FINAL REPORT

STEEL INDUSTRY HERITAGE CORPORATION ETHNOGRAPHIC SURVEY

FAYETTE COUNTY COMPONENT

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INTRODUCTION

This research was undertaken for the Steel Industry Heritage Corporation Ethnographic Survey in 1992. The area to be covered was those portions of Fayette and Westmoreland counties in Pennsylvania that were connected with the history of coal and coke, in particular in the Connellsville Coal and Coke District. The goal was to gather information about cultural life in the area for the

development of a cultural context and inventory of resources for cultural conservation planning by the SIHC.

RESOURCES AND PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Previous research sources relevant to this project included fieldwork done by America's Industrial Heritage Project Folklife Division fieldworkers, documentation of structures conducted by the Historic American Buildings Survey, and collections and writings made in conjunction with local cultural conservation efforts.

In 1991, folklorist Doris Dietrich conducted a general field survey of Fayette County. Her fieldnotes provide information on economic development efforts, churches and religious groups, ethnic groups and public presentation, and agriculture, as well as a case study of the changes in Ohiopyle as a result of the development of the state park. Her work can be seen as a companion to mine in that it provides a view of the agricultural and mountain areas that are more peripheral to the Connellsville District and its history. Martine Stephens' work in Somerset County, on the eastern border of Fayette, includes description of the connections between mining and agriculture that are relevant to Fayette County, as well.

Important background information and materials on the county and the Connellsville District, as well as contacts, were provided by a number of local people already involved with historical documentation and cultural conservation. They included the staff of the Patch/Work Voices project at Penn State -- especially Archivist Bobby Salitrik and Professor Evelyn Hovanec -- and local historians such as Walter Storey in Uniontown and Bill Balsley in Connellsville. The Patch/Work publication The Early Coal Miner, a collection of articles drawn from a conference held at Penn State-Fayette Campus in 1989, includes historical and cultural data on the county as well as on mining and miners specifically. The discontinued journal The People of Southwestern Pennsylvania, published through California University of Pennsylvania, includes many articles about ethnic groups and customs, as well as about towns and industries in the area.

Two documents prepared by the Historic American Buildings Survey include historical data regarding coal and coke as well as descriptive information on the remaining coal company towns. They are Margaret Mulrooney's A Legacy of Coal: The Coal Company Towns of Southwestern Pennsylvania, and Sarah Heald's Fayette County, Pennsylvania - An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites.

Other useful sources of information about the coal and coke industry and the patch towns are available in the writings and publications of individuals and organizations in the area. They include John K. Gates' The Beehive Coke Years, A Pictorial History of Those Times, and Muriel Shepherd's Cloud By Day. Many of the churches have published centennial booklets that trace the history of the church and community. Some even publish annual picture books that include information about the church and pictures, names, and addresses of the congregation members. These provide data unavailable elsewhere. The Fayette County Develpment Council and the Office of the County Commissioners also provide useful information on industry and demographics.

RESEARCH PLAN

The first task of my research was to gain an overview of the industrial and cultural history of the county and an understanding of the prevalent social structures there. From that overview, I would identify important topics and configurations relevant to the Connellsville Coal and Coke District -- whether cultural, geographic, or economic -- to address in further reading and fieldwork. Among these, I would focus especially on those that have particular expressive capacity, doing as much documentation and description as possible in remaining fieldwork time.

The research unfolded more or less according to plan, with some typical fieldwork problems such as difficulty scheduling interviews in the available time. I spent my first days in the field collecting impressions, references, and contacts, and orienting myself to the area geographically and conceptually. I began compiling lists of potential contacts, cultural organizations and institutions, events, and businesses. I read historical background, field reports, and HABS documents.

Based on this introduction, I decided to focus on the ways that communities are configured at present in the Connellsville Coal and Coke District, and the ways that the network of industries central to the coal era have changed. On my next visit of two weeks, I contacted churches in the region and attended their events, talking to participants about their families, towns, churches, jobs, and activities. While I would ideally have liked to survey all the different ethnic groups and religions, I found it necessary to follow what was available when I was in the area. To broaden the survey, I did more interviewing by telephone later in the project.

During that term, I also tried to visit as many patch towns as possible, concentrating on those in the Connellsville District. For a case study, I was attentive to the ways that people have used the remnants of the coal companies and the ways that they've reconfigured community life. By project's end, I had been to twelve coal patches, as well as the larger population centers of Connellsville, Uniontown, Brownsville, Masontown, and Belle Vernon, and numerous other small towns, speaking to people about family, work, religion, and activities. I also contacted and visited companies and small businesses that were related to coal.
During my last visit to the area, I taped focused interviews with people from a variety of ethnic groups, occupations, and patch towns to get more depth on those subjects. I followed the fieldwork with further telephone calls.

BACKGROUND OF FAYETTE COUNTY, PAST AND PRESENT

GEOGRAPHY

Fayette County lies on the southern border of the state, the second county from the state's western border. The county's western boundary with Greene and Washington counties is formed by the Monongahela River. Its southern boundary, separating the state from West Virginia and Maryland, is the Mason-Dixon line. The county encompasses 802 square miles, making it twenty-fourth in size in the state. The center of the county is approximately 45 miles southeast of Pittsburgh. There are 24

townships, 16 boroughs, and 2 third-class cities in the county.

Chestnut Ridge rises east of Uniontown and Connellsville and divides Fayette County into two distinct parts. One-third of the county lies east of the ridge and is mountainous and wooded. Five townships, two boroughs, and an 18,500 acre state park, Ohiopyle, are located in this section. Altitudes there reach 2,500 feet. The western part of the county consists of rolling hills that slope gradually toward the Monongahela River. The northeastern portion of this section contains the Pittsburgh coal vein on which the Connellsville Coal and Coke District was built. The majority of the county population of about 160,000 lives in this section.

Fayette County is in the Monongahela River watershed, which is part of the Ohio and Mississippi River watershed. The Youghiogheny and Cheat rivers are principal tributaries of the Monongahela and flow through Fayette County, the Youghiogheny northwestward from Maryland, and the Cheat northward from eastern West Virginia. The Dunlap, Georges, and Redstone creeks flow through the county and into the Monongahela.

The county's soils are loam in the valleys, sandstone, clay, and sand in the hills, and clay and sand on the ridges. Twenty-two percent of the land in the county is crop and pastureland, and approximately 60% is forested, with 304,200 of those acres in commercial forestry. The forests consist of oak, sugar, poplar, maple, wild cherry, chestnut, and pine.

The county has gas and oil reserves, as well as mineral resources of coal, limestone, sandstone, clay, and shale. Fayette lies in the Appalachian bituminous coalfield. Only a small amount of economically minable coal remains in the Pittsburgh vein, a major deposit of high quality coal which fueled the coal and coke boom. In the western part of the county, around Brownsville and Uniontown, however, there are minable reserves of lower quality coal. There are significant amounts of Loyalhanna limestone in Fayette, particularly along the Youghiogheny, and veins of fire clay are widely distributed throughout the county.

INDUSTRIAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY

Despite its sad economic state today, Fayette County has had significant periods of economic prosperity in the last 250 years, made possible primarily because of its location and its natural resources. Those periods of prosperity shaped the cultural landscape that an ethnographer faces today.

During the early development of the nation and its major industries, Fayette County's location brought economic and demographic growth. What local historian Walter Storey calls "the only feasible land route" from Virginia to the forks of the Ohio river network (Pittsburgh today) ran through the mountains of Fayette County, bringing explorers, traders, and military groups into the area. George Washington used the route to lead Virginians through it, and he was followed by General Braddock, who improved the path. After the French and Indian War, English settlers from Virginia, and Scots-Irish and Germans used this road to come across the mountains and establish subsistence farms in the county. Eventually,

Colonel John Burd and Chief Nemacolin extended to Brownsville the route that started in Cumberland, Maryland. By 1818, it was operating as the National Pike, and its important role in westward expansion placed the county in the forefront of the young nation.

Pennsylvania and Virginia, which had not yet split into two states, fought over the area. Eventually, the limit of William Penn's original land grant -- the Mason-Dixon line -- was used to divide the states and create the southern border of Pennsylvania. Fayette County was formed from the southern portion of Westmoreland County and was named for the Marquis de Lafayette.

Fayette County's soils have been a dependable source of income throughout its history. Besides supporting agriculture into the present day, the land has produced crops and minerals that provided the base for its industries. Among the early industries that brought people and prosperity to Fayette County were iron, glass, grist milling, distilling and boatbuilding.
Iron ore was discovered by the earliest explorers, and Fayette County was the western center of iron production from 1789 until the early nineteenth century. Furnaces, forging mills, and industries that used iron, such as nail factories, were important to the county. The iron furnaces used charcoal for their fuel in the early years, and as they shifted to the use of coke, the forges and furnaces moved to the urban centers.

The era of glass making in Fayette County marks its beginning primarily with the establishment of a factory at New Geneva by Albert Gallatin around 1797. The county was in a good position to supply areas west of the Alleghenies, because of the difficulty of transporting glass over the mountains from eastern factories. Brownsville, Fayette City, and Belle Vernon were important centers at that time. Until 1883, the glass factories used coal as fuel, and hired men to mine it for them. By the twentieth century, Point Marion, developed by Belgians, was the center of the region's glassworks. Today, Houze Glass is a survivor of that historic era.

As both the transport of industrial products and travel developed, so did the boatbuilding industry in Brownsville. Steam boats, barges, keelboats, and others were built in and launched from that town into the water system that led north and westward.

Fayette County produced great amounts of grain that was used by distilleries and later breweries in the county. Distilling was important enough by the later 1700s for the Whiskey Rebellion to be initiated in Brownsville, and by 1870, it was one of the primary businesses in the county. Home production of whiskey was widespread from the earliest days, when farmers used their own grain and stills. This provided the legacy for moonshining, which thrived during the days of Prohibition and continues to some degree today. Breweries proliferated after the Civil War, but few in the county recovered after the end of Prohibition in the twentieth century.

It is, of course, the history of coal and coke in the area that is most salient today. Along with the largely rural, agrarian landscape, the industry's material and cultural remnants dominate contemporary Fayette County. There were indications from even the earliest explorers that the coal in the area would one day fuel its prosperity. Ellis's History of Fayette County records the fact that Colonel Burd used the coal and predicted that it would one day make the area "one of the most prosperous in the state."

While coke was used in the iron forges before the coal and coke boom days, it would take the

development of the beehive oven and its connection with the steel industry to catalyze that era. In 1841, Provance McCormick, James Campbell, and John Taylor made coal in a beehive oven and tried -- but failed -- to sell it in Cincinnati. However, the Cochran family, which eventually built Linden Hall, now a U.S.W.A. property, bought Taylor's ovens on the Youghiogheny River and began the first successful coke works in 1843.

By the mid-1800s, the demand for iron and steel throughout the nation, as well as the development of beehive oven technology, permitted the hearty growth of coke operations in Fayette County for the next fifty years. The beehive oven's swift domination of the visual landscape represented the coal and coke industry's rapid transformation of a diversified, agrarian-based economy to a single-industry economy that laid the groundwork for the terrible economic crash in the twentieth century.

By the 1870s, most of the coke yards were located between Uniontown and Connellsville and along the north bank of the Youghiogheny River. The Pittsburgh and Connellsville Railroad Company was the first railroad to open in Fayette County. It fostered the further growth of the industry and the railroad network. In 1882, the Pittsburgh, McKeesport and Youghiogheny Railroad (later taken over by the P&LE) provided rail service throughout the area of biggest development. The Baltimore and Ohio and the Pennsylvania railroads dominated the transport of Fayette County coal and coke.

In 1880, Fayette County had over 4,000 ovens and was responsible for 45.8% of national coke production. Westmoreland County was second with about 25%. The mines and coke yards were scattered around outcrops on the perimeter of the coal bed rather than near the existing cities. In order to accommodate and encourage workers to come to the area, the coal companies began building towns near the mines and coke yards. They also sent agents to recruit in southern and eastern Europe. The result was a huge influx of Italians, Poles, Slovaks, Czechs, Croatians, Serbians, and Hungarians into scattered "patch" towns. Lebanese settled in Uniontown and traveled as peddlers to the patches. Within about twenty years, the immigrants outnumbered the older English-speaking population. It was during this decade that the Leisenrings, three important coal towns, were founded.

While there were many small operators in the earlier days of coke production, H.C. Frick's entry into the field changed its structure. Frick entered the industry in 1870 and by 1895 dominated the industry by virtue of his acquisitions. By 1901, Frick was part of the U.S. Steel Corporation.

The last two decades of the century also saw a lot of labor activity. The 1880s were characterized by unrest, and the county's first United Mine Workers local was established in the 1890s, but by 1894 the union was dissolved after a long struggle with the companies.

In the last decade of the nineteenth century, the Connellsville District's percentage of national coke production had fallen, and overall growth in the area started to slow down and shifted to the western side of the district. The coal fields of German and Menallen townships and parts of Georges, Nicholson, and South Union townships were named the "Klondike," likening their rapid development to that of the Alaskan gold fields. More of the mechanized "rectangular" ovens were built there. By 1905, 30% of Connellsville coke came from the Klondike. Coal towns such as the Allisons, Shoaf, the Continentals, Republic, Royal, Buffington, and others were established in this era.

However, though the industry was still strong, the response of operators there to the development of

by-product oven technology foreshadowed the end of the industry. Figuring that the remoteness of the county and the diminished reserves of coal in it would discourage industrial users of the by-products from locating there, Fayette County operators did not convert to the new ovens. Instead, U.S. Steel constructed its first by-product oven at Clairton in 1916.

By the end of World War I, 60% of coke production was being done in by-product ovens. The coal strike of 1922 further propelled the industry's decline and diversified the labor force with southern blacks brought in as strikebreakers. U.S. Steel started getting coal from West Virginia and Kentucky during the strike. Following the settlement of the strike, many miners left the district to work in union mines elsewhere.

More mines closed during the 1920s, and beehive oven coke diminished to only a small percentage of American coke by 1937. The area saw an upsurge during World War II, but by 1950, most of the Connellsville mines were worked out and the beehive ovens were obsolete. A good number of the company properties were demolished to save the company from paying taxes on them. Many others were sold to real estate speculators who resold them. Some were destroyed so that the remaining coal could be stripped. The HABS report notes that, by 1959, only 29% of the Connellsville towns remained.

The Fifties were cataclysmic to Fayette County, a short, precipitous bridge between "then" and "now" both culturally and economically. Other industries in the area went down with coal. The railroads gradually curtailed their passenger services within the area and laid off employees. Families and towns changed as residents moved to Cleveland and Detroit, where there were similar ethnic groups and jobs in other industries. People grappled with the change in occupational identity and town structure. The schedules and maps of daily life were altered as some men began commuting north to steel mills or south or west to other mines. Some patches dwindled to little settlements. Others began their pattern of loss of younger residents.

The decline in population affected such diverse aspects of life as local business, observation of ethnic custom, and consolidation of churches. Unemployment reached 25%. The county's population, which had peaked at 200,900 in 1940, went down by 15% by 1960. By the end of the decade, Fayette County was so economically devastated that it was chosen to be one of seven counties nationwide to participate in the pilot food stamp program.

In the 1960s, county leaders tried to regroup and diversify the county's economic base. The Greater Uniontown Industrial Park on Route 119, that had been built in the 1950s to attract industry, gained tenants such as Fruehauf. However, over the next two decades, many left, including Fruehauf. By 1970, the county had lost another 10% of its population.

Not until the 1970s did the county feel some recovery, especially spurred by the oil embargo. During the embargo, plans for a coal gasification plant in Fayette County were discussed. The plant would have created more demand for workers in area mines as well as employed itself as many as five hundred people. The new generation of miners, though fewer in number than previous ones, worked in Ronco, Maple Creek, Consol, and Bethlehem.

But the relief was shortlived. The gasification venture never developed. In local parlance, "the bottom

fell out" again in the early 1980s with the decline of the steel industry. Men who had gone to the mills after the mines closed were out of work once again. Miners who didn't lose their jobs then lost them later when the longwall machine drastically reduced the number of men needed to dig coal. This time, there were no jobs in Cleveland and Detroit, so the county did not experience such a great exodus as in the 1950s. Although it was easy for a miner to get a job helping to build the tunnel in Washington, D.C., in the early 1980s, according to UMW District Four President Ed Yankovich, that city was too far away and too expensive to attract many of them.

During the 1970s and 80s, the development of suburban malls dealt the final blow to downtown and local business and contributed to the pattern of part time, minimum wage, no- benefits employment that characterizes much of the available work now. The Volkswagen plant opened in Westmoreland County, employing many Fayette County residents and bringing some new people into the county and employing numbers of residents, but left after the ten-year tax break ended, stranding 1,400 people. Federal retraining programs helped former miners and mill workers prepare for different occupations, but did not increase job openings in the county.

POPULATION AND INDUSTRY IN THE PRESENT

The population continues to be concentrated in the string of townships that runs down the western central portion of the county. In order of size, they are: North Union, Uniontown City, South Union, Connellsville City, Dunbar, Bullskin, Georges, and Redstone. The county experienced a net population loss of 6.8% between 1980 and 1990. The only townships in the county that gained population were Wharton (in the mountains to the east), Upper Tyrone, Lower Tyrone, Bullskin, and Saltlick. The last four are on the north fringe of the county and seem to be becoming suburbs of Pittsburgh. Per capita income is highest in South Union, Fayette City, Union City, Brownsville Borough, and Ohiopyle.

Few new ethnic groups have come to the county in recent years, and those who have have come because of factors outside the county more than those within it. The county has not experienced the heavy influx of Asians and Southeast Asians that other parts of the state have. The non-white population of the county is only about 4%. According to the 1990 census, the major ethnic groups by number (based on single ancestry figures) continue to be Italian, German, Irish, Slovak, English, Polish, Czech, Hungarian, Austrian, Scotch-Irish, Scottish, Dutch, Russian, Welsh, and Lebanese, with Italian, German, Slovak, and Irish the most numerous.

In the past, various neighborhoods and towns were identified with particular ethnic groups or as having specific ethnic neighborhoods. While county residents still can identify these areas with the often-pejorative monikers they were given -- "Hunky Hollow," for instance -- they usually describe the residence pattern and naming behavior as part of the past. But their notion of "mixed" residence may bear examination. Judie Kosisko described the ethnic makeup of Monarch as mixed. Later, however, she noted that most people in town are Slovak. Mixed could mean a very few residents of other cultures.

A few generalizations that can still be made are that Lebanese live mainly around Uniontown and Brownsville, Jews around Uniontown, Russians around Masontown, Belgians around Point Marion (although they are a small group), and Hungarians around Brownsville. While the four largest groups

are dispersed fairly evenly throughout the area, Slovaks, along with other Eastern European groups, are especially numerous in the patches.

In general, however, the patterns of ethnic residence in Fayette County are not strict or necessarily dependent on ethnicity. The tendency of families in the area to live near each other helps to maintain some ethnic sectors, but as younger generations intermarry and older generations die off, the ethnic diversity increases. Because they have become mixed, as well, the churches are more symbols of past ethnic concentrations than present ones. (A notion of the earlier concentrations can be obtained by noting the location of the churches identified with a particular group in the List of Contacts -- Churches, appended to the report.)

Probably the only significant ethnic/racial residential division that remains is of African-Americans. In the 1990 census, Uniontown and environs had the largest black population, with significant numbers -- as compared with the rest of the county, that is -- in and around the cities of Connellsville and Brownsville and in the townships surrounding Brownsville. Towns and patches still have sections which have higher concentrations of black residents. A section of Ralph was and apparently still is called "Coon Hollow" by outsiders. Adah continues to be the black section of Palmer. But most patches also have a few black families that are not segregated. Mack Stevenson recalled that "Goose Hollow," so named because many of the black residents kept poultry, was the original black section of Leisenring. Later, he said, blacks were allowed to live on Church Street, where his own family lived for a while. Now, in addition to Church Street, several families live on his street, Broadway, along with white families. [See ES92-RM7-C, p. 3, for story illustrating changes]

Economically, Fayette County has never recovered from the Eighties bust, according to Walter Storey. The county has the second highest number of people receiving government assistance (for black lung, unemployment, Social Security, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, etc.) in the state, second only to Philadelphia. The dependence on assistance is so great that it even affects shopping schedules. Local stores expect crowds and arrange their hours according to the dates when these assistance checks are mailed. Unemployment is around 10%. Where once there were 20,000 miners living in the county, today there are probably no more than 1,000, and almost all work outside the county.

Most manufacturing in the county is on a small scale now. The major employers in the last five years, according to the Fayette County Development Council, have been the Uniontown Hospital, Connellsville School District, Anchor Glass Container Corporation, Sensus Technology (formerly Rockwell and now in the process of downsizing and moving some operations to Mexico), Anchor Hocking Packaging Company, and Williamhouse Regency of Delaware. There are also jobs in state government, factories making such things as water meters, clothing, and steel furniture, and in retail trade and construction. Sony is in the process of opening a plant that may provide 1,000 jobs. While agriculture is the county's single greatest source of income, there are few jobs available. Timbering and lumbering continue to be a stable industry in the county, but without employing large numbers of people. Stone quarries are increasing rapidly, many owned by companies from outside the area. There is some resistance to them based on claims that they damage the environment and adjacent homes, do not create jobs for local people, and contribute little to the local economy. [See ES92-RM12-F]

To develop the economy, efforts are in motion to promote tourism, both by marketing the recreational resources in the eastern part of the county and rehabilitating the downtown areas of the cities; and to

develop access to major highways. The Mon Valley-Fayette Expressway, for instance, will link Pittsburgh through Brownsville to West Virginia. At present, the county is bordered but not transected by major highways.

AGRICULTURE

Fayette County appears to the eye to be an agricultural area. Cornfields and pastureland are distributed fairly evenly throughout the county. Consequently, I began my research with two questions in mind: 1) To what extent is agriculture important culturally to Fayette County and the Connellsville District? 2) What were the historic connections between mining and agriculture?

Statistics would lead one to believe that the agricultural lifestyle must be important to the overall cultural configuration of Fayette County. According to Penn State statistics, of 507,961 acres of land in the county, 116,231 are farmland and 335,100 are forest land. Nearly seventy percent of the population is considered to be "rural," and only twenty-nine percent is "urban." There are 902 farms, and agriculture ranks first among industries in the county in the amount of income it generates -- $22,224,000 in 1991, with $8,888,000 coming from dairy products.

However, average sales per farm are only $16,102, revealing what for people in agriculture is a critical factor in determining agricultural identity: many of the farms are part time operations on which at least one of the owners works at another job. Myra and John Piwowar, who run a dairy farm, mentioned that their daughters were among a very few students in their Uniontown school whose parents farm full time.

Because farming today requires a great deal of capital, agriculture is not an occupational option. Most of the large farms have been owned by old Anglo families for many generations, and much of the labor on Fayette County farms is done by family members. The seventy percent of people there who are classified as "rural" apparently are working or have worked in an industrial setting and are living in a village setting.

In fact, the Extension Service, feeling that agriculture is almost foreign to most of the people in the area, sponsors an annual "City-Farm Day" to bring people to the farms. The 4H livestock clubs, which are among the most popular, are made up mainly of youth who don't live on farms but are raising an animal for the possible high earnings they bring at the annual county auction, I was told. Most of their parents are either "hobby" farmers or part time farmers. Although they provide a link to agriculture, it is considered to be tenuous. County Agent Jay Espenshade said that even the granges don't reflect the current active farming community. Rather, they are made up of people who formerly had or simply like an agricultural lifestyle. The Pennsylvania Farmers' Association reflects the active farming community.

Historically, the mines grew on land that coal companies bought from farmers, usually at unfair prices. But in more recent years, some farmers have stripped their property for coal, thus deriving some profit for themselves. Apparently, a good number of miners had farms that they and their families ran. To get a more detailed view of the kinds of connections that existed between mining and farming, I interviewed the Piwowars, whose farm was originally bought by Piwowar's grandfather, a miner. Piwowar's grandparents came to this area of Pennsylvania because it was similar to their homeland in Galicia,

where people lived in small villages and farmed land outside the village. After they had been here for a few years, they bought the farm so they could "get back to the country." In the country, they proceeded to create their own little Polish village by selling parcels of the farm to relatives and countrymen.

Piwowar's grandfather continued to work in the mines when he could, but he felt that others were often given work before him because the company thought he could support himself with the farm. The family struggled to maintain itself and the farm through the Depression.

Piwowar's father worked on the farm until his late twenties and then went into the mines. In 1960, he quit the mines and went full time into farming and an agricultural service business. But farming was still not as profitable as mining. In 1968, he returned to the Nemacolin Mine for $52.00 a day, and he continued to work there until he retired in 1984.

According to Piwowar, there are a fair number of Polish and Slovak among the current farmers in the county. They have helped each other by trading labor for machine use, for instance.

John Piwowar represents a new generation of farmers, though, whose success will depend in large part on their management and technological skills. Piwowar's operation is now mechanized and computerized. He does not, however, see a good future for agriculture in the county, both because the young are leaving the farms and because the priorities of the politicians are not supportive of agriculture. Not long ago, they defeated an effort to initiate a state-supported program to protect farmland in the county because they felt it might hamper development, according to Piwowar. Perhaps the industrialists in the county are still at odds with the farmers.

TRANSPORTATION

Industries that moved coal and steel have been of great importance to the area. Today, neither barging nor railroading is a major employer, but their patterns of survival are part of the portrait of coal's impact on Fayette County.

Barging

Barging in Fayette County involves both the building of barges and tow boats and the moving of coal and steel. Some coal companies, such as Consol Coal, have their own barging operations. Others hire companies such as Mon River Towing to move coal from the mines to the power plants, which are a major destination of Greene County coal, or to railroads or Great Lakes ships.

Trinity Enterprises in Brownsville is a major shipyard for the building of barges. The company originally bought wooden barges. In 1937, Henry L. Hillman of Pittsburgh, who owned mines along the river, bought the company. For almost thirty years, Hillman both built barges and moved coal. In 1961-62, however, there was a prolonged strike because Hillman wanted to reduce barge crews from thirteen men to eleven. Eventually, No settlement was reached, and eventually Hillman sold the transportation division to Mon River Towing in Upper Charleroi. In 1979, the company consolidated into HBC Barge, and in 1989, joined Trinity Enterprises. However, the shipyard is still commonly referred to as

"Hillman."

Presently, Hillman has approximately 285 employees. They build a variety of barges -- tank, derrick, grain, coal, and floats. They have also built tow and tug boats. In addition, their Marine Repair division repairs barges. The workforce comes mainly from the area around Brownsville. It includes fathers and sons. While he said that there is no predominant ethnic group in the workforce, Superintendant of Marine Repair Gerald DeWitt mentioned that there are a lot of Italians and Polish. The shipyard workers are members of USW 3312 union.

Historically, coal and steel strikes and layoffs have caused drops in orders for new barges and repairs at Hillman. However, the company has maintained a much steadier level of employment than have the coal and steel industries. Often, Hillman would hire laid-off miners and millworkers, but they would usually quit when they were called back to the mines or mills because wages there were higher than at Hillman. Hillman employees, although they were paid at a lower rate, generally worked all year round.

In 1982, when the bottom dropped out, Hillman experienced its biggest depression. There were no new orders for barges or even repairs. The company eventually reduced its workforce to as few as twelve. This last year, however, orders have risen dramatically and the company is "booked up" until 1994. The company hired 150 workers and is trying to get its workforce up to 300. They recently moved to a two shift day, each shift lasting nine hours and often including a lot of overtime.

The most important and prevalent job in the shipyard is welding. Recently, the company is trying to have all employees -- regardless of what particular job they have -- be able to weld so that they can have a more flexible workforce. They have sought welders from the Vocational-Technical School, but there is apparently a dearth of skilled welders. According to DeWitt, it takes a special knack to be a good welder. At Hillman, the best welders are "first class" in a seven-class system. They also have specialty welders. The company has at times run their own welding school.

DeWitt's father was a machinist and welder for the mines; one of his grandfathers was a blacksmith. In his youth, DeWitt worked in the mines and learned welding from a friend of his father. He went to work for Hillman and rose through the ranks of the company. His son, who he taught to weld, was employed at Hillman until an elbow injury took him out of the regular workforce. The elder DeWitt has also used his welding skills to make decorative steel porch railing.

Mon River Towing is one of Hillman's customers and is one of three major towing companies in the area. In the late 1950s, there were four towing companies: Jones and Laughlin, which owned mines along the river; Ohio Barge Line, which was owned by U.S. Steel; Consol Coal, which ran its own towing line; and Hillman Barge. Mon River was established in 1960 to haul gasoline to the Gutman pumping station in Belle Vernon-Charleroi. In 1962, Mon River bought Hillman Barge's transportation division and hired many of its captains. Because of the high cost of running transportation divisions in a time of economic slowdown, companies like U.S. Steel also sold off their barging lines. Mon River bought J&L. Campbell Towing bought the U.S. Steel operation. Consol Coal has continued to barge their own coal.

Mon River Towing has fourteen tow boats and 430 barges. They employ 125 people and will be hiring more because of an increase in petroleum shipping contracts. According to Herb Carpenter, Manager

of Employment and Development at Mon River, people who work on the river tend to live near it. Many of their employees live in Charleroi, Brownsville, Monesson, Belle Vernon, and Rice's Landing. There is much occupational continuity within families, as well. Two of their captains are brothers. Carpenter was himself a tow boat captain. Moreover, his father, mother, wife, sister-in-law, mother-in-law, and brother-in-law have all worked on barges.

A typical work trip on a barge involves picking up the coal from the mine, moving it to a power plant near Pittsburgh, and returning to Mon River. Traveling at five miles per hour, the trip may take from 24 to 36 hours. A boat usually pushes from six to nine barges, the maximum number that locks on the Monongahela can handle. The crew includes about six men, who maintain six-hour watches around the clock. In the not-too-distant past, barge crews included cooks, and the crews were on board for longer periods of time. Now the men cook for themselves.

Within the occupation, men start out as apprentice deckhands, generally with the aim of eventually becoming a pilot. They move up to stern deckhand, and the deckhand with the most experience is the "lead" man. There are two pilots in the crew; the elder or more experienced pilot is the captain of the crew. He stands the 6 p.m. to 12 a.m. watch. Although pilots attend a school in Nashville, Tennessee, and have a lot of electronic equipment on board, their piloting skills and styles are highly individual. For instance, each one "looks at a lock" in his own way.

The towing business has also been affected by the cycles of coal and steel. Mon River, in fact, refers to the usual June-July slowdown as "miners' vacation." Slowdowns are also caused by coal and steel strikes or the freezing of the Great Lakes in the winter months. At those times, Mon River may lay employees off or repair their boats.

Railroading

In the not-too-distant past, railroads of all types and sizes crisscrossed the county, moving people and cargo. Many people in Brownsville and Connellsville, especially, worked for the railroad, with sons often following their fathers into the
industry. But when coal went, it took much of the railroad with it, and downsizing and consolidation continue to erode what was left.

In Connellsville, where there were once as many as five railroads, there are now only two. Conrail maintains a facility there but doesn't use it. Amtrak makes two stops a day for passenger service. Chessie has a yard. In Brownsville, the past and the future of railroading seem to be located in the South Brownsville yard of the Monongahela Railway and the West Brownsville yard of Conrail, respectively.

The Monongahela is a small, local railroad, working mainly in Pennsylvania and West Virginia. It's history reflects the metamorphosis that many railroads have gone through. It was started about ninety years ago by a coalition of the Pennsylvania, New York Central, and Baltimore and Ohio railroads. Later, it became part of the Penn Central, itself a merger of the Pennsylvania and New York railroads. More recently it became a subsidiary of Conrail, which is the merger of six railroads that cover sixteen states and go as far west as St. Louis.

The MGH, as employees refer to it, has always been primarily a mover of coal. Presently, most of the coal comes out of mines in Greene and Washington counties and counties in northern West Virginia. It goes to power plants in several states and to the Great Lakes for shipment out of the country. The railroad's dispatching operations are located along the river in South Brownsville in a quaint old building out of the heyday of railroading -- high ceilings, wooden floors, large windows. Conrail has been computerized for about five years now, but MGH still uses a trainboard to track crews, local dispatchers to call them, and handwritten work orders to direct them.

At present, about 80% of the employees of MGH are 30 or younger, according to Yard Clerk George Harvey, who has been working for MGH for 36 years. This is a result of the fact that the company hired many employees in the last ten years, after the Bailey and Emerald mines in Greene County opened up. Those mines are big producers, and as their production increases, so does the railway's. Nevertheless, the company is now much smaller than it was when Harvey began. Then there were 80 men on the roster. In the Sixties, the number went down to 20. Now there are 47.

The people who work in the south yard are mainly from the Brownsville area and northern West Virginia. It used to be a "family or clan affair," Harvey recalls. "If you went to the Methodist Church, you had a job [with the railroad]." In those
days, the railroad hired directly, but now it goes through state employment offices.

At present, Conrail and Monongahela are in the process of merging, and the merger will probably eliminate many jobs. Some people expect a figure as high as 50%. Conrail has promised to place as many as possible elsewhere in the company as it centralizes operations, but it will likely mean a long commute or a move. Clerks such as Harvey, for instance, may have to go to Waynesburg, 25 miles away.

When Harvey was laid off in the Sixties, it didn't pose such a hardship because there were still places such as Hillman Barge or the steel mills where you could get a job. Now, there will be no other jobs to turn to, he fears. "If they don't [place people in other jobs in the company], we're done here. There's no work here," he said. Moreover, the economy of Brownsville will be affected not only because of the loss of jobs, but also because Conrail will probably eliminate some of the buildings and sidings to avoid taxes. At the roundhouse down the road, Dave Wargo, a supervisor, predicted that Conrail will close their facility and consolidate engine maintenance at Conway, 75 miles away.

The West Brownsville yard of Conrail offers a prophetic contrast to the MGH. Although the west yard is a hundred years old, the men work out of a small, nondescript prefab building that was put up in the Seventies. The two yards are connected in carrying out the task of forming and moving trains. Conrail now supplies the empty cars for MGH to move coal out of the mines and then Conrail moves the coal to points such as Maryland, New York, New Hampshire, Ohio, and Michigan.

At the west yard, Trainmaster William Lewis, who has been with Conrail for seventeen years, is a newcomer to the area. He and his family moved to Brownsville only a year ago, and they don't like it. All of the approximately 150 men at the west yard are transplants. Most have between twenty and thirty years of service and many have moved a number of times. About 20% of them live in Brownsville, 50% commute from the Pittsburgh area, and rest commute from Youngstown. Even

though they are in the situation of being away from family and community, most haven't formed much of a community in Brownsville. Lewis bemoaned the fact that at his home in Ohio, there was always something going on -- someone dropping by, a family or community event. Here there is "nothing," he said, making it clear that "something" means family and community, and that activities without those connections are not very nourishing. In the same way that natives of the Fayette area do, he explained his preference for western Ohio with "That's home."

Lewis recalled that when he began with Conrail sixteen years ago, there were 100,000 employees. Today, there is a "streamlined" workforce of only 27,000. Crews have been reduced since the Fifties from six men to two. The caboose and a brakeman have been abandoned in favor of telemetric devices that register distance and air levels in the brakes. And they are talking about a one-man crew, Lewis said. "I don't know how they can cut anymore. Somebody's got to be on the ground."

At the south yard, I met Shaun O'Hern, a 26-year old extra clerk and driver from Grindstone who said that he is the first in his family to work on the railroad. "I'm the first and I'd like to be the first of generations," he said. Unfortunately, it seems unlikely.

RECYCLING THE LEGACY OF COAL

Today, mining in Fayette County is a legacy, not an industry. It is true that a small percentage of people in the county make their living in mining or mine-connected businesses, but the mines themselves are in other counties and states. This is not to say that there are not hopes and expectations for an upswing in mining that will impact favorably on the county. Even people who had a critical view of the industry and its effects often expressed a wish that mining would "come back" to rescue the economy. Some insist that there is still enough coal in the county to make it possible. Others expect the implementation of clean air regulations to boost the demand for the low-sulphur coal that southwestern Pennsylvania is rich in. Ed Yankovich, president of District Four of the United Mine Workers, predicts an increase in the demand for the area's coal starting in 1994, accompanied by a slow but steady rise in employment. But the technology of mining, and the fact that the hills of Fayette are already riddled with mines, assure that coal will never again rule the county.

And many people don't want it to. They are still struggling with the economic legacy of coal and trying to diversify so that a Fifties will never happen again. They're unhappy as well with the identity of the region as a distressed area. Still in the grips of the past, they have very mixed feelings about it. While they express nostalgia for the abundance of the "booms" that were fathered by coal, it is the "bust" that they were left with that concerns them. Southern West Virginia is what they hope not to become, they often say.

CULTURAL CONSERVATION EFFORTS

Salvaging the cultural, economic, and material remnants of the coal era to sustain themselves is the task at hand for most people in Fayette County, and they aren't necessarily thinking about conserving their coal heritage when they're doing it. They're thinking about using what they've got because they haven't got much. Their attention is more on survival and economic issues than on memorialization of the past.

This is perhaps the reason that I met relatively few organized local efforts to conserve the legacy of coal.

The Scottdale Coal and Coke Heritage Festival turned out to be more of a city fete promoted by a cultural elite than a broad-based heritage event. It included little that would connect it with occupational heritage or the cultural diversity that accompanied it. Sponsored by the Scottdale Historical and Heritage Committee, the event included a parade with local bands, fire engines, and organizations, and a tour of the elegant homes of former residents. There were food booths selling some ethnic food, a crafts sale with mainly generic contemporary crafts, and musical performances by country and western and contemporary bands. The Coal Country Cloggers from Pittsburgh performed in an instructive format. They seemed to be a folk revival group, and the audience's responses to their questions indicated that few people were familiar with clogging.

The event's connection with coal and coke heritage were visible mainly in the sponsorship by the Coal and Coke Museum and the demonstration of a coke oven at the Alverton Coke Company. However, the museum is a non-professional, shoestring operation in three rooms of an office building that is owned by the president of the Scottdale Historical and Heritage Committee. It appears to be the effort of one man's collections mainly of written materials and a mixed group of "artifacts." It has little visitorship.

As regards real needs and issues in the area, it is telling that the demonstration of the coke ovens was cancelled because neither the owner of the site nor the historical society could pay for the firing. Moreover, the owner, Mrs. Painter, who used to fire the ovens herself for the demonstration, is seriously considering razing the remaining ovens so that the coke dust in the yard can be reclaimed.

Ed Yankovich was not well familiar with the festival. His response to the festival implied that it is not the property, so to speak, of mine workers. Rather, Yankovich described the group that presents the festival in this way: "They emulate H.C. Frick." While I'm not sure that he meant emulate rather than honor, the comment placed the historical society members and their values and aims at a classical counterpoint with miners and coke burners.

When I asked Yankovich about memorialization and conservation efforts by miners and former miners themselves, he knew of none other than the December 6 memorial service to the men who were killed in the Robena Mine disaster in 1962. Neither do the retired miners get together much for celebratory or memorial events. (You can find them at the malls, he said.) Their participation in the union is mainly focused on advocacy efforts -- helping with mailings, for instance, and attending meetings when there are presentations on pension issues.

The Patch/Work Voices Project, on the other hand, is a grassroots conservation effort organized and executed by the children of coal. It offers a real process for the culture bearers themselves to shape the story of their history. Most of the Penn State staff that began and run the project are from coal miners' families and grew up in the patches. Further, much of the oral history collecting has been done by their students who interview family members and friends. The students are usually as deeply rooted in the culture as the professors, and include former miners. In addition to building an archive and collection, the project has presented conferences that people from all aspects of the industry and region have participated in. It has published The Early Coal Miner and Patch/Work Voices: The Culture and Lore of a Mining People, and has created a traveling exhibit that has been made widely accessible. The

group is working toward the development of a museum, and supporting efforts to preserve sites such as Shoaf.

Wilbur Landman represents a third aspect of conservation efforts in the area. A laid-off miner, he collected songs and stories from "the old guys" when he worked in the mines, and he was himself recorded by the Smithsonian Institution. Later, as a student at California University, he researched and wrote articles for the college newspaper on topics in local history. His personal ties in the region are culturally varied and elaborate. He welcomes opportunities to present what he has learned and to assist research. Retrained to an M.A. in Communications Technology after he was laid off, Wilbur is still unemployed and would most like to work for an agency such as the American Folklife Center.

Although I cannot speak definitively about the range and number of conscious cultural conservation efforts regarding coal and coke in Fayette County, it appears to me that more of them are personal and individual -- people writing their own memoirs or histories of coal patches, for instance, and collecting things from their family's past in the industry. Tapping into these, as the Patch/Work Project can, is a most promising avenue of grassroots conservation.

PERSONAL, COMMUNITY, AND OCCUPATIONAL USES OF THE REMNANTS OF THE COAL ERA

What I feel is most significant in understanding the legacy of coal and coke in the area is the ways that people are dealing with its remnants in restructuring their occupational, personal, and community lives.

OCCUPATIONAL USES

One way of making a living out of the remaining coal itself has been through strip mining. Strip mines typically take off the coal left by deep mines -- the deposits close to the surface and the ribs and pillars that supported the shaft mines. They also mine outcrops -- places where the coal lies very near the surface or actually extrudes from it. The few operations that remain in the county now are generally small operations that employ the members of a family. Like the Swenglish family of Smithfield, which had miners and coke yard workers in the previous generations, they may strip their own property or that of farmers. However, according to Charles Swenglish, it is becoming more difficult to find mine remains that have substantial sections of coal left, and it is difficult and unprofitable to try to strip where stumps and ribs are very small. The quality of the coal may not be high, either.

Some people mine outcrops on their property and have small coalyards from which they sell to regular domestic-use customers. Participation in the government energy assistance program, through which the government rather than the homeowner pays the supplier, makes this a more stable source of income, but such operations still tend to be supplementary rather than basic.

Reclamation projects that remove coal refuse and restore the land around mines also help support small, local companies. In some instances, "gob" (slate and rock) dumps are being washed to salvage the coal in them, which can be as much as 20%. However, German and Australian companies have also

become active in this business in recent years.

Of most value in reconstructing an occupational life in the aftermath of coal, however, are the work skills that individuals and families learned in that era and have passed on. One of the "skills" is the ability and willingness to work hard and long, which people here take great pride in and regard as an asset. I was often told that Pennsylvania miners looking for work in other states only had to say they were from Pennsylvania and they'd be hired on the basis of their reputation as hard workers.

Miners also often point out that mining required many skills, including those of a carpenter, electrician, and engineer, making miners highly versatile in their abilities. Occupational versatility is also valued, and many men are proud to have maintained their families by doing many different jobs. They see their versatility as a hedge against unforeseen changes in labor markets and economies.

The Swenglish family of Smithfield included, in addition to miners and coke yard workers, coal company owners and coal haulers in the previous generations. In more recent decades, the father and his three sons have stripped and sold coal, and done road construction, coal yard reclamation, coal washing, and scrap hauling and selling. Charles Swenglish points to his grandfather's experience in the mines and his skill at blacksmithing as a source of their skills in welding, which have provided a backbone to many of their jobs. They built a coal washer themselves, for instance, and do much of the repair and rebuilding of their machinery themselves.

John Piwowar explained that in the mines his father acquired the skills of an electrician and mechanic that have helped them with the work on the farm. Mack Stevenson, speaking of his work in the mines and mills and at his home, proudly said that he could do anything involved with "making," the essence of both work and creativity. He won awards from U.S. Steel for his innovations and inventions that made things work more efficiently. His company home has been transformed by his abilities, as well. John Moore, whose work life started in his grandfather's blacksmith shop and extended to the office of employee relations at U.S. Steel, pointed out that his work skills and versatility also found expression in his making of stained glass objects.

PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY USES

In the bituminous region company towns, every structure was built and owned by the coal company. Besides the workers' homes, there were community centers, recreational facilities, schools, and stores. In some towns, the company even built some churches and exerted a certain amount of control over them with regard to labor activism. There were many buildings involved in running the mines-- offices; wash houses, where the men dressed and washed before and after work; lamp houses, where they picked up the lights they wore or carried into the mines with them; stables, where mules and ponies that were used in the mines were cared for; power houses, and others. And then there were the mines, the coke ovens, and the water reservoirs themselves.

When the mines went out, companies quickly divested themselves of their holdings so that they would not have to pay taxes on them. Sometimes, they bulldozed them. Most often, they sold them to a broker such as John W. Galbreath of Cleveland, who bought the Leisenrings. These speculators then resold them, usually to the people who had been living in or using them for years. Families and

communities finally took ownership of the structures their
lives had been built around, often transforming them to fit different values, needs, and patterns. The ways they've used and transformed both the structures and the communities is one of the most interesting aspects of the legacy of coal.

Structures

One of the most usable types of building was the company store. They were large, usually with very high ceilings and high or sweeping roof lines and, as Margaret Mulrooney points out, were always in a prominent position within the patch. While some people remember the company store as an amazing place filled with wonderful goods, it seems that more of them recall it as a place of heavy obligation, either because of high prices and bills that decimated paychecks, or because of requirements to shop there. In a nice twist on history, today many of those stores are sites for activities that celebrate, entertain, and sustain families and communities. The fact that they were usually in a prominent place within the patch lends reason to this choice.

Some, such as the one at Smock, became community centers where events of interest and service to the village take place. The center at Smock has been sided with aluminum and partitioned inside. Senior citizens' groups and youth groups such as Boy Scouts meet there. The hall is rented out for weddings, dinners, dances, and other family and community events. The post office, which functions as a sort of community information center in the patches, rents space there, too.

Many former company stores now house volunteer fire department social halls, which are also important centers for community events. Raymond Wallace was one of the founding members of the North Union Volunteer Department in Lemont Furnace. His family had worked with the Union Supply Store there, and when it was vacated in the Fifties, he helped to arrange for the fire company to buy it. They lowered the ceiling, partitioned some rooms, tiled the floor, and paneled some of the walls. The VFD has fundraising events at the hall and rents it out for weddings and other socials.

Some of the stores were sold to retailers initially. The company store at Monarch (Leisenring #3) was bought and run for a time by Sullivan D'Amico, now the owner of Pechin's, a popular and unusual discount store in Dunbar Township. Galbreath first sold the store at Leisenring (Leisenring #1) to an organization of blacks who wanted to use it as a club. Their plans did not succeed, according to Al Pellish, who identified himself as "the mayor of Leisenring." It was resold and has continued to function as a store and, according to resident Mack Stevenson, a community meeting place where, as in the past, residents go "to get their newspaper and their news." It's where I met him.

Other kinds of businesses are located in former company buildings. The stable at Ralph now houses TTH Machine and Welding Company where John Hall, 32, and a few employees repair mining equipment. Hall grew up in Ralph and has family all around the area. He worked for a strip mine for eight years, then went to work for his father. The elder Hall had acquired the stable when he started a business repairing strip mining equipment in the early Seventies. Previously, he had worked as a machinist for the mines. The business closed down for a few years in the Eighties, partly as a consequence of pressure to unionize the small shop. Today, the business is small, but it allows Hall to remain in the area. [See ES92-RM15-F for Hall's comments on labor management.]

Some buildings and facilities have been turned to recreational uses. At Smock, the wash house was first used as a community center. The local sportsmen's club, Franklin Rod and Gun Club, used the company office building and then moved into the wash house. A second floor had already been created by partitioning the high-ceilinged interior. Club members painted and put in a tile floor. They retained nothing of the mining days as decoration or memorabilia. Today, says member Steve Bertovich, it's like a "town meeting place" for club members and their guests. The ballfield where company teams played at Lemont Furnace is now the sight of Little League action.

Even the remains of the coke yards have been appropriated for personal and community uses. The lake that provided water for the Brownfield coke ovens is now part of the compound owned by Hutchinson Sportsmen's Club, which was started in 1946 by a group of Brownfield workers. The club stocks the lake with fish regularly, and it is a major recreational resource for the 2,000 club members, many of whom are former miners. The club also owns over 50 acres of former coke yards. Besides serving as a buffer to development, the property is used as a hunting preserve for members. Although it is still full of ash, it has grown over and small game and deer both live in it.

There are banks of deteriorating coke ovens throughout the area. It is well known that poverty-stricken families sometimes made temporary abodes in them during the Depression. Paul Kolp told the story of a worker who went to sleep in an oven one night and burned to death. Later, after they had been abandoned, children played in them. One woman recalled that her teenaged son fifteen years ago carried an old sofa down to the ovens and made a clubhouse for himself. Hoboes found shelter there, too, but now the ovens are so overgrown as to be part of the natural environment. Paul Kolp, in fact, has gone to the coke yard at Youngstown many times to dig up bushes and trees to transplant in his yard.

The cut stone that was used for the exterior walls of the ovens is valued by the people of the area. Many have taken the stones and used them to build fences and borders to their yards and flower beds. The Swenglish family used coke oven stone for a wall of the family room in the parents' home. Some of the stones, Charles Swenglish said, are particularly beautiful because they have a charred reddish cast.

Although oven ruins are clearly on the cognitive maps of people in the patches, no one expressed to me a desire or idea for using them in any commemorative or constructive way (except for the site at Shoaf.)

Houses

The company workers' houses are the most culturally significant remnant of the coal era. In her work for the Historic American Buildings Survey, A Legacy of Coal: The Coal Company Towns of Southwestern Pennsylvania, Margaret Mulrooney notes that, for immigrants, home ownership symbolized permanence and achievement. The number of miners who bought their company houses, she says, indicates that home ownership and independence were important values. To the folklorist, the changes that have been made to these houses are telling indicators of the transition from the era of "theirs" to "ours." Karen Hudson, who has documented the ways that workers changed company houses in other parts of Appalachia, described it as a process in which residents obtained a sort of expressive freedom along with ownership when they purchased their company homes.

While it was not possible for me to make a survey of the ways that Fayette Countians have changed their company homes, I learned of some types of changes that have expressive potential and, with more careful research, might yield ethnic or regional patterns . One which seems particularly assertive of family identity, independence, and advancement is the creation of a single-family home from a double house. The Kolp and Kosisko families did this by buying both sides of the house and creating a larger living room, or a dining room and living room, adding a bathroom, and making three or four bedrooms. The Kolps also made a laundry-storage area adjacent to the kitchen. Other changes include enclosing porches to create another kind of room or work area, paneling living area walls, and varying the exterior of the house with different kinds of shingles or aluminum siding.

Even outhouses have been adapted to other uses, most commonly workshops and storage sheds. Mack Stevenson made his into a little shop where he works on his inventions. Paul Kolp didn't use the building, but made a flower bed in the remains of the foundation.

More expressive than the changes themselves, in terms of values and attitudes, is the pride in independence, ability, and achievement that people take in having made them. The Kosiskos explained that his parents (as was the case with all of my informants) first bought the house from a broker. They didn't have the money to make many changes, but they did open the two sides of the house to each other. George and Judie proudly pointed out that they have put in new windows, a new bathroom (Galbreath put in low quality ones before he resold), and a new roof. They've expanded and remodeled the kitchen, paneled the walls, and built a patio with sliding doors. They added a garage in the back yard and have decorated the front and back yards extensively. Their pride in ownership is one of the most important elements of the communities that remain from the coal era.

Communities: "Everything you see here, we did ourselves."

Mulrooney's essay provides an excellent description and analysis of the physical and political aspects of company towns. She emphasizes that the towns were built for the good of the company, not the worker. Built as close to the mine as possible to save money in land development, they were all arranged similarly and monotonously. The basic two-story, four-to-six room house was detached or semi-detached and was constructed cheaply with a balloon frame, and some type of board exterior. The variations and arrangement of the houses in the patch reflected company notions of ethnic and occupational hierarchies.

Although some companies included community centers and did other things to encourage worker enthusiasm for their towns, there were instead many things to discourage worker investment in the patch. There were few amenities for the ordinary worker -- no bathrooms or tubs, for instance. The company could use its ownership of the town as a weapon in labor control, evicting the troublesome upon little notice. Even when the Progressive Era encouraged the inclusion of green and open spaces in company towns, most companies in the bituminous area did so only by supporting and promoting the planting of gardens.
Despite these drawbacks, people created communities in these spaces and became attached to them. Mulrooney refers to a study of continuity in anthracite communities that found that "intangible associations to a particular landscape are more instrumental in encouraging an individual to reside there

than the physical support it can provide." I was interested in those community landscapes, so to speak -- in identifying some of the ways that people in the patches have maintained their communities, if indeed they have.

During my fieldwork, I visited twelve coal towns (six of which are in the Connellsville Coal and Coke District and four of which are in the Klondike region), spoke to residents in most of them, and taped interviews with six residents. The towns included Adah (1908 - named for U.S. Steel official W.P. Palmer, German Township), (Adelaide (1888 - named for Adelaide Childs Frick, Dunbar Twp), Bute (Leisenring #2 or West Leisenring, 1881 - named for Connellsville Coke and Iron Company president John Leisenring, North Union Twp), Fredericktown (in Washington County), Leisenring (Leisenring #1, same as Bute, but in Dunbar Twp), Lemont Furnace (1876 - named for "le mont," the mountain, North Union Twp), Monarch (Leisenring #3, same as Bute, but in Dunbar Twp), Palmer (same as Adah), Ralph (1908 - named for the son of the H.C. Frick Company president, German Twp), Republic (1905 - founded by Republic Steel Company, Redstone Twp), Smock (post office 1884 -named for landowner Samuel Smock, Franklin and Dunbar Twps), and Star Junction (1893, Perry Twp).

While I do not know the genesis of the common name "patch" for these towns (which are called "camps" in West Virginia), their variations in size and distribution over the countryside are reminiscent of the patches in a crazy quilt. They range from a few houses to over a hundred. While the houses are usually located near the street in straight, tight rows, the streets may run up and down hills and "hollers." The towns themselves are scattered among fields and farms, seldom including or lying within site of a commercial area. Although they may be quite close to other patches by actual distance, the terrain makes many of them seem remote and isolated, little villages unto themselves.

They also vary widely in condition, and the state of repair of different ones seems to be widely known and to be the basis for judgments by non-residents of community cohesion. Monarch, for instance, is known to be well-kept, and indeed, Judie Kosisko said that it is a "village," not a patch, where residents keep a code of appearance. Smock has various sections that some residents rank according to appearance and care. There are New Houses, Smock Hill, Colonial #1, as well as Hirsh Row and Cottage Row. Residents generally agree that homes in New Houses are best kept. Ralph and Republic, on the other hand, are thought to be "rough" areas where property is not so well cared for.

Data prepared in 1991 by the Fayette County Planning Commission
reflect desirability of different areas to some degree: the median home value in German Township is 29,100; in Redstone Township, 25,900; in Dunbar Township, 37,400; and in North Union, 40,500. (It's important to note that there is also a good deal of suburban housing in North Union.) The range of value for individual homes is wide, however, based on improvements and area. Al Pellish said that he paid $1,850 for his Leisenring house in 1958. When the Volkswagen plant was still open, home values were as high as $30,000. Now, he says, many of the homes sell for $18,000 - 20,000.

It is difficult to get demographic figures that reflect more specifically the population characteristics of the individual patches, since the census was based on township and reporting area, and other kinds of towns are in each of the townships. Based on what people there say, however, the patch towns reflect the overall ethnic mix, with slight preponderances in different towns. For instance, there are more Italians in Republic; Croatians in Smock; Slovaks and Rusyns in the Leisenrings. Blacks are scattered throughout most of the patches. In Leisenring, for instance, where there are now 100 homes, there are

seven black families.

Although the population is usually spoken of as being older, many of the patches have a fair number of young people, as well. Father Peter Peretti said that the Leisenrings have many families with children. According to Judie Kosisko, who called herself "the mayor of Monarch" because of her activities in the town, there are mostly middle-aged people in Monarch.

Most of the male residents of the patch towns are blue collar workers who work outside the town in jobs such as construction, mining, millwork, and glassmaking. In Monarch, most of the men are employed at Anchor Glass. Some commute to Pittsburgh or Greene and Washington counties. The women work in a wide variety of places, including stores, businesses, restaurants, garment factories, schools, and hospitals. In each town, I was told that there were a lot of retired people on pensions. In some, there are supposedly a lot of people on welfare -- "reliefers" that people often claim have come from the cities because it's so easy to get relief in Fayette County. (I have no idea if this is true.)

Many of the families in the patches that I learned about have had three generations in the same town, and often two in the same house. Mack Stevenson lived in his East Broadway Street home as a teenager. He bought a house up the street where his daughter now lives. George and Judie Kosisko are living in the house that George was born and raised in. Their son lived for a few years on the other side of his wife's parents' house.

There are often extended family members in the same patch, also.
Judie Kosisko said "We're all related in here," of Monarch. Nancy Snyder, whose trailer in Bute sits on the lot that her parents' house once occupied, lives next door to her cousin.
In Smock, Betty Bertovich's son lives down the street from her. Paul Kolp's sister lives across the street from him in Lemont Furnace. His wife's sister lives up the road in the Youngstown section of the town. Mack Stevenson's daughter and aunt live nearby in Leisenring. Andy Baker's brother lives adjacent to him in Adelaide. In some of the patches, members or friends of families already in the patch are the main purchasers of homes that go up for sale. This is one way of keeping the neighborhood safe.

While everyone acknowledges that community life in the patches has changed, residents still act together at certain times for the good of the community and individuals. Patches don't have their own law enforcement officers, and those of the state or township may not be very accessible. I was told in several towns that the patch was kept safe and lawful because residents carefully watch the activity of undesirables and exert unified pressure on them. [See ES92-RM6-7, 12-13-C] Judie Kosisko told of how the residents of Monarch stopped the sale of drugs, then she joked that I was probably being "timed" by neighbors while I was in their home for the interview. Wilbur Landman said that by the time we drove out of Ralph, probably everyone would know we'd been there, the word having been passed over the telephone. Volunteer fire department membership in the patches is high, a another reflection of how the community takes care of itself.

When someone in the patch or a close relative dies, residents donate money and food, often organizing a "repose" or post-funeral dinner for the family. In Monarch, Judie Kosisko collects money from each family. With it, flowers and a mass card are purchased and the remainder goes to the family to use as they wish. Residents also pitch in to help when someone is sick or needs help with a project.

Another characteristic of the patches is that the residents think of themselves as a community, albeit with differences. Several people mentioned that, as a gesture of neighborliness after they bought their houses from the company, they took down the fences and hedges that had rimmed and separated the yards. Mack Stevenson, in fact, said that the patch was like "a big family." (Mulrooney notes this description, also.) In fairness, I heard a complaint that Adelaide was mostly "strangers" now, yet the speaker pointed out at least twelve old families in the patch.

As discussed in the section on houses, another characteristic is the pride in ownership that many residents share. Some patches have an unwritten code of house and yard appearance that can be read in the exteriors of the homes and their gardens. As if a part of the legacy of the coal company contests, many patch homes have both vegetable and flower gardens. I saw many bright, flower-bedecked porches and lawns, often with flags, yard ornaments, and outdoor sitting areas such as gazebos, as well as well-kept vegetable gardens.

Paul Kolp, whose parents won awards for their vegetable gardens when they lived in the "Tenderloin" section of Lemont Furnace, took me on a tour of his side yard and told me the histories and origins of many of the plants he has put there. [See ES92-RM4-F] A large vegetable garden, grown with seeds he's gotten from relatives or saved himself, produces the cabbages that he makes into sauerkraut, the peppers he pickles, and over a dozen other vegetables that he cans for his own and his son's family.

The Kosisko's yardscapes are stellar examples of the ways that yard decoration can express personal identity. In the front yard is an assemblage of shrubs and flowers, river rocks that Judie picked by hand, and statues of deer, a salute to the Kosisko men's love of hunting. In the back, where there are also raised dog pens, is an elaborate shrine to the Blessed Virgin Mary. An old bathtub, one end embedded in a concrete foundation, shelters a statue of the virgin; two cherubs flank the corners of the shrine, and tiny lights illuminate it. George has been approached by a number of people who asked him to build such a shrine for them.

Although the coal companies may have built the original towns, the residents have built the communities. Most people there can truly claim, with George and Judie Kosisko, that "everything you see here, we did ourselves."

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE AND TRADITIONS IN FAYETTE COUNTY

The two most important contexts for social/cultural identity and activity in the former Connellsville Coal and Coke District of Fayette County are the family and the church. While ethnicity is still an important aspect of identity and cultural life, it is less the common denominator of a community than an aspect of family and church life.

ETHNICITY

Signs of ethnicity are all around -- onion domes on churches, pascha loaves in bakeries, clubs with names like Sons of Italy, neighborhoods with local names like "Hunky Hollow." People know what

their ethnic background is and usually where their progenitors came from. Yet ethnic identity no longer draws boundaries around individual lives or shapes residential, occupational, and economic patterns as it once did. Although the external structures may look the same, the internal workings are very different.

There are, of course, important generational differences in attitudes toward ethnicity. The older generations, those over 65, may be more invested in ethnic identity and inclined to congregate within ethnic groups. They may still recall the early times and sufferings of the decades following immigration and thus retain their practices and biases. But even many of those in their sixties are third-generation American, and for the third and fourth generations especially, the espousing and performance of ethnicity are more a matter of personal choice than predestiny or obligation, and more often a channel for aesthetic expression than a structure for behavior.

Two generations of intermarriage and social interaction, as well as several decades of programs in social justice, have increased the ethnic diversity of occupational groups, neighborhoods, families, and churches. Yet, people in Fayette County don't seem to feel that they have "lost" their identity or cherished values with the disappearance of some traditions. I did not hear that complaint once, in contrast to what I have heard from ethnic groups in other places. I believe this is because they have maintained what is valuable to them within their families and churches. The most common theme of their comments on ethnicity was "mixing."

Different groups have, of course, had different experiences. There seems to be more of a community of Lebanese, for instance. Several factors contribute to this, I believe. First, the Lebanese are darker-skinned than most of the other ethnic groups in the area. This allows them to be set apart visually. They themselves, in fact, refer to non-Lebanese as "whites." Secondly, they have less in common culturally with those of European extraction. While they are usually Christian and most often Catholic, they may belong to a Maronite rite or orthodox church. Their foodways, music, and dance are all quite different. Finally, they have from the time of immigration tended to be of a higher socioeconomic level. They never worked in the mines, but were usually business owners as soon as they had saved enough from peddling in the coal patches.

Biases and barriers continue to exist for African-Americans, but are not as institutionalized as they were in the past. Blacks are generally in separate churches and clubs, and their residential patterns are more likely to be restricted. Job opportunities appear not to be as wide as for whites, despite laws forbidding discrimination. Several people mentioned that racial prejudices have taken the place of ethnic ones. A few of my informants did express belief that ethnic biases still exist, but said that the evidence of it is vague. I believe that long and careful observation in a variety of contexts would be required to verify or deny that claim.

The Polish seem to maintain a higher consciousness of identity, even more so than the Slovaks. Their ethnic churches are somewhat more likely to have survived. The Italians, on the other hand, have tended to assimilate more. Although there are large numbers of people who claim Irish ancestry, and a couple of churches that are understood to be Irish parishes, there are almost no other signs of Irish ethnicity or community in the area. Of course, more remnants of Irish culture have entered the common cultural base.

Finally, I found the notion of "mountain people" to be ambiguous, and attitudes toward them to vary.

While they are defined in The People of Southwestern Pennsylvania as being offspring of the original Scotch-Irish settlers who maintained an independent, self-sufficient subsistence lifestyle in the mountains, and some informants described them this way, many others think of them mainly as people of low socioeconomic status who are clannish, rough, and reclusive.

REGIONAL TRAITS

Most of the people that I spoke to described the culture as mixed, and I believe there are indications of a regional culture that might be described as rural with an Eastern European cast. While there are very few single-ethnicity bands in the area, there are many "polka" bands. These bands usually have a broad polka repertoire, may sing in several languages, and have a multi-ethnic mix of musicians. They play at all kinds of events -- those that are not ethnically-focused as well as those that are. Country western bands are very popular, too.

Weddings in the region are worth note, particularly because a wedding is usually a prime event for the display of ethnicity. At weddings in Fayette, there are almost always a number of multi-ethnic elements. The food served provides a cross-section of major groups in the area: rigatoni, halupki, potato salad, luncheon meat (also called "cold cuts", which are actually kinds of sausage) breaded chicken, and baklava, for instance. Regardless of the ethnic identity of the couple, there is almost always a "bride's dance," an adaptation from the Polish. This custom involves having every guest make a donation to the maid of honor for a dance with the bride. In return, men receive a shot of whiskey or a cigar, and the women receive a piece of cake. Father Peter Peretti also noted that the Italian custom of signaling the groom to kiss the bride by tapping a plate or glass with cutlery is a part of all the wedding celebrations.

Even in large grocery stores such as Adrians in Hopwood and non-ethnic restaurants, certain ethnic pastries and entrees are generally found either regularly or weekly. For instance, nut and poppy seed rolls or versions of them, haluski, pierogies, cabbage rolls, kielbasa, and Italian sausage sandwiches. These are also sold at most festivals and public events, along with "fried dough," which both the Lebanese and the Eastern Europeans make. At the Scottdale Coal and Coke Festival, the YMCA Swim Team sold a platter of cabbage rolls, haluski, pierogies, and kielbasa.

While I do not know their historical connections, the men's sports clubs seem to be a prevalent part of the regional culture.

FAMILY

Two characteristics that support the notion of family as an important cultural community are patterns of residence and patterns of interaction.

Most of these families came to Fayette County because of jobs. Now, despite the dearth of jobs, they stay because of family. To be sure, many individuals and families left the area in the Fifties to find employment elsewhere. This extended family networks into Cleveland, Parma, Ohio, and Detroit, especially. However, those who lost jobs in the Eighties seem to have prioritized staying in the area.

I took care to ask as many people as possible where their siblings and offspring are living, and I was surprised that the majority of their offspring are not only in southwestern Pennsylvania, but in Fayette County. Repeatedly I was told that people have remained in or returned here because of their family networks. They've limited the range of their job searches, turned down jobs in other places, tried new occupations, "scratched" -- as Ed Yankovich called it, sacrificed, and held on so that they would not have to move away from parents and siblings. (John Piwowar, quoting Albert Skomra, called this "Mon Valley Momism," the dogged and, in his opinion, limiting determination to remain in the area despite the lack of economic opportunities.)

Within the county, they have some very interesting settlement patterns. Most of my informants have lived in close proximity to relatives during the present generation as well as the previous one. The arrangement varies from living in the same home (Balas, Brundige, Kolp, Kosisko, Storey, Piwowar), to living in the same double house (Kolp, Kosisko III, Landman), to using part of a family home for a child's business (Paroda), to living along the same road or on the same hill (DeWitt, Yankovich), to creating a family "village" in a rural area (Piwowar, Swenglish), to living in the same patch (Stevenson, Bertovich) or village (Moore). Numerous others that I did not formally interview were living in the same towns and neighborhoods as other family members.

Forty-year old Charles Swenglish explained that people used to call their section of Haddenville in Menallen Township "Swenglishville," because so many members of the extended family lived there. This pattern continues in the present generation, when many of Swenglish's cousins have built their homes in a second row behind those of his aunts and uncles. John Piwowar told of how his grandparents sold small parcels of the farm they bought outside Uniontown to countrymen and relatives, in effect establishing their own little Polish village near Route 51. Continuing the pattern, John helped a cousin immigrate from Poland in 1980 and set up a business and home just a stone's throw from his house.

This physical proximity facilitates a high degree of interaction and assistance among generations and branches of a family. Mack Stevenson takes care of the house and runs errands for his elderly aunt, who lives on the street behind him in Leisenring. Paul and Bertha Kolp's granddaughter stays with them often, and Paul takes responsibility for getting her to and from her part time job at the Uniontown Mall. Judie Kosisko babysits her three grandchildren while her daughter works at a bank in Connellsville. Tillie Paroda prepares lunch every day for her son (whose physical therapy clinic is in a section of her house), her husband, and a grown daughter, as well as some of the workers in the clinic. Bob Clifford and his wife babysit their grandchildren while their mother works. I spoke to Clifford while he and his four-year old grandson practiced golf swings at the Knights of Columbus in Uniontown.

The economic assistance that the extended family can provide is especially important in an area as depressed as Fayette County. Sharing of resources is an important hedge against destitution --and moving. Among the cash-poor, time, meals, housing, labor, and garden produce can be important shared resources. In discussing his reluctance to move from the area despite an eight-year job drought, ex-miner Wilbur Landman pointed to the low cost of living in the area and the presence of family and family resources as strong reasons for staying. He lives in one side of a house that was initially his grandfather's. His sister lives on the other side.

Families can provide social networks and activities as well as cultural continuity. I found that my informants socialize frequently with their extended families. They share work and play, sadness as well

as celebration. George Kosisko III described his mother-in-law as his wife's best friend. He himself saves his vacations for sports activities with his father. John Piwowar explained that it is a Polish tradition for every branch of the family to visit the elders on Sunday. In turn, his parents made a swimming pool out of a silo so that their grandchildren -- and many of their friends -- could congregate at their house in the summer. While I interviewed Bonnie Balas, whose aunt was visiting from California, Balas explained that it wasn't necessary for her to join the group when several cousins dropped by, because "they're local." In other words, they visit often. Family networks are not the only social outlets that people have, but they are an important one, even for younger people.

Families provide cultural continuity, as well. Many of those who are now raising children rely on their mothers to provide traditional ethnic foods and holiday celebrations. Family networks help sustain church membership, and vice versa. In addition to the large number of family businesses, the interaction of the generations seems to have created continuity in occupational skills, even though they aren't necessarily applied in the same jobs.

ETHNICITY AND FAMILY

One of the main functions of keeping ethnic customs and identity in families is to maintain a sense of connection with the past. Usually, the families of immigrants have great respect for their forebears, for the hard work, sacrifices, and bias that they endured to establish a home in America. By maintaining ethnic identity and customs, the younger generations are paying tribute to that past. Yet, at the same time, they have a strong sense of the differences of the present. They are no longer "foreigners," and they seek to focus on the most expressive and satisfying facets of ethnic culture, rather than the prescriptive structures.

Bonnie Balas's experience reflects these changes. Early in her adulthood, Balas's maternal grandmother abandoned many of her traditions as part of the family effort to prosper by assimilating. Years later, when Bonnie began investigating Rusyn traditions after attending a course in egg painting, her mother and her grandmother were surprised and cautious, but gradually went along with the reintroduction of traditions into family life. For the younger Balas, developing ethnic arts has been a vehicle for personal expression and social development, quite the opposite of her grandparents' experience.
The ethnic mixing that residents refer to actually began in the first generation. Among the Slovaks and Carpatho-Rusyns, for instance, there were different dialects and religions, implying different customs, as well. Anna Karaffas explained that the inclusion of pagach on the Christmas Eve table had never been a part of her nuclear family's Rusyn tradition, but that she had started including it when she married her husband, who was accustomed to it in his Rusyn nuclear family. Years later, Karaffas added fish to the table to please her daughter's Slovak husband. Even years after his demise, fish is still on the Karaffa table on Christmas Eve.

In the past, I was told, it was customary for the bride to go to the husband's church if they were from different religions. This seems still to occur, for a number of women that I talked to mentioned changing churches. Interestingly, a number of them were marriages between an Anglo woman and a Slavic man. Judie Kosisko most vigorously adopted the Slovak identity of her husband. When I asked about her ethnic background, Judie said that her family was Irish and German, "but I'm Slovak!" She converted from a Protestant denomination to Catholicism and has worked tirelessly with St. John's in Connellsville on cultural heritage activities. She has observed traditions in the home and her children now identify

clearly with Slovak heritage, also.
Myra and John Piwowar, in their 40s, were raised Jewish and Catholic, respectively. Though their cultural differences would seem to be more profound, they have found a less radical way of melding the cultures. They observe both traditions in their home, and have identified a theme shared by both their ethnic cultures -- family closeness -- to concentrate on in raising their children. After living in New Hampshire for several years, they decided to move back to Fayette County so that John could run the family farm. They live close to and interact frequently with the many Piwowars in the nearby area, but they also visit her family in Levittown regularly and are raising their daughters in the Jewish faith. The family belongs to Temple Israel in Uniontown. Both of the girls, the parents laughed, are currently dating Catholics.

Within this frame of cultural mixing, customs that enhance family life are most widely practiced. The two most popular genres among my informants are foodways and holiday observances, both of which bring family together. Mothers and mothers-in-law are often the cultural brokers and foodways the currency.

Both my Eastern European and Lebanese informants described large weekly meals in which ethnic favorites are always included. Often, this is a meal that brings the grown children together in the parents' home. These are also occasions for younger women to learn by helping. My informants weren't sure if the younger women would continue these large meals and the preparation of more difficult ethnic dishes and holidays when their mothers can no longer do it. However, among the older women I interviewed, most had gone to their mothers' homes when they were younger, too, suggesting that when the time comes, the younger generation will carry on.

Christmas Eve dinners, observed by Eastern Europeans and Italians alike, are widely held. They repeat some of the old and adapt the new. Bonnie Balas described the different tasks of family members in the preparation of the Christmas Eve meal. Marge Dursa, Italian by birth, described her "Mixed Old Slavonic and Italian Christmas Eve." Her table includes a modified version of her mother-in-law's recipe for "bobolki," as well as other Slavonic dishes, along with the smelts, eel, vermicelli, and lupe beans that she identifies as Italian.

The rise in the popularity of the Easter basket custom reflects on both the mixing of cultures and the selection of traditions that enhance family life. The tradition involves the preparation on Holy Saturday, the day before Easter, of a basket containing (sometimes but not always) ham, bacon, beets with horseradish, salt, pascha, kielbasa, sweet cheese, butter, and pysanki. An embroidered cloth made expressly for the ritual is draped over the basket and a candle is secured near the handle. The basket is taken to church and blessed by the priest in a special ceremony. Some churches have found it necessary to conduct the blessing ceremony twice to accommodate everyone.

While a core of people has maintained this custom continuously, in the last decade the practice has grown. In 1991, approximately 600 baskets were blessed at St. Mary's Church in Uniontown. Many of these, to be sure, were presented by women who are from cultures that never have had such a tradition, such as Germans and Irish. Yet these women have enthusiastically adopted the practice because of its appeal to family values and aesthetic sensibilities. Charles Swenglish said that his Italian wife "does it for [him]." Children enjoy being involved in the preparation, I was told, especially with regard to the coloring of eggs. In some families, the preparation and consumption involve extended

family members. Fifteen people participate in the Balas Easter, and Bonnie's uncle "always brings the kielbasa." Balas mentioned that at some churches in Pittsburgh, the meal is consumed at the church hall, underscoring the interconnectedness of family and church communities. In Fayette County, the meal is taken at home.

CHURCH

Churches are clearly important in Fayette County. There is broad membership and participation in the churches, and they are notable centers for social activity as well as religious activity.

The variety of churches in a county not heavily populated is quite impressive. There are AME, Assembly of God, Apostolic, Baptist, Southern Baptist, Independent Baptist, Church of the Brethren, Catholic - Byzantine rite, Catholic - Latin rite, Catholic - Maronite rite, Charismatic, Christian, Christian and Missionary Alliance, Church of Christ, Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, Church of God, Community churches, Disciples of Christ, Evangelical, Evangelical Free, Evangelical Lutheran, Evangelical Independent, Eastern Orthodox, Episcopal, Full Gospel, Independent Fundamental, Interdenominational, Jehovah's Witness, Lutheran, Mennonite, Free Methodist, Methodist, United Methodist, Wesleyan Methodist, Nazarene, Russian Orthodox, Syrian Orthodox, United Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Presbyterian - USA, Seventh Day Adventist, as well as Conservative, Orthodox, and Reform Jewish congregations.

While there is a wide variety of Protestant denominations, the predominant religion is Roman Catholic. This was reflected in my fieldwork in the Connellsville Coal and Coke District. Researcher Doris Dietrich noted that Protestant churches predominate in the more rural and mountainous part of the county, Catholic in the towns and patches. Dietrich's fieldnotes include more information on the Protestant churches.

ETHNICITY AND CHURCH

Among the Catholic churches, there are "territorial" and "ethnic" churches. The territorial churches are parishes that were established to serve all the Catholics within designated geographic boundaries, regardless of ethnicity, such as Immaculate Conception in Connellsville. (However, others called the church "Irish," according to the pastor.) The ethnic churches were established specifically to serve a particular group and initially had services in the native language, observed ethnic liturgical and social customs, and were staffed by priests of the same ethnic group. Holy Trinity in Connellsville is such a church.

These definitions are confounded by practice, however. In the first place, almost all of the churches have ethnically-mixed congregations today. Some of the territorial churches had or have congregations in which one ethnic group predominates and its culture is incorporated into church life. On the other hand, some churches established as ethnic have become territorial, observing few if any ethnic customs for a congregation coming from a particular area. Then there are cases such as that of St. Vincent's in Leisenring. It was once the Irish church but is now the territorial church, and the pastor, Father Peter

Peretti, blesses Easter baskets and provides "oplatki" at Christmastime.

There are both large and vigorous ethnic churches and small, "mission" churches. A mission church is one whose congregation cannot support the parish and priest alone. Many of these are churches in patches whose population was severely reduced either when the mines worked out or during the Fifties. They were left with an older population core that is elderly today. In order to keep the church open and the congregation in place, a mission church becomes part of a stronger parish and contributes to the support of that priest. He, in turn, says mass there once on Sundays and twice during the week and performs baptisms, weddings, and funerals there when needed. St. Polycarp in Bute and St. Vincent de Paul Church in Leisenring have this relationship, as do St. Stephen's Byzantine in Leisenring and St. Nicholas Byzantine in Perryopolis. This arrangement also forestalls church consolidation, the combining of smaller churches into one larger territorial church by the diocese. Many people dislike consolidation because it seems to diffuse the ethnic focus of a church.

Despite the changes, churches are still a focal point of ethnicity in Fayette County. They are identified as the "Irish" church, or the "Slovak" church or the "Italian" church, even if in the next breath the speaker qualifies with "but today we're mixed." In most Latin-rite churches, however, ethnic services are few and usually are limited to the singing of native language hymns on special occasions and the inclusion of some holiday ceremonies. The performance of ethnicity is mainly through the presentation of ethnic foodways at parish suppers and fundraising events.

Father Rich Curci at St. John's Slovak Church in Connellsville told Doris Dietrich that "ethnicity does not really surface too strongly anymore in church life, but that it still plays an important role for the parish's identity...as a spiritual tie with the past." Father Mina at St. Stephen's Byzantine in Leisenring told me that national identity is of much less importance to the members of St. Stephen's than is the community of people who have belonged to the church and shared each other's lives for such a long time. Bonnie Balas said that her religious identity was of greater importance to her than her ethnic identity, despite the fact that she is one of the prime conservators of Rusyn culture in the area. The folk arts that she practices, she said, are pretty and interesting -- more for "fun."

The fact that many of the Eastern European groups in the area came from places that either were never independent countries or have become part of another country may contribute to the diminished sense of national identity. The Carpatho-Rusyns, for instance, encompassed a range of dialect groups from the Transcarpathian Mountain Range, which traverses several different countries today. Many of the Lebanese came from areas that were part of Syria at the time of their migration. One more recent immigrant from Beirut said that the village that many Fayette County Lebanese identify as their home village, Abdillah, is not even on the Lebanese map, adding to his feeling that the earlier immigrants are not, in fact, Lebanese in the contemporary sense.

Some of the things that have had an impact on the ethnic focus of the churches are the diminished understanding of native languages, the mixing of congregations by intermarriage, the practice of parishioners joining or leaving the church for reasons other than ethnicity, and the efforts of the churches themselves to discourage bias by encouraging intergroup and interfaith participation.

Although interest in learning the native language seems to be growing in some parishes, few of the ethnic groups or their churches have passed on facility with the original language to the third generation. At St.

Stephen's Byzantine Catholic Church in Leisenring, which is celebrating its centennial, Old Slavonic was taught to parish children at summer catechism classes until around 1955. As a result, the younger generation of parishioners today does not speak the language. As the dominant language of the parishioners changed to English, many of the customs and rituals that depended on Old Slavonic disappeared, among them the "parakils," Wednesday evening rituals of prayers and songs in Old Slavonic during Advent, Christmas caroling in Old Slavonic, and the observation of "veliga," the Christmas Eve service traditionally held in the church at around eight in the evening. This is characteristic of the experience of Latin rite churches such as Holy Trinity, as well.

More important than ethnicity to many parishioners are strong leadership and a full range of activities. People change parish at will today, without the fear of ecclesiastical censure. In some cases, the size and vitality of church congregations has risen and fallen with the leadership abilities of the pastors. The Kosisko family and the Stevenson family told of pastors whose behavior and personality drove people away from their churches. On the other hand, parishioners of St. George's Maronite Catholic Church and St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church attributed the vitality of the institutions to the vigor of the pastors.

Important parish leaders also come from the ranks of the laity. In strong congregations, there usually is an individual or core of people who are responsible for organizing many of the activities. These activities may reflect the interests of the individual. For example, Bonnie Balas, an artist in her own right, started the Crafts Club at St. John's Byzantine after she became interested in Carpatho-Rusyn folk arts, and the group's work has spurred greater interest in Rusyn crafts.

Many people belong to two or more parishes, either for convenience or to satisfy a variety of personal and family needs. Charles Swenglish noted that, despite the fact that his family has belonged to St. Mary's for a couple of generations, he is considering, as others have, changing to St. Theresa's, which used to be the Italian church but is largely non-ethnic now, because they have more activities for children. As a result, patterns of church membership, even in territorial parishes, are not consistently geographic. In other words, Slovaks that live in Lemont Furnace would belong to St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church in Uniontown rather than St. John's Catholic Church in Connellsville, but they might also or instead go to St. Cecilia's in Lemont Furnace or St. Procopius in New Salem or St. Theresa's in Uniontown.

The presence of a parish school seems to bolster parish vitality and, to some degree, ethnic identity. St. Mary's and St. John the Baptist Byzantine in Uniontown, two of the strongest parishes, have schools. However, these schools have also become multi-cultural. Less than half of her class at St. John's is Carpatho-Rusyn, according to Balas, and a slightly higher percentage are Byzantine. Besides Roman Catholics, the student body includes Jews, Protestants, and even Hindus. They come to the school, says Balas, because of its excellent reputation in academics. While teachers include cultural studies of a broad range of groups, the students of all faiths participate in the Byzantine customs and rituals.

In Connellsville, there are consolidated Catholic school districts which serve five or six parishes. As with the consolidated churches, some people feel that these schools are less likely to enforce ethnic identity. However, few of the parish schools had ethnic nuns or language after the 50s, anyway. For children who do not attend Catholic day school, CCD classes (Catholic catechism classes) are usually held after school hours.

In the Byzantine churches, it appears that there have been cycles of strengthening or diluting the ethnic/religious nature of the church. Some of those churches abandoned structural and ritual aspects of their old country identity in earlier years when there was a greater desire among immigrants not to be so different, and pressure from the American hierarchy to Latinize. For instance, the "iconostas" at St. Stephen's was removed, over the objections of some of the parishioners. The Midnight Mass, more typical of the Roman rite, was incorporated. St. John's Byzantine was built without an iconostas, and statues were incorporated into the interior. Stations of the Cross, another ritual non-traditional to the Byzantine, was adopted. Now, on the other hand, in a time of renewed respect for ethnicity, the iconostas are being rebuilt and some of the Latin practices are being eliminated. Father Eugene Yackanich, pastor of St. John the Baptist, has been active in the de-Latinization of the church. He recently acquired wedding crowns for use in the parish. For some time, floral wreaths have been worn by the bride and groom, but the heavier metal artifacts are more traditional. Such changes, even in the name of enhanced traditionality, don't always meet with the approval of the congregation members, especially the older ones.

In general, the move has been toward communication and integrated activities among the different rites and parishes. There is an interfaith council in the county that encourages ecumenism. Various churches have participated in cooperative religious activities, as well. Children from the Protestant and Latin rite churches have visited St. John the Baptist Byzantine for services, and vice versa. Five churches cooperated in a "Rosary Walk" in September 1992: St. John the Baptist Byzantine (Carpatho-Rusyn), St. Mary's (Slovak), St. Theresa's (Italian), St. George's Maronite (Lebanese), and St. John's Roman Catholic (Irish). Following the pattern of the rosary, which has five "decades," or groups of ten prayers, the group of worshipers from the five parishes went from church to church, at each place saying a decade of the rosary and singing a hymn specific to the church. The pastor there also delivered a short homily.

I believe Father Peter Peretti echoed a common attitude of the clergy when he recalled his own thought at the complaints of a woman whose ethnic church had become consolidated with others. She complained that the church members would not have ethnicity in common. He thought to himself, he said, that they have Catholicism in common, and that is more important. This attitude is surely effective in moving religion into the center that ethnicity once occupied.

CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

Most churches, whether large or small, territorial or ethnic, offer the same kinds of clubs and organizations. Stronger parishes will have more activities than smaller ones, but almost every church has a ladies organization that is responsible for the fundraising and social activities of the church. Sometimes there is a similar men's organization. Other kinds of organizations are solely religious, such as sodalities and rosary societies and groups focused on devotion to a particular saint, e.g., Marian organizations. Some, such as altar societies, take care of the church and ritual artifacts. Youth and senior citizens' groups that provide social opportunities and activities for age groups are part of the larger churches. There are also groups that perform services such as ushering or reading in church, and in recent years, parish councils, which help to administer the church. A number of churches have choirs.

It is the ladies' organizations that form the backbone of the church as community. In ethnic churches, while helping to support the parish, they may provide a vital service in the preservation of ethnic traditions, especially foodways. The "Pirohi Group" at St. John the Baptist Byzantine in Uniontown is an example. All the members of this group have or had children in the school. They were, in fact, organized to raise money for the support of the school. For that reason, they have more younger members -- mothers whose children are currently enrolled in the school -- than most such ladies' organizations. The group has made and sold pierogies every Friday during the school year for almost forty years, as well as prepared ethnic meals on other occasions. They have customers of long standing who call ahead to place their orders. Many of these regulars, I was told, are men "whose wives don't make these things anymore." Other customers go to the school cafeteria for the pierogie lunch. However, many of them are neither parishioners nor Slavic. They are city workers and business people who like pierogies.

St. George's Maronite Catholic Church Ladies' Auxiliary (also in Uniontown) raises money for a variety of uses by preparing and selling Lebanese dishes for such occasions as church breakfasts. They also prepare meals for celebrations and festivals. At the breakfasts, Lebanese bread, which is not often made at home anymore, is one of the first foodstuffs to sell out. Its availability relies almost wholly on the skills of one woman, Elizabeth Barkett, who is elderly. Most of the women in the group are over 60. With their earnings, the ladies have contributed to the support of a former priest in retirement and helped to buy a new car for the current pastor.

Even small congregations have a group that cooks and bakes. St. George's Serbian Orthodox Church outside Uniontown has 120 families and draws from a 140-mile radius between Morgantown and Monongahela. The ladies' group makes and sells Serbian pastry every Tuesday. They are also responsible for much of the food at the annual Serbian Picnic in August, as well as for the "dachas," post-funeral dinners held at the church for the families of the deceased.

The Kitchen Committee at United Baptist Church in Connellsville has existed about as long as the church has, with changing membership, of course. The African-American congregation was established around 1917 as Mt. Zion Baptist. In 1929 a rift developed in the congregation, and a second group emerged and named their church Union Baptist Church. In 1986, their congregations dwindling and their memories of the rift dissipated, the two churches reunited as United Baptist Church. United has a congregation of only about 40 people, mostly elderly. They, too, lost younger members when jobs declined. The women's group has a function similar to those at the Catholic churches -- they cook for church events, but it seems that their purpose is more social than economic. On the occasion of my visit, they had prepared a post-funeral dinner for the family and friends of the deceased. There was no charge for the dinner.

These groups do not make ethnic crafts much anymore, however. St. John the Baptist Byzantine is unusual in having a Crafts Club. Unlike the cooking groups, which have been in existence for many years, the Crafts Club is only about ten years old, more a product of ethnic revival than survival. Although a couple of the women in the group have embroidered and made pysanki all their lives, others learned from Bonnie Balas, who herself is mainly self-taught. They make many Rusyn embroidered ritual cloths, pysanki, and woodburnt items to sell at the annual Carpatho-Rusyn Festival to people of Eastern European extraction as well as others who simply admire the arts. Their proceeds also go to the support of the church.

Another ladies' group is the St. Vincent de Paul Society at Holy Rosary Church in Republic. The Society gathers used clothing and household items and sells them in a store in Uniontown, providing low-cost clothing to the area.

CHURCH ACTIVITIES

I did not attempt to survey the religious services that Fayette County churches offer, seeing them as more private and sectarian than public and of interest to the SIHC. However, two that are of a rather public nature and that receive media attention are the blessing of Easter baskets and the sixty-two year old annual pilgrimage at Mt. St. Macrina. The Easter basket tradition has already been described on page 39. Following is a description of the Mt. St. Macrina event.

Mt. St. Macrina Annual Pilgrimage

Mt. St. Macrina is the current name of Oak Hill, the former J.V. Thompson estate in Uniontown. Thompson was a wealthy realtor in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. His lavish estate included a mansion, lake, gardens, swimming pool, and stable. Thompson's fortune collapsed during the Depression, and Oak Hill became the property of Union Trust Bank. In 1933, the Bank sold the property to the American Province of the Sisters of Saint Basil. This order of nuns had been formed from a Galician order specifically to serve the Ruthenian (Rusyn) people of the Byzantine rite in America. That they chose to locate in this area underscores the importance of southwestern Pennsylvania in the settlement patterns of this ethnic group. In 1947, adjoining property that belonged to Thompson's son was acquired.

From the start, the estate was used for retreats for Byzantine clergy and laity alike. The nuns established a girls' academy, which closed in the Sixties, and a personal care boarding home. During the Sixties, a motherhouse for the order was built on the estate. A nursing home was built in 1971, and the Thompson mansion was restored as a retreat center. While the nuns have been primarily involved in education, they also produce liturgical garments, linens, and oil used in Byzantine rituals, as well as greeting cards. In local eyes, the honey cookies made there for the annual pilgrimage may be equally important.

The first pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Help at Mt. St. Macrina took place in 1934. Members of the Byzantine rite identify as precedents pilgrimages to weeping icons during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in what are now Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Rumania. The site of the first event, Mariapovch (Hungary), became a prominent pilgrimage destination in Europe.

The pilgrimage at Mt. St. Macrina is regarded as other pilgrimages are -- as an occasion for conversion and healing. It has also come to serve as an important time of reunion for both the members of the church and former residents of the area. Lasting for several days, the event draws thousands. It includes processions, candlelit ceremonies, singing of hymns, liturgy, and blessing of the sick. The first procession assembles parish groups who carry banners identifying their parish up the hill to the motherhouse. There, the icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help is taken and the procession goes on to the

Lourdes Grotto on the property.

Besides the banners and flower wreaths that are made for the processions, another well-known art is the "medovnicki," a honey cake decorated with icing flowers and designs and pictures of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. These are made by the nuns and volunteer helpers all summer in preparation for the Labor Day weekend event, and are intended to represent the food that pilgrims would need to sustain them on their journey home. In fact, they have become symbols of the event and the group itself. Supposedly, the recipe for them is never made public.

Festivals

A prominent and widespread type of event associated mainly with the churches is the festival, bazaar, or picnic. They have many elements in common, with the bazaar often being mostly focused on sales of food and crafts and the picnic having little for sale but the food. Most of the festivals have been going on for many years, and have come to serve as reunions, as well.

Many of the churches have festivals that either occur on and are named for their patron saint or simply celebrate the parish. If the parish has a significant ethnic element, it is likely to be featured at this festival, principally in the food. However, every event includes typical "American" foods such as hamburgers, and some even include ethnic varieties other than that of the parish. Often, a meal is served in the social hall of the church or the cafeteria of the school, if there is one.

Crafts sales are usually part of this kind of event. The crafts may vary from ethnic folk arts made by the ladies of the church, to general "country craft" items, to flea market-type sales. Books and memorabilia of the nationality may also be available. Many festivals include games of chance and rides; most include game booths and beer sales, as well.

Music is always a part of the festival. In Fayette County, however, reflecting the multi-ethnic constitution of the parish as well as the general population, the music will likely be either multi-ethnic or popular. Sometimes, a group which is of different ethnic identity from that of the church will perform, as the Molinaro (Italian) Band did at the festival of Sts. Cyril and Methodius (Slovak) Church that Doris Dietrich documented. Often, a polka band with a multi-ethnic and "Chicago" polka style performs. Many of these are from Fayette. When traditional dance and music are performed, it is usually by a group from elsewhere. For instance, the Slavjane Dancers from Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church in MvcKeesport perform at the Carpatho-Rusyn Festival at St. John the Baptist Byzantine Church. The Blue Moon Band from McKeesport plays Serbian and Croatian music at St. George's Serbian Orthodox Church Picnic in August.

Most of the festivals have been going on for many decades. The Carpatho-Rusyn Festival is an exception. It was begun in 1982 as part of an effort to develop a city-wide multi-ethnic festival. The people of the parish prepared crafts, etc., for the festival, and when it was cancelled, the priest decided to proceed with a Carpatho-Rusyn festival to raise money to refurbish the church dome. The festival includes educational components, which are not common at the older type of festival, e.g., lectures on Eastern Europe and demonstrations of the making of folk arts and crafts.

Food Events

Events that are built around food are even more common and important to the social life of the county and church, regardless of denomination. They include those that are primarily for celebration and socialization to those that are for fundraising.
In the first category are the dinners and parties that are sponsored to celebrate important anniversaries and holidays. Usually these will include mainly parishioners rather than the public. Some will celebrate the visit of prominent clergymen; some will provide a social occasion for an otherwise prayer- or work-focused parish club. St. Stephen's Byzantine Church in Leisenring had a banquet to celebrate their centennial, for instance, and more recently a buffet following a service and visit by church hierarchy.

Events such as church suppers and breakfasts bridge the social and commercial. St. George's Maronite church breakfast was an occasion for congregation members to visit with relatives and friends, but the Ladies' Auxiliary also made over $400 on the occasion. People donated baked goods and the auxiliary made fried dough ("zelba"), Lebanese bread, and fruit salad to sell. St. George's Serbian Orthodox Church has a social after Sunday services to which the congregation members bring, and then buy, pastries. St. Vincent de Paul's in Leisenring recently had a "Soup and Salad Bar" to which parishioners donated prepared foods and then bought tickets for the dinner.

Other events, weekly, seasonal, or cyclical, are mainly fundraisers, often with socializing by the producing group as a welcome by-product. Food sales are prominent. The weekly pirohi sales at St. John the Baptist are an example. St. Mary's Orthodox Church in Masontown sells pascha at Easter. St. George's Serbian Orthodox sells Serbian pastries every Tuesday. Holy Rosary in Republic has several spaghetti dinners each year and fish dinners during Lent.

Events that feature gambling games are also popular. Bingo games are held regularly or periodically at some churches. "Las Vegas Nights," in which people pay to get in and then play games of chance with play money, are popular at other venues, as well. Father Peter Teretti at St. Vincent's said that this event "provided a nice social evening for the parishioners."

The churches also sponsor flea markets and rummage sales to raise money.

IMPORTANT SECULAR ORGANIZATIONS

While they are organized around a variety of foci -- sports, ethnicity, community service, religious belief, community membership -- the predominant characteristic of the many older secular organizations in the county (ones that are not part of the churches) seems to be that they are for men. While some are admitting women now, most have included them in their activities only through auxiliaries or guest membership. (Paul Kolp, in fact, said that when the sportsmen's club in Lemont Furnace began admitting women, most of the "oldtimers" like himself quit.) They are all multi-generational, including men from their late teens through their eighties, and the members often include several generations and branches of family members. In addition, as are most other social bodies of the county, these organizations are now quite multi-ethnic, even the ethnic clubs. While nearly all do some type of charitable or community-support activities, a primary function is obviously male socialization. The

sportsmen's clubs and ethnic clubs, in particular, appear to be an important part of the culture of miners.

SPORTSMEN'S CLUBS

It is tempting to conjecture that the popularity of sportsmen's clubs is related to the fact that so many of their members spent their days below ground. Many of these clubs were established in mining towns during the heyday of mining. Some of them, in fact, have adapted structures that were owned by mining companies. Hutchinson Sportsmen's Club was established by a group of men who worked together in the Brownfield coke furnaces and mines and had hunted in the area. Hutchinson is the name of the area encompassing the mining towns of Big and Little Brownfield, Rosedale, and Oliphant Furnace. When the group bought the club property in 1946, it included ash dumps from the ovens, a mine entrance, and a lake that had provided water for the coke operations.

Today, while their memberships include men from many other occupations as well as professionals, all have a large number of former miners. With the exception of the Hutchinson Sportsmen's Club (which has grown to 2,000 members, mostly from a 25-mile radius), most have a limited geographical range. Franklin Rod and Gun Club members come from within a five mile radius, for example. Steve Bertovich compared the club, housed in a former mine wash house, to a "town hall or town meeting place," where everyone gets together to talk and find out what's going on. In fact, they seem a little like "patch clubs."

Shared interest in hunting and fishing and the skills that are part of them, such as gunmanship, are a primary motive for the sportsmen's clubs. Some own property that members hunt on, and they may have shooting ranges and horseshoe pits, for instance. They provide awards for various categories of prey: the pheasant with the longest tail, the buck with the largest rack. They may organize functions around sports seasons. For instance, Hutchinson has a "camperee" the Friday night before the start of trout season. On that night, members are allowed to park their campers beside the lake that is on the club's property. The next morning, the club provides a free breakfast starting at 5:30 so that members can be ready to fish when the season opens officially at 8:00. Hutchinson stocks its lake several times a year. Other clubs enhance hunting opportunities by putting out pheasant or digging holes for rabbits to encourage their presence on the hunting field.

According to Bob Neel, an officer of Hutchinson Sportsmen's Club, which a few years ago expanded its original nine-and-a-half acre site to sixty-three acres, the popularity of clubs today reflects the concern among sportsmen that development is "moving in and endangering hunting." Many clubs are buying as much property as they can in order to ensure that it won't be developed. Indeed, an observation of men in several clubs was that the areas around them that used to be available for hunting no longer are because of development.

Day-to-day socializing is the most prominent activity, however. When clubs receive their charters, they are allowed to sell liquor to members according to the rules of the state liquor control board. Every club has a bar. Many are open most days for long hours. Others are open certain days of the week. In some ways, they are like "the corner bar," serving a regular clientele who get together regularly, watch television and sports events, talk, play cards, etc. This is encouraged by the remarkably low

prices that they sell the liquor for -- 75 or 80 cents for a beer or a shot of whiskey!

Liquor sales are a main source of support for the clubs. Other activities that help support them are turkey shoots, bingo, and punchboard (a game of chance), for instance. They have dances and picnics and parties, depending on the size of the club. Hutchinson also has a Family Night every Friday when members bring the entire family and there is a private bingo game. Outsiders can attend events at the club only in the company of a member, and membership is restricted. New members must be sponsored by a member. That has no doubt kept them racially segregated.

ETHNIC CLUBS

Ethnic clubs are mainly male social organizations with an interest in providing support for ethnic community needs. The Polish Club of Connellsville was founded by a group of men from Connellsville, Trotter, and Leisenring who wanted to do something "to unite the Polish people." In some ways, these clubs may be seen as secular branches of churches, for many of them were established by groups of parishioners. For example, the Polish Club was started by members of Holy Trinity parish, and today the club sometimes provides money for flowers for the church, for example. The Italian Independent Social Club and the Independent Slovak Club, both in Connellsville, were founded by groups of male parishioners to raise money for St. Rita's Catholic Church and St. John's Catholic Church, respectively. Today, the Slovak Club continues that role, but the Italian Club has for a few years had some difficulty raising funds.

Most of the clubs have mixed membership now, often based on family and occupational networks that have become multicultural. The Italian Club has approximately 50% Italians, for instance; the Polish Club, 75% Polish. Members of both clubs are mainly in blue collar occupations, working at Anchor Glass, in the mines, or as construction workers. Members' ages range from 21 to the 80s and 90s.

Ethnic clubs bear many similarities to the sportsmen's clubs. They usually have a bar which sells liquor at very low prices and is the main source of income for the club. They may have a kitchen that is either staffed or used by members to prepare food. The clubs serve as regular meeting places where members talk, watch television, play pool or cards, or participate in punchboard. Unlike the sports clubs, but like the volunteer fire departments, they sometimes own a hall that can be rented by other groups to contribute to the support of the organization. Membership is mainly male, with women allowed as guests. In the Polish Club, women may hold "social membership," which does not allow them to vote.

Like the churches, some ethnic clubs have few events and activities that have to do with tradition. Bill Wisilosky, president of the Polish Club, which has 600 members, said that the previous evening they had "pasta e fagioli," an Italian bean and pasta soup that one of the members had made, but they sometimes do have pierogies and cabbage rolls, for instance. Those genres of tradition that do remain are most likely to be foodways and music. The polka band Trail Tones, which plays and sings Slovak music as well as other polka music, sometimes plays at Slovak Club events, for instance.

The Jewish Community Center in Uniontown represents a similar genesis but a different life course from

those of other ethnic organizations. It was founded by a group of Jewish businessmen who wanted to have a place for the men's organization B'nai B'rith to meet and for men to gather to talk and play cards. Presently, the membership consists of about 70 Jewish families and as many non-Jewish. In addition to the center itself, there are tennis courts and a swimming pool in the complex. Non-members can rent the facilities for wedding receptions, banquets, parties, etc., as well as participate in summer sports there. The center has a day care center whose clientele is mixed. Both Christian and Jewish holidays are observed in the day care center.

VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENTS

While the volunteer fire departments provide a setting for male social life, their activities are more community-focused than those of the sports and ethnic clubs. Chief Mark Trenker of the Dunbar VFD, which was founded in 1916, said that the motivation for joining is "to help the community." Membership is based upon residence within the township of the department. Activities, while similar to a sport in some ways, are directed toward the community good. In addition to fighting fires and helping at accidents, volunteer fire departments put out brush fires or burn unwanted buildings for community residents, pump water out of basements, and haul water to people whose wells have gone dry, for instance. The Dunbar VFD had 180 calls last year, the North Union VFD 320.

Like the other clubs, these are all-male, except for ladies auxiliaries. They are multi-ethnic and multi-generational, often including many family members. Chief Trenker of the Dunbar VFD is the son, nephew, and brother of firemen. Like many other firemen, he was interested from an early age and joined when he was 20. Firemen tend to be blue collar workers. The Dunbar department has a large number of glassworkers and construction workers. The North Union Fire Department, which has 65 members, 25 of them active, includes men between the ages of 19 and 77. Different systems are used to determine active members, but basically all revolve around the member attending meetings regularly, helping fully with fundraising, and coming out for fires. Department members elect a chief, assistant chief, and captains or lieutenants annually. They also select business managers.

Members may visit the firehouse daily, using it as a social space where they can watch television, read, play cards, and talk. They also spend a lot of time on the care of the engines, which are awarded trophies in the parades and other fire department events. After a fire, newer members are generally given the task of cleaning the hoses and engines. While the chief and the assistant are responsible for seeing that everything gets done, not all departments have formal structures for the assignment of tasks.

Firemen are trained initially at a "fire school" on New Salem Road that is run by the county. Periodically, experts on different topics also visit department meetings and give workshops and lectures. Otherwise, firemen learn by working with each other.

Most fire departments have both firehouses for their engines and equipment and social halls. The North Union VFD in Lemont Furnace, like other VFD halls, is used not only for department events such as meetings, but also to raise funds. The departments may sponsor dances and bingo games there as well as rent the facility out for wedding receptions and other events.

Fundraising is especially important to the fire companies because they have to pay for their engines

themselves, sometimes receiving some money from the borough or township. The Dunbar VFD has an annual week-long street fair, with rides, food games, a disk jockey, and live bands. Other fundraising activities include raffles and fund drives. The Dunbar Ladies' Auxiliary also has a calendar sale, dances, buckwheat pancake and sausage breakfast, and spaghetti dinners to help support the fire department. Social events exclusively for the department members include Christmas parties and summer picnics.

A very important event in the folklife of the volunteer fireman is the annual county firemen's convention. There, companies compete in such events as the "Bucket Brigade," in which they compete in filling a 55-gallon drum with buckets of water, and the "Tug of War," in which two opposing companies equipped with firehoses try to move a barrel secured to the middle of a cable across a line. The Dunbar VFD has over 200 trophies from such events, the oldest won in the 1940s. This year, the convention will take place in Dunbar Township during the week-long Dunbar VFD street fair in July.

Chief Trenker mentioned that many of the volunteer firemen are also members of sports clubs and the Connellsville Slovak and Sons of Italy clubs.

Other clubs that are numerous in the county, but which I did not collect data on, are the Knights of Columbus, Masons, Eagles, and Veterans' organizations.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND PROGRAMMING

While I believe that this report provides a sound introduction to topics of major importance in Fayette County and the Connellsville Coal and Coke District, it does not cover all topics of note there. For instance, I was unable to schedule interviews with people who lumber and have quarries. Also, because of the geographical and time limitations of the project, I did not document any of the farm families who represent earlier settlement, or mountain people, although I believe that their histories and culture are part, however peripheral, of the picture of the coal region. My research focused on the Catholic and Orthodox churches and the East European cultures of the coal immigrants more than on the Protestant and Anglo cultures of the earlier settlers. Some ethnic groups whose histories are not so intrinsic to the coal era were not contacted, for instance, the Belgians. Further information on all of those topics would expand the picture of culture in Fayette County.

Neither was the survey format compatible with in-depth documentation and description of any single group. The transportation industries in particular are promising areas for research in occupational folklife. They are rich in hierarchies, ritual, language, and skills. The fact that they are undergoing significant change adds urgency to the importance of documenting them. The garment industry has also been important to women's occupational folklife in the area, but little documentation of it has been done. I believe that welding as a cross-occupational skill and expressive mode may be a particularly rich topic for research in this very industrial area, since so many of my informants knew welding and used it for personal projects, both expressive and utilitarian.

While my research documented aesthetic expressions that were part of the topics I covered, I did not focus on artists per se. More information on artists and the particularities of their forms would be useful

for programming. Also, comparative examination of the ways that different ethnic groups have altered their company houses may expand the picture of patch life in an interesting way. Dialect studies may clarify the picture of regional culture.

My impression is that the rituals and customs surrounding death and burial are important to the culture, particularly because death has been a part of occupational life, and a high percentage of the present population is elderly. Finally, my conclusions regarding ethnicity are tentative because they are based on what people told me more than what I could observe. On this topic, in particular, I feel that observation in a wide range of contexts is important.

As regards follow-up programming, I recommend projects that enhance the sense of connection with and contribution to cultural conservation activities in the broader steel industry heritage region. I think people in the area feel peripheral to Pittsburgh and need leadership and encouragement to develop organized conservation efforts. For instance, letters of acknowledgement to the main informants and a summary document of the project made widely available through a variety of outlets would assist this goal. The churches, in particular, are an excellent channel to ethnic groups and patch communities, and outreach to groups such as the ladies' organizations for conservation projects may be fruitful. Even those groups that have not really concerned themselves with culture but are in fact strongholds of local culture, such as the fire departments, might respond to an initiative. I strongly support plans to incorporate some informants into an advisory group, and recommend Mack Stevenson, Mark Trenkler, Wilbur Landman, and Bonnie Balas.

Fayette County has a very bad self-image and a notion of its public image as a depressed region of the "has-been" and "left over." ("This place is beat down," I heard more than one person say.) Projects that focus favorable light on the resourceful ways that people have used the remnants of the coal era would be beneficial to them as well as interesting to others. For instance, viewing the patches as little villages, which they are in fact, and focusing on the creativity and resourcefulness of the remodeling of the company houses through photographic essays and exhibits would garner cooperation. (In fact, the efforts to maintain homes and communities in the patches may be seen as unself-conscious cultural conservation.) A project to encourage local support for and documentation of individual gardens in the patch towns, perhaps with the "award" being inclusion in a publication or exhibit, would be a pleasant turn on the past company awards.

Projects that reinforce and focus on important local values such as family life could also be supportive of the region. Multi-generational documentation workshops and projects for families conducted in familiar settings such as the churches, perhaps in conjunction with the Patch/Work project, would encourage and shape grassroots cultural conservation. Also, projects to encourage the documentation of club histories by members would underscore their importance in local culture and encourage their continuation.

Projects that engage local people in conservation of the remains of the coke yards, or in their more recent histories, may be of value. For instance, an organized effort to find family pictures that include coke yards -- not just work pictures, but those that show other kinds of activities that went on in that environment, such as children playing or men hunting, would illustrate the ongoing use and a sort of community proprietorship.

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