

**ETHNOGRAPHIC SURVEY OF WESTMORELAND COUNTY AND FORWARD  
TOWNSHIP, ALLEGHENY COUNTY**

Elise Mellinger  
Steel Industry Heritage Corporation  
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## **PREFACE**

The quotes in this report are taken directly from tapes or written records of informants' statements given during the course of fieldwork. Sources for these quotes are indicated after the quotes in parentheses. Sources referred to as "logc," preceded by a number, indicate that a tape was the source. The tapes collected for this report are numbered chronologically, 1-24. Occasionally, tape counter numbers are included after the tape number, for example: (log13c 398). "Side A" of the tape is always the referrant unless "side b" is indicated after the tape number. (i.e. log 13c side b 398)

Sources other than tapes include fieldnotes and field (or untaped) interviews. These are indicated by FN or FI respectively. The date on which the notes or interview were collected precedes the code (i.e. 8-13FN). These sources can be located in the Steel Industry Heritage Archives and are indexed by separate tables of contents for tape logs and fieldnotes.

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## **I Fieldwork Plan**

### **A. Geographic approach**

The area assigned to me for this project included the parts of Westmoreland County west of the Pennsylvania Turnpike, 76, and north of route 31 at Southerwood in Fayette county, excluding North Huntingdon Township. It also included several chunks of Allegheny County: Elizabeth and Forward townships, which can be considered as "culturally" belonging to Westmoreland County. (Dyen, personal comm., 1992)

The geographic plan dictated that I begin with Elizabeth Borough, drive up towards Clairton and then away from the river, inland to Elizabeth Township, then to return to the river and visit Forward Township riverside communities such as Bunola, Elkhorn, Gallatin and Sunnyside. Then I planned to go through Forward Township's more rural inland areas. Returning to the river, I would follow it on route 136, which turns into 906 at the borderline with Rostraver Township of Westmoreland County. Route 906 continues through Webster to Monessen. After covering those parts of the Mon area, I intended to turn east towards the Youghiogheny River, going through the countryside in between and beyond it, down through South Huntingdon Township to Smithton, Jacobs Creek, Macbeth, and Reagantown, to East Huntingdon Township which includes Scottdale, West Overton, and Mt. Pleasant. Then I would go north through Hunker, New Stanton, Madison, and up through Yukon, Herminie, West Newton.

The unfolding of the plan was initially as outlined above. However, I spent more time in the denser population centers and less in rural areas, mostly because it was easier to contact people in denser population centers. In some places, such as Bunola and Elkhorn, there were no people on the streets in the afternoons, save bicyclists who whizzed by, and the public buildings I could find, such as the post office and fire station, were closed seemingly for good, making these places rather uncondusive to fieldwork. In other places in Forward Township, such as Gallatin and Sunnyside, I stopped in a bar (Rapp's Bar in Gallatin) and a church (Riverside Tabernacle, Gallatin-Sunnyside border). I spent more time in Elizabeth than I had originally intended to, perhaps because that was the beginning of fieldwork and I wanted to interview many of the contacts I made there.

Elizabeth Township ended up getting short thrift, however. One afternoon drive up Atlantic Ave., to south 48, past the Allegheny County Maintenance District #4 building and a stretch of commercial properties on the highway, past a few craft shops, was my only contact with this township. Although I did stop to talk with a young man selling corn on the side of the road, he wasn't from the area, and didn't know anyone I could talk to about it. Time did not allow a return visit, as I was eager to proceed down through Forward Township and to get into Westmoreland County. I did talk briefly, however, with one woman from Elizabeth Township, my first contact, Carolyn Muszynski, a volunteer at the Elizabeth Borough Library. Researchers who want to investigate Elizabeth Township more deeply might start with her, and also might visit the Central Volunteer Fire Company on south 48.

## **A. Geographic Approach**

### **1. Sites Visited**

The aforementioned sites are the locations I visited in Forward and Elizabeth Townships. Sites in Westmoreland County included: Webster, Fellsburg, Monessen, Jacobs Creek, Smithton, Centerville, Macbeth, Reagentown, Scottdale, Mt. Pleasant, West Bethany, Ruffsedale, Tarrs, West Bethany, Mendon, Wyano, Yukon, Herminie, West Newton, Hunker, New Stanton, Greensburg, Hecla and Norvelt. The geographic field plan shifted to include the last three sites because I thought a visit to the Westmoreland County seat, Greensburg, was important both to get a better picture of the area and to get lists of countywide activities and county maps; I also attended the Westmoreland County fair near Greensburg, in Norvelt.

## **B. Ethnographic Approach**

This project's main aim was the cultural preservation of important occupational, ethnic, religious and social aspects of the region. I designed an interview guideline which would reveal: occupational changes, social arrangements, the interaction of community groups, social networks, religious and ethnic identifications, and the people's relationships to the land, history, and environment of the area. I also wanted to discover what issues and concerns are important to the residents in the area. I planned to approach data collection through: interviewing, "windshield anthropology," and participant observation. "Windshield anthropology" entails learning about the built and intangible cultural scenes by driving through and around the target areas. Participant observation includes participating in and observing community events and activities such as festivals and the mundane scenes of everyday life: buying items in convenience stores, getting gas, having a drink at the bars, and walking around on the streets.

The first phase of the fieldwork plan involved spending several days collecting and reading archival materials to get a general idea of the history and other features of the region I'd be working in. I went to the University of Pittsburgh's Hillman library and was able to get several informative books on Westmoreland County. Other archival materials which I used (included in the reference list) were gathered as I went along; for instance, three books were lent to me by Bill Boucher in Elizabeth, one by Terry Necciai in Monongahela, and one by Bill Garber in Jacobs Creek. I also read materials provided to me by the Steel Industry Heritage Corporation from their files, such as their copy of Southwestern Pennsylvania's issue on Monessen. I reviewed lists of contacts, events, and possible interview questions from SIHC files.

The second phase was to involve "windshield anthropology"; driving around my general area and getting a feel for the built cultural environment, identifying churches, ethnic organizations, the layout of the towns and rural areas, businesses, fraternal halls, etc. This was to be a difficult task for me, as I was constantly tempted to stop in places and look around, and it wasn't until the end of my fieldwork phase that I covered most of my area in a "windshield" approach.

What worked best for me in this project was to drive to a town or populated area, get out, walk around, take pictures, write descriptions of what I saw, and meet people. Serendipity played a big part in this as in any anthropological undertaking. I would meet someone who happened to know someone I simply must talk to, and they knew someone, and so on. This kind of snowball networking was how I met most of my informants; others I was referred to by Kim Falk, or met through community events.

The third phase was to be developing contacts in whatever way I could; entering grocery stores, bars, restaurants, post offices, convenience stores, libraries, and municipal buildings, and then interviewing them in depth about their communities, their roles in their communities and issues and concerns which are important to them. In reality, as mentioned, I combined the second and third phases

or approaches. My first few contacts were unstructured interviews; I asked questions which popped into my head about my surroundings and the community, or what they did in the community. For the rest of the interviews, I used a interview outline to guide but not formally structure the interviews. Questions were mostly open-ended, and I pursued any interesting leads informants offered. I taped sixteen interviews, did thirteen untaped, written interviews (usually either because the person refused to be taped but allowed me or asked me to write their story/concerns, or because of the circumstances; they were working, it was too noisy, etc.), and at least eight shorter written interviews which were more conversational and informal. A chronological description of fieldwork is included in my field log.

Given the survey nature of this project which emphasized covering a large geographic area in a short period of time, my results and conclusions are necessarily more impressionistic than they would have been in a longer, more in-depth research project. Nonetheless, the data I collected from the forty or fifty people I spoke to and the places I visited presents a picture of the current residents' resilient adaptation to the area's depressed occupational and economic situation; these are people holding on to the cultural legacies their parents and grandparents created by encouraging and working for new development, preservation, and education.

## **II Elizabeth**

### **A. Geography**

Elizabeth is located on the Monongahela River, about fourteen miles from Pittsburgh on route 51. It can also be approached from route 22 or 30. A cheery white sign with red houses welcomes you to "Elizabeth, a Mid-Mon Valley Town" as you veer right off of 51 onto Market Street. You find yourself immediately in the heart of town, as you pass a pizza store on the left in the Elizabeth Hotel, a bar on the right, the Engine No. 2, a Moose lodge with an old wooden bench in front of it lettered "Independent Order of Odd Fellows Old Monongahela Lodge 209" and come to a stoplight. Ahead, Third Avenue crosses your path; the next street is Second Avenue. The Elizabeth Library, run entirely by volunteers, is on the corner of Second Avenue, opposite the dark green brick of the Shamrock Restaurant and bar.

One street down and you're on Water St., which boasts the expensive firehall building used for its profitable Bingo games, and is along the waterfront, above the Riverfront Park. Turning on Second Ave., which along with Third is the main hub of the small town, population 1,610 (1990 state census), one passes the Sportsmen's bar and State Legislator Dave Levdansky's office, the Calvary Temple Church, and Rockwell's Red Lion Restaurant, with its tall white pillars and British-style Red Lion flag.

The "five and ten" on the other side of the street, Murphy's, is now a vacant storefront. Further down is a Barton's Flowers and gifts store, and a few other retail stores. If one continues straight, one faces a dead end onto someone's property; to the right lie railroad tracks and a dirt road, Upper Mill Street, along the river. Making a left and then a right would take one along the Scenic River Road, 136, further into Forward Township.

Continuing up Second Ave. takes one past the post office, the United Methodist Church, (1790-1990), and Jay H. Feldstein's attorney-at-law office. There is a Graham's auto service and a nail and hair salon in a brick house with a fancy turquoise turret. The narrow streets are lined with old-style black lamppost-streetlights which add to the cozy small-town atmosphere. The town is liberally sprinkled with wood-paneled houses in turquoise-green and blue-gray.

Third St. is the home of the First Presbyterian Church and the Elizabeth Elementary School. Across from the school is the Municipal building, a small convenience store called "Lou's Place" and the Senior Center. Crossing Market St. takes you past the ramp to 51, towards the new BP station and Rite Aid Pharmacy. Opposite that is the Bethesda Presbyterian Church, and beyond that is Clairton, a



mile or two further on, and Elizabeth Township, which lies to the right, before Clairton, on Atlantic Ave. and south 48. Returning back through Elizabeth on Third St., past the BP, one encounters a sign "Elizabeth's Business District", and Marlene's Dance Studio. There is one pharmacy and a women's clothing store in the business district. The community is a "bedroom community", with no industry and little retail. Pizza stores, bars and restaurants dominate the town's business area. Most of the town's African-American residents live in an area not far from the BP station which they call "the Hollow" and the town's white residents call "Pifershire". An asphalt road cuts through this area to an area with mostly white residents above it on the hill. For a more specific geographic layout, refer to the map of Elizabeth included with the fieldworker's field materials at the SIHC archives.

## **B. History**

### **1. Elizabeth and the Monongahela River**

Elizabeth's history is inextricably intertwined with that of the Monongahela River. "Monongahela" is a Delaware Indian name meaning "the river with high banks which fall in." (Wiley, 1937, p. 17) The Mon is one of the few important rivers in the United States whose course is northwards, and its length is over two hundred miles. (Wiley, 1937) Its chief affluent is the Youghiogheny River, which is the main body of water in Westmoreland County. (Wiley, 1937: p. 14)

The Mon's total freight tonnage was the greatest of all the rivers in the United States, and it was one of the first rivers to receive dams and locks. Indeed, the Mon was the first river on which the United States Government installed a complete lock and dam system. The presence of the Mon River enabled its surrounding region, then known as the "Monongahela Country" (Wiley, 1937: 1) to become one of the foremost regions in the country in the mining and shipping of bituminous coal. (Wiley, 1937: 13)

### **2. Early Inhabitants**

The earliest known inhabitants of the Mon region around Elizabeth were the Delaware Indians, the Shawnees, and the Iroquois, who were crowding the former two peoples out of the western Pennsylvania region claiming it by conquest. Archaeological excavations have revealed even earlier inhabitants who were called "mound-builders" (Wiley, 1936:3) by historians in reference to the mounded-earth burial places they left behind. These ancient people are believed to be related to the region's Indian population but neither the early Indians nor the early white settlers knew who they were.

Historian Wiley concludes that Elizabeth itself is "wholly lacking in Indian history." (Wiley, 1936:9) because of the lack of permanent Indian villages in the Mon valley around Elizabeth at the time of white settlement. The Indians in this area, unlike those sedentary tribes inhabiting the Ohio and Allegheny river valleys, were nomadic, probably hunting-and-gathering or horticultural peoples. There also was no record of Indian-European war in the area, which, Wiley states, remained "west of the Monongahela and east of the Youghiogheny." (Wiley, 1936:9)

White settlement began in Southwestern Pennsylvania in the middle of the eighteenth century. In 1753 Frazer, a trader with the Indians, moved to Turtle Creek. He was a supporter of the Penn provincial government. Christopher Gist, an agent of the Ohio company who supported the colonial government of Virginia, also moved to Southwestern Pennsylvania that year, to the present Fayette County. In 1768 the British purchased the Western Pennsylvania territory from the Iroquois. (Wiley, 1936:14)

Many of the early settlers in Elizabeth after the Revolutionary War were Scotch-Irish, originally farmers, most of whom were paid in land for their services in the war. The Germans followed not long behind them, some of them farmers, others merchants. After 1820, the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, the first wave of immigration into Elizabeth and the surrounding area began. This wave

consisted of English, Germans, and Italians who knew how to make iron and set up "cottage industries" with furnaces in the woods. (log5c 108) The second wave of immigration, Eastern Europeans such as Slovaks and Poles, came as factories were established on a larger scale. African-Americans immigrated to the area to work in the factories after the Civil War.

### **3. Elizabeth region's early industries**

Elizabeth town, established in 1787, was named after Elizabeth Mackay, the wife of Colonel Bayard. The colonel and Elizabeth's brother, Samuel Mackay, purchased Greenoch from Donald Munro, a Scotsman, and established the town. Elizabeth town was incorporated as a borough on April 2, 1834. (Wiley, 1936:83)

Elizabeth's position on the Mon was instrumental in establishing one of its most important early industries, boat building. Elizabeth's boat-building history began around the beginning of the 19th century.

The Monongahela Farmer, built in 1800, was one of the first oceangoing vessels built in Elizabeth. It was financed through the Monongahela Company, which consisted of twenty residents who each contributed one hundred dollars to the capital stock and hired John Scott to draw the vessel's plan. Captain John Walker was the "master and Supercargo" (Wiley, 1936: 61) of the vessel which took barrels of flour, hemp, flax, and five-hundred barrels of whiskey on its fourteen-month trip to New Orleans. The Monongahela Farmer was sold and made a sailing vessel after successfully completing its long journey.

Among the more famous and prestigious rivercraft built at Elizabeth were the two "pirogues-large vessels of the log canoe type- built for the historic expedition of Lewis and Clark, to the far Northwest, under the recommendation of President Thomas Jefferson. . . in 1803." (Wiley, 1936:68)

Boat building followed a gradual evolution of forms: from the Indian-style log canoes to pirogues to bateaus (vessels with squared ends) to flatboats, keelboats, and oceangoing ships and then to the steamboat. The beginning of steamboat building in Elizabeth has been identified as around 1824-26; however, evidence suggests that at least one steamboat, the Western Navigator, was built a decade earlier. (Wiley, 1936:70) The keelboat remained popular some thirty years after the introduction of the steamboat because of its greater maneuver-ability. The steamboat industry faded because of increasingly scarce timber, the substitution of steel for wood in the construction of river vessels, the construction of the Pennsylvania Railroad bridge below Dam No. 2 which restricted the possible size of the boat hulls, and rapid railway expansion. (Wiley, 1936:82) There was a brief revival of the boat industry with the coal boom, and then it faded once more. However, Elizabeth's present Consolidated Coal's Marine Works has been operating continuously since 1887 and it is still to Elizabeth that boats such as the Gateway Clipper are sent for repairs.

By 1836 Elizabeth's industries already included: three steamboat yards, two steam saw-mills, one water saw-mill, a green-glass manufactory, and a woolen mill. (Wiley, 1936:100)

Coal mining and shipping was not common at this time; wood was commonly used for domestic

purposes. Mining for shipment began in West Elizabeth in 1842 in the Owen and Ihmsen Works. The coal "was used in the firm's glass factory in Pittsburgh" (Wiley, 1936:135) This works was bought by James O'Neil, and grew into O'Neil and Company, which later made the Elizabeth area a center of coal production.

By 1888, there were seven mills in the immediate area, which employed 1,777 men in the mining industry itself, 259 in boat building and repair, and another 100 as steamboatmen. (Wiley, 1936:141) These companies merged in 1899 into the Monongahela River Consolidated Coal and Coke Company, which became the Pittsburgh Coal Company early in the 20th century.

Coke also played a small part in the Elizabeth region's early industrial history. There were a few beehive ovens run by Connelly Brothers between Elizabeth and Clairton, and some others run by John A. Wood and Son across from the Connelly plant.

The development of the steel and coke industry in Clairton in the early 1900s greatly contributed to Elizabeth's prosperity. Elizabeth had become, however, mostly a "residence town" by the 1930s, the time in which Wiley wrote his history of Elizabeth.

#### **4. The Centennial**

On July 1, Sunday, 1934, the hundred-year anniversary of Elizabeth's incorporation as a borough was celebrated in a four day community festival. This festival featured a steamboat parade of twenty steamboats, athletic events, a historical pageant, and a historical parade with covered wagons and replicas of early churches, pioneer forts, and Indian and early settler representatives. (Wiley, 1936: 167) This event is still salient even to some younger Elizabeth residents as a source of community identity and pride. (8-11FN)

#### **5. Religious History**

The first churches in Western Pennsylvania were in the rural areas. The first church near Elizabeth was the Round Hill Presbyterian, founded in 1778, three miles out of Elizabeth. (Wiley, 1936:207) Bethesda Church, a United Presbyterian church, was founded in Elizabeth Township in 1782 by "Dissenters." It was called the "Forks of Yough Associate Reformed Meeting-House" until 1832. When the United Presbyterian Denomination formed in 1858, incorporating the Associate Reformed into its ranks, the Bethesda Church joined the denomination. A branch of this church formed the First United Presbyterian Church of Elizabeth in 1895, which still exists there today.

Seven miles south of Elizabeth, a Methodist Episcopal church, Fell's Church, was established in 1792. Members of that church were instrumental in establishing a Methodist church in 1832 in Elizabeth, which was succeeded in 1885 by the present Methodist church on Second Avenue and Walnut Street. (Wiley, 1936: 212)

Elizabeth's Baptist church was formed as an offshoot of the Salem Church in Rostraver Township in 1832. Its present building was dedicated on July 24, 1892.

The origins of Catholicism in Elizabeth goes back to the services of the Roman Catholic chaplains who came with French regiments from Canada. In 1851, "the great church-building year", (Wiley, 1936:214) a Catholic church, St. Michael's, was built on Fifth Avenue and Walnut Street in Elizabeth. By 1908 missions were established at Monongahela, Finleyville, and Clairton.

The African-American community in Elizabeth began planning an African Methodist Episcopal church in the 1850s. They were financially unable to complete the church until 1871, however. In the 1930s, several other African-American churches were established. An African Baptist church was established in the early 1900s in the Fallen Timber Hollow district, "where it has had a struggling existence." (Wiley, 1936:214) The fate of this church was the source of controversy and tension between Elizabeth's African-American and white communities whose effects linger on today. (see D. 2.

The African-American community of "Pifershire" in this report) Another African-American church in Elizabeth, the Friendship Baptist, which met in rented property, was established in the 1930s.

A Pilgrim Holiness Church, Methodist Protestant Church, Cumberland Presbyterian, the McCoyite Church, and the Monongahela congregation of Covenanters, or Reformed Presbyterians, are all Elizabeth churches also mentioned by Wiley. These, however, have all disappeared. (Wiley, 1936:214)

### **C. Present Religious Activities in Elizabeth Borough**

All of the churches in Elizabeth are quite active. The present Methodist church, discussed in the previous section, offers day-care services. The Baptist church has a weekly sing-a-long in which "everyone from all the churches who likes to sing gets together." (log5b-c 106) Members of the two Presbyterian churches in town and the one outside of town come together for women's and men's groups' activities such as breakfasts.

Despite the dozen or so Jewish residents in town, there has never been a synagogue in the vicinity; Jewish residents may go to McKeesport or to Pleasant Hills to worship, if they do go at all.

There is an active African Methodist Episcopal parish in town, and there is an interesting story surrounding the demise of the other African-American church in town, which was Baptist. As this story sheds light on African-American/white interactions in Elizabeth, I will discuss this issue in the following section on "Pifershire."

Another Elizabeth group which has been deprived of their church is the Catholic community. The Catholics who worshipped at St. Michael's were mostly Elizabeth's Irish and Italian residents. This church was moved into Elizabeth Township. An Elizabeth resident told me that "it used to be up on the hill but they moved it out to the country . . . because they said they had more parishioners out there but our people didn't agree. They fought 'em- they even took it to the Pope, but it didn't work. So a lot of them quit the congregation, just went elsewhere . . . in the Mon Valley." James McNeil, the owner of Elizabeth's Shamrock Restaurant, was one of those affected by the move: "We were upset they moved it out. Now I go to St. Joseph's in Clairton, or in Southside sometimes." (8-17FN)

The Catholic Church's tendency to close, merge, and move churches, causing storms of parishioners' protests, is also evident in Monessen and probably in other areas which I didn't investigate.

I will discuss the Monessen Catholic merger in the section on religious groups in Monessen.

None of the members affected by the mergers and moves in either Elizabeth or Monessen agreed with the Bishop's assertions that they were needed, and some, as obvious from the above quotes, were angry enough to worship elsewhere. This pattern created by the Catholic church is a slap in the face to people who are already faced with declining industry, retail, and employment prospects. Losing traditional ethnic and religious institutions and groups has been particularly devastating to older members of the community. At the same time, it is an unfortunately vivid demonstration of how closely ethnic and religious affiliations, identifications and involvements are intertwined with a region's economic and demographic patterns.

### **D. Ethnic/racial groups**

An Elizabeth resident, when asked what kind of ethnic groups were in town, shrugged and replied: "We're sort of a Heinz 57." (log1c) This resident also didn't think the churches were tied to any ethnic affiliation. Bill Boucher described Elizabeth as "a truly homogeneous community- everyone kind of lives together- although there is an Afro-American section." (log6c) He felt that the Presbyterian churches were mostly Scotch-Irish, and the Catholic church (which was moved to the township) was attended mainly by Irish and Italians.

### **1. The Irish Community**

A woman I spoke with from Elizabeth Township didn't realize there were any Irish people in town, despite the Shamrock restaurant, which she thought had been built recently. James McNeil, the owner of the Shamrock restaurant, bar, and catering business, told me: "there aren't a whole lot of Irish living here. My brother over there, Rod, works for the county. . . and runs the Loyal Order of Moose." ( 8-17 fieldnotes) Although the few Irish people in town do gather at the Shamrock, it is also known as a bar for sports fans of about thirty to forty years of age. James McNeil told me that Irish people driving through town will stop for a drink. He says that he will always stop at a Shamrock or Kelley's Bar when he's driving somewhere and sees one, too, just to stop in and say hello.

Irish cultural activities include "having a real good time on St. Patrick's Day" being "a big follower of Notre Dame" and occasionally making Irish stew and bread in the restaurant. James also belongs to the Ancient Order of Hibernians, an Irish social organization, mostly for men, in Homestead, but will transfer his membership soon to Monroeville. He goes there once a week with friends from town. The one in Clairton "died", he told me.

### **2. Ethnic/racial relations**

The general consensus of Elizabeth's white population seemed to be that what little ethnic and racial tension there is now in Elizabeth is minimal, but that there had been some discrimination in the past.

Bill Boucher's mother told me that to get into the Masons or its women's sister organization, Eastern Star, that "your mother had to belong to Eastern Star and your father to the Masons. Never get a Jewish or Catholic in there." (log6c 424)

The fraternal halls exclusive nature apparently provided fertile ground for prejudicial exclusion; new members had to be voted in and accepted by the entire membership. Bill said that "at one time there was a story about Jay Feldstein, a Jew, one of the lawyers in town, who couldn't get into the Lions Club, but now the Lions Club has Black members. . . that was in the sixties." (log6c 382) "The first Black member was accepted into the firehall two years ago, but the first woman only three years ago, so if there are those things [discrimination] they tend to be whittled away over time." (ibid 397)

However, Bill conceded that others might still feel discrimination: "Like Mrs. Cotton was saying. . . she looks at it as a racially motivated decision, you can tell. . . " (log6c 397) He dismissed it as something that happened almost twenty years ago, not really relevant today. But the story he went on to tell and show me of Elizabeth's African-American community convinced me that the African-Americans in Elizabeth don't entirely agree with his viewpoint.

### **3. The African-American Community of "Pifershire"**

"Pifershire," Bill and another resident pointed out, means "thieves' village." That, they said, is what Elizabeth's African-American area is called. In R.T. Wiley's 1936 book on Elizabeth's history, however, I found no mention of this name; the area is referred to as "the Fallen Timber Hollow district." (Wiley, 1936: 214) Possibly the name took hold after the book was written. In any case, the name obviously points to past discrimination. Noone was able to tell me where and when the name came about. Toby, an African-American man who owns a Toby's Auto Service in Elizabeth, told me that there had been arguments about the name "Pifershire" and it wasn't a name its African-American residents liked. He recommended that I look at city council records, which should have an account of the discussions which took place on that subject.

Although the relationships between whites and African-Americans in Elizabeth may be better

now, at least from the whites' perspective, their living situation reflects not only past but present biases, in the unwillingness of the city council to spend money on a mainly African-American area of town. Bill told me: "There's no sewage in the Hollow, and one road isn't paved, so once a year they come to council and say 'you don't pave the road 'cause you want all the white folks up on the hill and. . .' and they say 'we will pave your road at some point.' The reason they can't be in the sewage is because they're in the flood plain; again, the lower end of town. . . but it's so miniscule, the conflict that comes about racially." (log6c side b 419) He pointed out, in contrast, that the situation in Clairton, right across the river, "is pretty bad. . . a lot of racial tension. . . a murder a month over there."

Toby laughed cynically when I repeated Bill's flood-plain argument to him. He said: "if you take a look at a topographical map of Elizabeth you'll see that some of the streets in Elizabeth have a lower elevation than the Hollow. They just used that as an excuse. They paved a road that goes right through the Hollow to the top of the hill where a white community is, but they didn't bother to pave the rest of the streets in the hollow. They could have done that just with the material they ended up throwing away!" (12-24FN)

Bill Boucher drove me to the Hollow/"Pifershire." I was shocked at the overgrown, neglected air of the area; weeds grew in vacant lots, most of the buildings were somewhat ramshackle, and here and there a few outhouses were still scattered throughout the area. I was shown the now condemned African Baptist Church, which is in a hopelessly irreparable state. I took a few black and white pictures of the church. A leaflet I picked up from the floor was dated 1966; the schedule of meetings and services for that year showed a full, busy schedule, not that of a church whose congregation was inactive.

Toby had told me that the church had belonged to the Cottons, that they had called it "their" church, and that most of the members had been Cotton family members. However, both he and his friend had belonged to this church at one time and he had sung in the choir. He snickered when I told him a white informant had suggested that the African Baptist church had merged with the African Methodist-Episcopalian church. "Nah, they didn't merge, no way. The Baptist is more lively-like, singing and that. The Methodists are more serious- like" (12-24FN).

I first heard about this church when I was interviewing Bill Boucher in his family-run insurance office. He told me that the African Baptist Church had been closed because the building was unsafe and had been condemned. An old member of the church, Myrtle Cotton, was standing in the office as we spoke about it, and Bill asked her why it was shut down. The ensuing conversation revealed her bitterness at what she perceived as racial discrimination. The following is her explanation of the events, which I pieced together as a narrative:

"Whenever everybody died [from the congregation] I tried to sell the church. . . because we couldn't keep it up with a just a handful of people. . . I wanted to sell the church. . . everything in it and the right to be minister to a minister from Blydale. . . the congregation he would have brought with him and our congregation would have been able to continue the church. . . the council down here. . . said we couldn't sell it, then nobody did a darn thing in that church. . . there was never any reason for what they did. . . all they had to say was look they wanted something else done to the church but there was nothing to be done. . . I don't know the real reason, but it stinks, whatever it is. . . our bills were all paid. . . we had just remodeled and the minister was going to reimburse us. . . all we had to pay were our taxes. . . I never heard anybody paying taxes on a church before in the first place, they shouldn't have been paid, but this is what they're saying. . . it's just a lot of baloney, that's all it is, I don't care what they say, and how they cover up, try to make it smell differently, it doesn't" (log6c 253-343).

At one point, when she'd stopped speaking to us to talk to Mrs. Boucher, Bill said to me " ok

so they didn't merge- but they did. So the congregation got too old. That was interesting." His reaction plainly indicated that he didn't quite understand or believe Mrs. Cotton's rendering of the events. She turned to us on her way out the door and said "No, that's wrong, why don't you just put the truth down there. The fact is that that church would have been there . . . all these many years." She reiterated and explained part of her story quoted above. When she left the store, Bill looked at me knowingly and said: "I'll take you over there and then you can see for yourself" (log6c 343).

So the story of the African Baptist Church in the Hollow, which Wiley spoke of as having "a struggling existence," remains a somewhat confusing issue for me. It definitely was not a clear cut "merger" in any sense, as Bill believes. First of all, the churches were of two different denominations, Baptist and Methodist Episcopalian. Secondly, both Myrtle and Toby concurred that there had been no merger. Thirdly, Myrtle told us that she attends church with a friend, another past member, in McKeesport, not in the other "African" church in Elizabeth. The most salient factor for Myrtle in her religious practices seems to be denomination, (Baptist) rather than racial affiliations, as Bill assumed.

I asked Bill if he thought the decision not to allow her to sell the church was racially motivated. He denied that she was refused permission to sell: "It wasn't that they didn't allow her to sell that building, they probably condemned it for safety reasons. The guy that's a safety inspector in town is a very fair guy. . . but there were real hazards. Her view of it is racial but in actuality it was not" (log6c 485).

The very contradiction of their two viewpoints, however, is illustrative of conflicts and concerns which are significant to members of the African-American community in Elizabeth, if not for the white community. Further interviews of Myrtle Cotton, other past members of the African Baptist Church, and of council members who had made the decision approximately twenty years ago to refuse her request, would help to untangle what "really" happened. The events may lie somewhere between the opposing views.

### **E. Hangouts and Social Organizations in Elizabeth**

Rockwell's Restaurant is "a kind of coffee club. . . where the news of the day gets discussed." (log6c side b 088) One resident told me that the now vacant five-and-ten (Murphy's) used to be a hang out, and that "there's really no place to hang out any more." (8-11FN) She said that people "try" to hang out in Lou's Place (a candy/convenience store) but that it "doesn't really work." However, when pressed, she told me that people hang out in Rockwell's and the bars.

Another resident said that the Shamrock is where people in their thirties who are interested in sports hang out. The Shamrock's role in the community is that of solidarity promoter and service organization, in addition to its role as casual "hangout."

Examples of its activities include "Fantasy Football" games, a Heart Fund drive for heart patients which initially raised money for Steve Courson, a former Pittsburgh Steeler, and now is raising money for an Elizabeth resident who needs similar heart surgery. The Shamrock also sponsors an annual golf tournament.

The firehall holds "bingo nights," which "bingo mamas" and "all different" people ("older people, younger people, men, women") frequent. (log1c, 032) Regular bingo goers are thought of by some as "not real intelligent," as "little old ladies with time to kill" or younger people who "have nothing better to do." (log6c, side b, 019-049)

The firehall also runs a bar, and profits from the bingo are invested not only in buying new fire equipment, but also into the bar itself. It is the richest organization in the municipality. According to one informant, the people who join the firehall are "mechanics, gearheads" who have a "firefighter mentality."

The Riverfront Park is a hangout for people of any age; people fish, older people sit on the benches and talk, young kids hang out in groups here and there.

The fraternal halls are also important gathering places; most of them have bars. So in addition to the bar at the firehall, the bar at Engine No. 2 (which was opened by an ex-firehall manager accused of embezzling firehall funds), the Elizabeth Hotel, the Shamrock, the Sportsmen's Bar, and Rockwell's, there is the Loyal Order of the Moose, in which they drink "moosemilk" (beer) at most social occasions, the Elks (which is a "Colored" lodge—refer to log6c) and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Other fraternal organizations in town include the Rebekah lodge of the Oddfellows and the Masonic lodge. Bill Boucher distinguished these as "true" fraternalists in that they are more ritualistic than the "animal" fraternalists such as Moose, Owls, etc. Both types of fraternalists fund raise for foundations; fraternalists such as the Moose and Owls tend to have bars and to be more inclusive. (log 6c)

Elizabeth also has a Lions Club and a Rotary club which are service organizations for the community; the Lions Club runs an eye mobile, and the Rotary Club has a scholarship for high school students. Other clubs include a Women's club, an American Legion, and a Chamber of Commerce.

There are also many active groups affiliated with the churches in Elizabeth such as youth groups, Boy Scouts, Christian Women's Groups, and bible school and class activities.

## **F. Concerns and Issues**

The dramatic decline of industry in the area which turned Elizabeth into a "bedroom" or "residence" community with few nearby opportunities for employment has affected Elizabeth in several important ways. First, the declining population has contributed to one church closing (the African Baptist Church) and one church (St. Michael's) moving to a more populated area (as discussed above).

The loss of institutions such as churches and services is of grave concern to Elizabeth residents. The closing of their "five-and-ten", Murphy's, the State Liquor Store, and many other retail stores has affected the mood, economic situation, and the pattern of daily lives. As James McNeil said, "I don't even have a place here in town to buy thumbtacks or nails if I need them. I have to go somewhere else to get it, out of my way."

The current trend of retail and other institutions moving out to the township and other areas haunts parents of school-age children in particular for an additional reason. They are afraid that the last school in Elizabeth, the elementary school, might be moved out to the township as the Elizabeth high school and two elementary schools were in the "school district jointure" which took place fifty years ago.

The ramifications of the jointure weren't felt until recently, with the school mergers. One woman concerned about the fate of the last school in town told me: "We managed to keep holding them off until



now every time they think about it, but. . . they moved [the other schools] out of town and now our kids have to be bused. Our little kids like to walk to school, and they can walk to school; the school here goes up to sixth grade." (logc1 209)

This woman expressed a fear of being "swallowed up" by the township, losing the police force and the municipal services. This would change the social nature of the community drastically. "A lot of our control is because the policemen know the kids, and if they do something, the policemen can go to the kid and say 'Hey, stop doing that!' If we get a regional force in here that doesn't know the kids, they can't do that. . . if they do something, they don't fine them, like when they graffitied the gazebo down the river and he made them sand it down. He knows the kids, so he knew who did it." (log1c 326)

She also believes that services such as paving the street and neighborhood services would be cut if the Elizabeth municipality was absorbed into the township.

Several Elizabeth residents were concerned about Elizabeth's small tax base. The fact that the town is only .52 square miles and has seven churches makes it "fourth in the county for being tax exempt." (8-11FN) Limiting the borough's cash flow even further is the fact that the existing tax base is built on "little old ladies in ten room brick houses. . . who only get Social Security checks, and who spend very little in town as opposed to a family of eight." (log6c 168 side B) One resident lamented the fact that the community has to worry about whether the infrastructure, which is very old, can be repaired because of the lack of tax money.

Elizabeth residents have been quick to point out the positive aspects of their small residential town: "everyone gets along," there's a low crime rate mainly due to a neighborhood watch program, and it's a "nice little city." However, they regret the withdrawal of industry and retail, and the fact that Elizabeth is "rapidly becoming a service district of doctors, insurance, lawyers, plumbers. . ." (log6c side b 136)

Despite Elizabeth's post-industrial loss of services, retail establishments and its mergers and possible mergers of schools, churches, the police force, etc., the residents I talked to were hopeful about the future. James McNeil is training his son to carry on the Shamrock family business, and Orrie Rockwell III of the Red Lion is being groomed as chef and future heir of his family business. The Bouchers are also a family operation, as are some other businesses in town.

Elizabeth residents base their optimism on the possibility of new development, and several of the projects they told me of were not only quite feasible, but are under present consideration for implementation. Elizabeth residents are pinning their hopes for economic revival and community stability mainly on tourism.

The residents I talked to all suggested the development of tourism; Orrie Rockwell recalled the Centennial celebration of 1934 and remarked that something similar which would draw large crowds, but on a continual basis, would be good for the town. (8-11FN) One possible way to increase tourism, Bill Boucher pointed out, is the development of the river as a recreational focal point, creating a "New Englandy" atmosphere, "where a lot of residents have a boat down at the marina." (log6c 059) He also suggested bringing a lot of antique shops into town to "make Elizabeth a destination, like Ligonier." (ibid)

An interesting project whose plans are being discussed now is the possible construction of a "glassworks" park at the site of the old water company. When the water company moved, they donated their land to Elizabeth, but dictated that it be made a park named after the head of the company, James LaFrankie, who was originally from Elizabeth. The water company's deed arbitrators are therefore opposed to Elizabeth's plan to build "an artist colony" there. Negotiations are under way to accommodate the clause and at the same time establish the project; one informant argued "it would still be a park, it's not going to be industrial." (log1c 213) The successful establishment of this project would draw "little shops" (log1c 213) and tourism to Elizabeth, giving it a much needed economic boost.

### **III Forward Township, Mon Valley region**

#### **A. Early Industries**

The Monongahela River played an instrumental role in the industrial activities of the communities along its shores. In addition to boat-building and glass-making industries, there were flour and whiskey production, wool mills, tanneries, lumberyards, limestone quarries, paper-making mills, pottery, saltworks, iron-ore mining, and of course coal mines, steel mills and coke works. Natural gas was found in the 1890s in Elizabeth and was still being produced at the time when Wiley wrote his book (1937). Gas displaced coal for a while in some manufacturing industries, particularly in glass making.

The Monongahela River was the site of much coal trading and shipping activity, and all of the region along the river was in some way affected by this.

Most of the little towns I visited along route 136, such as Elkhorn, Bunola, and Gallatin were originally coal mining towns rather than coke- or steel-based towns. They were later greatly influenced by the Clairton Coke and Steel Works which opened up the river from Elizabeth in 1918, and the Combustion Engineering and Axleton Mill which stretches from East Monongahela to Gallatin. More recently, the Chemply Chemical Division of E and E (US) Inc. is an employer, but certainly not on the same scale.

In 1899 the Monongahela River Consolidated Coal and Coke Company was organized, encompassing almost all of the holdings of companies "engaged in the coal business of the river. . . mines, coal in the hills, about 100 towboats and tugs and thousands of coal containers." (Wiley, 1937: 190) The Pittsburgh Coal Company was already in existence by then, and had similarly encompassed the mining properties in that district which shipped coal by rail. By the early 1930s the Pittsburgh Coal Company had already taken over the Monongahela River Company, creating a monolithic regional coal giant.

Coke wasn't as important an industry in the Mon Valley region originally because of the then-acknowledged superiority of Connellsville coke, due to the soft, porous nature of the coal in the Youghiogheny valley. (Albert, 1882: 405) However, with the advent of by-product coke plants and the move of these ovens farther away from coal mines, some of the coke production moved towards the Monongahela region. The Carnegie-Illinois Steel Company's works at Clairton was (and still is) the largest by-product coke plant in the world (Wiley, 1937: 192; Keyes, 1991: 13)

#### **B. Geography**

Driving along the river from Elizabeth on 136, the "Twin River Scenic Road," I passed Lock and Dam Number Three-US Army, and then Lock Number Three, Oil and Coal Dock. Railroad tracks follow the river as it winds along the bends in the road. There is a "Waterfront Restaurant" at the Evanford Marina; I'm not sure if it belongs to Bunola or East Monongahela or is considered something else. The distinguishing factor about these little riverside communities in Forward Township is that they're difficult to distinguish from one another; there's a different town name for about every half-mile. The residents themselves seem confused about exactly where these communities begin and end, and some were quite puzzled over why I'd want to know where Elkhorn is.

The first community along the way is Bunola. I knew I was in Bunola because I passed a small white wooden church "The Church of the Nazarene, Bunola." Bunola is a lush-green, quiet area. In the three or four times I drove through it I saw few people. The post office seems deserted; I've never seen it open, and there are no hours posted on the locked, rusty door. The Bunola Fire Hall is in a similar

faded state. There is a sign posted under a stop sign near the fire hall declaring this area a "quiet zone." An honor roll stands near the post office, two American flags flanking it, but weeds and trees encroach even on this memorial. There is a Bunola Recreation field, and a "Carousel Marina."

The Chemply Chemical Division and the Molnar Marina are also in Bunola; at least, the marina is listed as Elizabeth/ Bunola. Terry Necciai told me that the marina is in Elkhorn, however. His cousin Julius also referred to the area around the marina between Bunola and Monongahela as Elkhorn. He said "It's just one house on one side of the road and another on the other." (8-13FI) The waitress at Rapp's Bar, however, had never heard of it. Elkhorn is home to the Old Eagle Mine, the present New Eagle's Eagle Mine's predecessor, according to Terry. At one time there was a thriving small community around the mine.

Elkhorn reputedly got its name because one of Monongahela's founders, Parkeson, had a flour mill there which later became one of the first paper mills west of the Allegheny mountains. When someone hung a large rack of horns on the mill door, the area got the nickname Elkhorn and it stuck. (log12 311)

The next three miles along the river are scenic; the broad blue expanse of the Mon can be glimpsed occasionally on the right until the trees close around you, making the road almost a tunnel of green. The trees open suddenly and the road branches off to the right and left. This is East Monongahela.

A burnt out building on the right, spray-painted "Moved to new location-McKeesport," gives the area a depressed, abandoned air. The Forward Township Municipal Offices are located here. Terry Necciai told me that this area was popularly called "Hell's Half-Acre" because although it was a part of Allegheny County (and still is) it was very far from the sheriff's office in Pittsburgh, and so there was "no law and order on that side of the river. . . a lot of illegal alcohol operations and bordellos there in the 1800s." (log12c 221)

I came to a bridge; across it, to my right, lay Monongahela, and straight ahead was more of Forward Township and eventually, Monessen.

Shortly after the bridge is the "Combustion Engineering Power Systems Mon Plant." Terry explained that the area surrounding the first part of the plant is called Axleton, because the company was called Liggetspring and Axleton, and that it is made up of about twenty similar houses which are now indistinguishable from East Monongahela. The Forward Township offices, he explained, used to be the Axleton school. After that is a section called Manown, then Manown Hollow, and that is where Gallatin begins. Gallatin is one-half of a mile long, and after it, from the firehall on, is Sunnyside.

The firehall, as befitting a border landmark, has a hyphenated name: Sunnyside-Gallatin Volunteer Fire Company. Across the road is the Riverside Tabernacle, a Full Gospel Church of the Assemblies of God. After that is Milesville, and if you turn left into that you will find Ella Hollow.

The significance of the differences of these little communities which all had their own honor rolls, fire departments, churches, post offices, schools and stores has obviously faded for the residents there now, particularly those under thirty. The people I talked to either hadn't heard of the communities I was talking about, or wondered why I cared. Even those contacts who were well-informed about the community borders, such as Terry Necciai, don't find them to be viable distinctions anymore.

For instance, when Terry's father, who's from Manown Hollow, passed away, they listed him in the paper as a Gallatin resident "because noone knows about Manown Hollow now, it was just easier to put Gallatin." (log12 053)

### **C. Ethnic Groups**

Most of these little communities have thus passed into history, losing their identities as they have lost their populations and ethnic distinctions. The area along 136, I was told by two informants, is mostly populated by Italians, and Germans live up in the hollows, in the more rural pockets. The Italians in this region used to segregate themselves strictly into Tuscans, Calabrese, Neopolitans, Sicilians, Piedmontese, and until the 1920s would not marry across those ethnic dividing lines. Now they have taken on a more "pan-Italian" identity. (log12c 161) Terry Necciai's aunt said that there were around 1000 Italians in the area around World War II, and now she can only think of about twenty-six Italians.

The African-American population of the area is also significantly reduced from its former strength. African-Americans migrated into the area after the mines implemented an "open shop" policy around 1927. This policy meant that the management would hire whoever they wanted, mainly non-union people. African-Americans streamed into the area, mostly from Alabama, and "since then Gallatin was about fifty percent African-American. . . there are very few left, maybe five or six, but there were at least 400 at one time. . ." (log12c 209-220) One of the few African-Americans left in Gallatin, Jerome Long, runs a barbecue restaurant "down in the patch." He's now begun selling his barbecued ribs in front of the Isaly's in Monongahela on rt. 88 during the day, Terry told me. The Grays are the only other African-American family left in Gallatin, according to Terry.

"There were a few Slovaks in the region but they've all died. ." (log 12c 161) The Bruces of Riverside Tabernacle, who are German and live in Pangburn Hollow, said that "all kinds" go to their church, "Italians and Slovaks and Scots and everyone, a mixture. . . mostly what you get around here [this road] are Italians. . . up where we live. . . there are more Germans." (8-18FN)

The distinctions that all of my informants made between groups, and the stories and reactions they gave me illustrated the region's ethnic map and interactions. First, the Germans live in the more wooded, rural areas, the hollows, away from the river; the Italians live close to the river and the main road. Second, there were some German-Italian and Italian-English tensions, as they jostled each other for a place in the industry-oriented social hierarchy of the time. In these communities, the Western Europeans who'd been in the region first, such as the English and the French were able to get higher-paying and higher-status jobs such as managerial positions. They looked down on later immigrants such as the Italians and Slovaks. The Italians, in turn, looked down on the Germans as "farmerish" unsophisticated hillbillies and recluses. (log12 040)

There was also an association of rural folk with more "emotional" religious movements and "gobbledygook" such as speaking in tongues. (log 12c) This perception is partially due to the fact that many of the rural churches are from the full-gospel or ecstatic, revivalist traditions. However, the categorization of these ecstatic religions as "emotional" or "gobblydegook" illustrates how different group perceptions and, consequently, interactions, were shaped by ethnic and religious identity in the area.

Interestingly, "across the river" in Monongahela, farming was "more glorified," "a noble profession." Some of these distinctions persist today. (log12c side b 040)

One of my most upsetting experiences in the field was in fact the most instructive in this matter of ethnic sensitivity and prejudice. Upon interviewing Julian Necciai in Rapp's Bar, Gallatin, an Italian restaurant, I made the mistake of handing Julius the biographical form to fill out (he'd asked to see it as I was filling it out, and I told him he could just fill it out himself if he wanted to). Although Julius had expressed a lot of anger and bitterness at the corporations and the government and even at me in a sense, which events certainly justify, I'd felt the interview had gone reasonably well. However, when he reached the blank marked "ethnic identity" he looked at me and snarled "Ethnic identity? What the hell you want to know that for? You want to know my ethnic identity? I'm an American! That's all you need to know, that's all." His friend, who sat "sunk deep in his cups" and had refused to introduce himself emerged from his television trance and said "that's right, you don't put nothing about ethnic identity down

there, you just write American. . . " he looked at me pityingly and shook his head. "You think you're doing us a lot of good but in the end you're going to end up getting us all in trouble. You're too young, you don't know what they could use that for. . . they could do something like what they're doing in Bosnia, ethnic cleansing, they never thought that would happen over there either. . . " (8-13FN)

Julius interrupted, "You know what I am, I'll tell you, I'm German, and I wish that Hitler had won the war, they would have taught America a thing or two!" I looked up at him and saw that he was laughing at me. This was the first indication I had of possible Italian/German tension. He continued ranting, "You're an American when you back the people up in this country! That Bush, he's not an American! Who's this for again? He looked at the paper. Steel Industry Heritage Corporation! See there, you're fooling us all this time, you're working for them!!" and he held the paper up in front of me and ripped it in two. "I ain't givin' this to no corporation, that's for sure!" (8-13FN)

I managed to sit still and calm him down a bit. . . when I was about to leave he said to me "Anyways, I'm a Dago, and I hate them Johnny-Bulls. Where you from, anyhow?" I told him Russia and Poland and he grunted. "You're ok, then." I asked him what a "Johnny-Bull" is but his friend hushed him and wouldn't let him explain. Terry Necciai, Julian's cousin, told me that it's slang for Scotch-Irish.

This anecdote illustrates how strong ethnic tensions were and still are, at least for some of the older population. It also reveals Julian's self perception as a "persecuted minority." (log12c 035) He graphically demonstrated his disdain for Germans, who Terry explained were "the only people below them [Italians] on the totem pole." (log12c 040)

Harry Bruce, the Riverside Tabernacle "elder" and Betty Jean Bruce, the church secretary, seemed to be very adamant that their church was a place of ethnic unity. Indeed, their religious ritual of "speaking in tongues" symbolically demonstrates group unity by creating a special language which only church members who participate in the ecstatic services can understand. Harry told me that a person will "get a message from G-d" and "speak in tongues. . . which may be like Italian or German and I won't know the language but I'll understand it, or someone from the congregation will interpret it." (8-18FN)

I asked the Bruces about regional ethnic differences in several different ways before they told me that certain groups lived in different areas. Through their insistence that there are "all kinds" of people in the church and in the area, they may have been emphasizing a "brotherhood of man" doctrine. Religious movements such as these may indeed have been responsible for some ethnic integration; they are newer denominations which welcome all, and are unconnected to one particular ethnic group, country, language or tradition.

When I met the Bruces, they were about to give their daughter-in-law a baby shower in the church. I asked if others in the community use the church for such things, and Betty Jean replied that some do, but mostly they're held in people's houses. However, her daughter-in-law lives in a foundation, the bottom of a house, and they "haven't gotten around to building up yet" so they didn't have much room.

I didn't see any other churches in the area; I suspect that the firehall serves as a community center for the area, based on the overall regional pattern and on its changing advertisements for dinners and events on its prominently displayed sign.

#### **D. Issues and Concerns**

The main concern for the area expressed in Rapp's Bar by Julius and his friend was over the lack of jobs. Julius shouted, "They've got to bring the jobs back! All the politicians in this country are gutless, they don't bring it up, they think it will go away." (8-13FN)

Julius' friend added his concern that the lack of steel jobs will lead to an ignorance of the area's steel history: "In twenty years no one will even know there was steel 'round here at all."

Julius expressed bitterness towards the corporations: "I worked in Combustion Engineering down the road. They sold out just like the rest of them. They're in India now. I left there at 53. I had thirty-seven years in. If I'd stayed till I was 65 I'd have had forty-nine years in. I started when I was 16. I left because of my lungs and heart, from the work." (8-13FN)

Julius blamed the situation on "corporate greed", the "dumb American consumer" and "President Bush." He told me there "used to be thirteen steel companies here at one time, and Cooper was the head negotiator for all of them. Bethlehem closed down, Johnstown's closed last week, over 1400 jobs gone. Cooper was the head of US Steel and the head negotiator. . . how? . . . does that make sense? . . . The steelworkers would ask for a raise, and they wouldn't give it to them, they needed a unionman to represent them."

Unions' lack of power was a concern, also. His friend turned to me and said "You just go down to the Press, that'll tell you the story in a nutshell, the beginning of the end for the unions. Years ago they brought in the Pinkertons, now they're shipping in workers from other states. I'll tell you, it's just a shame what they're doing." (8-13FN)

They agreed that unions were "the greatest thing that ever happened" and that without them the working conditions would have been even worse. Julian snorted: "Down here they didn't even give you a mask! Clinics! Hah! No way." Relationships with management were necessarily strained, as both sides were suspicious of the other. "The corporate people will squash you! If they can get you to work for ten cents an hour, they'll do it. . . that's why companies are so screwed up." (8-13FN)

## **IV Westmoreland County Geography and History**

### **A. Geography**

Westmoreland County consists of 1,039 square miles of hilly terrain. (Dyen, 1991; Pollins) It contains high peaks and large stretches of rural areas. It is the sixth-largest county in Pennsylvania in population and the eighth-largest in area. (Westmoreland County's Guide to the Best, 1991: 7) Westmoreland County is "fifty miles long and forty miles wide between the 79th and 80th meridians of west longitude and the 40th and 41st parallels of north latitude." (Bomberger, 1941: 15) Its surface "averages 1,500 feet above sea level, includes eastern highlands and rolling western table-lands with a general slope toward the northward drained by the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers. Between Laurel ridge and Chestnut ridge in the eastern part of the county is the beautiful Ligonier valley. Farther west is Dry ridge and then come the rolling foothills, drifting westward from the Allegheny plateau." (Bomberger, 1941: 15)

Westmoreland County is bounded by Allegheny County to the west, Armstrong County to the north, Indiana County to the northeast, Cambria County at its far east corner, Somerset County to its east below Cambria, and Fayette to its south. It is divided into twenty-one townships. I set out to study seven of them: North Huntingdon, Sewickley, South Huntingdon, Rostraver, East Huntingdon, Hempfield, and Mt. Pleasant. I spent a bit more time in Hempfield township (two days) than planned, and no time in North Huntingdon.

The Monongahela River runs along the southwestern part of Westmoreland, past Monessen. The Allegheny River streams along Westmoreland County's northwestern edge, at Lower Burrell and Allegheny Townships.

The Youghiogheny River begins its course through Westmoreland at its midwestern edge, at North Huntingdon Township, then wends its way through the bottom of Sewickley Township and down through the town of West Newton, through Rostraver and South Huntingdon townships on its way

southward where it feeds Jacobs Creek.

Major highways crosscutting Westmoreland are interstate 70 and the Pennsylvania Turnpike, I-76 going east and west. Other major roads are routes 51, 31, and 119, going north and south. Routes 981 and 819 are important roads through the southern section, near Smithton, Jacobs Creek, and Scottdale. Routes 136 and 201 are main roads through Rostraver, Sewickley, and Hempfield townships. Route 30 is an important road through North Huntingdon Township. The ubiquitous "four-number" (e.g. 3015) roads are all rural, secondary routes. These wind through acres of farmland, past freshly harvested and baled hay, corn fields, dairies and sprawling homes with huge yards. These rural stretches are dotted with little communities along the way such as Yukon, Wyano, and Herminie. These are now small clusters of people in what used to be boomtowns of a few thousand people each. They almost always have a firehall, a few churches (rarely did I ever see just one), a post office, an honor roll and one last surviving store or two.

## **B. Agricultural History and Development**

Westmoreland's green hills proved ideal for raising cattle and sheep, and its "fertile creek bottoms yielded good corn, wheat, rye, oats, and grass." Westmoreland was called an "agricultural county" in 1940. (Bomberger, 1941: 78) Although agriculture is still very important, particularly in the eastern region (Dyen, 1991: 1), as the interest in digging what lay under the crops grew much more profitable than tending to the crops themselves, farming decreased significantly. Bomberger tells us that in 1940 there were 3,930 farms in Westmoreland County. (Bomberger, 1941: 79) By 1991, the number of farms had shrunk to 1,335. (Skiavo, 1991: 5) Thirty-two percent of the county's 1024 square miles is now in crop and pasture land. (Westmoreland County courthouse map) The county went from 355,577 acres in farmland in 1940 to the present 164,716 acres. (Bomberger, 1941: 79; Skiavo, 1991: 5)

The overall population shift from 1940 to 1991 was from 303,411 people in 1940 to 392,294 in 1980. (Bomberger, 1941: 78; Westmoreland County courthouse map)

## **C. Industrial History and Development**

Industrial development in Westmoreland County has been strongest in a few central cities and along its edges: on the Monongahela with Monessen as the main steel- and tin-plate producing area, and in the New Kensington, aluminum-producing area, near the Allegheny in northern Westmoreland. Industrial development in central Westmoreland County has been concentrated in Irwin, Latrobe, Jeannette and Greensburg. (Arcom, 1970: 10) Jeannette was the center of the county's glass industry, with at least six different glass factories. (Bomberg, 1941: 81) A large rubber plant was also in Jeannette.

Mt. Pleasant and Greensburg were known for manufacturing "novelty glass." Mt. Pleasant, in particular, still has a reputation as a glass producing area, and is known for its Lenox and Smith glass warehouses. Garments, woolen goods, mining and electrical equipment, bricks, and carbon dioxide were some of the materials produced in the early days of the county's industries. (Bomberger, 1941: 82) Other major industries in Westmoreland County and the surrounding regions were steel, coke and coal works which exploited the region's wealth of natural gas, coal and limestone.

By 1880, Westmoreland County ranked only after Allegheny County in the nation's bituminous coal production. (Keyes, 1991: 18) The area along the Youghiogheny in Westmoreland and Fayette counties became so well known for its coal that the term "Youghiogheny coal" was coined to describe the best grade of coal. (Wiley, 1937: 193) Coke was also of vital importance to the region, particularly in the Scottdale-Mt. Pleasant vicinity, and around Connelsville, across the border in Fayette county. Westmoreland County produced 27% of the United State's coke, second only to Fayette county, which produced 45%. (Keyes, 1991: 19)

During these industries' heyday, around 1850-1930, coal-patch towns and steel-mill cities sprang up and flourished on the landscape of Westmoreland County. (Keyes, 1991: 9) The industrial giants who built them had a captive market of workers, so these communities were often poorly planned and distinguished by inadequate housing conditions. (Arcom, 1970: 5) When the heyday was over, these areas rapidly deindustrialized and depopulated, turning from industrial centers into service-based areas.

The hopes of people in Central Westmoreland for economic revival during the collapse of the steel and coal industries were buoyed by the planning and building of a Chrysler plant outside of New Stanton in the early seventies. A 1970 report requested by the Pennsylvania State Planning Board from Arcom, Inc. and Marcou, O'Leary and Associates, Inc. optimistically touted Westmoreland County as a "prototype" for a "new community" centered around the Chrysler Plant:

"The location of the Chrysler plant in southern Westmoreland County could provide the initial economic base for a prototype community. . ." (Arcom, 1970: 5) This prototype entailed the "concentration of programs, money, and management to stimulate new housing production in a single location with adequate planning for the provisions of supporting services and further expansion of the economic base." (Arcom, 1970: 11) The site was adjacent to Highway 119 between New Stanton and Ruffsedale, along the Pennsylvania Turnpike between New Stanton and Carpentertown, and along 981 between Mt. Pleasant and Carpentertown. (Arcom, 1970: 15)

The Arcom report laments the state of housing in the area which was created by the steel and coal giants of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and presents the possibility of rectifying the situation in a new community with better housing. (Arcom, 1970: 5) The report notes the lack of affordable housing alternatives in the region for lower income families. These families' adaptive strategy was to fulfill their "strong preference. . . for homeownership" by purchasing mobile homes. ((Arcom, 1970: 10)

These mobile-turned-permanent homes are visible all over Westmoreland County today, sometimes scattered throughout towns and townships, more often concentrated in mobile home parks. Despite these housing and other problems, Westmoreland's population increased by 25,000 between 1960-70, while Pittsburgh lost 32,000 of its population. (Arcom, 1970: 7)

Unfortunately, however, this predicted upward trend did not last. The Chrysler plant was completed in the late 1970s, a time when the American auto industry was faltering, so "they decided not to build cars there and sold it to Volkswagen." (log10c side b 455) Volkswagen's presence helped the county's economy by increasing the real-estate prices but was to be relatively short-lived. The county had offered the company ten years of tax-free operation; when they were up, Volkswagen left the county and sold the plant to Sony. (log10c)



The 1980s brought a further blow to Westmoreland's economy with the Wheeling-Pitt Monessen Works closure in 1986. Most of the coal mines in the area also closed by the mid-1980s.

The arrival of the Sony plant, however, has sparked a bit of hope in Westmoreland residents once more. The planning and creation of other industrial parks throughout the region, such as the Westmoreland Technology and I-70 Industrial parks near New Stanton have also provided new economic possibilities. An industrial park is due to be installed in the Jacobs Creek/Smithton area, at the 76 truck stop. (log10-c)

Other industries now active in the New Stanton area alone include trucking firms such as Charley Brothers and Consolidated Freighters, and distribution centers such as Montgomery Ward, Sun Carpet, and United Parcel Service.

The Central Westmoreland Development Corporation has contributed to regional economic development over the last thirty-five years with the planning of the previously mentioned industrial parks and the Greensburg-Hempfield Business Park near Jeannette, the Westmoreland County Industrial Parks, near Greensburg, north of New Kensington, near Murrys ville, between Irwin and Jeannette; and the Westmoreland Business and Research Park between New Kensington and Murrys ville. (Skiavo, 1991)

The 1970 Arcom report's optimistic prediction of population growth and "10,000 new jobs in the county" (Arcom, 1970: 7) may yet be realized if the industrial park idea, and particularly the powerful Sony corporation, take root and flower into a strong regional industrial and economic base. The resulting economic upswing would affect not only all of Westmoreland County, but Pittsburgh and its surroundings as well, if workers from the entire region begin commuting south to the parks.

#### **D. County History and Early Settlement**

Westmoreland County was named for Westmorland county in northwest England. (Bomberger, 1941: 9) It is historically important as "the first American frontier west of the Appalachian mountains." (Bomberger, 1941: preface) This part of the country saw a lot of activity during the French and Indian war, and many bloody exchanges between Indians and the early settlers, unlike the Mon region of Forward Township.

In 1768 a treaty at Fort Stanwix in New York transferred all land south of the Ohio river and east of the Allegheny at Kittanning to Pennsylvania by the Indians for "ten thousand dollars in provisions and money together with an unlimited supply of rum." (Bomberger, 1941: 40) This was the "purchase of 1768" (Albert, 1882: 43) The portion of this land which was to later become Westmoreland County was included in Cumberland County, which had been established in 1750. Bedford County was erected from Cumberland on March 9, 1771, and Westmoreland from Bedford on February 26, 1773. (Albert, 1882: 51)

Westmoreland County was called "Mother Westmoreland" (Bomberger, 1941: 9) because Washington (1781); Allegheny, (1788); Armstrong; Fayette, (1783); and Indiana were directly cut from her, and Beaver, Butler, Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Greene, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango, and Warren were created from those.

When Westmoreland County was formed, Pennsylvania was a British province and Richard Penn was the governor. After the Revolutionary War, in 1779, the Penns were "divested" of most of their property. (Rowe, 1934: 42)

The names of the original townships in the newly created Westmoreland County reflected the influence of the Scotch-Irish (Bomberger, 1941: 10): Derry, Rostraver, Tyrone and Donegal were named after places in Ireland. Hempfield township was named after a Lancaster county township which

also raised a lot of hemp. Huntingdon was named for an English town.

Westmoreland County was nicknamed "Star of the West" by eastern politicians because of "the Democratic party majorities over the Whigs each election in the 1840s. The name probably had its origin in a German newspaper, "Star of the West," . . . in Greensburg. . . [and] later in Adamsburg catering to the 'Pennsylvania Dutch' element in Hempfield township which clung to the Democratic party." (Bomberger, 1941: 11) Westmoreland County was known as a Democratic county until the early 1900s. (ibid)

Hannastown was "the first place west of the Appalachian mountains where due process of English law was applied. . . it also was the site of the last English court to be established in the colonies." (Bomberger, 1941: 41) It was also the place in which the last hostile act of the Revolutionary war, on July 13, 1782, in which British Tories and Indians under Guyasuta burned the town down. Most importantly, it was the site of the famous Hannasburg Resolution of Independence, adopted May 16, 1775.

Civil strife ensued between Pennsylvania and Virginia; there was a movement for a new state called "Westsylvania" which would include Ohio, W. Va., and Virginia. However, by 1780, this was ended by "friendly agreement." (Bomberger, 1941: 41)

Another event of historical importance which took place in Westmoreland County was the Whiskey Rebellion or Insurrection of 1794. This was one of the young nation's government's first trials in state peacekeeping. The Congressional Excise Act of 1791 which taxed whiskey infuriated the farmers of the area, who depended on the sale of whiskey made from their grain. The insurrection is mainly attributed to the Scotch-Irish settlers. (Albert, 1882: 47) After some seven thousand of these men met in Braddock's field to protest the tax, Washington ordered fifteen thousand troops to stop their activities. (Rowe, 1934: 41) By the time the troops arrived, however, the activities had quieted down and they faced no resistance.

### **E. Early Settlers**

The earliest settlers in Westmoreland County were the Scotch-Irish, who were originally from Scotland and had been encouraged by the English government to move to Ireland, where they settled for about a hundred years before emigrating to the colonies. Much has been written in the history books about their "character" and actions. They were said to "live by thrift rather than labor" (Albert, 1882: 44) and to be "more aggressive . . . than were the plodding Germans." (ibid)

They "had a controlling influence in public affairs. . . wherever they settled" and "the more marked characteristics of both nationalities (Scotch and Irish)" (Albert, 1882: 45) They are also said to be "brave, patriotic" fighters. (ibid) "More Scotch-Irish came to Pennsylvania than to any other section of America." (Boucher, 1918: 186) They referred to their emigration to Pennsylvania as "settlement among the broadrims," referring to the Pennsylvania Quakers (Boucher, 1918: 186). They did not get along well with the Quakers, Germans, English or the Indians; their aggressive thirst for land put them into conflict with Indian interests and worsened the relationships for the other ethnic groups. They mainly practiced a "Calvinistic religion" (Presbyterianism) and apparently converted many to it. (Boucher, 1918: 186)

The Germans were the next-largest group of early settlers, and settled most thickly in Hempfield and Huntingdon townships. They were more scattered and isolated than the Scotch Irish and didn't "meddle in public affairs." (Albert, 1882: 47) The Pennsylvania Dutch did not come from Germany, but from the "Germans and the Dutch of the Netherlands, and spoke a language that was a mixture of English and German." (Boucher, 1918: 187) They were characterized as sober, plain, honest people

who were mainly agriculturalists, in contrast to the Scotch-Irish who opened taverns and mills, speculated and manufactured. (Albert, 1882: 47) The Germans were "among the first in our county to establish schools for the instruction and catechisation of the young." (Albert, 1882: 48) They were mainly Amish or Dunkards, but some were Mennonist. Many of them were Lutheran or German Reformed. (Boucher, 1918: 189)

There were also descendants of French Huguenots in Westmoreland County, many of whom had been living in other European countries for so long they no longer spoke French. Of all the early settlers, it is estimated that three-fourths of them were native English speakers, the other fourth, German speakers. (Boucher, 1918: 185)

## **V. Monessen**

### **A. A Brief Industrial History**

Monessen was incorporated as a borough in September, 1898. It was an "industrial boom town" and is on the eastern bank of the Monongahela River about thirty miles south of Pittsburgh. (Magda, 1983: 5) Monessen was perhaps best known for its metal production (tin plate, fence nails, wire).

In 1894 a group of Pittsburgh industrialists such as Colonel James Schoonmaker, the vice-president of the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad Company, purchased land from farmers and formed the East Side Land Company. In 1897 William Donner, who headed a tin plate mill company in Indiana, decided to build a tin plate mill on their land. M.J. Alexander, the real estate manager for the land the East Side Land company subsequently decided to sell, decided to name the new community Monessen- "Mon" after the river, and "Essen" after the German name for "a large industrial city." (Magda, 1983: 6) This tin mill was to be the driving force in the creation of Monessen and in its eventual decline in population and businesses.

By 1920 Monessen was the "chief industrial town in Westmoreland County in terms of capital invested, product value, number of workers, and wages paid." (Magda, 1983: 6) Since 1930, however, with the collapse of its industries, Monessen's population has declined from 20,268 to 11,928 in 1980. (Magda, 1983: 7)

### **B. Ethnic Composition**

Monessen even today, with a declining population, presents a rich wealth of ethnic variety and interests which is displayed in the Cultural Heritage Festival held each summer. Most of Monessen's early and present residents are southern and eastern European immigrants and their descendants: Italians, Slovaks, Poles, Croatians, Hungarians, Greeks, and Ukrainians. By the 1960s African-Americans comprised about 10 percent of Monessen's population.

As groups of immigrants poured into Monessen, the immigrants who had arrived first would form a mutual aid society to provide insurance for its members and to teach them about citizenship requirements and life in the new country. These organizations, such as the Polish National Alliance and the Croatian Fraternal Union, also taught the language of their native countries to their children, and provided the new immigrants with social networks and entertainment.

### **C. Ethnic Clubs**

#### **1. Monessen's Past and Present Clubs**

Today Monessen has far fewer ethnic clubs than in the past; even the last few years have seen

closings of clubs such as the Sokol Club, and the sale of the last of the Italian clubs. Today there is a Slovak, a Croatian, a Ukrainian, a Hungarian, and a French club in Monessen.

Ed Filipowski of the Polish National Alliance on Knox Avenue spoke of ethnic clubs as "the only way you're going to keep heritage going." (log18c side b 167) Indeed, for the Polish, the Croatians, and Slovaks, the club is their last formal avenue of ethnic expression in Monessen. These communities are mostly Catholic and belonged to one of five ethnic Catholic churches in Monessen which were merged this year. (The merger will be discussed in the next section in more detail.) The Italians and the Irish, the two other ethnic groups who lost their churches, do not have their own clubs.

The merger has made the preservation of ethnic identity an even more poignant struggle for these groups in Monessen, and the clubs are feeling the burden of being the last formal institutions of their group. The Italians have suffered a particularly hard blow, having gone from five ethnic clubs to "zilch." (log18c side b 167) The New Italian Hall was sold to a private owner, although the Italians continue meeting there. "The Sons of Italy was sold to Black people." (ibid) There were Italian Mutual Aid societies and NIPA, National Italian Political Association, too.

Other clubs, such as the Finnish club, closed a while ago, after the tin mill shut down in the late 1930s. The Greek American Protective Association lodge was disbanded in the 1960s, "and its role was taken by the American-Hellenic Educational Progressive Association, which serves both Uniontown and Monessen, and by St. Spyridon's Church, which has assumed many of its social and cultural functions." (Weston, 1983: 32) The issue of "Southwestern Pennsylvania" magazine on Monessen (quoted above) goes into detail about the ethnic groups and clubs of the area, and mentions that at one time there was also a Mexican community. I did not hear of any Mexican activity or presence in Monessen; according to the 1990 census, there are 25 Mexicans remaining in Monessen.

## 2. The Polish National Alliance

The situation at the Polish National Alliance on Knox Avenue in Monessen shares a pattern similar to that of the Slovenian halls in Herminie and Yukon, and perhaps other ethnic halls in the region. In all three places, the officers are in their seventies and the frequent members are mostly senior citizens. The primary concerns of these caretakers are who will take over once they're gone, and how ethnic heritage will continue without the hall.

Ed Filipowski, the Monessen P.N.A. vice-president, compares the club to "home", saying: "Nothing like a hall to come to, we have our meetings, we enjoy it. . . this is ours" (log18c 126). In this case, as mentioned above, the club members are still adjusting to the loss of their church, which had been an important means of affirming and retaining their ethnic identity. Ed felt literally robbed of his identity: "They worked hard for that church. . . paid everything off and then they came and took it away from them. That's like stealing it from them." The club then became even more precious to its members.

Ed Filipowski was concerned, as Adolf Korber of Yukon's Slovenian lodge and Al Lazaar of Herminie's Slovenian lodge were, that "we're going to lose all our ethnic in time." (log 17b-c 111) The club tries to keep its youth involved and maintain ethnic affiliation by holding events such as Easter egg hunts, Mardi-gras, Oktoberfest, and coloring contests. They also participate in national PNA golf and softball tournaments. Ed's policy is to: "get membership, get them involved, fraternalism, keep the members happy. We have Monday night football, throw parties, have potato pancakes, have parties to initiate new members, we want to keep them happy, keep them coming in." (log18c side b 357)

The PNA's "Polish room" is a strong symbol of its members' ethnic identification and pride. Ed repeatedly stressed the room as a vital component in the fight to maintain ethnic identity. He proudly told me: "My sister and my wife put this room together." (log18c side b 373) and added that "People from

Pittsburgh come up here they just love our room" (log18c side b 083).

The women are just as involved with the club as the men are, Ed told me. His sister is secretary and is national commissioner, and his wife is trustee, and there is a "lady vice-president." Vestiges of the original all-male structure of the club are apparent in the women's roles, however.

The "lady vice-president" is in addition to the male vice-president (currently Ed). Her position is a relic of the time when there was a separate ladies' auxiliary. This auxiliary has long since gone the way of other ladies' auxiliaries, and I suspect her role is more of a figurehead than that of an active officer. The trustee job is a maintenance job, sweeping and cleaning, and secretary is a stereotypically female role. National commissioner seems to be the only role which involved females on a higher administrative level, in a non-traditionally female role. This observation is only based on the limited number of women whom Ed mentioned, but I believe this is a fairly good indicator of women's roles in the organization.

That the club was in reality a male-centered domain itself was apparent from the dimly-lit bar at which only men were sitting. Many of the ethnic clubs have bars and receive a significant proportion of their profit from them. However involved women may be in event-planning and office holding, the daily social structure and networks of ethnic clubs revolve around its male members. This is to some extent understandable, as when these clubs were originally founded some 80 years ago, women and men were only nominally in the same organizations, which had separate "ladies' auxiliaries," meetings, and activities. Ella Dacko suggested that this may have been so that one parent could go out while the other watched the children. (log 14c)

Ed lamented the lack of a women's auxiliary: "we have a nice stainless steel kitchen upstairs, they cooked and everything. The women got older, and we don't have it anymore" (log18c side b 174). This is another trend shared by Yukon and Herminie's Slovenian halls, whose ladies' auxiliaries have also died with their older members. Women are increasingly less willing to shoulder these additional, "feminine" duties which they may see as extensions of unpaid, undervalued domestic duties, rather than valid expressions of ethnic loyalty.

#### **D. Religion and Ethnic Identity**

Ethnic identity and religion seem to be more closely or overtly related in Monessen than in Elizabeth, for example. People in Monessen identify churches as "the Finnish church" or "the Greek church." When I asked the question "what kinds of people go to this church?" or "do certain ethnic groups go to certain churches?" in Elizabeth, Forward Township, and all of the other areas in Westmoreland County which I visited, most people replied "all kinds" or "Heinz 57." The exception in Elizabeth was the Italian/Irish Catholic church, St. Michael's, which had been moved out into the township.

This high correlation of ethnic identity with a particular church and religion in Monessen may be because of the previously mentioned high eastern European immigrant composition of Monessen. In Monessen a group of people would arrive and establish churches, then aid societies and clubs shortly afterwards. As Ella Dacko explained to me: "You see how these organizations started with the church and then slowly [developed]." (log14c side b 093)

#### **1. Ethnic Greek Orthodox Churches-Toward Unification?**

Interestingly, it seems that with the ethnic groups who practice Orthodoxy, that is, the eastern groups such as the Greeks, Syrians, and Carpatho-Russians, their clubs and groups seem to have faded as they center increasingly on the church. For instance, there are no Syrian, Greek or Russian social

clubs or halls in Monessen today, although there were in the past. The Russian club, which came into existence around the same time as St. John's Orthodox Church did, disbanded ten years ago. However, some St. John's members such as the Dackos are still active in Russian Orthodox activities outside of Monessen, such as UROBA (The United Russian Orthodox Brotherhood of America) whose lodge and headquarters are now in Pittsburgh. Many of the Syrian Orthodox activities, such as picnics, take place outside Monessen as well; the main hub for Syrian activities, again, is the church. The only one of the four Orthodox groups which has both an ethnic hall and a church is the Ukrainian community.

While the Greek Orthodox groups such as the Syrians and Russians want to maintain their individual ethnic identities, they see a merger of the Orthodox Churches as a necessary, inevitable, and even desirable step.

George Essey of Monessen's Syrian Orthodox church, St. Michael's, strongly expresses this: "Hopefully by the year 2000 maybe [it will be] the Orthodox church of America, [we'll] break away from the churches in the old countries and have our own archdiocese. . . I've been looking for that. . . if this is the way things are going to go (forgetting ethnic heritage) then why not just stay an American? Why keep your heritage background?" On the other hand, he expresses ambivalence: "I'd love to keep mine, my family tries to maintain what we do have. . . I'm an American-born Syrian, and I love it." (log4c 128-201)

Other members of Orthodox churches in Monessen and Jacobs Creek echoed George's sentiments. They want one Orthodoxy, saying there's "no difference" in the services and little between the churches save for the different patriarchs and the occasional use (most frequently at Christmas) of the native languages to sing hymns. At the same time, they want to retain their ethnic pride and identity, as Andrew Dacko of St. John's said: "In this country there is a need for all the Orthodox churches to get together, but like anything else, it's ethnicity." Ella Dacko was optimistic about the possibility of achieving both ends: "I think we could get together and still keep our identity, each one." (log14c 212) She added "I like diversity. . . [ethnic identity] is important." (log14c 212)

All of the four Monessen Orthodox members and the two Jacobs Creek Orthodox members I talked with agreed that the Orthodox churches have more in common than they have differences. Although they don't share administrative or bureaucratic hierarchies, "the priests and the people communicate; they share problems and different things but each do their own things." (log14c side b 219) Another common element which is an important solidarity creating mechanism for Orthodox churches is the "Sunday of Orthodoxy" in which people from all of the Mon Valley deanery's Orthodox churches can participate in the choir and attend the service. Each deanery has a separate "Sunday of Orthodoxy."

In Monessen, they "alternate between the Greek church and [the Russian church] for Sunday of Orthodoxy. . . the first Sunday in Lent."

Ella Dacko neatly summed up the differences between the Orthodox churches: "Traditions- there's a big T and a little t - the big T is basic tradition of the church. The little t is in different areas of Europe people brought over to this country things that were special to them, like foods." (log14c side b 134) The question seems to be, then, if the "little t" will keep Orthodoxy ethnically segregated, and if so, for how long.

## **2. The Catholic Church Merger-Losing Ethnic Heritage**

Both the case of a possible Orthodox merger and the Catholic church merger illustrate the gradual processes of ethnic attrition and the weakening of ethnic boundaries in the area. However, the feelings and attitudes of the Catholic groups in Monessen present a stark contrast to the Orthodox

groups' willingness and desire to unify. They are angry and hurt by the recent merger that was imposed on them from above by Bishop Bosco.

Ed summed up their feelings: "Wouldn't you be hurt if somebody took something away from you that you had all your life?" (log18c 107) One immediately apparent difference between the two cases is that the Orthodox members feel they have an active voice in deciding if and how such a merger would come about. Catholic church members were not so empowered; they were subject to the whims, they felt, of Catholic Church policy. This the protesting members of the Slovak Holy Name church (now up for sale) state succinctly on their billboard: "In God we trust, in Bishop Bosco we don't." (log18c 063)

The Catholic parishioners are understandably bitter about the two-year old merger: "I don't feel very good about it. They took the church away from us. From my childhood I went there and they took it away. I think everyone feels bad about it." Not only are they upset by it, some feel it's a distinctly anti-ethnic policy: "They don't want people to have no ethnic affiliation, that's the way I look at it." (log 18c 141)

Members are not only deprived of the familiar services and surroundings, they are deprived of traditional customs associated with their church, such as the Polish tradition of bringing a basket of food with them to church to be blessed on Christmas. They also can't be buried in the church which some of them have served all of their life; funeral and wedding masses are only held at St. Cajetan, the previous Italian church, now called Epiphanes, and St. Hyacinth, previously the Polish church, is only a chapel, Epiphanes Chapel.

The "good deal of hard feelings" (log2c 015) stem not only from the helpless feelings of "losing [their] ethnic heritage" but from the parishioners' inability to influence the merger, from their powerlessness. The Bishop's task force ostensibly referred to the results of a parishioner survey when they made their suggestion to merge, however many feel that the surveys were not taken seriously: "We did our surveys, we wrote 'em down, we told them we didn't want it but they did it anyhow." (log18c-141)

The parishioners are far from passive in fighting for what for many constitutes an essential part of their lives. Some of them, like the Holy Name group, the Slovaks, are actively protesting the merger through billboards and by repeatedly "bothering the Bishop." Others speak openly of their resentment, sense of betrayal, and bitter disappointment to outsiders such as myself and anyone who will listen. Many of them boycott the new Epiphanes Church, preferring to go elsewhere than to face what represents to many the end of a lifetime of dedication. Some refuse to be buried in the Epiphanes Church. The most important resistance to the Catholic Church's forced "de-ethnicization" however, is the continued efforts by people like Ed Filipowski and Anthony Chelen to preserve their ethnic heritage through club and family activities, by making ethnic foods and keeping cherished traditions.

### **E. Monessen Public Library, the Largest in the Mon Valley**

The Monessen Public Library is the largest in the Mon Valley region, and is an invaluable resource for everyone, particularly researchers interested in historical materials on the region. It also has provided me with a wealth of ethnographic information from the many delightfully helpful librarians, who referred me to each other and provided me with a map of Monessen. The first librarian I met, Linda Vrabel, kindly told me about activities in Monessen, saying that they are "very big on sports" such as soccer, but that there really wasn't any place that people hung out in Monessen. She added, however, that people sometimes go to Sweeney's or Picnics in Rostraver Township, which are bars and have games. Linda also suggested that the Main Street Mall and Landmark Place, where people go dancing, are possible hangouts in Monessen. She recommended that I speak with Carol Sepesky, the

Workplace coordinator for the library, whose husband was a Monessen mayor.

### **1. Workplace Program; Easing the Employment Pinch**

The Workplace Program was conceptualized after the Monessen mill closed down in 1987. It was funded by a grant from the Kellogg Corporation which ran from 1989-91. Since the grant has run out, the library has sought new funding unsuccessfully. The program is kept alive through library fundraisers such as flea markets. It is a free program available to anyone in the region, but has specifically responded to employment needs resulting from mill and mine closings. Carol Sepesky, the Workplace Coordinator, told me of being "on a rapid response team through the unemployment office when the Mathies mine in Finleyville closed down two years ago. . . Anywhere workers are laid off in large numbers we try to go to them so they know they have somewhere to go for help." (log3c 199)

The help Workplace provides includes Carol's invaluable guidance. She assists people with writing resumes and cover letters, applying to schools and taking entrance exams. She also guides people through a computer program, Discover, which matches people with career suggestions suitable to their abilities and interests.

The average age of Workplace clients is between thirty to forty. Women clients are generally returning to work after having a family or divorcing, or are just out of school. (log3c 268) Carol estimates that the numbers of men and women seeking Workplace assistance are about even. Most of the women are looking for teaching jobs in elementary schools, as nearby California University is noted for its education department. They are also seeking secretarial, health care, child care, accounting, bookkeeping, and office jobs.

Most of the men Carol counsels have been laid off from industrial jobs. The jobs they seek and have held run the gamut of "just about anything. . . high tech fields, security guards, accounting, business, sales, and management. Most had to give up on steel or coal. They try to find a job using the experience they had in the mill, like heavy equipment, truck driving." (log3c 302-13)

Carol advises 900-1000 people a year. She is the only staff member to work with the patrons, although they are free to utilize the materials at any time. She receives job notices on microfiche from a job service in Charleroi, newspaper ads, national ad searches, and has lists of businesses.

Finding a new source of funding for this essential and important program has become a pressing concern for Carol and the rest of the library staff. They continue to hold it together despite hard times, much as their clients have, and provide hopeful new directions for many who thought they had reached the end of the road.

## **VI Yukon and Herminie**

### **A. Ethnic groups**

Yukon and Herminie have a lot in common. Only four or five miles apart in the middle of Westmoreland County, near the I-76 turnpike, they are tied together by the relationships between their Slovenian residents. Both towns have large, well-maintained Slovenian halls, and boast traditional Slovenian button-box bands.

Yukon has always been about fifty percent Slovenian, (Weston, 1983: 12) and the area around the Slovenian Hall was known as "Grannish Street." (8-25FN) Herminie, a younger town, became a center of Slovenian life after World War I, when Slovenians settled to work the Ocean Coal Co. mines.



Herminie has also been about half Slovenian since then.

The other main Yukon ethnic groups mentioned by informants were the Italians, Croatians, and Jews. Yukon's Slovenians and Italians got along well: "The Italians and Slovenians played 'bocci' or 'bolyny' together, almost like bowling, in a sandlot, in teams. . . Grannish and Italian and Polish played together on teams." (log2c 362-398) The Moose club, today not identified with a specific ethnic identity, used to be mostly Italian. The Croatian Fraternal Union is also still active in Yukon.

The relations between the groups seemed to be quite congenial, they "lived together in harmony, no bad feelings against anyone." (log2b-c 160) However, the Jews seemed to be regarded as different from the other ethnic groups; they were mostly owners of the clothing and grocery stores in town. One informant leaned over and confided to me: "I don't know what nationality you are, but I'll just say it anyways- there were two Jews over here from Pittsburgh, they had a clothing store, I used to work for them. They used to tell me they made a lot of money in this little mining town." (8-25FN) Today in Yukon, there are "no Jews here no more. . . those up on the hill. . . burned their buildings down. . . [and] moved to Pittsburgh" (log2b-c 160)

Also, "there aren't too many Italians around" (8-25FN) today. An informant told me that he sees a few of them at the post office every so often, but that "Italians don't do things anymore since they got all these mixed breeds now. There's too much outside business now, people are busy with other things." (8-25FN)

The Slovenian population seems to dominate present-day Yukon, with their Slovenian Hall a center for parties and weddings from people all over the region. However, even this strong ethnic group is moving from the town, as was apparent at the Kalikfest I attended at the Yukon Slovenian Hall; most of the people at the event were not Yukon residents.

## **B. Slovenians and Union Activities**

The Slovenians were known for their strong socialism and pro-union tendencies. The Coal and Iron Police were in full swing in Yukon during the early 1930s, and one Yukon resident recalled the tension: "The strikers would go up in them caves. . . up there in the hills. . . and shoot down at the police, and they'd shoot back at them. They were shooting here like in the wild west. Not shooting people really as much as they had their guns." (8-25FN) Frances Korber recalled her early memories of these police going into her mother's basement to look for a man they thought was hiding there. Nick Korber recalled that the situation was so tense that two people weren't allowed to talk together on the street: "My dad was drug between two horses because he was talking to another man" (log2c 096). Slovenians, well known for their activism, were the focus of police searches: "I remember [we] used to hold union meetings up at the Slovenian hall, State police would come and try to break the meeting up" (log2c 096).

## **C. Working conditions in the Mines**

Yukon men mostly worked for the Westmoreland Coal Company from 1904 to 1950. One informant I talked to worked in Jeannette, the 12-6 shift at the "glasshouse" during high school, but later worked in the mines for 26 years. Nick Korber told me about working conditions in the mines: "[In] winter months I never saw daylight, I worked ten hours a day, except for Sundays." (log2c 032) "Mines in them days were dangerous because they had a lot of gas." (log2c 109)

Worker-management relations weren't too great then either: "Did the same type of work at each mine, handloading. Me and my brother got fired because we wouldn't vote for Hoover, we never would.

"There was no reason. They said, 'You left slate in the corner.' It was a blessing anyway" (log2c 123).

Adolf Korber, Nick's brother, also had harsh stories to tell of mine work: "I was 16 and got this hand all mashed up, no compensation, just \$165 as a settlement" (log8c 002). He and his brother both have black lung disease; Nick, however, is attached to a breathing apparatus and undergoes frequent oxygen treatments. Adolf described the exploitative conditions at the mines: "Had screen coal, if coal fell through the screen the company didn't pay you for it. People were starving and they were getting rich. The average salary was \$4.76 a day. I put 35 years in, then doctor discovered I had black lung, I was only 54. He said I had to quit- I said how I'm not old enough to get a pension" (log8c 235).

#### **D. Kalikfest at Slovenian Hall, Yukon**

The Kalikfest is an annual event sponsored by Frank Kalik and his associates from his travel agency, "Kalik and Company" and from the Slovenian Heritage Association. It is held at the Slovenian Hall at Yukon. Each year they choose a different theme for the festival and people are bused to attend it from as far away as Detroit. The first year's festival featured the Philadelphia Mummers parade, about ten years ago. This was an event that Yukon residents remember well today. This year's theme was "Celebration of Nations." A group called France Marroult was booked on their North American tour from Slovenia. These are young college students from Slovenia who are majoring in music, dance, or ethnomusicology. They performed traditional Slovenian dances, wearing traditional clothes which reflected regional differences. Most of the audience was not from Yukon. Adolf Korber's sister had driven up from Pittsburgh by herself, and the majority of people I met came from Pittsburgh or Monroeville. A few had come from Herminie. The event was almost sold out at around 400 people.

Adolf introduced me to Terry Stefl, an active member of the Slovenian Heritage Association and a co-owner of the Kalik travel agency. He himself is Bohemian, not Slovenian, and claims that most of the people in the group are not Slovenian, but just people who like Slovenian culture. Most of these members were recruited from among travel agency clients. The Slovenian Heritage Association, gift shop, and travel agency are located in Monroeville.

Adolf also introduced me to Frank Kalik, the events' organizer. His father was Bohemian, mother Slovenian. He broadcasts a Slovenian radio program on Sundays in addition to his Slovenian Heritage Association and travel agency activities.

Sally Leskosek was another SHA member I talked with at the Kalikfest. She is the manager and her husband the director of the Yukon Button-Box Band. She was also involved, as is her granddaughter, in Children's Circle activities. Her daughter and her fifteen year old granddaughter are also very active in Slovenian associations. Her granddaughter plays the (Slovenian) button-box accordian.

Kalikfest is not run by the Yukon hall itself, and one of the reasons for its success is its access to a wider audience. Yukon simply doesn't have the population anymore to support big events.

Adolf Korber holds dances about four times a year at the hall. He would do more, perhaps, but he is in direct competition with Herminie for the same Slovenian population: "Herminie monopolizes nearly every Friday and Saturday and Sunday, which is not fair, and if I have a big dance and they have a dance nobody makes any profit, maybe a little bit, but it's not worthwhile." (log8c 055)

Adolf is concerned that "it [the hall] could fall apart. . . I'm afraid to die, 'cause this hall's going to fall apart. Who's going to do it?" (log8c 370) There's "not enough interest" and people are just "drifting apart." "I don't see no future. . . The older people are dying off and the younger ones don't care." (log8c 444)

Adolf compares Slovenian enculturation unfavorably to Polish enculturation: "The Polish people teach their young kids, six, seven, eight, the polka. We don't have the Slovenians doing the polkas around here, very few of them are dancing. It's going to fall apart."

## **E. CRY: A Protest Against the Hazardous Legacy of an Industrial Past**

The hazardous waste dump in Yukon is a burning concern for most of the residents in the surrounding area, but I heard about it in Yukon mostly from Nick and Frances Korber, who are active members of CRY. They weren't sure exactly what the initials stand for, something like "Citizens React for Yukon," but they were very sure what they are fighting for—the quality and length of their lives, and the ability to control their surrounding environment to their benefit (or at least to prevent their detriment).

The hazardous dump is run by Mill Service, which contracts with in-state and out-of-state steel mills to bring their waste here and dump it in "the lagoons" (log2c). Supposedly a filter plant has been installed, but residents are skeptical even about its existence. Frances Korber expressed her concerns about the plant's effects: "This dump up here might erupt and everyone goes kaphooey. The contamination is leaking through people's water wells, so they gave certain people city water. One farmer up there adjoins the site and his cattle all died. The politicians are against it but aren't doing anything about it. Money talks, bullshit walks. A lot of people are getting sick, cancer from it. They made \$60 million in one year and they have a citation for \$200,000 and with that they put in a water line for the people that lost their water" (log2c 180-285).

CRY is not only protesting the plant, it's suggesting other solutions for the problems caused by the plant: "CRY wants to buy out the peoples' homes so they can go elsewhere or reduce or taxes. Our property's not worth anything, so people are coming in because they're getting something for nothing, [they're] sell[ing] it [so] cheap" (log2c 194).

Adding a sadly ironic twist to the story is the fact that because of the area's lack of jobs, some of Yukon's residents are working as truckdrivers for Mill Service. This is strangely reminiscent of earlier situations in Yukon and throughout southwestern Pennsylvania where sometimes neighbors were "working for the enemy" as scabs. Mostly these were people from out of town, but sometimes they were people one knew, or came to know. Economics can thus influence social position and interactions in subtle ways. My contacts were sensitive to this, and declined to tell me who in Yukon was working for the Mill Service.

## **F. Herminie**

### **1. Ethnic and Social Composition**

Herminie's Slovenian population seems to be larger than Yukon's, and again, people from all over the region attend the hall's events. The Slovenians bought their present hall from the Italians, who moved down the street into a "little club." The Italian club has since closed, and the German club, which used to be where the ambulance center is, is also closed. The Moose club in Herminie is still active. Most of the Slovenians in Yukon and Herminie are Catholic; Yukon's Slovenians go to the Seven Dolors R.C. Church, and Herminie's Slovenians attend St. Edward's. Other churches in town include St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church and The United Brethren Church.

### **2. The Slovenian Hall**

Herminie's Slovenian Hall members are about sixty percent Slovenian. This hall is the site of the Thursday Night Button-Boxers, a band which includes the traditional Slovenian accordion which has

buttons rather than keys. They practice every Thursday night, and play for different events. For instance, they played for Ethnic Days in Perryopolis. The spouses of the players come and sit at the tables nearby, playing cards, watching, and talking.

Downstairs, Slovenian line-dancing takes place, also on Thursday nights. This kind of dancing is "good for widows," Florence Penske told me, because you don't need a partner. (9-24FN) The line dance instructor, Pauline Sakaley, is 73 years old and is an SNPJ lodge member from Library, Pennsylvania. People come to line dance from West Mifflin, Greensburg, Harrison City, and Wickhaven. One couple come from Pittsburgh, and most of them come from Greensburg. The line-dancing is not only to Slovenian music, but to such pop classics as "It's Electric." The line dancers were all women, although a few men wandered in and out on the sidelines and one or two sat at nearby tables. Most of the people in the room were at least over forty, and the average age was probably sixty or seventy.

The Slovenian Hall also holds a country-western dance every Friday evening, and most Saturdays they have polka dances. Every second Sunday of the month there are jam sessions, and any musician can come along and bring her or his instrument.

Florence mentioned that she is involved in the Slovenian Folklore Ensemble, which has authentic costumes and travels all over America. They performed in Pittsburgh at the Station Square I.C. Light stage on Memorial Day this year. She started line-dancing, and then began taking button-box lessons, which she's kept up for five years.

Other regional Slovenian activities involve the SNPJ campgrounds in Enon Valley, Lawrence County. Rita Zupanc told me that she and her family have a trailer there and "go up for the summer," during which they hold dances, have bingo, "blyma", and a Slovenianfest with foods and bands. The Grape Festival at Evanston (near Herminie) is another Slovenian summer event.

The button-boxers and line-dancers were generally friendly and allowed me to take pictures, a few of them coming over to say hello. One interesting incident occurred as I was about to leave. I was wearing a sweatshirt with Hebrew on it, and as I stood near a table collecting my things, a brown-haired, stocky man in his sixties, called to me "hey, you ain't one of them Hebrews, is you?" I looked at him and said "As a matter of fact, yes, I'm Jewish." He had begun telling a Jewish joke, something about how do you tell a Jewish boy from. . . I didn't pay much attention, as I didn't want to be baited. Florence said to me, "Don't pay no attention to Ben, he likes to tease." I began walking out and Ben approached me and asked me some questions. I answered him, and he said he would show me the way out. I said it wasn't necessary, but he insisted. On our way out, he turned to me suddenly and said "You know I was just kidding with you, don't you? I'm a Jew myself, Ben-ya-min" he pronounced his name for me in Hebrew. Shocked, I looked at him. "Yeah, I'm probably the only Jew around for miles. My wife's Slovenian." In a month of fieldwork in Westmoreland County and Forward Township, he was the only Jewish person I met. I would have liked to interview him; it would be interesting to get his perspective on the area's ethnic group interactions and concerns.

## **H. Concerns and Issues- Yukon and Herminie**

The first concern mentioned by people in Yukon was the lack of work in the area: "Put people back to work, there's nobody working around here. They give you a little raise in one hand and use both hands to take it back" (log2c side b 180). Another contact complained that "people don't want to work anymore. . . they don't want to work for \$4-5 an hour. . . the big-paying jobs are all gone" (8-25FN). He echoed the need for work, specifically mill work: "We need some mills, man. . . we need some business around here. All this talk about industrial parks, they don't do no good, they don't put nobody to work. . . " (8-25FN).

Other important issues for Yukon residents include, as previously mentioned, "get[ting] rid of the acid plant" (log2c) and keeping ethnic heritage going in the Slovenian hall. Also, the entire Yough School District, merged from schools in Yukon, West Newton, Herminie Mendon and Madison, will be affected by the projected closing of the Mendon, Barn Run and Louber elementary schools. The Yough high school will remain in Herminie, and the elementary schools in Herminie and West Newton will remain open. There will be a junior high in Mendon, and the high school in Herminie will be enlarged. Judging by reactions I heard to the school merger in Elizabeth, this is an issue which will greatly upset the area's residents. Not only is it a great inconvenience for the children and their parents, it is also another poignant sign of the area's population loss and decline. Also, it contributes to this population loss when families leave the small towns to move closer to schools.

The loss of the area's young is a pivotal concern in the residents' attempts to preserve ethnic heritage. Herminie's Slovenian Hall president, Al Lazaar, feels that although Slovenian culture will still be here twenty years from now, the clubs probably will not be; his concerns echo Adolf's and other older ethnic group members': "We can't get young people interested. . . the youngest are 30-50" (9-24FN). Youth conferences are targeted at getting the young involved. Al is more optimistic than Adolf Korber, though expressing similar reservations : "The bigger lodges will survive. This one should be around for quite a few years, but then you don't know who will be here to take our places. I 'm 73, and I can't keep going forever" (9-24FN).

## **VII West Newton and Sewickly Township**

### **A. The Social Setting**

West Newton welcomes you before your arrival with a wooden sign on route 51 which reads: "West Newton- 200 Years of Charm." I followed route 201 to east 136 towards West Newton as the scenery changed abruptly from the heavy commercialism of route 51 to a lush green rural area dotted only with occasional billboards for pizza, flowers, a stone and marble store, and a few churches. Several ramshackle gray weathered sheds added a picturesque touch to the landscape as the one-lane road wound toward and then through West Newton.

A sign declaring that "Yough children are protected. . ." told me that West Newton's children have been incorporated into the larger common identity of the Yough School District, which was probably relatively recently created with the area's school merger. This sign symbolized, for me, the study area's trend towards a melding of identities, and an attrition of the independent community identities which were fostered in the days of the boom town.

People in the area are mainly truckers, farmers, or service workers. Truckers work for Charley Brothers in New Stanton or for other nearby companies, and some are independent. Ethnic groups in West Newton include French Canadians, Italians, English, and Slovak. There are only 64 blacks and 3,081 whites in West Newton.

After talking with several people in West Newton it became apparent that residents in the area see their town as embedded in the wider context of the area. They are knowledgeable about activities and landmarks in other small towns in the region, and often work in different sections of townships and boroughs simultaneously. Community boundary lines seem to be "blurry" in the sense that people can identify with more than one small-town community without conflict. The overarching regional identity of Sewickley township may be a more salient marker. Thus, for instance, Jack Kuiphoff, himself a relatively new resident, could tell me he's a "fireman from Turkeytown" who lives in West Newton and also volunteers with the West Newton Ambulance team. He is intimately knowledgeable about strange situations in Wyano, and he works in both Rostraver Township (at the Citgo gas station) and in West

Newton. He wants to get a job in Greensburg with the Mutual Aid Ambulance.

Jack's father moved from nearby Ruffsdales to New Stanton where he and many other area truck drivers work. Jason, who works with Jack in the Citgo gas station, is a Fellsburg resident who is familiar with places in New Stanton and Perryopolis at which he and other area youth hang out for fun.

Despite the regionally embedded context of West Newton's social and cultural life, residents create individual community identity through various community events and organizations. For instance, West Newton has its own volunteer emergency medical services. The gas station, Hillcrest Exxon, on east 136, seems to be an informal community information center. Its outside windows and walls are covered with fliers announcing community events. The attendant there was quite helpful with directions and knows the area well. A "West Newton Community Family Picnic" was held at the West Newton Community Pool. A "West Newton Community Festival" was another summer community event.

Churches also sponsor community events. Bingo is held at the United Presbyterian Church as well as at the Firehall. A "Soup and Salad Game Party" was sponsored by the Holy Family church at their social hall. The town of West Newton, population 3,152 (1990 State Census) boasts eight churches, a Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist, Methodist-Episcopalian, Baptist, Presbyterian and Wesleyan church.

Just a few miles from the Hillcrest Station, to the left on east 136 is the Sewickley P of H Grange, which held a "Sewickley Community Fair" in August, before the West Newton Fair. It would have been informative to have been able to attend both events and compare visitors and organizers to see how much overlap there is between the two "communities."

Continuing down the narrow road (136E) away from West Newton in Sewickley Township, the scenery is mostly rural. Fields of corn, barns, and spacious homes with horses and cows grazing in the yard flank the road.

Coming back along route 136, heading west, there is a small road opposite the "Candlelight Inn" which rolls down through corn fields and green hills and over a picturesque covered wooden bridge. Straight ahead lies Wyano, past a metal guardrail which is spray-painted: "Pa Dot for Kill." Yukon is to the left at the guardrail.

On the way to Wyano was an intriguing place which looked like it was a remnant from Halloween. Two red posts flanked a wide driveway; the posts were topped by leering plastic skulls and adorned with upside down metal crosses. A dark red wooden sign warned: "Satan's Land- Enter At Your Own Risk." A miniature American flag flew from each side of the sign. Next to it was a small white chair which read "Lifeguard" across the back, and underneath it, in black "Jesus Christ." A Pepsi-Cola can sat on the armrest of the tiny wooden chair. Across the driveway was a rope which was on the ground, and a cardboard sign which warned people in fluorescent orange to "Stay Away." Next to the other post, across from the sign, lay an uprooted red mailbox, which read "Denny Skinnerback, 666 Devil's Lane."

At the top of the driveway, an upside down cross hung over the entrance to a large white garage.

Two eighteen-wheeler trucks were parked in front of the garage; one had "Welfare Line" spray-painted on its white door. A neat, ordinary-looking stone house stood innocently across from the garage, at the end of a wide expanse of grass. This property and its owner play an interesting role in the area's youth culture, which I will discuss in more detail in the next section.

Across the street from this property, two large white circles decorated with star-like symbols in the middle and leaves and flower-like symbols surrounding it in a circular pattern hung on the front of a large red barn. They reminded me of Amish decorations. Above those two large circles was a smaller circle, decorated by a horse head set in the black outline of a star. I was told the family which owns this barn has Amish origins. (log22c) I'm not sure if these two properties are considered to be in Wyano; I

think they may be considered simply Sewickley Township.

Wyano has a post office, an honor roll, and a foundry which seems to be still in operation. It also has a hotel and the Wyano Evangelical United Brethren church.

### **B. Youth culture, "Satan's land" and graveyard entertainment**

The teenage boys of Rostraver and Sewickley Townships are involved in various activities such as hunting, fishing, hiking, and volunteering with the fire or emergency medical departments. Many of them also hold some sort of service job in gas stations or fast food places. For entertainment, some of them "hang out at Kmart's"; others enjoy mischievous pranks and "spooking" themselves and their friends. (log18c 188) As I only spoke with boys (two) I didn't find out much about the young girls' activities, but I was told that several of the girls they knew also worked at McDonald's. My guess is that few of the girls in the area work at the gas stations.

Denny Perlow, who calls himself "Denny Skinnerback," and his home "Satan's Land" provides entertainment for the area's youth and a source of gossip and head-shaking for the adults. Also, unfortunately for his neighbors, he is a nuisance, lowers their property's value and makes it next to impossible for them to sell their homes.

Teens who don't feel like "hanging out at K-Marts" drive through Denny's yard at night and damage his property, knocking down the rope at the bottom of his driveway, uprooting his mailbox, etc. They knock on his door and run away. When Denny responded to one of the midnight drive-throughs by assembling a "dummy" replica of one of the boys he'd seen in the car, with a death threat on it, neighborhood boys dismantled the dummy. According to them, Denny then "hooked up 220 volts to it which shocked people when they touched it" (log22c 020).

Tales about Denny include rumours that he chases people in his eighteen wheeler, and that he rides "his lawn tractor at night with no clothes on and a devil's mask. His neighbors think he's sick" (log22c 091).

Jack Kuiphoff did not know where Denny worked; he assumed he was an independent trucker. However, Jason, his co-worker, told me that Denny works for D + A Auto Auction on route 70 as a truck driver. He knew this because his father had also worked there at one time.

Denny supposedly "goes to work drunker than hell." Although the company was somewhat reluctant to hire him because of his strange behavior, his record was very good, and as "he's a pretty good mechanic," they hired him. (log22c 136)

The Sewickley Township teens also "cruise" through cemeteries for fun. The idea of the supernatural in the forms of ghosts, spirits, or the devil seems to fascinate them. This is probably the case in many rural communities; one contact I met briefly from New Kensington told me of teens waiting at "Sleepy Hollow" for "the bride," a bride tragically killed on her wedding night years ago, to cross the road. They bring alcoholic beverages and drink until someone "sees" the bride.

Jason told me that there are two cemetery "attractions" he goes to occasionally. One is "the Archangels", who are in a New Stanton cemetery. They are reputed to have some mystical or spiritual aspects, because "some kid was going to take pictures of it for a school project of memorials and that was the only picture that didn't come out. The two angels were guarding the tomb and the picture was all blurry where the two angels were." (log22c 155) He regards the outings as entertainment, pragmatically, not as a chance for a true encounter with spirits: "No [noone else has taken a picture] it would ruin the fun cause then the picture will come out right." (log22c 155)

He had the same pragmatic approach to their other graveyard destination, that of the "glowing tombstone." This is in a cemetery on a hillside nearby: "when you drive past there's one tombstone that

glows, and what it is is a porchlight, but you're not supposed to know that. A smart person would know, but when you first see it. . . " (log22c 165-187)

Also there's "the old Quaker cemetery that's been moved, it's only 'bout a hundred feet by a hundred. . . they say weird things happen up there but I never seen anything." (log22c 165-187)

## **VIII. Mt. Pleasant**

### **A. Geographical and Social Description**

Mt. Pleasant can be approached via 76 to the Donegal exit and then west on 31, or via 51 to 981, through Smithton and Alverton. Approaching Mt. Pleasant on west 31 one passes signs for the Acme Methodist Church and Community Center, which hold bingos and auctions. There is a Mt. Pleasant Mine Service off of route 31, and the Bear Rocks Community is also nearby. The Mennonite Church Center is on route 982, a right off of west 31. The Lenox Clearance Center is on route 31, as is Mount Joy, a small town like Mellingsertown or Elkshorn which obviously was a town with an individual character and identity but today consists of a few houses and maybe a sign or two. The attendants at the Sunoco station at the Donegal exit were surprised that Mt. Joy was on my map, and they were astonished that Mellingsertown, which is now essentially just one road, was on the map. Mt. Joy was distinguished by the small Mt. Joy church, which has an adjoining cemetery.

After the Mt. Joy Church is the Church of the Brethren, and shortly after the church a sign welcomes you to Mt. Pleasant. The first church sign inside Mt. Pleasant proper is one for the First Assembly of God. After that is a blue and yellow state sign commemorating John Geary, the first governor of Pennsylvania, who had been a Mt. Pleasant resident. Opposite that sign is Mellingsertown Road, next to King's Copies.

Further in town is the only Sunoco in Mt. Pleasant- the Donegal Sunoco attendants had told me the attendant there would know where Mellingsertown is. Obviously gas stations are informal information centers for these towns, too, as in West Newton. The attendant at this station was able to direct me to Mellingsertown Road; however he didn't know much about the town it once was, (nor could he tell me where the newspaper offices are).

In the heart of Mt. Pleasant, population 4,787 (1990 State Census) is the Chamber of Commerce, which advertised the community's glass festival. Downtown Mt. Pleasant boasts an American Legion, a funeral home, a Church of God, a Reunion Presbyterian church, a United Methodist, a First Assembly of God, and a Methodist-Episcopalian church. Stores such as Co-Gos and bars line the main street. The office of the state representative of the 26th district, Eugene G. Saloom (the funeral home bears his name) is located on the main street next to a hunting and fishing store. Obviously the Saloom family is influential in town, because the department store also bears the name Saloom, George Saloom. The "racial" composition of Mt. Pleasant consists of 55 African-Americans, 9 people of "hispanic origin," 6 American Indian, Eskimo or Aleut, 4,720 whites and 5 Asian or Pacific Islanders. Ethnic groups in the area include French Canadians, Italians, Polish, Slovak, German, Czech, and English.

The Mt. Pleasant area was surrounded by Henry Clay Frick's coal mines and coke factories. It is also renowned for its glass; the natural elements needed for glass-making are abundant in its hillsides. The main items produced today in Mt. Pleasant are colored glass and crystal. The Smith Glass factory in town produces pressed glass. The Lenox Factory produces crystal. Lenox used to be located in town, at the site of the old Bryce factory, but it was "moved out of town because the old buildings weren't good enough or something." (9-1FN) Obviously this was somewhat of a blow for Mt. Pleasant, as fewer Lenox customers continue into town to purchase items there. Nevertheless, the very presence of the popular Lenox plant helps the town's economy. A Lenox saleswoman told me that the crystal is



still produced in Mt. Pleasant because the natural materials for it are abundant here, but that the china is produced in New Jersey.

### **B. The Mt. Pleasant Glass Festival**

The Mt. Pleasant Glass Festival centers around the town's principal past (and present) industries, as does the Scottdale Coke and Coal Festival. A wooden wagon at the entrance to the festival prominently displayed glass objects, and Lenox and Smith glass tents were set up near a glass-blowing demonstration.

The concept of crafts as production (i.e. glass) was reflected and reinforced by the many handi-craft booths in the festival.

The Scottdale Festival, in contrast, had emphasized historical aspects of the town and of the coke industry as work rather than as a craft or skill. While the Scottdale festival had a section for "Arts and Crafts" which was relegated to the basement of a bank, the crafts booths at Mt. Pleasant were a dominant festival feature, scattered throughout the food, drink, and readymade goods booths.

In addition to booths and the glass-blowing demonstration, the festival sponsored entertainment such as a "twins contest" and gospel music by the Mt. Pleasant based Steel City Quartet.

Most of the people running the festival booths came from outside of Mount Pleasant; in fact, none of the craftspeople I encountered were from the town or even a nearby area. One, Seamus Connolly, is from New Stanton; others were mostly from Westmoreland and Allegheny counties- Glassport, Pittsburgh, Ligionier, Connellsville, Confluence, etc.

### **1. Steelworkers, carpenters, housewives turned craftspeople**

The craftspeople at both the Scottdale and Mt. Pleasant festivals were people who had come up with creative solutions to their economic problems. The men often had the help of their spouses in beginning their own businesses using previously acquired skills or familiar materials. The men were mostly involved in wood carving and painting, while the women seemed to establish more solitary crafts businesses such as crocheting, needlework, jewelry or hand-painted clothes. Women seemed to have less spousal support. Women sat together in many of the women-run booths, some of them mother-daughter pairs.

For many of these craftspeople, their crafts are hobbies which have become either supplemental or alternative means of support as their crafts businesses became more lucrative than other available jobs. For instance, Gary Barden, a carpenter turned craftsman now creates cabinets, decorative hooks and other carved wooden items. He told me that his craft business has become so busy that he had to take days off of his recently acquired factory job to prepare for this show. He has been doing carpentry work since high school, and decided that he wanted to work for himself; someday he'd like to own his own shop.

Several other craftspeople mentioned owning their own shops as a personal and occupational goal. Richard Bilak told me the story of his occupational evolution from steelworker to craftsman and aspiring craft shop owner. After losing his job in 1979 at the Pittsburgh Steel Foundry (now Bucyrus-Erie Steel) he started doodling, and then "putzing around" in his cellar making names out of wood. People liked his crafts, and he continued making them, giving them away or keeping them. When he and his wife, Carol, were down to their last few hundred dollars of savings, they purchased a scroll saw, and he began creating figurines. Starting in 1981, he soon branched out into painting on wooden plaques and creating bird houses and unique tree trunk planters with carved faces.

Carol, a medical secretary at the Pittsburgh Epilepsy Center, helps him and also carves some

items herself. She feels that Richard's creativity had been stifled by the mills, and only now was able to emerge. They, along with many of the other crafts and sales people at the festival, now make the rounds of area festivals to sell their crafts, creating and selling them from their home.

Some of the other craftspeople at the festival don't sell their crafts out of their homes, and are not professional festival attenders. They attend festivals sporadically as a means of supplementing their other income. For example, Della Resh of Sapesville, a mother of two who was selling her own hand-knitted items, does not sell out of her home. She works and attends the Community College of Allegheny County. Her mother was assisting her at this festival, and she told me that her sister would be selling some of her crafts at the Soroptomist Annual Antique Show in Somerset.

Family seems to be an important support for craftspeople selling their merchandise and starting crafts businesses. One family has taken their craft beyond the world of festivals and had gone into distribution to different stores in Pittsburgh and on the Pennsylvania turnpike. In an interesting twist they create continuity with the region's past dependence on coal through their craft. Their coal figurines are a potent symbol and reminder of Southwestern Pennsylvania's occupational heritage. It is fascinating how this craft changes coal from a sometimes painful reminder of past losses to a symbol of people's resilience and their ability to construct a new future.

### **C. Mellingtown Road**

Mellingtown Road, the Russels told me, was "like a little town at one point" (9-1FN). The road had not had a sign "until the reverend moved here. . . his congregation had a hard time finding him. He's retired now. . . " The sign was misspelled because "someone keeps taking it down. That's about the third sign they put up and they still can't get it right" (9-1FN).

The only trace of the Mellingers who had lived on this road was a small cemetery which the Russels, who live on Mellingtown Road, told me about. It is in the backyard of "someone who owns a lot of eighteen-wheelers" and almost as many barking, chained dogs. The cemetery is very small, almost a family plot, with very old faded gravestones and footstones. A Samuel and Mary Mellinger are buried there with their son Joseph. It is my guess that Samuel was an assimilated Jew and married a non-Jewish woman, Mary; not only is their name a Jewish name, but her stone mentions Jesus, and his, while lacking a Jewish marker or Hebrew, does not. They were both born in Lebanon, Pa, and died four years apart, he in 1871, she in 1876. Joseph, who is probably either their son or his brother, died in 1875. His tombstone is much smaller and less legible than Samuel and Mary's. The two other surnames in the cemetery, Moody and Kramer, are also possibly Jewish names. Unfortunately, because of the faded inscriptions, it was difficult to really tell much more about these past Mellingtown residents.

However, the Mellingtown story reminds me of the other little towns I have encountered in my research such as Elkhorn and Manown Hollow, whose identities today emit only a faint echo of their past vitality.

## **IX. Scottdale**

### **A. Brief geographic and socio-historical description**

A sign at the entrance to Scottdale proclaims that you are entering a "friendly community." Some community institutions that one passes on the way up the hill to the center of the "friendly" town include an American Legion Post, Loucks park and playground, a denture clinic, an architect's office, a First Baptist church, a Church of God, a Calvin United Presbyterian Church, a Ferguson Funeral Home, an

optometrist's office, and a library. Scottdale appears to have many more services than most of the small towns I visited. The main square on Pittsburgh street boasts a restaurant, several stores, and the "Independent Observer" newspaper office. The Courier Daily, which is published out of Mt. Pleasant, has a Courier company office in Scottdale on North Broadway St.

Scottdale, with a population of 5,184 (1990 State Census) has a racial distribution typical of the study area of very few African-Americans (69) in an overwhelmingly white community. Its main ethnic groups are Germans, Polish, Irish, Italians, Slovaks, and English.

Scottdale and its surrounding areas were famous for their coke production and for their proximity to Connellsville in Fayette county, whose coke was considered to be the top grade of coke available. Scottdale was also well known for the famous coal and coke moguls who resided there, such as Henry Clay Frick and H. B. Thompson. Frick was reputed to own "95,000 beehive ovens between Brownsville and Latrobe." (log17c) Coke more than anything else defined life in Scottdale. People riding on the trolley at night read the newspapers by the light of the coke ovens, and people waited for days on which coke wasn't drawn to do their laundry. Otherwise, their "clothes were going to be so black that it wouldn't do much good." (log 16c)

Today, the beehive ovens are largely a relic of the industrial past, and the ovens in Alverton, near Scottdale, serve as educational tools. Dick Campbell reported having "a guy call me and ask me to arrange for a tour for a whole company of men down here who'd never seen a coke oven. . . they make coke all their life and they don't know what an individual coke oven looks like." (log17c)

## **B. The Scottdale Coke and Coal Festival**

The Scottdale Coke and Coal Festival, held annually in September, is more of a commemoration of an industrial heritage and a celebration of its legacy than of present industrial production. Coke production has now moved towards the Mon river, and is mainly carried out at the large Clairton and Wheeling-Pitt works, rather than at the smaller works such as Alverton which dotted the area surrounding Scottdale.

This festival's goal is to construct a proud memory of this identity-defining industry: "The coke business is what made our industrial history. To get good iron you have to have coke." (log17c) A pressing concern for Dick Campbell and other Coke and Coal museum supporters is the need for funds to restore and maintain such monuments to the past as the Alverton bee-hive ovens.

The Alverton ovens provide Scottdale residents with an opportunity to see actual beehive ovens and occasional (usually at least once a year, at the festival) coke drawings. Dick Campbell stressed the need to tie these ovens in with the museum so that people wouldn't have to travel even as far as Mammoth Park to see them; an outing could be made to the museum and the ovens in one afternoon.

At the festival, booths selling sweatshirts, jewelry, wooden name plates, toys, etc. lined the walkway to the central gazebo. The Mt. Pleasant Firemen's Band was playing, and other groups were scheduled to play in the gazebo throughout the day. Crafts, as mentioned previously, were in the basement of the bank on the square. A slightly unhappy looking llama strolled along the cement plaza with his trainer, John Pavlik of Fantasy Enterprises, Inc., from white Oak. (They also attended the Mt. Pleasant Festival, at which the llama seemed much happier in the grassy upper park.)

Around the gazebo were various booths. One was for the Scottie Marching Band, another for RACC, Rural Area Concerned Citizens, who are fighting the installation of a stone quarry in Bullskin Township, across the Fayette/Westmoreland border. I talked with a RACC member, Marian Ash, and the president, Deb Wilson. Marian told me of their distress at the possibility of the quarry damaging their homes and well water, and destroying the beauty of Greenlick Dam Reservoir. She said that the dust

and pollution would affect Scottdale as well.

The "ethnic" food booths which were advertised consisted of pierogi and halushki, Italian sausage, kielbasa, pizza, Chinese food, fried vegetables, etc. There were also amusement park rides for the children. A wagon pulled by a tractor instead of a horse waited for passengers on Pittsburgh St.

### **1. The Alverton works tour and the Coke and Coal museum**

The biggest festival attraction seemed to be the tours, for which schoolbuses left regularly from the front of the Y.M.C.A. building.

There were tours of the city, the museum, and the Alverton Coke Works. A coke draw was listed in the program for the 4:00 tour, so I chose to participate in that tour.

However, upon arriving at the works with Dick Campbell, he told a disappointed group that coke would not be drawn this year, and pointed to the surrounding black heaps, explaining: "It's in very bad shape because this year Mrs. Painter decided that she was going to try to reprocess all of the leftover coke that was around the ovens that had built up for years. She thought she could make a little bit of money if she could scrape up all of this and sell it to somebody. But once she got into the thing the DER wouldn't let her take it off the grounds so we have the whole thing dug up and now they won't give us permission to do it. When she did that she cut our beehive oven off so we can't get into the beehive oven. . . again we got politics all over the place." (log17c)

One of Dick's main concerns, then, is the Department of Environmental Resources. Despite his earlier comment about the coke drawings turning the air so black even the laundry got dirty, he downplayed the effects of the industry on the environment.

Dick's comments capture the ambivalence of many people about the coke, coal and steel industries of Pennsylvania; people look with nostalgia on the relative security (availability) of the work and the way of life it supported, but many are relieved to live in a cleaner environment. He argued: " . . . You see the pictures of all the company houses, and they took great pride in their gardens and . . . raised big plants. So I don't know that it did such great damage as far as the environment. We've gotten so accustomed to this thing of trying to protect the environment that I don't know if we haven't destroyed ourselves to some extent." (log17c)

Dick also needs funds not only for the preservation of the coke ovens, but for the desired purchase of the Frick office building in Scottdale. This would fit in nicely with the historical reconstruction of Scottdale's occupational legacy.

### **2. The Craft Circle**

After the tour, I visited the crafts section in the bank basement. I met a retired gentleman, Mr. Willis, who had begun making crafts with his daughter. When she turned to other things, he and his wife continued the crafts business, making wooden and cloth items such as potpourri hotpads.

Sandy Stohl was selling the coal figurines I mentioned above. An artist was drawing caricatures in the corner. One other table offered toys and handmade gadgets and Christmas ornaments, another held carved, stained wooden objects. The table at the entrance was run by the Craft Circle, a group of senior women who are all members of the Jacobs Creek Church, the oldest Methodist church (160-70 years old) in Scottdale. They were raffling off a quilt they had stitched together. The group also does other things together, such as cooking and serving food for lunches, and craft shows at the church.

Carolyn Schmuck, a Craft Circle member who lives in Bear Rocks Community now, near Mt. Pleasant, still comes to the church on Sundays and participates in these kinds of activities. She is skilled

in doing the unusual "tennerref" stitch, which she taught the group to do on their first quilt. Another member, Leora Kooser, practices the rapidly fading (according to C.C. members) art of tatting. They told me that the Scottdale Christ United Methodist Church also has members who quilt and that they have a bazaar every year.

Another folkcraft genre popular in this area is gospel music. Gospel groups performed at both the Scottdale and the Mt. Pleasant festivals.

Carolyn Schmuck told me that a "gospel sing" is held on the first Sunday in June at the Mennonite Center near Scottdale, and at New Salem in Fayette County. Her son attends a gospel sing in Deep Creek, Maryland.

#### **D. The one who would call herself "queen"**

I met Marina Philips at the Scottdale Coke and Coal festival. She is from the Philippines, and is the only Asian person I'd come across in the duration of my fieldwork, so I was particularly eager to find out her perspective on community life and her own role in it. She was helping another Philippino, a male friend from New York, sell his imported toys. I asked her if I could interview her, and though suspicious at first, she agreed after I showed her the survey explanation sheet.

She told me that she is the only Philippino in the area, and that she has a half-sister in Mississippi, but her father, two sisters and a brother are still in the Philippines. The only Philippino community in the region is Pgh, she told me, and there are a few Philipinos in Greensburg.

Marina claims to be the messiah, the "queen" of the world, chosen before Jesus to be the prophet after him, to reveal the way the world is built and to teach people about "God, the Holy Spirit and the Devil." (log23c) She asserted repeatedly that "your president knows about me" and said that she is "the one Nostradamus predicted." Her sense of alienation from the community came out in many of the things she said: "People will laugh at me when I reveal myself to the world because I am an Oriental girl." She lambasted the Americans' treatment of blacks: "American people think black is no value and so they want them to die" and of her "people" in her country. "I'm going to go home and prove to my people what the Americans did to my people." Marina accuses America of dumping its waste in a cave in the Philippines. "America is trying to control everything and not telling everybody what they're doing." (log23c)

Marina lives alone in a huge old mansion on Pittsburgh St. filled with antiques and gorgeous stained glass windows which she claims are symbols of "the prophecy" and demonstrations that the Holy Spirit chose this house for her.

Marina has lived in Scottdale for five years, moving to this house because it was a "gift from the Holy Spirit." Previously she lived in Greensburg for 15 years. She immigrated to America at 17, married to an American serviceman whom she subsequently divorced. He has custody over their three children and lives in Export. She is separated from her second American husband, who lives in Washington, Pennsylvania.

Marina considers herself a businesswoman. She presently distributes embroidered sweatshirts to area shops. Before beginning this business, she owned an eggroll business, Hobitas Philippino Food, which was in Greensburg. She supplied stores such as Shop N' Save and Giant Eagle. She also helped run a Philippine food fair in town for five years.

Marina feels that she has been manipulated and taken advantage of in her business and by her husband because she can't read and write, is Philippino, and because of her "prophecy." She was persuaded by her business advisors and her ex-husband to allow him full custody while she retained visitation rights; since that agreement she has not been allowed to see her children. She is presently

fighting for the custody she relinquished in 1986.

Marina is in a similar position to Denny Perlow in the Wyano/West Newton area, in that their aberrant beliefs make them not only virtual outcasts but the objects of curiosity, gossip, fear, and pranks by neighborhood kids. Marina, however, functions much better as a community member than does Denny Perlow.

She says, "I don't hang out with anybody but a lot of business people know who I am because I did the food fair and was in the newspaper. . . I have lots of friends but I like to be by myself. . . I hang out at Tartal's a lot for dinner. . . One of my best friends in Scottdale is Bonnie from the Herb Cupboard." (log23c) She talks about the neighbors' reactions to her: "They tell stories that I'm a whore and a drug dealer because I live in a big house alone, but it's not true. . . They're trying to run me out of town. . . I'm an Oriental person and Scottdale is the most discriminating place. . . neighbors don't associate with each other . . . the children want to know who I am, gossip about me, knock on my door and run away." (log23c)

Marina also complained about the Mennonites, with whom she worships occasionally. She said that although she likes their anti-war beliefs, they are hypocritically exclusive of non-Mennonites and also "want to know everything . . . about your private life." "Most of the people in town are Mennonites," she said. The plethora of other churches seems to belie this assertion, but I have no statistics on church membership in the area.

She also told me that Scottdale was known for Ku Klux Klan and Mafia activities. How much of her description is true remains to be seen; interviews with members of the black community or the few other Asians she claims are in town would help to verify or disprove her assertions.

The overall impression I got from Marina, aside from her (to me) strange religious beliefs, was an overwhelming sense of alienation from the community, despite her desire to participate in it. "I want to serve the community. I was involved with the Coke and Coal. . . I'm trying to show that even without education I can do better for myself."

The worst scenario Marina predicted was a continuation or worsening of the discrimination she feels in Scottdale. She feels that the presence of Sony will somewhat lessen community discrimination against Asians. The best scenario Marino could imagine would be if neighbors "try to get to know their neighbor instead of judging them and being scared of each other." She has a positive outlook for the future of the community: "the children's minds are different from this generation, Scottdale will be better in the future, they don't like war." (log23c)

## **X. Jacobs Creek**

### **A. History of Jacobs Creek and the Alliance Furnace**

Jacob's creek was formerly called "Salt Creek" by early settlers because of the ubiquitous salt licks along its edges. (Rowe: 5) The present name of the creek and the town was derived from the Delaware Chief Jacob, as he was called by the Americans. He often camped along the Yough River and the creek. His Kittaning stronghold was destroyed in 1756 by Colonel Armstrong. (Rowe: 5)

Early industries in the area included salt works and iron works. It is one of these iron works, the Alliance Furnace, the oldest iron works west of the Allegheny mountains, that Bill Garber of Jacob's Creek pointed out to me.

Bill Garber agrees with A.L. Rowe, the author of Rambling in the Valley of Jacobs Creek, that there is an urgent need for such an important monument to Pennsylvania's industrial past to be preserved. (Rowe: 21) The furnace was first "blown in" on November 1, 1790. (Rowe: 10)

The original owners of the furnace were Turnbull, Marmie and Co., merchants from Philadelphia. (Rowe: 11) Folk legend has it that Marmie, the Frenchman who managed the daily operations of the furnace, "committed suicide by jumping into the mouth of the burning furnace, after driving in his dogs of the chase before him." (Rowe: 12) Rowe points out that this "romantic" story is not true, and that a similar story was told of a Fayette County furnace proprietor.

The furnace was "the centre of life and trade for miles around" providing employment for many. (Rowe: 13) It also played an important historical role. The "shot and shell used by General Wayne in his expedition against the Indians in 1794 were cast at this same old furnace at Jacobs Creek." (Rowe: 14) The furnace ceased operation in 1802, and was purchased by the Jacobs Creek Oil Co. around 1823. Presently it is on state gamelands property.

One of the earliest salt works in western Pennsylvania is located about a mile from the furnace. (Row: 19) A barrel factory was also nearby. On the Fayette side of the Jacobs Creek falls are "the ruins of a saw and grist mill, supposed to be the site of Thomas Kyle's mill." (Rowe: 36)

## **B. Geographical and social description**

Jacobs Creek is a small community on the other side of Smithton on route 981. Nearby Smithton has a brewery, Jones Brewery, which makes Staub's beer. Smithton has several churches, including a Universalist church, a library, and a post office. Jacobs Creek has a First Baptist church and the St. Nicholas Russian Greek Orthodox church. Attendance is low at the old Baptist church: "Not many go there anymore, about 12 people." The Orthodox church building is "relatively new. . .and was moved from the lower end of town [to this location]." (log11c side b 143-50)

Across from the Orthodox church sits a white building which used to be the Jacobs Creek local grade school, but has been vacant since the Yough district merger about fifteen years ago. It is now used by St. Nicholas as a social hall. There are also two bars and a post office.

Ethnic groups in Jacobs Creek are mainly English, German, Russian, Slovak and Hungarian. There are very few African-Americans in Jacobs Creek; Bill Garber recalls only one African-American family ever having lived there.

Activities in Jacobs Creek are very limited. Most people, Bill told me, go to Greensburg's and Belle Vernon's malls; the stores that used to be here are now all gone, along with the gas station. One can hear local gossip at the post office, however. There are no social organizations in Jacobs Creek now, although they used to have a gun club and a UMW (United Mine Workers) union hall.

Jacobs Creek just recently received city water because of the poor local water loaded with irons and chemicals. Residents had to petition the state to receive the state-funded water lines, and were required to pay tap-in fees.

## **1. Past and present occupations**

In the past, many Jacobs Creek residents worked in the mines, as Bill Garber's father did. Working conditions were so bad in the mines that his father refused to let him work there. He'd narrowly missed being in several explosions. "Most all your coal miners in those days had something wrong with them, broken arms, slate fell on them, something happened to them. A lot of them carried pieces of slate or coal dust in the cuts that they had, the dust would get in and leave a blue streak. Sometimes the charges would go off prematurely and it would blow slate and coal and pepper their face with little black specks." (log11c side b 368)

Mr. Garber eventually left the mines to work in the Scottdale and then the Wyano foundries,

and taught his son a bit about blacksmithing. Although mining bothered his father, Bill pointed out that "no one questioned it in those days. . . It seemed like a man would go into the mine and get a job and they actually liked being in there, they liked the work. Most coal miners you would talk to didn't want to work anywhere but the mine." (log11c side b 403)

Farming was also an important source of livelihood for Jacobs Creek at one time. Today there's only one working farm in Jacobs Creek, and even that farm no longer ships milk. (log11c side b 000) Most of the farms in Jacobs Creek have been sold to "people from the outside . . . [who] aren't farming them. . . they may be speculating." (log11c side b 000) Most of the steelworkers in Jacobs Creek who are old enough draw their pension, and some of the younger ones got called back to work at Monessen and Clairton. (log11c side b 040) Many people work for the Wettarau Corporation, a food distribution company (log11c side b 061) "There are a lot of people working at the 76 truck stop, pumping gas. . .[there's] really not a whole lot around this area. " (log11c side b 061) + "A lot of the people [from Jacobs Creek] move out" Bill told me, giving me an example from his own family, "like I was saying about my nieces, one's working at Seven Springs and one in Pittsburgh" One Jacobs Creek woman works with heavy equipment as an operating engineer. She used to work for the steel mills but now works on state roads and projects.

### **C. The Russian Greek Orthodox Church**

The Bobbiches are active members of Jacobs Creek St. Nicholas Russian Greek Orthodox church. His family is from Czechoslovakia, hers from Croatia. As this was "the only church for Slavonic people [in the Smithton/Jacobs Creek area] [they] were baptized there." (log15c) Their families are from the area of the Carpathian mountains, so they are actually Carpatho-Russians. Their church is one of the few which still celebrates Christmas on January 7, while most of the other Orthodox churches have begun celebrating Christmas on December 25. They also celebrate Easter after Passover, a tradition they're likely to hold on to.

Chuck, who was a steelworker at Wheeling-Pitt in Monessen for 40 years, has been a treasurer in the church since he was 23. Becky was the president of the altar society, which was like a women's auxiliary. It dissolved about eight years ago, although if something is needed for the church the women make phone calls and mobilize. Becky and Chuck just helped coordinate the 48th national convention of Russian Orthodoxy in Greensburg. Their church was the host chapter and sponsored the convention. The convention was attended by about 400 people, and meetings were held to discuss changing organization laws, fundraisers, and getting youth involved. Chuck said he was surprised at how many "young ones" there were at the convention.

The congregation consists of about thirty-five families. Chuck's brother, Frank, is the church president, Nick Rubbish is the secretary, and George Opalenick is the vice-president.

Congregants come from Dawson, Jeannette, and "this side" of Greensburg, but most of them are local. The ethnic composition is "mixed, really, a lot of intermarriage." The church is occasionally used for community events, for which the church charges just enough to cover costs. (log15c) The church now holds services on some Saturday evenings with Father David Smoley. When services are Saturday night, there are no services Sunday morning, except in Monongahela. The Jacobs Creek St. Nicholas is a mission church of the Monongahela St. Nicholas.

St. Nicholas was founded in 1911 at the lower end of town near the railroad tracks. Around 1962 a new building was constructed at the present location to replace the deteriorating old church. During the coal boom years of Jacobs Creek, St. Nicholas had over 200 families in its congregation.

The church coordinates events with other Carpatho-Russian churches such as hayrides with the



Monongahela St. Nicholas.

Although many families have moved out in pursuit of jobs, there are still some young children in the area. The church recently held a holy communion for 4-5 children who are over nine years old. One of those children is the Bobbiches' granddaughter.

The Bobbich family is representative of the regional pattern of mobility. Those of their four children who were able to commute or work in the area have stayed nearby, while the others moved to find employment. Their daughter, Barbara, works for the Muskeega Lake Millen Brewery in Wisconsin. One of their sons, Michael, lives "up on the hill" in Jacobs Creek, and works at Robert Shaw, which sells controls for stoves and furnaces. Another son, Charles, lives in Yukon and owns the farm behind Mill Service, and owns a business called Vertex Imaging right down the street. Their son John lives in Yukon and worked in the mills until they were phased out and then began work at the Liebart Company repairing computers; he is separated from his wife and children who live across the street from the Bobbiches. Michael is still active in the church, and John was until he moved to Yukon.

### 1. Ethnic Traditions

An interesting and beautiful ethnic craft activity which Becky and a few other St. Nicholas members pursue is that of Pesenke egg decorating. Becky's priest runs projects annually before Easter, such as reading the Bible, etc. About ten years ago her priest decided to teach the members pesenke egg decorating for that annual Easter project. Becky has been designing eggs since then and has taught her children and grandchildren how to do it as well. Becky refers to her book, Eggs Beautiful- How to Make Ukrainian Eggs, for new ideas.

Becky showed me her pesenke eggs, which were decorated with many different patterns and colors. Becky recalled that although her mother never practiced ethnic arts, except needlework, her grandmother created pesenke eggs using a dull red dye she got from soaking onion skins in water. Her grandmother would drip the wax on the area where the design would be, and then dip the egg in the onion dye. Becky picked up several of her eggs and showed me the difference in style between them and the others she made. "Old timers used to do this but it wasn't as delicate a design- these are what they used to do." These had fewer colors, mostly red, black, and white, and simpler designs. Becky's other eggs more closely resembled the eggs in Eggs Beautiful; they were more colorful and more intricately designed.

Many of the decorations, according to the Eggs Beautiful, symbolize religious ideas or practices. For instance, the pussy willows are reminiscent of the pussy willows the Orthodox use for Palm Sundays instead of Palm. Becky laughingly told me, however "I just do what [design] I like" (log15c)

Creating pesenke eggs, Becky told me, involves melting wax onto the egg in areas you don't want to have a certain color, then dying the egg that color, moving the wax, etc. She buys the dyes in packets, and uses a stylus to make smaller, more detailed designs. The designs are intricate and complicated on many of them, and it's a time-consuming art which requires patience.

Becky also decorates eggs with pictures of religious significance such as "the Virgin Mary" with beads and sequins. These have hooks and can be hung in Christmas trees as ornaments.

Other ethnic traditions the Bobbiches keep include Slavic cooking. They make ethnic food such as halushki, kielbasi, sauerkraut, and goulash for food booths in a Monongahela festival and for Monessen's ethnic days, and South Park Community Days. Also, to raise money for the church, they make hoagies every week and sell them at the 76 Truck Stop.

Both Becky and Chuck do crafts such as needlework, and she crochets and knits as well. Becky's mom taught Chuck to do needlework to pass his idle time during a sickness, and he enjoyed it

so much he's continued with occasional projects since then. Their house is decorated with many beautiful products of Becky's work.

#### **D. Concerns and Issues**

Bill Garber is quite concerned, as mentioned previously, about the preservation of the Alliance Furnace. He and the Bobbiches agreed that there is a need for jobs, and that the condition the town is in has to do with "employment and the number of young people leaving." (log11c side b 323) The people who are in town are transient, the buildings are "abandoned, old, and delapidated. . . falling apart." (log11c side b 323) There is little new construction in town, partly because of the lack of work and money, and partly because the town is in a flood plain, which makes insurance expensive.

Bill is somewhat pessimistic about the outlook for employment, although he holds that some positive effects might result from the Sony plant. He decries the "Reagan-Bush administration. . . thinking they're going to run an economy on service jobs, but they're eroding the tax base because people on minimum wages aren't paying much taxes. They're not paying into any pension plans, social security, and I feel that somewhere down the road this is going to come to a bad end." Chuck and Becky suggested the possibility of "high-tech work" for the next generation, but concluded that "it's unforeseeable whether it will happen. . . with work it's almost impossible to dream along those lines."

Bill's idea of a "best future scenario" is to revive some of the industry such as steel and bring in plastics companies and "high tech stuff" such as computers and software." Chuck mentioned that he would like to see more socializing in the general community, as there was when he grew up, rather than the television-centered mindset.

As for the church's future, the Bobbiches would like to have more church functions to keep people interested in their ethnic heritage, particularly the younger generation. Chuck stressed the importance of teaching them the values of family life. They would also like to see more people and better attendance in church.

The Bobbiches are interested in the prospect of a united Orthodoxy, as are the Dackos and the Esseys and many Orthodox church members. Chuck agrees with them that it would be a good thing: "It would be splendid" but adds his reservations, "but I think we would still stick to our own." Becky said "I look for it" and Chuck added that "It's the only thing we have to keep us going till the Second Coming." (log 15c) "Since I've seen so many churches close [their] doors I'm hoping that the younger generation will be able to maintain enough support to keep the community alive." (log15c)

### **XI. Overview of Cultural Patterns in the Study Area**

#### **A. Shifting patterns of social, ethnic, and religious interactions**

For the people in my study area along the Monongahela and in Westmoreland County, the loss of big industry has meant not only the loss of employment but the loss of occupational, social, ethnic and religious ways of life. Towns whose community and ethnic identities were vibrantly independent during the coal and steel boom area have begun fading into the surrounding township or other nearby towns. These towns all had their own honor rolls, post offices, firehalls, and at least a few stores, schools, restaurants, bars and churches.

With the industrial decline, stores were the first to leave, in an exodus with the people who owned them and worked for them or for nearby coal or steel works. The owners of the stores moved to big urban centers such as Pittsburgh or Greensburg. They often burnt their stores in order to collect

enough money to leave, for no one was interested in purchasing property in places such as Yukon or Herminie after the coal boom collapsed.

Post offices and firehalls sometimes closed as their services were taken over by nearby towns. A few bars and still fewer nice restaurants remain in the towns, eking out an existence and hoping for better times. Although social and fraternal clubs are present in almost all of the study area, many clubs have been disbanded, including most of the women's church auxiliary clubs.

School and church mergers have been among the most significant factors in changing people's way of life. People whose churches have merged feel that their ethnic heritage has been "taken away" or stolen. People whose churches have been closed or moved are also frustrated and bitter at being deprived of an important form of social and ethnic identification and solidarity. School closings have also shifted the social focus from intra-community to inter-community associations. In some cases, this degraded community solidarity or blurred the sharp lines of community identity, and in some cases contributed to a wider identity with a township or area (such as the Yough School District or Sewickley Township). These closings and mergers may also contribute to the movement of people from the shrinking towns to larger urban areas.

These patterns have caused people to reshape their modes of interaction to some extent. People who have lost their church, such as the eastern and southern European Catholic groups of Monessen and the Irish and Italian Catholics of Elizabeth, focus more on ethnic activities in the remaining ethnic clubs as their last formal hub of ethnic relations.

According to Foster's reformulation of Barth's (1969) theory, "ethnic identity is the result of a community's shared categories, which form the basis of their interactions with each other and with outsiders" (Pomponio, 1992: 4). These are people who have lost institutions which provided and created many "shared categories" of ethnicity, and therefore their interactions, social patterns, and the expressions of their ethnic identity have been profoundly changed.

The church closings and mergings actually provide a new "shared category" of sorts around which ethnic pride and identity can be rallied and strengthened. For instance, the Slovaks of Holy Name Church in Monessen have strongly identified themselves as a coherent group separate from other Catholic groups in their anti-merger campaign.

Orthodox churches provide not only a focus for ethnic activity but a forum for Orthodox community interaction through the annual Sunday of Orthodoxy and their plans for a potential United Orthodoxy of America. These are people who want to cross and yet maintain boundaries simultaneously, putting the patches of ethnicity together to create the patchwork quilt of a single religious orientation.

One of the central issues in the merging of churches and the possible Orthodox union is the practice of foreign-language services. Orthodox members expressed relief at the recent trend away from "hard" priests who perform services mostly in the "old country's" language (log4c) but despite this, still sing some "old country" language hymns in the mostly English service. This adoption of a mostly English service is seen as important in encouraging English speaking spouses and children to participate more fully in the church. However, many of the Catholic members expressed regret at losing their "old country" language services, particularly those in the Christmas and Easter services.

The ethnic groups in my study area are rapidly aging as young people move away or lose interest, becoming more absorbed with television culture than ethnic-hall culture. There seems to be a concerted effort by all of these ethnic groups to entice youth to stay. Ethnic clubs, organizations, and churches sponsor youth conferences and activities, and English has become the primary language for all of the ethnic groups. The average age of ethnic hall and church members is about 60-65. Their only hope for continuity is if the young somehow are returned to the area through revitalization of the

economy. However, some expressed the belief that even that wouldn't help, because of the media and the "me" focus of today's culture. The youngsters, the older ethnic group members complain, aren't interested in community activities anymore, only in material gains.

Intermarriage has also contributed to ethnic attrition. Interestingly, however, the intermarried couples I talked to follow one ethnic tradition, mostly the husbands'. This involves attending their husbands' churches and participating in their activities, possibly helping with related club activities, and cooking ethnic foods.

## **B. Cultural Geography**

Geography is important in the spatial structuring of ethnic groups and their networks, and is an indicator of social prestige and occupation. For instance, African-American communities were almost invariably in "hollows" below flood levels, as in Elizabeth and Smithton, or in a lower-level "coal patch," as in Gallatin. Informants refer to going "down to the patch." The white community in Elizabeth, for example, is situated above the African-American community in the hollow. As discussed earlier, the physical infrastructure of African-American neighborhoods is much more primitive and neglected than that of white neighborhoods.

The distinction "up on the hill" seems to imply higher status or wealth. People who lived "down" at the "lower edge of town" would often try to move up the hill, as in Monessen, where a lot of immigrants lived on Third St. or Morgan Ave. and then "moved up the hill" (log 13c) to places like the Park Plan area, which is "a melting pot" (log3c) and is a "nice area" (log3c).

Morgan Ave. has become not just a street but also a cultural symbol of times and social networks that have disappeared. The street and its memories are kept alive through "Morgan Street Reunions" of the now-scattered past residents.

Geography is sometimes simultaneously linked with ethnic and occupational identities, as in Forward Township, where the German farmers occupy the inland, rural areas, and the Italian merchants dominate the riverside, more commercial area of marinas, restaurants and bars. According to Terry, the Italians didn't and still don't know too much about the "farmerish" Germans up in the township.

The inland/riverside distinction is also an important cultural and geographical marker in terms of community referents and identity. From people's expectations that towns "right across the river" (log6c) or "down the river" should be similar to their town, I understood that being a "riverside town" was more important than actual geographical proximity in establishing social ties and community relations. Monessen is "just up the river" from Elizabeth, while for Elizabeth or Gallatin residents people in the townships live "out there" in the townships. This again could be partly due to occupational differences, as industry was concentrated along the river. However, in the Scottdale/Mt. Pleasant area, coke and glass production prevailed, rather than steel and tin, providing another cultural separation from the riverside towns. Now that the river is no longer used to ship the massive exports of coke and coal from Westmoreland County, this inland/riverside distinction may have become stronger as industrial and social links have diminished.

The blending of communities along the river in Forward Township also seems to indicate that the river is an overriding common denominator; the township community seems to remain distinct from these riverside communities. (8-18FI) A deeper investigation of inter-community social networks would reveal how salient these distinctions are in daily social life and business.

## **C. Folk Arts**

The folk arts that are most widely practiced today in the region are cooking and music. Among Slovenians, in particular, music is an important part of their heritage, and there is a strong button-box band tradition in mid-Westmoreland County. Gospel music is also popular in this area. Cooking and other arts often center around the church. For instance, the women of St. Spyridon's do Greek cooking, the women at St. Michael's Syrian Greek Orthodox Church make Syrian bread and other delicacies, and the Bobbiches of the St. Nicholas Carpatho-Russian Church in Jacobs Creek make "Slavic" food for festivals and hoagies for church fundraisers. The priest at the Bobbiches' church also taught some of its members the art of pesenke egg making. Some of the Scottdale Jacobs Creek Methodist Church members participate in the quilting Craft Circle, etc. The Slovenians seem to be one of the few groups that practice traditional dancing, with polkas and line-dancing on the weekends in Herminie and a few times a year in Yukon. The Syrians do their dancing to traditional Syrian music at their annual picnic, and the Polish seem to save their polkas for weddings.

#### **D. Social Hubs**

Aside from fraternal and ethnic halls and churches, there are a wide variety of social "hang-outs" or informal hubs of communication and interaction. The study area shared a distinctive pattern of these hubs. Almost everyone I talked to suggested post offices as places to "get information, find out what's happening." Some post offices put up notices of community activities. Other informal hubs include convenience stores, restaurants, bars, and libraries. In the communities with gas stations in or nearby, such as Mt. Pleasant and West Newton, people stop in to ask for information and can read notices about community events and activities. Sports such as soccer are a "big thing" to do in places such as Monessen, and in the past were big in Gallatin and other areas as well: "This here place [Gallatin] used to have the best soccer team in the nation. They were champions in the 1942 open" (8-13FN). In the countryside, beauty salons and antique shops abound, and although I didn't talk to many people from the townships, I would speculate that these are also important informal social hubs.

More formal social hubs include the firehalls and boat clubs, which sponsor fish fries and sales, corn roasts, bingos and dances. People also often vote in firehalls and occasionally in post offices (such as Jacobs Creek). The Chambers of Commerce also sponsor events and post activities.

#### **E. The Work Situation**

Although many of the residents I talked with look back with nostalgia on the "good old days", they acknowledge that even then it was never easy working in the mills, mines, and coke works. A few described the difficult working conditions of their past to me, "I came out of there, [the tin mill] my hair wouldn't grow on my legs cause I pulled five-six hundred pound bundles off the heat, sure. . . When I worked at the coke plant you could have put needles in the bottom of my feet and I wouldn't have felt it, from the heat." (log18c) Other contacts told me appalling stories told to them by their fathers or uncles, or injuries that they had seen, "People were killed and trapped. Most all your coal miners in those days had something wrong with them, broken arms, slate fell on them, something happened to them. A lot of them carried pieces of slate or coal dust in the cuts that they had, [and] the dust would get in and leave a blue streak. Sometimes the charges would go off prematurely and it would blow slate and coal and

pepper their face with little black specks. My mother's brother, Uncle Joe, he was in the Dahr mine explosion and he was all burnt. Until the day he died he had scars on his face from the explosion " (log11c, 393).

Despite the risks inherent in the steel, coke, and coal industries, "Nobody questioned it in those days. It seemed like a man would go into the mine and get a job and they actually liked being in there, they liked the work. Most coal miners you would talk to didn't want to work anywhere but the mine" (log11c, 403).

Unsafe working conditions in the mills and the mines were not the primary concern of the workers, however. The frequent patterns of lay-offs and strikes was their fundamental concern. Most sought, above all "steady work" (log18c), and some contacts admitted that they would have worked elsewhere, as long as the pay was similar and the work was steady. Industrial workers in the 1930s and 40s thought that they would be "set for life" (log 18c) because there were "more jobs than you could shake a stick at" (8-25FN). The increasing number of temporary and permanent lay-offs demonstrated, unfortunately, the growing fragility of the industries. Even the unions which many of them strongly supported couldn't save many of their jobs.

Most of the people in my study area agreed that the unions were "the greatest thing that ever happened" to workers, but a few expressed reservations about the changed role of unions, feeling that they had "gone too far" and "gotten greedy" (8-13FN). One Elizabeth resident explained: "I think they had a place years ago when people didn't even have a high school education, but I don't think we need them now. . . companies and workers should work [directly] together." (log1c)

Although the coke works at Monessen and Clairton are still operating, most of the laid-off steelworkers and coal miners have had to "give up the idea of going back to the mills and mines" (log3c). Many of them, often with the help of Monessen Library's Workplace program, have gone back to school for retraining in other fields such as the booming health field.

More men are entering the business and management fields and performing service jobs. The work scene has shifted from a white, male-dominated industrial labor force to include African-Americans, females and other minorities in a more service-oriented economy.

Women contacts mostly worked in domestic or "feminized" jobs such as housewife, sewing industry worker, house maid, floor scrubbing, and volunteer worker for ethnic and religious organizations. Women contacts who worked for the steel industry were in secretarial capacities, in contrast to Albert's description of Hungarian women workers of his time who "shared the coal labor with their men. . . forking coke into cars" (1882: 408). The company then took "no account of them, and their time [was] computed with that of their husbands, fathers, or brothers." (1882: 408) Women now are entering the health care field in increasing numbers, as well as remaining in traditionally female fields such as child care, secretarial and clerical work, and sales.

## **F. Women's roles**

In general, the older women I talked with only held jobs until their marriage, mostly menial tasks which they happily relinquished for the job of "domestic engineer." (log12c) Their husbands expected them to stay at home and run the house. The women were subsequently instrumental in preserving the ethnic identities which have persisted today. The women often perform volunteer duties in lieu of their husbands; for example Doreen Essey is "volunteered" for her husband's organizations frequently, selling ice cream or other goods to raise funds.

Women's auxiliaries in churches and ethnic clubs were responsible for maintaining them, raising funds and cooking for events. These roles were essentially an extension of their domestic role. Very few

of the official women's church or club auxiliaries are still in existence, although the women do participate in separate church activities and mobilize when aid is needed. Contacts told me that the auxiliaries fell apart because of the age of the women, but also, interestingly, that younger women weren't willing to do the work for free anymore. Adolf Korber complained, "They want a percentage of the profits!" (log8c)

The existence of separate men's and women's branches within the churches and clubs seemed to be universal throughout the study area. Men tended to have "breakfast clubs" which meet on Sunday mornings for brunch, while women had "auxiliaries" which clean the buildings and raise funds. The fraternal clubs such as the Moose also have women's branches, in this case Eastern Star.

The ethnic and fraternal halls, which usually have bars, are primarily male preserves. Women participate in events but don't "hang out" at the clubs. They have only recently been admitted into firehalls as members in some areas, such as Elizabeth.

A majority of women in many of these small towns are "little old ladies" (log6c) who live alone on minimal incomes and often become "bingo mamas" (log6c), spending money they can't afford on bingo, out of boredom. These "ladies" are thought of by some as a social problem because they live in "ten-room houses" and pay little in taxes. Some of the senior women volunteer in religious and ethnic and public service institutions; for instance, in Elizabeth, it is primarily women who staff the all volunteer library.

## **XI Regional Concerns and Issues, Future Projections**

### **A. Concerns**

One major shared concern of the region is the need for work to revitalize the economy and with it the community's social and ethnic life. Some people think that industrial parks might provide some solutions; others are less optimistic about them. What people do agree on is that "We need some business around here."

Residents are concerned about the physical deterioration of their infrastructure and buildings and their shrinking tax base which exacerbates these problems. They are upset about losing churches and schools to mergers, and in Elizabeth, about the possibility of losing vital community services such as the police force to the township. Elizabeth residents feel that this would degrade community life further by eliminating the "face-to-face" nature of the community and subsequently successful social control of crime. The flight of youth from the study area is a fact many acknowledge as inevitable; others are upset about it and stress this problem as the primary motivator for their concern about jobs.

Those with strong ethnic identities were more concerned with the direct impact of a declining economy and mergers on their ethnic heritage and continuity.

Terry Stefl, of the Slovenian Heritage Association, points out that "Pittsburgh has 37 or 38 identifiable ethnic entities- it's the kind of city that wouldn't exist without them." (log10c side b 398) He feels that not enough is being done to "showcase" ethnic heritage, and that more municipal support is needed to muster the kind of support that other cities such as Toronto give to their ethnic groups. Terry stresses the need for good marketing and "a spoonful of sugar" to make ethnic heritage events tempting to younger generations.

It is indeed ironic, as one contact told me, that ethnic cohesion and strength is declining at a time when "cultural diversity" is becoming the popular "watchword." He laughed: "Used to be they'd make fun of you, the teachers would say 'This is America speak American, no hunkies.' Now you got to pay to take a foreign language!" (8-25FN) Perhaps the new interest is symptomatic of the decline, an

attempt to preserve sadly fading traditions.

## **B. Future Projects and Hopes**

The tourism industry was suggested by many informants as a key to revitalization. In Elizabeth, a plan for an artists colony and glassworks is being negotiated by town administrators and the Waterworks company which donated park land to Elizabeth. Bill Boucher suggested that the river be a focal point for turning Elizabeth into a "New Englandy" tourist town, with residents having "a boat down at the marina," complete with plenty of quaint antique shops. (log7c)

In Jacobs Creek, the preservation of the Alliance Furnace and the nearby Saltworks and Grist Mill sites on state gamelands would make a significant contribution to the area as a historical museum.

The revival of the railworks and the introduction of some "clean industry" has been suggested for Monessen. Area residents have presented plastics and high-tech production as hopeful future possibilities. Industrial parks such as Sony may also offer possible future revitalization.

In Monessen, the library which serves the entire Mon Valley is in desperate need of funds for its important Workplace Program and other vital services. In Scottdale, the Coke and Coal Museum provides an important historical education for many on the occupational heritage of the area; the museum needs to preserve its nearby coke ovens and to purchase the Frick office buildings to provide a full context for its significant lessons.

## **C. Interpretive Programming**

Retraining programs are essential, and SIHC should work with the Monessen Workplace to enable it to continue to provide its services.

Programs which address concerns of ethnic group members, such as the lack of youth participation, should be encouraged. People such as Sally Leskosek, Terry Stefl and Frank Kalik of the Slovenian Heritage Association who are experienced in marketing ethnic heritage and encouraging participation, should be consulted for ideas on supporting heritage in the area.

Filming heritage events which are then used to fundraise for the ethnic groups or to lobby their causes against church mergers might be helpful.

Terry Stefl informed me about a program that has been implemented at Gateway school, in which people from different ethnic groups give seminars to the children. This is sponsored by the Pittsburgh Folk Festival groups. His group, the Slovenian Heritage Association uses puppets to get the children interested in Slovenia. Developing a similar program for Westmoreland County, for the Yough School District, for example, would be effective in preserving some of the region's rich heritage. Programs could concentrate on ethnic groups which were dominant in the areas from which the children are from, and their relation to and role in past industrial occupations.

Using techniques such as puppet shows and plays, as Terry's group does, or perhaps traditional crafts shows or musical events (e.g. button-box bands), would interest and educate students more than lecture-style seminars.

Continued research which discovers and preserves the richness of the ethnic groups remaining in the area is also of vital importance to discover how to design and implement education programs. These programs will help regional ethnic groups maintain their pride and cohesion despite the loss of identity-maintaining institutions.

## **XII Recommendations for Future Research in the Area**



African-American/white interaction is an important research issue which I wasn't able to explore fully enough. The number of African-Americans left in these communities is very small, and getting their stories would illuminate past and present racial interactions. It would also allow researchers to hear the stories of how African-Americans in these overwhelmingly white areas feel about being there. Also, their personal histories should be fit into the context of our knowledge of the region's white population. The previously mentioned geographical discrimination against African-Americans in towns such as Elizabeth, Monessen, and Smithton indicates that there are many deeper layers to unpeel.

I observed a general trend in these communities, particularly Monessen, for African-Americans to buy or move into older, small buildings sold by ethnic groups who were "moving up" by selling their old institutional halls to finance their purchases of larger, newer buildings in more desirable locations. For instance the (African-American) Grace through Faith Church purchased the old Syrian Orthodox church in Monessen, "colored folks" (log14c) moved into the old Russian hall in Monessen (now an apartment building), "Black people" bought the "Sons of Italy" (log18c) club in Monessen, etc. Initial contacts for more research in the study area's African-American communities should include Myrtle Cotton and Toby of Toby's Auto Service, Elizabeth and Jerome Long of Gallatin.

A more in-depth study of the strong Slovenian communities of Yukon, Herminie, and Monroeville which focuses on their musical traditions and dancing would uncover more of their ethnic heritage.

A closer look at Slovenian social networks which branch at least through Allegheny and Westmoreland Counties and even across state lines (as evidenced by the Yukon Kalikfest attendees from Michigan) would provide important information on the adaptive strategies Slovenians utilize to maintain their ethnic cohesion and identity. Case studies of Slovenian and other ethnic families such as the Leskoseks with more than two generations involved in ethnic activities would provide valuable information on "successful" socialization processes.

A fascinating follow-up study in about a year would involve interviewing Sony employees and nearby residents to examine the impact of the plant on employment, residence and social patterns.

I would also suggest a study of craftspeople's networks to investigate how they identify themselves and who they identify with. Several factors may be salient, such as gender, type of craft, or previous occupation. Types of craftspeople (i.e. professional festival goers, shop owners, etc.) and their interactions should be examined, as should their motivations for becoming craftspeople and their individual life histories. Which of these craftspeople turned to crafts as an alternative method of support, and which as a supplement, and why? Connections between past occupations and crafts should also be investigated.

Finally, I would recommend an more in-depth study of people who were specifically laid off from the mills and mines, in a similar approach to this project but more time-intensively, through contacts developed in this study. Of particular interest would be a study of their coping mechanisms and emotional, occupational and social responses to the lay-offs.

**ORGANIZATIONAL DIRECTORY**Belle Vernon

Mon Valley Chapter of the Pgh. Opera

Bunola

Bunola Church of the Nazarene

Elizabeth Township

Elizabeth Township Ex-Servicemen's Association  
Smithfield St., McKeesport 751-9984

Elizabeth Township Historical Society  
5811 Smithfield Bstn 754-2030

Central Volunteer Fire Company  
Atlantic Ave.

Elizabeth Borough

American Legion

Bethseda Presbyterian Church

Calvary Temple Church  
Second Ave.

Eastern Star Organization  
(Sister branch of Masons)

Elizabeth Baptist Church  
Centre Ave.

Elizabeth Hotel

Elizabeth Library  
Second Ave.

Elizabeth United Methodist Church  
Second and Walnut

Elizabeth Volunteer Fire Company  
Water St.

Elks Club

Engine No. 2 Bar

Fire hall

First Presbyterian Church  
Third Ave.

Independent Order of Odd Fellows Old Monongahela Lodge 209

Loyal Order of Moose Club

Masons Club

Municipal Building  
Third Ave.

Riverfront Park  
Water Street

Rotary Club

Shamrock Restaurant and Bar  
Second Ave.

Sportsmen's Bar  
Second Ave.

Rockwell's Red Lion Restaurant  
Second Ave. and Plum St.

Senior Center  
Third Ave.

Veterans of Foreign Wars

### Fellsburg

Fell's Church                      Oldest Methodist church in Pa.

### Gallatin

First Baptist Church  
Reverend Goliath

### Herminie

St. Edward's Catholic Church

St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church

The United Brethren Church

SNPJ campgrounds in Enon Valley, Lawrence County - Slovenianfest

Herminie Moose Lodge

Herminie Slovenian Ballroom  
SNPJ Lodge

### Jacobs Creek

ACRY- American Carpatho-Russian Youth Club  
Jacobs Creek and Monongahela St. Nicholas together

76 Truck Stop

First Baptist church

St. Nicholas Russian Greek Orthodox church

### Mendon

Mendon Baptist Church

### Monessen

For a complete listing of Monessen organizations, see SIHC archives

Boys and Girls Club  
Schoonmaker Rd.

Croatian Club

Elks Club, Lady Elks

Epiphany Church (was St. Cajetan, an Italian church)

Epiphanes Chapel ( was St. Hyacinth, a Polish church)

French Club (Franco-Belgian Beneficial Society)

Hungarian Club

Ladie's Guild, St. Michael's Antiochan Orthodox Church

Landmark Place

Main Street Mall

Monessen Chamber of Commerce

Monessen Fire hall  
(next to library)

Monessen Public Library

Polish Club

Polish National Alliance

Rotary Club

Slovak Club

St. John the Divine Russian Orthodox Church

St. Michael's Antiochan Orthodox Church

St. Spyridon's, Monessen

Ukrainian Club

UROBA - United Russian Orthodox Brotherhood of America  
(headquartered in Pgh.)

Workplace Program  
Monessen Public Library

### New Kensington

American Hosn Association  
(Syrian background group)

New Stanton

Hempfield Hunt Club

Stefon Crystal Studio and Workshop  
417 Centre Ave.  
15672  
(412) 925-1990

Mount Joy

Mt. Joy Church  
Route 31

Mount Pleasant

American Legion Post 446

Bear Rocks Community  
Route 31

First Assembly of God  
Route 31

Laurel Art Glass and Craft Center  
Star Route Box 75  
15666  
(412) 547-2724

Lenox Clearance Outlet  
Route 31  
Reunion Presbyterian church

Mennonite Church Center  
Route 982

Mount Pleasant Firemen's Band

Mount Pleasant Lions Club

Nana's Hand Crafted Gift Outlets  
434 Main St.  
15666  
(412) 547-4405

Smith Glass Factory

United Methodist  
Methodist-Episcopalian church

Pricedale  
Hungarian Hall  
Ohio St.

Pricedale Post Office

Rostraver Township

Sweeney's Bar and Restaurant  
Route 51

Picnics Bar and Restaurant

United Mine Workers of America  
Route 51

Ruffsedale

Lebanon United Methodist Church

Ruffsedale Baptist Church

Ruffsedale Gun Club

United Church of Christ

Scottdale

American Legion Post 240

First Baptist Church  
Loucks and North Chestnut Streets

Calvin United Presbyterian Church

Garden Club  
(Senior citizens, associated with Mennonite Church)

Loyal Order of Moose

Scottdale Coke and Coal Museum

Sewickley Township

Sewickley P of H Grange  
Route 136 East

Smithton

Firemen's Club

Lions Club

Oddfellows Lodge

Smithton Library

Universalist church

U.S. Post Office

Sunnyside-Gallatin

Menner Bible Church

Riverside Tabernacle  
Route 136  
Sunnyside

Sunnyside-Gallatin Volunteer Fire Company  
Route 136  
Sunnyside/Gallatin

Tarrs

U.S. Post Office

Webster

Webster Boat Club  
Route 906 and Gilmer St.

Holy Cross Church  
Route 906 and Gilmer St.

Webster Presbyterian Church  
Route 906

Webster United Methodist Church



Route 906

Westmoreland County-Greensburg/Norvelt

Westmoreland County Fair  
Norvelt

end of August

Greensburg Pointer and Setter Club

For more complete listing of Greensburg organizations, see SIHC archives listing from the Greensburg Y.W.C.A.

SNPJ Federation of Westmoreland County

Westmoreland County Drill Team

West Newton

West Newton Community Pool

First United Methodist Church  
106 North Second Street

Holy Family R.C. Church  
225 North Second Street

United Presbyterian Church  
Third and Main Street

Mt. Zion Baptist Church  
North Second Ext.

Christ Lutheran LCA Church  
Vine and Fourth Street

First Baptist Church  
Vine and Sixth Street

Wesleyan Church  
310 Pgh. St.

St. Paul's AME Church  
Collinsburg Road

Wyano

Wyano Vets Club

Wyano Evangelical United Brethren church  
First Street and Bells Mill Road

Wyano Post Office  
First Street

Wyano Veterans of Foreign Wars P.O. 8659  
First Street

### Youngwood

A + B club , an Italian club

League of Separated Tribes (L.O.S.T.) Last Sunday monthly-2 p.m.  
St. Paul's United Methodist Church  
101 N. Fourth St.

L.O.S.T. Cultural Center            M-Sat., 10:30 a.m.-5:00, Weds.-9 p.m.  
122 N. Fourth St.

### Yukon

Croatian Club

Senior Citizen Organization

Seven Dolors Catholic Church

United Church of Christ

Yukon Loyal Order of Moose Lodge 442

Yukon Button-box Club  
contact Sally Leskosek

Yukon S. Huntingdon Township Volunteer Fire Department

## **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

### Elizabeth

Event and Location

Date

Baptist Church Sing-a-long	weekly
Loyal Order of the Moose Bluegrass Festival	
The Shamrock's Annual Golf	annually- Tournament
<u>Evanstown</u> (near Herminie)	
SNPJ Federation picnic	mid-summer
Slovenian Harvest dance	Beginning of September, annually
Slovenian Grape Festival	End of September, annually

The federation picnic is in Evanstown, and the Harvest dance, too.

### Everson

Country Western Square Dancing (for couples)  
Laurel Swingers Square Dance Hall (Mayflower Hall)  
Brown St.

### Hecla

Hecla Firemen's Fair	Sept. 11-13
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### Herminie

Slovenian Hall dances	Friday and Saturday evenings
Line dancing, Slovenian Hall	Thursday evenings
Button-box band, Slovenian Hall	Thursday evenings

### Monessen

Cultural Heritage Festival	second week in June
Monessen Chamber of Commerce Annual Steak Fry	early September

Sunday of Orthodoxy	annually
Polish Heritage Month	October
<u>Mt. Pleasant</u>	
Laurel Art Glass Instructional Classes	
Stained Glass Mon. 7-9 p.m.	
Ceramic Class Tues. 6-9 p.m.	
Oil Painting Weds. 6:30-8:30 p.m.	
Tole Painting Thurs. 7-9 p.m.	
Laurel Art Glass and Craft Center	- year round, M-F 10-9, Sat 10-5
Star Route Box 75	Sun. 1-5
15666	
(412) 547-2724	
Mt. Pleasant Glass Festival	September 25-27, Fri., Sat.- 11 a.m.- 11 p.m. Sunday 11 a.m.- 9 p.m.
Downtown	
Mt. Pleasant Glass Festival Poker Ride	Sunday, September 27
Main and Diamond Streets	Bicycle ride- 5 or 15 miles
Bear Rocks Craft Show	October 10
<u>New Kensington</u>	
Hafflee Picnic (Syrian Picnic)	July(?)
<u>Sewickley Township</u>	
Sewickley Community Fair	August 10-15
Sewickley Grange, route 136	
<u>Scottdale</u>	
Gospel Sing	The first Sunday in June
Mennonite Center near Scottdale	
Scottdale Coke and Coal Festival	Third weekend in September
Jacobs Creek Church the oldest Methodist church (160-70 years old) in Scottdale	
Craft Circle (quilting group- members of J.Creek Church)	

Yukon

Slovenian Hall dances	March, July 4th, October
Kalikfest	@ September 20 - annually
Slovenian Hall Christmas Party	Christmas Eve.
Slovenian Hall Picnic (members and invited guests)	Second Saturday in August
<u>Westmoreland County- Greensburg/Norvelt</u> Westmoreland County Fair	end of August

West Newton

West Newton Community Festival	Sept. 11, 6-11 p.m. Sept. 12, 10 a.m.-11 p.m. Sept. 13, 1 p.m.-8 p.m.
West Newton Family Picnic West Newton Community Pool	August 29, 5:30 p.m.
Soup and Salad Game Party Holy Family Church Social Hall	Sept 15, 6:30
<u>Somerset County</u> Soroptimist Annual Antique Show Ramada Inn, Pa. Turnpike Exit 10, Somerset	Fri., Oct. 2 5:30-9 p.m. Sat., Oct. 3, 11 a.m.-8 p.m. Sun., Oct. 4, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.

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