

Introduction: The Past Made Public

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Abstract and Keywords

Industrial sites archaeology has, for a long time, memorialized the benefits of industrial capitalism at the expense of those workers who toiled in the factories and mines. Research has often emphasized the great engineering feats of the past, while the history of labour has often been subordinated. By understanding and making the heritage of the working class prominent at industrial sites illuminates the differences between labour and capital in the past. This work can also provide new avenues to understanding inequalities in our contemporary world. The call for labour justice that developed as a result of the Lattimer miners' strike in northeastern Pennsylvania, USA in 1897 is compared to the recent Marikana miners' strike in South Africa. Many of the injustices in the mining industry that occurred in the USA and other western nations over a century ago now seems to be exported to developing countries.

Keywords: memory, industrial heritage, Lattimer massacre, Lonmin's Marikana strike, social justice, labour justice

Introduction

WHERE heritage and archaeology meet at industrial sites, we find the excitement of our discipline. This intersection is also where we find some troubling aspects of how nations and communities use their past and develop their heritage discourse. 'Heritage' is difficult to define because it means different things to different people; the keepers of any particular 'heritage' are likely to have their own definitions.

Peter Howard's (2003) definition of heritage is a good starting point. In *Heritage: Management, Interpretation, Identity*, he begins by stating: 'Heritage is taken to include everything that people want to save, from clean air to Morris dancing, including material culture and nature. It is all pervasive, and concerns everyone. Much of it divides people' (2003: 1). While heritage can be divisive through the exclusion of peoples' stories, it is also true that heritage can unite people. It is this tension—between remembering and

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forgetting—that makes the preservation of industrial and labour sites an important issue to discuss.

Much of this volume is about the accomplishments of industrial archaeologists bringing the industrial and engineering feats of the past to a larger audience. This archaeology succeeded only because of the hard work by professionals in extraordinary conditions.

We treat many of these industrial heritage sites as monuments to industrial achievement, as remnants of the past, and of an era of industrial achievement that is the foundation for the way we live today and yet, at the same time, foreign to the way we live in the present day. What is disturbing to the author, is that while we remember these places for industrial achievements, we often neglect to commemorate the people and labour associated with these places. James Green (2000: 151) notes that, for people who worked in early industrial places, unorganized labour often meant an early death, (p. 2) since there were few unions, or weak unions, to insist on workplace safety protection. At places that commemorate industry, the general public often remains unaware of the horrific workplace conditions of the past.

Robert Vogel, Curator of Mechanical and Civil Engineering at the Smithsonian Institution, observed the dilemma of preserving industrial sites. He noted that in many instances the working class would much rather forget the industrial past than commemorate it. Vogel explains ‘The dirt, noise, bad smell, hard labour and other forms of exploitation associated with these kinds of places make preservation [of industrial sites] ludicrous. “Preserve a steel mill?” people say, “It killed my father. Who wants to preserve that?”’ (quoted in Lowenthal, 1985: 403).

In the US, the preservation efforts to develop Lowell National Historic Park occurred despite dissenting opinions. Although the national park’s museum exhibits are displayed in a restored boarding house, many of the boarding houses of the former industrial town have vanished from the landscape. Mary Blewett (1979) explains that the lack of boarding houses on the Lowell industrial landscape is about ‘working class revenge’. She noted that in 1966, the Lowell working-class residents and city officials battled with preservationists who wanted to save the buildings and commemorate the paternalistic era of capitalism of Lowell’s history. A city councillor argued that the buildings were ‘a part of our history that should be forgotten’ (Ryan 1989: 82).

Another example is the Bread and Roses Strike, which began in Lawrence, Massachusetts in 1912. It is another documented instance where part of a contemporary community wanted to forget an episode of its industrial past. The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) led the strike, and they were initially successful in organizing young immigrant women from thirty different nationalities. While the workers received some concessions, eventually Lawrence, like many other northeastern industrial cities in the 1920s, suffered as textile mills were relocated elsewhere seeking cheaper, unorganized labour. When public historians recorded oral histories about industrial Lawrence and the Bread and Roses Strike, they received mixed responses about what the community wanted to remember as the city struggled to preserve its industrial past. Some citizens believe the

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story of labour and labour strife should be told, while others want to forget the days of exploitation (Green 2000: 57–60). ‘How beautiful it is to sweetly forget the clubbings of 1912, the jailings of 1919, and the clubbings again of 1931’ noted one former factory worker (quoted in Green 2000: 60). Therefore, when thinking about remembering some of the stories associated with industrial sites, or in fact any place, it is essential to recognize that there are views that may differ with preservationists’ goals to preserve and develop an industrial heritage landscape.

There is a growing trend in historical archaeology for practitioners to see the recovery of the past as a way to help illuminate the roots contemporary social, economic, and political injustices (Hodder 1986; Leone 1981; Leone et al. 1987; Orser 1998). Many of these projects tend to focus on traditionally marginalized communities that have been made invisible through the forces of colonialism, racism, and capitalism, among other factors. Understanding these historical conditions allows us to explain how (p. 3) many of these social inequities developed and show how they still exist in the contemporary world.

More histories of marginalized peoples are becoming part of the public memory through international efforts by UNESCO’s world cultural and natural heritage programmes, as well as by individual governments. Some of these stories are difficult histories, and their inclusion often meets resistance when they counter the long-held beliefs of a culture. As practitioners, we have a choice to either support an uncritical subscription to the dominant perspective of the past—reinforcing a single system of moral values—or support alternative perspectives that allow for cultural differences and alternative pasts (Meskell 2005: 127). Archaeology is about examining the material conditions of life, and archaeologies of traditionally marginalized groups, such as the poor, women, and undocumented workers, allows our discipline to be visible, relevant, and potentially transformational. When using archaeology to examine work and labour in an industrial context, it becomes clear that some long-term conditions of injustice found in the past are still present today. They can be found in the long-term history of the place, or they can be found in the long-term history of an industry across modern geographic borders.

Therefore, the preservation and commemoration of industrial sites can serve as a reminder that social and economic inequities existed during the development and height of the industrial era. At the same time, the past can be connected to the present, and preserved industrial sites also need to be a reminder that many of these inequities still exist today in many different forms. Remembering the accomplishments of the industrial age should serve as a call to action. They should be lessons learned that allow us to help protect and provide better economic conditions for workers today—locally in the many sweatshops found in our cities, nationally in the non-unionized factories, and internationally in the deplorable conditions that exist in factories in developing nations. Connecting the past to the present can make communities more aware of the inequalities that exist in industry today and perhaps allow us to make choices about how to act and live today.

Historical Continuity: Labour Inequalities and Action

The following is an example of how labour can be connected through time at industrial sites. Even though geography separates the incidents, the historical connection is clear. The same type of labour injustice that occurred at the turn of the twentieth century continues over a hundred years later. While labour laws were once weak in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century, causing significant injury and death because of the lack of safety regulations, these conditions have been exported to developing countries only to have the same negative results.

(p. 4) Connecting the Historic Lattimer Miners' Strike, Pennsylvania, USA with the Recent Marikana Miners' Strike, South Africa

In 1897, a little remembered coal strike occurred in northeastern Pennsylvania, resulting in one of the bloodiest labour strikes in US history. The Lattimer massacre was the result of a conflict between immigrant labourers and coal operators in the anthracite region. Living in poverty in the scattered shanty towns adjacent to the collieries, with inadequate housing, no sanitation infrastructure, and none of the comforts found among the English-speaking working class, they struck for equal pay and better living conditions. Marching, unarmed, to Lattimer with the aim of closing the coal mine, they were met by the sheriff and his posse of over 100 men. On the edge of town, while still on a public road, the sheriff stopped the 400 miners and asked them to disperse. The miners refused and a scuffle occurred between the sheriff and one of the protesters. Someone yelled 'fire', and bullets were shot into the line of striking miners. Though many of the men turned and fled, the members of the posse continued to fire. The incident left twenty-five immigrant men of eastern European descent dead. The majority of them died of wounds from being shot in the back as they fled the confrontation. About forty more men were wounded, although the exact count is unknown and could be higher. Not surprisingly, the event is missing from the official memory of the United States, and it reflects the control that capital has over the memory of the industrialization of America (Novak 1978; Roller 2013; Roller 2015; Shackel 2016; Shackel and Roller 2012; Shackel et al. 2011; Shackel and Westmont 2016).

When Michael Novak, a Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, wrote a historical novel in 1978 about the incident, it was reviewed by the *Wall Street Journal* and the reviewer wrote:

It is tempting to ask Mr. Novak why we really need the book. The incident occurred more than 80 years ago. It sounds like a unique event that would best be forgotten. Besides, American society has changed; American bosses don't act that way toward blue-collar workers anymore

(Wysocki 1978: 24).

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It is a remarkable comment that is ignorant of the lessons of the past and blind to the unchecked capitalism in many parts of the world today. It is this type of attitude that makes it difficult to connect lessons of the past to contemporary issues of injustice.

Despite the growing concern about how to critically interpret difficult histories at heritage sites, a handful of local community historians, clergy, community leaders, and academics have endeavoured to keep the story of Lattimer alive. The Roman Catholic Church conducted an annual commemorative mass at the massacre site from 1972 until the early 2000s. An ecumenical service commemorating the Lattimer massacre was resumed again in 2013. In 1972, a twenty-tonne stone was retrieved from a nearby coal stripping and placed near the site of the massacre. It was dedicated as 'Labor's Rock (p. 5) of Solidarity' (Pinkowski 1997). The monument was dedicated under the co-sponsorship of the United Labor Council, AFL-CIO, and the United Mine Workers of America. Attached to the rock is a large bronze plaque with the names of the Lattimer Massacre victims, and a pick and shovel made of bronze sit at the base of the monument (Shackel 2016, 2018).

Cesar Chavez of the United Farm Workers of America, along with other labour leaders, attended the 1972 ceremony. Chavez said:

Let there be only one voice ... the voice of the working man and woman. Let there be only one Lattimer and for God's sake let there be no more Lattimers. Let there be peace, let there be justice and let there be love among all people

(quoted in *Pennsylvania AFL-CIO News* 1972; Roller 2015).

Prior to the centennial commemoration ceremonies associated with the massacre, a stone marker was placed at the cemetery where fourteen miners of Polish ancestry, who were shot and killed at Lattimer, are buried. Unfortunately, at the time of the writing of this chapter, the cemetery marker has been removed, and the marker's text now faces the cemetery wall making it nearly impossible to read. At the centennial commemoration, in 1997, labour leaders, historical societies, and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) gathered to commemorate the event and to dedicate a new roadside marker at Lattimer, as well as a marker in Harwood, the patch town where the march began on 10 September 1897 (Shackel 2016, 2018).

Museums are developing throughout the region to commemorate mining heritage, including the Anthracite Museum, in Scranton, Pennsylvania, and the Eckley Miners' Village in Weatherly, Pennsylvania. Coal-mine tours are also available in the towns of Scranton, Ashland, and Lansford. The heritage sites display the technological prowess of the past, and interpret the rugged individuals who made the industries work, despite the high mortality rate of mine workers. Connecting the region's heritage of work and labour to contemporary conditions in similar industries is lacking. While most US workers do not encounter the horrendous conditions that miners faced in the nineteenth century, many of the same conditions have been exported and have been recreated in developing nations.

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Like the Lattimer massacre, the Lonmin's Marikana strike in South Africa, in 2012, led to the deaths of about forty-seven people and seventy-eight additional workers were injured. The total number of injuries during the strike remains unknown. The strike began in August of 2012, at Lonmin's Marikana platinum mine and gained international attention after several violent incidents between the South African Police Service, the corporation's security force, and the striking workers. Lonmin PLC is registered in London with operational headquarters in Johannesburg, South Africa. Its operations focus on extracting platinum metals. The platinum mines at Marikana are near the city of Rustenberg in the northeast quadrant of South Africa (Shackel 2000).

On 10 August 2012, about 3,000 mine workers went on strike when Lonmin failed to meet with the strikers. The workers were exasperated with living conditions, inequality, (p. 6) and poverty. Frustrated further because of a lack of economic progress, the workers initially rejected the long-term leadership of the National Union Mineworkers (NUM) for the militant Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU). The beginning of the strike led to ten deaths, including miners, police officers, and mine security staff (De Wet 2012; Laing 2012; Tabane 2012).

The accounts of the next tragic episode on 16 August 2012, indicate that police broke up an occupation by striking workers on a hilltop near the Nkaneng shack settlement (Laing 2012). The police could not control the crowd with tear gas, water cannons, and barbed wire, and what followed is now known as the Marikana massacre. The police struck back by firing live rounds into the crowd for three minutes. Reports indicate that this is the deadliest use of force in South Africa since the end of apartheid in 1994. The police killed thirty-four strikers (De Wet 2012; Laing 2012; Tabane 2012).

From this point in the story, journalists' accounts of the incident vary. The BBC reported that the strikers were holding clubs and machetes and rushed the police line. *The Times* reported that the police did not use live ammunition until they were rushed. The *Sowetan* reported that it was a peaceful gathering. *Al Jazeera* reported that the police in armoured vehicles forced the strikers into an area surrounded by razor wire and then began shooting (South African Press Association [SAPA] 2012a).

A post-mortem examination of the dead indicated that the majority of the strikers were shot in the back while fleeing the confrontation, and that many were shot far from the police line. The autopsy report contradicts the police account that they fired upon an attacking mob. Fourteen of the miners were shot over 300 metres away from the police line. Only one handgun was found among the strikers. A reporter for the *Daily Maverick*, Greg Marinovich, examined the scene and he found that these victims appear to have been cornered and shot at close range. If they were shot from 300 metres away he would have found a shower of bullets throughout the area. However, few stray bullets were found, suggesting that once they were cornered, the police closed in on them and shot them at close range, with very few stray shots. 'It is becoming clear to this reporter that heavily armed police hunted down and killed the miners in cold blood' (Marinovich 2012).

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The day after the shootings a group of miners' wives protested. They sang and chanted slogans from the anti-apartheid movement. They demanded that the police officers responsible for the shooting be sacked. Over 28,000 miners remained on strike, even though the company said that those who did not show up for work could be dismissed. On 5 September 2012, about 1,000 miners protested at the mines. On 15 September the demonstrations again turned violent. The police fired tear gas on protesters in a shanty town. Two days later another protest was stopped by police (*Al Jazeera* 2012).

Those miners who were captured and imprisoned later filed over 150 complaints that they were tortured while in police custody (De Wet 2012; Laing 2012; Tabane 2012). Wildcat strikes spread throughout South Africa after the Marikana massacre. By the end of September 2012, the company and the workers resolved their wage dispute with the help of the South African Council of Churches along with the moderate unions and the exclusion of the AMCU. A minimum entry wage was set and to be enacted within two (p. 7) years. Miners received a 22 per cent pay raise, a one-off payment of R2,000, and in exchange, they would return to work on 20 September (De Wet 2012; iAfrica 2012).

The Bench Marks Foundation responded to this situation in October 2012, with a document entitled 'What Government needs to do to prevent another Marikana'. The Foundation is an independent non-profit, faith-based organization owned by the churches in South Africa. It is part of an international faith-based coalition that also has partners around the world. Its aim is to monitor multinational corporations so that they implement socially responsible policies. The Bench Marks Foundation (2012) clearly states that its goal is to monitor these corporations to ensure:

- they respect human rights;
- they protect the environment;
- that profit-making is not done at the expense of other interest groups; and
- that those most negatively impacted upon are heard, protected, and accommodated within the business plans of the corporations.

The Foundation explained that the discontent that arose from the Marikana strike will not go away until the root causes of discontent is addressed. The Bench Marks Foundation reports: 'The benefits of mining are not reaching the workers or the surrounding communities. Lack of employment opportunities for local youth, squalid living conditions, unemployment and growing inequalities contribute to this mess' (SAPA 2012b). The conditions that the miners face every day includes falling rocks, exposure to dust, intensive noise, fumes, and high temperatures, among others (International Labour Organization 2012). The Bench Marks Foundation document titled 'What Government needs to do ...' makes recommendations directed not only to mining companies, but to government, parliament, and other state bodies as well as civil society and communities. The government lacked a credible response around Marikana, dealing with the unrest in the most forceful way (Bench Marks Foundation 2012). John Capel, executive director of the Bench Marks Foundation, states: 'We need to ask why such a forceful response was taken'. Capel notes: 'It

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begs the question in whose interests was government's response to Marikana directed to?'. Capel explained the conflict of interest among companies and politicians. For instance, mining companies continue to lobby politicians, and politicians still participate in companies as board members or are shareholders. Therefore, the involvement of government officials in mining companies is undermining democracy (Bench Marks Foundation 2012).

The Foundation also noted that while private companies operate to maximize profits to increase shareholder return, there is a lot more that corporations can do to improve the situation for communities. Capel said: 'Regardless of what they say, mining is a profitable business and we need to ensure that all involved benefit from it ... Government has the power to make a huge impact. The question is: does it have the will to do so?' (Bench Marks Foundation 2012).

After the incident, the Marikana Commission of Inquiry was appointed by the president of the Republic of South Africa. After nearly a year, the investigation commission (p. 8) announced on 20 September 2013 that the police version of the event 'is in material respects not the truth' (*Washington Post* 2013). This conclusion came after searching the computer hard drives of the police officers after the shooting. The commission proclaimed that the police officers lied and withheld information.

Some Thoughts about an Industrial Heritage

Individual dissenting views on the true benefits of industrial preservation exist. At many of these places, we forget about the struggle for decent wages and good, safe working conditions. At historic industrial sites, these struggles become a moment of the past and our homage to industry fails to connect these important issues of labour to the present. Workers' struggles become victories of the past, and they are rarely presented as part of a community's heritage. As Howard (2003) implies, the creation of heritage is a political act. The act of preserving industrial landscapes is like the memory of all significant events in history. There are winners and losers. While most industrial heritage is about celebrating the achievements of capital, we can connect the past to the present and use our industrial heritage to inform people about the issues that working-class people face throughout the world today.

For instance, in a time when international corporations continue to undermine the workforce by weakening unions and extending the average working week, and more workers are not contractors responsible for their own healthcare and retirement, we as global citizens need to think about labour issues and remember the long and arduous struggle of workers to secure good working conditions and the middle-class working wage. As an increasing number of people are now bound to make lower wages and have fewer benefits, it becomes a challenge to think about how these preserved industrial landscapes are relevant to working-class people. Understanding labour as a component of industrial heritage

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provides a conduit to revisit the history of labour at industrial sites and provides us with a mechanism to think about labour in historical and contemporary terms.

For instance, many of the injustices that can be uncovered at industrial sites over a hundred years old have been exported to other parts of the world, and they continue to impact local communities as the global community consumes these products. Many large-scale corporations work to make labour inequity invisible, keeping workers and their concerns at the periphery of any discussion related to issues of social justice in the workplace. By bringing to light the conditions of the past and connecting these issues to the present, we can make some of these difficult histories a platform to discuss social inequality today. The example of historic Lattimer and contemporary Marikana shows how the former has become industrial heritage, while the latter is too recent to be considered heritage. Rather, it is a site of tragedy with too many unanswered questions as the incident begins to fade from our memory.

(p. 9) Heritage sites can serve as important places where we learn about communities and ourselves. While we are used to honouring the rusted steel infrastructure, renovated building, and rebuilt canals of industrial heritage places, what becomes obscured is that the struggles of working-class people have been exported to industrializing developing countries. The question for heritage managers of industrial sites, therefore is: can highlighting and interpreting the labour conditions in which these industrial heritage sites existed make us more aware of the tragedies and injustices that exist in some parts of industry today? While we can commemorate the tragedies of the distant past by developing heritage landscapes, contemporary workers protesting for similar conditions have gone unnoticed on the global stage. If we cannot recognize the historic struggle of industrial workers, we need to question our purpose for preserving industrial heritage sites. What are the lessons learned and what are the outcomes of these lessons in contemporary society? Should they be about celebrating the past industrial prowess of a community or a nation, or should they make us aware of the issues associated with labour and how this struggle continues today.

One of the most influential movements in developing long-term historical perspectives that addressed social justice issues, and making them part of the public memory, is the formation of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience. In 1999, eight museums and historic sites with similar missions banded together to promote the interpretation of difficult histories and making them relevant to contemporary society. Some of these museums are safe places that help foster civic dialogues that connect the site's history to contemporary social and political issues.

Today there are more than 250 members of the Coalition from across the globe. Museums, like the District Six Museum in South Africa and Memoria Abierta in Argentina, are about remembering discrimination, ethnic cleansing, and state oppression. Remembering and commemorating these tragic historic episodes through historic sites, help keep difficult episodes in the public memory while these communities transition their way to democracy and inclusiveness. Other sites provide wider overviews of oppression, like the

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Terezin Memorial in the Czech Republic which tackles the history of anti-Semitism. The museum works to bring contemporary forms of racism, such as the current attacks on the Roma people and the rise of neo-Nazi nationalist youth groups, into the discussion of the museum (Ševčenko and Russell-Ciardi 2008: 9–10, 13).

There are currently no sites directly related to industrial heritage affiliated with the Coalition. However, there are places connected to the Coalition that can be easily linked to issues of industry, migration, and poverty. For instance, in the US, Jane Addams Hull-House serves to commemorate social reformer and Nobel Peace Prize recipient Jane Addams (1860–1935). Addams, along with other social reformers worked to better the lives of new immigrants who came to the US, many to work in the factory system. The museum programmes today make connections between the mission of the Hull-House and contemporary social issues, linking research, education, and social engagement. In the UK, the Workhouse at Southwell, built in 1824, is a large red-brick building that housed those who were too poor, old, or ill to support themselves. Unwed pregnant (p. 10) women were also inmates here. Life inside workhouses was intended to be harsh and teach the inmates about self-sufficiency and industry. Much of this poverty and social anomie was related to the advent of widespread industry and the separations and segmentation of life that occurred with industrial capitalism.

The site directors of the Coalition believe that:

it is the obligation of historic sites to assist the public in drawing connections between the history of our sites and its contemporary implications. We view stimulating dialogue on pressing social issues and promoting democratic and humanitarian values as a primary function

(Ševčenko and Russell-Ciardi 2008: 9–10).

The challenge is to encourage a larger number of historic places to engage local communities by connecting their heritage to issues that matter most to them. That too, should be the challenge for those who practise the preservation of industrial heritage sites.

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