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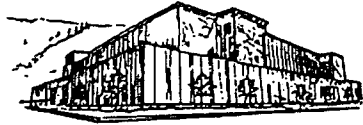
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Joy in Minersville:
A Study of the Butte Mines
And Independent Leagues

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Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of

Master of Arts


The University of Montana

August 2004

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Joy In Minersville: A Study of the Butte Mines and Independent Leagues

Director: Professor Michael Mayer 

This thesis discusses baseball in the Mines League in Butte and Anaconda, as well as the independent leagues that existed in Butte, Anaconda, and Helena. The Anaconda Company sponsored the Mines League between 1920 and 1927, in an attempt to create accord between managers and miners. Reformers and company managers also hoped to use baseball to assimilate the immigrants who made up such a large part of the work force. From informal collections of employees, with a few ringers, the teams evolved into professional units made up of players whose connection with the mines was little more than nominal. The thesis argues that the miners who played in the leagues and those who watched them play brought their own ethnic sensibilities and loyalties to the game. Thus baseball acted not only as an agent of assimilation but also as an agent of ethnic preservation and identity.

The first chapter provides a brief history of baseball that provides necessary background to understand references later in the work. The second chapter offers an overview of the immigrant experience and the process of forming ethnic identities. This, too, is important background for the discussion of the cultural significance of the Mines League. The third chapter is an in depth discussion of the Mines League in Butte and independent leagues that existed throughout Montana. It analyzes the intent of the companies that formed the league and compares the original intent of managers and reformers with what the ethnic players and fans made it. Players and fans brought ethnic customs to the game and, even as they became American by playing and watching baseball, they made the game their own.

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Prologue

In 1959 I thought I had a future in baseball. As captain and catcher of the Farm League champion Pirates, this seemed like a logical conclusion. My family lived in San Mateo; a suburb located twenty miles to the south of San Francisco. The San Mateo Little League offered baseball coached and organized by well meaning, caring fathers who took an active role in promoting the baseball hopes and dreams of their sons. Sometimes, with interested fathers making decisions, the best players often began their careers batting ninth and playing right field, the Siberia of Little League Baseball. These aspiring talents lost out because the children of the coaches and sponsors received the lion's share of attention, played the most critical positions on the field, and had the benefit of the best equipment. The volunteer dads sought to instill basic fundamentals: catching, throwing, running, and hitting. They also taught teamwork, order, and sportsmanship. The coaches tolerated the idea of winning and treated the concept as secondary and unimportant. My father, a San Francisco policeman, did not coach but came to almost every game. In 1960, my parents abandoned the soulless, sterile "Father Knows Best" environment of the suburbs and moved to San Francisco.

We moved to the Excelsior District in the southeastern section of the city. When Tony Bennett sang, "I left my heart in San Francisco," he did not have the Excelsior District in mind. Nevertheless, my introduction to the ethnic character of the neighborhood came on a Saturday morning when my mother sent me around the corner to buy bread and milk at Sissa's, a neighborhood grocery store owned by Italian

immigrants. Several aged men gathered around the cash register at the front of the store listening to a live radio broadcast of the Metropolitan Opera of New York sponsored by the Texaco Oil Company. They promptly shushed me as I burst into the store. After the tenor finished his rendition of Della Sua Pace by Mozart, the old men yelled “bravo!” The storekeeper then helped me, and I looked forward to my Saturday visits to the store from that point on. The ethnic pride demonstrated by the old men in Sissa’s was reflected everywhere, in grocery stores, bakeries, social clubs, and churches. It also was present in a totally unexpected place, The Excelsior Park Giants (the best schoolboy baseball team in San Francisco). I had the distinction of being one of the few players on the team who did not have an Italian surname.

Excelsior Park was not the San Mateo Little League. The director or coach who ran the park was a paid employee of the city of San Francisco. Parental involvement was limited to the role of spectator. The players had real uniforms and sponsors, wore metal spikes, and could read about their team’s progress in a Box Score in the San Francisco Examiner every Thursday morning. Competition for a place on the Giants was intense but fair. If a kid could play, they made room for him. After the relaxed atmosphere of suburban baseball, I was thrust into a playing style characterized by intense passion, competitiveness, and a family-like spirit. I was adopted by my Italian teammates and began to understand how important our game was.

Many of my teammates were second- and third-generation immigrant Italians, whose families still had strong ties to Italy. Many of my friends were bi-lingual. On any given day, as I would drop by a friend’s house to pick him up on the way to Excelsior Park for baseball practice, I would be compelled to eat a fabulous meal prepared by a

Nanna, or Grandmother, who lived at the house. The first Italian word I learned was Mange! Eat! When the Giants took the field, it was common to have many of the player's extended families in full attendance. Grandfathers watched the games with keen interest. A great play by a grandson meant major bragging rites at the Bocce Ball courts. The Excelsior Italians were Catholic, and most of the players would make the sign of the cross before they entered the batter's box. It was never clear to me if this was a sign of devotion or if it was a custom to bring the hitter luck. This custom was never observed in the Little League of San Mateo.

I moved out of the Excelsior when I was nineteen years old. When considering a topic on which to write a thesis some thirty-six years later, I almost missed the obvious. Professor Dave Emmons, the noted historian of the Butte Irish, suggested that I take a look at the Mines Leagues that had existed in Butte during the early part of the twentieth century. After some preliminary research I realized that this was an exciting, unique, and relatively unexplored area of Montana History. I wanted my thesis to discuss an era of American History that has always fascinated me, the Progressive Era. Butte is a city and culture that is an anomaly in the Western United States. Although the West was highly urbanized, the mining industry that existed in Butte presented all of the industrial problems and excesses that were so endemic in the East. Its industrial excesses created an environment that made it a natural laboratory for the reform minded Progressives of the early twentieth century. Corporations used the game of baseball to entertain and assimilate the immigrants who made up their workforce.

Steven Gelber, a historian, has analyzed the reason American corporations were so willing to sponsor sports programs for their employees. Modern scientific thought

compared the work site, be it factory, mine or office, to a beehive. All acts of work were economized, and every part of work was made to act in concert with every other part. Baseball reflected the modern factory system in that the game included an inherent organized division of labor and a spirit of co-operation that was vital in order to win the game. Watching infielders turn a double play provided a graphic example of co-operation in order to achieve a common goal. Gelber, concluded that “baseball should be seen as a game that marks the transition from individual to corporate values.”¹

Another historian, Melvin L. Adelman, has critiqued Gelber’s thesis “that the rise and popularity of baseball during the nineteenth-century was directly linked to the cultural matrix of the emerging modern business society.” Adelman further refuted the idea that “baseball subsumed the individual into the collective,” by pointing out that, although baseball was a team sport and did require some sacrifice, the game was fundamentally an individual sport played in a collective setting. Adelman provided another substantial point to the argument when he cited Branch Rickey, the preeminent baseball executive of the twentieth century, who stated, “Only in baseball can a team player be an individualist first and a team player second, within the rules and spirit of the game.” One of baseball’s unique appeals, Adelman pointed out, is baseball’s nurturing of quirky individuals, ranging from Michael “King” Kelly in the 1880’s, Jerome “Dizzy” Dean in the 1930’s, and the ephemeral Mark “the Bird” Fidrych of the 1980’s.²

Touching Base, Professional Baseball and American Culture in the Progressive Era, by Steven A. Riess, argued that well meaning progressive reformers attempted to

¹ Steven Gelber, “Working At Playing,” *Journal of Social History*, Summer, 1983. p. 10.

² Melvin L. Adelman, “Baseball, Business And The Work Place: Gelber’s Thesis Reexamined.,” *Journal of Social History*, Winter, 1989: p. 293.

prevent the spread of radicalism and anarchy by “acculturating and exercising social control over the new immigrants and their children through such institutions as the public school and the national pastime.”³ Progressives believed that baseball had two principal functions, to teach children traditional American values and to help newcomers assimilate into the dominant WASP culture through their participation in the sports rituals. Local teams, they assumed, would generate a sense of community by creating a feeling of hometown pride and boosterism through identification with the home team.⁴ Progressives believed that baseball was second only to the public schools as a teacher of American customs to the second-generation immigrants. Hugh Fullerton, a journalist who worked at the turn of the twentieth century wrote:

Baseball, to my way of thinking, is the greatest single force working for Americanization. No other game appeals so much to the foreign born youngsters and nothing, not even the schools, teaches the American spirit so quickly, or inculcates the idea of sportsmanship or fair play as thoroughly.⁵

Melvin Adelman, however, looked at the game of baseball from a very different viewpoint. According to him, baseball was popular among workers because of their cultural heritage that they brought to the sport. Adelman refuted the congruent thesis of recreation which stated that “people develop a consistent set of behavior patterns and values, and consequently replicate their work situation in their leisure time.” The “compensatory” thesis postulates that leisure compensates people for lack of stimulation

³ Steven A. Riess, Touching Base, Professional Baseball and American Culture in the Progressive Era, (Westport, Connecticut, Greenwood Press, 1980): p. 6.

⁴ Ibid. p. 7.

⁵ Ibid. p. 25.

in their work experience.⁶ Baseball, as it was played in Montana, corroborated the latter thesis. The Mines League of Butte and Anaconda, (along with a look at some Independent Leagues) provided persuasive evidence.

This posed the question regarding the Mines League in Butte. Did baseball really attain the lofty goals of the Progressives or did it tell a different story? Realizing that I had already experienced what it was like to play baseball in a dominant ethnic group, I developed the following thesis for my work on the Butte Mine's League. The game of baseball, as played in the Butte Mine's and ancillary independent leagues, sought to provide the people of Montana entertainment, unify and create a spirit of teamwork among the work force. Even as they helped assimilate ethnic groups into a greater America, the leagues, quite by accident, presented an opportunity for these groups to maintain their ethnic identities through the game of baseball.

To understand how and why the game of baseball became America's national pastime and an eventual tool of the social reforming Progressives, the thesis offers a brief discussion on the history of the game's development in America. The second chapter provides an overview of the patterns of immigration into the industrial areas of the United States and the process of assimilation. Understanding why immigrants chose to come to America along with a discussion of how the passage at Ellis Island and the discovery of their unique ethnic identities through foreign language newspapers and fraternal self-help organizations helps to explain how they developed the confidence and pride that allowed them to embrace and excel at the American game of baseball. Finally, an examination of the Mines League, along with some discussion of ancillary Independent Leagues, will

⁶ Adelman, *Journal of Social History*, p. 285.

demonstrate that baseball represented an important aspect of the turbulent history of the mining culture of Butte and Western Montana.

Chapter I

A Short History of Baseball

Although baseball can trace its origins back to two English games, it became America's national pastime. Baseball developed from cricket, a stately pastime divided into innings and supervised by umpires, and rounders, a children's stick and ball game brought to New England by the earliest colonists.⁷ There were many American versions of the game in a variety of names, starting with "old cat," changing to "town ball" and eventually becoming known as "baseball."⁸

Town ball was the most popular version of the game in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The game was played on a square infield, with no foul lines, and no fixed positions in the field. Eight to fifteen men usually played on a side, but sometimes as many as fifty players were used. The first pitcher to be used in the game was called the "feeder." His job was to lob the ball to the hitter, "striker," so the striker could hit the ball and run the bases. One out retired the side, and a runner was out if the ball was caught on the fly or if he was hit with a tossed ball while running the bases.⁹

Ken Burns provided a glimpse of how passionate young Americans were about the emerging game of baseball in a quote attributed to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, a student at Bowdoin College in 1824, who wrote that the game, "communicated such an impulse to our limbs and joints that there is nothing now heard of, in our leisure hours, but ball, ball, ball. I cannot prophesy with any degree of accuracy concerning the

⁷ Ken Burns, Geoffrey Ward, Baseball An Illustrated History, (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1994): p. 3.

⁸ Ibid, p. 3.

⁹ Ibid, p 4.

continuance of this rage for play, but the effect is good, since there has been a thoroughgoing reformation from inactivity and turpitude.”¹⁰

Alexander Cartwright set down the first formalized rules of baseball in 1845. The rules stipulated that the infield be diamond shaped with four bases, one at each corner. A team’s turn at bat was limited to three outs, and the game ended when a team scored twenty-one runs in any number of equal innings for both teams. Fielders made outs by catching a batted ball on the first bounce, in the air, throwing to first base ahead of the runner or by tagging the runner between bases.¹¹

A modern baseball fan who observed a baseball game played in the style that was accepted during the 1840s and 1850s would witness a game that was both familiar and somewhat strange. The umpire was seated at a table along the third base line and was costumed in tails and a stovepipe hat. This seated umpire, who was selected by the team captains, resolved disputes and kept a careful record of the violations of club rules. Home and visiting teams were decided by a coin toss. Fielders in the infield stood directly on their bases, and players did not use either gloves or protective catcher’s gear. The pitcher, from a distance of forty-five feet, gently underhanded the ball for the batters to strike. The umpire called no strikes, so the batters could wait patiently for the perfect pitch to hit. Spectators, who were members of the elite strata of society, attended the game by invitation only, and often the clubs assured the comfort of their guests by providing refreshments and tents to shade the ladies from the sun.¹²

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 4.

¹¹ Benjamin Rader, American Sports, From the Age of Folk Games to the Age of Spectators, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 1983): p. 109.

¹² Ibid. p. 110.

Baseball eventually became America's national pastime. When Cartwright penned his rules of baseball in 1845, cricket was the leading ball game in the country. It received more attention in the press than any other sport, with the exception of horse and harness racing. By 1870 baseball replaced cricket as America's leading ball game, and cricket disappeared from the mainstream of American sports.¹³

The reasons for the demise of Cricket's popularity were varied but important to review in order to understand how baseball came to reflect the cultural values of an emerging nation. Cricket had well defined rigid rules that were established in England long before it arrived in America. Baseball by contrast, arrived in America at a much earlier stage in its development. Since no august ruling body governed the rules, the game could therefore be changed by trial and error.¹⁴ Sportswriters of the day viewed cricket as a game that instilled character and values in the participants. Henry Chadwick, a prominent sportswriter of the age wrote, "cricket calls into play most of the cardinal virtues: a player must be sober and temperate; and success on the field requires fortitude, self-denial, and obedience." Chadwick stated that cricket "teaches a love of order, discipline, and fair play."¹⁵

An examination of the structure of the two games helps to clarify why baseball became America's passion. The simplicity of baseball and the ease with which it could be learned also explained why it became America's national pastime.¹⁶ A cricket inning

¹³ Melvin Adelman. *A Sporting Time, New York City and the Rise of Modern Athletics, 1820-1870*, (Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1990): p.,97.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 116.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p 106

¹⁶ *Ibid.* p 111

lasted until all eleven offensive players were retired; a baseball inning lasted for only three outs. In contrast to baseball's rotation system of batting, each batter in cricket continued to hit until he was retired. Some cricket matches could last for two days while a baseball game was over in a couple of hours.¹⁷ In contrast to cricket players, most American ball players were not serious athletes; for them the attraction of ball games was not the degree of difficulty but rather the sheer enjoyment of playing, the social interaction, and the healthful exercise.

New York, the center of American culture, proved to be the home center of baseball's popularity as well. The beginning of baseball as an organized sport can be traced to a dozen clubs that sprang up in Manhattan and Brooklyn between 1845 and 1855, beginning with the Knickerbocker Base Ball Club. The game had been started by a group of gentlemen who played in a vacant lot in Manhattan at the corner of Twenty-Seventh Street and Madison Avenue. Commercial expansion forced the players to move. They secured a permanent site at Elysian Fields in Hoboken, New Jersey, where for a fee of seventy-five dollars per year they rented the field and the accompanying dressing room.¹⁸

In 1855, a rapid increase in the number of participating baseball players and clubs created the need to adopt formalized rules to bring order to the expansion of the game. During a convention in 1857, the basic rules of Cartwright were confirmed. The only major change was the adoption of the nine-inning game. This rule replaced the earlier rule, which stated that the first team to score twenty-one runs was the winner of the game.

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 113.

¹⁸ Ibid, p 122.

In 1858, at another convention the National Association of BaseBall Players (NABBP) was created.¹⁹

The game of baseball made major advances after the Knickerbockers organized the first club. They introduced the fly rule, which stated that a batter could be put out only by a defensive player catching a batted ball on a fly (rather than the old rule that permitted an out after a ball was caught on the first bounce). The rule was put into practice by the NABBP prior to the 1864 season.²⁰

Baseball was an extremely popular spectator sport in its early years. The formation of professional teams in order to exploit this popularity was only a matter of time. Amateur baseball teams that participated in the NABBP violated their own rules by paying star players. Working –class youth, often German or Irish, began to replace the old stock Puritan Yankees on the rosters of these semi-professional teams. The game had become an integral part of a modern, industrial American culture. The sons of immigrants had begun to use the game of baseball as a tool of social mobility. The pattern they established would be followed by subsequent ethnic groups who were willing to learn the game. The goal of winning replaced all efforts at maintaining the social pretensions of the original founders of the game.²¹

The National Association of Professional Baseball Players was formed in 1871. Although the clubs were joint-stock companies, the league was a players' "paradise." The players controlled the league and were free to move from one club to another at the

¹⁹ *Ibid.* p 127.

²⁰ *Ibid.* p. 131.

²¹ Rader, *American Sports, From the Age of Folk Games to the Age of Spectators*, p. 112.

end of each season. The salaries were commonly two or three times higher than the ordinary workingmen of the era.²²

The short-lived freedom of the players association lasted until 1875. In 1876 a few men led by William Hulbert created the National League, designed to be profitable to investors. The constitution of the National League gave the owners complete control of every business aspect of the game including hiring of umpires and scheduling of games.²³ The National league, under the leadership of Hulbert, did not play on Sunday, forbade the vending of beer, and charged fifty cents admission to the games. The average wage for the workingman was from one to three dollars per day. To charge a fan, in some instances up to one half of a days pay to watch a game, generated some criticism of the fledgling enterprise. Opponents to the league referred to it as a “rich man’s” league.²⁴

The Cincinnati club, which sold beer and played ball on Sundays, was summarily removed from the National league in 1880 by the sanctimonious Hulbert. In 1881, Cincinnati and other cities that had been excluded from the National league formed the American association of Baseball Clubs. Critics referred to the league, which charged twenty-five cents for admission and served liquor at games, as the “Beer Ball League.” The 1880’s were a prosperous time for baseball. The presidents of the two leagues and the head of the Northwestern League, which operated in Michigan, Ohio, and Illinois, penned a tripartite National Agreement which established the mutual recognition of reserved players and guaranteed exclusive territorial rights.²⁵ Most of the clubs made a

²² *Ibid.* p. 114.

²³ *Ibid.* p. 115.

²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 115.

²⁵ *Ibid.* p. 116.

profit, but the inevitable competition for players drove up salaries. The National Agreement of 1882 was ignored. Players who were prospering attempted to organize their own league once again, and the National League expanded to twelve members by absorbing The “Beer Ball League.”²⁶

The second attempt by players to run a league began in 1889. It was an attempt to attain economic freedom and benefit directly from their talents as ball players. The National League employed various strategies to undermine the Players’ League. The National League would deliberately schedule its games so that teams from the two leagues competed on the same day in the same city. This strategy worked for the National League, because although the scheduling conflict caused financial damage to both leagues, the National League had superior financial resources and were therefore better equipped to win the fiscal war of attrition. The financial backers of the Players League succumbed to payments or threats by the National League and the ephemeral experiment known as The Players League ended after just one season.²⁷

The National League, which survived the threats from the Players’ League and the American Association, struggled through the 1890’s with a cumbersome twelve-team loop. Many of the teams were unprofitable. In an attempt to right the ship, the league returned to eight clubs in 1899. The teams included Boston, Brooklyn, Chicago, Cincinnati, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and St. Louis.²⁸

An economic upswing at the turn of the century and the elimination of the four “weak” teams created an opportunity for Byron Bancroft “Ban” Johnson to challenge the

²⁶ Ibid. p. 117.

²⁷ Ibid. p. 118.

²⁸ Ibid. p. 125.

National League for baseball supremacy. Johnson, who was president of the Western League (a minor league), persuaded his followers to create franchises in the four cities that the National League had abandoned. In 1901, Johnson claimed major league status for the Western League and renamed it the American League. The raiding of National League rosters and plans to invade New York were instrumental in granting full recognition of the junior circuit by the National League.²⁹

The final establishment of the two major leagues in the early twentieth century coincided with rule changes that brought about modern baseball. When the National League began play in 1876, pitchers threw from a distance of forty-five feet. The pitches they threw were thrown from below the hip. In 1884, pitchers began to throw overhand and in 1893 the pitchers mound was extended to the modern distance of sixty feet, six inches. The first two fouls counted as strikes, and the number of balls required to earn a “base on balls,” was reduced from nine to four. Baseball rules have remained essentially the same since the turn of the twentieth century.³⁰

Professional baseball experienced unparalleled popularity and growth during the first twenty years of the twentieth century. Major league attendance doubled from 1903 to 1908. Virtually every city, town, and village of any consequence had one or more professional or amateur teams. The minor leagues grew from thirteen leagues in 1903 to over forty in 1913. Over 300 cities, a significant number of them with populations of less than 25,000, had professional teams by 1913. William Howard Taft, the twenty-seventh president of the United States, established the custom of the President opening each

²⁹ Ibid. p. 125.

³⁰ Ibid. p. 119.

season by throwing out the first ball in 1909. This annual rite of spring in effect made the President a promoter of professional baseball. The World Series, which pitted the American League champions against the National League champions, became an annual fall event. During these early years of rivalry between the American and National Leagues, the game of baseball held an emotional grip on the American people that has never been surpassed.³¹

The game as it was played at the turn of the twentieth century used a baseball that had a rubber core. This baseball had considerably less resiliency than the modern cork-centered baseball. Unlike modern baseball, where dozens of balls are used throughout the game, the umpires used only a few new balls per game. The few balls that were used frequently became misshapen, lopsided, or soft. This was the era of the “Dead Ball.” Trick pitches were allowed. The “spit ball” which was created by applied saliva of the pitcher was an extremely difficult pitch to hit. The lack of friction eliminated the natural spin of the ball which floated in with unpredictable breaks and dips. The batter in essence was reduced to swatting at the pitch rather than employing a normal swing.³² Although trick pitches were allowed, the bulk of the pitching dominance of the era was achieved by hurlers who used the fast ball and the curve.

As a reaction to pitching dominance, innovative managers created many strategies that are still used in the game today. The Boston Beaneaters and the Baltimore Orioles innovated and made famous the “scientific” or “inside” strategies used in the 1890’s. Most of the hitters choked up on the bat and attempted to get on base by simply making

³¹ Ibid. p. 127.

³² Ibid. p.131.

contact with the pitch and driving it through the infield. The bunt was a commonly used technique of reaching base during this era. Managers would fine hitters who swung freely at the plate. Outfielders of the era usually played very shallow so that they could return the groundball base hits to the infield quickly and not allow the runners to advance extra bases. Most home runs that were hit during this time were usually inside the park. The introduction of the cork-centered ball in 1910 changed the game dramatically. Batting averages increased, and the home run went from inside the park to out of the park. Nevertheless, the scientific strategy that was innovated by managers during the deadball era became a permanent part of the game.³³

The above discussion of baseball's history has stopped at the dead ball era and the decade after, because this thesis will focus on the Mines League in Butte and Anaconda from 1915 to 1928. These were the last years of the dead ball era and the decade after in the national game. Evidence from sports pages of the era reveals that the scientific strategies commonly used during the deadball era at the major league level were used in baseball games in remote areas of the United States as well.

The emergence of baseball as the national pastime not surprisingly coincided with the emergence of the United States as a dominant economic power. Between 1865 and 1901, the United States underwent an industrial revolution. Technology contributed to this revolution, as did developments in transportation (particularly railroads) and communications (the telegraph and telephone). Industry, aided by technological developments, also led to the growth of urban centers. The harnessing of electricity by the inventions of Thomas Edison and the development of steel as a building material by

³³ Ibid. p. 131.

Andrew Carnegie enabled cities to build skyscrapers and become vibrant economic hubs with large populations. Trolleys that ran in a grid like pattern throughout cities also enabled people to live in suburbs and neighborhoods away from the working environment.³⁴ Railroads and the elaborate structure of Big Business, which enabled enterprises to draw on resources from a wide geographic area and sell to a national market, transformed the United States from a country of small and isolated communities that was scattered across 3 million square miles of continental territory into a compact economic and industrial unit.³⁵

The economic and industrial transformation that took place in America's urban centers had many lasting effects. Industrial jobs attracted immigrants from Europe and elsewhere to America's cities. Another important transformation that resulted from industrialization was the creation of a new "Middle Class." Changing from a rural to urban economic system created a group of people who performed jobs that simply did not exist during America's bucolic past. There were always Doctors and Lawyers, but jobs in public health, social work, or factory management were a new and vibrant class of workers who exerted political, cultural, and economic influence in the cities in which they lived.³⁶ Immigrants arrived to a world that was "new" on many levels.

³⁴ Mark Wahlgren Summers, The Gilded Age, or The Hazard of New Functions, (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1997.) pp 2-8.

³⁵ Sean Dennis Cashman, "Industrial Spring: America in the Gilded Age," Leon Fink, ed., *Major Problems in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, 2nd Ed. (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2001), p.5.

³⁶ Robert H. Wiebe, The Search for Order, 1877-1920 (New York, Hill and Wang, 1967) p.112.

Chapter II

Immigration

The United States transformed itself into a world economic power by utilizing the labor of millions of European immigrants. The steady flow of workers from Europe took place between the years 1880 and 1921. Changes in the modern world, telegraph, the railroad and the steamship allowed emigrants to learn of conditions abroad, travel less expensively, and arrive more quickly. Between 1887 and 1888 alone, approximately one million people left the continent of Europe for destinations in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil. These ambitious people altered not only their own economic and social patterns, but also those of the communities they left and joined.³⁷

In the 1880s, when immigrants began to arrive in large numbers, the cities offered them more plentiful economic opportunities than that of the rural areas. The United States was beginning a period of rapid industrial expansion and had created an environment that required a steady and ready supply of cheap, unskilled, and semiskilled labor for factories and mines. As a result, the industrial sector of the American economy generated jobs that were staffed by workers from abroad. In the New England states, the Irish and British immigrants of an earlier era competed for jobs with recently arrived French Canadians. By 1910; a study of twenty-one industries reported that 52.9 percent of all employees were foreign-born, some two-thirds of them from the countries of

³⁷ Allan Kraut, The Huddled Masses: The Immigrant in American Society, 1880-1921, (Arlington Heights, Illinois, Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1982) p 9.

southern and eastern Europe. In some industries such as textiles, clothing manufacturing, cigar making, mining, and meatpacking, the percentage was even higher. During this period of immigration, Slavs, Poles, and Italians frequently found jobs in railroad and construction work, two areas that were dominated by Irish who preceded them during the 1840's.³⁸

Approximately 4,500,000 Italians entered the United States between 1880 and 1921. Over 80 percent of them came from Il Mezzogiorno, the southern provinces of Italy.³⁹ Reasons for massive immigration from this section of Italy were varied. Agricultural problems were numerous and deep rooted. The majority of the land was owned by landlords who charged high rents, paid low wages, provided unsteady employment, and did not reinvest any of the profits back into the marginally fertile soil. Peasant protest against this unjust system proved futile, since the pressure of increasing population insured that the supply of agricultural workers would always exceed the demand. During the period from 1870 to 1900 population growth outstripped the increase in the gross national product and produced a decline in per capita income. As a result of these circumstances, peasants who owned land added to the labor glut by seeking extra work as agricultural laborers in order to compensate for their diminished incomes.⁴⁰

Wages paid to both skilled and unskilled workers in Italy were extremely low. Agricultural workers, who farmed the entire year, averaged between 16 to 30 cents a day.

³⁸ Ibid, p. 12.

³⁹ Ibid, p. 19.

⁴⁰ Luciano J. Iorizzo, Salvatore Mondello, The Italian Americans, (New York, Twayne Publishers, 1971): p.40.

Workers who only labored during harvest time made between 50 to 60 cents a day on average. Winter season workers only earned between 10 to 20 cents a day on average. The work year was short, averaging between 240 and 270 paid days per year.⁴¹

A comparison of Italian wages versus those paid in the United States presents another clear and obvious reason for mass migration. Italian carpenters during this time period made anywhere from 30 cents to a \$1.40 per day, or for a six-day week, from \$1.80 to \$8.40. In the United States carpenters made about \$18.00 for a fifty-hour week. General laborers in Italy earned about 60 cents a day or \$ 3.50 per week, while in the United States common laborers were pulling down \$9.50 for a fifty-six hour week.⁴²

There were many jobs to be had in America. American natives and earlier immigrants from Northern and Western Europe had improved their work skills and moved up the industrial ladder and were no longer available to fill menial jobs. The end result was that several states in the Union became dependent upon the new tide of immigration from southern and eastern Europe to perform the rough labor that was necessary to build a rapidly growing nation. By 1900, these new immigrants were the main source of labor that worked on the railroad. The Italians, the Poles, the Hungarians, and the Czechs dug and enlarged canals and waterways. They built urban water systems and constructed sewage lines throughout America. They harvested fruits, vegetables and grains in the rural areas of the country and eventually worked in the iron and copper mines.⁴³

⁴¹ Ibid. p. 43.

⁴² Ibid. p. 44.

⁴³ Ibid. p. 52.

The Italians, like other groups of immigrants before them, were subjected to ill treatment by nativists who viewed these people as “the scum of Europe.” Ethnocentric evaluations of the great migration from Italy by the mass media failed to perceive that the Italian immigrants were poor but not destitute, illiterate but not ignorant. Professor C.L. Speranza of Columbia College wrote in 1889 that the popular contention of misery as the primary reason for the exodus from Il Mezzogiorno was erroneous. Speranza contended that the underlying reason for mass migration was the Southern Italians’ desire to better their economic condition, along with a conviction that the improvement could be attained in America.⁴⁴

In his book, *The Huddled Masses*, Allan Kraut, presents a broader perspective as to how and why massive immigration occurred in the United States between 1880 and 1920. Kraut points out that what created a crisis, “were the changes in how people lived. The family, the church, the social hierarchy, the political establishment, the cement of community in traditional European societies, proved unable to absorb the shock waves of change.” A rapidly increasing population, a declining agrarian system, and the emerging industrial revolution fractured traditional political, economic, and social relationships. This new culture created an environment that isolated the people. Political institutions and social customs could no longer stabilize their lives. People began to solve their problems as individuals. The technological advances of this new age in Europe made emigration and even easier, safer, and a more economical choice than ever before.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 59.

⁴⁵ Kraut, *The Huddled Masses*, p. 28.

Emigrants had to undergo the process of preparing themselves to leave by uprooting themselves psychologically as well as physically. “Fears and anxieties had to be overcome, friends and relatives bid painful farewell, and belongings sorted through for departure.” The journey to America seemed vast and perilous. Often times parents and children parted fearing they would never see each other again. Frequently they were correct.⁴⁶

The Huddled Masses offered a vivid description of the effect of immigration in the small villages of southern and eastern Europe. People in little villages were closely connected and news of one of their own getting ready to immigrate caused public reaction. Kraut quotes from Mary Antin’s, *The Promised Land*, in which she recalls the day she received a steamer ticket sent by her father in America: “Before sunset news was all over Plotzk....Then they began to come. Friends and foes, distant relatives and new acquaintances, young and old, wise and foolish, debtors and creditors, and mere neighbors -- from every quarter of the city.... a steady stream of them poured into our street, both day and night, till the hour of our departure.” On the actual day of departure, a procession of villagers escorted the family to the train station, Antin recalls:

The procession resembled both a funeral and a triumph. The women wept over us, reminding us eloquently of the perils of the sea, of the bewilderment of a foreign land, of the torments of homesickness that would await us. They bewailed my mother’s lot, who had to tear herself away from blood relations to go among strangers; who had to face gendarmes, ticket agents, and sailors, unprotected by a masculine escort; who had to care for four young children in the confusion travel, and very likely feed them trefah (non-kosher food) or see them starve on the way. Or they praised her for a brave pilgrim, and expressed confidence in her ability to cope with gendarmes and ticket agents, and blessed her with every other word, and all but carried her in their arms.

⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 44.

Leaving for America was a bittersweet occasion. It was a triumph that was touched with regret and the loss of a part of one's life and identity.⁴⁷ Emotional loss was only a part of the hardships that the immigrants from southern and eastern Europe endured. Travel from villages to ports of departure oftentimes proved to be daunting. During the early stages of immigration in the 1880s many immigrants hiked for days and weeks with their belongings on their backs. Some used handcarts that they pushed or pulled, and those who could afford it came in horse-drawn wagons that they either owned or rented. By the turn of the century, the European railway lines were complete. This made the journey to ports of departure less exhausting and a lot less risky. Arrival at a port of departure did not guarantee an unencumbered exit to America. Emigrants who left from Hungary were required to secure birth certificates and show them to government officials prior to departure. Male emigrants had to be cleared of their military obligation before being allowed to leave. Passports were issued only after all criteria had been met and tickets were sold to only those who possessed passports. Bribery and the sale of falsified documents became a common practice. All immigrants were required to endure a medical examination before boarding the ships for America. As a result of increasingly stringent health standards, by 1907, nearly 40,000 people were rejected by physicians at European docks. At various European ports such as Liverpool, Havre, Trieste, Fiume, and Palermo, American doctors or those selected by American consuls worked with local physicians who represented steamship companies of European governments. Despite the

⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 44.

best efforts to restrict availability, medical certificates, like passports, were often attainable to anyone who could pay the price.⁴⁸

Kraut described emigrant processing procedures.

At Naples, the ship lines issued ration-tickets and travelers were sent to a licensed hotel and then to a restaurant for dinner, which often consisted of a thick soup or stew, melon, and wine. Vendors along the way peddled all manner of food to those still hungry. On the day the ship was scheduled to depart, American consular officials saw each emigrant and provided vaccinations. After a final medical inspection by an American doctor and a last check of papers, the emigrants boarded and made last minute purchases of food, tobacco, and lucky charms from merchants in small boats bobbing around the anchored ship. The emigrants were finally underway.⁴⁹

Most immigrants spent the voyage to America in steerage class. Steerage was the below deck compartments of a ship that was located fore and aft where the ship's steering equipment had been in earlier times. The steerage compartments that the immigrants sailed in the late nineteenth century were cargo holds without portholes. They had only two ventilators and were cramped with two or more tiers of metal bunks. Men and women were segregated, often times separated by nothing more than a blanket draped over a line in the center of the compartment. Children traveled with their mothers. Larger ships that sailed across the Atlantic crammed as many as 2,000 men, women, and children into compartments unfit for any human habitation.⁵⁰

The voyage took between eight and fourteen days. The short duration of the trip reduced the likelihood of steerage epidemics, a common occurrence during earlier periods of immigration. However, because of the close quarters, occasional out breaks of

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* p. 47.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* p 47

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p 49..

typhus and smallpox did occur. Emigrants cooked their own meals and had to bring their own utensils on board. Many immigrants brought food with them. Toilet facilities were inadequate, with later ships providing on average one toilet for every forty-seven travelers.⁵¹

The processing of immigrants prior to 1850 was a rather casual affair. Port officials maintained records of immigration in a rather haphazard style, if it was done at all. The entrance of 4,500,000 immigrants from northern and western Europe by mid century convinced port officials to adopt a more uniform, systematic approach to process the endless stream of newcomers.⁵²

Between 1855 and 1892, immigrants who arrived at the busiest port, New York, were taken by ferryboat to Castle Garden at the tip of Manhattan Island. Castle Garden was America's first Immigrant landing port. Massachusetts, Maryland, and Pennsylvania had major ports and they also made haphazard attempts to solve the problems of mass migration.⁵³

The new influx of southern and eastern European immigrants to the shores of the United States, beginning in 1880, put great stress on what few immigration facilities there were. The United States Congress appointed the Ford Committee to investigate immigration procedures as a response to many reports of abuse and inefficiency. The Committee issued a report in 1889 that was highly critical of the way the states handled problems represented by the new wave of immigration. The report also reflected a change in attitude of American officials toward the immigrant. The attitude was a change

⁵¹ *Ibid.* p. 49.

⁵² *Ibid.* p. 51.

⁵³ *Ibid.* p. 52.

of emphasis from protecting the immigrant against the hardships of America, to one that protected America from potentially dangerous elements of the immigrant population. The state of New York spent in excess of \$20 million annually to care for immigrants who were categorized as paupers or mentally ill. The Federal Government created the Bureau of Immigration in 1891 to regulate immigration procedures. The Bureau took on the responsibility of acting as a kind of filter that protected America from immigrants who were likely to become public charges. Idiots, paupers, people who suffered from dangerous or contagious diseases, people who were convicted felons or who had been convicted of a crime or misdemeanor involving moral turpitude were not allowed to enter the United States.⁵⁴

Laws became even more stringent in 1903. Beggars, the insane, prostitutes and anarchists were deemed unfit for admission. Four years later, Congress added to the list of undesirables the feeble minded, imbeciles, persons with physical or mental defects which might affect their ability to support themselves, sufferers of tuberculosis, and children under sixteen who were unaccompanied by parents or legal guardians. Congress also raised the penalty against shipping companies that carried immigrants who were found to be unfit by United States Immigration officials. In 1917, the immigration laws became even more stringent when a new provision required that all immigrants be able to read and write a language. According to Kraut, "The literacy requirement was especially aimed at the peasants of southern and eastern Europe. It was a thinly veiled attempt to discriminate against the new immigrants."⁵⁵

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p. 52.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* p 53.

In order to handle the processing of immigrants within the strict new federal guidelines, a facility was constructed in 1890 at Ellis Island, located in New York harbor, the greatest center of immigrant activity. The first wooden structure burned down in 1897. The federal government rebuilt it and completed a massive set of red brick buildings in 1901. The first floor of the main building included baggage handling facilities, railroad ticket offices, food sales counters, and a waiting room (for those who were traveling to other states). A mezzanine floor held observation areas and administrative offices. The Great Hall included the registry room and on the second floor were detention areas, offices, waiting areas, and special inspection offices.⁵⁶

Upon arrival to America, the typical immigrant docked at Ellis Island and was met by a uniformed officer who pinned an identity tag on the immigrant's clothing. The tag, which was numbered, matched the number that was assigned to the immigrant in the ship's manifest. After being handled in this manner, like a piece of freight, the newcomer to the promise of America was administered his first subtle test. The ascent of the stairs to the main hall, carrying all of his luggage, gave physicians an opportunity to scrutinize the general health of the immigrant after he had endured the physical stress of carrying heavy suitcases up a flight of stairs. Overall fitness of the immigrant was determined after examining hands, eyes, and throats. The health of the heart could be determined to be strong or weak after the climb up the stairs and the exertion caused by the physical stress, the doctors believed, revealed deformities and defective posture.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 54

⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 6.

The immigrant was then given a stamped identification card. As the physicians examined the card, they somehow determined by process of observation, whether or not the immigrant had defective eyesight. The immigrant was oftentimes examined for trachoma. This painful test required the examination of the immigrants eyelids which were turned out by using a glove buttonhook. Scalps were probed for lice and the immigrant was required to turn his head so his facial expression could be examined. Doctors of the day believed that certain expressions were indicative of mental disorders.⁵⁸

As the immigrant proceeded on his way to the great hall, he hoped that he had no chalk marks on the right shoulder of his coat. “Letters marked in chalk stood for the particular disability which might cause that immigrant’s detention, or even rejection: L for lameness, K for hernia, G for goiter, X for mental illness and so on.” An immigrant who failed to pass the medical exam was kept behind for a more thorough inspection. A few days of rest and some nourishing food were sometimes all that were needed for the immigrant to remove any medical objections.⁵⁹

After the medical examination came the encounter with the immigration inspector. The inspectors, with the assistance of interpreters, asked the immigrant the following questions. What is your name? What is your nationality? Are you married? What is your occupation? Who paid your passage to the United States? How much money do you have? Have you ever been to a poor house or been in prison? The literacy requirement that was introduced in 1917, which required all immigrants to demonstrate literacy in a foreign language, was administered in a rather curious way. Inspectors, who

⁵⁸ Ibid. p 56.

⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 56.

usually could not speak a foreign language, gave the immigrant a card instructing the immigrant in his native language “scratch your right ear.” All immigrants who accomplished this feat were thought to have read the card and therefore to be literate.⁶⁰

To the English speaking immigration inspectors, names of the immigrants were a constant source of bewilderment. Many of the immigrants were not able to spell their surnames in English. Inspectors either spelled the names as best they could phonetically or they simply Americanized a name. The story of “Sean Ferguson” presented a graphic example of how this process worked. A German Jewish immigrant became so unnerved by the impatient, incessant questioning of an inspector that when the immigrant was asked his name he answered in Yiddish “Schoyn vergessen (I forget).” The inspector who only spoke English, did not have any understanding of Yiddish and utilizing a crude phonetic interpretation of the immigrant’s statement, welcomed “Sean Ferguson” to the shores of America. Based on the limited linguistic skills of the inspectors, it was not uncommon for members of the same family to exit Ellis Island with different surnames. “The similar sound of the Ukrainian “G” and English “H” and an inspector’s poor penmanship, left half of one Ukrainian family named Heskes and the other half named Gesker.”⁶¹

Eighty per cent of the three to four hundred people per day who passed before immigration officials during the peak years of 1880 to 1920 were admitted without difficulty. These immigrants returned to the first floor of the main building where friends

⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 56.

⁶¹ Ibid. p. 57.

might meet them and relatives who accompanied them on the ferryboat ride to New York.⁶²

The twenty percent who did not pass through the procedures of Ellis Island routinely were detained for various lengths of time. They were often kept in compartments made out of wire that displayed them like puppies in a pet store for all newly arriving immigrants to witness. The unlucky twenty per cent slept in three-tiered metal bunks that were organized in rows with very little space between them. New York is a very humid place. This became evident to the immigrants who tried to sleep in the crowded environment on hot summer nights. The beds often were infested with lice as well. Most of the inhabitants of this depressing setting arrived there because they had failed some type of medical test. A Board of Inquiry was presented with medical reports of the rejected immigrants and was responsible for the final decision of each immigrant's admissibility.⁶³

In reality, only a very small percentage of immigrants were turned back at Ellis Island. In 1907, a peak year in immigration, there were 1,000,746 admissions and 195,540 detentions. Of those detained, 121,737 were held temporarily, 64,510 were held for specific inquiry, and 9,203 were hospitalized. Exclusions by the Board of Inquiry comprised only 15 percent of the total cases heard. Statistically, an immigrant newly arrived to Ellis Island had very little to fear.⁶⁴

After surviving the processing of Ellis Island, new immigrants had to make decisions on where they would live and work. From 1880 to 1920, the United States had

⁶² Ibid. p. 57.

⁶³ Ibid. p. 58.

⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 59.

transformed from a rural agrarian society to an urban industrial culture. There was no longer inexpensive abundant land that had attracted earlier immigrants. Laborers were needed to fill thousands of jobs that existed in factories that were located in an urban environment.⁶⁵

Even though some ethnic groups, The Italians for example, lived agrarian lives as virtual serfs, they readily adapted to life in the big cities of America. American cities with abundant factory jobs provided these people an avenue to free themselves from the oppression of agriculture. Italians also became miners and immigrated to Butte, Montana, where they became an integral part of the workforce. The Italians associated wealth, power, prestige, and all worldly comforts with the non-agrarian lifestyle.⁶⁶

Polish immigrants were concentrated in the industrial cities of the Great Lakes Basin, from New York to Illinois. Unlike the Italians, Poles planned to live in America long enough to earn high wages and return to Poland. For this reason, most preferred the high wages of the coal mines of Scranton, Pennsylvania, the stockyards of Chicago, or the steelworks of Buffalo, New York.⁶⁷

Greeks, following the pattern of the Italians and Poles, also preferred to settle in urban areas. The Greeks, unlike the Italians and Poles, began to move to the west. By 1907, there were between thirty and forty thousand Greeks west of the Mississippi. In the Rocky Mountain region, Greeks found work in the mines and smelters of Colorado and Utah. In the south and the west, the Greeks oftentimes created their own businesses,

⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 64.

⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 65.

⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 66.

such as restaurants, shoeshine parlors, and fruit stores. The Greeks generally rejected a life of rural isolation and preferred to live in cities.⁶⁸

As a result of the patterns of immigration, many of the older cities of the United States became cities of immigrants. According to census records of 1910, approximately 75 percent of the populations of New York, Chicago, Cleveland, and Boston were made up of immigrants or their offspring. On the West Coast, the port city of San Francisco was extremely popular with immigrants. San Francisco, unlike East Coast cities, had a tremendous influx of Chinese and Japanese immigrants. In 1916, over 72 percent of the population in the city regarded a foreign language as their primary tongue.⁶⁹

In the early twentieth century, the new immigrants were the chief source of labor in almost every area of industrial production. In 1910, the Dillingham Commission reported that 57.9 percent of all employees were foreign-born, approximately two-thirds from southern and eastern Europe. In some industries, such as garment manufacturing, coal mining, slaughtering, meatpacking, construction, and confectionery, the proportion of new immigrant to native born was even higher.⁷⁰

After the process of securing employment in the new land, the immigrant faced another challenge. How was he to adjust to living in a culture that was oftentimes markedly different from the one he had left behind? In order to begin the process of assimilation the immigrant had to determine what it was to be American and ultimately to

⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 67.

⁶⁹ Ibid. p 77.

⁷⁰ Ibid. p 87.

decide which changes were worthwhile and which individual ethnic customs and values were too important to abandon.⁷¹

Faced with the difficulties of life in the new urban environment, some of the immigrants who came from countries fractured by regional conflicts, like the Italians, found a common identity with people from the next town or even another province.⁷² Observing this dynamic, Will Herberg notes that “a new unity began to emerge, a unity defined primarily by language, a unity largely unknown in the Old World but quick to become their very identity in the New. The immigrant church was the primary expression of this unity.”⁷³ In the Old World, immigrants had viewed themselves as members of a village or province. This concept lasted well into the twentieth century as these people had no concept, understanding or interest in nationalism as an ideology. Immigrants from Italy were not Italians in the old country, they were Apulians, Genovese, or Sicilians. Similarly, Germans considered themselves Bavarians, Saxons, or Prussians, while Greeks viewed themselves as Thracians, Macedonians, or men from Crete.

These groups’ established self help societies along village or regional lines. American life was ever changing and too fluid to permit a lasting establishment of these local identities. Like it or not, men and women of many villages and provinces were thrown into the same “ghetto,” and forced to deal with the question of self –identification, self-location and the problem expressed in the question, “What am I?”⁷⁴

⁷¹ Ibid.p. 112.

⁷² Humbert S. Nelli, *Italians In Chicago, 1880-1930, A Study in Ethnic Mobility*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 1970)156.

⁷³ Will Herberg, *Protestant-Catholic-Jew, An Essay in American Religious Sociology* (Garden City, New York, Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1956)24.

⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 24.

The question “What am I?” was created by the abnormal situation of disintegration and crisis that the immigrant faced as he attempted to rebuild his life in the New World. American reality provided the answer. Immigrants began to disregard differences in dialect and custom. The common thread that immigrants began to gravitate towards was their own language, which allowed them to communicate with each other. Awareness of this fact resulted in the immigrant groups naming themselves by their language rather than their place of origin. They became Poles, Russians, Slovaks, Greeks, Italians, or Swedes. By naming themselves after their language, the new character of the immigrant group answered the question of “Who am I?” This was a concept that Americans could understand and accept. Americans often referred to immigrants as members of foreign language groups. To thoughtful Americans and immigrants, language usually meant culture and very soon nationality as well. Intellectuals, who were often nationalist ideologists, and business people, who were eager to create a client base of “fellow countrymen,” greatly encouraged the emergence of this new form of self-identification. To immigrants who began to accept the idea of “nationality,” it seemed as if the idea was almost biological. To become truly assimilated, and part of the great “melting pot” of American culture, an immigrant had to know what “ethnic” group he represented. The new form of identification and self-identification had been a result of American culture and American experience, and represented the first examples of their Americanization.⁷⁵

In Protestant-Catholic-Jew, An Essay in American Religious Sociology, Will Herberg explained that “this new form of self-identification and social location is what

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* p. 26.

we have come to know as the ethnic group. The ethnic group became for millions of Americans, a source of identity, which enabled them to participate in the social, economic, and political life of the total community. "Social-class structure, marriage selection, "availability" of political candidates, church and religious forms, all reflected the profound influence of the ethnic groups into which American reality had organized the bewildered immigrants."⁷⁶

Ethnic nationalism was sometimes created by participation in church. As the importance of the ethnic group began to emerge, it was important for believers to express their faith in relevant linguistic, cultural, and national lines. Conflict arose, as American based churches were not willing to allow foreign-language subdivisions to operate in the existing framework of organization. This compelled the immigrants to set up churches that met their needs. Thus German Methodist churches, Lutheran churches that represented, German, Swedish, Norwegian, and Finnish concerns were established.⁷⁷

Perhaps the harshest test confronted the Roman Catholic Church, a universal church made up, in this country, almost entirely of immigrant groups. Catholics from the very beginning of their history in the United States had been subjected to anti-foreignism, first against the French clergy in the late eighteenth century, followed in succession by the Irish, Germans, Italians, Slovaks, and Poles. As each earlier group became established, it adopted the anti-foreignism to which it had been subjected and directing it toward who ever were the new immigrants. The end result of this behavior was that these ethnic groups tended to develop an intense ethnic nationalism.⁷⁸ Some ethnic groups, like

⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 26.

⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 27.

⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 27.

the Italians of St. Louis, Missouri, centered their lives on the church. In *Immigrants on the Hill, Italian-Americans in St. Louis, 1882-1982*, Gary Mormino described St Ambrose parish as “the unquestioned social center of the community.”⁷⁹

Ethnic nationalism was nurtured in sources other than the church. Foreign Language newspapers and Benevolent Societies were a major source of ethnic pride. Luigi Carnovale, an Italian American journalist, who worked for *La Tribuna Italiana Transatlantica* in Chicago and *La Gazzeta Illustrata* (a magazine) in St. Louis, stated that the foreign-language press provided the immigrant with his best friend in the new homeland. “In the colonial press, in short, the Italian immigrants have always found all that is indispensable, wise advice, moral and material assistance, true and ardent fraternal love, for their success and triumph in America.”⁸⁰

During the peak years of immigration, 1880 to 1920, at least twenty Italian – language newspapers appeared in Chicago alone. These journalistic ventures expressed several viewpoints. The most popular mainstream newspapers were *L'Italia*, founded in 1886, and *La Tribuna Italiana Transatlantica*, founded in 1898. Papers that reflected left wing political views of the day were *La Parola dei Socialisti*, founded in 1908, and *Il Proletario*, which was launched in 1896. These newspapers had an audience that ranged far beyond the city of Chicago. *L'Italia*, for example, claimed a nationwide readership and featured news items and advertisements from communities throughout the Mid-West, the Rocky Mountain area, and the East Coast.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Gary Ross Mormino, *Immigrants on the Hill, Italian Americans in St. Louis, 1882-1982* (Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1986) p. 204.

⁸⁰ Luigi Carnovale, *Il Giornalismo degli emigrati italiani nel Nord America* (Chicago, 1909), 34; also 33, 74, 77.

⁸¹ Nelli, *Italians in Chicago*, p. 159.

The Americanization of immigrants was subtly influenced by some of the newspaper use of language. *La Tribuna Italiana Transatlantica* which began as a weekly paper was edited by journalists who liked to use Italian-American slang to make their stories more colorful and appealing to immigrant readers. Words like “storo” for store, “bosso” for boss, “ganga” for gang, “grosseria” for grocery store, and “sciarap” for a command to be silent, are some examples that are found in this newspaper. This newspaper did not aspire to compete with other papers in precise factual reporting, but confined itself to opinion, special features like news from Washington, D.C., and reports on Italian theater and opera.⁸²

Some newspapers that attempted to instruct and help the immigrant make adjustments to the new land had definite political agendas. *La Parola dei Socialisti*, an Italian voice for the Socialist Party, intended to create and maintain worker solidarity, protect workers’ interests, give them news of the “Movement” in the United States, and provide them with general news of their homeland, Italy. The paper and the Party attempted to help immigrants and tried to educate the new workers how to obtain the good things in life through political activities and the discriminate use of the strike.⁸³ Other ethnic groups published newspapers that addressed labor problems. *The Yidische Folkstzeitung*, published in New York, attempted to persuade Jewish workers to become unionized by speaking to them in simple language about the concept of solidarity: “When two people establish a relationship as husband and wife, they create a family organization.” This “organization” is what the Jewish workers needed to better their lives.

⁸² Ibid. p. 161.

⁸³ Ibid. p. 161.

The Arbeiter Tzeitung, a much more sophisticated newspaper, created in 1890, also addressed labor problems, but featured prominent writers like Abraham Cahan who, under the by line of *Der Proletarishker Magid*, “shrewdly united the manner of an old-country preacher with the stripped ideas of socialist agitation.”⁸⁴

Foreign language newspapers began to wane as second-generation immigrants began to acquired a sufficient understanding of English. In 1922, the Foreign-Language Information Service, in a report called the *Bulletin*, stated that “American born children of immigrants preferred to read American papers, and that the foreign born themselves after learning English preferred to utilize American papers for general news, and use foreign language newspapers for news of the home country.” The same pattern occurred in other ethnic groups. The Mary McDowell Papers located at the Chicago Historical Society, and compiled in 1922, reported that Lithuanians preferred to read American newspapers because there was more news in them.⁸⁵

Italian newspapers, despite their shortcomings, provided many positive benefits to the immigrants. The papers were written in a simple, idiomatic style. Using a mixture of Italian and English words and phrases, the foreign language press actually taught immigrants how to adjust to American papers, which were filled with pictures and used language that was also simple and idiomatic.⁸⁶

Italian newspapers in the United States functioned as guides, coordinators, promoters and sources of ethnic pride (Italian) that was understood on a national level. The newspapers served as an intermediary between uneducated, frightened immigrant

⁸⁴ Irving Howe, *World of Our Fathers*,(New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976) pp110,111.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* p. 169.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* p. 169.

masses and the new institutions and strange people of their new homeland. Many Italians were educated on American popular culture by reading articles in the sports pages that talked about local baseball teams and other sporting events. The papers acted as a kind of span or bridge between the known (Italian villages) and the unknown (strange American cities). The newspapers also helped to identify local leaders in the community who could be looked to for support by the immigrants. The real importance of the newspaper value to the ethnic community lay in the fact that it was the main link between tradition and new experiences.⁸⁷

Immigrants joined many fraternal and mutual benefit societies. Membership in these organizations helped the newcomers adjust to life in America. Some of these organizations, The Columbian Federation and the Order of Sons of Italy in America, were and still are fraternal insurance organizations. The Columbian Federation was organized in Chicago in 1893, and the Order Sons of Italy in America was formed in New York City in 1905.⁸⁸

Each society, fraternal organization, and mutual benefit society usually had its own doctor and a commonly employed attorney as well. The doctors and lawyers usually belonged to the membership of the organizations. Their organizational duties consisted of tending the medical and legal needs of fellow members. The system benefited both members and the doctors and lawyers. Members enjoyed aid and advice during times of need and the doctors and attorneys had a ready made client and patient base that assured

⁸⁷ Ibid. p. 170.

⁸⁸ Ibid. p. 174.

them of income regardless of whether or not they could attract clients or patients who were not members of their organization.⁸⁹

Fraternal and mutual aid groups began to include social functions as a method of retaining and building membership. Social events became so popular that each organization celebrated Italian and American holidays independently. In the spring of 1906, in the city of Chicago, the city's major Italian social organizations combined to present, "one brotherhood under the name of the United Italian Societies," in an attempt to coordinate social activities. The experiment was so popular that in only two years the United Italian Societies raised enough funds to construct a building that could be used by all affiliated clubs. The edifice named "Italian Hall" was constructed at Clark and Erie streets. This hall was used for meetings, banquets and dances. By the late 1920s, Italian social clubs had a membership that numbered between five and six thousand.⁹⁰

Italian societies generated much interest in Italian nationalism and identity by actively celebrating Italian holidays. They celebrated the unification of Italy on September 20, birthdays of heroes like Garibaldi and Mazzini, and the birthday of whoever happened to be the reigning monarch of Italy. The societies collected money from their members and constructed monuments and statues of leading cultural heroes like Dante, Columbus, Verdi, and Garibaldi.⁹¹

The societies also created a genuine passion for patriotism in its members by celebrating American holidays like Independence Day and Memorial Day. These groups also worked to gain national recognition of the discovery of America by Christopher

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* p. 175.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 177.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* p. 179.

Columbus and did succeed in making it a state holiday. In 1910, fifteen states, including New York and Illinois, had officially designated October 12th as Columbus Day. The attempt to make it a national holiday continued during succeeding years.⁹²

Before the creation of the Social Security System in the United States, the immigrants' mutual benefit societies and fraternal organizations provided social insurance. After realizing that regular infusion of "new blood" into the organizations and societies to keep the clubs financially stable was a fallacious idea, they adopted the fixed premium insurance concept. This technique collected more money in the early years so that a reserve fund that was accumulated made up for costs in later years when membership had not increased in great numbers. The Italo-American National Union, the Sons of Italy, and other organizations followed this practice.⁹³

The mutual benefit societies and the fraternal organizations instilled a sense of ethnic pride in the new immigrants. Involvement in the construction of ethnic monuments, statues, and the celebration of ethnic patriotic dates gave the immigrants self-respect and confidence in "their" glorious past as they faced a strange new country. Education in the history of their homeland provided an opportunity to achieve equal footing with Americans and other immigrant groups who also indicated pride in their own origin.⁹⁴

Ethnic pride sometimes took the form of harsh criticism directed towards other ethnic groups. The Irish competed with the Italians for jobs and stature in the New World; remarks written by both sides were not complimentary. In the 1880s, when the

⁹² Ibid. p. 179.

⁹³ Ibid. p. 175.

⁹⁴ Ibid. p. 181.

great tide of immigration began, writings of the Irish offered a glimpse of what they thought of their Italian competitors. An Irish critic remarked in 1888, “While an American or an Irishman preferred to starve than to seek charity, the Italian was always ready to ask for public assistance. It was the absence of ‘manly qualities,’ that separated the Italian from the other ethnic groups in America.”⁹⁵

An Italian professor at Columbia attempted to address the ethnic slurs by pointing out that while some Italians sought public assistance, many were injured and disabled because of the laborious work they performed. *Il Progresso*, an Italian newspaper, responded to Irish criticisms by stating in 1888, “that Irish-Americans knew how to better themselves only by the use of violence and strikes and the acceptance of public charity.” *Il Progresso* continued its criticism by stating, “These miserable wretches driven from their own land because they have shown the world an incapacity to govern themselves now come here, maintained by public charity, to urge war against those honest laborers who have fought for independence and have attained it.” In a final response of invective, *Il Progresso* wrote, after listing Italy’s artistic and scientific contributions to society, that the Irish gifts to the general American culture were strikes, boycotts, and dynamite.⁹⁶

Not all patterns of immigration conformed to the much studied, industrialized culture of the East Coast. Examination of the patterns of immigration in the Rocky Mountain region provide examples of immigration that were caused at times by economic necessity and random chance. A town called Black Eagle, which has since been absorbed by the city of Great Falls, Montana, was a smelter site for the Anaconda Company. The

⁹⁵ Luciano J. Iorizzo, Salvatore, Mondello, The Italian Americans (New York, New York, Twayne Publishers, Inc, 1971) p. 65.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* p. 65.

Company provided many good paying jobs for new immigrants. Examination of a pictorial collage at the beginning of the *Black Eagle History Book, In the Shadow of the Big Stack*, reveals an interesting trend in the immigration habits of some ethnic groups. The majority of the population of Black Eagle was Croatian and Italian. These two groups appear to have emigrated from two villages, Bribir in Croatia, and the village of Santa Maria Del Giudice, Italy. The security that these people felt by staying in their ethnic groups probably made their transition and assimilation to the New World much less stressful than the groups who emigrated to the industrial centers of the East Coast.⁹⁷

Some immigrants came to the West at the whim of chance and luck. Lona Peterson immigrated to the United States from her native Denmark, departing from Copenhagen during the early years of the First World War. She arrived in America and was processed in New York instead of Ellis Island. Lona was twenty-nine years old when she immigrated to the United States and probably did not travel in steerage, which would explain why she did not have to be processed at Ellis Island. She was alone and was unable to speak English. Through sign language and luck, Lona was able to procure a train ticket and traveled to Minneapolis where she transferred to a train headed for Havre, Montana. She went to this bleak town to find her sister, but upon arriving there, discovered that her sister had moved to Seattle. Lona's luck improved when she met some Danish speakers in Havre helped her procure a job at a government-run poor house, where she was paid twenty dollars a month. Lona had spent her early years working on a farm in Denmark. The discovery of indoor plumbing during the course of her duties at

⁹⁷ Gail Michelotti, *Black Eagle History Book*, no listed publisher, or publishing date. Located in the University of Montana special collection area.

the poor house was an eye-opening experience. She eventually ended up in Helena where she worked as a cook at Fort Harrison.⁹⁸

Lona Peterson did not mention the isolation that likely felt when she worked in Havre under what must have been incredibly difficult circumstances. She was a single young woman working among old poor men and spoke very little English. She endured the harsh winters of Havre, and she endured the loneliness that comes to one who is separated from culture and family. Lona had no fraternal organization or mutual benefit society to help her adjust to life in America. Despite the hardships, Lona appreciated the opportunity to work in a new country, because America was a more egalitarian country than the class conscious countries of Europe.⁹⁹

Similarly, Montenegrin miners who lived in Bear Creek (Red Lodge), brought their cultural habits and adapted them to their new land. Montenegrin immigrant John Barovich gave some interesting insight into the cultural makeup and habits of the Montenegrins:

We had parties at Easter and Christmas. At Easter time, my mother would boil three, four or five dozen eggs. We used to use vinegar and everything else to toughen them up. The men would start out in the morning from one end of town with a pot full of eggs. You would come to a house. You would have an egg contest. This party would hold his egg point up and you would hit point down and you better not miss the point and cheat by hitting on the side. If you cracked the egg, you get the egg. This went on all day long, busting the eggs. Then there would be a fistfight over the fact that somebody didn't hit the egg on the very point. That's how serious they were about winning.....

Then at Christmas time was the other event. They'd start partying from house to house, bring their revolvers along and get a few drinks and then they'd start unloading the guns through the ceilings. The next day they

⁹⁸ Lona Peterson, Interviewed by Steve Inman, 11 November, 1979, interview OH 084, tape .University of Montana Library, Missoula, Mt.

⁹⁹ Ibid. Oh084 tape.

were out patching the roofs. I tell you they were something. Hot tempered as hell. Our Montenegrins were awfully hot tempered.¹⁰⁰

Anaconda and Butte, two important towns located in Western Montana, emerged as the center of the mining industry that was the dominant economic force in Montana at the turn of the twentieth century. The patterns of immigration that occurred in each city differed. An analysis of how and why these differences happened will help to understand why ethnic rivalries were more intense in Butte than they were in Anaconda. A company town that was created to operate the smelter that processed the raw ore obtained from the mines in Butte, Anaconda's small size and domination by a single industry presented special challenges to immigrants anxious to preserve old country ways. Despite its proportionately high numbers of foreign-born, Anaconda's size created an environment of cultural exchange rather than neighborhoods that maintained a rigid ethnic identity. Residents of many ethnic backgrounds worshipped, lived, socialized, worked, and played together.¹⁰¹

The city of Butte eventually became a great melting pot of many ethnic groups. Before this happened, the city was an Irish enclave established by the founder of the Anaconda Company, Marcus Daly. Daly was born in Ireland in 1841 and immigrated to New York in 1856. Marcus moved to California at the age of twenty-one, after spending five years in New York. He worked in the silver mines of the Comstock in Virginia City Nevada and rapidly advanced to a supervisory position. Daly moved to Salt Lake City

¹⁰⁰ John Barovich, Interviewed by Anna Zellick, 14 May, 1991, Montana Oral History Association, Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena, Mt.

¹⁰¹ Laurie Mercier, Anaconda, Labor, Community, and Culture in Montana's Smelter City (Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 2001)p.22.

and went to work for the Walker Brothers' mining company. In 1876, he was sent to Butte to investigate the commercial possibilities of the Alice Mine, a struggling silver enterprise. The property impressed Daly, who was then able to convince the Walkers to purchase the mine. Daly invested \$5,000 of his own money with \$25,000 from the Walkers and moved to Butte to manage the new mine. In 1880, using money that he made from the Alice, Daly purchased the Anaconda Mine from another Irishman named Edward Hickey.¹⁰²

Daly mined the Anaconda as a silver interest until 1882, when his miners discovered at the three-hundred-foot level a vein of copper that would make it at that time, the richest copper mine the world had seen.¹⁰³ As Daly developed his properties, miners began to come to Butte in ever increasing numbers. The fact that many of these miners were Irish was more than mere coincidence. Marcus Daly, himself an Irishman, maintained a devotion to Ireland and various aspects of Irish culture. He was a member of the Irish Catholic Ancient Order of Hibernians, considered for membership in the Robert Emmet Literary Society, and a generous benefactor of the Catholic Church in Butte, Anaconda, and other Mid-Western Cities.¹⁰⁴

Daly's interest in all things Celtic was not the real reason that the Irish immigrated to Butte in large numbers. Daly needed skilled miners. Many of the miners he had worked with in California, Nevada, and Utah were Irishmen who had impressed

¹⁰² David M. Emmons, The Butte Irish, Class and Ethnicity in an American Mining Town, 1875-1925, (Urbana, Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1989) p.20.

¹⁰³ William Lang, Richard Roeder, and Michael Malone, Montana a History of Two Centuries (Seattle; University of Washington Press, 1976): p. 201.

¹⁰⁴ Emmons, The Butte Irish, p. 21.

him. The promise of good steady work and his relatively sympathetic treatment of the Irish created a network of workers who knew of the hiring practices of Daly's Anaconda Company, and regardless of their level of skill or experience, they beat a steady path to Butte.¹⁰⁵

As the mines grew and prospered, the miners received wages that were almost twice what industrial workers earned. The average industrial worker in 1891 made less than \$600, while many Butte miners earned well over a \$1,000 per year. The lure of steady work and the ease with which Irish immigrants could make their way to Butte on the four transcontinental rail lines that serviced Butte, created an environment ripe for a major Irish immigration.¹⁰⁶

Irish immigrants sent back news of their positive experience in Butte to the homeland in the form of letters. The end result was that by 1895, Butte had a self-sustaining Irish immigration. "Hugh O'Daly, for example, visited other western mining towns but settled on Butte because many of the other towns were insufficiently Irish and / or had no Catholic Church." The path from Ireland to the mines in Butte is to be found in Dave Emmons, *The Butte Irish*, it reads, "Skibereen to Queenstown; Queenstown to Boston; Boston to Butte and the Mountain Con Mine" where Jim Brennan was the foreman and known to favor fellow Irish job applicants.¹⁰⁷

As the mining industry took off, Butte enjoyed great prosperity and growth. Between the years 1880 to 1916, Butte's population multiplied thirty times, starting at three thousand and growing to almost ninety thousand people. During this time, Butte

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. p.21.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. p. 25.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 30.

was the largest metropolitan area in the five-state region of the northern Rockies. Butte's origins, unlike other Western cities, were built exclusively by a swiftly growing mining industry. Butte was known as "the Pittsburgh of the West," because large corporations controlled its economy and it was dominated by a single heavy industry.¹⁰⁸

From 1890 to the beginning of World War I, Butte experienced the exhilarating ride of the boom and bust economic cycle that copper provided. The Irish were the dominant ethnic group, but the economic good times began to attract other immigrants. These new immigrants, Finns, Serbs, Croatians, and Italians, arrived to seek their part of the American dream. This influx of immigrants resulted in the creation of neighborhoods that established boundaries of ethnicity and class¹⁰⁹

Between the years of 1890 to 1930, Butte was the most ethnically diverse city in the intermountain West. A large percentage of Butte's population was foreign born. In Butte, unlike Anaconda, some ethnic groups were the objects of intense discrimination. Southeastern European immigrants became the focus of irrational accusations. For example, the *Butte Evening News* in 1910, declared that, "bohunks were driving the white men slowly but surely out of the camp."¹¹⁰

Miners lived and worked under harsh conditions. *The Hard Rock Miners*, by Richard Lingenfelter, presented a graphic description of miners' work.

View their work! Descending from the surface in the shaft-cages, they enter narrow Galleries where the air is scarce respirable. By the dim light of their lanterns a dingy rock surface, braced by rotting props is visible. The stench of decaying vegetable matter, hot foul water, and human excretions intensify the effects of the heat. The men throw off their

¹⁰⁸ Mary Murphy, *Mining Cultures, Men, Women, and Leisure in Butte, 1914-41* (Urbana and Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 197) p. Xiv.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. p. 4.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. p. 14.

clothes at once. Only a light breech-cloths covers their hips, and thick soled shoes protect their feet from the scorching rocks and steaming rills of water that trickle over the floor of the levels. Except for these coverings they toil naked, with heavy drops of sweat starting from every pore....Yet though naked, they can only work at some stopes for a few moments at a time, dipping their heads repeatedly under water showers from conduit pipes, and frequently filling their lungs with fresh air at the open ends of the blower-tubes. Then they are forced to go back to stations where the ventilation is better and gain strength for the renewal of their labor.¹¹¹

The miners had to consume extraordinary amounts of ice and water to survive the heat of the mines. The hardrock miner labored in temperatures well above 100 degrees F. in the deep levels of many mines throughout the West. The air in the deep mines was fouled both by the stench of excrement and by the accumulation of carbon dioxide. An overabundance of carbon dioxide presented a greater danger because it would make the miners lose consciousness.¹¹² As a result of the extreme conditions suffered by miners, they were subject to many diseases of the respiratory system. The most general affliction of the hard rock miner was silicosis, caused by breathing the fine silica or quartz dust from drilling and blasting.¹¹³

Anaconda, the site of the smelter, presented its own hazards. Although work in the smelter was not as dangerous as the life of a hardrock miner, the work nevertheless posed serious health risks. Accidents ranged from explosions and electrocutions to

¹¹¹ Richard Lingenfelter, *Hardrock Miners, A History of the Mining Labor Movement in the American West, 1863-1893*, (Berkeley; University of California Press, 1974) : 13, quoting Eliot Lord, Comstock Mining and Miners, (Washington: G.P.O., 1883)

¹¹² *Ibid.* p15.

¹¹³ *Ibid.* p. 16.

scalding by molten metals, burning by acids, crushing by machinery or railroad cars, and falls from high places.¹¹⁴

One of the many stories illustrating these ever present dangers involves a new hire being taught his duties by a fellow worker, “And in here, kid, you only get one chance, when the alarm goes off, you’d better get the hell out as fast as you can, or else.” “Or else they’ll fire me?” “No, or else they’ll bury you!” Despite this grim portrayal of the work environment in the smelter of Anaconda, the job paid some of the highest wages in the United States. Anaconda was considered to be a more pleasant environment than Butte, because most homes had electric lights, modern plumbing and other amenities. These extra benefits made it easier for the smeltermen to raise families.¹¹⁵

The working life span of the average hardrock miner was about ten years.¹¹⁶ In 1908, metal mining had more fatalities than any other industrial job. In Butte, the sordid working conditions coupled with the bleakness of a treeless environment caused by toxic smelter fumes, created an atmosphere of almost hopeless depression. Desperation was represented in the mining culture by the following telling statistic. Butte had a suicide rate two and a half times the general suicide rate of the United States. In the age group 15 to 19, the death by suicide rate was 30 times the national average for young men and 60 times the average for young women.¹¹⁷

At the peak of its new found industrial might America was a country rife with social problems caused by its industries. Children operated machinery that often crippled

¹¹⁴ Patrick Morris, Anaconda Montana. Copper Smelting Boom Town on the Western Frontier, (Bethesda, Maryland.:Swann Publishing, 1997): p. 183.

¹¹⁵ Ibid. p. 184.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. p. 184.

¹¹⁷ Pamela Wilson Tollefson, “Myron Brinig’s Butte: Jews In The Wide Open Town,” (M . A. thesis, History, University of Montana, 1994) pp. 37,38.

them for life. Miners worked in aforementioned unsafe conditions, and workers toiled for long hours, usually six and sometimes seven days a week for low wages in sweat shop conditions. The workers, who were generally immigrants, lived in crowded tenements and their family lives were a chaotic, never ending, desperate, hand to mouth existence.

To counteract the excesses of industrialism, a political response known as Progressivism emerged in the late 19th and early twentieth centuries. Progressivism sought to reform all or most of the deleterious side effects caused by the rapid onset of industrialism.¹¹⁸ Progressives attempted to reform society by concentrating on three basic values: democracy, stability, and morality. Democratic reforms came in the form of granting the people the power to write laws and vote on them, through initiative and referendum. Other democratic reforms included the direct election of senators and the ability to recall elected office holders. Stability was provided by eliminating cutthroat competition through the creation of regulatory agencies and federal control of the money supply. Scientific management of the public lands to balance long term needs against short term demands was another way the Progressives sought to provide stability. The government attempted to provide morality by regulating drunkenness, graft, prostitution, and other socially unacceptable customs.¹¹⁹ The Progressive philosophy was also applied to popular social trends that included the sporting boom of the early 1900's. New theories incorporated organized play of youths, supervised by adults. The theories provided an effective method to control wild inner city boys who had an abundance of free time. "Progressive reformers believed sports kept young men out of trouble by

¹¹⁸ Arthur Link, Richard McCormick, Progressivism, (Wheeling, Illinois; Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1983) pp:2-11

¹¹⁹ Mark Wahlgren Summers, The Gilded Age or The Hazard of New Functions, p. 286.

providing alternative, uplifting amusements that substituted for a lost rural world, lack of formal education, the declining influence of religion and family, and the lack of community in the mobile world of the cities.”¹²⁰

This Progressive philosophy of sport became part of the corporate culture with employer sponsored recreational activities. Many companies, including The Pennsylvania Railroad, U.S. Steel, and the National Cash Register Company started industrial sports programs in the early twentieth century and these included the game of baseball. Andrew Carnegie, who was the president of U.S. Steel, believed that, “leisure time activities influenced his workers’ mental, physical, and moral development.”¹²¹

The game of baseball that was played in urban areas at the ‘ball park’, educated immigrants to the nuances of the national pastime Understanding the rules, that were easily acquired, created a democratic environment that engaged all of the spectators on an equal basis. The ball park was a haven for everyone; social standing was irrelevant. Rooting for the local team was all that mattered. The immigrants’ “growing knowledge of the subtleties of the game made them eligible to join the turbulent democracy of protesters who noisily expressed their dissent from the umpire’s decision.”¹²²

¹²⁰ Steven A. Riess, Sports in North America, A documentary History. Volume 6, Sports In The Progressive Era 1900-1920. (Gulf Breeze, Fl.; Academic International Press, 1998): p. xvi.

¹²¹ Ibid. p. xx.

¹²² Gunther Barth, City People, The Rise of Modern City Culture in Nineteenth-Century America. (New York, Oxford University Press, 1980)p.187

Chapter III

Baseball In Montana,

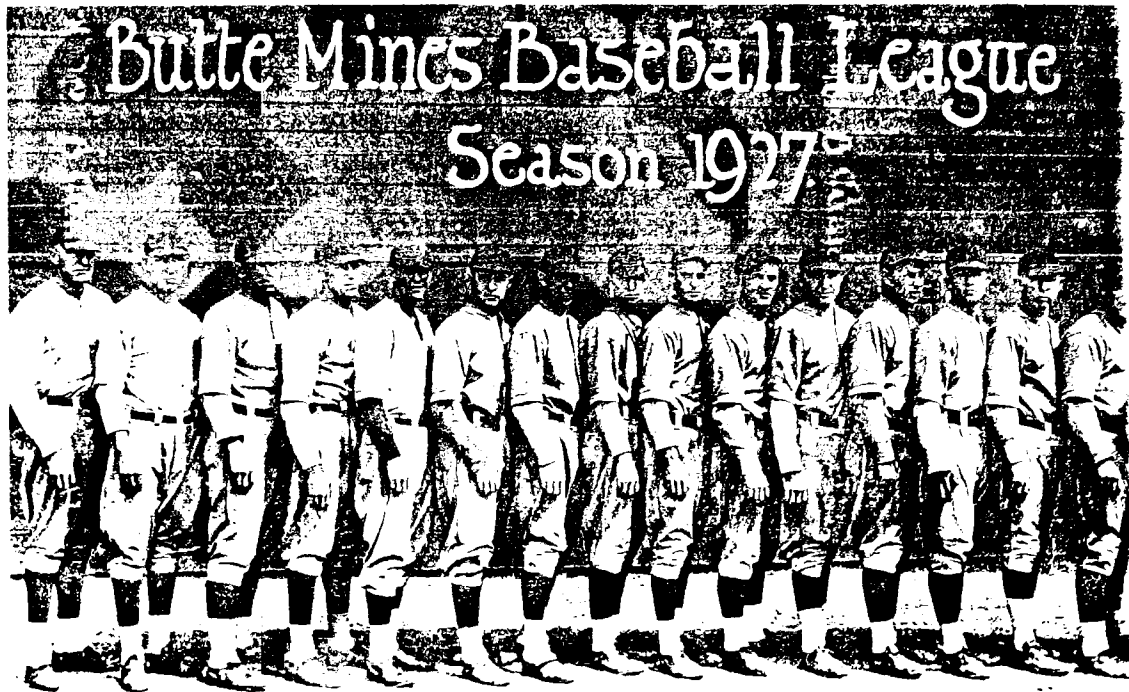
Mines and Independent Leagues





Berkley Mine Baseball Team

1913 — The champion Berkeley Mine team



1927 — Montana Power baseball team

The two photographs above, available at the state historical archives in Helena, Montana, represent elements of the game of baseball in Montana. The first picture, titled “1913- The champion Berkeley Mine team,” is a portrait of approximately forty randomly dressed and posed members of the team. One of the players is holding a sign that has been doctored by some unknown person to say \$200.00. The meaning of the money is open to speculation. Perhaps the team won the money and posed all of these people at their victory party, or maybe the money was some sort of bonus that the miners would realize in wages. The league that they played in, judging by the clothing worn by the players in the picture, must have been casual at best. With close to forty members on the roster, playing time must have been at a premium. In reality, the team was more than likely structured like the local neighborhood bar slow pitch softball teams that became popular throughout the country during the 1970s. These teams never practiced, showed up for games randomly, and participated in the game for the sheer joy of playing.

In stark contrast, there is a photo taken in 1927. Bold lettering says: Butte Mines Baseball League Season 1927. The team pictured in this photograph is the Montana Power baseball team. These players are posed in modern baseball uniforms of the day, and their collective expression is one of stoic, casual, professional indifference. These players,(there are fifteen on the team), were more than likely experts in their chosen field of endeavor, baseball. All of the players on the Montana Power baseball team appear to be the same general age, while the players on the Berkeley Mine team represent a wide range of age groups. Virtually all of the players on the Berkeley Mine team are relaxed and smiling in their photograph while the professional looking Montana Power players fail to exhibit any joy at all.

Examining these two photographs raises many questions. How and why did the Mines League begin? Was there some underlying reason that the players appeared to become professional? Was the league a successful enterprise? How long did the league exist? Did any notable players participate in the league? Where were the games played? How long was the season? What was the fan interest?

In her book, *Mining Cultures, Men, Women, and Leisure in Butte, 1914-41*, Mary Murphy answers some of these questions. Beginning in the 1920s, the Anaconda company, in an apparent attempt to conform with work place reforms popular during the Progressive Era, initiated a safety campaign, created Mines League baseball, and sponsored an annual Miners' Field Day at Columbia Gardens. Each initiative was intended to promote harmony among all levels of workers and their families. All the mining companies in Butte formed a baseball commission and began the Mines League in 1920. Each company sponsored a team. The games were supported by local businesses, which provided many forms of encouragement, such as drawings for cash for loyal fans and various prizes to the players who performed feats of baseball skill. In 1922, the Butte Electric Railway Company erected a grandstand and bleachers in Clark Park for the sole purpose of watching Mines League games.¹²³

The Mines' league certainly began with the best intentions. The use of sport to provide recreation and to create a cohesive, unified work force seemed like a reachable goal. Quoting from *the Engineering and Mining Journal*, dated August 1922, Mary Murphy wrote, "that the editors of the journal felt that the league had great potential for creating accord between managers and miners. They reported that mine managers rubbed

¹²³ Murphy, *Mining Cultures*, p. 127.

shoulders with muckers, and all class distinction is eclipsed by the common desire to have the company's team victorious." The journal held that the creation of the baseball league would produce more beneficial results than generally realized. Other observers, primarily local journalists, viewed the creation of a league as a strategy to prevent the workers from organizing against the company. If miners and managers were playing baseball side by side in a unified struggle against other companies, how could the miners feel anything but eternal loyalty to a company that provided them the means to achieve victory?¹²⁴

The league had a more than passing interest to the fans who supported it. An article in the *Anaconda Standard* on 9 May, 1923, gave an indication of this interest.

BAND ON HAND SUNDAY WHEN MINES LEAGUERS OPEN PLAY

A program by the Butte Mines band will be included in the opening ceremony of Mines Leaguers at Clark Park Sunday when Black Specs and A.C.M. club will start the pennant chase at 1:30 o'clock. Steve Hogan, league secretary, announced yesterday. The second half of the double bill for the day will feature the Clarks and the Montana Powers. For the last week the clubs have been going through hard practice in the afternoons. Al Sundberg's A.C.M. gang are working at Meaderville, Clarks, ColoPitts and Montana Powers at Clark Park and the Black Specs Outfit under Angus McLead at Columbia gardens. The weeding out process has already started and a number of the rookies who bolstered the squads to large proportions when training first started have been dropped from the clubs. Yesterday the commission announced that Ed Rouliou, Butte man, who officiated last year in the league, is on the reserve list of arbiters for the league. The two regular umpires chosen from professional ranks will be H.J. Felbert of Kansas City and L Whitesides of Seattle. The ruling of hiring professional umpires was one of the first made by the commissioners following the complaints of several clubs that favoritism might creep in with arbiters who make their homes in Butte and Anaconda. Last year there were many changes in the staff of umpires to further impress the commissioners with the need of bringing in outsiders with wide experience. Alex Blewett of the Butte Electric Railway Company, who is in charge of the ground at Clark Park, announced

¹²⁴ Ibid. p. 127.

yesterday that they would be in the finest shape for the opening double header and that special street car service will be arranged for the fans.¹²⁵

Careful analysis of this article reveals the level of commitment that the Mines League was willing to provide to the fans that followed the games. The organizational structure included commissioners, which indicates that this baseball generated more than casual interest from the fans who supported it. That league commissioners imported professional umpires to avoid any hint of favoritism suggested that the league was probably very competitive. Moreover, it offers tantalizing evidence that perhaps games in earlier years had been subject to the biases of local umpires. Utilization of the Butte Electric Railway Company to transport fans to the ballpark indicated that these games attracted great crowds that warranted the use of this public utility, and indeed crowds could be large. On opening day in 1925, five thousand fans filled the stands and watched the mayor throw out the first pitch.¹²⁶

Further evidence that the league had advanced from the disheveled photograph of the champion Berkeley Mine team of 1913 to a more professional operation can be found in the Montana Historical Archives, located in Helena, Montana. In 1923, the Clark baseball team offered contracts to eight players whose primary job was to play baseball.¹²⁷ These contracts are significant because, other than newspaper articles, they are the only concrete evidence that professionalism existed in the Mines League. Close scrutiny of a representative contract demonstrates how serious a venture baseball was. The contract of Eddie Charlton, the highest paid player, was for \$235.00 per month.

¹²⁵ *Anaconda Standard*, 9 May, 1923.

¹²⁶ Murphy, *Mining Cultures*, p.127.

¹²⁷ The contracts are located in the Anaconda Copper Mining Company Records.

Memorandum, Witnesseth:

That the undersigned, Eddie Charlton, having on this date entered into a certain "Players Agreement" to play baseball with the Clark Ball club of the Butte Mines League, for the season of 1923, agrees:

1. That said season is from May 4th to September 4th, of said year.
2. That for greater certainty and advantage to himself and in lieu of all so-called "cuts" or shares in general fund balance, mentioned in said players Agreement, he shall be compensated as follows: At the rate of \$98.50 Dollars per month direct from said Clark Ball Club for playing ball, and in addition thereto by a job of regular employment, with other, procured for him by said club, at which job he can work twenty-six days each month, excluding Sundays, at \$5.25 dollars wages per day, so that from such job he can earn \$136.50 dollars per month if he chooses to do so. It being the intention of our arrangement that the undersigned shall be in a position through both compensations \$235.00 dollars per month, during said period. It is understood however, that he is not to receive any wages for time lost in said job so procured for him, provided that the time required by the manager of said club for practice and playing shall not be considered as time lost. This memorandum shall be and operate as an assignment to said Clark Ball Club of said "cuts" or shares which would otherwise come to him from Buttes Mines Leagues.

Dated at Butte, Montana, this 14th day of May, 1923

Signed by Eddie Charlton¹²⁸

Charlton's contract posed some interesting questions about the direction and purpose of the Mines Leagues. There are several references to "cuts" or "shares" supposedly provided by the Mines League. By signing the contract, Charlton waived his right to participate in this custom. On the surface, it appears that the Clark Ball Club provided more than an adequate wage for its star player. Charlton earned almost a thousand dollars in a four month period. Miners oftentimes made this much money over the period of an entire year. Crowds that watched the games during the season often

¹²⁸ Anaconda Copper Mining Company Records, 409.8, 8 players agreements for Clark Ball Club 1923, Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena, Mt.

numbered in the thousands. Fans were usually charged no more than twenty- five cents general admission to attend a game. A crowd of four thousand fans who paid the fee would therefore generate one thousand dollars per game. The season lasted four months and included approximately a hundred games. Considering overhead to run the stadiums, provided for by the Anaconda Company, it might have been that the people who controlled the league wanted winning teams for publicity or that fans demanded winning teams. The idea that players were waiving their rights to participate in “cuts” and “shares” suggests that perhaps players may have been tempted to affect the outcome of a game by consorting with gamblers. Being a well paid player would therefore eliminate any reason for improper behavior.

Hiring Eddie Charlton proved to be an astute managerial move. At the conclusion of the 1923 season, The Anodes of the smelters of Anaconda and the Clark Ball Club of Butte played for the championship of the Mines League. The Clark Ball Club won the game in ten innings by a score of seven to five. Although Charlton was a minor contributor in this particular game, statistics indicated that he was a dominant player in several categories during the season. Charlton’s batting average was .347, fifth in the league. He had forty-three hits, first in the league. He finished second in the league in doubles with seven, first in the league in triples with six, and first in the league in total bases with sixty eight.¹²⁹

¹²⁹ Anaconda Standard, 2 September, 1923.

An article in the *Anaconda Standard*, dated Saturday, May 7th, 1927, gave a clear idea of how common the hiring of professional players became in the Miners' League. The article discussed how manager Bill McGonigle, who skippered the Montana Power Baseball Club, was assembling his team by working out some local players while waiting for several players to arrive from the West Coast.

Being optimistic about the weather, Bill McGonigle, skipper of the Montana Power ball club, last night announced his embryo collection of diamond athletes would have their first workout today.

The last few trains have been bringing candidates into the Power camp and there are enough on hand now to sock the ball and toss it around in order to find out who will claim some of the jobs the opening of the season, May 15.

All of the electric players are not present, but by early next week a good sized squad will be digging in, the manager announced.

Among the men who are here and look like regulars are Joe Guerrero, last year's left fielder for the club; Art Parker, a youngster, who was with the Portland Coast league club up to last Sunday; Harry Cloniger, right fielder in 1926, and Everett Gomes, an experienced catcher from the Virginia league. Young Parker is a third sacker and is expected to do lots of things in the Mines circuit this summer.

Al Keliatt, the big pitcher, who is well known in the league, is expected in today from New York. Another righthander who will join the club is Eddie Foster, who was in Great Falls last year.

A number of players have come to Butte on their own hook to try out with the Powers. Among them are Matt Gosich, an outfielder from Illinois; Wally Bray, catcher and outfielder from the Timber league in Washington; Jack Street of Dillon a flychaser; Wendel West, a third baseman and outfielder from the Oregon Aggies; Sand, a catcher from Oregon; Cloniger, a catcher, who is a brother of the Power outfielder, and William Todd, an outfielder from Alberta.

Some of the local boys who will be out today are Bert Williams, a chucker; John Stanton, outfielder; Lew Mehilich, outfielder; Al Ward, pitcher.¹³⁰

This article indicated that, by 1927, the Mines League had become a completely professional operation. The Montana Powers team seemed to have employed players who

¹³⁰ *Anaconda Standard*, 7 May, 1927.

were either on the rise or on the way down. Perhaps Art Parker, the youngster who was with the Portland Coast League until the Sunday before the season started, was not getting enough playing time. Maybe he needed more experience, or perhaps he could make more money playing in Butte. It is quite possible that the Mines League may have had some type of working agreement with professional teams around the country to employ their cast off or inexperienced players. There is no direct evidence, but perhaps the Mines League had some type of network or scouting system that enabled them to attract players nationally. The fact that they made a concession to the locals by allowing them to try out was probably nothing more than a public relations move to generate fan interest. Like big league baseball that was having tremendous success during the 1920's, the primary focus of the Mines League appears to have been putting a good product out on the field.

Many of the merchants in Butte relied heavily on the league for business opportunities during the season. *The Anaconda Standard* of Sunday, May 15th, 1927 revealed evidence of this interest. The editor, in a two-page article that featured advertisements paid for by many of the merchants in Butte, began the feature by writing the introduction:

The Mines League Merits Support

Again this year, the lineups of the Mines League teams indicate that Butte baseball fans will be served up a sterling brand of ball. It has long been the boast of Butte people that they get the greatest baseball value in the country for their money. The boast may still hold good, for all teams present a strong front --- the boys have been working hard to round into

form in spite of discouraging weather--- and are now rarin' to go. Do your bit to give them a real welcome---BE THERE TODAY.¹³¹

The business interests of the merchants who paid for this advertisement are well represented in this opening day homage to the fans and players of the Mines League. The list of "Twelve Valuable Prizes" the merchants offered to players of the Montana Powers and Clarks teams indicated what a serious business this must have been. W. J. Sewell Hardware Company offered a Genuine Louisville Slugger Bat to player making first three-base hit at Clark Park this season. Willard Battery Station provided one Smithkit Cigarette Server for motorists to both the winning catcher and pitcher in the day's game. Old Chequamagon Café donated a banquet with all the trimmings for the champion Mines League team. Howard Pierce Inc gave a \$25 credit on any car in stock to the player filching the first bag in a regular game at Clark park. Mudro Grill furnished a barbecue party in the "famous Mudro style" for the champion Mines League team. Butte Tire And Service Company included a \$2 credit to be applied on any tire service job to the player making first put out in today's game. The Creamery Café provided a \$5 meal ticket to the player making the first home run. Walker's gave a carton of cigarettes of the player's choice to the player making first home run. Green's Café offered \$5 in merchandise tokens, good for cigars, tobaccos, fishing tackle or lunches, to the player making the first clean hit to right field. The Western gave \$ 2 in merchandise tokens, good either at lunch counter or cigar stand, to outfielder making first catch of fly ball. Spillum Cigar Company promised the player making the most hits in the opening game a

¹³¹ Anaconda Standard, 15 May, 1927.

box of 50 El Sidelo cigars. New York Coney Island gave the player scoring the first run a meal ticket worth \$5 in trade.¹³²

The list of prizes offered by the merchants gives us a glimpse of what life must have been like in Butte during the “roaring twenties.” It was perhaps ironic that Howard Pierce, a used car salesman, offered his gift for the first player who stole a base. Did the merchant select this category, or did the newspaper assign it to him? Even at their inception, used car salesman, may have had a reputation for questionable ethical standards. All of the cigars and cigarettes that were offered as premiums for outstanding play seem to suggest that visits to speak easys for illegal whiskey or gambling may have been a common off the field activity.

This professional ad blitz ended with another editorial that extolled the fans to support the league passionately.

JOIN THE CROWD

Today's the day—the baseball lid opens and all the dyed-in – the –wool fans will be out to greet their favorites in their first game of the season. Everything is in readiness to make the day the biggest in the history of Butte baseball. Join the crowd—get the bug and go out and shout your lungs out—get in step with the great American pastime. The merchants on this page join in wishing the Mines League great success this season. They want it to start off with a bang—Today's the day.¹³³

The Mines League courted the fans as well. In a four by eight inch ad, in large bold letters, the league offered a major enticement to attend the games on a regular basis. The ad stated “Come and Win \$50”. “A weekly attendance prize of \$50 will be awarded the holder of the lucky coupon at the Butte games. Every paid admission gets a coupon.

¹³² Anaconda Standard, 15 May, 1927.

¹³³ Anaconda Standard, 15 May, 1927.

Full particulars at Clark Park.”¹³⁴ Realizing that a miner in Butte at this time was making approximately one thousand dollars per year, an enticement to win five percent of a yearly salary just by attending a baseball game indicates how important a loyal fan base was to keep the Mines League afloat.

The entertainment aspect of the Mines League seems to have been the primary reason that professional players filled the ranks of the teams that participated in the league. With the use of financial contracts to limit the financial gain of the players, the heartfelt philosophy touted by the editors of *the Engineering and Mining Journal* at the leagues inception seems to have been ignored. The leagues “great potential for creating accord between managers and miners” was just another Progressive idea that withered on the vine.¹³⁵

Newspaper ads also revealed what style of baseball was played in the Mines League. One ad indicated that the baseballs provided by the D. & M. Sporting Goods, “had been adopted as the Official Ball for the Mines League and Amateur League of Butte.” A diagram in a lower portion of the ad indicated how the baseball was constructed. The exterior of the ball was made out of horsehide, and it was constructed with heavy sea island thread. The inner portion of the ball was wound wool yarn, and the center of the ball was made of rubber.¹³⁶

The baseballs gave telling evidence of the style of play the fans watched throughout the summer. The ball used in the Mines League had a rubber center and was typical of those used during the “deadball era,” 1900-1920. These balls, which did not go

¹³⁴ *Anaconda Standard*, 15 May, 1927.

¹³⁵ Mary Murphy , *Mining Cultures*, p.127.

¹³⁶ *Anaconda Standard*, 15 May, 1927.

very far when they were hit, produced a style of baseball characterized by defensive display, bunting, hit and run maneuvers, and pitching that featured trickery (most notably the spitball.)

At the same time, the major leagues were using a baseball that was wound tightly and had a core made of rubber coated cork. The livelier ball resulted in fan pleasing displays of offense. Major league baseball was trying to rebound from the infamous “Black Sox Scandal” that rocked the game to its core in 1919. The game was attempting to create an image of incorruptibility.¹³⁷ In 1927, Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig, the legendary New York Yankee stars, established some formidable offensive statistics. “The heart of the 1927 Yankees, the pair finished one-two in every major American League slugging department in addition to walks and runs. Ruth placed first in runs scored (158), home runs, (60), bases on balls (138), on base percentage(.487), and slugging average (.772); Gehrig was first in doubles (52) and RBI (175).¹³⁸

The Anaconda Company, in a gesture that can be considered as being influenced by the spirit of “Progressive Reform,” built two beautiful parks for the use of its employees that were located in Anaconda and Butte. Washoe Park, located in Anaconda, included zoos, gardens, and baseball fields that were originally used by teams in the Mines League.¹³⁹ The park located in Butte was named the Columbia Gardens and also included amusement park rides, zoos, picnic areas and baseball fields. The Garden stayed open until the 1970s. Clark Park, which the Anaconda Company also built, was

¹³⁷ Paul J. Zingg, The Sporting Image, Readings in American Sport History, (Lanham, Md. University Press of America, 1988)p. 359.

¹³⁸ David Nemeec, The Baseball Chronicle, Year by Year History of Major League Baseball, (Lincolnwood, Illinois, Publication International, LTD., 2001):p 123.

¹³⁹ Morris, Anaconda, 192-193.

located in the downtown section of Butte and was used by the team that represented the Clark Team in the Mines League.¹⁴⁰

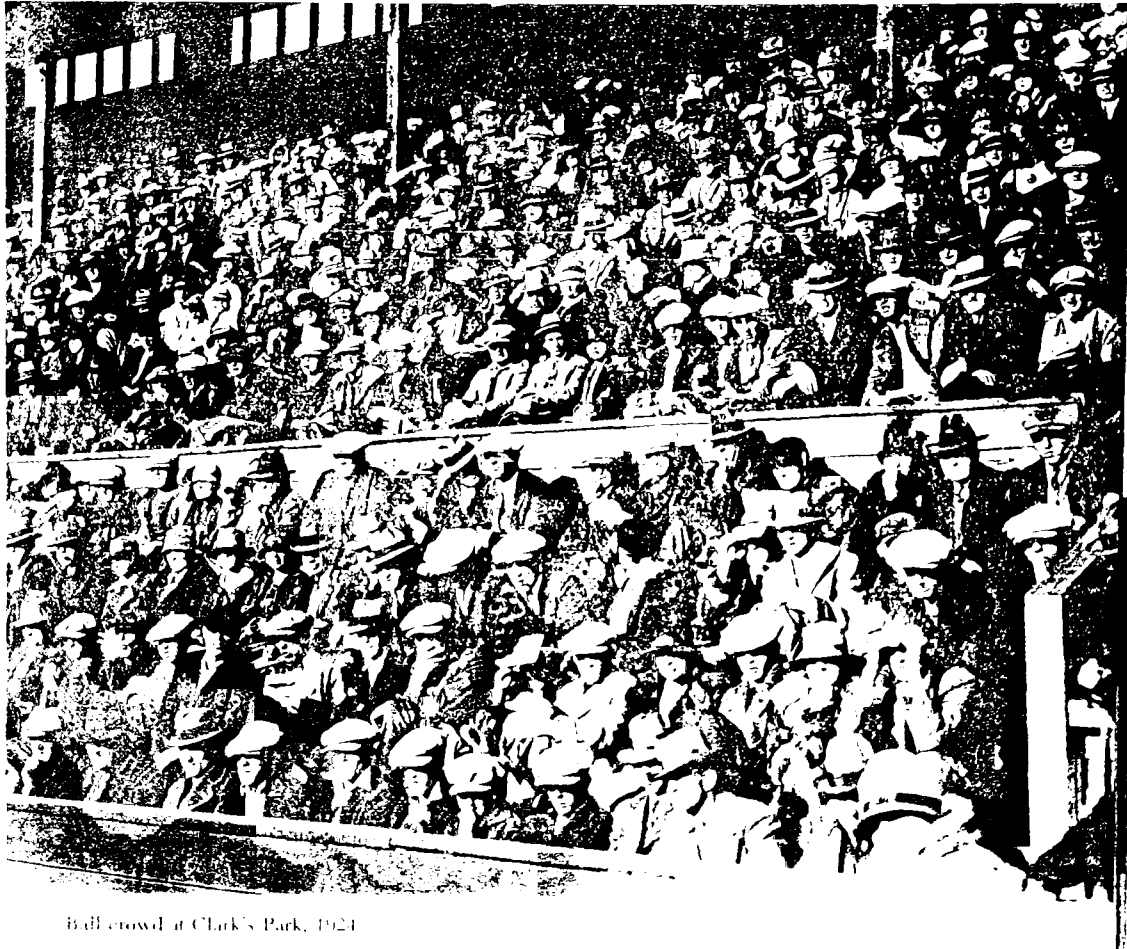
Teams that competed in the Mines League at the league's inception were The Anodes, which represented the smeltermen of Anaconda, The Black Specs, a Butte mine team, The Montana Powers, A.C.M. (Ananconda Company Mines), Colorado-Pitts, a Butte mine team, and the Clarks. An article written at the beginning of the 1923 season presented a thumbnail sketch of each team's prospects for the upcoming year. The article picked the Anodes of Anaconda as favorites. Their team returned virtually intact and led by their star pitcher, Frank Juney. Fans in Butte were betting on the A.C.M. and Montana Power teams as the strongest squads. The Clarks team was bothered by minor injuries but had a potent offense. This team was filled with newcomers but knowledgeable fans looked on it as a real dark horse. The Black Specs, perennial cellar dwellers, was filled with newcomers and looked upon as the weakest team in the league. The Colorado-Pitts team, ranked above the Black Specs, was led by an Earl Tucker, who was described as an "inter-city favorite and a ball leader of experience."¹⁴¹

The season of 1923 lasted 105 games. The season opened at the beginning of May and concluded on Labor Day with a double header in Butte and a single game in Anaconda for the smelter fans. Twilight contests were played in Butte and Anaconda on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. Sunday afternoon games were also scheduled throughout the season. During the early years of the league, beginning in 1920, fans were charged twenty-five cents for Sunday games, and day games were free of

¹⁴⁰ Harry Harkins interviewed by author, 1 April 2002.

¹⁴¹ The Anaconda Standard, 13 May, 1923.

charge.¹⁴² As the league progressed fans were eventually charged admission to all games. Attendance at the games was robust. Examination of a partial photograph, displayed below, reveals a grandstand packed with spectators watching a day game at Clarks' Park in 1924.



Ball crowd at Clark's Park, 1924

Virtually every member of the crowd is staring at the field with intense concentration. The game was obviously very important. Most of the crowd appeared to be men, perhaps miners who worked nights, or maybe the game was played on a Sunday afternoon.¹⁴³

¹⁴² Murphy, *Mining Cultures*, p. 127.

¹⁴³ SC 783, *Star Baseball Club Records*, Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena, Mt.

An incident during the championship game between The Anodes of Anaconda and the Clark Ball Club of Butte at the end of the 1923 season revealed the passion of the fans for the game and their undying support for their teams. The weather on the day of the game was obviously frigid. Fans built a fire in the stands to warm themselves, and things got out of control. A story in the Anaconda Standard described “a smudge blaze in the stands in the third, and noted that it bothered only firemen and caretakers, those in the seats along side of it caring mostly about any danger that might happen to their favorite club on the diamond just then.” Not even potential physical danger could deter fan interest.¹⁴⁴

The story of Charley Albert Phippen, a pitcher for the Clark team told a great deal about the Mines League. Phippen was born in 1896 at Bonner’s Ferry, Idaho. As a young man playing baseball for a town team in Dillon, Montana, he was scouted and signed by the Clark Baseball team of the Mines League in Butte. Phippen was a successful pitcher who used the “spitball” as his primary pitch. As mentioned earlier in this essay, the Mines League used a dead ball with a rubber center and played a style of baseball that was common during the “dead ball era.” The style placed a premium on trickery by the pitcher, who made the baseball do strange things.¹⁴⁵

In an arrangement that was similar to the contract given to Eddie Charlton, Charley was given a job as an apprentice electrician in the Alma Lou Mine. He worked till noon and then spent the rest of the day practicing baseball.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ Anaconda Standard, 2 September, 1923.

¹⁴⁵ In order to obtain information from citizens of Butte who might have some direct link or historical background concerning the Mines’ League, the author placed in the sports section of the Montana Standard seeking possible informants. Fred Phippen, a man in his late 80s responded and told the story, his father Charley Albert Phippen.

¹⁴⁶ Fred Phippen, interviewed by author, October, 2003.

The Anaconda Standards included many references to Charley Phippen.

Surprisingly, when he played in the Mines League in 1921, the newspapers were already referring to him as a “veteran.” Either the league started well before the anticipated start up date of 1920, Charley was a well known local player, or a man in his mid-twenties was considered old.

The sports page of the *Anaconda Standard*, described Phippen as a solid, tested, and dependable pitcher. A headline that appeared in *The Anaconda Standard*, on Wednesday, July 13th, 1921, portrayed just how effective Charley Phippen could be when his pitches were working. The article started with the headline, “BLACK-SPECS HAVE NO CHANCE TO BEAT CLARKS, Veteran Phippen Allows Only Five Hits and Has Four Strikeouts to His Credit.” The reporter who wrote the story managed to give Charley Phippen a different first name and offered stats that did not agree with the headline. “Carl Phippen had something on the ball last night, recounted the article;. “In fact, he had a whole lot on the ball because in six innings he struck out 14 of the Black-Specs who faced him.” Charley’s pitching feat was impressive; he accounted for 14 of the games total 18 outs. The Black-Specs must have spent a frustrating night at the plate trying to hit a spitball. The box score revealed that Charley could also handle the bat. He went a very credible two for three, hitting two singles. The reporter’s account stated that, “In between strike-outs Phippen allowed five hits, gave a couple of bases on balls and hit two batsmen, enough to let the Specs get three runs, but as his mates piled up nine tallies of their own that did not worry the veteran in the least.”¹⁴⁷ The boxscore revealed that the game lasted only six innings. It was probably called on account of darkness, or

¹⁴⁷ *The Anaconda Standard*, 13 July, 1921.

perhaps rain. A random sampling of boxscores of other games by the author indicate that they usually lasted the standard nine innings. Phippen, who appeared to be a very good pitcher, must have racked up some impressive numbers when he was performing on all cylinders for a full nine innings. One can only speculate because box scores that were used to record games during this era did not provide pitching or complete batting statistics. To have a reporter actually record the number of strikeouts that a pitcher attained in a game was very unusual.

An article written in *The Anaconda Standard*, dated Sunday, July 31st, 1921, mentioned Charley Phippen as the probable starting pitcher against the A.C.M. team. The game was important because A.C.M. was in first place, and the Clark Team was beginning to make a run to get back into contention. The reporter noted that, "When right, Phippen goes as well as any flinger in the league." The baseball played by these two teams must have ignited the passion of the fans because the article predicted, "It is expected that one of the largest crowds of the season will journey out to the gardens, as these two teams always draw unusually well."¹⁴⁸

Charley Phippen appeared in the *Anaconda Standard* in only a few sporadic box scores after 1921, the year he received his most favorable publicity. Charley played in the Mines League until May 21st, 1926 when this announcement appeared in the papers.

CLARKS SIGN MAN

LATE OF POWERS

Clarks have signed Wunder, right handed pitcher, who
Was with the Montana Power club until a few days
Ago it was announced in yesterday's
Mines league bulletin. Phippen,

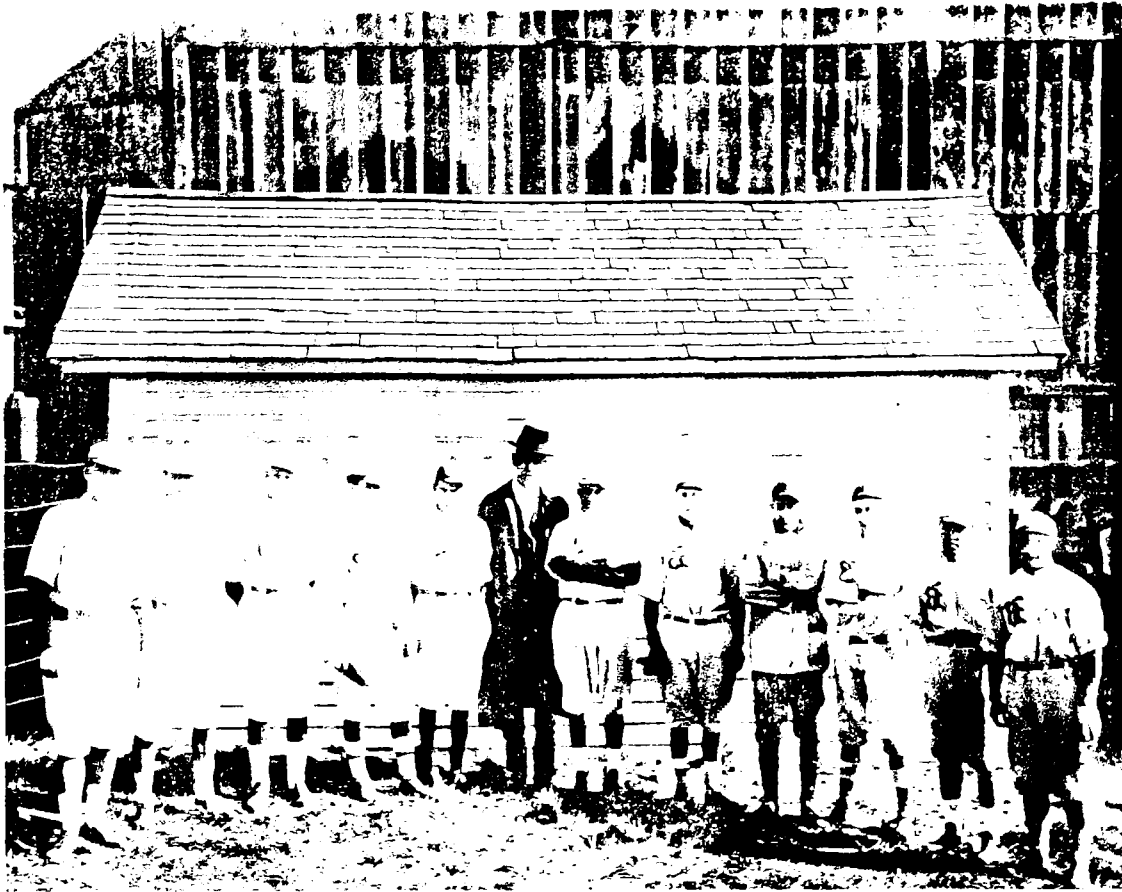
¹⁴⁸ The Anaconda Standard, 31, July, 1921.

Veteran Butte hurler, who was enrolled
With Clarks has been released.¹⁴⁹

Charley Phippen's Mines League career came to a close in 1926 at the age of thirty. He continued to play baseball in Butte City leagues after his stint in the Mines League. Two photographs of Phippen as he appeared sometime in the 1930s as a member of the Montana Power Electrics presented a team of eleven players who were photographed in one picture at a ballpark and the other had them posing with a championship trophy.



¹⁴⁹ Anaconda Standard, 21 May, 1926.



Although the teams in this league were amateur, baseball had obviously become more than the casual game that was presented in earlier photographs. The uniforms that the players wore in the photos from the 1930s were very professional looking, a marked contrast to the informal pictures of earlier years.¹⁵⁰

Charley's son, Fred Phippen carried on his father's baseball legacy. He played in the "Copper League," which was a Butte independent city league, as a pitcher. Fred learned how to pitch from his father and was able to incorporate the use of juice derived from the chewing of "slippery elm" to develop a "palm ball." Fred had "no idea" why the Mines League folded. He also was unaware of ethnic rivalries that may have occurred

¹⁵⁰ Members of the Phippen family generously contributed the photographs of their grandfather.

when the league was in full swing. Fred, who was born in 1915, was a boy of no more than six years old when he attended his father's games. Fred Phippen recalled that the games were filled with fierce competition, but once the game was over, the players were friends. This statement seems to support the idea that the league at its conclusion was professional in nature and the players treated the game like a job.¹⁵¹

Fred Phippen mentioned that Frankie Crosetti, a New York Yankee who played with Ruth and Gehrig, had played in the Mines' League. Many people in Butte seemed to know this but had no idea of when he played or for whom. Fred recalled hearing that Crosetti played for the Montana Powers. *The Anaconda Standard* of May, 21st, 1927, supported this.¹⁵²

Somebody in Butte may of had a direct line to the talent pool on the West Coast, because in a team photo taken of the Montana Powers before the start of the 1927 season, Crosetti is nowhere to be found. The paper shows that the seventeen-year old made his first appearance in a game played on May 21st, 1927. In a game played under miserable weather conditions, the Montana Powers defeated the Clark Baseball Club by a score of 8 to 2. The game was only the third of the season, but the teenaged Crosetti, who played shortstop, distinguished himself in this game by scoring three runs, getting one hit, and handling all of his chances in the field without an error.¹⁵³

In a box-score that described a game played on June 2nd, Crosetti played second base and once again was an integral part of a Montana Powers victory. In this game, he handled six chances, three putouts, three assists, scored a run and had one hit. Crosetti

¹⁵¹ Fred Phippen, interviewed by author, October, 2003.

¹⁵² *Anaconda Standard*, 21 May, 1927.

¹⁵³ *Anaconda Standard*, 21, May, 1927.

also figured in the game by demonstrating extraordinary hustle that would be a hallmark of his later career on the Major League level with the New York Yankees. In the bottom of the seventh and deciding inning, “Crosetti hit to Keeley, who pegged wild to second, the runner scoring while the ball was coming to a stop in right field. Crosetti reached third on the play, and then Cullen hit to Keeley, Crosetti scoring while the batter was beating out the hit which was a slow roller back of the pitcher.”¹⁵⁴

Crosetti finished up the season playing first base for the Powers on September fifth, 1927. The Montana Powers, unfortunately finished a disappointing last in the league, but Crosetti’s effort remained consistent throughout the season. In this last game, Crosetti once again handled every chance in the field flawlessly, registering fourteen put outs, and went a respectable two for four at the plate. He hit a homerun and scored one run. Hitting a homerun in a deadball league was no easy task. Considering the fact that Frank Crosetti was only seventeen years old at the time, it is no surprise that this player eventually ended up in the Major Leagues.¹⁵⁵

Nineteen Twenty-Seven, the year Frank Crosetti played for the Montana Powers, appears to have been the only year that he played in Montana. Frank Crosetti signed with the San Francisco Seals of the Pacific Coast League in 1928.¹⁵⁶ Crosetti was born in San Francisco, on October, fourth, 1910. He was five feet ten inches tall and weighed one hundred sixty-five pounds during his playing days.¹⁵⁷ There is no official record

¹⁵⁴ Anaconda Standard, 2, June 1927.

¹⁵⁵ Anaconda Standard, 5, September, 1927.

¹⁵⁶ Robert Palazzo, *Three in Four Days*, available from <http://the.diamondangle.com/bob/threefour.html>; accessed 2, February, 2004.

¹⁵⁷ Frank crosetti Baseball Statistics by Baseball Almanac, available from <http://www.baseball-almanac.com>

available of his time spent playing in the Mines League. Frank spent three years playing for the San Francisco Seals before his entry into the Major Leagues.

The newspapers in Butte kept track of the progress of Crosetti's career in San Francisco. In an article found in the *Butte Free Press*, dated 11 May of 1929, the headline states:

OLD MINES LEAGUE ACES
HELP SEALS WIN BY 13-0
Cleanup Hitter Eddie Coleman Hits Double and Homer,
Crosetti, as Leadoff Man, Adding Double
And Single: League Games

Eddie Coleman also played in the Mines League. He appeared in several box-scores as a player for the Anodes of Anaconda in 1923. It remains uncertain when he left the team, but he did not appear in the team picture taken before the final Mines League season of 1927.

Frank Crosetti went on to sign with the New York Yankees in 1932. His career as a player lasted until 1948. Some of his highlights as a Yankee occurred in 1936, a pennant winning year, when he drew 90 walks and scored 137 runs as a leadoff hitter and shortstop. That was also Joe DiMaggio's rookie season. In 1940, Crosetti had the dubious distinction of leading the league in being hit by pitches for a record fifth consecutive year.¹⁵⁸ Crosetti had a lifetime batting average of .245 and ninety-eight career home runs. He played in 1,683 games, had 6,277 at bats, scored 1,006 runs, got 1,541 hits, hit 260 doubles, hit 65 triples, drove in 649 runs, got a free pass 792 times and

¹⁵⁸ David Nemeec, *The Baseball Chronicle*, pp. 176,204.

was hit by the pitches 114 times. As a shortstop he had a career .949 fielding percentage committing 421 errors in 7,898 chances.¹⁵⁹

The Mines League did not appear in any box-scores or sports sections after the final game of the season in September of 1927. One can only speculate why this league disappeared. Perhaps the mining industry was in an economic downturn and the company or private sponsorship found the league to be too expensive to maintain. The importing of outside professional ballplayers to maintain a competitive edge may have led to the leagues demise, or there could have been other more compelling reasons, such as gambling or fixing games. During the league's existence, the fans enjoyed the game and attended in great numbers. Further, caliber of play appeared to be on a very high level.

An article written in 1970 by Gary Lucht suggested that gambling was a possible reason for the demise of the Mines League. Titled "Scobey's Touring Pros: Wheat, Baseball, and Illicit Booze,". The article discussed a rivalry between the two towns, Scobey and Plentywood. In the Northeast corner of Montana, Scobey had risen to prominence as a result of the Great Northern Railroad's construction of a railhead there in 1913. Scobey became the transportation center for a vast area and earned the recognition for being the primary wheat shipper of the United States. Scobey retained this honor until 1926, when the railroad extended the railhead to Opheim, a town further west.¹⁶⁰ In 1925, money was abundant, and the people who lived in this part of Montana were

¹⁵⁹ Frankie Crosetti Baseball Statistics by Baseball Almanac, available at <http://www.baseball-almanac.com/players/player.php?p=crosetfr01>

¹⁶⁰ Gary Lucht, " Scobey's Touring Pros: Wheat, Baseball and Illicit Booze " *Montana Western History Magazine*, Volume XX, Number Three, Summer, 1970. p. 88

willing to spend it. Plentywood, a town that was located 37 miles to the east had become the focus of an intense rivalry with Scobey in the sport of baseball. Plentywood, as rumor would have it, had signed a noted black pitcher named John Donaldson. When the rumors were proven to be true, the citizens of Scobey, represented by a group of local businessmen, contributed \$3,015.00 to assemble a team of mercenary ballplayers who would defeat the upstart mercenaries of Plentywood.¹⁶¹

The citizens of Scobey sent out a call to minor leagues of Canada, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Ohio and the Dakotas. Two of the players they were able to sign, Happy Felsch, and Swede Risberg, were former players with the infamous Chicago White Sox team that had thrown the 1919 World Series and created the famous “Black Sox” scandal.



¹⁶¹ Ibid.p.88.

“Risberg and Felsch signed contracts with the organized Scobey merchants to the tune of \$600.00 a month, plus expenses.” Although a princely sum in 1925, most of it stayed in Scobey, because the players’ truly heroic appetite for “booze and broads” soon became legendary. The two ex-big leaguers proved to be professional sots who happened to be very good ball players. They could play excellent ball, even though they appeared regularly to be hungover. Risberg played in Scobey for only the 1925 season, while Felsch played there for two seasons.¹⁶² This article is significant because it firmly established the fact that two known professional players who had been associated with baseball’s darkest hour, “The Black Sox Scandal,” had played in Montana as ringers. This raises the possibility that these and other banned players could have played baseball in the Mines League as hired professionals.

Montana and Butte had other connections to Chicago.¹⁶³ Butte was visited by major criminals during the years that the League existed. William Janacaro, a telephone splicer, grew up in Butte and as a young man spent many happy hours at a drinking establishment known as “Club 13.” This bar, located in uptown Butte, was owned by a man named Packy Buckley. Packey had once worked in a restaurant in Meaderville called The Rocky Mountain Café. Meaderville, which is now part of the massive pit that was once mined by the Anaconda Company, was at one time an Italian enclave. The Rocky Mountain Café served legendary Italian food. In 1978, many old cronies of Packy, who were well into their seventies, visited The Club 13 on a regular basis. The

¹⁶² Ibid. p.89.

¹⁶³ In a casual conversation, William Janacaro, an employee of the local phone company, and a former Butte resident, provided information that supported the idea that gambling could have easily caused the demise of the Mines’ League.

conversations that took place between the younger patrons and these gentlemen of seventy plus years were often very entertaining. On one particular night they told Janacaro two interesting stories. The first was about an Italian chef who worked at the restaurant and still had strong ties to the old country. The chef would send money and correspondence back home to Italy and they wrote him back, addressing the envelope, “Rocky Mountain Café, Butte, America.” According to these men, the letter arrived to the restaurant and this was the beginning of the famous phrase, “Butte America.” The second story they related was that Al Capone, the famous Chicago gangster visited The Rocky Mountain Café and kept a stash of illegal whiskey stored under the porch of the restaurant. Capone visited Montana during the nineteen twenties to oversee his business interests in the state, which included the importing of Canadian Whiskey to the United States during Prohibition.¹⁶⁴

In a photograph of The Clark Baseball team of 1927, the fourth player from the right in the front row bears a strong likeness to Happy Felsch, and the first player in the second row, upper left could easily be Charles Risberg.



1927 Clark Baseball team

¹⁶⁴ William Janacaro, interviewed by author, 6 April, 2004.

With the presence of a known, criminal, gambler, Al Capone from Chicago, it is entirely plausible that gambling may have played a significant role in the Mines League's short seven year existence.¹⁶⁵

James A Scott, author of an article on "The Montana State Baseball League," described that league, which existed at the turn of the twentieth century, as a mix of progressive reforms and holdover characteristics of the 1890s. It had aggressive professionals who were assumed to have clean morals and values, highly prized patterns of behavior by progressive reformers, but it also had gamblers who roved stands hoping to profit from the day's action."¹⁶⁶ The four largest cities in Montana, Butte, Anaconda, Helena and Great Falls created a professional league. Scott contended that, although the league had early success, it ultimately failed "because it was unable to overcome the violence, gambling and poor organization that clouded baseball's recent past."¹⁶⁷

After considering the articles by Lucht and Scott, the interview with William Janacaro regarding the presence of known criminals in Butte, and the photographic evidence, it seems reasonable to conclude that gambling may have contributed to the leagues' demise. Gambling would have ruined fan interest because nobody wants to watch an athletic contest and root for his favorite players when the outcome of the game is decided before it is played. At best, the evidence is circumstantial, but the gambling

¹⁶⁵ After gathering information that supported the idea of gambling as a cause for the demise of the Mines' League, I decided to examine a photo of the 1927 Clark Baseball team. The ballplayer in the first row, far left, bears a strong resemblance to "Shoeless Joe Jackson" The excitement of a major historical discovery becomes ephemeral when it is determined that this player threw with his left hand. Joe Jackson threw right.

¹⁶⁶ James A. Scott, "If It Don't End In Bloodshed," The Montana State Baseball League, 1900," *Montana, The Magazine of Western History*, Volume 47, Number 3, Autumn 1997. p. 61.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.* p. 61.

theory is a bit more interesting than an explanation that the companies that provided this entertaining pastime simply ran out of money.

The Mines League started out with noble principles. “All class distinction is eclipsed by the common desire to have the company’s team victorious.”¹⁶⁸ The hiring of professional baseball players pretty much turned the Mines League into entertainment that kept the fans of Butte and Anaconda excited from May to September.

The amateur independent or ancillary leagues that thrived during the time of the Mines League and far beyond, provided insight into the effect of baseball in ethnic groups. These leagues appeared in sports pages of towns throughout Montana before, during and after the time in which the Mines’ league existed. Players who participated on these teams were local citizens who played for the love of the game.

The first ethnic group to make a significant impact on how the game of baseball was played was the Irish. Scott maintains that, “their effect on the national game stemmed largely from their social and cultural origins.” For many Irish-Americans, baseball provided a means of social mobility; success in the game enabled them to leave the mundane world of the blue collar job behind. In Montana, between 1876 and 1903, Irish ball players transformed the game “from a pleasant, pastoral pastime into a rough, fast, in-your-face, trash talking show.”¹⁶⁹ During this era, the Irish contributions to the game included the invention of the double steal, the hook slide, the hit-and –run and the systematic theft of the catcher’s signs.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ Murphy, *Mining Cultures*, p. 127.

¹⁶⁹ Scott, *Montana, the Magazine of Western History*, p. 70.

¹⁷⁰ Benjamin G. Rader, *American Sports: From the Age of Folk Games to the Age of Televised Sports*, 2d ed. (Prentice Hall Inc. Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1990), 45.

The style of baseball played in Butte, was strongly influenced by the Irish, since they were the city's dominant culture. Immigrants from southeastern Europe were subjected to intense discrimination by the dominant Irish culture. An article in the *Butte Free Press*, dated 19 May, 1929, offered a graphic example of how the game of baseball became a stage on which ethnic pride was demonstrated by the winning team. The article began with the headline: "ITALY NINE TOPS GULCH ON DIAMOND, Meaderville Stays Ahead in League with 7 to 5 Victory Over Dublin Gulch, Rocker Beats McQueen's." The article that followed was quite revealing.

Floral Park and Stratfords at
Hebgen Park (2pm)
"It takes the Italians to beat the
Irish."
The song was probably sung on
The streets of Meaderville to the
Tune of "Rigoletti."
And if the singers wore black
Shirts they would have looked like
Conquering Facisimo.
For the glory of Italy was maintained and
Its honor upheld. Down on Parrot Flat where
Umpires are nuisances and women are the
Boys, weaknesses, nine descendants of old
Rome took up bats and baseballs to prove
Their ability in assimilating the Yankee
National pastime into their regular
Routine with more facility than the boys
From the Irish Free State. And the experiment
Ended happily for the Meaderville diamond
Cavorters as they went back to their vineyards
With a 7 to 5 victory over the Irish Commanches
Of Dublin Gulch.
In the first two innings of the contest,
the Gaelic tribe tallied two runs in each while the
Italian colony scored but one, Then came a
Lull until the final canto when the Meadervillers
Trounced in with five markers to win the game

That kept their season's record unsullied
And gave them a 1.000 percent tie with
Western Fuel for the league leadership.¹⁷¹

The box score of the game revealed the fact that many of the players on the Meaderville team did not have Italian surnames. The hitters in the lineup who batted in the heart of the order, third through fifth spots, all had Slavic surnames, Jurinsich, Mehelich, and Mufich. The Irish team were Celtic from top to bottom with Kelly, Leary, and Denehy, being the most represented names. The article portrayed the winning team as a group of opera-loving, wine-drinking Italians. The article was probably meant in fun because singing, wine drinking and opera were a long way from the depiction of Italian immigrants as criminals and anarchists, a common view of that time. The mention of ethnic assimilation by co-opting the "Yankee national pastime into their regular routine with more facility than the boys from the Irish Free State," was perhaps to be interpreted as a sign of respect.

Other ethnic groups in Montana introduced some aspects of their culture into the game of baseball. In East Helena, the Slovenians who came to Montana at the turn of the twentieth century were the primary labor force that was located in the town. The Slovenians were Catholic and their church, St. Cyril Methodius, actually outlasted the smelter. The church played a central role in the preservation of ethnic identity, but baseball was another venue in which Slovenians celebrated their uniqueness. The East Helena Smelterites' began playing baseball in 1914 and continued up into the 1960s. Fans of East Helena practiced a unique custom. They would shower a hitter with silver

¹⁷¹ *Butte Free Press*, 19 May, 1929.

dollars as he rounded the bases after hitting a home run.¹⁷² While available sources did not indicate whether the custom originated in Slovenia, evidence does link the tossing of coins at a sporting event to Eastern Europe. In a chess match played in Breslau in 1912, a player named Frank Marshall won a game with a brilliant sacrifice of his queen. Spectators showered him with gold coins when he made the move.¹⁷³ Whether or not the tossing of coins as practiced by East Helena's fans was an ethnic custom can perhaps be debated, but the Slovenians of East Helena did bring another element of their culture to the ballpark. Dave Foster, an ex-mayor of East Helena, recalled that many times after games when the Smelterites' would provide food for both teams. The food was Slovenian cuisine, sausages, rye bread, various cheeses, and assorted beer. Accordion music added to the ambiance. This custom of hospitality was common to Europeans but not usually found in most ball parks.¹⁷⁴

While the Mines League disappeared after the 1927 season, the Independent Leagues, which included the neighborhood teams of Butte and teams that represented other towns throughout Montana, did not fade away until the 1960s. Reasons for the demise of this interesting chapter of Montana sports history are varied. More modern forms of entertainment, increased mobility for leisure activities, televised professional sports and the eventual closing of the mines and smelters closed the curtain on an era.

¹⁷² Independent Record, 5 April, 1999.

¹⁷³ Irving Chernev, The 1000 Best Short Games of Chess, (New York, Simon and Schuster, 1955) game 918.

¹⁷⁴ Dave Foster, interview by Laurie Mercier, 19 December, 1986 interview OH962, tape, Montana Historical Archives, Helena, Mt.

The Mines League was a tremendously successful entertainment enterprise. Although the company provided recreational areas for workers and their families, (Washoe Park in Anaconda, Columbia Gardens and Clarks Park in Butte,) the Mines League did not really create a spirit of teamwork between managers and workers through the cooperative attitude that baseball was supposed to instill according to the “Progressive Ideal.” Workers could root for the hired professionals that represented them in the league but this was not what reformers had in mind. Baseball played in the Mines’ League was all about making money. Accounts found throughout the newspapers of the day were filled with countless examples of businesses that made money by catering to fans. Although romantics would have it otherwise, the business of baseball has always been business.

The Baseball played in the Independent Leagues offers some concrete proof that ethnic identities were maintained through the game of baseball. All of the groups eventually assimilated, but the Slovenian custom of silver dollar tossing and the invention of the double steal by the Irish are two examples of ethnic contributions to the game.

Epilogue

I returned to the Excelsior to pay my final respects to my father who passed away in April of 2002. I visited my family house for the last time and walked up the hill to Excelsior Park. The sun was unusually bright as I watched several young boys playing on the diamond I loved so much as a kid. The ethnic make up of the neighborhood has changed. Italian culture has been replaced by a Latino culture. The baseball field is now surrounded by colorful murals painted on the concrete walls by young Diego Riveras. Despite the passage of time and the changing of culture, baseball is still as important to eleven year old boys as it ever was. I wonder if the Excelsior Park Giants are still the team to beat.

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