, a "stick to your ribs" cornmeal mush eaten by northern Italians and by the *contadini*, or farmer class, could be purchased at stores in the Avella area. Like macaroni, polenta was a staple: cheap, nutritious, versatile, and filling. It could be eaten hot or cold. Left over from a meal, polenta was often sliced, warmed up in a skillet and served with syrup or tomato sauce poured over it. Many Italian-Americans in Avella have continued to enjoy polenta through the generations. "All my children loved grandpa's polenta and rabbit," remembers Mary Ann Noble. "When he made it, by the time he was through with the polenta, when he turned it over on the table it stood up there. And then he cut it with a string, just as neat."³⁷

There were also several Italians who owned bakeries and grocery stores in the area. The 1910 census lists 49-year-old Joseph Vogliona as owner of a general store. Natalia Tacchino and Pasquale Calderella were proprietors of a bakery, and by 1920, Charlie Rolando, who came from the Piedmont, owned a bakery on Highland Avenue.³⁸ Paul Bardelli also ran a bakery, and delivered his bread throughout the mining towns by wagon. Accordingly, "his 'Avella Italian Bread' was known over the area."³⁹

Physical conditions — housing and work specifically — were other factors that affected community in the Avella area. "Community" meant an amalgam of peoples — Austrians, Hungarians, Slavs, and Italians — living in close proximity to one another and under similar conditions. "None of the mining camps were very homogeneous, since people of Polish origin might be living in the same 'row' with families from Italy or Austria or Yugo-slavia [sic]," according to local historian A.D. White.⁴⁰ Or, in the words of a former Italian coal miner: "When you lived in one of these camps, you didn't have a choice where you lived."⁴¹ In fact, manuscript censuses from 1910 and 1920 indicate that a number of Italian men boarded at Austrian, Slovak, and Belgian households in the Avella area.⁴² One Italian-American woman recalls that her



mother, who kept boarders, "could talk and understand all the languages.... They brought this real old Hungarian guy wanting to get into the mines. And they brought him up because they knew my mother could understand him."⁴³

Attempts in the 1920s to unionize mine patches around Avella ushered in a period of conflict; according to some reports, it was also an era of class solidarity which cushioned the impact of low wages and dangerous work conditions. Avella's miners, and Italians in particular, were "pretty good union men," who embroiled themselves in a number of local "riots" for the union cause.⁴⁴ There are rumors that Avella was once the center of a great deal of anarchist activity, and one of the most talked about incidents was the Cliftonville Riot of 1922. Just four miles from Avella, Cliftonville's mine was using non-union miners in violation of an ongoing United Mine Workers of America strike. Avella miners gathered at their union hall and marched along the tracks of the Wabash Railroad, "collecting all of the men they could from houses along the way."⁴⁵ After an all night standoff with the local sheriff, miners stormed the coal tippie at dawn, setting it on fire. The sheriff and his men responded with gunfire. An all-out battle ensued. The sheriff and 13 of his men were killed, and 78 miners were indicted for first-degree murder.⁴⁶ The Avella miners' active and visible involvement in the efforts to unionize did not go unnoticed. The UMW's president, John L. Lewis, made several

visits to the Avella area in the 1920s. Avella's miners became official UMW members in 1925.

Other factors that shaped the post-frontier ethnic experience in Avella were the nature and timing of immigrant settlement. The 1910 censuses of Cross Creek and Independence townships are the first to reveal a significant foreign-born population since the period of northern European immigration, which ebbed in the first half of the 19th century.⁴⁷ The growth and development of 20th century Avella was sudden, contained, and purposeful: immigrants came to work in the mines, and stopped coming in significant numbers by the 1930s, when there was no longer strong demand for mine work. In this way, they created a community from scratch.

The landscape was another factor, it seems, in this period of Avella's development. Because immigrants initially lived in company-owned houses in the coal camps, the only land available for later residential development was the hilltops near the mines. In fact, not until about 1921 did the first residential plan appear on one of Avella's main residential roads, and its reputation is another indication of how quickly Italians gained financial stability in the community. The original owner was Robert Knox, who sold lots for \$100, but the area quickly took the nickname "Italy Hill" because, supposedly, all but two of the original home owners were Italian. Steve Odesio, an immigrant stone mason, is said to have constructed the homes.⁴⁸ Typically, families left company housing only when they could afford to build on their own. According to the Immigration Commission's report, the Italians, more so than other immigrants in the representative coal town, were known for buying "real estate with their savings," and they owned "the largest amount of taxable property in the town."

Many Italians made their greatest earnings, according to several Italian-Americans, not in the mines, but in their homes. At the center of this business activity, quite often, was the woman of the household. The family-run grocery stores, for example, were run out of a room in peoples' homes. Taking in boarders supplemented a family's income, sometimes substantially. "It didn't matter how many kids you had, you had to take in boarders," reflected one oldtimer.⁴⁹ Louise Fioroni's mother held her family together by taking in boarders in a 10-room house near Avella's Donehoo Mine after her husband was killed in an accident. She ran the business quite aggressively, housing as many as 15 boarders at one time. "Mother told the superintendent...: 'Any Italian man who comes here, you send them to me.'"⁵⁰

Italians were also known to make money operating speakeasies out of their homes during Prohibition. This business seemed an obvious extension of their wine-making. "Everybody had wine," laughs one Italian-American. "And when Prohibition was over and there was a tavern, you could bet money that that guy was a former bootlegger."⁵¹ There is nostalgia for the era of the speakeasies, too. One former resident of Italy Hill recalls her neighbor, an old Italian woman, who used to make wine and sell it out of her home on Saturday evenings. "I can remember lying in bed at night listening to them [the customers] sing," she remembers. "And now, whenever I hear Luciano Pavarotti sing, I think of

those Italian tenors."⁵² Another woman recalls the fun of wine-making, despite not having a mechanical press for squeezing the grapes: "Dad got a brand new pair of rubber boots and that there great big tub.... He put the grapes in there, and each one of us had to take turns, put them boots on and stomp on those grapes. But them boots was hung up and nobody touched them for nothing else but that."⁵³

A final factor that shaped Avella's development was its geographical position. Even as late as 1900, Avella was still a rural, relatively isolated village, whose agrarian economy was held in the hands of several prominent Anglo-Saxon families. The coal companies that began to buy up these families' lands shortly after the turn of the century were numerous, and of varying sizes. Avella was never a "company town" in the classic sense that one large firm controlled the labor market and most of the town's resources. Furthermore, the coal from Avella-area mines was shipped away; in contrast were the many coal towns further east, in the Coke Region of Fayette and Westmoreland counties.⁵⁴ There, the towns usually were combination coal-and-coke towns: the coal was brought to the surface to fuel the coke ovens located nearby. Most of these towns were dominated by one company — Henry Clay Frick's. Although Avella and most coke towns had distinct similarities — in ethnic composition, housing conditions, isolation in a generally rural region — the existence of numerous independent mines seems to have provided Avellans with somewhat more independence. A former resident of Avella summed it up: "Life was very good in Avella because it was the kind of society that took care of itself."⁵⁵

Mining hung on through the hard times of the post-World War I era, when demand for coal plummeted, but it could not pull itself through the decline that set in after World War II. Remnants of former deep mine veins were strip-mined in the 1950s, '60s and '70s. When the mines closed, many men began to commute to industrial jobs in Weirton, Beech Bottom, and Follansbee, W. Va., and even to the mills in Pittsburgh. A number of younger people made the decision to leave Avella altogether in the 1950s. Residents speak of children and neighbors leaving for Cleveland and Detroit. Elio Cecchini was 35 when he lost his job in the strip mines around Avella in 1952. For him, leaving the area was not an option. "My roots are here. We've been here since 1922, when my dad came over from the old country." When friends told him that the Wheeling-Pittsburgh coke plant in Follansbee was hiring, he drove down and got a job. He made the 45-minute commute to the Follansbee plant in a carpool with five or six other men who had also lost their jobs in the mines.⁵⁶

Today, the Avella School District is the biggest employer in Avella. There is also a lumber yard and small packaging plant, but no real industry left.

It is hard to believe that Avella was once a bustling town, or to envision people crowded along Highland Avenue, or to imagine hearing the train's whistle, which blew at least half a dozen times a day at the Avella station. Harder still is it to picture Avella's landscape dotted with coal tipples and smoke stacks, or to picture its lush hillsides before they were scarred by strip-mining. Some



John L. Lewis,
president of the UMW,
speaks at a picnic on
Vance's farm near Avella,
during one of his visits
in the 1920s.

people who left Avella, who made financially rewarding lives for themselves elsewhere, have mixed feelings about their success and their hometown. "Breaks my heart," says one former resident. "And I tell you why it breaks my heart. It's because I'm part of the problem. See, I wouldn't want to live in Avella. We produce our flowers and we send our produce out to the world. You know, we all did great. But we won't live in Avella, because if we all lived in Avella, we'd tear the town down and rebuild the town. And we'd have \$250,000 homes, and we'd have condos, and we'd have parks and stuff like that. But Avella's half a mile from nowhere."⁵⁷

For a community that sprang from almost nothing, and has been sustained economically by so little in the last 40 years, it is almost surprising that Avella is still around. Italy Hill still has its Italian families. Some of the old-timers still make wine, and many keep gardens. The Polar Star Club opens a couple of times a week, and St. Michael's Church is fairly well-attended on Sundays. Of course, the Italian bakeries and grocery stores are gone, having long ago been replaced by the Convenient Mart. But sometimes on a gentle, starry summer evening, sitting out on a porch on Italy Hill, you can almost imagine what it sounded like, years ago, when those Italian tenors sang out to the night. ☼

Notes

- ¹ Interview with Louise (Bogo) Fioroni, April 13, 1994. Italian-American Archives, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania. (hereafter "Italian-American Archives")
- ² For a brief discussion of the limitations imposed by studying only those immigrants who stayed in America, see John Bodnar, Roger Simon, Michael Weber, *Lives of Their Own* (Urbana, 1982), 9.
- ³ Figure for Avella given by Independence Township Municipal Authority, 1994.
- ⁴ Carolyn J. Bogo and A.D. White, *Sketches of the Cross Creek Valley* (Cross Creek Valley Bicentennial Commission, 1976), 41.
- ⁵ Avella area resident Art Torboli talked excitedly about exploring caves in his youth, looking for Indian remains. It is also popular lore that Indian remains lie on the top of "Italy Hill" in Avella.
- ⁶ *Sketches of the Cross Creek Valley*, 35.
- ⁷ *Washington Observer*, Oct. 6, 1903.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁹ *Sketches of the Cross Creek Valley*.
- ¹⁰ A.D. White, *Historical Sketches of Northern Washington County* (Burgettstown, Pa., 1979), 35.
- ¹¹ Interview with Michael Pascuzzi, Feb. 22, 1994.
- ¹² *Sketches of the Cross Creek Valley*, 41.
- ¹³ *Washington Observer*, Sept. 23, 1903, 1.
- ¹⁴ *Historical Sketches of Northern Washington County*, 32.
- ¹⁵ A.D. White, *History of the Cross Creek* (unpublished, 1975), 45-46.
- ¹⁶ *Coal and Coke Operator*, Oct. 14, 1909.
- ¹⁷ U.S. Congress, Senate, Reports of the Immigration Commission, VI and VII, "Immigrants in Industries: Pt. 1 Bituminous Coal Mining" (Washington D.C., 1911).
- ¹⁸ Phylis C. Martinelli, "Pioneer Paesani in Globe, Arizona," in *Italian Immigrants in Rural and Small Town America* (Staten Island, 1987), 166.
- ¹⁹ 1910 U.S. Manuscript Census, Independence and Cross Creek townships, Washington Co., Pa. (hereafter "1910 Census")
- ²⁰ *Sketches of the Cross Creek Valley*, 42-50.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*
- ²² 1910 Census.
- ²³ Paul A. Sturgul, "Italians on the Gogebic Iron Range," in *Italian Immigrants in Rural and Small Town America* (Staten Island, NY, 1987), 171.
- ²⁴ *Sketches of the Cross Creek Valley*, 42.
- ²⁵ 1920 U.S. Manuscript Census, Cross Creek and Independence townships, Washington Co., Pa. (hereafter "1920 Census")
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*
- ²⁷ U.S. Congress, Senate, Reports of the Immigration Commission, VI and VII, "Immigrants in Industries: Pt. 1 Bituminous Coal Mining."

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Interview with Elio Cecchini, Feb. 22, 1995.

³⁰ *Washington Observer*, Sept. 17, 1903, 7.

³¹ Interview with Art Torboli and Mary Ann Torboli Noble, Jan. 25, 1994. Italian-American Archives.

³² See Joseph Katrenick, "Villages," *Pittsburgh History* 77, Fall 1994, 100-115, for an account of Eastern European immigrants in one rural Western Pennsylvania coal-mining town.

³³ *Sketches of the Cross Creek Valley*, 22.

³⁴ Interview with Art Torboli, Jan. 28, 1994. Italian-American Archives.

³⁵ Martinelli, "Pioneer Paesani in Globe, Arizona," 168.

³⁶ Interview with Mr. and Mrs. William Tonini, March 21, 1994.

³⁷ Interview with Art Torboli and Mary Ann Torboli Noble, Jan. 25, 1994.

³⁸ 1910 and 1920 censuses; interview with Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Fioroni, Apr. 13, 1994.

³⁹ *Sketches of the Cross Creek Valley*, 48.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 104.

⁴¹ Interview with Elio Cecchini, Feb. 22, 1995.

⁴² 1910 and 1920 U.S. censuses.

⁴³ Interview with Mary Ann Torboli Noble, Jan. 28, 1994.

⁴⁴ Interview with Elio Cecchini, Feb. 22, 1995.

⁴⁵ Unpublished account of Cliftonville incident, author unknown, in possession of John Milantoni. Copy in Italian-American Archives.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ 1910 U.S. Census.

⁴⁸ Interview with Mr. and Mrs. William Tonini, Mar. 21, 1994.

⁴⁹ Interview with Mary Ann Torboli Noble, Jan. 28, 1994.

⁵⁰ Interview with Louise (Bogo) Fioroni, Apr. 13, 1994.

⁵¹ Interview with Lee Cecchini, Feb. 22, 1994. Italian-American Archives.

⁵² Interview with Mary Ross, Feb. 22, 1994. Italian-American Archives.

⁵³ Interview with Mary Ann Torboli Noble, Jan. 28, 1994.

⁵⁴ On coal-mining towns devoted, in past decades, to coke production in Fayette County, Pa., see David Demarest and Eugene Levy, "Touring the Coke Region," *Pittsburgh History* 74, Fall 1991, 100-113.

⁵⁵ Interview with John Milantoni, Apr. 28, 1994. Italian-American Archives.

⁵⁶ Interview with Elio Cecchini, Mar. 13, 1995.

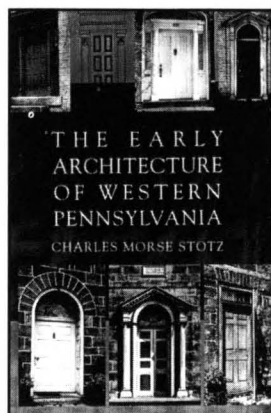
⁵⁷ Interview with John Milantoni, Apr. 28, 1994. Italian-American Archives.



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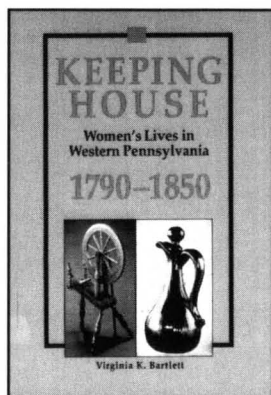
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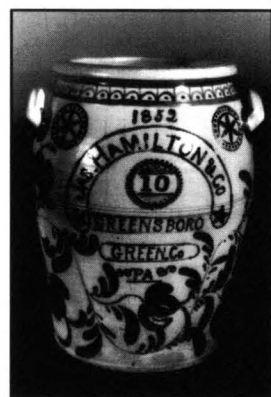
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