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NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA'S FORGOTTEN LABOR MASSACRE:
ANALYSIS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE RECORD OF THE LATTIMER
MASSACRE

A Thesis Presented

by

Jamie C. Costello

Submitted to the Offices of Graduate Studies,

University of Massachusetts Boston,

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

December 2022

History Program

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JAMIE C. COSTELLO

Approved as to style and content by:

Nicholas Juravich, Assistant Professor
Chairperson of Committee

Vincent J. Cannato, Associate Professor
Member

Timothy Hacsí, Associate Professor
Member

Vincent J. Cannato, Program Director
History Program

Heidi Gengenbach, Chairperson
History Department

NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA'S FORGOTTEN LABOR MASSACRE:
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ABSTRACT

NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA'S FORGOTTEN LABOR MASSACRE:
ANALYSIS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE RECORD OF THE LATTIMER
MASSACRE

December 2022

Jamie C. Costello, B.A., King's College
M.A., University of Massachusetts Boston

Directed by Professor Nicholas Juravich

The Lattimer Massacre occurred on September 10, 1897, in a small anthracite mining town in northeastern Pennsylvania. The bloody conflict erupted when an unarmed group of mostly Eastern European immigrant mine workers lethally clashed with militantly armed sheriff's deputies who acted on behalf of private coal companies. Nineteen strikers died at the scene and dozens more were horrifically wounded. Despite the outraged shock of the community clamoring for justice which led to a murder trial that made international headlines, the Lattimer Massacre faded from local and national memory in the following decades. A combination of lingering nativist prejudice curated by capital and elite society

and a lack of surviving evidence from the Eastern European immigrant community contributed to the Massacre's absence from broader historical discussion of Gilded Age labor organization in the United States.

This work seeks to position the Lattimer Massacre within Gilded Age American society in an effort to acknowledge the roots of ethnic and economic conflict between established immigrant groups and newly arriving Eastern and Southern Europeans in northeastern Pennsylvania. This study seeks to understand how the community memory of the Lattimer Massacre influenced historical scholarship. A lack of historicization of primary sources created a distorted understanding of the immigrant led strike activity. This distorted view positioned Lattimer as a rare moment of extremes rather than the explosion of decades of conflict between immigrant workers and capital. Analysis of the English-language newspaper record and community produced documents brings out fresh insights about the anthracite community of northeastern Pennsylvania and the evolution of Lattimer's memory in the historical record. Appraisal of the source materials exposes the critical role of women and families in immigrant strike activity, demonstrates how Slavic immigrants understood their positions in an evolving American society, and creates a more complex understanding of how American society perceived and reacted to unionization and immigrant labor.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people and institutions I owe a debt of gratitude for their support and assistance with this thesis. To my family and friends for their love, laughter, acceptance, and support which has meant the world to me. Thank you for being a part of this. To my irreplaceable colleagues at King's College in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania and to the dedicated professors at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. Thank you for your insight and tutelage which were indispensable to the success of this project.

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INTRODUCTION: REVISITING LATTIMER

The Lattimer Massacre occurred on September 10, 1897, in a small anthracite mining town in northeastern Pennsylvania. The bloody conflict erupted when an unarmed group of mostly Eastern European immigrant mine workers lethally clashed with militantly armed sheriff's deputies who acted on behalf of private coal companies. Nineteen strikers lost their lives at the scene with an additional five dying days later from their injuries. Dozens more received horrific and debilitating wounds, most often in their backs and sides indicating that they had been attempting to flee the shooting. The escalation and intensity of the violence shocked the local community and attracted national and international attention. The trial of Sheriff James Martin and his deputies pit the anthracite community of northeastern Pennsylvania against itself. Two camps emerged—those who believed that Martin and his deputies upheld American law and those who believed that the legal system had robbed the strikers of justice. Despite the fierce debate, condemnation, and scathing reports on both sides of the conflict, the Lattimer Massacre faded from local and national memory in the following decades.

Growing up near Scranton, Pennsylvania, I was acutely aware of the impact that generations of immigrant anthracite miners had on the region. The statue of John Mitchell, president of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) from 1898 to 1908 and

“champion of human rights,” loomed large around the Lackawanna County Courthouse, not far from the sites of the 1877 and 1902 strikes. Local playwrights wrote dramas which mocked the cruel misdeeds of William Scranton and the prosecutors of the Molly Maguires. The spring field trip in grade school usually meant a visit to the Lackawanna Coal Mine Tour at McDade Park. It was a rite of passage to join your peers on a shaky shaft elevator and be plunged into darkness where you may or may not be frightened by the tour guide’s fake rats (a common pest of the anthracite mines.) Family histories often revolve around an immigrant progenitor who worked hard in the coal fields, scrimping and saving their wages to purchase the family home and establish new life in America. Of course, these stories often involve accidents, mine collapses, coal fires, dynamite mishaps, and, if the progenitor was still working into the twentieth century, the debilitating effects of black lung.

This is a region where immigration heritage is a major source of pride. Local residents display their family’s nation of origin alongside the American flag. Celebrations of the region’s immigrant heritage, especially those nationalities that took up employment in the anthracite industry, are everywhere. The spring and summer months are filled with countless annual picnics, bazars, and celebrations hosted by ethnic churches and heritage groups. The official beginning and end of warm weather is marked by the annual Saint Patrick’s Day Parade in March and La Festa Italiana over Labor Day weekend. It is easily apparent that locals venerate their mining and immigrant heritage in northeastern Pennsylvania. With this in mind, why then is the Lattimer Massacre, a strike which involved mostly immigrant strikers taking on exploitative company management, largely absent from the region’s understanding of their anthracite heritage?

I am not alone in pointing out the absence of the Lattimer Massacre in broader discussions of Gilded Age labor conflicts. Labor historians and community members alike are puzzled by Lattimer's absence in the larger historic narrative surrounding anthracite mining in Pennsylvania. Until the late 1960s, the memory and discussion of the massacre and its victims existed primarily within the Eastern European immigrant community of northeastern Pennsylvania.

Although the Lattimer Massacre became a rallying cry for Eastern Europeans to join the fledgling UMWA after 1897, the tragedy remained outside of the official periphery of the organization. Even after John Mitchell had given his blessing for a monument and the UMWA recognized Lattimer as a contributing factor to its successes in the 1902 strike, community business leaders feared backlash and resisted efforts to construct a memorial site in Wilkes-Barre.¹ Business leaders felt that if they supported the monument, they would be supporting the "rioters," and if they rejected the monument outright, it would be a demonstration of their support for the shooters.² It took decades for the community to properly acknowledge the graves of the Lattimer victims due to financial and political setbacks. The monument dedicated to the victims as well as the historical markers indicating where the march began and the site of the shooting were not erected until seventy-five years after the 1897 shooting in 1972.

With a few exceptions, labor historians tended to overlook Lattimer. If mentioned, Lattimer is a footnoted example when discussing more well-known labor events like the Pullman and Homestead Strikes and the Haymarket Riot. Lattimer was just as horrifying and

¹ "May Build Memorial Hall," *Wilkes-Barre Times* (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania), April 4, 1902, 9.

² Paul Shackel, *Remembering Lattimer: Labor, Migration, and Race in Pennsylvania Anthracite Country* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2018), 64.

bloody, yet few know its story. Until the recent work of the Lattimer Massacre Project and the publication of *Remembering Lattimer: Labor, Migration, and Race in Pennsylvania Anthracite Country* by Paul Shackel, which rejuvenated both scholarly and public examination of the Lattimer, it was exceedingly rare for historians who did not specialize in the anthracite and immigrant heritage of Pennsylvania to acknowledge the massacre.³

Some of the explanation of Lattimer's absence in the larger narrative can be explained by the racial attitudes and nativism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Michael Barendse points out that the "expert texts" on Eastern and Southern European immigrant communities in the United States are filled with nativist racial biases. These accepted "experts" contributed to academics diminishing the role of immigrant communities, especially in the formation of the UMWA.⁴ Nativism and race theory encouraged negative assumptions and birthed "truths" about Eastern and Southern European immigrants which bled into every aspect of communal life. Mine owners and managers, business owners, newspaper editors, union officials, and even religious organizations embraced these negative stereotypes.⁵ These assumptions then bled into the academic

³ Paul Shackel points out in *Remembering Lattimer* that Lattimer is briefly mentioned in Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*. Harry B. Schooley III declared the Lattimer Massacre as "labors forgotten massacre" in an issue of *Slovakia* in 1977. There was a small surge of inquiry into the massacre after the publication of Victor Greene's *The Anthracite Community on Strike*, however investigation dwindled in the 1980s and 1990s. *Pennsylvania History: A Mid-Atlantic Journal* dedicated an entire issue to the Lattimer Massacre in 2002, but the audience did not expand beyond those who study the anthracite region of Pennsylvania.

⁴ Barendse specifically details the work of contemporary sociologists and historians Peter Roberts, Frank Warne, and Andrew Suffern, but also includes the ways in which business owners, newspaper editors, religious organizations, mine operators and managers expressed their beliefs in Slavic inferiority and perpetuated nativist prejudices.

⁵ Michael A. Barendse, *Social Expectations and Perceptions: The Case for Slavic Anthracite Workers* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1981): 31.

discourse regarding early twentieth century labor conflict leading to Lattimer's exclusion from the broader narrative.

Another likely cause of Lattimer's absence in scholarly discussion is the lack of surviving evidence detailing Eastern European contributions in northeastern Pennsylvania's anthracite region. Much of the primary documentation of the shooting and trial of Martin's deputies—materials including coroner's reports, court transcripts, and other legal documents—have been destroyed. Firsthand oral accounts of the shooting from the perspective are extremely limited. Scholars did not begin to investigate Lattimer until the late 1950s and by then many of the surviving strikers involved at Lattimer had passed away. The firsthand accounts that do exist have been filtered through a secondary perspective. While these versions of the event are invaluable, as they demonstrate how the Slavic immigrant community reacted to and memorialized the shooting, they are hardly verbatim recollections of the event. The closest thing possible to an existing oral record is within the surviving newspaper record. The surviving English-language newspaper accounts from Luzerne County attempted to portray an accurate an even-handed account of the strike, shooting, and trial. Therefore, this investigation of the Lattimer Massacre will be limited to a small selection of English language news reports, community produced documents, and secondary research.

Generally, historians agree that nativist attitudes were a significant factor in the escalation of violence from the sheriff's deputies.⁶ They point out that the sheriff's men were

⁶ George A Turner, "The Lattimer Massacre: A Perspective from the Ethnic Community," Paul A Shackel's *Remembering Lattimer: Labor, Migration and Race in Pennsylvania Anthracite Country*, George A. Turner and Philip Anthony Hroback "The Lattimer Massacre and Its Sources," Victor R. Greene, *The Slavic Community on Strike: Immigrant Labor in Pennsylvania Anthracite*, Steven Laurence Danver "Lattimer Massacre (1897) in *Revolts, Protests, Demonstrations and Rebellions in American History: An Encyclopedia*, Mildred Allen Beik

mostly Anglo, Irish, and German business owners or managers with connections to the private coal companies. It was more beneficial for the coal barons and managers to forget the conflict and downplay the demands of the demands of the workers.⁷

What is lacking from these explanations is a thorough examination of the primary source texts which reveal the ways in which this silencing of violence began. Moreover, nativist prejudices and stereotypes are not created in a vacuum and need to be continuously fed and reinforced by popular discourse as reproduced in public media. Community-produced documents about Lattimer, such as Edward Pinkowski's *Lattimer Massacre* and Konstantín Čulen's *Slovaks in America* demonstrate that the Eastern European immigrant community in Luzerne County was aware that their story was being silenced and actively worked against that, preserving the memory of Lattimer in whatever way they could. This memory contains a deep sense of injustice, especially when dealing with figures of authority as well as a deep animosity for coal company executives and managers for their exploitative practices. These testimonials also demonstrate the ways in which the community used Lattimer and their support of the UMWA to work against the accepted beliefs that Slavic immigrants weakened and stymied unionization efforts in Pennsylvania's anthracite region.

In this exploration of the Lattimer Massacre, I will analyze English-language news reports and community produced documents within their historical framework as a means to bring out fresh insights about the strikers and their families. This investigation will also explore the emerging narrative of the Lattimer shooting from the perspective of the

"The Significance of the Lattimer Massacre: Who Owns History?," Michael A Barendse *Social Expectations and Perception: The Case of the Slavic Anthracite Workers*. Kenneth Wolensky and Melvyn Dubofsky argue that the immigrant laborers who marched at Lattimer understood that they were also marching for their understanding of American citizenship

⁷ Shackel, *Remembering Lattimer*, 2.

immigrant community and the ways in which this narrative influenced historical discussion. I do not wish to challenge the existing narrative of class and ethnic conflict. Instead, my goal is to create a richer and more complex understanding of the tragedy.

A fresh examination of the Lattimer Massacre is necessary. The lack of formal memorialization and documentation of the massacre meant that the memory and legacy of Lattimer had to be preserved by the Slavic immigrant community. As such, community documents are filled with feelings of anger and distrust at American authority, a need to position the fallen strikers as martyrs for the union cause, and a strong desire to champion Slavic culture. Newspaper sources also contain their own sources of biases necessitating contextualization and historicization. As David Paul Nord explains in *Communities of Journalism: A History of American Newspapers and Their Readers*, public journalism was not contained solely within the public realm. Religious and business elites, political factions, ethnic and cultural interest groups, reform associations, and the American people themselves constructed public media.⁸ This is especially true of the English-language papers of Luzerne County which documented the entire tragedy from the August 1897 mule drivers' strike to the acquittal of Sheriff James Martin and his deputies for murder in March 1898. The same elites who owned and ran the anthracite mines also had significant controlling interest in Luzerne's printing industry. Their reporters, even when sympathetic to miners' causes, helped to shape a particular community identity beholden to the ideals of America's elite society. This identity revolved around the notions of nativism and positioned the Slavic immigrants murdered at Lattimer as less-than-human.

⁸ David Paul Nord, *Communities of Journalism: A History of American Newspapers and Their Readers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 2-3, 17.

The lack of primary sources, limited reading of the newspaper record, and lack of attention to community produced documents has created a distorted understanding of the immigrant-led strike. Through this lens, historians and scholars then depict Lattimer as a rare moment of extremes rather than an explosion of decades long conflict and tension between capital and immigrant labor. Reexamining the English language record exposes the ways in which community and historical memory interact and influence one another. This reappraisal of the source material also exposes the critical role of women and families in immigrant strike activity. It also demonstrates how Slavic immigrants understood their positions in an evolving American society. Revisitation of the historical record of the Lattimer Massacre creates a richer and more complex understanding of how American society perceived and reacted to unionization and immigrant labor.

Chapter one will explore the historiographic memory of Lattimer within the Eastern European immigrant community and explore the ways in which this memory impacted scholarly investigations. These sources demonstrate that Lattimer left deep scars on the Eastern European immigrant community. Lattimer's memory is paired with a distrust in authority—especially authority with any connection to the business of the anthracite mines—and ardent feelings of injustice. Building from these documents, historians use the events of Lattimer as an example of the extreme ethnic and class divisions between newly arriving Eastern European immigrants and the existing community, which consisted of mostly White Anglo-Saxon Protestants and Irish immigrants. These conflicts combined with nativist ideas in American society perpetuated by scholarly experts contributed to Lattimer's exclusion from the historiographical record.

Chapter two will contextualize the events of the Lattimer Massacre within the framework of late nineteenth and early twentieth century industrial America. Reframing the documents of Lattimer within the broader context of Gilded Age America acknowledges the roots of ethnic and economic conflict between established immigrant groups and newly arriving Eastern and Southern Europeans in northeastern Pennsylvania.

Chapter three focuses on a reexamination of the existing primary newspaper record of the Lattimer Massacre, placing it within Gilded Age American society. This fresh investigation also acknowledges the long-overlooked contributions of immigrant women in strike activity and sheds light on moments of community unity during an event which demonstrated the extremes of ethnic and class division. Finally, reexamination reveals the evolving understanding of who and what America was and could be, especially on the part of the immigrant strikers.

CHAPTER 1

THE LATTIMER MASSACRE IN HISTORY IN MEMORY

The Mule Drivers' Strike and a Murder Trial

The Lattimer Massacre was the violent climax of a strike begun by immigrant workers in July 1897 in the Pardee Bros. & Company Mines of Lattimer, Pennsylvania. Lattimer was a company town which meant that any trouble in the mines usually meant trouble for the entire community. The appointment of an unpopular superintendent, Gomer Jones, marked the beginning of the conflict. Jones attempted to institute a new rule which forced the mule boys into adding two extra hours of work each day without compensation.⁹ When the mule boys refused these new conditions and stopped work, Jones violently confronted them and assaulted one man, breaking his arm. The scuffle led to further walkouts and a general strike broke out on August 16, 1897. The mule boys strike had exposed numerous grievances at the Pardee Mines, least of which was Jones's management style. Employees demanded an immediate increase in pay, which Jones had reduced upon becoming the mine superintendent, the right to select their own doctor, a reduction on the price of blasting powder, the promise that every man on strike would have his position reinstated, and finally that Jones would be removed.¹⁰ By early September, the strike had

⁹ Mule boys were typically older adolescent boys or teenagers who were responsible for stabling and caring for their animals. They began their mornings early, harnessed their mules to a cart, and began the Sisyphean task of transporting men and coal between the pits below and the surface.

¹⁰ Philip Anthony Hrobek and George A. Turner, "The Lattimer Massacre and Its Sources," *Slovakia* 27, no. 50 (1977): 22-24.

escalated to include several hundred men in the disparate Luzerne County coal fields across several mining companies.

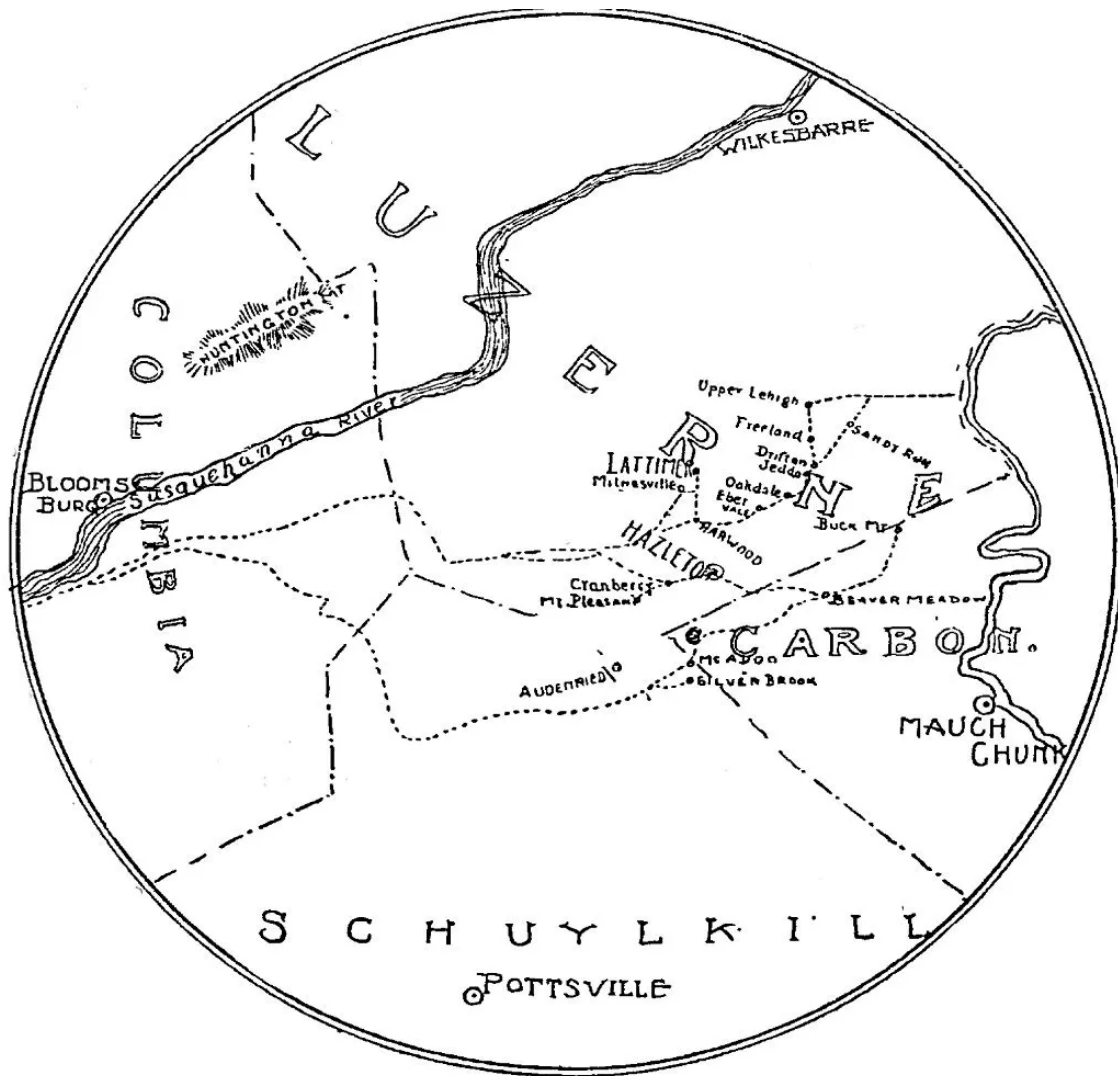


Figure 1. Map of Luzerne Region. Philadelphia Inquirer.

Organization on this scale was monumental. Conditions at one mine may not exist in the next and some owners were more willing to arbitrate than others over employee complaints. The community buzzed with fears that the anthracite region was prepping for a massive walkout. The bituminous mines of western Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and West Virginia had been on a coordinated strike under the new UMWA (founded in 1890)

since July. Rumors flooded the Wyoming Valley with talks that the anthracite men would soon join up with the bituminous mines in this larger strike. Newspapers even reported that labor agitators from the bituminous regions were in Luzerne County leading and organizing the men.¹¹ The last time any coordinated effort occurred in the Wyoming Valley had been during the Great Upheaval of 1877.¹²

As the days passed without resolution and discussions of widespread strikes became more realistic, mine owners became more and more fearful. One local paper estimated that “nearly 8,000” were on strike and that there were “indications...that 25,000 men will strike within a week.”¹³ Alarmed, mine owners summoned Sheriff James Martin of Hazleton back from his late summer Atlantic City vacation. Notably, this summoning was not on the behalf of any elected public official of either Hazleton or Wilkes-Barre. Martin met only with the owners and officials of the Lehigh Valley Coal Company, Lehigh & Wilkes-Barre Coal Company, Cross Creek Coal Company, and Pardee Bros. & Company mines. These men made it very clear to Martin that he would be personally responsible for continued strike activity and further interferences to business.¹⁴ Martin quickly summoned a posse of deputies. The deputies, who had either worked previously as Coal & Iron Police or had business or family connections to the coal companies, had been outfitted with high powered

¹¹ “Unsettled Labor: Van Wickle Collieries are Still Idle and Men Are Waiting,” *Hazleton Sentinel* (Hazleton, Pennsylvania), August 30, 1897 and “Peace Reigns: the Arrangements for To-Nights Meeting Attracting Attention,” *Hazleton Sentinel* (Hazleton, Pennsylvania), September 18, 1897.

¹² Also known as the Great Railroad Strike of 1877, or the Great Strike of 1877. The 1877 strike encompassed workers from Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, and Missouri. Pennsylvania saw some of the worst violence from the strikes from strikers, national guard members, and police. Luzerne County residents very likely remembered the scene of carnage in the neighboring city of Scranton some twenty years earlier when William Walker Scranton, manager of the Lackawanna Coal & Iron Company and then mayor of Scranton, and a posse of his men used newly purchased Winchester rifles to confront the strikers. Violence and chaos erupted when the strikers and Scranton’s men met on the street. Several men died from gunshot wounds and dozens more were wounded.

¹³ “Hazleton Strikes Steadily Growing,” *Scranton Tribune* (Scranton, Pennsylvania) September 10, 1897, 1.

¹⁴ Hroback and Turner, “The Lattimer Massacre and Its Sources,” 28.

Winchester rifles.¹⁵ In the days leading up to the deadly shooting, strikers and deputies continually clashed with each interaction further escalating tensions.

On September 10, 1897, an estimated three to four hundred unarmed strikers marched in protest of unfair management, pay schedules, company store policies, and payroll deductions. Strike leaders had urged the men to remain peaceable and to not carry anything that could be perceived as a weapon. Strikers made a point to obtain two American flags for their parade and some even carried their naturalization papers the day of. They had every indication that they would be permitted to march, providing they remained on public roads and did not interfere with private business. Evan Jones, the Chief of Police of West Hazleton, peaceably interacted with strikers earlier in the morning and even directed them to a side road that would take them around the town.¹⁶ Late in the afternoon, strikers made their way to the Lattimer mines from Harwood, another mine a few miles away, where they had heard they could find sympathetic men to add to their numbers. Martin and his deputies met the strikers along the public road to Harwood. It is at this point when the story becomes muddled, and the precise narrative of events begins to break down.

It is unclear what triggered the deputies to fire. Although Martin initially explained on September 10 that “I hated to give the command to shoot and was awful sorry that I was compelled to do so,” his story quickly changed after speaking with his lawyer. Martin later could not recall whether or not the order to fire had been given or who had given it.¹⁷ The version of events which became repeated by newspapers in the days following the shooting

¹⁵ “Mob Rule Up in Luzerne District: Foreign Workmen Close Mines and Attack Superintendent Jones’ House.” *Philadelphia Inquirer* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), September 3, 1897.

¹⁶ “Presiding Judge Not Scared,” *Times Leader* (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania), February 9, 1898, 5.

¹⁷ “Sheriff Martin’s Story: He Claims That It Was Necessary to Fire Upon the Strikers,” *Scranton Tribune* (Scranton, Pennsylvania) September 11, 1897.

was that Martin and the strikers met on the road where he then read them the Riot Act and ordered them to disperse. The strikers, still agitated from an earlier scuffle between themselves and the deputies, where rocks had been hurled and arms were broken, struck or pushed Martin down.¹⁸ It was then that the command to fire had been given, though none of the deputies could tell who specifically had given it. Strikers insisted that they “did not attempt to hit or molest” the sheriff or his deputies when they attempted to move past Martin when he attempted to stop them on the road.¹⁹ The deputies fired upon them when they successfully pushed past Martin to continue their peaceable march.

The carnage and bloodshed at the scene shocked news reporters. “Men dropped like wheat stalks before a scythe and the scene was indescribable,” wrote the *Wilkes-Barre Record*.²⁰ Nineteen men died on the scene. Six more succumbed to their wounds in the hospital afterwards. A score more had been seriously wounded or maimed by gun fire. Victims, wounded and dead, had been shot in the back indicating that they had been attempting to flee the melee when they were gunned down. Others had multiple wounds indicating they had been specifically targeted.

The initial investigation into the shooting placed the blame on the deputies. The majority of the coroner’s jury found that the strikers were “marching peaceably and unarmed on the public highway” before they were intercepted by the sheriff and his deputies and shot to death.²¹ They found “that the killing was unnecessary and could have been avoided without serious injury to either person and property, and we find, finally, that the killing was

¹⁸ “Strikers Fired Upon,” *Hazleton Sentinel* (Hazleton, Pennsylvania), September 10, 1897.

¹⁹ “Strikers Shot Down,” *Scranton Tribune* (Scranton, Pennsylvania), September 11, 1897.

²⁰ “Day of Blood at Lattimer!” *Wilkes-Barre Record*, (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania), September 11, 1897.

²¹ “The Lattimer Inquest,” *Pittston Gazette* (Pittston, Pennsylvania), October 1, 1897. Two of the six jurors did not concur with the verdict and justified the deaths of the strikers as necessary to control the “unruly mob.”

wanton and unjustifiable.”²² Witnesses reported that deputies mocked and further injured wounded strikers, indicating that there may have been racial motives behind the actions of the deputies.

Massive unrest occurred in the area after the strike.²³ The Wyoming Valley had grown accustomed to decades of bloody violence between capital and labor, but the slaughter of nineteen peaceable men was a step too far. None of the deputies nor Sheriff Martin had been physically assaulted by the strikers, and the supposed “evidence” of the violent strikers was unconvincing at best.²⁴ Sheriff Martin and his deputies had gravely overstepped their authority and outrage came from all aspects of the anthracite community. Rumors of “revenge killings” swept through the patch towns.²⁵ Governor Daniel H. Hastings quickly summoned the Pennsylvania National Guard to Hazleton in the hopes that the troops’ presence would quell any protest over the shooting. Still outraged by the deputies’ actions, strikers and their families clashed with national guard troops brought in to protect mine property and keep the peace. Fearful deputies published affidavits in the newspapers stating that they had not fired their weapons on September 10th and one deputy reportedly fled to South America.²⁶ One particularly angered city constable even stalked the National Guard’s

²² “The Lattimer Inquest,” *Pittston Gazette* (Pittston, Pennsylvania), October 1, 1897.

²³ Associated Press, “Way Sunday Was Spent: Funerals of Friday’s Conflict with the Deputies,” *Scranton Tribune* (Scranton, Pennsylvania), September 13, 1897, 5.

²⁴ “Way Sunday Was Spent: Funerals of Friday’s Conflict with the Deputies,” *Scranton Tribune* (Scranton, Pennsylvania), September 13, 1897, 5. Though there were numerous claims that the strikers had carried weapons on their march from Harwood to Lattimer, the only weapon supposedly recovered from a striker was a .32 caliber “bulldog” style revolver. The gun had been found in the pocket of a slain striker, but it was unloaded and had not been fired. The coat was kept at the offices of the Lehigh Traction Company, a trolley car service that worked in coordination with the anthracite mines.

²⁵ “A Feeling of Security: Each Passing Hour Brings Added Sense of Relief to Hazleton,” *Wilkes-Barre Record* (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania), September 15, 1897.

²⁶ “Warning From the Bench,” *Wilkes Barre Record* (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania), February 8, 1898, 7.

camp, where some deputies had fled to for protection, to serve the deputies warrants of arrest for murder.²⁷

Despite initial public outcry over the massacre, sympathy of the immigrant strikers soon began to wane. The trial of Sheriff Martin and his deputies for the murder of Mike Cheslock began in late January 1898. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania gathered a high-profile prosecution team lead by District Attorney T.R. Martin.²⁸ John T. Lenahan, a noted criminal attorney, led the defense team for Sheriff James Martin and his deputies.²⁹ District Attorney Martin chose Cheslock as the first case. Cheslock was a well-known and respected member of the community and had recently applied to become a United States citizen.³⁰ The Austro-Hungarian government became interested in the case because many of the Lattimer victims were still Austrian and Hungarian citizens. Rumors circulated that the Austro-Hungarian government would seek indemnity from the United States if Sheriff Martin and his deputies were convicted of murder.³¹

Unfortunately, the trial seemed to be stacked against the Lattimer victims from the start. The *Wilkes-Barre Times* described Sheriff Martin at the defendant's table, as "at ease" at the opening of the trial, explaining that "the expression on [Martin's] face seemed to indicate that the trial could have but one result, and that favorable to him and his associates

²⁷ "The National Guard: In Complete Control—A Constable Arrested While Attempting to Arrest Deputy Hess." *Philadelphia Inquirer* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), September 13, 1897. and "Death Toll Is Twenty," *Scranton Tribune* (Scranton, Pennsylvania), September 13, 1897.

²⁸ "Great Legal Battle" *Times Leader* (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania), February 1., 1898, 1. James Scarlet, former District Attorney and then Democratic State chairman John M. Garman, E.F. McGovern, and P.F. Laughran made up the rest of the prosecution team.

²⁹ "Great Legal Battle" *Times Leader*, 1. The rest of the defense team consisted of ex-Attorney General H.W. Palmer, George S. Ferris, F.W. Wheaton, and George H. Troutman.

³⁰ Shackel, *Remembering Lattimer*, 46.

³¹ "Wheels of Justice Set In Motion," *Wilkes-Barre Semi-Weekly Record* (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania), February 4, 1898, 7.

on Lattimer's bloody day."³² The selected jurors were men from English or German heritage and had little first-hand knowledge of the complexities of anthracite affairs in the company towns. Several jurors admitted that they had already formed opinions but would attempt to put them aside during the trial.³³ The prosecution also faced a serious lack of funds and had to petition the court for advances. Many of their witnesses were unemployed laborers who could not afford to pay for travel expenses.³⁴ Clearly the extensive resources of the coal companies, and by extension the sheriff and the deputies, eclipsed those of the immigrant strikers.

Perhaps the most damaging for the prosecution's case against Martin and the deputies was the defense's success in playing into nativist perceptions of Slavic immigrants which painted the strikers as a frenzied uncontrollable mob. Though the prosecution deftly argued that the strikers acted in accordance with American law and had produced an army of witnesses testifying to the deputies malicious and prejudiced actions, nativist prejudice overshadowed their case. Highlighting the strikers' ethnic characteristics and lack of English comprehension, Martin's defense team successfully convinced the jury that the foreign strikers had created a "reign of terror" in the week prior to the massacre.³⁵ The defense called upon dozens of witnesses who expressed their fears about the strikers' violence or stated they had been forced into the ranks of marching men. "Those who resisted were set upon, beaten, clubbed and wounded," declared George S. Ferris, one of Martin's defense attorneys in

³² "Taking of Testimony Began This Morning," *Wilkes-Barre Times* (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania), February 3, 1898, 1.

³³ "Trial of Sheriff Martin and Deputies," *Wilkes-Barre Times* (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania), February 1, 1898, 1,6.

³⁴ "The Lattimer Cases," *Times Leader* (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania), January 31, 1898, 9.

³⁵ "Opening for Defense: The Other Side in the Big Trial," *Times Leader* (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania) February 22, 1898, 5.

court.³⁶ He continued stating that the “sanctity of the home was violated... and men dragged out of them, or forced to flee to the woods for their lives.”³⁷ This image of the strikers, which met society’s nativist expectations of Eastern European immigrant behavior, became the accepted narrative. American media downplayed the immigrant striker’s version of events which highlighted the deputies’ prejudice and connections to the anthracite industry.

The trial concluded in March 1898 and the acquittal of Sheriff James Martin and his deputies for the murder of Mike Cheslock sealed the fate of the Lattimer Massacre’s story.³⁸ The prosecution’s witnesses had failed to identify the deputies who had fired, and the argument that the actions of the deputies had been premeditated could not be proven. The defense successfully argued that the strikers had created a state of panic in the region with their demonstrations and that they had forced bystanders into the march thus justifying the Sheriff’s right to summon a *posse comitatus*.³⁹ Luzerne County papers occasionally brought up the massacre and trial when discussing labor conflict, but American media as a whole rarely reported on it after March 1898. The outbreak of the Spanish-American War in late April 1898 can be attributed to some of media’s abandonment of the story, but it was just as likely that the story of immigrant victims, who were generally seen as brutish outsiders, attracted little attention outside of its own community.

The memory of the Lattimer Massacre was preserved primarily within the Eastern European community of northeastern Pennsylvania until the mid-twentieth century. Though

³⁶ “Opening for Defense: The Other Side in the Big Trial,” 1.

³⁷ “Opening for Defense: The Other Side in the Big Trial,” 1.

³⁸ Mike Cheslock and many of the other victims typically have several different spellings of their last names printed in the newspapers. English-speaking reporters often used phonetic spellings for the names of Slavic strikers as they lacked a fluency in the strikers’ original language. The spellings of the victims outlined in Edward Pinkowski’s *The Lattimer Massacre* will be used for the duration of this thesis.

³⁹ “The Lattimer Verdict,” *Semi-Weekly Record* (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania), March 11, 1898, 4.

it was a significant event for Luzerne County, the elite society in charge of documenting the region's history minimized the massive unrest and coordinated efforts that sprung from the mule drivers' strike. They dismissed the conflict as "foreign unrest," thereby discrediting the entire event as the work of radical extremists rather than a coordinated protest. In contrast, the Slavic community preserved Lattimer in a way that commemorated and honored their slain neighbors. Their story focused on positioning the protesting men as champions for union causes and American ideals. Examination of community produced documents from the Slavic immigrant community demonstrate their desire to contradict the narrative created by English-language sources.

Scholarly investigation of Lattimer did not begin until the late 1960s with Victor Greene's pivotal research dedicated to northeastern Pennsylvania's Slavic community. Importantly, Greene contextualized the mule drivers' strike and places the massacre within the broader framework of labor verses capital in the Gilded Age. He successfully argued that the Slavic immigrant community in Pennsylvania's anthracite region were essential to the success of the UMWA. Using Greene's research, historians examined the Lattimer Massacre in order to bring out new insights about the impact of Slavic immigration in American society. Despite these fascinating and important works, scholars continually overlooked Lattimer. Examination of the silencing and subversion of the massacre by researchers is an important lesson for historians. Lattimer's absence from national discussion of labor violence demonstrates that we as researchers need to be mindful of our participation in the silencing of history. Acceptance of racially biased documents as fact distorts historical reality. Moreover, we must be aware of the inherent biases of historical documents, especially when it comes to events which are intimately tied to community memory.

Despite the drama and bloodshed, historians largely overlooked Lattimer. Some explanation for this oversight can be attributed to the lack of a notable celebrity or politician attached to the event, like in the cases of the Pullman and Homestead strikes. Another likely reason is that examination of the Lattimer Massacre necessitates the difficult task of grappling with American ethnocentric nativism in the early twentieth century. Thankfully, historians began tackling this complex topic in the mid-1960s. These historians effectively posited that America's ethnocentric nativism played a significant role in the escalation of violence on the striking miners at Lattimer. Victor Greene's essential research regarding the Slavic anthracite community further challenged ethnocentric assumptions and proved that, as a community, Eastern European immigrants were essential to the formation of the UMWA in Pennsylvania's anthracite region. Building from Greene's foundational work, later labor historians sought to place Lattimer within the larger context of social and economic conflict occurring between new immigrants and established Americans between the 1880s and 1920s. They found the conflicts of rapid urbanization combined with America's prevalent theories of nativism created a social environment rife with hostility against new immigrant groups. Despite these fascinating investigations, national memory of the Lattimer Massacre is virtually non-existent and historical memory tends to remain within the bubble of labor conflict within the Mid-Atlantic region.

Nativism in American Society

Two articles published in *Harper's Weekly* and *The Century Magazine* written by Henry Edward Rood shortly after the Lattimer shooting and Mike Cheslock's murder trial strongly exemplify the American ethnocentric and nativist perceptions of the Slavic immigrants in the anthracite region. Rood's description of Eastern Europeans and the

Lattimer Massacre exemplify the nativist narrative that emerged from the trial. Because of their national audience, these articles became the first official account of the Lattimer Massacre and of the individuals involved. These nativist and ethnocentric perceptions of the Slavic community aided in the silencing of the Lattimer Massacre from broader discussion of Gilded Age labor organization. It should be noted that these articles were not unusual for their time. Intellectual elites accepted nativist theories of race to be legitimate. Henry Edward Rood visited the colliery towns near Lattimer and detailed the differences between English-speaking and Italian and Slavic immigrant neighborhoods to his nationwide audience. Rood emphasized the squalor and poverty in the Slavic and Italian neighborhoods. He dismissed the idea that men endured garnished wages or that they died penniless or worked for weeks on end to take home only a fraction of what they were owed. He cautions against taking the foreigners' stories as full truths, suggesting that his reader "might be well to inquire as to the industry and capabilities and soberness of the men referred to, as well as to the thrift or extravagance of themselves and their wives."⁴⁰ Rood did not see any truth to the foreigners' argument that the company store system was exploitative, providing examples of how Welsh and Irish miners used the credit offered at the stores to improve their homes and lives.⁴¹

Rood is deeply sympathetic to the English-speaking miners, to the point of dehumanizing Slavic and Italian immigrants. In Rood's view, immigrants did not participate in American society and were happy to remain in their lower societal positions working for low wages in dangerous conditions.

As a rule, the foreigners in the anthracite fields have been content until recently to labor for very low wages without a protest; to huddle in shanties like so many domestic animals; to eat half-spoiled vegetables and fruits that would not be sold to

⁴⁰ Rood, "A Pennsylvania Colliery Village," *The Century Magazine* 55, no. 6 (April, 1898): 814.

⁴¹ Rood, "A Pennsylvania Colliery Village," 809.

English-speaking people. They care nothing about acquiring our language, and do not associate with the old hands for obvious reasons; they have their own churches and amusements and weekly newspapers; and, until the summer just passed, they never had an idea of engaging in a general strike.⁴²

In Rood's view, poverty and squalor was a reflection of the immigrants themselves and not the result of exploitative company practices which kept them in a cycle of destitution. These were simply people who refused to assimilate, were content with their substandard way of life, and would only organize or protest for better conditions if someone else prompted them. Note that Rood believed that immigrant miners acted only when "politicians and agitators" persuaded them into action as they were incapable of organizing on their own. In reality, the entire 1897 protest was organized, carried out, and led by immigrant workers driven to action by a sense of injustice. Unfortunately, the popularity of these national magazines meant that Rood's portrayal of the Slavic workforce became the dominant account in American society.

Rood was especially wary of new immigrants' desires to become involved in the American political system. He warned against Eastern and Southern European immigrants becoming involved in American politics as they were "more dangerous to the body politic than the excluded Chinese." These newcomers were superstitious, murderous, and did not hesitate to use explosive and violent means to get their way.⁴³ Rood was suspicious of immigrant workers for their "ignorance" and desire to take part in American politics. Like other intellectuals of his time, Rood believed that immigrants could not understand complex democratic policies because they had come from agrarian societies. Their simple and backwards nature made them easy targets for revolutionaries looking for lackies.⁴⁴ Perhaps

⁴² Rood, "A Pennsylvania Colliery Village," 818.

⁴³ Rood, "A Pennsylvania Colliery Village," 810-811.

⁴⁴ Rood, "A Pennsylvania Colliery Village," 811.

most dangerous of all, Rood explained that the intelligent among the immigrants insisted “that every good foreigner should obtain his ‘papers’ as soon as possible, and vote at the coming election, lest the ‘white men’ throw too many votes into the ballot-box, and pass a law to drive them out of the country.”⁴⁵ The bloody events at Lattimer were the result of this ignorant and violent workforce being conned into protest by radical labor agitators. Rood explained, “[i]t is within the bounds of reasonable belief to state that the terrible affair at Lattimer, Pennsylvania, on September 10, 1897, never would have occurred had not English-speaking labor agitators aroused the immigrants to a frenzy because of alleged ‘wrongs.’”⁴⁶ These were people “accustomed to work from daylight until dusk for a pittance,” and the idea that they would demand more was abnormal.⁴⁷

Rood, echoing nativist convictions, believed immigrant labor to be not only inept and ignorant, but also violent and dangerous. According to Rood, “Slovak[s]” and “Polack[s]” first purchase weapons and silver watches and if they are “particularly thrifty,” delay the purchase of a gun or knife and instead carry “a round, hard stone large enough to crush a man’s skull, and in another a piece of iron filched from the colliery scrap-heap.”⁴⁸ Again, Lattimer was an example of the dangerous capabilities of these immigrants:

The ignorant, hulking Slovaks and Polacks, and the brawny, cunning Italians, who formed the mobs, would not have thought of raiding through the lower end of Luzerne County had it not been for the politicians and agitators. But when once started on the war-path—the word is used advisedly,—nothing could stop the rioters, except a volley from Winchester rifles in the hands of Sheriff James Martin’s posse of deputies.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Rood, “A Pennsylvania Colliery Village,” 811-812.

⁴⁶ Rood, “A Pennsylvania Colliery Village,” 818.

⁴⁷ Rood, “Miners’ Riot Near Hazleton,” *Harper’s Weekly* XLI, no. 2128 (October 2, 1897): 990.

⁴⁸ Rood, “A Pennsylvania Colliery Village,” 815.

⁴⁹ Rood, “A Pennsylvania Colliery Village,” 818.

Nativists like Rood understand immigrants to be dangerous not because of their capacity for violence, but because radical extremists could aim this force at American institutions with perilous consequences. Thankfully, “proper” American citizens were there to keep such hostile forces in line. Rood’s arguments, combined with the acquittal of Sheriff Martin and the deputies which reinforced the inaccurate statement that the strikers had been a mob, helped to reinforce false stereotypes about Eastern and Southern European immigrants.

It is important to remember that Rood’s nativist sentiments and negative understanding of Eastern and Southern Europeans were not out of place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Anti-foreign nativism was especially potent in Pennsylvania’s anthracite region. Established Welsh, English, German, and Irish communities embraced anti-immigrant nativism and labor leaders pushed for harsh restrictions and penalties on foreign workers in an attempt at protecting American jobs.⁵⁰ America’s social, political, and intellectual leadership believed that the problem in society could be directly traceable to urbanization and the influx of millions of “inferior” immigrants. Therefore, to the political elite, newspaper editors, mine operators, and expert observers, the problems in the anthracite region were the direct result of Slavic settlement in the patch towns.⁵¹

The “experts” in Slavic immigration of the early twentieth century, Frank Warne (*The Slav Invasion and the Mine Workers*, 1904), Peter Roberts (*Anthracite Coal Communities*, 1901), and Arthur Suffern (*The Coal Miners’ Struggle for Industrial Status*, 1926), reinforced false ideas about Slavic immigrants and their contributions to American society. While some blame can be placed on the destruction of evidence of Slavic immigration and

⁵⁰ Barendse, *Social Expectations and Perceptions*, 18.

⁵¹ Barendse, *Social Expectations and Perceptions*, 30-31.

influence on the anthracite industry from natural disasters, scholars must acknowledge the influence of these early scholars and the continued perpetuation of nativist ideas. These early accounts of Slavic life were taken as firsthand accounts of the reality of anthracite communities without regard to the circumstances surrounding the creation of the text. Roberts, Warne, and Suffern, influenced by unfounded prejudiced scientific theory, portrayed Slavic immigrants as a threat to the existing Welsh and American workforce. Their work rarely delved into the unscrupulous practices of mine management or the unfair and nepotistic systems of employment. Instead, “inferior” Slavic immigrants became an easy foil for American and other assimilated, (i.e., English speaking,) workers. The work of Suffern, Roberts, Warne, and Rood helped to reinforce negative stereotypes of the “invading Slav” and perpetuated the myth of an immigrant workforce actively working against labor organization.

Unfortunately, this reliance upon these texts, largely due to a lack of other available sources, has led historians to heavily rely on early 20th century researchers, like Warne, Roberts, and Suffern. These “experts” on Slavic immigration presented a very biased and unfair view of Slavic immigrants. Historians accepted the published texts of these scholars as eye-witness accounts of Pennsylvania’s anthracite region.⁵² Michael Barendse warns against taking these sources at face value in *Slavic Immigrants in the Pennsylvania Anthracite Fields, 1880-1902: A Study of the Contrast Between Social Expectations and Immigrant Behavior* (1981.) Barendse points out that “by failing to reexamine the events described by

⁵² Barendse, *Social Expectations and Perception*, 31.

Roberts, Warne, and others, historians produced work that reinforced the less-educated opinions about the Slavs held by the local population of the anthracite region.”⁵³

Lattimer Through the English-Speaking Community’s Perspective

One of the earliest accounts of the Lattimer Massacre from the English-language community of Wilkes-Barre can be seen in *A History of Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania* in 1929. This book was an attempt at documenting the history of the Wyoming Valley in conjunction with the Wyoming Valley Historical and Geological Society in Wilkes-Barre, an organization run by the region’s wealthy and prominent citizens. It should be noted that the authors, Oscar Jewell Harvey and Ernest Gray Smith, belonged to this high society and their understanding of Lattimer is clearly reflected in their writing.⁵⁴

The account in *A History of Wilkes-Barre* by Harvey and Smith describes the Lattimer Trial as one of the two major events of 1898 in the Wyoming Valley, the other being the war with Spain. In this version, the strikers were a mob a mostly foreign workers dissatisfied with their employers. Harvey and Smith exclude many of the reasons for the August 1897 strike activity, explaining that there had been a lot of unhappiness in the mines due to underproduction. These feelings intensified when operators of the Hazleton district asked for wages to be readjusted until markets became more promising.⁵⁵ Some men accepted these terms, but others “dominated largely by leaders of the foreign element,

⁵³ Barendse, *Social Expectations and Perceptions*, 33.

⁵⁴ Dwight J. Stoddard, *Prominent Men Scranton & Vicinity Lackawanna County* (Press of the Tribune Publishing Co: Scranton, PA 1906): ivi and ixv. Harvey worked as an attorney prior to his literary pursuits on Luzerne County history and Smith, who picked up editing the volumes of history after Harvey’s death, was the editor and general manager of the *Wilkes-Barre Times Leader* and acted as a board member to several prominent businesses in the region.

⁵⁵ Oscar Jewell Harvey and Ernest Gray Smith, *A History of Wilkes-Barre Luzerne County, Pennsylvania*, vol. IV. (Wilkes-Barre: The Smith Bennett Corp., 1929), 2175-2176.

protested.”⁵⁶ Note that the “dissatisfied element” was made up of foreign workers who marched from breaker to breaker, stopping operations.⁵⁷

Harvey and Smith’s choice of language is telling. They do not use the terms “strikers” or “workers” to describe the protesting men. Instead, they are a “mob.”⁵⁸ Harvey and Smith are sympathetic to Sheriff James Martin and his posse of deputies, explaining that Martin was beaten by the mob on the road to Lattimer. Smith and Harvey explain that someone, whose identity is never discovered, gave the order to fire when Martin was attacked by the strikers. This “broke the spirit of the mob” at the cost of nineteen dead and thirty-eight wounded.⁵⁹ Initially, the community prevailed against Martin and his deputies, believing that they had exceeded their authority. But, by the time the not guilty verdict was read, public sympathies were split. Harvey and Smith agree with the outcome of Martin’s trial, concluding the case to be a “classic in American jurisprudence.”⁶⁰ This published version of events was the generally accepted narrative, especially to Luzerne’s economic and political elites who ran in the same social circles as Harvey and Smith.

The description of the trial in *A History of Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania from Its First Beginnings to the Present* (1929) lacks any reasoning behind the striking men’s grievances and excludes any indications of mass organization. This early treatment of the narrative of Lattimer does help to explain the emerging themes in the first documented accounts of the Lattimer Massacre from the immigrant community. Documents produced by the immigrant community, or their descendants, revolve around a need to

⁵⁶ Harvey & Smith, *A History of Wilkes-Barre*, IV: 2176.

⁵⁷ Harvey & Smith, *A History of Wilkes-Barre*, IV: 2176.

⁵⁸ Harvey & Smith, *A History of Wilkes-Barre*, IV: 2176.

⁵⁹ Harvey & Smith, *A History of Wilkes-Barre*, IV: 2176.

⁶⁰ Harvey & Smith, *A History of Wilkes-Barre*, IV: 2176.

understand the tragedy while exonerating the memories of the dead and wounded. The authors explain that the strikers were not an unruly mob but a peaceful organized group fighting against an unjust and exploitative system. They describe a community which distrusted authority as a result of injustice and fought hard against the exploitation inherent in an unfair capitalist system. In these texts, Lattimer is a catalyst moment which solidified the Slavic anthracite community and propelled them towards the UMWA.

Lattimer Through the Slavic Immigrant Perspective

Historical documentation of the Lattimer Massacre from the Slavic immigrant community created a much different version of events from the one accepted by Luzerne County's elite society. Konštantín Čulen *History of Slovaks in America* contains one of the earliest documented accounts of the Lattimer Massacre and is an indispensable source of information about the early period of Slovakian immigration to the United States. Originally published in 1942, it was only accessible to scholars literate in Slovakian until its translation into English in 2007.⁶¹ Notably, Čulen was able to work with documents that no longer exist in contemporary times and interviewed many individuals who otherwise would not have been able to share their experiences. Čulen interviewed locals, attended community meetings, and collected Slovakian newspapers and publications in the early 1930s in and around Scranton, Pennsylvania.⁶² As a whole, *A History of Slovaks in America* provides a unique perspective of the Slovakian immigrant community living in America.

⁶¹ A translation of the chapter on the Lattimer Massacre was translated and published in a 1977 edition of *Slovakia*, a journal focused on Slovakian customs and traditions however a complete translation of *The History of Slovaks in America* was not available until 2007.

⁶² Konštantín Čulen, *History of Slovaks in America*, trans. Daniel C. Nečas (St. Paul, Minnesota: Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International. 2007), 7.

Čulen attempted to portray the positive and negative aspects of life for Slovaks in America. Interestingly, the negative aspects of immigrant life resulted from a lack of unity and comradeship within the Slovakian immigrant community. Though there were outside forces—like Americans’ distrust of foreigners, oppression and violence from other immigrant communities, and exploitative capitalist practices—the true problem for Slovaks was their distrust in one another.⁶³ The one good thing to come from the Lattimer tragedy and the unjust trial, at least for Čulen, was that a “blossom of solidarity grew out of the blood of the martyrs.”⁶⁴ The shock of the massacre and the injustice of the trial had the effect of unifying Slovaks scattered across the country. Those that were not part of any kind of fraternal organization learned that membership was important, especially in cases of extreme tragedy. This fraternal unity vastly improved the quality of life for Slovaks in America. Slovaks became literate, organized themselves, and subscribed to newspapers.⁶⁵ This unified community enabled Slovaks to fight for their freedoms and better their positions in American society.

A History of Slovaks in America (1942) pointed out two forces at work against immigrant labor, mine management and native workers. Exploitative company managers in the mining industries targeted hardworking and humble Slovaks as “[i]t was easier to deceive Slovaks in the process of distributing wages than it was to deceive the impulsive and fearless Irish.”⁶⁶ The company towns, which were ruled by ruthless landlords ready to evict their tenants at the slightest provocation, controlled every aspect of an individual’s life.⁶⁷

⁶³ Čulen, *History of Slovaks*, 6.

⁶⁴ Čulen, *History of Slovaks*, 131.

⁶⁵ Čulen, *History of Slovaks*, 131-132, 140.

⁶⁶ Čulen, *History of Slovaks*, 132.

⁶⁷ Čulen, *History of Slovaks*, 91

There were likely thousands of “unknown, bloody tragedies” endured by Slovakian immigrants because they did not know the language and were unable to claim their rights, “even if there was a fair judge.”⁶⁸ Čulen pointed out that coal companies often had a “blacklist” of any “rebellious miners” who dared to challenge their authority.⁶⁹ Coal companies also rigged political elections in their favor. Anyone who “did not suit the company’s preferences had to leave.”⁷⁰ Everything in these company towns, from the judges to the policemen, business owners, newspaper editors, and other higher officials were all members of the company.⁷¹ Čulen concluded bleakly that though the Civil War had abolished the old slave system, a new industrial slavery emerged and “[i]n this modern slave mill, there was a lot of good Slovak grain.”⁷²

Native workers, especially established Irish immigrants, saw Slovaks as direct economic competition, and argued that Slovaks and other Slavic workers lowered the standards of living.⁷³ Čulen described how Irish gangs “would go hunting for Slovaks,” and when a Slovak immigrant appeared, the gang would ambush and beat him, sometimes to the point of death.⁷⁴ Irish immigrants also used property destruction and vandalism to intimidate Slovakian workers. Mobs of young Irish men would throw stones at houses, smash windows, and beat the owner if he came out to defend his home. Čulen explains that “sometimes these skirmishes looked like small wars” and that there were “often fatal casualties.”⁷⁵ Attempting

⁶⁸ Čulen, *History of Slovaks*, 91.

⁶⁹ Čulen, *History of Slovaks*, 93.

⁷⁰ Čulen, *History of Slovaks*, 93.

⁷¹ Čulen, *History of Slovaks*, 58.

⁷² Čulen, *History of Slovaks*, 58.

⁷³ Čulen, *History of Slovaks*, 133.

⁷⁴ Čulen, *History of Slovaks*, 63.

⁷⁵ Čulen, *History of Slovaks*, 63-64.

to seek justice from the police, sheriff, or judge was also pointless as these men these men were often Irish as well and “always on the side of their own people.”⁷⁶

Čulen frames Lattimer through this broader lens of competition, injustice, and corruption. Like earlier skirmishes with corrupt Irish police officers and judges, Lattimer was another example of the total control of capital over American society. In Čulen’s version of the massacre, Sheriff Martin receives much of the blame for instigating the violence. When the strikers and Martin met on the public road from Harwood, they explain to him that they only wished to walk along the road, peaceably, and meet the men at the Lattimer mines who were sympathetic to their cause. Aggravated, Martin pulled the American flag from a miner’s hands and tore it apart before taking out his weapon and opening fire. Čulen explains that the first five shots misfired, but the sixth bullet went off and hit a miner in the chest. This last shot sparked gunfire from the deputies who were lined up on the hill, further along the road. The initial volley did not harm the miners but did inspire them to flee. As the miners ran, the deputies shot at any who attempted to escape. Apparently, it was the strikers’ attempt to flee the scene that outraged the deputies into firing at running men and beat those who had fallen. To add further injury, police officers arrested Slovak and Polish workers after the massacre.⁷⁷

The trial was further evidence of capital’s extensive control over American society. Čulen states that the judge, Stanley Woodward, favored mine interests and made a point to select native-born Americans who were hostile towards foreigners as jury members. This was a tactical move, as Woodward had familial ties to the mines and was a co-owner of one himself.⁷⁸ It was revealed in the testimony that the strikers had been kicked and beaten by

⁷⁶ Čulen, *History of Slovaks*, 63

⁷⁷ Čulen, *History of Slovaks*, 123.

⁷⁸ Čulen, *History of Slovaks*, 127-128.

deputies after they had been shot. Ario Pardee Jr., a deputy and son of one of the owners of the Pardee Bros. Company mines, where the strikes had begun, had encouraged his fellows to “shoot down the Huns!”⁷⁹ Even with such damning evidence, Martin and his deputies understood that the judge was on their side and that no testimony from the immigrants could damage their case. The vast wealth and power of the coal company was just too much for the poor working immigrants to overcome.⁸⁰

Čulen explains that Lattimer became a rallying point for the Slovakian immigrant community, vowing to never allow such atrocities to be repeated. The shock of the massacre and the injustice of the trial had the effect of unifying Slovaks scattered across the country. Those that were not part of any kind of fraternal organization learned that membership was important, especially in cases of extreme tragedy. This fraternal unity vastly improved the quality of life for Slovaks in America. Slovaks became literate, organized themselves, and subscribed to newspapers.⁸¹ This unified community enabled Slovaks to fight for their freedoms and better their positions in American society.

Edward Pinkowski’s *The Lattimer Massacre*, published in 1950, explored the understanding of the Lattimer Massacre from the second and third generation Slavic community. *The Lattimer Massacre* is the first to specifically emphasize the ethnicities of the strikers and testifies to their sacrifice for the union cause. It is worth noting that Pinkowski is deeply invested in telling the story of Lattimer, making a point to highlight his immigrant heritage and familial connection to Pennsylvania’s anthracite industry. He asserts that “[l]ike

⁷⁹ Čulen, *History of Slovaks*, 129.

⁸⁰ Čulen, *History of Slovaks*, 129.

⁸¹ Čulen, *History of Slovaks*, 131-132, 140.

some of the Lattimer victims, [his] father was a Polish immigrant.”⁸² He directly links the Slavic strikers to the union explaining that “[i]t made his blood boil to know that people of his race were forgotten for shedding their blood for the cause of unionism.”⁸³ He strongly emphasizes the ethnicity of the victims as well, beginning the text with a guide for the reader to properly pronounce the names of the Slavic strikers who died in the massacre. Pinkowski was one of the few researchers able to interview people with firsthand accounts of the massacre and trial.⁸⁴ Pinkowski’s work provides a unique insight into the community memory of Lattimer through these first-hand witnesses.

Unsurprisingly, Pinkowski reached similar conclusions to Ćulen regarding the massacre and the necessity of Slavic unity. Pinkowski described the Pardee family, who owned the mines involved in the Lattimer Massacre, Judge Stanley Woodward, who oversaw Mike Cheslock’s murder trial, and Henry W. Palmer, Sheriff Martin’s star defense attorney, as greedy, inept, corrupt, prejudiced, and unscrupulous. Racial hatred triumphed over justice through the acts of these men. Like Ćulen, Pinkowski understood that the Lattimer Massacre had one beneficial outcome out of the tragic loss of life. The Lattimer strikers died “so that others would have unionism.”⁸⁵ Society needed to remember the men who died, shot in the back as they struggled for a decent life.⁸⁶ Pinkowski’s emphasis on the Lattimer strikers’ struggle for unionism rather than Ćulen’s Slavic fraternity is significant. The massacre transformed from a story of shame and tragedy to a story of survival and success. The

⁸² Edward Pinkowski, *The Lattimer Massacre* (Sunshine Press: Philadelphia, 1950): About the Author.

⁸³ Pinkowski, *The Lattimer Massacre*, About the Author.

⁸⁴ Pinkowski, *The Lattimer Massacre*, 39-40. Edward Pinkowski was able to interview the daughter of Mike Cheslock, Mrs. Mary Sonderschafer, two strikers who survived the massacre, Andrew Meyer and John Miklos, and other unnamed individuals connected to the strike and trial.

⁸⁵ Pinkowski, *The Lattimer Massacre*, 39.

⁸⁶ Pinkowski, *The Lattimer Massacre*, 39.

victims became martyrs for the union cause, even though they were not formally part of the UMWA.

Pinkowski's depiction of the Lattimer strikers as martyrs naturally creates a very intimate account of the march from Harwood to Lattimer from the strikers' perspective. Family was especially important in Pinkowski's version of events. The strikers were organized and peaceable, taking the time to find two American flags for the men to march behind. Breaker boys lined up behind the first flag bearer in support of their fathers and older family members.⁸⁷ These brave boys were turned away by their fathers, not out of maliciousness but because these were men who had "perhaps a few minutes before, had held infants on their knees and kissed their wives goodbye[e]."⁸⁸ Women make a prominent appearance in his text, most notably Mary Septek, also known as "Big Mary," and her fortitude against scab workers and the Pennsylvania National Guard.⁸⁹ This "Polish Amazon" gathered "about 150 brawny Polish women" and kept the men from returning to work after the shooting, bravely facing off the Pennsylvania National Guard protecting capital's interests.⁹⁰ While American media in 1897 used the term "Amazon" as a way of defeminizing and slandering immigrant women, Pinkowski uses it reverently in his text. In his view, Mary is a noble and strong wife and mother capable of bravely facing overwhelming and dangerous forces.

⁸⁷ Breaker boys were young boys between the ages of eight and twelve, though they could be as young as five or six, employed at the mines. Their job was to hand-pick slate and other mining waste from the conveyor belts of mined coal headed for processing in the breakers.

⁸⁸ Pinkowski, *The Lattimer Massacre*, 11-12.

⁸⁹ Mary is also referred to as "Mary Septak" in many publications and "Maria Septakova" in a regional play by Regina R. Drasher. Like the Massacre victims, newspapers spelled Septek's name phonetically in publication.

⁹⁰ Pinkowski, *The Lattimer Massacre*, 27.

Pinkowski draws attention to the sharp contrasts between the strikers and those aligned with the coal companies. The strikers are depicted as honorable and peaceful men while the deputies act upon their prejudice with violence and aggression. When the deputies first confront the strikers at West Hazleton, they break a man's arm and are admonished by Chief of Police Evan Jones. Ario Pardee Platt, grandson of Ario Pardee, made a point of bragging about his relatives' patriotism. Platt supposedly boasted about his and their military service as he forcibly took an American flag from the strikers.⁹¹ When the strikers pressed charges against the deputies for their excessive violence, they were instead read the Riot Act.⁹² Even after the shooting, the actions of the deputies remain steeped in hatred and cowardice. Priests who attended the dying and wounded were told that they "'need not be afraid'" because "'the guns were empty now.'"⁹³ When the immigrant community came to mourn their dead respectfully and properly, the deputies hid behind national guard troops, fearing the entire wrath of the anthracite community. The strikers faced the tragedy with dignity while the deputies hid behind their cowardice and hate.

Lattimer Through the Scholarly Lens

Building off Pinkowski's research, Victor R. Greene's *The Slavic Community on Strike: Immigrant Labor in Pennsylvania Anthracite*, published in 1968, is a landmark work which exposed the significant contributions of Eastern European immigrants. Greene's investigation of the Slavic community in northeastern Pennsylvania is not from the perspective of the Slavic immigrant community. Greene aimed to understand Slavic immigrants' relationship to labor unrest prior to 1903. Greene theorized that the society of

⁹¹ Pinkowski, *The Lattimer Massacre*, 13.

⁹² Pinkowski, *The Lattimer Massacre*, 12.

⁹³ Pinkowski, *The Lattimer Massacre*, 17.

the Eastern European anthracite community and the eventual recognition of their militancy and cohesion by the UMWA solidified the organization's position in the industry. Contrary to accepted belief that Eastern Europeans weakened labor's position in the 19th and 20th centuries, Greene successfully argued that Eastern Europeans supported labor protest more enthusiastically than others and were essential to the establishment of the UMWA.⁹⁴

Greene's work is quite significant as he is the first to counter the myths surrounding Slavic labor's introduction to the American workforce. Greene used the Lattimer Massacre as an example of how Slavic workers fought for their own economic justice in the United States. Examination of Lattimer, he argued, could also demonstrate how Slavic workers felt about their positions in the American workforce.⁹⁵

Greene argued that the Lattimer Massacre was a demonstration of how the Slavic immigrant community argued *on their own* for economic justice. The passage of the Campbell Act in 1897 by Pennsylvania's General Assembly, which taxed alien workers three cents a day on top of their already lowered wages, ignited unrest among the Slavic workers. When the newly appointed manager Gomer Jones attacked a mule boy and did not face punishment, the fire became an inferno. Lattimer was a distinctly Slavic affair. English-speaking miners had been placated by the promises of the mine managers and owners and agreed to go back to work by late August 1897. The immigrant workforce refused the offers

⁹⁴ Victor R. Greene, *The Slavic Community on Strike: Immigrant Labor in Pennsylvania Anthracite* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 1968): xvi-xv.

⁹⁵ Victor R. Greene, "A Study in Slavs, Strikes, and Unions: The Anthracite Strike of 1897," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 31, no. 2 (April 1964): 200, 213. Greene points out that the mule drivers' strike, and the supportive strikes that followed mid-August through September until the shooting, was the result of Slavic immigrant dissatisfaction. The complaints of pay discrimination, payroll deductions, and unfair management did not come from Americans or English-speaking workers. The protests and demonstrations were a Slavic reaction to perceived injustices, and it was done without any apparent unified organization.

given by mine management and would not back down from a strike. By numbers alone, the Slavic miners intimidated the English-speakers into backing a strike, paralyzing the entire Hazleton area.⁹⁶

Greene explained that by early September, it was clear that the American and Anglo-Saxon mineworkers no longer had control of the strike. Newspapers emphasized the “immigrant characteristics” of the strikers’ speeches and characteristics.⁹⁷ Greene underscored the control of the Slavic workforce by highlighting the militancy of Slavic immigrants during strikes. The Slavic immigrant community would not tolerate discord or disunity, especially when they conflicted with an employer. They reacted *en masse* as a community to whatever intolerable conditions affected them. Americans understood strike activity to be an expression of economic protest. Slavs on the other hand, understood strikes to be like a war.⁹⁸ Lattimer, like other incidents before it, suggested that these outbursts were manifestations of community sentiment and little compromise would be afforded to those who did not fall in line.⁹⁹

In Greene’s view, the Lattimer Massacre created unprecedented unanimity across Slavic America. This was likely the Slavic fraternity and support of the UMWA that Čulen and Pinkowski described. The Slavic community raised massive sums of money for the prosecution of the deputies and for massacre victims. Slavic Americans rallied around cries for justice and Pan-Slavic unity in defiance of the claims that the victims were an unruly barbaric mob.¹⁰⁰ Greene points out that John Fahy, the president of the Ninth district of the

⁹⁶ Greene, *Slavic Community*, 131.

⁹⁷ Greene, *Slavic Community*, 132, 135-136.

⁹⁸ Greene, *Slavic Community*, 137.

⁹⁹ Greene, *Slavic Community*, 139.

¹⁰⁰ Greene, *Slavic Community*, 141-142

UMWA, immediately changed tactics after the massacre and used Lattimer as a recruitment tool. The renewal of UMWA offices in Lehigh and Wilkes-Barre, galvanized by Slavic recruitment, brought the union back into the anthracite fields just in time for the 1900 and 1902 Anthracite Strikes.¹⁰¹ Lattimer became an important lesson for Fahy and other union leaders. It demonstrated the strength and resolve of immigrants during strikes while exposing the weakness of politicking restrictive legislation.¹⁰² The defining moments of the 1900 and 1902 strikes would not have occurred “without the immigrants’ powers of cohesion, resistance, and militancy.”¹⁰³

Greene’s original research on Pennsylvania’s Slavic immigrant community inspired other investigations by leading labor historians. These historians employed Lattimer as an example of broader national trends. Eastern and Southern Europeans clashed with established immigrant groups socially and economically between the 1880s and 1920s. Prevalent theories of nativism offered an easy excuse for the problems of rapid urbanization. Philip Anthony Hroback and George A. Turner (1977) argued that the conflict between the deputies and the striking miners lay in their conflicting social and economic statuses.¹⁰⁴ These groups were diametrically opposite in terms of their nationalities, positions in society, and occupations. Combined with the heightened nativist tensions from the strike, stresses between the two conflicting groups laid the foundation for explosive violence. Lattimer was not an exception, but rather one of many breaking points when examined within the larger framework of immigration and labor conflict of this period.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Greene, *Slavic Community*, 145, 150

¹⁰² Greene, *Slavic Community*, 212

¹⁰³ Greene, *Slavic Community*, 212

¹⁰⁴ Philip Anthony Hroback and George A. Turner, “The Lattimer Massacre and its Sources.” *Slovakia* 27, no. 50 (1977): 9-43.

¹⁰⁵ Hroback and Turner, 35-37.

Other historians have taken to examining the Lattimer Massacre from the perspective of the Slavic community. Mildred Allen Beik (2002) and Melvyn Dubofsky (2002) argue that the Lattimer Massacre was a defining class and social experience for Eastern European immigrants.¹⁰⁶ Beik explained that the shooting and trial clearly demonstrated to new immigrant groups that they were unequal in society.¹⁰⁷ Immigrant workers learned through the tragedy of Lattimer that they needed to disprove nativist stereotypes and prove, like the Irish before them, that they could mobilize collectively as a way of improving conditions for everyone.¹⁰⁸ Dubofsky argued that the strikers at Lattimer contested the meaning of American citizenship.¹⁰⁹ He cited the strikers' insistence in carrying American flags during their march and the instance where an Italian immigrant carried his naturalization papers as proof that the strikers had fully embraced their identities as "Americans." Here, in this new land, the immigrant strikers believed that they were entitled to the same rights and respect and that they too had a constitutional right to protest and march on public roads.¹¹⁰

Lattimer In Public Memory

Public interest of the Lattimer Massacre from the local community has largely been informed by Michael Novak's *The Guns of Lattimer*, published in 1978. Novak was not a historian by trade, but rather a Catholic philosopher who "found a gap in history" and decided to "fill the gap" himself.¹¹¹ Used by regional dramatists and professional historians alike, *The Guns of Lattimer* is the accepted text for individuals seeking a concise narrative of

¹⁰⁶ Beik, Mildred Allen. "The Significance of the Lattimer Massacre: Who Owns Its History?" *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 69, no. 4 (Winter 2002): 58-70. Melvyn Dubofsky, "The Lattimer Massacre and the Meaning of Citizenship." *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 9, no. 1 (Winter 2002).

¹⁰⁷ Beik, "The Significance of Lattimer," 63.

¹⁰⁸ Beik, "The Significance of Lattimer," 67.

¹⁰⁹ Dubofsky, "The Lattimer Massacre and the Meaning of Citizenship," 52.

¹¹⁰ Dubofsky, "The Lattimer Massacre and the Meaning of Citizenship," 52-53.

¹¹¹ Michael Novak, *The Guns of Lattimer* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1978): xvii.

the strike, shooting, and trial. Novak's work is extensively researched. Like Pinkowski, he interviewed surviving strikers and their families and worked from newspaper and government accounts.¹¹² Though Novak was not an academically trained historian, he hoped to retell the story accurately and to serve the truth while remaining true "in tone or in context" to recorded evidence.¹¹³ He blended fiction and non-fiction in his text, alternating chapters between a historic retelling and a fictitious one told through the eyes of Benedikt "Ben" Sakmar, a made up Slovakian immigrant. Ben Sakmar, loosely based upon Novak's real-life grandfather, acted literary device, helping the reader to better understand the motivations of the strikers.¹¹⁴ Novak reasoned that while much of the written record explained the motivations and feelings of the mine owners, superintendents, deputies, national guard troops, and newspaper editors, the victims left very little of their memory behind. Many strikers were single and did not have families and very few left any written or oral record of their experiences.¹¹⁵

Although Novak's text is thoroughly researched, caution should be exercised when using his narrative. Novak's desire to "reconstruct thinking or feeling" is often at odds with his desire for historical inquiry. He positioned key figures of the strike and trial into defined roles of heroes and villains, attempting to reconstruct their motivations and inner thoughts. This conjuring of motivations can be distracting and leads to the creation of a false historic narrative, even if it is based on evidence and historic truth. This is especially true of the "inner voice" of Sheriff Martin in *Guns of Lattimer*. Novak described a scene prior to the

¹¹² Novak, *Guns of Lattimer*, xv.

¹¹³ Novak, *Guns of Lattimer*, xi.

¹¹⁴ Novak, *Guns of Lattimer*, xiv.

¹¹⁵ Novak, *Guns of Lattimer*, xii.

shooting where Martin internalizes his attitudes of the immigrant workforce while drinking lemonade on vacation, explaining that:

[if Martin] didn't like the Hungarians, Polanders, Eye-talians, and the other foreigners, it wasn't because he was prejudiced. He wasn't. He just couldn't tell what was going on in their heads. They wouldn't look you in the eye. He couldn't understand their jabbering. It made him feel, sometimes, like a keeper in a zoo. The way they lived, in houses no American would live in, crowded twelve or sixteen in a room. It wasn't human.¹¹⁶

While it is entirely likely that American nativism influenced Martin, it is wrong to assume his inner thoughts. In fact, Martin may have held more respect in the mines than his fellow deputies. Pinkowski had no qualms about vilifying the Pardees, Woodward, and Palmer in *The Lattimer Massacre*. However, Pinkowski treated Martin more as an unwilling stooge of the company bosses than a vicious rogue set out against the Slavic miners. Martin is described as “debonair,” sociable, and an individual who commanded respect in the anthracite fields when he worked as a mine manager.¹¹⁷ It was only his election as sheriff under a disreputable and corrupt political leader that led to “the most unpleasant experience in his entire life.”¹¹⁸ In Novak’s retelling, Martin and others were prejudiced scoundrels seeking out any excuse to exercise their power and authority. Such analysis oversimplifies not only the complex social, political, and economic dynamics historic individuals lived in, but also robs these individuals of their agency. The nativist prejudices of Martin and his deputies were not the exclusive reason behind their bloody confrontation with immigrant strikers. Rather, the sheriff and his deputies were actors working on behalf of the demands of a capitalist system that fostered and facilitated a perpetual system of violence. This is not to say that Martin or his deputies are blameless or that their actions were in any way justified.

¹¹⁶ Novak, *Guns of Lattimer*, 32

¹¹⁷ Pinkowski, *The Lattimer Massacre*, 8.

¹¹⁸ Pinkowski, *The Lattimer Massacre*, 8.

Instead, we must remember that these were individuals acting upon the information they had through their understanding of society. History grants us the gift of perspective, but we should be cautious not to exercise our own perceptions on historical actors.

Novak's work is perhaps most influential on the community's remembrance of the Lattimer Massacre. William E. Bachman sourced information about his radio drama, *The Lattimer Massacre...A Radio Play* (2012), on *The Guns of Lattimer* sometimes directly quoting Novak's text, like in the case of Sheriff Martin's inner dialogue. The *Radio Play* condenses the events of August 1897 to March 1898 into a short two act drama under forty-five minutes about the determination and perseverance of the strikers and the UMWA. Bachman favored dramatization over historical accuracy, opting instead for a compelling story. Bachman clearly defines Gomer Jones, the mine owners, and the deputies as violent and racist bullies who use their power to exploit and oppress the strikers. Reverend Richard R. Aust, a priest from the Polish church of Saint Stanislaus, and John Fahy, the UMWA representative for Pennsylvania's anthracite district, act as commentators of the action, deploring the actions of the deputies while defending the men's right to strike. The play heavily emphasizes the strikers' right to march and promotes an almost nostalgic remembrance of unionization. There is no mention of conflict or discord between the American and immigrant workers. The main source of disunity and indeed the motivating factor behind much of the malefactors is their racism against Slavic workers.

Paul A. Shackel's recent work, *Remembering Lattimer: Labor, Migration, and Race in Pennsylvania Anthracite County*, published in 2018, has been a significant contributing force in renewing community and national interest in the Lattimer Massacre. Shackel focused on Lattimer's public memory, exploring the ways in which the local community

commemorated the tragedy rather than a formal contextualization of the existing historical record. For Shackel, Lattimer was a nationally significant story of people struggling to achieve social and economic justice while they were being racialized and treated as disposable because of their nation of origin.¹¹⁹ Given that his investigation revolved around the memory of Lattimer, Shackel effectively connects the historic events to the present day, exploring Hazleton's relationship with the growing Hispanic and Latino immigrant community. He explored the historic social, economic, and political circumstances of the Lattimer Massacre in an effort to promote social justice issues existent in contemporary society connecting Hazleton's contemporary prejudices.¹²⁰ Shackel's focus on the public memory of Lattimer required the omission of historical contextualization of the documented record of Lattimer. Shackel's approach is extremely useful, especially regarding the revitalization of the local community's interest in labor conflict, but it is only the beginning. In-depth analysis of the historical record reveals the ways in which established Americans and immigrants thought of themselves in an evolving society.

Shackel contextualized the massacre within a broader framework of immigration and industrialization in the anthracite region. He explained that capitalists were seen as a "new type of hero" who invented and invested the new machinery bringing about a bright new era. Attempts at unionizing the dangerous coal fields where legislated safety measures were ignored for the sake of profit were seen as radicalization.¹²¹ Slavic immigrants, who were discriminated against because of prevalent nativist theories of race, were generally described in negative terms. America's elite society understood Slavic immigrants to be placid,

¹¹⁹ Shackel, *Remembering Lattimer*, 5.

¹²⁰ Shackel, *Remembering Lattimer*, 2-6.

¹²¹ Shackel, *Remembering Lattimer*, 11-12.

kindhearted, and overall simple but were prone to drunkenness, laziness, and lying. Slavic immigrants also threatened American values as their innate simplicity made them an easy target for radicalization.¹²²

It was this understanding of Slavic immigrants that colored the murder trial of the deputies. Shackel explained that Henry W. Palmer, one of Martin's defense lawyers, argued that if the miners won the case and the Sheriff and his posse were declared guilty of murder, it would strengthen the radical cause against democracy and be a victory for the anarchists. Peace, democracy, and the Anglo-Saxon American way of life would cease, leading to a reign of oppressive military despotism.¹²³ This understanding of the conflict ultimately colored America's perception of the strikers, helping to silence their story from national memory. Grief also played a role in silencing the event from within the community, but it was also in the best interest of the coal companies to repress the memory of Lattimer as best they could. Company management "encouraged" involved strikers to find employment elsewhere and some prosecution witnesses were blacklisted entirely from any employment in the anthracite patch towns.¹²⁴ Although national memory forgot Lattimer, Shackel pointed out that the aspects which did get remembered and the ways in which they continue to be remembered are important. This process demonstrated how places and events are memorialized and historicized.¹²⁵

Much of the emphasis of Shackel's research on Lattimer was on how its memory can best serve Hazleton's contemporary community. Lattimer becomes a cautionary tale,

¹²² Shackel, *Remembering Lattimer*, 19-20, 21.

¹²³ Shackel, *Remembering Lattimer*, 49-50.

¹²⁴ Shackel, *Remembering Lattimer*, 50.

¹²⁵ Shackel, *Remembering Lattimer*, 57.

reminding Hazleton natives of the unfair and prejudiced treatment of their immigrant predecessors.¹²⁶ Just as Americans blamed Slavic immigrants for the problems of urbanization and industrialization in the early twentieth century, contemporary Hazleton residents blame Hispanic and Latino immigrants for the city's contemporary issues. Shackel explained that contemporary immigrants, like Slavic immigrants before, have very little to do with the region's economic or social woes. Shackel pointed out that contemporary economic disparity is rooted in the long-term inequities created and fostered by the racial attitudes of the coal barons who reinforced negative stereotypes. Just like Slavic immigrants, local newspapers, social media, and politicians reinforce racist attitudes against Hispanic and Latino immigrants by encouraging ideals of a nostalgic past and perpetuation of the Latino Threat narrative.¹²⁷ This false narrative contradicts the reality that Latino immigrants delivered the city out of complete economic ruin in 2000.¹²⁸ Shackel believes that contemporary "English speakers" need to shift their understanding of the regions' history and develop a more inclusive narrative which recognizes the new immigrant culture as part of a broader regional heritage.¹²⁹

The Slavic immigrant community's remembrance of the Lattimer Massacre impacted the ways in which scholars and the public recognized this tragic event. The works of Ćulen and Pinkowski describe a community attempting to rebuild after experiencing extreme

¹²⁶ Jaime A. Longazel, a native of Hazleton, also uses the Lattimer Massacre as a cautionary tale, pointing out the racist actions of the deputies against Slavic strikers in his book *Undocumented Fears: Immigration and the Politics of Divide and Conquer in Hazleton, Pennsylvania*. Longazel explores Hazleton's reaction to Latino immigrants from a sociological view, rather than a historic one, seeking to understand contemporary national trends existent in American society.

¹²⁷ Shackel, *Remembering Lattimer*, 98-99. Shackel explained that Leo Chavez proposes the theory that the negative sentiments Latino immigrants endure are part of a narrative that positions them as a dangerous invasive force from the southern border. This force seeks to reclaim the land previously owned by Mexico and is actively destroying the American way of life.

¹²⁸ Shackel, *Remembering Lattimer*, 102.

¹²⁹ Shackel, *Remembering Lattimer*, 105, 109.

trauma. Lattimer was a lesson that taught Slavic immigrants that American authority figures, legal systems, and capital industries were exploitative and untrustworthy. These systems racialized and stereotyped them and therefore could not be relied upon for protection. To counter these racialized and negative assumptions, the Slavic community used the Lattimer Massacre as a rallying point for labor organization and for the promotion of pan-Slavic unity in the United States. The memory of the massacre that became codified through community produced documents subsequently positions the strikers as martyrs for the UMWA cause, even though they were likely not members.

Although the Slavic community's memory of the Lattimer Massacre eventually became the dominant version of events, nativist theories of race initially overshadowed it. Influenced by nativist theories of race, experts and laymen alike perpetuated negative assumptions about Slavic immigrants and their contributions to the anthracite industry. Victor Greene's crucial investigation of the Slavic immigrant successfully countered long held false presumptions about Slavic involvement and dedication to union causes. Greene's work became a launching point for other scholars investigating Pennsylvania's Slavic community and the Lattimer Massacre. They found that positioning the Lattimer Massacre within a larger framework of Gilded Age America brought out new insights about the conflict occurring between new immigrants and established Americans between the 1880s and 1920s. They used the Lattimer Massacre as a case study to discuss larger issues of rapid urbanization and industrialization. For them, nativist theories of race created a social environment that was extremely hostile against new immigrant groups. Lattimer was a moment of reflection not only for the immigrants themselves but for American society. The treatment of the Lattimer strikers by the sheriff's deputies was visible evidence of how

American society understood and accepted Slavic immigrants at that time. These investigations pointed out the importance of the inclusion of the Lattimer Massacre in larger discussions of American labor history as well as demonstrate the need for historians to reevaluate their own biases and assumptions lest they perpetuate the silencing of historic voices.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND THE CONTESTED EVENTS OF THE LATTIMER MASSACRE

Early Immigration to Northeastern Pennsylvania

The Lattimer Massacre's absence from the discussion of Gilded Age labor organization erroneously positions the immigrant-led strike as an abnormal event rather than understanding it to be an extraordinary event within a broader trend of Slavic strike activity and protest. Lattimer was an extraordinary event to be sure, but it was hardly the only instance where the Slavic community joined together to protest their conditions. Slavic immigrants frequently backed strikes and union causes, even prior to their involvement in the UMWA. Nevertheless, established immigrant groups blamed Slavic immigrants for every misery of the coal mines from stagnant wages to mining accidents. Therefore, the Lattimer Massacre needs to be placed within the broader context of European immigration to Pennsylvania's anthracite mines and the long struggle for unionization in order to better understand the conditions that led to such a catastrophe.

The first immigrant group to flock to the anthracite mines of eastern Pennsylvania were the Welsh in the early half of the nineteenth century. Welsh miners had experience working with hard coal in Wales and brought their expertise to the United States. Pennsylvania's coal fields were more profitable and safer than the Welsh mines. Additionally, their expertise and experience made it easy to gain high paying positions as

mine managers, inspectors, or engineers. Welsh immigrants were mostly Protestant which helped them to easily assimilate with the existing Anglo-Saxon settlers of Luzerne County.¹³⁰

The next immigrant group to flock to Pennsylvania's coal fields were the Irish beginning in the 1860s and 1870s. Initially, Americans discriminated Irish immigrants, understanding them to be rowdy, drunk, prone to radicalism and extreme behaviors. Irish immigrants tended to form insular communities separate from established Anglo-Saxon and Welsh immigrants which in turn created pockets of regionalism within the northeastern region.¹³¹ Most Irish immigrants were Catholic, which created some social issues with the overwhelmingly Protestant Anglo-Saxon and Welsh Pennsylvanians.¹³² Many Americans were suspicious of Catholicism's adherence to papal authority and thought Catholics would work to undermine American democracy. The Molly Maguires, a secret society brought over to the United States by Irish immigrants, were an oft cited example of intense Irish extremes, especially when it came to labor violence and Catholic radicalism.¹³³ Capitalist owners and managers claimed that the Mollies were violent radical terrorists and declared early fraternal union groups, like the Ancient Order of Hibernians and the Workingmen's Benevolent Association, to be fronts for these extremists.

¹³⁰ Barendse, *Social Expectations and Perception*, 22-23.

¹³¹ Harold W. Aurand, "Early Mine Workers' Organizations in the Anthracite Region," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 58, no. 4, Papers from the Eckley Conference. Anthracite Mining Unionism and the UMW (October 1991): 299.

¹³² Shackel, *Remembering Lattimer*, 9-10.

¹³³ The Mollies gained renown in the anthracite region after ten members were accused of a plot to execute "revenge killings" on Pinkerton Detective Agents hired by the railroad and coal companies to put a stop to unionization efforts. The Mollies allegedly planned to destroy a railroad bridge in response to violent acts committed by Pinkerton Agents on labor organizers. Though the terrorism plot was never carried out (and may not have even existed at all), ten men were executed in Mauch Chunk (now Jim Thorpe), Pennsylvania for the plot in 1877 and 1878. The Mollies had tremendous notoriety in Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties. For some, they were beneficial labor organizers fighting against the exploitative coal and railroad companies but for others they were violent terrorists and murderers who could not be trusted.

By 1890 there was a massive shift in the immigrants coming to the anthracite fields of Pennsylvania. Eastern and Southern European immigrants, mostly from Austria, Italy, Hungary, Russia, and Poland, were brought over by coal barons to work as scab workers as a way of breaking strikes and disrupting the union activity of the Irish and Welsh miners.¹³⁴ Mine owners, frustrated by Anglo and Irish workers' demands for safer conditions and better pay, recruited newly arriving immigrant workers. They hoped this Slavic and Italian immigrant workforce, consisting mostly of former agrarian workers, would happily accept lower wages and the dangerous and less desirable jobs. Moreover, mine owners counted on the lack of a common language, culture, or religion between Eastern and Southern Europeans and established immigrants. They believed this lack of commonality combined with the region's existing regionalism would disrupt further attempts at unionization in the coal fields.

Americans held racist theories about newly arriving Southern and Eastern European immigrants. For many Americans, these new immigrants, like the Irish who arrived in the first half of the nineteenth century, were inferior to Anglo and Northern European races. The influx of Southern and Eastern European immigrants, with their unfamiliar languages, customs, and social norms in the 1880s and 1890s shifted negative attention away from Irish immigrants. Some Irish immigrants embraced and encouraged negative stereotypes of these newcomers as a way of bettering their own social and economic positions. The English-speaking Irish suddenly found their social status rising in American society, especially when compared to the "invading Slavs."

Although Eastern and Southern Europeans shared a Catholic faith with the Irish, they did not share the same religious traditions and practices. This disunity was especially

¹³⁴ Shackel, *Remembering Lattimer*, 10-11.

apparent between Polish and Irish Catholic immigrants in northeastern Pennsylvania. An unnamed “Priest of the Scranton Diocese,” explained that the division began when Polish immigrants settled “for reasons of self-protection” in isolated towns and villages in northeastern Pennsylvania.¹³⁵ “Violence was frequent between the Irish and the ‘foreign elements,’” and “incidents of bloodshed” were not uncommon.¹³⁶ As a result of this animosity, Polish Catholic immigrants distrusted the authority of the Irish bishops and priests from the Scranton Diocese, which oversaw the Catholic churches in the Luzerne and Lackawanna counties. They demanded Slavic pastors who could preach and converse with their parishioners in their native languages. Slavic Catholics felt that the Irish bishops and priests wanted total control over them and sought out ways to emasculate them in every way possible.¹³⁷ This discord climaxed on a Sunday morning in March 1897 when Slavic parishioners attempted to block a diocesan priest from holding mass. Though successful in preventing the priest from entering the church, police quickly dispersed the crowd of protesting churchgoers.¹³⁸ This incident inspired many Polish Catholics to split from the Scranton Diocese and the Roman Catholic Church entirely. They allied themselves with other Polish churches across the country and formed the Polish National Catholic Church.¹³⁹

¹³⁵ A Priest of the Scranton Diocese, *The Polish National Church* (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, 1953): 16. It is very likely that the “Priest of the Scranton Diocese” was Tadeusz Zieliński, the first American to serve as bishop of the Polish National Catholic Church in 1953.

¹³⁶ A Priest of the Scranton Diocese, *The Polish National Church*, 16.

¹³⁷ A Priest of the Scranton Diocese, *The Polish National Church*, 17.

¹³⁸ Paul Fox, *The Polish National Catholic Church* (Scranton, Pennsylvania: School of Christian Living, 1961): 24-28, 37.

¹³⁹ This is a simplistic summary of the breakdown between the Roman Catholic Church and the congregation that would eventually form the Polish National Catholic Church. More information can be found in Rev. John P. Gallagher’s *A Century of History: The Diocese of Scranton: 1868-1968* and in Paul Fox’s *The Polish National Catholic Church*. Importantly, the founder of the Polish National Catholic Church, Rev. Francizek (Francis) Hodur, also founded the Polish newspaper *Straz* in April 1897 which was extremely outspoken against the exploitative practices of the anthracite industry and heavily promoted Polish culture and traditions. Victor R. Greene explains in *The Anthracite Community on Strike* that the Polish National Catholic Church and ethnic newspapers like Hodur’s *Straz* heavily promoted the UMWA in 1898 and 1899 likely contributing to the successes of the 1900 and 1902 Anthracite Strikes.

While it is unlikely the religious split between Polish and Irish Catholics directly led to the violent conflict at Lattimer, it is very likely that these religious protests in Luzerne County may have exacerbated existing prejudices against Slavic immigrants in the months leading up to the massacre.

The historical literature surrounding Lattimer is based in long-held assumptions on Slavic immigrants and their supposed lack of contributions to unionization efforts in northeastern Pennsylvania. This understanding is based entirely upon falsehoods created and perpetuated by nativist labor leaders and scholarly “experts” who characterized immigrants according to racist theories.¹⁴⁰ The falsehoods of immigrant labor destabilizing unions and working as scabs began in the Long Strike of 1875 and the Great Strike of 1877 which had very little to do with Eastern European immigrant labor. The strikes of the 1860s and 1870s were not broken because of “immigrant scabs” or “invading Slavs.” There were simply too few Eastern European and Italian immigrants in the anthracite region at this point to make a difference.

Men typically had to work their way through the hierarchy of the anthracite mines over their working lives. Very few immigrant workers had achieved a miner’s certification at this point because it required extensive testing. Mine owners were incredibly reluctant to hand over work to inexperienced men who lacked the training and expertise to work with dynamite.¹⁴¹ To become eligible for a mining certification, an individual had to work as a mine laborer under the supervision of a licensed miner for several years before they could be

¹⁴⁰ Documents like Smith and Harvey’s *History of Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania*, and those produced by Slavic “experts” like Andrew Suffern, Frank Warne, and Peter Roberts helped to perpetuate negative stereotypes around Slavic immigrants and encouraged nativist theories supporting the superiority of Nordic and Anglo races. These documents encouraged negative assumptions about Eastern European immigrants which led to the diminishing and silencing of Eastern and Southern European contributions to unionization efforts.

¹⁴¹ Greene, *The Slavic Community on Strike*, 95-96.

considered eligible for the official exam. Slavic immigrants simply lacked the experience to work as miners at this point. Instead, the strikes of the 1860s and 1870s were broken because the striking men and their families were starving.¹⁴² Failure to produce improvements in wages and working conditions came down to employer resistance and a lack of a coordinated union effort across the mine fields which could not maximize the mine workers' economic power.¹⁴³ Despite this, the image of the strikebreaking, ignorant immigrant miner persisted and was even amplified in the 1880s and 1890s.

The UMWA and Anti-Immigrant Legislation

Nativist organizations, like the American Protective Association (APA), gained influence in the Pennsylvania anthracite region and had a significant impact on the anthracite community's perceptions of Slavic immigrants. These organizations fed off these negative assumptions around immigrant labor and the failures of unions in the 1880s and 1890s. Slavic immigrants, for the most part, had been agrarian workers and lacked the capital for purchasing property and did not have the required skills to obtain a high paying job in the anthracite region. Their substandard living conditions and willingness to take jobs for low wages made them an obvious scapegoat for a weak union and lower wages.¹⁴⁴ To many of Pennsylvania's English-speaking anthracite miners, these newcomers were ignorant, dirty, and the root of mining accidents and conflicts with management.¹⁴⁵ Slavic immigrants' thriftiness and ability to save also contributed to the bitterness and resentment among American and Irish miners. The 1890s was a decade of depression that did not appear to affect the Slavic community. Slavic immigrants were better at saving money than their Anglo

¹⁴² Greene, *The Slavic Community on Strike*, 76.

¹⁴³ Greene, *The Slavic Community on Strike*, 61.

¹⁴⁴ Greene, *The Slavic Community on Strike*, 112-113

¹⁴⁵ Barendse, *Social Expectations and Perceptions*, 31.

and Irish counterparts and were still able to save and buy property even when destitution and starvation rocked the region.¹⁴⁶

The push for unionization in the anthracite fields was largely a result of the financial instability of mine employment and dangerously unsafe working conditions. Miners lucky enough to avoid injury and illness then had to endure intermittent pay schedules and insufficient wages. They could find themselves in debt after getting paid because of company store bills, doctor's fees, and church tithes which were all deducted from miner's paychecks.¹⁴⁷ Coal companies controlled the price of blasting powder and other mining necessary mining supplies further abusing the miners.¹⁴⁸ Competition between the railroad and anthracite tycoons and companies in eastern Pennsylvania drove the price of anthracite coal to ruinous levels with their attempts at manipulating as much of the market as possible.¹⁴⁹ Market instability meant that coal prices could fluctuate wildly and miners could be unemployed for weeks if not months. Competition for reliable, good paying jobs was fierce.

The working conditions of the mines were dirty, dangerous, and often deadly. Miners had to contend with falling rock, premature blasts, fires, explosions, and suffocations alongside poor sanitation and pests which bred diseases like tuberculosis, "miners' lung," and parasitic infections.¹⁵⁰ Even when safety measures were legislated, they were often ignored for the sake of profit.¹⁵¹ Company doctors often saw injuries and illnesses in ways that would benefit their employer rather than their patient. Illnesses like miner's lung were not attributed

¹⁴⁶ Greene, *The Slavic Community on Strike*, 118-119.

¹⁴⁷ Aurand, "Early Mine Workers' Organizations," 298.

¹⁴⁸ Hroback and Turner, "The Lattimer Massacre and its Sources," 21.

¹⁴⁹ Barendse, *Social Expectations and Perception*, 11.

¹⁵⁰ Aurand, "Early Mine Workers' Organizations," 298-299 and *Report to the President on the Anthracite Coal Strike of May-October, 1902*, 27.

¹⁵¹ Shackel, *Remembering Lattimer*, 12.

to the working conditions of the mine or respiration of coal dust. If a miner was sick or injured on the job, he did not receive a pension from the company. Instead, miners had their own fraternal organizations, divided among ethnic lines, that provided insurance against illness or death and would provide for a proper burial and funeral.

The early labor organizations that attempted to alleviate the issues in the anthracite mines tended to be divided along ethnic lines and were rarely unanimous in their intent.¹⁵² Though these early mining organizations lacked the ethnic diversity and unifying power of the UMWA, which promised in its 1890 constitution to unite all workers “in one organization, regardless of creed, color or nationality,” their importance cannot be overstated.¹⁵³ Though these organizations lacked the strength, numbers, and coordination that the UMWA would have in the early part of the twentieth century, they were important organizations that improved the working conditions and lives of the anthracite miners. These institutions helped to establish a sense of community between the collieries and breakers of differing companies in disparate coal fields and prepared newly arrived workers for organization. Organizational successes were not universal and could be temporary, but these wins taught anthracite miners that strong collective action could produce beneficial outcomes.

The physical geography of Pennsylvania’s anthracite coal fields was the most significant factor in the lack of coordination between fraternal organizations and early union groups. Travel and communication between towns and cities was difficult and expensive. In addition, the coal and rail companies owned most of the means of travel and communication,

¹⁵² Hroback and Turner, “The Lattimer Massacre and its Sources,” 21.

¹⁵³ *A Brief History of the United Mine Workers of America*, Justin McCarthy (editor), United Mine Workers Journal, Washington D.C., (195-), 3. <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/009694265>.

making it nearly impossible to coordinate strikes by typical means. Working conditions and wages at individual mines and breakers varied greatly. Unsafe working conditions or low wages might exist in one mine but might not in another. Mine owners could easily break strikes by raising wages in one region without raising wages across the entire industry.¹⁵⁴

Early unionization efforts, like the Workingmen's Benevolent Association and the Knights of Labor, did benefit the anthracite miners. However, unstable markets, underemployment, and low wages pervaded the anthracite industry. Newly arriving Southern and Eastern Europeans became an easy scapegoat for the industry's numerous problems. Americans and established immigrant groups scorned these newcomers who were willing to perform dangerous labor cheaply. Mine management also used immigrant workers as a way of intimidating striking employees into recanting demands. This led unionization groups to push for legislation that would protect the American workforce from the "invading Slavs." Union groups argued that by accepting lower wages and breaking strikes, Eastern and Southern Europeans harmed American social and economic prospects and undermined unionization efforts.

Much to the dismay of company owners and in contradiction to the allegations of union groups, Slavic and Italian workers tended to support unionization efforts. Even before the UMWA specifically targeted new immigrant groups for membership during the Coal Strikes of 1900 and 1902, Slavic labor was generally loyal to union causes. Slavic workers often went to militant lengths to prevent scab workers from entering the mines. In 1887, nearly a decade before the strike that led to the Lattimer Massacre, the groups that made up a proto-UMWA—the Knights of Labor and the Amalgamated Association of Miners of the

¹⁵⁴ Barendse, *Social Expectations and Perception*, 13-14.

United States—called for a general strike. Coal owners brought in Slavic miners to act as strike breakers. Instead of picking up tools and descending into the shafts to work, Slavic miners physically attacked other scab workers or “black legs” and prevented them from working. Although this strike failed, it did demonstrate the willingness of Slavic miners to better their conditions and to enforce solidarity amongst themselves.¹⁵⁵

Initially, the members and leadership of the UMWA worked against the employment of immigrant laborers in the mines. The establishment of the UMWA in northeastern Pennsylvania in 1892 should have led to a massive boom in membership, but several factors worked against the organization’s expansion. John Fahy, who eventually became president of the UMWA’s Ninth District of the eastern anthracite fields, was an ideal candidate for further organizing Pennsylvania’s anthracite mines. His experiences in Ohio taught him the importance of installing Slavic union leadership which drastically propelled Eastern Europeans into joining the new organization. Immigrant workers were warm to UMWA organization, and by 1894 had formed local organizations in Mount Caramel, Mahanoy City, and even Hazleton. However, anthracite workers’ support of union was more moral than financial. The combination of low wages, lack of support from the UMWA headquarters, and Eastern European hesitancy to pay union dues to a strange new organization resulted in a complete lack of funding for the anthracite district in 1894. By 1896, organization of the district had severely weakened or disbanded entirely. In response to this severe financial setback, Fahy looked for cheaper options and set upon lobbying Harrisburg for legislative aid for the mineworkers.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁵ Shackel, *Remembering Lattimer*, 16.

¹⁵⁶ Greene, *The Slavic Community on Strike*, 122-126

Bitterness against Slavic workers combined with propaganda from anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic groups like the APA led to the support of anti-immigrant legislation in Pennsylvania. By 1889, union organizations and nativist groups had successfully ensured that all mining certification laws would be given in English, impeding Eastern Europeans from employment. Any mine caught employing non-certified miners was steeply fined.¹⁵⁷ The most significant piece of legislation passed by Harrisburg was the Campbell Act in June 1897, months before the Lattimer Massacre. The Campbell Act dictated that every employer hiring foreign born unnaturalized males over the age of twenty-one would be taxed three cents per day for each person employed. The revenue was to go directly to the respective county treasuries.¹⁵⁸ John Fahy, still lobbying for better wages and conditions in Harrisburg, praised passage of the bill. He even lamented that the tax was not high enough, explaining that passage protected not only American workers but the foreign born by “keeping them out of the coal mines where all is cruel poverty and misery.”¹⁵⁹ As anticipated, mine owners passed this tax on to their immigrant workforce and garnished wages accordingly.

Although Harrisburg passed anti-immigration legislation, enforcement in the anthracite region was lax. American and Irish miners needed help, and Slavic miners answered the call. Some Americanized miners even preferred working with Slavic immigrants because they were willing to help with the difficult jobs of blasting and drilling and were eager to learn about the mining profession. This informal on-the-job training was enough for some Slavic workers to be able to pass mining certification tests without formal schooling. Slavic workers were also seen as essential, mostly because they were willing to do

¹⁵⁷ Greene, *The Slavic Community on Strike*, 115.

¹⁵⁸ John Fahy, “John Fahy: Makes Further Report Concerning the Successful Passage of Labor Measures in the Pennsylvania Legislature,” *The United Mine Workers Journal*, 12, no. 12, (July 1, 1897): 1.

¹⁵⁹ Fahy, “John Fahy: Makes Further Report,” 1.

difficult jobs that Americans refused. Victor Greene points out that miners of the mid-1880s were also impressed with Slavic workers' knowledge of the going wage for their labor.¹⁶⁰ Despite the reality of Slavic workers being willing to support union causes, even when they were not members, and their invaluable roles in the mines, negative stereotypes about Slavic immigrants prevailed in the anthracite region.

Slavic immigrants faced significant discrimination in the anthracite fields of northeastern Pennsylvania from both elite society and their fellow Irish and American workers. Established workers and nativist organizations blamed Slavic immigrants on economic and social problems which had existed long before the arrival of Eastern Europeans. Yet, in spite of these stereotypes and assumptions of a foreign workforce, Slavic immigrants were overwhelmingly supportive of strikes and union activity even when they themselves were not yet formal members of any English-speaking organization. Slavic immigrants did not hinder or degrade attempts at unionization in northeastern Pennsylvania. Their militancy, desire for cohesion amongst their peers, dedication to union causes, and sheer numbers ensured that the UMWA found a strong foothold in the anthracite industry. The formal organization of immigrant workers after Lattimer positioned the UMWA to have the strength to combat capital and government forces working against union causes in the 1900 and 1902 Anthracite Strikes.

By positioning Lattimer as an exceptional display of Slavic solidarity and protest in Gilded Age America, scholars inaccurately depict the Massacre as an extraordinary event. Nativism was a part of the landscape of the anthracite mines, but it was not the only explanatory variable in the Lattimer Massacre. Violence between labor and capital was

¹⁶⁰ Greene, *The Slavic Community on Strike*, 115-117.

systemic. Decades of exploitative practices by the owners and managers of the anthracite mines created a community acclimated to regular violence from private and public authorities attempting to protect private property as well as protesting labor petitioning for better wages and conditions. Though the bloodshed and chaos of the gunfire was unusual, even for long-time residents of the patch towns, the racialization and treatment of Slavic immigrants was not. Scholars must therefore remember to contextualize their sources and reframe them in a way that involves discussion of the environment in which they were created. By doing so, scholars will come to an understanding of the Slavic immigrant community that is based in historic truths rather than long held potentially false assumptions based on prejudice. Having demonstrated the contested landscape of the anthracite region, chapter three will tackle analysis of the existing English language newspaper record of the mid-summer mule drivers' strike in 1897 and the murder trial of Mike Cheslock in 1898.

CHAPTER 3

ANALYSIS OF THE NEWSPAPER RECORD

The Need for Analysis

A lack of primary resources is one of the major obstacles in the historical investigation of the Lattimer Massacre. Fires and catastrophic floods destroyed a significant portion of the written record of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Luzerne County. This includes not only official and unofficial documents about the massacre and trial of Sheriff James Martin, but also the written record of the Eastern European community and their contributions to Pennsylvania's anthracite region. Oral history of the event from firsthand witnesses is extremely limited and has been filtered through a secondary perspective lens. While the UMWA did acknowledge the Lattimer Massacre as a contributing factor to their later successes, especially when organizing union membership and during the 1900 and 1902 strikes, it did not collect any formal information about the 1897 strikers, their demands, or the results of their collective action.

Unfortunately, this has led historians to heavily rely on early 20th century researchers, like Frank Warne (*The Slav Invasion and the Mine Workers*, 1904), Peter Roberts (*Anthracite Coal Communities*, 1901), and Andrew Suffern (*The Coal Miners' Struggle for Industrial Status*, 1926). These "experts" on Slavic immigration presented a very biased and unfair view of Slavic immigrants. Historians accepted the published texts of these scholars as eye-

witness accounts of Pennsylvania's anthracite region.¹⁶¹ Michael Barendse warns against taking these sources at face value in *Slavic Immigrants in the Pennsylvania Anthracite Fields, 1880-1902: A Study of the Contrast Between Social Expectations and Immigrant Behavior* (1981.) Barendse points out that "by failing to reexamine the events described by Roberts, Warne, and others, historians produced work that reinforced the less-educated opinions about the Slavs held by the local population of the anthracite region."¹⁶² These early social researchers did not recognize their biases against Slavic immigrants, understanding their views to be based upon then accepted scientific beliefs. Prior to their investigations in the anthracite region, they had already recognized Slavic immigrants as the root of labor troubles and urban conflict. They reinforced their beliefs using the examples of the squalor and poverty in Pennsylvania's anthracite region citing differences between established Irish and Welsh neighborhoods and Slavic ones. As Barendse points out, what society, including historians, believed to be true in a self-fulfilling prophecy regarding Slavic immigration.¹⁶³ Historians' reliance upon these texts helped to cultivate the silence around the Lattimer Massacre as well as diminishing the contributions of Eastern Europeans in labor organization.

The reliance upon easily digestible narratives, like Michael Novak's *Guns of Lattimer* (1978) can have the effect of oversimplifying the circumstances of the Lattimer Massacre. In practice, the region had a far more complex understanding and relationship to labor violence. The very nature of the company town system muddled the division between labor and capital as the two forces were inherently reliant upon the other. Comparison between patch town

¹⁶¹ Barendse, *Social Expectations and Perception*, 31.

¹⁶² Barendse, *Social Expectations and Perceptions*, 33.

¹⁶³ Barendse, *Social Expectations and Perceptions*, 5.

newspapers and reports from large cities demonstrate the normalization of labor violence as routine by local reporters. The 1897 immigrant-led strike activity also demonstrates society's evolving understanding of who was or could be American. The Lattimer affair demonstrated that Slavic immigrants had a much greater understanding of their rights than previously recognized. Reexamination also reveals the significant and vital role of immigrant women in strike activity. Their participation in marches, command of the household during lean strikes, and militant devotion to union causes facilitated labor's success in the patch towns. Therefore, reexamination of the surviving English newspaper record complicates the existing understanding of immigrant community and the anthracite region's reaction to labor violence.

Like Suffern, Warne, Rood, and the rest of society's intellectual elite, newspaper editors and reporters understood their society through a lens of nativism. This is not to say these individuals were unethical or inaccurate in their reporting or that they purposefully misrepresented or falsified information. But we should be remembered to place their reporting within the context of the American society in which it was written and consumed. It should also be noted that the original consumers of this newspaper coverage understood the reports to be true and factual, providing historians with a way to gauge historical society's reaction and awareness to the massacre and trial. Therefore, reexamination of the surviving newspaper record is necessary as it reveals a far more complex and dynamic community than previously acknowledged. America's conflicting and evolving identity during the beginning of the twentieth century, immigrants understanding of their position in this new society, and the significant contribution of immigrant women during strike activity are revealed through analysis of the English language newspaper record.

The silencing of Eastern European immigrant voices began, in part, with scholars' acceptance of the surviving newspaper record to be an entirely truthful representation of the strike, shooting, and trial. The narrative that emerged during the trial from American media portrayed the strikers as a violent foreign mob who defied authority and opposed American institutions. Sheriff James Martin's defense attorneys played upon existing nativist prejudices which was then reinforced by newspaper reporting. The alleged violence of the immigrant strikers therefore justified the actions of Martin and his deputies. The jury concluded that he and his men had done his duty to protect private citizens and property.

Reliance upon English media is understandable given the lack of other surviving primary materials.¹⁶⁴ The trial of Sheriff Martin and his deputies made national and international headlines and reporters detailed nearly every dramatic courtroom action. Newspapers often printed verbatim and highly detailed accounts of attorney speeches or witness testimony. Local newspapers from Luzerne and Lackawanna fought with reporters from larger cities for exclusive information from anyone connected to the trial with insider information. The trial attracted international attention because it was thought that the government of the Austro-Hungarian Empire would seek to secure indemnity for their citizens slain by Martin's deputies. Of course, reporters and editors chose the most exciting or dramatic testimony to publish as they wanted their paper's edition to be a best seller. Reports of bitter clashes between defense and prosecution attorneys or explicit and gruesome details from key witnesses on the stand often took precedence over a perfect chronicling of

¹⁶⁴ Michael Novak did conduct several oral interviews with surviving Lattimer strikers and community members for research for his book *The Guns of Lattimer* (1978). These rare interviews have not been digitized, as they have yet to be safely converted. Edward Pinkowski and Konstantín Čulen were also able to conduct oral or written interviews with surviving community members for their books, but these interviews have not been preserved beyond the pages of their published works to the knowledge of this author.

courtroom events. Newspapers of this era thrived on yellow journalism and sensationalism and used these techniques to drive sales. Despite this flair for the dramatic, the surviving English language newspaper accounts from Luzerne County attempted to present an even-hand in their reporting of the strike, shooting, and trial.

The English newspaper record of Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties are integral to the story of Lattimer because they demonstrate how the anthracite community, American and immigrant, processed the shooting and the trial. The selection of reports included from the strike and shooting demonstrate local reporters' complex understanding of regional affairs. They had firsthand knowledge of the exploitation experienced by the employees of the mines, but also had to acknowledge the business interests of their paper's owners. After all, the very existence and survival of the patch towns relied upon the success of the anthracite mines. Like the nationally published articles from *Harper's Weekly* and *Century Magazine*, the Associated Press reports coming from Scranton and Wilkes-Barre became the dominant narrative of the strike, massacre, and trial. Again, it is worth noting that these authors did not set out to intentionally mislead or misinform their readers. These reporters and editors honestly believed they were presenting these events as truthfully as possible. These men accurately understood the complexities and violence of patch town life and wanted to portray a truthful version of themselves and their community to their audiences.

Local and Big City Newspapers

The anthracite region of northeastern Pennsylvania had dozens of English and foreign language newspapers representing a variety of political beliefs. Immigrant communities and fraternal organizations often created and published their own newspapers in their respective languages. Alongside these smaller community presses, Luzerne County boasted a strong and

technologically advanced printing industry. The offices of the *Wilkes-Barre Record*, a Republican paper considered to be the leading publisher of the county, had a lightning press which could produce 12,000 papers per hour by the late 1890s.¹⁶⁵ Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties had regular contributors to the Associated Press. National and international news outlets often picked up these reports from the anthracite region, especially if significant strike activity occurred or during times of tragedy.¹⁶⁶ Hazleton's *The Plain Speaker* was the first in the region to make use of Associated Press services. Many readers gave preference to *The Plain Speaker* because of this early adoption and was held in high regard for being "very close to the hearts of the people."¹⁶⁷

New York and Philadelphia newspapers were the most culpable for their sensationalist reporting. Larger city newspapers tended to exaggerate the community's response to the shooting, playing into negative stereotypes more often than their small-town counterparts, and even falsified details revealed in court. Philadelphia papers reinforced the notion that immigrants sought out wrathful vengeance after the massacre and could, at any moment, explode into radical violence. Hazleton was a town "quiver[ing] on the edge of a volcano," wrote the reporter of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.¹⁶⁸ Immigrant mine workers were so incensed that at mass meetings, "[a]n inflammatory word on the part of a speaker, it is feared, will serve as a spark to ignite the magazines of wrath that is hidden within the Poles and Hungarians."¹⁶⁹ The editors and reporters of the Luzerne County newspapers had a more

¹⁶⁵ H.C. Bradsby, ed., *History of Luzerne County with Biographical Selections* (Chicago: S.B. Nelson & Co., Publishers, 1893): 407.

¹⁶⁶ Bradsby, *History of Luzerne County*, 401, 410.

¹⁶⁷ Bradsby, *History of Luzerne County*, 411-412.

¹⁶⁸ T.V.R., "Quiet Yesterday, But Anxiety At Night," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, September 14, 1897.

¹⁶⁹ "Situation Grows More Serious: Feeling of Unrest Prevails in the Hazleton Region," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Sept 18, 1897.

complex and complicated understanding of immigrant labor than their big city counterparts. While Philadelphia and New York painted immigrants as ignorant laborers, drunkards, and violent anarchists, the communities around the coal breakers and collieries understood that the problems of the anthracite mines affected the entire community, regardless of their class or business.¹⁷⁰

Local news reporters had very little patience for any “misrepresentation” of the anthracite fields and the aftermath of the Lattimer shooting. The *Hazleton Sentinel* insisted that out of town correspondents were “either misinformed or unable to size up the situation in anything like a correct form.”¹⁷¹ They felt that the exaggerated “wild stories” should be suppressed, as “[e]verything is quiet and peace and tranquility reign.”¹⁷² During the trial, Judge Stanley Woodward denounced the press for their “falsehood and misrepresentation[s]” which only created “sensational effects and prejudice[d] the public judgement.”¹⁷³ Although Woodward refrained from specifically naming reporters, he warned that he would throw the offending parties out of his courtroom if they continued to publish lies.¹⁷⁴ Luzerne County reporters and residents were accustomed to conflict between capital and labor. They understood that any retaliatory action of grieving workers, Slavic or otherwise, to be more of a common nuisance of life in the patch towns rather than an all-out assault on American society. Labor and capital had been violently clashing for decades and retaliatory behavior on

¹⁷⁰ “End the Strike,” *Wilkes-Barre Record* (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania), September 17, 1897.

¹⁷¹ “The Day in Detail: Everything Quiet and People Are Now Composed.” *Hazleton Sentinel* (Hazleton, Pennsylvania), September 14, 1897, page 4.

¹⁷² “The Day in Detail: Everything Quiet and People Are Now Composed.” *Hazleton Sentinel*.

¹⁷³ “Warning From the Bench,” *Wilkes Barre Record* (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania), February 8, 1898, 7.

¹⁷⁴ “Warning From the Bench,” *Wilkes Barre Record*.

both sides was common. To be sure, the peace and tranquility reported on in the Luzerne County papers still came with an expectation of violence from the immigrant community.

The papers of Philadelphia and other large cities placed the Luzerne County strike activity in more prominent positions of their papers, likely as a way of enticing their business class readers eager for news of a potential mass strike. Luzerne County's railroads and coal pits were owned and managed by men who lived and worked primarily in Philadelphia or New York. The massive bituminous strike, which erupted on July 4, 1897, across western Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, Indiana, and Illinois, also likely drew the attention of the larger city papers to the events in Luzerne County. A widespread strike in the anthracite mines on top of the existing bituminous strike would have been devastating for the interests of multiple industries. The editors of the Luzerne County papers rarely put local anthracite strike activity on their front pages. Strikes tended to be mundane news unless they extended across differing coal companies, were particularly violent, or had some drama or celebrity attached. Most of the coverage of the strike activity in July and August 1897 as well as the coverage of the murder trial of Mike Cheslock was found in the local and state news sections of the Luzerne County papers.

Newspaper coverage of strike activity in the anthracite region tended to favor the causes of the anthracite workers, provided the men were well-behaved, followed proper arbitration protocol, and did not prohibit other men from working if they wanted. Unhappiness in the mines generally meant unhappiness elsewhere in the community as the entire livelihood of the patch town revolved around the success or failure of the mine. J. Bernard Hogg pointed out in his article "Public Reaction to Pinkertonism and the Labor Question," that American business theory likely contributed to local reporters' support of

strike activity. Hogg explains that two concepts were fundamental to American economic thought at this time, the right to private property and the inalienable right of contract.¹⁷⁵ In regards to the rights of labor, this meant that employees could make demands of their employer, provided they did not prevent anyone else from working the same job they had a grievance against. But just as employees were free to barter for better wages or conditions or seek employment elsewhere, employers were free to establish whatever wages and conditions they saw fit for any job. In this way, mine workers were free to barter and arbitrate with employers for better working conditions and wages, but employers were also free to refuse negotiations and hire others to do the work at the conditions they set.¹⁷⁶ It should also be remembered that the editors and reporters of the patch town newspapers likely had a close relative, neighbor, or friend who toiled underground or had some connection to the mines. These were men who had firsthand knowledge of how dangerous and deadly mining could be and knew the miners were dismally underpaid.

A selection of reports from the time of the strike and shooting demonstrates local media's understanding of the complexities of the anthracite region. Though American society viewed foreign workers from Eastern and Southern Europe unfavorably, reporters of the coal region had a more complicated understanding of immigrant labor. It should be remembered that anthracite mining was a dangerous and deadly profession. Anyone willing to descend into the pitch darkness of the pits with the knowledge that they may never return to the surface had the respect of the community. The extremes of this complex understanding can be demonstrated in the *Wilkes-Barre Record* and *The Hazleton Sentinel*, two Republican

¹⁷⁵ J. Bernard Hogg, "Public Reaction to Pinkertonism and the Labor Question," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 11, no. 3 (July 1944): 185-186.

¹⁷⁶ Hogg, "Pinkertonism and the Labor Question," 184-186.

papers.¹⁷⁷ “Van Twillers’ Column,” a regular editorial of the *Wilkes-Barre Record* depicted immigrant labor unfavorably days after the shooting but still put full responsibility for the bloodshed on the coal companies for bringing immigrant labor to Hazleton in the first place.¹⁷⁸ The *Hazleton Sentinel* went so far as to argue against the Alien Tax Act. In a response to the *Philadelphia Times*, the *Sentinel* argued that the idea that unnaturalized immigrants did not contribute to the public was “arrant nonsense.”¹⁷⁹ The article goes on to argue that employers taxed immigrants as they did American workers. They also paid rent and their landlords made them responsible for the housing taxes, water bills, and rent insurance on the property.¹⁸⁰ The author of the editorial harshly rebuked the *Philadelphia Times* for its pronounced ignorance of coal region affairs. To be sure, the *Sentinel* editor is not favorable towards immigrant labor, understanding this community to be a “menace to good government, a detriment to their own efforts for education and enlightenment,” and the cause for the squalor in the mining communities.¹⁸¹ However, the author explained that the community regarded immigrants “with that sense of equity characteristic in the coal region.”¹⁸² Like the *Wilkes-Barre Record*, blame was reserved for the coal companies for taking advantage of ignorant workers in order to accumulate wealth.¹⁸³

This nuance understanding of anthracite mining affairs also extended to demonstrations of labor violence. In one article published a few days prior to the Lattimer shooting, an “old hand” remarked that he had seen “more troublesome times” and “more

¹⁷⁷ Bradsby, *History of Luzerne County*, 407, 411

¹⁷⁸ “Van Twillers Column: Random Notes of Daily Life in Wilkes Barre,” *Wilkes-Barre Record* (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania), September 13, 1897.

¹⁷⁹ “The Strike,” *Hazleton Sentinel* (Hazleton, Pennsylvania), August 31, 1897.

¹⁸⁰ “The Strike,” *Hazleton Sentinel*.

¹⁸¹ “The Strike,” *Hazleton Sentinel*.

¹⁸² “The Strike,” *Hazleton Sentinel*.

¹⁸³ “The Strike,” *Hazleton Sentinel*.

terrifying” raids on collieries in years past, referring to the Civil War draft protests.¹⁸⁴ The old hand went on to talk about how mobs of protestors raided mining villages, beat village inhabitants, and destroyed property. He explained that “the shooting was terrible” and that the strikers raided “blackleg” homes and smashed doors and windows.¹⁸⁵ Concluding his story, the old hand remarked that he only spoke of general strikes, as there were “scores” of local strikes “and pretty hot ones too.”¹⁸⁶ The skirmishes of the Slavic workers, at least for the individual interviewed, seemed trivial compared to the actions of the previous generation.

The apparent apathy of the community’s reaction to labor violence becomes understandable if placed within the broader framework of the anthracite mining industry. Accidents and fatalities in the pits or while running the machinery of the colliery were commonplace. Roughly one out of every hundred employees across the eight mining districts in Luzerne County had been injured or killed on the job in 1898 and 1899.¹⁸⁷ This was also a region that had endured the Great Upheaval of 1877, the raids of the Mollie Maguires, and regularly dealt with one devastating tragedy after another from fires, cave-ins, gas explosions, and blasting accidents. Small wonder then that the Luzerne County reporters derided big city papers for their “misinformed” and confused judgements.¹⁸⁸

American Identity and the Inclusion Of The Immigrant

Initially, the Harwood and Lattimer strikers had community support in the summer of 1897. It had been well known that the men were dissatisfied with their wages in the Honey

¹⁸⁴ “Marching Again: The Honey Brook Strikers Continue Raiding Tactics,” *Hazleton Sentinel* (Hazleton, Pennsylvania), September 8, 1897.

¹⁸⁵ “Marching Again: The Honey Brook Strikers Continue Raiding Tactics,” *Hazleton Sentinel*.

¹⁸⁶ “Marching Again: The Honey Brook Strikers Continue Raiding Tactics,” *Hazleton Sentinel*.

¹⁸⁷ *The Record Year-Book and Almanac 1901* (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania: Wilkes-Barre Record, 1901): 33.

¹⁸⁸ “The Day in Detail: Everything Quiet and People Are Now Composed.” *Hazleton Sentinel* (Hazleton, Pennsylvania), September 14, 1897.

Brook district for some time prior to the strike.¹⁸⁹ The *Hazleton Sentinel* reported that employees in the region had been without a uniform wage since the Great Strike of 1887-1888 and even argued for a uniform pay rate in the Luzerne County coal fields.¹⁹⁰ Again, it should be noted that the economy of the entire Wyoming Valley rested upon the men of the anthracite fields. If they were underpaid or if the price of coal fell off, the entire region's businesses suffered as well. Reporters also blamed Gomer Jones for exacerbating the mule drivers' grievances. Though the headline in the *Hazleton Sentinel* stated "Angry Strikers: They Assail the Mine Superintendent," the story exposed manager Gomer Jones as the instigator of the physical conflict.¹⁹¹ The same newspaper described Jones as a nepotistic and tyrannical boss and that his methods of economizing a mine always came at the expense of his workmen.¹⁹²

When other collieries unrelated to the mule drivers' complaints began to shut down in support, the *Hazleton Sentinel* described the men as "cool" and that they "conducted themselves in a very credible manner."¹⁹³ The paper even discredited reports of the strikers being "hot headed," prone to violence, and drunk.¹⁹⁴ In comparison, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* reported that the strikers were extremely bitter against Jones, to the point where he feared physical harm and traveled with armed guards.¹⁹⁵ The disposition of the men,

¹⁸⁹ "Angry Strikers: They Assail the Mine Superintendent," *Hazleton Sentinel* (Hazleton, Pennsylvania), August 14, 1897.

¹⁹⁰ "The Strike Today: What the Reporters Found in their Investigations," *Hazleton Sentinel*, September 1, 1897.

¹⁹¹ "Angry Strikers: They Assail the Mine Superintendent," *Hazleton Sentinel*.

¹⁹² "The Strike: General Situation Unchanged Preparations for a Siege." *Hazleton Sentinel* (Hazleton, Pennsylvania), August 17, 1897.

¹⁹³ "Strike is Spreading: General Shut Down at Lehigh & Wilkesbarre Collieries," *Hazleton Sentinel* (Hazleton, Pennsylvania) August 16, 1897, 6.

¹⁹⁴ "The Strike: General Situation Unchanged Preparations for a Siege." *Hazleton Sentinel*.

¹⁹⁵ "Luzerne Miners Join Big Strike: Over Four Thousand Diggers Throw Down Their Picks in Hazleton District." *Philadelphia Inquirer* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), Aug. 17, 1897, 1-2.

“foreigners especially,” were prone to violence and excitement and that very little would set them off.¹⁹⁶ In late August when the strikers shut down a mine with a sign that read “*Stragk*,” indicating that it was a distinctly foreign affair, the men rushed upon the mine, “shouting and yelling and firing off revolvers” and proceeded to beat the employees off the job.¹⁹⁷ Again, the local papers do their best to discredit the reports of violence. “Contrary to the reports sent to the city earlier, none of [the strikers] showed any signs of intoxication, they were well behaved and were anticipating interference from the police but they were determined and would take the middle of the road instead of the pavement whenever their line was blocked.”¹⁹⁸ The strikers were even cheered along their route by observers.¹⁹⁹

Public sympathy for the mule drivers’ strike was short-lived, especially when it became apparent that immigrant workers controlled negotiations. By the end of August and early September, most of the English-speaking miners had agreed to the terms for returning to work set by the managers and owners of the coal companies. However, immigrant workers refused these concessions citing discrimination as their wages remained stagnant. Reporters indicated that the English-speaking workers were becoming disgruntled at the refusal to return to work, but kept their dissatisfaction about the strike quiet, as they were vastly outnumbered by immigrant labor.²⁰⁰ The fact that immigrant-workers controlled the strike did not sit well with many in the community, especially in older residents who had been

¹⁹⁶ “Luzerne Strikers May Face Militia: Superintendent Jones Assumes an Aggressive Spirit Towards Ex-Employees,” *Philadelphia Inquirer* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), August 18, 1897, 1.

¹⁹⁷ “Luzerne Miners Use Revolvers: Foreign Element at Van Wickle’s Colliery Causes Great Excitement,” *Philadelphia Inquirer* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), August 28, 1897, 1. The sign painted with “*Stragk*” or “strike” in Slovak indicates that the strike was driven by Eastern European immigrants rather than the English-speaking miners.

¹⁹⁸ “Striking Miners Field Day: The Hungarians And Italians Want To Be Paid And Recognized As Are the English Speaking Workers,” *Hazleton Sentinel* (Hazleton, Pennsylvania), August 27, 1897, 5.

¹⁹⁹ “Striking Miners Field Day,,” *Hazleton Sentinel*, 5.

²⁰⁰ “The Strikers Today: Hold The Fort But Make No Further Demonstration,” *Hazleton Sentinel* (Hazleton, Pennsylvania), August 28, 1897, 5.

active during the times of the Mollie Maguires. The same “old hands” that appeared supportive of the strike and excused the men’s excitement now spoke out against the immigrant led strike. The *Hazleton Sentinel* reported that “[a]n old Irishman said: ‘We are at the mercy of the Hungarians and I understand an appeal will be made to Negroes of the South to come here and free us.’”²⁰¹

Newspapers soon echoed this discontent with immigrant leadership and printed negative stereotypes. They pointed out perceived negative characteristics of immigrants, emphasizing their proclivity towards violence, transforming the group of determined strikers into a lawless mob. *The Wilkes-Barre Record* for instance exclaimed that the foreigners were “determined” and “maintained a dogged, stubborn disposition” which “bodes ill for those interfering with their intention.”²⁰² Paradoxically, the *Record* reporter cites foreign prejudice against Americans as a deep concern, explaining that immigrant workers “call the Americans ‘little white men,’ and their opinion of their white brethren is not very exalted.”²⁰³ Given American social attitudes towards Eastern Europeans, this refusal to concede to their so called “superiors” was a sign of trouble to come. The same paper appeals for a swift end to the strike because “foreign elements,” namely Hungarians, Poles, and Italians, were in control of negotiations.²⁰⁴ The author explains that “a large portion of them are reckless, turbulent and lawless under ordinary circumstances, and under the excitement and irritating conditions incident to a strike unusual excesses may be expected.”²⁰⁵ Interestingly, despite

²⁰¹ “Strike Spreading: Audenreid Men Idle Today—Officials Not Keeping Faith.” *Hazleton Sentinel* (Hazleton, Pennsylvania), August 31, 1897, 5.

²⁰² “Waiting for Developments: Some Anticipate a Serious Time Among the Strikers in the Hazleton Region—Strike May Spread.” *Wilkes Barre Record* (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania), August 30, 1897, 5.

²⁰³ “Waiting for Developments,” *Wilkes Barre Record*, 5.

²⁰⁴ “Waiting for Developments,” *Wilkes Barre Record*, 5.

²⁰⁵ “Waiting for Developments,” *Wilkes Barre Record*, 5.

the aversion of immigrant-controlled strikes, the *Record* pressures the coal companies to end the strike. Regardless of their citizenship, *if* the immigrants had been mistreated, or foolishly provoked into conflict, it was then the duty of the Lehigh and WilkesBarre Company officials to right their wrongs and quickly put an end to the strike.²⁰⁶

Analysis of the newspaper record reveals the conflicting and evolving identity of America occurring at the beginning of the twentieth century. On one hand was a nativist identity which set forth strict qualifications on who was and could be American. On the other, was an identity that embraced the contributions of immigrants, especially those who embraced American concepts of freedom, liberty, and democracy. The Luzerne County coal fields represent a microcosm of this conflicting discussion of American identity. The region has deep roots to early Pennsylvania settlements and prides itself in its military connections to both the Revolutionary Era and the Civil War. This identity came in constant conflict with the waves of immigration in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Conflict between these contrasting identities likely propelled the stereotyping and racialization of Slavic immigrants.

The evolving debate between these identities can be seen in the reporting of the trial of Sheriff Martin and his deputies for the murder of Mike Cheslock. The defense highlighted the differences between the American deputies, who had connections to the early families of Luzerne or had served in the Union Army, and the alien strikers, who were painted as foreign anarchists bent on the destruction of American society. The prosecution countered this argument by emphasizing the contributions of immigrant American heroes and emphasized that the strikers insisted that they march under American flags. They pointed out that the

²⁰⁶ “The Lower End Strike,” *Wilkes-Barre Record* (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania), August 18, 1897, 4.

strikers had an understanding of American rights and liberties and knew that they were permitted to march peaceably on public roads under American laws. The strikers themselves argued that they were entitled to equal treatment and had the same right to live under American rule and law. They alleged discrimination based upon their status as immigrants and demanded to have the same equal treatment and wages as their English-speaking counterparts.

The defense's key strategy during the trial was to paint the strikers as foreign anarchists bent on the destruction of American law and order. This was not a new argument against labor organization and was frequently a tactic used to discredit attempts at industrial unionization. Anarchists were blamed for the bombings at the Haymarket Square Riots and for the attempted assassination of Henry Clay Frick during the Homestead Strikes. It was therefore not a stretch for Martin's defense attorneys to employ this tactic to counteract the image of peaceful, unarmed strikers. In his opening speech, the star attorney, John T. Lenahan asked if the "brave and courageous officer and his assistants" would be punished for doing their duty against "foreign anarchists."²⁰⁷ He likened the strike activity in the days leading up to the shooting and the attack on the sheriff and his deputies to the "scourge" of Huns and Slavs in the early Roman times when Attila sacked the Roman Empire. "That lawless horde that came down from the steppes of Asia has found its way here," Lenahan declared in court.²⁰⁸ He explained that strikers had assaulted men, "[y]et these barbarians look for the law's protection—these who frighten people out of their homes to seek the safety of the mountains."²⁰⁹ Another defense attorney, Henry W. Palmer, declared that the Lattimer

²⁰⁷ "A Day of Oratory: Scarlett and Lenahan Talk to the Jury About the Shooting" *Hazleton Plain Speaker* (Hazleton, Pennsylvania), March 8, 1898, 4.

²⁰⁸ "A Day of Oratory: Scarlett and Lenahan Talk to the Jury About the Shooting" *Hazleton Plain Speaker*, 4.

²⁰⁹ "A Day of Oratory: Scarlett and Lenahan Talk to the Jury About the Shooting" *Hazleton Plain Speaker*, 4.

shooting was a conspiracy of anarchists and warned that the event would be a rallying cry for “socialists, anarchists and haters of organized government, as well as a slogan for the cheap demagogues who reckon political success above public welfare, and who stand ready to ruin where they cannot rule.”²¹⁰ Though the ending of Palmer’s quip was aimed directly at his political rivals on the prosecution’s side, the Lattimer Massacre did become an example of capital’s obstinance and corruption to several labor and socialist leaders. The defense team’s argument against labor was not an original one. Marxism and leftist politics that used anti-capitalist rhetoric inspired labor movements in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Emma Goldstein, Samiel Gompers, and several labor trade magazines all cited the massacre as an example of the evils of capital. Paul J Gilje points out that when officials labeled a labor event or movement as anarchist or socialist, it allowed them to take preemptive action.²¹¹ Labeling the strikers as violent anarchists played into existing negative stereotypes and helped to justify the actions of the sheriff and his deputies. This strategy allowed the defense to position Martin and the deputies as saviors of American life and liberty.

The defense contended that the “foreign anarchists” on the prosecution’s side were opportunists who wanted to defraud the American government to make money. They attempted to demonstrate that the prosecution witnesses, many of whom were Austro-Hungarian citizens, sought legal retribution in the hope that they would secure financial damages from the United States government if a jury convicted Martin and the deputies.²¹² The defense called forth deputy Samuel B. Price, who testified that when he told the strikers

²¹⁰ “The Verdict is Ready: Lattimer Case Given to the Jury Last Evening,” *Hazleton Plain Speaker* (Hazleton, Pennsylvania) March 9, 1898, 4.

²¹¹ Paul A. Gilje, *Rioting in America* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996): 131.

²¹² “The Martin Trial: More Witnesses for the Commonwealth Heard in Court Yesterday,” *Hazleton Plain Speaker* (Hazleton, Pennsylvania), February 12, 1898, 4.

to disperse, they were not afraid and replied, “[y]ou shoot. We ‘get lot of money for wife and children.’”²¹³ Sheriff Martin echoed a similar statement on the stand. Martin explained that when he confronted the strikers at West Hazleton, one striker told him “Me no citizen and can do what I like.”²¹⁴ Attorney Lenahan asked Andrew Meyer, a prosecution witness who had lost his leg because of the bullet wounds he received at Lattimer, how much Meyer expected to get from the case against the sheriff and deputies. When the prosecution objected to this line of reasoning, Lenahan argued that Meyer was an Austrian subject whose government was now watching the trial and was expected to seek indemnity for its subjects killed or injured at Lattimer.²¹⁵ Another defense witness, eighty-two-year-old Annie Graber, testified that she heard a man say, “[t]his time America is four years Hungarian country” and fired a pistol.²¹⁶ She explained that she had told the man who fired the gun, “that when this became a Hungarian country there would be no more blood in it than there was in my little finger. Then one of the strikers threw a stone at me.”²¹⁷ Graber produced the stone and it was offered in as evidence.²¹⁸ The legitimacy given to hearsay testimonies and absurd evidence was quite nonsensical, however this evidence was accepted as legitimate. In closing statements, John Garman of the defense exclaimed that the United States “will not be given over to the Slav or Hungarian just yet. The freedom of this country have been watered with

²¹³ “Deputies Testify: Graphic Accounts of the Lattimer Trouble,” *Wilkes-Barre Record* (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania), March 3, 1898, 6.

²¹⁴ “Sheriff Martin Tells His Story: His Account of the Lattimer Tragedy.” *Wilkes-Barre Record* (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania), March 2, 1898, 6.

²¹⁵ “More Wounded Strikers: Tell in Court the Story of the Conflict,” *Wilkes-Barre Record* (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania), February 12, 1898, 5.

²¹⁶ “Opening for Defense: The Other Side in the Big Trial,” *Wilkes-Barre Record* (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania), February 22, 1898, 5.

²¹⁷ “Opening for Defense: The Other Side in the Big Trial,” *Wilkes-Barre Record*, 5.

²¹⁸ “Opening for Defense: The Other Side in the Big Trial,” *Wilkes-Barre Record*, 5.

too much precious blood to have it destroyed by people of this kind.”²¹⁹ Clearly the defense team did everything in their power to prove just how dangerous and un-American the strikers were.

The defense positioned the deputies, Sheriff Martin, and the coal company that had equipped them with weapons, as American heroes in comparison to the foreign anarchists bent on destroying American society. Lenahan alluded to the Union service of the deputies, explaining that they had learned their loyalty to the American flag defending it from internal enemies thereby proving their Americanness. Sheriff Martin had made the wise decision to choose Thomas Hall, “who had learned to support law and liberty on many a southern battlefield,” as one of his deputies.²²⁰ Lenahan paid particular attention to the Pardee family, stating that the patriarch had sent two of his sons along with two fully equipped companies to fight for the Union Army. The Pardees owned the mines at Harwood and Lattimer where the conflict took place. Lenahan stated, “[t]here are in this country two classes of men. One who, like Ario Pardee, is ever ready to defend its laws against foes from within and without. The other is the offspring of anarchy...ready to see the country destroyed.”²²¹ Sheriff Martin was a true American hero for standing up to the mob when local authorities were either “in sympathy or paralyzed at the peril confronting them.”²²²

According to the defense, the immigrant strikers did not march under an American flag and could not even recognize one. One of the deputies admitted to taking a flag from the strikers on the stand, but described it as having yellow, red, and white stripes and that it

²¹⁹ “All But the Verdict: Final Pleas of Attorneys and the Judge’s Charge,” *Wilkes-Barre Record* (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania), March 8, 1898, 6.

²²⁰ “Scarlet and Lenahan: Attorneys Begin Their Closing Pleas to the Jury,” *Wilkes-Barre Record* (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania), March 8, 1898, 6.

²²¹ “Scarlet and Lenahan: Attorneys Begin Their Closing Pleas to the Jury,” *Wilkes-Barre Record*, 6.

²²² “Scarlet and Lenahan: Attorneys Begin Their Closing Pleas to the Jury,” *Wilkes-Barre Record*, 6.

lacked a field of blue and white stars.²²³ The defense mocked the idea that the immigrant strikers understood American rights and customs. It was ludicrous “that you should for the first time be taught to venerate and love that flag by John Mehalka, Andrew Sivor and their Hungarian friends.”²²⁴ The immigrants were the barbaric threat from the East, and it was only the true American citizens, like the deputies, Martin, and the Pardee family, that could be counted on to defend the American flag and what it stood for.



Figure 1. *The Lattimer Massacre, September 10, 1897.* Photograph by Henry Dreyfus, 1897. Public Domain.

The defense team’s insistence that the immigrant strikers lacked respect for the American flag is at odds with newspaper reports of strike activity in summer 1897. Newspaper accounts demonstrate that immigrant strikers understood that they had certain rights and were entitled to certain freedoms under American law. Reporters described strikers marching behind American flags in August and September prior to the shooting and several

²²³ “The Deputies On: Messrs. Price and Platt Swear That They Did Not Shoot,” *Hazleton Plain Speaker* (Hazleton, Pennsylvania), March 3, 1898, 4.

²²⁴ “Scarlet and Lenahan: Attorneys Begin Their Closing Pleas to the Jury,” *Wilkes-Barre Record*, 6.

third-party witnesses unrelated to strike stated that the men marched behind an American flag the day of the shooting. The strikers who took the stand for the prosecution insisted that they carried two American flags on their way to the Lattimer mines because “the McAdoo people told us we dare not march without a flag.”²²⁵ The lone surviving photograph of the Lattimer march shows what appears to be a tattered American flag in the procession. This corroborates the testimony of the strikers who alleged that the deputies tore it in their attempts to seize the flag from them at West Hazleton.²²⁶ News reports prior to the shooting indicate that the immigrant strikers had reverence for the American flag. *The Hazleton Sentinel* reported on September 2, 1897 that the strikers marching on the Coleraine mines “hold the Stars and Stripes in supreme respect and positively declined to have anyone march in front of it.”²²⁷ One special policeman who attempted to test this reverence by riding his bike in front of the column of marchers was quickly unseated by the strikers for his disrespect.²²⁸ The shooting did not diminish immigrant strikers use of the American flag. Mrs. Martin McCrone, also known as “Captain McCrone,” proudly told the *Philadelphia Inquirer* that she and a large group of women were going to carry American flags on their march to the collieries to urge the men to join the strike.²²⁹

During the trial, the prosecution reiterated the fact that the strikers carried an American flag and emphasized that the strikers believed they would be protected under American law, provided they were weaponless and marched on public roads. Prosecution attorney James Scarlet brought up the flag in his closing remarks, stating that the strikers

²²⁵ “Disgraceful Scene in Court,” *Hazleton Plain Speaker* (Hazleton, Pennsylvania), February 7, 1898, 3.

²²⁶ “A Tilt in Court: Attorneys Martin and Lenahan Engage in Hot Words Over Witness,” *Hazleton Plain Speaker* (Hazleton, Pennsylvania), February 17, 1898, 4.

²²⁷ “Excitement Prevails: The Strikers On the South Side Take Matters In Hand,” *Hazleton Sentinel* (Hazleton, Pennsylvania), September 2, 1897, 5.

²²⁸ “Excitement Prevails: The Strikers On the South Side Take Matters In Hand,” *Hazleton Sentinel*, 5.

²²⁹ “Women Mach on the Mines,” *Philadelphia Inquirer* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), Sept 17, 1897, 2.

marched under what they recognized to be an American flag and that by doing so, they were entitled to the protection of the law.²³⁰ Countering allegations of socialism and anarchy, Scarlet exclaimed, “[i]t was not the red flag of anarchy they carried, the emblem of riot and disorder, but the flag of our country and theirs, the flag in which one would be proud to be wrapped in in death, the same flag that has turned back the invading march of an entire nation and protects the liberties of a free and enlightened people.”²³¹ One of the striker leaders, John Eagler, emphatically explained to the *Philadelphia Inquirer* that the Sheriff did not follow the letter of the law or read the Riot Act. The deputies were even villainous enough to rip one of the American flags from a striker’s hands and break the pole. Despite these insults, strikers maintained their peaceful demeanor. Eagler stated that he even stepped up to argue with Martin about their right to march, having been told by Police Chief Evan Jones of Hazleton, that they were granted permission to march on the outskirts of Hazleton towards the Lattimer mines. Eagler stated, “[Jones] said the sheriff would not shoot in that case,” as they had a right to march peaceably on public roads without disturbing private homes or business.²³²

Eyewitness testimony given to newspaper reporters also counters the defense’s allegations that the strikers lacked understanding of American law and the rights they had, even as unnaturalized citizens. For some in the march, the mule drivers’ strike was about more than just organizing for a better wage. It involved a larger discussion about who was American and what rights extended to naturalized and unnaturalized citizens. Sheriff Martin stated in an interview with the *Wilkes-Barre Record* that one of the striker leaders, an Italian

²³⁰ “Scarlet and Lenahan: Attorneys Begin Their Closing Pleas to the Jury,” *Wilkes-Barre Record*, 6.

²³¹ “Scarlet and Lenahan: Attorneys Begin Their Closing Pleas to the Jury,” *Wilkes-Barre Record*, 6.

²³² “Eagler’s Story: The Leader of the Strikers Gives His Version of the Affairs.” *Philadelphia Inquirer* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), Sept 13, 1897, 1.

man, “said in broken English: ‘The English miners have not treated us right since we have been over here and we are going to have some rights of our own. We pay taxes here and we have as much right to march on the streets as anyone else.’”²³³ Miners’ meetings following the shooting also call upon patriotic language, explaining that the Pardee Company had “deprived us of our liberty,” “tyrannized us in ways too numerous to mention,” and that the men were “no longer free men, but slaves.”²³⁴ As Melvyn Dubofsky points out, the immigrants marching from Lattimer to Harwood on September 10, 1897 understood themselves to be American. They carried naturalization papers, held American flags high, and most importantly claimed their rights as citizens of the United States. Their protest affirmed their identities as “Americans” rather than as citizens of a foreign land. This explains why the strikers understood themselves to be entitled to the same respect and rights as their Irish and Anglo-Saxon neighbors.²³⁵

The Role Of Women in Strike Activity

Women’s roles in the history of anthracite mining and labor unrest have largely been overlooked by historians and other researchers. Carolyn Kitch explains that women are cast in roles that reflect them as relational rather than central to industrial operation, relegated to the creation and support of the industrial household. Their day-to-day hardships tends to be seen through a longer historical perspective, which treats women as cheerful pioneers to a new industrial experience. Women’s domesticity is conflated with ethnicity as the home was the place where traditions and immigrant identity were kept. The women who are celebrated

²³³ “Sheriff Martin Interviewed: He Arrives in the City from Hazleton,” *Wilkes-Barre Record* (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania), September 11, 1897, 5.

²³⁴ “Twenty-One Dead; Five Are Dying: This Is the Result of the Affair at Lattimer on Friday Afternoon.” *Philadelphia Inquirer* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania). Sept 12, 1897.

²³⁵ Dubofsky, “The Lattimer Massacre and the Meaning of Citizenship,” 52-53.

tend to be presented as protectors who felt driven to take care of others and oppose the forces of industrialization.²³⁶ It is worth mentioning that in Pennsylvania's anthracite region, women's roles in labor organization exists almost entirely within the separate sphere of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) and the organization of the textile mills in the beginning of the twentieth century. However, examination of the existing periodical record reveals that immigrant women had a greater role in the strike activity of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries than previously acknowledged by labor historians.

Despite Victor Greene's convincing argument that the *entire* Slavic community—men, women, and children—participated in strike activity, women are mentioned briefly, if at all, in the discussion of labor organization in the anthracite mines. Women strike leaders, like Mary Harris “Mother” Jones, are exceptional for their work in unionization, completely dismissing the thousands of wives, mothers, sisters, and nieces who organized themselves and their families against unfair labor practices. The women who participated in the 1897 strike tend to be mentioned briefly, if at all, by Lattimer scholars. Like Mother Jones, these women are seen as exceptional models of their communities. In part, their prominence in the discourse is because such limited information exists about women's experiences during this time. Women were not technically permitted to work in the anthracite mines and could not formally belong to any of the fraternal organizations or unions connected to the anthracite industry. Illiteracy and a lack of English proficiency contributes to the scarcity of women's voices. Rare reports about women's experiences, like the ones from Olivia Howard Dunbar

²³⁶ Carolyn Kitch, *Pennsylvania in Public Memory: Reclaiming the Industrial Past* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012): 160-163.

during the 1900 Anthracite Strike, help to uncover these voices and helps to expand Greene's conclusions on the Slavic immigrant community.

Victor Greene points out that Eastern and Southern European immigrants learned a great deal about the necessity of solidarity from the strike activity of the late 1880s. This included the support and participation of immigrant women. In July 1887, women marched alongside men and beat scab workers with clubs, stones, and pistols.²³⁷ In January 1888 at a Shenandoah mine, seventy-five women offered scab workers loaves of bread to quit work. When the workers refused "they were pursued by the infuriated females, shouting epithets and hurling the bread after them."²³⁸ Greene explains that when the Slavic community went on strike, "it did so with a terrible ferocity and unity. ...[including] not just the breadwinners but all members of the community, particularly the women and children."²³⁹ Slavic immigrants found dignity not only in their quest for property but also in their role within their ethnic community and structure. "Scab" was an extremely dirty word.²⁴⁰ Eastern Europeans were also more adept at surviving prolonged strikes as they had more tactics for surviving on their meager incomes. Women and men would peddle coal scavenged from the culm piles, sell fruit, specifically huckleberries native to the woods of Pennsylvania, and would turn to their children to produce family income.²⁴¹ Despite the negative stereotypes that Eastern Europeans lacked family unity and thought only of themselves, it was precisely their deep commitment to the family unit and to their community that allowed strikers to hold to their demands.

²³⁷ Greene, *The Slavic Community on Strike*, 98.

²³⁸ Greene, *The Slavic Community on Strike*, 101

²³⁹ Greene, *The Slavic Community on Strike*, 149

²⁴⁰ Greene, *The Slavic Community on Strike*, 174

²⁴¹ Greene, *The Slavic Community on Strike*, 185-186.

Eastern European women, acting as boarding bosses and strike leaders, had significant social and economic roles within their communities and used these positions to support strike activity. Immigrant women not only maintained traditional domestic roles but often took work outside of the home out of economic necessity. Wives often supplemented their husband's incomes, working traditional "pink collar" roles as domestic servants, seamstresses, tailors, or accepted work in textile mills. Married women had the option of opening her home to lodgers, acting as a "boarding boss" by providing food, laundry services, and a place to sleep to single male boarders.²⁴² Although their wages were meant to be merely supplemental, these incomes were often used to sustain the family if a miner found himself unemployed or if the price of coal fell. Women's roles frequently brought them into contact with the systems the 1897 strikers protested, like garnished wages and the company store. Women had to endure the unreliable pay schedules and wages of the anthracite mines while attempting to feed and clothe their families. They also endured the social and economic pressures from capital. Mine owners forced mine workers and their wives with unemployment if they did not exclusively shop at the company stores. Women would be publicly humiliated and refused passenger service on the trolley cars that ran from mining village to village if they went outside the company's monopoly.²⁴³

A remarkable source of information about women's contributions to anthracite strike activity comes from the on-the-scene dispatches by *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* reporter Olivia Howard Dunbar. Dunbar is "the only woman correspondent in the coal fields" during the

²⁴² Emily Green Balch, *Our Slavic Fellow-Citizens* (New York: Arno Press, 1969): 349-351.

²⁴³ Olivia Howard Dunbar, "Wives of Miners: A Potent Element in Winning Strike." *St. Louis Post Dispatch* (St. Louis, Missouri), September 27, 1900, 3.

1900 Anthracite Strike and spent her time in Luzerne County.²⁴⁴ Dunbar's correspondence is remarkable for several reasons outside of her gender. She toured the mining towns of Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties and interviewed not only strike leaders and anthracite miners but their wives, mothers, sisters, and children. Dunbar points out that even when women were not directly on the front lines with their husbands and sons combatting non-union activity, they were the essential backbone of the family unit stretching their skills of domesticity to the limit to endure prolonged strikes. Interestingly, Dunbar's 1900 interviews acknowledge that the women of the patch towns were aware of American media's unfair portrayal of the immigrant community. "The people who come here to see us...do not look at us as human beings, but as something between beasts and men," one woman explained to Dunbar.²⁴⁵ The woman lamented that she and others were not thought of as American citizens and that her community's cries for "decent homes" and the ability to feed and clothe their children was seen as anarchy.²⁴⁶ Dunbar is expressly focused on demonstrating the humanity of the miners and their families. She provides countless examples of the exploitative practices of the anthracite mining companies and completely discredits the idea that Hazleton's "wonderfully polyglot laboring population" is the source off the anthracite industry's problems.²⁴⁷

Dunbar describes the women of the anthracite community in positive terms, highlighting their domestic skills and prowess as mothers. Women are frugal and thrifty,

²⁴⁴ Olivia Howard Dunbar, "Hunger Always Present in the Miners' Homes," *St. Louis Post Dispatch* (St. Louis, Missouri), September 18, 1900, 1.

²⁴⁵ Olivia Howard Dunbar, "Our Husbands, Say the Miners' Wives, Shall Not Yield," *St. Louis Post Dispatch* (St. Louis, Missouri), September 21, 1900, 2.

²⁴⁶ Dunbar, "Our Husbands," 2.

²⁴⁷ Olivia Howard Dunbar, "Women Warriors of the Coal Fields Fight the Battles," *St. Louis Post Dispatch* (St. Louis, Missouri), September 19, 1900, 2.

doing their best to soothe their children's fears in times when striking brought famine.²⁴⁸ One woman, Mrs. John Quinn, was exemplified for her intelligence, judgement, and domestic skills. Quinn, like many other women in the anthracite community, did not allow "misfortune and poverty" to dull her "housewifely sense."²⁴⁹ The women of the anthracite villages were, on a whole, warm-hearted and generous, sharing what little means they had with their neighbors.²⁵⁰ Interestingly, it was precisely their roles as mothers that gave these women their "unalterable resolve" to face scab workers at the mines during a strike.²⁵¹ The women were willing to fight, even when the men were not. Dunbar quoted one woman as saying "[f]ight? Yes, every day, if we have to, till this thing is settled, and settled as we want it. If the men can't manage it we'll do it for them."²⁵² These women have "righteous fury" when they face the men at one colliery, drawing attention to the little children and babies accompanying the women to the mines. The striking women used children to underscore their cause, telling the men that they were stealing their children's bread.²⁵³ These tactics were apparently effective as the men did not return to work the next day. "It had been closed—and by women."²⁵⁴ When Dunbar interviews John Mitchell about the strike, reminding him that women "closed collieries [sic], shamed non-union men and encouraged strikers; how they have resolutely taken up their own burden and helped their husbands support theirs; and how armies of them have gained their points by using such weapons of

²⁴⁸ Olivia Howard Dunbar, "Miners' Wives are Husbanding Their Scant Rations," *St. Louis Post Dispatch* (St. Louis, Missouri), September 20, 1900, 3.

²⁴⁹ Dunbar, "Our Husbands," 2.

²⁵⁰ Olivia Howard Dunbar, "Women Leaders Wives of the Miners Force Men to Quit." *St. Louis Post Dispatch* (St. Louis, Missouri), September 22, 1900, 2.

²⁵¹ Olivia Howard Dunbar, "Women Are Fighting in the Anthracite Regions A Battle for Life." *St. Louis Post Dispatch* (St. Louis, Missouri) September 24, 1900, 1.

²⁵² Dunbar, "Women Are Fighting in the Anthracite Regions," 1.

²⁵³ Olivia Howard Dunbar, "Women Leaders Wives of the Miners Force Men to Quit." *St. Louis Post Dispatch* (St. Louis, Missouri), September 22, 1900, 1.

²⁵⁴ Dunbar, "Women Leaders Wives of the Miners Force Men to Quit," 1.

persuasion as lay at hand.”²⁵⁵ Mitchell smartly acknowledges these contributions. Notably, he requests that women use every lawful means within their power to aid the strike, subtly acknowledging the militaristic lengths women could and would go to.²⁵⁶

Women, according to Dunbar, were key factors to the success of the 1900 strike. “For in a war of conquest men must do the fighting; in a war for principle, the warriors are women.”²⁵⁷ When the men accepted their last paycheck from the collieries and handed it to their wives, the strike “was left in the hands of the women.”²⁵⁸ Since women were responsible for the running of household affairs, her thriftiness and careful planning was essential. Every penny and crumb of food had to be used to ward off starvation.²⁵⁹ Women in the anthracite mining communities also had a significant role in boosting the spirit and determination of the strikers, even to the point of maintaining determination in spite of their husbands. One Shamokin miner’s wife openly expressed her disdain for yielding to the company’s demands, stating “I will eat grass before I will consent to my husband yielding.”²⁶⁰ The sympathy between the miners and their wives was “so intimate” in Dunbar’s opinion that she was “disposed to think this magnificent defiance was born in the hearts of women.”²⁶¹ Wives pressured their husbands publicly to remain loyal to the strike, going so far as to assault their spouses verbally and physically if they crossed the picket line to return to work.²⁶²

²⁵⁵ Olivia Howard Dunbar, “President Mitchel Pays High Tribute to the Work Done by Women in the Coal Region,” *St. Louis Post Dispatch* (St. Louis, Missouri), September 27, 1900, 3.

²⁵⁶ Dunbar, Olivia Howard. “President Mitchel Pays High Tribute,” 3.

²⁵⁷ Dunbar, “Women Warriors,” 1.

²⁵⁸ Dunbar, “Women Warriors,” 1.

²⁵⁹ Dunbar, “Women Warriors,” 1.

²⁶⁰ Dunbar, “Our Husbands,” 1.

²⁶¹ Dunbar, “Our Husbands,” 1.

²⁶² Dunbar, “Women Leaders Wives of the Miners Force Men to Quit,” 1.

One noticeable absence from Dunbar's interviews with the wives of the miners is the absence of Lattimer. The only instance that hints at Lattimer's memory is Dunbar's interview with an anonymous schoolteacher. The unnamed woman stated "I lost my position because the school directors failed to reappoint me. I had no bitter feeling against them, for I knew they were dummies in the hands of the men behind them. It is an operator of the mines who owns the opinions and controls the actions of the school directors."²⁶³ It is possible that the unnamed schoolteacher was Grace Coyle. Coyle and her mother gave testimony against Sheriff James Martin's deputies during the Lattimer trial and received backlash for it. It was in the interests of the coal companies to repress the memory of Lattimer. The miners who were involved in the trial were "encouraged" to find employment outside of anthracite mining. This courtesy was extended to Miss Coyle according to her descendants.²⁶⁴

Investigation of the newspaper record confirms women's significant role in immigrant strike activity before and after the Lattimer shooting. In early September, two "Italian women" carried an engineer from the engine room of a Coleraine colliery.²⁶⁵ Another reported that a "large stoutly built woman carried a mallet" alongside three men with American flags.²⁶⁶ She clearly oversaw the march, as "[e]verything caught before this line had to either join the ranks or get out of the way."²⁶⁷ Women's inclusion in strike activity only escalated after the shooting. When an attempt was made to restart work at the Lehigh and Wilkesbarre Coal Company days after the shooting, "...thirty women armed with clubs

²⁶³ Dunbar, "Women Warriors," 2.

²⁶⁴ Shackel, *Remembering Lattimer*, 60.

²⁶⁵ "Excitement Prevails: The Strikers On the South Side Take Matters In Hand," *Hazleton Sentinel* (Hazleton, Pennsylvania), September 2, 1897, 5.

²⁶⁶ "A Day of Excitement: An Immense Crowd of Strikers Again Visit the City," *Hazleton Sentinel* (Hazleton, Pennsylvania), September 3, 1897, 5.

²⁶⁷ "A Day of Excitement," *Hazleton Sentinel*, September 3, 1897, 5.

and backed by about 100 men and boys swooped down on the strippings and drove the men from the pits by hurling stones and clubs at the workers below.”²⁶⁸ They then turned their attention on the Monarch, Carson, and Star washeries and stopped work then before returning home. The “Amazons” again signaled for “no work,” beating on tin cans. When the washery attempted to start again, “. . .about eighty Italian and Hungarian women, wearing their varicolored neck shawls about their shoulders and kerchiefs on their heads, surprised the officers by attempting to make a descent upon the washery.”²⁶⁹ By describing immigrant women as “Amazons,” media outlets intended to characterize them as the antithesis to the ideal woman of this era. Amazons were warlike warriors who prided themselves on their masculine traits and abilities, shunning traditional roles as housewives and mothers. Immigrant women, acting outside the traditional roles of domesticity, were therefore not feminine and lacked the suitable aptitude for family life.

An editorial from the *Wilkes-Barre Record* provides some insight to how the inclusion of women in strike activity was seen by the English-speaking community. The author of “Women As Strikers” seems to accept the labor violence that surrounds the mine, noting that collisions occurred between strikers and the law and that coercive methods were sometimes used to prevent scab labor. Again, this reiterates the understanding that there was some acceptable level of violence tolerated within the anthracite community of northeastern Pennsylvania. The problem in the case of the 1897 strikers was that the able-bodied immigrant men allowed their wives, sisters, and mothers to “unsex themselves” by their

²⁶⁸ “Another Day of Comparative Quiet,” *Wilkes-Barre Record* (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania), September 17, 1897, 1.

²⁶⁹ “Mines Resume Work: Women Take to Marching at Lattimer Quietly Dispersed,” *Hazleton Sentinel* (Hazleton, Pennsylvania), September 20, 1897, 5.

demonstrations and assume the responsibility and risk.²⁷⁰ The author expresses that such an idea would have been unheard of if the mines were still controlled by American, Welsh, Irish, German, English, and Scotch miners. Women marching in the strike lines was a “pitiful spectacle” and was evidence of retrogression.²⁷¹ The author opines that “[n]ever has any other section of the republic experienced so deplorable a backward movement in those things which evidence civilization, enlightenment and moral development among the masses.”²⁷² Immigrant women are again defeminized and acting outside of accepted social norms and roles. Therefore, immigrant women, and by association their families, were deviant and inhuman.

The few women who are named as active participants in the strike activity of 1897 tend to be viewed by their contemporaries in a similar way as the author of “Women as Strikers.” One notable figure that Lattimer scholars draw attention to is Mary Septek, also known as “Big Mary.”²⁷³ Septek’s noteworthiness is likely due to her prominence in a *Century Magazine* article by Jay Hambidge. Like Rood’s article from *Harper’s*, Hambidge uses stereotypes Septek and the Slavic immigrant community as a way of placing blame for the issues of rapid industrialization. Hambidge describes Septek in extremely negative terms. She is “the most troublesome of all the foreigners,” and that even professional agitators lacked “half the force for mischief.”²⁷⁴ Her squad of Amazons, armed with “clubs and pieces

²⁷⁰ “Women as Strikers,” *Wilkes-Barre Record* (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania), September 22, 1897, 4.

²⁷¹ “Women as Strikers,” *Wilkes-Barre Record*, 4.

²⁷² “Women as Strikers,” *Wilkes-Barre Record*, 4.

²⁷³ There is very little known about Mary outside of her involvement in the Lattimer strikes. In the November 11, 1899 issue of Hazleton’s *Plain Speaker*, a short article titled “‘Big Mary’ Dead” described a woman very similar to the one in Hambidge article. In it, “Mary Septah” is described as an “Italian woman of robust build.” The article went on to describe Mary’s standoff with the National Guard, “[defying] them to shoot” and that “she even put the soldiers to rout.” Edward Pinkowski described her as a “Polish woman” in *The Lattimer Massacre*.

²⁷⁴ Hambidge, Jay. “An Artist’s Impressions of the Colliery Region.” *The Century Magazine* 55, no. 6 (April, 1898): 825. Accessed November 19, 2020. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.31822007285125>.

of scrap-iron,” were stopped “only when they felt the bayonets of the immovable line of soldiery.”²⁷⁵ She is a “veritable tigress” and feared by the company men from the offices to the trolley cars.²⁷⁶ Hambidge also seems astounded at Septek’s family life. Her daughter, though more interested in the excitement of a magazine reporter than reporting to work, is dutiful and obedient. Her husband is doting and loving, and “had never once struck her.”²⁷⁷ Mary is also named in a *Philadelphia Inquirer* article as one of the immigrant women leading raids on working collieries after the Lattimer shooting. According to the *Inquirer*, when Septek learned that the men intended to return to work she was “highly indignant” and “gathered together one hundred and fifty brawny Polish women, each armed with a big club.”²⁷⁸ Mary’s role as strike leader likely came from her role as a boarding boss. She, along with her husband, kept a boarding house at Lattimer.



Figure 2. *Mrs. M'Crone, the Leader of the Miners' Amazons*. Image from *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

²⁷⁵ Hambidge, Jay. “An Artist’s Impressions of the Colliery Region,” 825.

²⁷⁶ Hambidge, Jay. “An Artist’s Impressions of the Colliery Region,” 826.

²⁷⁷ Hambidge, Jay. “An Artist’s Impressions of the Colliery Region,” 826.

²⁷⁸ “Hazleton’s Strike Practically Ended: Many Miners Throw Up the Sponge and Resume Work,” *Philadelphia Inquirer* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), September 21, 1897, 1.

Mrs. Martin McCrone is another prominent figure in the strike activity named by the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Her last name, likely from the British Isles, demonstrates that the 1897 strike activity involved English-speaking miners as well as immigrants. Though English-speaking miners may have been unhappy with immigrant strike leadership, they clearly understood that immigrant workers were needed to obtain workplace demands. McCrone led the march on the Beaver Brook strippings and the Corson and Star washeries near McAdoo. Her husband and two sons worked at the Lehigh and Wilkesbarre Coal Company which had gone on strike in sympathy with the Lattimer strikers' demands. McCrone was known as "Captain McCrone" and she "was proud of having been captain of so full a company" of striking men and women.²⁷⁹ McCrone, like other women on the frontlines of the strike, takes on unwomanly features. She is "barefooted" and smokes a pipe. She and her band of "Amazons" "[leave] their babies to take up cudgels" and any man who wished to join was "forced to go to the rear to act as auxiliaries should their services be found necessary."²⁸⁰ These women had no respect for the military troops and even hurled rocks and epithets at the soldiers who were sent to subdue the strike activity.²⁸¹

Analysis of the newspaper accounts of women like Mary Septek, Mrs. Martin McCrone, and the numerous women interviewed by Olivia Howard Dunbar, demonstrate women's important and active roles in anthracite strike activity. Though they were not employees of the anthracite mines, their societal roles positioned them to be active participants in strike activity. They drew upon their positions as wives and mothers to force scab workers out of the mines in an effort to preserve their families. And when this

²⁷⁹ "Women March on the Mines," *Philadelphia Inquirer* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), Sept 17, 1897, 2.

²⁸⁰ "Women March on the Mines," *Philadelphia Inquirer* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), Sept 17, 1897, 1.

²⁸¹ "Situation Grows More Serious: Feeling of Unrest Prevails in the Hazleton Region," *Philadelphia Inquirer* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), Sept 18, 1897, 1.

demonstration was not enough to prevent strikebreaking, they became a militant and determined force who would not back down even when facing the rifles of sheriff's deputies or National Guard troops. Contrary to the idea that immigrant women's participation in strike activity weakened the family unit, it was their labor and dedication, inside and outside of the home, that sustained anthracite strikes.

Analysis of the surviving English language newspaper record also demonstrates the complexities of the anthracite community of northeastern Pennsylvania and America's conflicting and evolving identity. The region had a complicated understanding of labor violence. Conflict between labor and capital was almost an expectation of the patch towns as demonstrated by the reporting of strike activity between local and visiting reporters. Local papers downplayed violence between strikers and company forces while visiting reporters exaggerated them. These larger city papers highlighted the immigrant characteristics of the strikers, emphasizing their apparent violent and dangerous actions. To be sure, patch town papers did not view immigrant labor favorably. However, they understood that exploitative company practices were a greater hindrance to regional affairs than immigrant labor.

Newspaper records also reveal America's conflicting and evolving identity at the beginning of the twentieth century. American nativism clashed with the idea that any immigrant could become American if they embraced the concepts of freedom, liberty, and democracy. Acting as a microcosm of this broader national discussion, the murder trial of Mike Cheslock illustrates this broader national discussion. The defense team positioned the sheriff's deputies, with their military records and family ancestry, as the defenders of democracy and liberty and painted the immigrant workers as foreign anarchists. The

prosecution refuted these arguments. They emphasized the strikers' knowledge of American rights and their insistence upon marching behind an American flag on public roads.

The lack of a primary resources regarding strike activity and the Eastern European immigrant community has led to a distorted view of the Lattimer Massacre and anthracite region affairs. The importance of analysis of the primary record of the Lattimer Massacre cannot be overstated. As demonstrated, investigation reveals the significant contributions of immigrant women during strikes, residents' complex understanding of coal region affairs, and the evolving identity of the American individual in the early twentieth century. Of course, this investigation is only the beginning. Continued digitization of Luzerne County's newspapers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries will undoubtedly expose further details about American society.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

The contested narrative of the Lattimer Massacre continues to complicate resident's understanding of their ethnic and industrial heritage in the present day. In 1950, Edward Pinkowski explained that if you wanted to "slow up business in Hazleton," one just had to ask "'who started the shooting at Lattimer in 1897?'"²⁸² Talking with those who remembered the affair would leave you with "many different versions of the bloodshed that took place on a dusty road leading into Lattimer."²⁸³ Debate over the responsibility of the affair has continued to the present day. When the historical marker was eventually erected in 1972, it became a target for vandalism.²⁸⁴ Even recently, the graves of the Lattimer victims and their supporters are regularly defaced. Paul Shackel noted that when conducting research for *Remembering Lattimer* (2018,) the grave markers of the Lattimer victims at Saint Stanislaus Cemetery in Hazleton, had been smeared with mud. An unnamed faculty member from Wilkes University (in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania) explained that "the smearing of mud is a show of defiance against the workers who went on strike and were killed."²⁸⁵ As a longtime resident of Pennsylvania's anthracite region, the silencing of the Lattimer Massacre on local and national stages is fascinating. My own investigation of the Lattimer Massacre has left me with more questions than answers, especially regarding northeastern Pennsylvania's complicated understanding of industrial history. As more resources are digitized and become

²⁸² Pinkowski, *The Lattimer Massacre*, 5.

²⁸³ Pinkowski, *The Lattimer Massacre*, 5.

²⁸⁴ Shackel, *Remembering Lattimer*, 89.

²⁸⁵ Shackel, *Remembering Lattimer*, 87.

accessible to researchers, further investigations will undoubtedly demonstrate the need to include Lattimer in national discussion of labor conflicts in America's Gilded Age.

The Lattimer Massacre's absence from the discussion of Gilded Age American labor conflicts is the result of nativist prejudices permeating the historical record. From the very beginning of the August 1897 conflict, newspaper reporters and editors cast Slavic immigrants as ignorant radicals. These supposed foreign anarchists wanted to undermine not only the American workforce but American society as well. Though local newspapers allowed some grace to be given to Slavic immigrants, writers and editors fed into and perpetuated nativist racial biases. These biases continued to be fostered by those in elite society in their attempts at documenting Luzerne County's history. This unfair portrayal of the immigrant led protest prompted the Slavic immigrant community to maintain their own histories. This history cultivated an image of the strikers as martyrs for the union cause, sharply contradicting the descriptions of the immigrant workers by newspaper writers and local historians. The accounts of the massacre in Edward Pinkowski's *Lattimer Massacre* and Konstantín Čulen's *Slovaks in America* demonstrate the Slavic community's awareness of this biased narrative. Building from Čulen and Pinkowski's work, historians understand Lattimer as an explosion of class and ethnic conflict rather than an explosion of a decades long conflict between immigrant labor and capital. By recontextualizing and historicizing the English language accounts in newspapers and local histories as well as the community produced documents, historians gain an appreciation for the roots of ethnic and economic conflict between Americans and immigrants.

Analyzing the English-language newspaper accounts and community produced documents brings out important insights about the Slavic strikers and their families. Lattimer

is merely one of many demonstrations of the determination and militancy of the entire Slavic community during times of protest. The critical contributions of Mary Sepek, Mrs. Martin McCrone, and the hundreds of other women who stood up to corrupt officials and systemic exploitation need to be recognized. The reports of Olivia Howard Dunbar demonstrated the indispensable contributions of immigrant women to strike activity. Women's domestic skills ensured that striking households would not go without and could endure long strikes when the companies refused arbitration. Though these women left behind little of their own writing, their voices can still be found. Further digitization of historic records will undoubtedly foster new investigations and exploration of women's contribution to anthracite strike activity. The Lattimer Massacre serves as an example of the militant determination of immigrant women during strike activity. Of course, this tragic event is one of many immigrant led strikes across the anthracite and bituminous mines during America's Gilded Age.

Exploring the English language record of the Lattimer massacre and trial reveals important insight on the ways Americans understood immigrant labor. Analysis of the newspaper record demonstrates how immigrants understood themselves to be in American society. The protestation of immigrant workers illustrated how they understood themselves and their positions in American society. The Slavic immigrants who took part in the mule drivers' strike believed they had rights in this new land, even if they had not yet officially renounced their former citizenship. The insistence of these daring individuals, who risked their livelihoods in order to obtain equal treatment is embodied by their acquisition of two American flags and their knowledge of American rights. This demonstrates that immigrant labor had a far greater understanding of American society and involvement in American

politics than previously acknowledged by scholars. The examples of immigrant led protests before and after the affairs of Lattimer demonstrated immigrants' desire to challenge their positions in an evolving American society. Tired of unequal and unfair treatment, Slavic immigrants used American ideals of justice and fairness to organize and challenge their positions in society.

Further reexamination of northeastern Pennsylvania's forgotten labor massacre may complicate the nostalgic remembrance of the struggle for unionization. Local residents readily acknowledge the struggle for fair wages, an eight-hour-day, and the triumph of hard-working men over greedy capitalists, but few acknowledge the sacrifice and struggle that went into those successes. Furthermore, there is very little acknowledgement of the existing societal prejudices against immigrant workers during the establishment of the UMWA in Pennsylvania's anthracite region. As Paul Shackel points out, "many of the descendants in the anthracite region have forgotten their immigrant roots and the resolve of their ancestors to petition for better living wages and working conditions."²⁸⁶ The inclusion of the Lattimer Massacre in the broader discussion of anthracite heritage helps contemporary residents to complicate their understanding of the long struggle for unionization.

National acknowledgement of the Lattimer Massacre is important. The Lattimer Massacre is an example of workers' ability to triumph, even in the face of extreme forces working against them. Even though Slavic immigrants did not immediately join the ranks of the UMWA after the massacre, Lattimer became an example of the potential for corrupt business practices to triumph and the need to unify in order for workers to fight back against

²⁸⁶ Shackel, *Remembering Lattimer*, 105.

injustice. From 1898 on, Slavic immigrants largely embraced union causes and started local chapters of the UMWA which did lead to the significant successes of the 1900 and 1902 Coal Strikes. Slavic immigrant workers learned that their cooperation and coordination could lead to wage increases, a reduction of working hours, and better arbitration conditions. Undoubtedly, the Lattimer Massacre will serve as a starting point for these broader historical discussions.

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