



## A WORKINGMAN'S TOWN

*Chapter Three from: ST. CLAIR A Nineteenth-Century Coal Town's Experience with a Disaster-Prone Industry, by Anthony F. C. Wallace (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1987).*

The Carey group sold their first lot in August 1844 to Barton Evans, a Pennsylvania-born butcher, who selected lot number thirteen near the center of St. Clair on the east side of Second Street just south of Hancock. His next-door neighbor was the baker Jacob Gwinner, a German immigrant. Four months later, in partnership with another man, Evans bought the lot next door, and a year later still another on Front Street. The next purchaser was a twenty-six-year-old coal prospector and mine operator, John Holmes, an Irishman who had emigrated to the St. Clair area from Dublin about 1841 and had been working the local drifts ever since. He bought a prime commercial location, the lot on the northwest corner of Second and Franklin just across from the railroad depot, under a bond and mortgage, and would go on to buy other land in the town and nearby. Holmes never committed himself fully to the operator's role; he preferred to contract to do special jobs, like sinking a new slope or driving gangway, with a crew hired for the purpose. But he would play a major role in the development of the coal industry in the area, locating the "Holmes Vein," inventing mine machinery and fuses, and serving as a civic leader. In the latter capacity he conveyed to the Independent Order of Odd Fellows the four acres that later served as a public cemetery, and he built a public hall on Front Street. The third buyer was David Metz, a Pennsylvania German carpenter with an English wife, who set up shop in the same block of tradesmen as Evans and Gwinner, and the fourth was Daniel Slobig, a Pennsylvania-born clerk, who purchased another lot on the tradesmen's block and was to become one of the founders of the local Methodist Episcopal Church. The first miner to buy property was fifty-year-old, English-born Edward Hetherington, who took the southern corner lot in the tradesmen's block and proceeded to build a large house for his family and

to take in boarders (two shoemakers and a miner). By 1850 he had also built at least two other houses on the same lot to be rented, one occupied [124] by a widow and her engineer son, and the other by his brother Jacob, Jacob's French wife, and their infant son.

All of the lots fronting on Second Street were sold either by Nichols before 1835 or by the Careys by the end of 1846. The lots on Third Street south of Hancock were less desirable, for they were closer to the noise and dirt of the mines and the railroad, which ran up the middle of Fourth Street at the western edge of town. A number of these lots were purchased in 1846 by immigrant Irish families. The brothers Andrew and Terence McGough, mine laborers aged forty and forty-five, bought a lot together in 1845, built a single and a double house (for rental) apiece, and lived there next door to each other for the rest of their lives; Andrew also invested in another lot down the block. Irish brothers Thomas and Patrick I go took the lot next door but one, and Evan Evans, a Welsh mine laborer, the lot in between. By the end of 1847 the residential lots on Third Street had all been sold. Most of the remaining lots east of Front Street were sold off between 1847 and 1854.

The lots were not small. The street blocks measured approximately 480 feet in length and 200 in depth (approximately 2.2 acres); each block was divided into six, seven, or eight lots, depending on the value of the location. Thus individual lots were 200 feet deep and from sixty to eighty feet in width, and they fronted on two streets. Lots of this size could be, and were, quickly subdivided by their owners into as many as six smaller lots, and stores or houses were built to occupy the smaller locations and to yield rentals. Some lots and partial lots were soon resold in whole or in part. By 1850, for instance, when the tax assessor came by, Daniel Slobig had already sold half his lot, retaining possession of the other half, on which he had built a house.

By 1850 nearly half the numbered and surveyed blocks in the town—approximately twenty out of forty-four acres—were bought up in this way, lot by lot, by individuals or partners, and about 100 acres of undivided land had also been sold. The Carey group was left with 253 acres to sell, of which only about forty-eight were in numbered lots. Of the divided property, about five blocks had already been sold by Nichols, much of it to Thomas Albert Haven, Carey's business associate and son-in-law. The

rest—about seventeen blocks in the town itself—was reserved by Carey for his own use as industrial property or was acquired by large buyers, all of them relatives or business associates of the Careys, and large buyers also took up about 123 undivided acres. Carey's reserve was a couple of blocks between the railroad and Third Street, just opposite the St. Clair Shaft Colliery, and presumably this land was used to store materials, to erect workshops, and to locate the company office. Alfred Lawton took a large lot on the corner of the block just above Carey's reserve, and half a block on Front Street in the middle of the town, and Charles and John Lawton acquired four lots. But the two next largest buyers after Haven were Carey's nephew Joseph G. Lawton and his former business partner Burd Patterson. Between 1844 and 1847 Joseph Lawton acquired a large tract along Nichols and Morris streets in the northwest corner of town, amounting to about twenty-five acres. In 1845 he built a fancy, well-landscaped mansion. Burd Patterson bought a number of lots fronting on Second Street as a real-estate speculation. But his principal purchase, in 1847, was fifteen acres in the southwest corner of the town. surrounding the St. Clair furnace.<sup>1</sup>

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In the sale of these lots, the deeds clearly reserved to the Carey group the underground mineral rights, which were not sold but simply leased to mine operators for a term of years. Carey also asserted that the lots sold by Nichols before 1835 had been subject to a reservation of mineral rights, although this was challenged in a lawsuit brought by Nichols' widow twenty years later. But by that time the seams underneath the town were honeycombed with gangways, breasts, and tunnels, and the Careys continued to collect the royalties on all the coal. The interaction of surface ownership and underground leasehold, of course, also provided endless opportunity for dispute about damaged foundations, leaky cellars, and contaminated wells, and to some degree determined the materials of which the town was built. Although the larger structures, like hotels and warehouses, tended to be built of brick or stone, and stone was used for foundations, most of the residential structures were made of wood, allegedly because the wood withstood better the constant tremors caused by the firing of gunpowder charges in the mines and the occasional subsidence of the ground over an underground "crunch" when the roof collapsed into a breast or gangway.<sup>2</sup>

## BOOM-TOWN GROWTH FROM 1845 TO 1850

In the summer of 1845, in one of a series of articles on the renewed growth of mining towns, the *Miners' Journal* praised the rapid progress of St. Clair. "The country around has a sort of half civilized aspect," the editor noted, but he described the town's situation as "beautiful never the less. . . the work of nature in her happiest mood." (Other issues of the *Journal* praised the beautiful hills in the spring, covered by the flowers of mountain laurel and arbutus, and a St. Clair poet even published an ode to the "dear little trailing arbutus.") The completion of a new track by the Mill Creek and Mine Hill Railroad, the rapid progress on Patterson's furnace, and the current sinking of Alfred Lawton's perpendicular shaft (in addition to the : five collieries already in operation) had given a stimulus to development. Several "handsome brick buildings, intended for private residences," were under construction, and it was expected that by the end of the year about fifty-five smaller frame houses and other wooden structures would be added. The *Journal* reserved its most earnest compliments for the last paragraph, however, a fulsome celebration of the dedication of the town to Christianity and to education:

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There is but one Church in the Town, a plain building, held in common by all denominations of Christians. There is also a School house, generally among the first buildings erected in all American towns. It is a gratifying reflection that the school house and the teacher seem to be our people's care. "Educate your children." The wise precept which the old Athenian urged daily upon the busy multitude in the thoroughfares of the city, is appreciated by our people; in the newest districts the sturdy settler has hardly lopped the branches of the pine to admit the light of heaven, before he rears a building and dedicates it to knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

The population of the town increased rapidly after 1844, when the Carey group began their development program. During the 1845 season, eighty new buildings were constructed; the plans of one contractor for 1846 called for an additional 130 miners' houses. A private census of Schuylkill County taken in 1845 at the behest of the *Miners' Journal* gave

St. Clair a total population of 605, occupying 131 houses; there were three stores and two taverns. The population was heavily weighted by single miners, as the age/sex pyramid indicates (see Table I):

By 1850, St. Clair had become a town of over 2,000 souls. In April of that year, the legislature established the independent Borough of St. Clair, separating it from New Castle Township. The borough limits embraced most but not all of the St. Clair Tract (the western part of the tract remained in New Castle and Norwegian townships); and a strip of land north and south of the tract boundaries was taken into the borough, including the residence of the Johns family, their Eagle Colliery, and "Johns' Patch," just north of the St. Clair Tract. The borough limits now effectively defined the boundaries of the town of St. Clair. The town was to be a little over one mile square (5,280 feet by 6,600 feet), with the intersection of

TABLE I: *St. Clair Population by Age and Sex, 1845*  
*\*See end of document for Table 1.*

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First and Hancock as the geographical center. The voting place was Jonathan Johnson's tavern, a block north of the center, and it was presumably here that the five-member town council met after the first election in May 1850 had selected the town's officials. In addition to the town council, the residents elected a burgess (the equivalent of mayor), a town clerk, a justice of the peace, a high constable (who could be assisted by policemen appointed by the council), three assessors, six school directors, and various election officials. By law the burgess and council were the officers of a corporation having the right to acquire and sell property, to sue and be sued, and the council possessed broad powers to enact laws and make regulations "to promote the peace, good order, and general welfare of the inhabitants." Specifically, the council was responsible for the construction and maintenance of streets and alleys, the regulation of markets, the establishment and enforcement of zoning requirements, public health and sanitation, and the levying of taxes and fines. But there was one restriction upon the council's power that revealed the ultimate governance of coal:

*Provided*, That no streets, lanes, or alleys shall be laid out or extended in such way as to interfere in any manner with any coal

mines or coal operations which may now or hereafter exist within the bounds of said borough.

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The first election was held on May 9, 1850. The chief burgess was Charles Lawton, building contractor and brother of Joseph. The council members were Pennsylvania-born Jacob Metz (president of council), a carpenter and one of the original landowners, residing next to Johnson's tavern at the corner of Front and Franklin streets; John Mays, an English miner with a Welsh wife, owner of half a lot and a double house, prosperous enough to hire two servants to help his wife with her two infants; Michael Reilly, an Irish miner, who also owned half a lot and a double house; John R. Williams, Welsh, a miner and landowner; and Jacob Frantz, from Germany, also a miner and landowner; the constable was Joel Metz, brother of the council president and a blacksmith. The town clerk was Lott Evans, from Pennsylvania, a professional clerk. The assessors, all Pennsylvanians, included Benjamin Jackson, teacher and blacksmith; Harry Krebs, butcher; and Daniel Slobig, clerk, whom we have noted as an early landowner. It is a group that varied widely in occupation and ethnic origin but would seem to have been pretty much on a level with respect to wealth—at least, each owned a house and lot.

The council passed six ordinances in the spring and summer of 1850. The first prohibited the encroachment of private property, such as houses, awnings, and piles of building materials, as well as "stables, coal heaps, pig pens, wood piles, dung hills, ash heaps, and fences," onto the regularly laid-out streets, roads, and alleys. Another provided for the arrest and fining of vagrants and disorderly persons. A third required that "all exhibitions" pay a fee. A fourth prohibited the racing of horses in the public streets. A fifth regulated the placing of pumps and awnings between the sidewalk and the curb. And a sixth outlawed the erection or repair of mills for the manufacture of gunpowder or blasting powder anywhere within the borough. After thus providing for clear and safe passage in the streets of the borough, and for the removal of a dangerous powder mill (probably the establishment of John Scharr, a powder miller late from Germany), and (in 1855) for the public water supply, the council passed only two more ordinances in the next seventeen years until a revitalized council issued a flurry of legislation in 1867.<sup>2</sup>

One of the first acts of the council, other than legislation, was to commission a state-mandated map of the town, showing streets, lot numbers, and other major features. It, in conjunction with the list of lot sales from 1844 to 1858 kept by Carey's agent, and with the 1850 census of population and of manufacturers taken in mid-September and the tax assessment of 1851, enables us to obtain a fairly detailed picture of the little town in the summer of 1850. To an outsider riding into St. Clair on the Mill Creek and Mine Hill Railroad and disembarking at the depot at the north end of town, the first impression must have been one of noise. There were at least ten steam engines huffing and puffing at the five major collieries that loomed over the town on all sides, none more than a quarter of a mile from the center; five steam breaker whistles summoned and dismissed employees, morning and evening. There was the sound of coal being smashed in great cast-iron rollers in five breakers, bouncing through wire screens, sliding down chutes, and finally being dumped into coal cars. Iron wheels squealed on iron rails as coal cars negotiated turns on five sidings. When in blast, the Patterson furnace roared night and day. The scream of circular saws rose from two sawmills, and carpenters' hammers resounded from new construction. Half a dozen blacksmiths pounded away on their anvils. And another impression must have been one of dust, as wind blew cinders from steam engines, coal dust from culm banks, and powdered clay from unpaved streets. Now and then the ground vibrated from the firing of gunpowder charges down in the mines. Dogs barked, chickens cackled and roosters crowed, pigs ran in the streets and grunted, and cows mooed (forty-six were kept by householders). But within a few weeks the newcomer would no longer notice these assaults upon the senses and instead would attend with pride to the wide streets, the rows of new houses neatly whitewashed, the taverns and stores and churches along the wide main streets. Virtually every corner had its tavern or store, especially around the intersection of Hancock and Second. The homes of artisans, and their attached shops—carpenters, tailors, butchers, bakers, shoemakers—tended to cluster in the center of town too. The churches were more peripheral in location. At the extreme south end of the borough, outside the St. Clair Tract, was the oldest church, the little chapel of the Welsh Congregationalists. On the east side of town, nearer the center, were the Welsh Calvinist (1846), the Primitive Methodist (1847), and the Methodist

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Episcopal (1849) churches. The latter two served primarily English-born congregations, as did the Episcopal church built in 1854. The German-speaking immigrants would soon build St. Bonifacius Roman Catholic Church (1852) and, at the south end of town, the German Lutheran church (1855). A separate Catholic church, St. Mary's, was not built for the Irish population until 1864. The borough cemetery was located next to a colliery on the hill just west of town, north of the road to Wadesville; adjacent to it stood the old building that had been variously used as a meeting place for church groups and as a school since 1835.

The houses of the miners ranged along the streets throughout the town, expanding outward as housing was required for the later immigrants. The original "Long Row," housing sixteen miners' families in eight row houses, stood along the west side of Second Street just north of Hancock, and other rows of closely packed frame houses, built for rental to miners, stretched up and down Second and Third streets and those parts of First Street that did not front on Mill Creek, a narrow stream about fifteen feet wide that ran south through the very center of town, between its five-foot banks of earth and stone.

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It was, in the summer of 1850, a busy little boom town, mostly managed by tradesmen and miners, prospering with a growing industry in coal and iron, and drawing into itself an industrious population of European miners and artisans.<sup>3</sup>

### **THE CENSUS OF 1850**

The United States census of 1850 for the Borough of St. Clair was conducted in September by the enumerator assigned to New Castle Township. He separated the St. Clair schedules from the rest of the township, and, matching names with lot locations, we can observe how he proceeded. He began at the south end of the principal thoroughfare. Second Street, and walked north on the east side of the street, then south along the west side. After that, he covered the streets east of Second, and he concluded the survey by moving south on Third.<sup>1</sup>

The total population of the borough, housed in 442 dwellings, was 2,217, of whom 1,166 were males and 1,051 females. There were 471 residential family units (but the enumerator counted only 463). The 115

excess males were largely concentrated in the age groups of working miners, as the age-sex table indicates (see Table 2).

The town was overwhelmingly composed of relatively young immigrant families. 1,235 persons—more than half—were foreign-born; of the remainder, 502 were children of foreign-born fathers, most but not all of them born in the United States of American-born mothers; of these, 461 were born in Pennsylvania. The population was entirely white. For the immigrant families, there were four major countries of origin listed in the census: Ireland, England, Wales, and Germany. The Irish were most numerous, amounting to a total of 706 (493 Irish-born, 213 born out of Ireland of Irish-born parents). The English were next with 402 (272 and 130), the Germans with 324 (227 and 97), and, close behind, the Welsh with 315 (227 and 88). There were also 11 Canadian-born, 3 Scots, and 2

TABLE 2: *St. Clair Population by Age and Sex, 1850* [131]

*\*See end of document for Table 2.*

French. As for the "Americans" (children of U.S.-born parents), it would appear from the number of people with German names born in Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania parents that "Pennsylvania Dutch" ethnicity was a noticeable presence, on the order perhaps of 200 persons.

The census recorded the occupation of all males aged sixteen or over; only occasionally did the enumerator record a female occupation, apparently when the rarity of the occupation struck him as worthy of note, such as the one female listed (perhaps in error) as "miner" and one recorded as "governess" in the Johns household. Thus domestic servants, milliners, and female proprietors of candy stores and beer parlors go unrecognized. As one might expect, the categories "miner" and "laborer" were the most numerous, 229 and 254 respectively. The category "miner" here refers to the trade of "contract miner," and "laborer" must usually mean "mine laborer," the contract miner's helper. But no doubt other kinds of manual labor were included under the term "laborer," such as workers on railroad gangs, ditch diggers, and adult breaker boys. Many male children under sixteen worked in and about the mines, particularly as breaker boys, door boys, and mule drivers, but the occupations were not recorded.

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The census also recognized a large number of occupations that we can collect under the general rubric of "trades." (Contract miners also considered their calling a skilled trade and a few even paid to be listed in city directories as "miners," along with butchers, stonemasons, physicians, publicans, and shopkeepers.) In St. Clair, in addition to "miner," there were twenty-four other distinct occupations listed that we would recognize as skilled labor; 102 men were thus employed. Two occupations were probably colliery jobs: engineer (12 men), no doubt steam-engine operators, and machinist (2). Of the remaining twenty-two occupations, five were practiced by seven or more men each: carpenter (21), shoemaker (7), blacksmith (13), clerk (12), and teamster (9). The remainder had no more than four practitioners each: mason (3), painter (4), plasterer (4), teacher (2) (i.e., the public-school teacher and the Johns family governess), tailor (4), butcher (3), baker (2), sawyer (2), gardener (2), and one each for the more specialized trades of bottler, hostler, watchmaker, stage driver, stone-cutter, cooper, cabinetmaker, and peddler. Although the number of men engaged in the non-mining trades was outweighed five or six to one by miners, laborers, and boys working at the collieries, the town evidently had a wide range of skilled artisans available to supply its own needs and those of the nearby mine patches.

Finally, there was a small group of occupations that may be grouped together as "capitalist and professional." There were 4 men listed as landlords (i.e., hotel keepers), 12 as merchants (including not only storekeepers but also the three principal mine operators), and one each as physician, farmer, and contractor. Of the nineteen persons listed in this group, three were associated by residence or marriage with the Johns family (the Johns brothers and the physician who married a Johns girl) and two were Lawtons; the Johns and the Lawtons were the major colliery operators and Charles Lawton was the principal building contractor in town.

These two extended families were, in 1850, the elite of the town, owning the most land, operating the largest enterprises, residing in the largest houses, employing the most servants, and, at least in the Johns' case, educating their children privately. Next to them, the keepers of the hotels and taverns, the smaller merchants, and the professional men made up the upper-middle class. On the next rung of the occupational status ladder were the contract miners and tradesmen, the respectable working

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class of St. Clair. At the bottom were the "laborers." In this world of manual work, in 1850, it is not possible to draw a clear status line between the contract miner and the other tradesmen. Some individual miners shifted back and forth between mine and workshop as layoffs, injuries and illness, and financial opportunity dictated; and it was common, as the census schedules show in later years, when children's occupations were listed, for artisans' sons to begin their working lives as breaker boys or mule drivers or laborers, helping to support the family, even if in their later teens they learned a trade or profession and left the mines. There was, however, among the underground miners a clear status distinction between the contract miners and their laborers. Contract miners were paid by the colliery operator, by the ton or wagon load; they furnished their own tools and supplies; and they supervised and paid their own laborers. Miners were more likely to own their own houses (but a sizable number of laborers were home owners too). According to the 1851 tax assessments, 62 miners and 33 laborers owned a house and a lot, while no miners and 153 laborers resided with their families or lived in rented quarters. And what made the distinction between miner and laborer peculiarly important was the circumstance that most of the miners were English or Welsh and most of the laborers were Irish.

### **ETHNICITY AND OCCUPATION**

The census figures reveal a pattern of clear occupational disadvantage for the Irish in colliery occupations (see Table 3). This pattern is not repeated in the figures for the other trades, where there appear only 9 Irishmen, but also only 14 English, 9 Welsh, and 12 Germans; the majority of tradesmen were U.S.-born (37 in Pennsylvania, 9 in other states). Among the upper-middle class, only 6 were foreign-born, and 2 of these were Irish.

Clearly, the disadvantage of the Irish is greatest in underground mining, and the most likely reasons are the obvious ones. Ireland had a minuscule coal-mining industry compared to England and Wales, and thus English and Welsh miners on arrival in the United States were technically better qualified to take the more skilled jobs than most Irish countrymen. The English and Welsh were also more apt to arrive in St. Clair with

money to invest in the equipment and supplies needed to set up as a

TABLE 3: *Miner/Laborer Status and Ethnicity, 1850* [134]

TABLE 4: *Age of Oldest U.S.-born Child and Ethnicity, 1850*

*\*See end of document for Tables 3 and 4.*

contract miner than were Irishmen driven out of Ireland by famine and [135] landlords' evictions. Poverty and inexperience did not characterize all Irish immigrants, of course. Some did qualify as contract miners (some had learned mining during an earlier sojourn in England, some as laborers in American mines); some were well enough endowed financially to buy lots in the town. But in 1850, according to the census, only 10 Irishmen owned real estate, as opposed to 27 English, 21 Welsh, and 13 Germans. The Irish families of St. Clair were not residentially segregated in any obvious pattern; there was an Irish row on Third Street, but there were Irish families scattered all over town. There seems to have been a tendency for ethnic groups to cluster in blocks, to judge by distribution of ethnicity in the enumerator's sequence, but it was probably more out of choice than discriminatory intent by landlords. Another area of possible difference between the Irish immigrants and the others was duration of a family's residence in the United States (which can be roughly measured by the age of the eldest child born in the United States). Comparing the families with American-born children living in the same household, the Irish again stand out (see Table 4). The English and the Welsh families clearly have been in the country longer; the average age of the oldest U.S.-born child is 8.7 and 6.6, respectively. The Germans and the Irish are more recent, on the average, with virtually identical mean ages of oldest U.S.-born child, 5.2 and 5.3, respectively. The Irish profile has, however, an interesting characteristic: there is a core of Irish families long established in the United States, suggesting that the Irish immigration began just as early as the English and Welsh and then underwent a sudden jump in the later part of the 1840's.

All this suggests that the occupational disadvantage of Irish colliery workers may in part have been a consequence of inexperience in mining among the large cohort of young mine laborers recently emigrated from a country without a mining industry. But examination of the relation be-

tween length of residence in the U.S. and miner/laborer status shows that experience had not, up to 1850, benefited the Irish as much as other groups. Only one Irish contract miner was older than forty-four; 3 Germans exceeded this age, 17 Welsh, and 19 English. Conversely, no less than 27 Irish laborers were older than forty-four, as compared with 10 Germans, 3 English, and 1 Welshman. Comparing the older German with the older Irish laborers is also illuminating. Using the age of children born in the U.S. or country of origin as an index of length of stay in the U.S., and thus of opportunity to acquire experience in American coal mines, we find that of the five German families with children born in the U.S. living in the same household, in four cases the oldest American-born child was three or younger; the average age was 3.6. Three of the German families had no American-born children, but had young children born in Germany (ages six and seven). Among the Irish laborer families, twelve had U.S.-born children living with them; only one of these children was younger than eight, and the average age was 12.4. It would seem that the Irish mine laborer was less likely to move up in status as he gained experience: only inexperienced older German workers were laborers, while Irish laborers tended to remain laborers all their lives. This did not necessarily mean that they lived in dire poverty: the 1851 tax assessment shows at least eleven Irish laborers-as home owners, and, according to the census of 1850, six of the older Irish laborers owned real estate in St. Clair.

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But laborer status did carry certain disadvantages probably more galling than the difference in pay. The laborer was sometimes subject to a certain amount of informal abuse by his employing contract miner, such as having dirt kicked into his face as he followed the miner up the ladder into the breast, and being required to do the heavier physical chores, such as carrying timber and loading the coal cars. Furthermore, when the contract miner had fired his shot and was done for the day, he often left his laborer alone in the breast to finish breaking up the coal with pick and hammer, loading it into the cars, and piling the gob out of the way. This additional time implied added risk of accident and a longer period of inhaling coal dust (an effect no doubt enhanced by the deeper breathing entailed by heavier tasks).

As the years went by, the status difference between miners and laborers became increasingly institutionalized. In the late 1860's a Welsh

miner wrote back to a Welsh newspaper: "The laborer's work is fairly hard and this is the first work a stranger gets when first coming here and it has become the custom for a man to labor first of all wherever he comes from. Most labor for six to nine months before they get a place of their own. The laborer's wage is one third of that earned by the miner."<sup>1</sup> By the 1870's, laborers were complaining publicly about their condition. A laborer, writing to a newspaper, complained bitterly, "We often hear of the injustice of the coal operators toward the miners. But when have the operators treated the miners so bad as the miners have treated the laborers. . . ."<sup>2</sup> And another Welshman wrote home about

the unfairness of the system to the laborer who has to fill from six to seven cars a day with coal and he gets but one third of the wages of the miner. There is more water in this works than I ever saw before in the Old Country. Some here are filling coal in about [137] a foot of water. They wear boots that reach to the top of their knees but the water often comes over the top. The miner and laborer go to work at seven o'clock in the morning and probably the miner will cut enough coal by ten or eleven o'clock. Then he will go out leaving the [laborer to] fill three or four cars with coal after the gentleman had left. He will wash, put on a shirt, and a white collar and will go to dinner boasting that he has cut enough coal for the laborer. After he has had enough, he calls for his cigarbox and enjoys himself for an hour or two and because he is a religious man he says that it is nearly time for him to go to a prayermeeting. Between five and six o'clock the laborer, poor thing, arrives home as wet as a fish and after eating his supper, in spite of his weariness, goes to the prayermeeting and who should be praying at the time but the man he works for. These are the words he uses. "May our peace be like the river our justice like the waves of the sea." Oh! terrible hypocrite!<sup>3</sup>

When unions were eventually organized, the miners were careful to create an industrial rather than a craft union, thus preventing their laborers from forming a rival union of their own that might threaten the status quo. And in 1885 the miners, after lobbying in Harrisburg, were able to persuade the legislature to include in the Mine Safety Act of that year a requirement that miners be certified. Certification required the applicant to prove that he had worked two years as a miner's laborer and to pass an examination before a board of three miners, answering technical questions about min-

ing. The status of laborer thus was akin to that of apprentice, and the rationalization for the differential in pay and status was the need for experience, which presumably would bring knowledge, skill, and good judgment.<sup>4</sup>

The prolongation of the laborer status of Irish mine workers in the 1840's and '50's thus can hardly have been justified on the grounds of insufficient time; after all, even in 1885 certification could come after two years, and in the 1860's the customary training period was only six to nine months. It would appear more likely that miners and mine operators disliked and distrusted Irish workers on other grounds, such as an alleged propensity for drunkenness, fighting, absenteeism, reckless conduct in the mine, and adherence to Roman Catholicism. Such attitudes were not uncommon among Welsh and English working people, and in 1850 most of the miners, mine bosses, superintendents, and colliery operators were Welsh or English. Ethnicity and the status difference between contract [138] miners and mine laborers thus formed a single, deepening line of cleavage between Irish and non-Irish workers in St. Clair.

### **THE MINE PATCHES**

Across the hills surrounding St. Clair lay a ring of small hamlets that provided housing, a company store, and little else in the way of amenities, for the mine families associated with various isolated collieries. These patches consisted of a few dozen to a hundred company-owned houses and cabins strung out along the road. To avail themselves of essential services beyond the resources of the company store, the residents had to walk a mile or two to St. Clair, or other nearby towns, to visit tavern, church, shop, post office, or railroad depot; at night they were effectively cut off from the outside world, for walking the paths over the hills was dangerous in the dark, bestrewn as the landscape was with the debris of earlier mining operations and pockmarked with cave-ins and abandoned slopes and air holes. This remoteness gave to these hamlets a rural quality that has appealed to some twentieth-century romantics, who have seen in the life of the mine patch a kind of communal virtue denied the denizens of towns. George Korson, a twentieth-century folklorist, editorialized about the mine patch—"a cluster of squalid hemlock shacks built close to a breaker"—in

a fever of nostalgia:

All classes of mine workers participated in spontaneous communal gatherings which were usually held on the green, part of every mine patch. Under a starry, moonlit sky of a summer evening, against a background of colliery buildings and culm banks, and in an atmosphere infiltrated with coal dust and brimstone smells, the workers and their families sang together, listened to story tellers, played folk games and danced. ...

A sheet of iron borrowed from the colliery would be laid on the grass as a sounding board for jigs, reels, hornpipes, and breakdowns as the fiddler scraped out his tunes.<sup>1</sup>

Surrounding St. Clair in 1850 there were a number of such patches: to the east. Crow Hollow and Ravensdale, which served the Pine Forest Colliery; to the south. Mm Creek and Coaquenac; to the north, Johns' Patch (already becoming a part of the town). Dark Water, and New Castle (near Lawton's Mammoth Colliery); to the west, Wadesville, Mount Laffee, [139] and Scalpington (an Irish settlement at the Delaware Coal Company's mines). Mine patches survived only as long as their collieries stayed in business; when the breaker shut down, the patch was deserted, to rot away slowly, eventually to be torn down by strip mining or covered over by railroad yards and highways.

The isolation of the mine patches seems indeed to have nourished a communal spirit that may have had its origin in European working-class communities. In a detailed account of life in Coaquenac in the mid-nineteenth century, based on the recollections of aged survivors in the 1920's and 1930's, the historians of East Norwegian Township described cooperative local institutions that contrasted sharply with those of the towns. Until 1884 relatively acid-free water for washing clothes was obtained from a common well near the race that served the gristmill, and until 1870 bread was baked in an oven "owned in common by all the families in the village." The oven was large enough to bake twenty-four loaves of bread at one time. The women, it was said, had a traditional agreement "whereby the one who fills the oven at night has priority over the others for use of the oven on the next day. ... If two women want to bake on the same day, they will mutually decide on the previous evening which shall bake first." At night, after a supper of home-grown vegetables, home-butchered pork, home-churned butter, bread baked in the communal oven, and hot black tea, the men congregated on logs in front of their

gardens, to smoke their clay pipes and talk over the news of the day. After dark, tales of the supernatural were told, of fairies and vengeful ghosts and melancholy banshees.<sup>2</sup> The patches were not large; few held more than thirty or forty families. East of St. Clair, in all of East Norwegian Township in 1850, not counting the town of Port Carbon, there were only 195 households and 984 white inhabitants, plus one "Col. male," parceled out among five or six distinct patches. The bulk of this population was English and Irish, seventy household family units each, plus a few single boarders (see Table 5). The relationship between occupation and ethnicity emerges as clearly in the patches as in the town. The occupational category "miner" was assigned to 100 males; 62 of them were English, 10 Welsh, and 6 Scottish; 16 were Irish; 4 were Pennsylvania-born; and 2 were German. "Laborers" numbered 92; of these, only 7 were English, none Welsh, and 1 Scottish; 68 were Irish; 13 were Pennsylvania born; and 3 were German. Clearly, with regard to underground mining, there again was a strong relationship between occupational status and ethnicity. And similarly in other trades, a sharp contrast between English and Irish prevailed: there were five English machinists and no Irish, ten English blacksmiths and no Irish, one English iron molder and no Irish. All four farmers were Pennsylvania-born, and so were most practitioners of farm-associated trades, like miller, sawyer, tanner, and teamster. Indeed, only five Irishmen worked in trades other than miner or laborer: there was one Irish "teacher," a watchman, a teamster, a stonemason, and a shoemaker. There was, in effect, an ethnically tripartite occupational structure: Pennsylvania families owned the land and ran the farms, the gristmill and sawmill, and the tannery, and did most of the hauling because they owned the horses and wagons; the English, Welsh, Germans, and Scots were miners and tradesmen; the Irish were laborers.<sup>3</sup>

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North and west of St. Clair, a different pattern prevailed in rural New Castle Township (exclusive of the town of New Castle itself). In patches at Wadesville and Mount Laffee, there were fifty-one households containing 280 people (including as one household a boardinghouse run by an Irish couple with seventeen Irish mine-worker residents). There were no Welsh people at all in rural New Castle; only one German family (two persons, the husband a blacksmith) and one German laborer boarding with an Irish family; three English families, including five miners, twenty-three persons

in all; and one seven-person U.S.-born family (see Table 6). These patches

TABLE 5: *Ethnicity in Rural East Norwegian Township, 1850*

TABLE 6: *Ethnicity in Rural New Castle Township, 1850*

*\*See end of document for Tables 5 and 6.*

were, in effect, Irish ghettos: 247 Irish, 23 English, 7 U.S.-born of U.S.-born parents, and 3 Germans. But this segregation had its economically beneficial effect for the Irish: of the thirty-five miners, thirty were Irish, one German, and three U.S.-born. The cultural flavor of these western mine patches was undoubtedly Irish as well.<sup>4</sup>

## **WAGES AND SUBSISTENCE**

None of the business records of the St. Clair collieries of this early period have survived except for scraps from the Carey Papers. Nonetheless, a picture of the probable wage rates in the St. Clair area for different categories of work can be obtained from the records of a colliery (Kaska William) located about three and a half miles east of St. Clair. The paybook for Kaska William for a little over two years in 1851, 1852, and 1853 reveals much about how Schuylkill colliery employees were classified and paid.<sup>1</sup> There were basically four categories: management, craftsmen, miners, and laborers. Management included the mine manager, who was paid \$1.95 per day. and six foremen, five of whom were paid \$1.25 per day and one \$1.37. The craftsmen included six "engineers" (presumably the operators of the steam engines, pumps, and hoisting machinery), who received from \$1 to \$1.55 per day, one machinist at \$1.25, two blacksmiths at \$1.08 and \$1.25, two carpenters at \$1.08 and \$1.16, three "choppers" at 83 cents and 91 cents and a sawyer (no doubt operating the sawmill) at \$1, three teamsters at 99 cents, an hostler at 90 cents, and a storekeeper at 90 cents.

The category "miners" was complex. First of all. the forty-two miners [142] were divided into two groups in the paybook: nine miners paid by the day and thirty-three contract miners. Eight of the day miners received \$1.16; if they worked twenty-four days in the four-week pay period they earned 28 per month. One man received only 91 cents. The contract miners were

entered differently from the day workers: the day workers were listed as individuals, by name; the contract miners were recorded in every case as a separate company, thus "Conrad Zimmer Co.," "Dennis David Co.," and so on. The contract miners' accounts listed specific services performed and the rates for each; these rates varied, no doubt on the basis of negotiation about the difficulty of the task. There were two kinds of contract miners—the twenty who worked primarily cutting coal and who were paid by the wagon (which carried a load of about a long ton and a half), and the thirteen who specialized in the more difficult and less productive tasks of driving gangways, digging tunnels, air holes, and headings, and planking chutes. The specialty work was generally paid by the yard or less frequently, by the day (at \$1.16 per day). The wagon workers were generally paid 55 cents per wagon, sometimes less, down to 30 cents and a wagon "company" on an average loaded four to six wagons per working day. Maximum productivity in May-June 1851 (by "Edward Sheaffer Co. ") was 215.5 wagons in four weeks. If this represents one breast worked for twenty-four days, we have Sheaffer and his laborer or laborers cutting and loading nine wagons per day. In Sheaffer's case, this amounted to \$99.75 for the month. Other contract miners' gross earnings ranged downward from this to as low as \$20 for the same month. But these were gross earnings only. The contract miner had to pay his laborer or laborers presumably at a rate comparable to what the colliery paid the laborers who worked for the day miner, and he had to pay for lamps, lamp oil and wicks, gunpowder, and tools (shovels, picks, drills, and paper for making squibs). The cost of the items bought from the store averaged about \$8. The situation of the specialty miner was even more complex, inasmuch as he had to estimate in advance how much time on the average it would take to advance by one yard the gangway, tunnel, or whatever he was working on and charge accordingly, the rates ranging from \$3 to \$6 per yard. Specialty miners also had to buy supplies and pay their workers; because they worked in larger teams, their gross earnings were sometimes higher but not always. and it would appear that what they cleared after paying their laborers may not have been any greater than what the wagon miners earned

How much were the contract miner's laborers paid? Unfortunately the Kaska William books do not tell us because the colliery did not record what the contract miner paid his laborers, although it did sometimes charge

the miner with a laborer's expenses, such as rent and grocery-store orders. But the books do, in some months, specify a category "loader," of whom there were anywhere from eleven to twenty-two. Loaders were probably the helpers of the day miners. These helpers were generally paid 91 cents per day, with a few down to 85 cents and two at 95 cents. This would suggest a pay differential between day miners and their helpers of 25 cents per day. It is not likely that the contract miner, whether doing wagon work or working by the yard, could get away with paying his laborer much less. At 91 cents per day, in a twenty-four-day month the laborer would earn \$21.84. If the miner's supplies cost him \$8 in the same period, he would have to gross better than \$50 in the month just to earn for himself as much as he paid his laborer, and this meant producing at least 100 wagons of coal, about four wagons per day. If he averaged five wagons per day, he would earn an extra \$i 2.50 per month; if six wagons, an extra \$25. Clearly, the miner had a reason to push his helper to load in the neighborhood of nine or ten tons of coal every day.

Not all of those listed in the paybook, or the census, as "laborers" were miner's helpers, and most were paid considerably less. At Kaska William the lowest-paid worker was the "mail boy," who earned but 14 cents per day. Other day laborers about a colliery included the driver boys, who drove the horses or mules that dragged wagons back and forth between the loading points and the bottom of shaft, and the door boys, who opened and closed the ventilation-control doors as wagons and workers passed to and fro; men who carried prop timber down into the mine, hauled it to where it was needed, and helped to set it up; the men and boys who worked in the breaker; the helpers of the mechanics, carpenters, and other artisans; firemen for the steam engines; and a miscellany of ditch diggers, coal shovelers, culm-bank tenders, and handymen. These laborers in some cases earned as much as miner's helpers, but the less skilled and the youthful earned as little as 30 to 40 cents per day.

These wages if continued throughout the year could generate an income for an individual wage earner well above subsistence level. But demand for coal tended to slacken in the winter because most urban households had filled their bins and because the canal, subject to freezing, closed down for the season, leaving only the more expensive Philadelphia and Reading Railroad to take the coal from Port Carbon to Port Richmond

in north Philadelphia. So it is not reasonable to project summer earnings over the twelve months; such projections should perhaps be halved. Thus a laborer at Kaska William earning 91 cents per day for the twenty-four days of work during the four weeks from July 12 to August 9, 1851, would bring home \$21.84; the same laborer in the pay period January 24 to February 21, 1852. worked only eight days on an average, at a rate of 70 [144] cents per day, for a total of \$5.60. Furthermore, of the 150 laborers on the payroll in July, fifty-six had been laid off by February. Apparently no miners were laid off, but they too earned less: the day miner's rate went down to \$1 per day and he averaged only seven days in the month; the wagon miners filled fewer wagons and were paid at 35 cents per wagon (down from 55 cents); and the miners working by the yard worked less time at lower yardage rates.

In some families, however, there was more than one wage earner- at least fifty-nine family units (about 13 percent of the total) had two or more male wage earners over fifteen years of age. and there must have been some women who earned cash as domestic servants, washerwomen and seamstresses. Women also added to family income by taking care of male boarders. It is difficult to give an exact number because some apparent "boarders" may have been non-paying cousins or in-laws with a different surname; but approximately thirty families seem to have taken in boarders, to judge from the 1850 census schedules. Thus annual family income must have varied considerably even within the same occupational category A young laborer with a wife and two young children and no boarders might have depended solely on earnings that varied from \$20 per month down to \$6 per month from season to season, with a total annual income on the order of \$150 to \$200. An older laborer with two laborer sons and two boarders might see a family income of \$500 to \$600 per year Contract miners' family earnings probably ranged down to \$200 and up to \$700 or \$800 per year.

The cost of living in St. Clair in 1850 was low enough to make permanent residence possible even for laborers' families. Most Kaska William houses rented at \$1.25 or \$2 per four-week period; for the year. house rental thus might run from \$16.25 to \$26. A few were somewhat dearer on the order of \$4 to \$5 per week, but this figure included coal for the fire Rentals at St. Clair would not have been much higher. For those who

arrived with some savings, a lot could be purchased from Carey for as little as \$75, although most of his large lots sold for \$200. The cost of a new house was about \$200.<sup>2</sup> The houses owned by miners in the town were of various shapes and sizes and not distinguishable from dwellings of the rest of the community, but in the patches, where company housing was the rule, the houses were more standardized. In Johns' Patch, for instance the colliery rented houses to its employees along North Mill and Carroll streets where they stood under the watchful eye of the Johns family themselves in their mansion between the patch and the breaker. The patch houses were sturdily built (surviving ones are still occupied), of frame construction, resting on stone foundations with no cellar, only a shallow crawl space, and were arranged in pairs with a shared chimney and probably a shared outhouse. There was no front yard, not even a front porch, the door opening directly onto the street; in back, a garden led down to the creek, or the railroad, or a neighbor's back yard, and here vegetables grew and pigs and chickens and occasionally a cow were kept; the dogs roamed free. The exterior clapboard was painted red; the roofs were wood-shingled. Both the fireplace and the cookstove burned anthracite in chestnut and pea-coal sizes. Each house contained one room upstairs and three down: upstairs, a bedroom, twelve feet by fifteen, with a ceiling that sloped close to the floor front and back; downstairs, a kitchen jutting out to the side, nine by twelve; a front room, twelve by fifteen; and a back room, twelve by twelve. The half-circular staircase ran up the building's center partition at the front: in the middle was the fireplace; and beside the fireplace a closet. There was at least one glass window in every outside wall of every room, and all the floors, walls, and ceilings were laid in tongue-and-groove paneling and wainscoting. The use of the downstairs rooms no doubt was flexible and depended on the size and make-up of the family.<sup>3</sup>

Food prices in St. Clair probably were a bit higher than the prices [146] quoted in the *Miners' Journal* for the Pottsville Market, and this means they must have been about on a par with Philadelphia (in Pottsville, for instance, corn sold for 50 cents per bushel, in Philadelphia for 60 cents). Most of the food had to be imported; there were few farms in the coal country. In 1850 there were only seven farms in all of East Norwegian Township and two in New Castle, and only two of these nine farms were larger than eleven acres.<sup>4</sup> On April 27, 1850, at Pottsville, the following

prices were quoted:<sup>5</sup>

### **POTTSVILLE MARKETS**

*\*See end of document for Table "Pottsville Markets"*

Using the reports of the butchers of St. Clair in the 1860 census of manufactures, we find that the preferred meats were beef (from oxen) and mutton; veal (from calves) and pork were eaten sparingly. Meat prices are not evident in the 1850 record, but in 1860 beef was selling in St. Clair at 8 cents per pound and mutton at 5.<sup>6</sup> Commodity prices did not rise much in the decade, so the cost of butchered meat was probably about the same in 1850. Fresh beef and mutton were eaten in large quantities, and about twice as much beef as mutton. The average daily consumption of fresh meat for every man, woman, and child in St. Clair in 1850 was slightly more than a quarter of a pound. Assuming that infants ate little or no meat, and that children and women, being on the average smaller, ate less than men, it would seem likely that a hard-working miner might eat one or two pounds of beef or mutton per day. Although only half as much mutton as beef was eaten over the course of the year, mutton, containing a higher percentage of fat, had much higher caloric value. A pound of beef and a pound of mutton together would yield 2,000 calories or more, close to half a miner's energy requirement. And in addition to fresh meat purchased at the butcher's, people also went to the general store for salt pork products and fish, particularly mackerel. Privately raised chickens, pigs, and some products of the chase—wild fowl, small game, and a few deer—also added to the supply of animal protein. Thus a diet rich in butter and eggs, meats, and breadstuffs was available to the ordinary worker and his family the year round, with green and leafy vegetables and fresh fruits in the summer and dried fruits in the winter. Many householders probably supplemented their store-bought foods with vegetables and fruits grown in back-yard gardens; in the spring, children picked berries on the hillsides nearby, and in the fall the men hunted rabbit, squirrel, turkey, and other small game in the mountains. For a laborer requiring, say, 4,500 to 5,000 calories per day (half expended lifting nine tons of coal four feet into six wagons), a diet rich in meat and dairy products could be had for about 25 cents per day; by cutting proteins and fats, and eating more bread,

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pancakes, fruit pies, and potatoes, he could eat the same number of calories for about 20 cents per day. Assuming that women and children required far less food than a laborer loading nine tons of coal per day, a family consisting of husband, wife, and two children could get by on about 50 cents per day for food.

Work clothing was probably made in the house from yard goods, but some idea of the cost of store-bought clothes can be had from the 1860 census, which records a tailor as having sold eighty suits consisting of coat, vest, and "pantaloons" for \$19.50 apiece (\$12.50 for the coat, \$3 for the vest, and \$4 for the pants).<sup>7</sup>

It would appear that a laborer, with a wife and two children, who earned \$20 per month on an average through the year could make ends meet and save some money. More children, or less pay, required supplemental income from other members of the household, from occasional non-colliery jobs, or from boarders. Children usually kept coming, but could be put to work by the time they were eight or nine. But the principal problem was that employment was not steady. In 1850, for example, the mines on Mill Creek suffered three separate, and costly, interruptions of the normal spring and summertime burst of productivity. First, just as the trade was slowly picking up from the winter low of 3,000 tons per week (a low so deep that many left to seek employment elsewhere), the miners and laborers went on strike in May for higher wages. That knocked production—and employment—down nearly to winter levels. After the strike, production began to improve, only to be reduced again late in July by a freshet, the worst in twelve years, that drowned out a number of mines and washed out sections of railroad and canal. And no sooner had the collieries begun to recover from this disaster than another flood, worse than the last, following about eight inches of rain in one twenty-four-hour period closed everything down again. The dam at Tumbling Run, feeder to the canal broke and a wall of water plunged into the canal and onto the railroad at Mount Carbon, destroying the iron bridge and washing away the embankments of the canal. The valley below Pottsville was strewn with the wreckage of boats, lumber, furniture, and fragments of buildings. More than fifty people were drowned at Tamaqua and fourteen more along the Schuylkill River below Pottsville.

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The damage at St. Clair was not reported but apparently was not so

severe as it was along the larger streams, and within a month coal shipments from Mill Creek were back up. although not so high as in May and there they remained until the winter decline in September. The Schuylkill Canal, however, did not reopen for traffic for the rest of the year. Its closing forced the collieries to ship entirely by railroad and that cost them more money. The added financial pressure on the collieries no doubt was passed on to the colliery employees.<sup>8</sup>

Colliery employment in good times was steady and reasonably well paid. But colliery employment was notoriously subject to reduction or stoppage by seasonal variations in demand, by strikes, by floods, and—as we shall see later—by accidents and disasters. The economic security that the worker sought for himself and his family could not be obtained from the colliery, even with the help of extra jobs, child labor, gardening and berry picking and hunting, and taking in boarders. In the absence of any form of unemployment insurance from public funds, the individual had to go beyond the household family to obtain support when needed. This meant in effect, the extended family and, beyond this, those metaphorical families the benevolent associations.

### **THE EXTENDED FAMILY**

St. Clair was a family town. Virtually everyone lived in a house with other members of a nuclear family—husband, wife, father, son, or daughter. Only a handful of widows and widowers occupied a dwelling alone; and only 117 people at most lived as unattached singles in boardinghouses, hotels, or with families. The 1850 census counted 442 residences and 463 families (including some families boarding as units). Eighty-eight families were English as defined by husband's country of birth, 162 Irish 73 German, 70 Welsh, 61 Pennsylvania-born, and of the nine others 2 were Scottish, 3 New Yorkers, and 4 New Jerseyites.

Whatever differences in economic opportunity, language, or religious persuasion may have been associated with ethnicity in St. Clair, all ethnic groups shared fundamentally the same kinship system in ideology and in practice, and this made possible a small but significant number of inter-ethnic marriages. Such differences as may have existed were slight in comparison with the contrast between these western European forms and

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the kinship systems of many non-European peoples. Minimally, the system emphasized three things: monogamous marriage; a residence pattern in which a married couple with children ordinarily occupied their own house, with perhaps a few widowed, ailing, or single relatives and paying boarders; and the maintenance over generations of a bilateral extended-family network. The U.S. census has been constructed as a household census and this fact tends to make difficult the recovery of information about extended families from census schedules. But from other sources—letters, diaries, church records, company books, newspapers, and so on—it is clear that for all social classes the bilateral extended family, reckoning marriage and descent through both males and females, was in this period crucially important in providing security for the ill, injured, aged, widowed, orphaned, or impoverished, and served as a network for the mobilization of capital for joint ventures, such as the purchase of real estate or investment in a business. The typical person's kindred included parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts, cousins, sons and daughters, nephews and nieces, and grandchildren, and their spouses and their children, and a congeries of other in-laws. Such a kindred could include dozens of adult individuals in one or more communities to whom a person could turn for support and assistance of various kinds—money, transportation, temporary housing and food, assistance in obtaining employment, and nursing care, to name a few. For working people, this network of kin was the primary social safety net; for those sick or unemployed who had no kin to help them, there was only an uncertain level of outside relief provided by church congregations, middle-class philanthropies, relief committees, unions, and benevolent associations. When hard times overwhelmed both the kinship network and private charity, there was only the poorhouse.

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The census records provide only a partial glimpse of the extended-family system in St. Clair, but it is an illuminating one. If we examine the list of Irish households, for instance, we find that 45 out of the 162 clearly stand in an extended-family relation with another Irish household. The evidence in most cases is the presence of two families with husbands of the same surname living next door to one another (as judged from having adjacent "order of visitation" numbers). For example, family number 2145 was

Michael McCollough	30	Laborer	Ireland (place of birth)
Catherine "	30		
Mary "	6		
Patrick "	1		

and family number 2146 was

Rodger McCollough	33	Laborer	Ireland (place of birth)
Mary "	32		"
Nancy "	10		"
John "	8		"
Patrick "	6		"
Edward "	2		"

It seems reasonable to infer that two brothers McCollough emigrated together from Ireland in 1849 or early 1850, came to St. Clair together, and rented houses side by side.

In some cases, other evidence, from such sources as biographical dictionaries, church records, property maps, or newspaper items, confirms and supplements the inferences from the 1850 census. And if one carries the analysis forward in time to 1880, the evolving picture of the extended families who remained in St. Clair becomes much more complete. Let us look at another Irish extended family, the Igo/Duffy connection, for whom there is more than census data. One of the histories of Schuylkill County contains the biography of a successful businessman named Daniel Duffy, who was born at Crow Hollow in 1853. His father, Martin Duffy, was born in Ireland and came to America in 1838. Along with Martin came his sister Mary and her husband, John Igo. They settled first in Vermont and then moved on to St. Clair in 1840, where the men both "followed the occupation of mining." Martin Duffy married in 1843 one Margaret Lacey, who had come over from Ireland in 1840 with her parents, two brothers, and a sister. The Duffys moved to Crow Hollow; the Igos remained in St. Clair.<sup>1</sup>

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Turning to the Igo side, we find that a number of Igos had arrived in St. Clair by 1850; in fact, no less than five Igo families are listed in the 1850 census. John Igo, age thirty-five, miner, and his wife, Mary (Martin Duffy's sister), had five children ranging in age from ten years to five months; the two eldest were born during the stay in Vermont. Next door

to John's was another Irish-born Igo family: Catherine, age fifty-four, and her two sons, John, twenty-four, and Patrick, twenty-three, both laborers. And two doors away from her lived William Igo, thirty-four, his wife, thirty-five, and two children, age six and three, both born in Pennsylvania, and also one Nancy Holden, sixty, who may have been William Igo's mother-in-law. This group of Igos lived in the eastern part of town. Two other Igo families lived in St. Clair in 1850. Thomas Igo lived on Third Street in the Irish section, where he and Patrick Igo had bought a lot in 1845. Patrick left by 1850, but Thomas prospered and by 1851, although only a laborer, owned a whole lot, three houses, and a cow. He died about 1860. Michael Igo, a miner, had with a partner bought a lot on Mill Street in 1847 and built a house. There is no evidence to connect Thomas and Michael with the other Igos.<sup>2</sup>

Martin Duffy and John Igo remained in the area until they died. Duffy and his family resided in Crow Hollow until 1868, when they moved back to St. Clair. He was, in the words of his biographer,

... a substantial citizen and was held in high esteem by all who knew him. He took an active and praiseworthy interest in all matters pertaining to the public welfare, was especially interested in educational matters, served as school director of East Norwegian township for several years, and was also a school director and tax collector in St. Clair borough.<sup>3</sup>

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He continued to work as a laborer in the mines and was finally killed by a fall of coal in John's Eagle Colliery in 1876 at the age of sixty-eight.<sup>4</sup> Of John Igo's fate we are less well informed. Starting out as a laborer, by 1860 he was a contract miner. In 1870, at the age of fifty-seven, he was still working in the mines, now as a laborer again.<sup>5</sup> His name does not appear in the 1880 census.

A similar pattern of extended-family migration and settlement appears in the records of other ethnic groups. Family biographies similar to the Irish cases can be assembled for the Welsh, the Germans, and the English. We may begin with Thomas Phillips, an "enterprising, money-making Welshman" who emigrated to the United States sometime before 1864. He may have been the same Thomas Phillips who lived in St. Clair in 1862, worked in a mine at Wadesville a mile away, and wrote an informative letter back home that has fortunately been reprinted in a collection of Welsh immigrant letters.<sup>6</sup> In any case, one Thomas Phillips acquired an

interest in a colliery at Summit Hill, in Carbon County, and became superintendent there. In 1864 he "succeeded to" a general store at Hyde Park, near Scranton, and appointed as manager a man named John Williams. By 1876 Phillips was worth about \$100,000. In that year, back at St. Clair, he came to the rescue of a "relative" named Daniel Williams, whose general store had failed. Phillips bought the stock at the sheriff's sale and transferred it to Christopher, Daniel's son, aged about twenty-three, who had been a clerk in his father's store. The credit-rating agency that reported on the transaction declared that the new business of Christopher Williams "will be safe with endorsement of Thomas Phillips."<sup>7</sup> Daniel Williams, his wife, and children (eventually, at least nine of them) had been living in St. Clair since 1860 at the latest, when the census listed him as a merchant. He had been born in Wales and emigrated to the United States about 1842. Evidently, a Phillips had married a Williams and the connection was traced through a woman.<sup>8</sup>

For a German case, we may take the Frantz connection; but this is in fact the only clear case in the 1850 records of a German extended family emigrating to America and settling together in St. Clair. About 1845 (to judge from the ages of children born in Pennsylvania) a man named Adam Frantz, fifty-nine, and his wife, Catherine, also fifty-nine, emigrated from Prussia along with four sons, Adam (thirty-five), Jacob (twenty-six), Valentine (twenty-five), and Christian (twenty-four). They jointly purchased a lot and built houses. By 1850 all the sons were married and had children, owned their own houses, and were occupied as miners. Jacob was elected to the borough council in 1850. The elder Adam and Catherine died between 1860 and 1870, aged seventy-four or greater. By 1870 two of the sons, Adam and Valentine, had also died; both widows lived separately in houses owned by themselves, Adam's relict, Mary, being supported by her three unmarried sons, laborers in the mines, and Valentine's Magdalena taking in boarders. Jacob and Christian continued to prosper. Jacob now was a miner who owned his own house in Johns' Patch at the north end of town, where he and his wife lived with two miner sons and an Irish girl employed as a domestic servant. Christian was the most prosperous of all, being the owner and operator of a small colliery west of town near Wadesville valued at \$15,000. In 1874 a Jacob Frantz (perhaps the older Jacob, perhaps his son, perhaps one of his two nephews) had his thigh

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broken and his body crushed by a fall of coal in Johns' Eagle Colliery. By 1880 all the brothers were gone and only one of old Adam's children, Jacob, and his wife and one son remained in St. Clair, together with one of the younger Jacobs and his family. Old Jacob, now sixty-one, was still working as a coal miner.<sup>9</sup>

Our last example is a complex cross-ethnic extended family involving English, Scots, Irish, and Welsh over at least three generations. The presence of the Tempest-Stephenson connection in St. Clair first becomes visible in the 1850 census, which lists a Joseph Tempest, miner, age thirty-eight, from England, as head of a household including his wife, Catherine, from Scotland, also thirty-eight, their five boys, all born in England except the last (aged one year), plus a twelve-year-old girl with a German name who was probably a servant, and a boarder, a miner from England. By 1860, after siring a daughter, Joseph had died and the widow Tempest was keeping a boardinghouse for coal miners which she owned in the south end of town. Her oldest son, Thomas, had gone off to Australia about 1859 and married an Irish woman named Bridget Mack. The rest of Mrs. Tempest's children, with the exception of the eldest, were living with her, the two older boys mining coal. She employed a Welsh servant girl; and about 1861 a second son, Joseph, married a Welsh girl. By 1866 or '67 Thomas had returned with his Irish wife and four children and in 1868 joined John Siney and twelve other miners, of varied ethnic backgrounds, to found the Workingmen's Benevolent Association.<sup>10</sup> In 1870 the family was considerably dispersed. The widow Catherine, now fifty-nine, had gone to live with an English coal miner, a forty-nine-year-old widower named William Stephenson who occupied a house across the street from her boardinghouse, along with his handicapped son, John, a mine laborer; Catherine's own daughter, Hannah, sixteen and now a schoolteacher; and a fifty-nine-year-old woman from Scotland named Elizabeth Phillips. Catherine's son James had married William Stephenson's daughter Maria, and it is tempting to speculate that the Scottish washerwoman was also a relative of hers or Stephenson's.

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During the '70's the Tempest brothers all had their own households. Four of the brothers were miners and one was the town constable. In October of 1870 Joseph was badly burned in gas explosions in the Wadesville Shaft.<sup>11</sup> And in 1874 James was recommended to the Pinkerton

detective in St. Clair (assigned to watch the miners' union for signs of terrorist activity) as a suitable "butty" when the spy began looking for work. The spy started to work as a laborer for James in the Wadesville Shaft, but was soon thrown out of work by James' going on a spree. They started again a week later, but James was injured by a fall of coal and the job lapsed again. The spy was finally put out of his job by James on account of James' "going to work with his brother." "Work is scarce now owing to partial suspension of the P. and R. mines," reported the spy.<sup>12</sup> The reader will note that loyalty to kin took priority over loyalty to an unrelated partner even though the partner was a member of the same union.

By 1880 all the Tempests had left St. Clair except the aging widow Catherine, who by now had married William Stephenson, and James' daughter Isabella, age nine, who lived with her grandmother and grandfather. William Stephenson, now fifty-nine, was still mining coal. The rest of the Tempests had moved to Shenandoah, a larger mining town about eight miles to the north. By then one of the brothers, Martin, the constable, and one of the wives, James' Maria, had died, and James had married his widowed sister-in-law Matilda and he and his son lived with her and her children. Brothers Thomas, Joseph, and Andrew had large families of seven or eight children. All four brothers were still coal miners and all the boys over ten years of age worked as slate pickers, mule drivers, or laborers.<sup>13</sup> One of these slate pickers, nine-year-old Henry ("Harry"), became a famous stage minstrel and an informant to folklorist George Korson.<sup>14</sup>

### **OTHER BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATIONS: ODD FELLOWS, SONS OF TEMPERANCE, AND MASONS**

Fraternal organizations supplemented the extended family as a source of aid to the individual household. These "secret" societies flourished in nineteenth-century America; with their exotic dress, degrees of status, and arcane rituals of initiation, they provided ordinary men (women were regularly excluded from all but auxiliaries) with an identity as a member of a great, hierarchical, international organization devoted to noble, if somewhat vague, moral principles such as brotherhood, loyalty, and charity. Most of the larger societies paraded in their livery on the Fourth of July and

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at other occasions of patriotic ceremony; the Odd Fellows of St. Clair, for instance, marched in white gloves and dark suits. Many sponsored subsidiary organizations devoted to causes, such as temperance, that were believed to lead to community improvement, and all provided aid to members and their relicts in distress.

In St. Clair the first lodge to be organized, and the only one in town in 1850, was Mineral Lodge No. 285 of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. Of the ten original members, two were illiterate miners from England and Wales, two were Pennsylvania-born blacksmiths, one was a prosperous carpenter, and one a clerk. The second-ranking officer of the lodge, Jacob Metz, the carpenter, was also the first president of the town council. Another member, John Seitzinger, a blacksmith by trade, was also a justice of the peace. Both Metz and Seitzinger belonged to large, local extended families. Clearly, it was a lodge for prosperous, respectable workingmen, for family men, for men who aspired to community betterment.<sup>1</sup>

The Independent Order of Odd Fellows has been referred to as "the poor man's Masonry," and indeed it would seem to have been patterned after the older secret society. Odd Fellowship was first organized in England in the eighteenth century and was brought to the United States in 1817 by a member of a Manchester lodge that had split from the parent organization in protest against the excessive "conviviality" of its meetings. The order flourished in America under the leadership of the English emigrant and by the time he died (in 1861) numbered more than 200,000 members in the United States. Like the Freemasons, the Odd Fellows had their secret passwords, grips and signs, and rituals of initiation. The initiate, after admission by ballot, was blindfolded and placed in chains while the members marched around the room; after his blindfold was removed, he was required to look at a human skeleton, illuminated by torchlight, and to meditate upon death. New members could rise to three higher degrees within the lodge, known as Friendship, Love, and Truth.<sup>2</sup>

The Miners' Journal saluted the Odd Fellows of Pennsylvania in a small article in October 1850, praising the society for its charitable works, which were "much greater than people imagine." During the year, the 404 lodges counted 38,193 members and accumulated aggregate dues of \$206,268. The principal benevolent activity of the order was to provide

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financial assistance to its members (aid had been extended to 5,748 "Brothers" to the amount of over \$75,000). Smaller amounts were paid to cover the funeral expenses of deceased Brothers (of the 350 members who had died, 308 were buried at the society's expense); widowed families received subventions, and some orphans were educated.<sup>3</sup> And the society also expended funds for the burial of non-members. This particular aspect of the society's commitment to community improvement was expressed in St. Clair in 1865, when the society bought four acres of land and established a public cemetery on the hill at the southwest end of town.<sup>4</sup>

The second secret fraternal order in St. Clair was the Mount Horeb Division of the Sons of Temperance. (Mount Horeb was the mountain of God in the desert of Sinai where Moses received the ten commandments.) The parent organization was founded in 1842 by men and women dedicated to reforming drunkards and dissuading the public from the use of alcohol. The Sons of Temperance too had their own secret rituals but were not as formal as most other fraternal organizations. In 1851 however a group split off from the Sons of Temperance, calling itself the Good Templars. Like the Odd Fellows, the Good Templars recognized three degrees-in their case, Heart, Charity, and Royal Virtue-and incorporated religious prayers and songs into their ritual.<sup>5</sup>

The Order of Free and Accepted Masons was the third fraternal organization to establish a lodge in St. Clair. Anthracite Lodge No 285 was founded in April 1854. Its charter members and first officers were for the most part members of the town's elite: colliery owner William Mimes who in 1853 had bought Hickory Slope from John Pinkerton; Charles Lawton building contractor, sawmill owner, and chief burgess; Theodore Thorne' a prosperous plasterer and landowner from New Jersey; George Stahl a German-born carpenter; John Geiger, operator of a sawmill (probably Mimes' or Lawton's); Jonathan Johnson, owner of the hotel where the better class of boarders lived; and William Littlehales, an English-born colliery superintendent. Mimes was the Worshipful Master and during official sessions of the lodge wore the emblem of the square symbolizing morality; Charles Lawton, Senior Warden, wore the level, symbolizing the equality of all Freemasons; and Theodore Thorne, the Junior Warden wore the plumb, signifying righteousness.<sup>6</sup>

European Freemasonry tended to be atheistic, anti-clerical conspiratorial, and revolutionary, and it was this reputation that led to the persecution of American Masonic lodges during the evangelical revival of the 1830's, when in fact some lodges admitted free-thinkers. By the 1850's, however, American Freemasonry had managed to combine its arcane symbols and rituals with a conservative social stance. Masons had to believe in God, an afterlife, and the Bible; they had to be male; they had to be free, white, and twenty-one. In addition to the already mentioned "jewels" worn by the officers, in the local lodges a number of other ritual objects were displayed, most representing a tool of the mason's craft, each symbolizing moral and spiritual principles. The three "great lights" were the Bible, signifying faith, truth, and hope; the Square, representing morality; and the Compass, standing for spirituality. The hooded initiate could not see the jewels; his temporary blindness was a lesson to the candidate that the senses cannot lead man to spiritual enlightenment and that worldly passions must be curbed. The altar was decorated with three "lesser lights," representations of the sun, the moon, and the Worshipful Master. The altar, a symbol of sacrifice, was supposed to express the Mason's surrender of self-interest (and candidates were not supposed to be motivated to join by hopes of pecuniary or social advantages to be obtained from membership). Over the altar was a canopy of clouds, through which an opening in a ladder reached to a starry firmament. This symbolized the wish of the Mason to reach heaven by ascending the ladder of degrees of perfection. Other symbols of the craft had analogous ritual uses and meanings. The white lambskin apron, which was worn at official functions and in which members were buried, bespoke purity and honor. The rope tied around the disrobed initiate's neck as he took the Masonic oath of the Entering Apprentice degree represented submission and fidelity to the order. (It was this secret oath, and the threat of terrible mutilations to follow if the member revealed Masonic secrets, that led many laymen to suspect the order and in Catholic eyes justified the Church for prohibiting membership. The Presbyterians, the Lutherans, and some other Protestant denominations also opposed Freemasonry.) The hood reminded the candidate of his former state of benighted ignorance before receiving the "light." The all-seeing eye (similar to the figure on the Great Seal of the United States) showed the Grand Architect's omniscience and his constant oversight of man's

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works. The acacia represented eternal life.

The Masons, perhaps more than the other orders, were a conspicuous public presence in any town that supported a Blue Lodge. At public holidays, whenever there was a procession—on the Fourth of July and New Year's Day, at the least—the marching units of the Masons joined with other orders, and with fire companies, the militia, and the brass bands. They strutted up and down the streets of the little towns, dressed in bright reds and yellows, greens and blues and purples, bearing the symbols of their order, and carrying large banners showing scenes symbolic of civic virtue and progress. In later years, Masons strove to erect a Masonic hall in every community, where, in addition to sessions of the order itself, all sorts of public meetings could be held, but in these early days in Pottsville and St. Clair they and other benevolent associations had to rent quarters in hotels, bank buildings, or the town hall.<sup>7</sup>

The benevolent activities of the Masonic order were not channeled as precisely as were the Odd Fellows' charities. The Masons took care of their own indigent, sick, aged, and dead too, but they also made ad hoc contributions to a variety of worthy causes. The founding members were men who could be expected to exert their energies toward the public good. We have noted who were the founders of the St. Clair Lodge; in the county seat, Pulaski Lodge No. 216, chartered in 1831, as one of the county histories put it, "included in its membership many of the best men in Pottsville." Captain Thomas J. Baird, Carey's brother-in-law and coal-lands agent, was one of the first members; other community leaders may be mentioned too—Andrew White, pioneer colliery operator; Judge Strange N. Palmer; the Rev. Daniel Washburn, rector of Trinity Episcopal Church; William Kendrick, colliery operator; Henry Russell, land agent for Carey, and so on. Chapters of the Scottish Rite enrolled, among others, William Mimes, Jr., son of the founder of the St. Clair Blue Lodge. The Odd Fellows of the region, not to be too brightly outshone by the Masons, over the years strove to improve their social standing. In commendation of Pottsville's Odd Fellows Lodge (instituted in 1829 and no doubt the lodge to which St. Clair's Odd Fellows repaired before founding their own in 1847) one of the county historians wrote in the 1880's: "From a membership composed mostly of miners at its inception, there are but three living members at present (1881) who are known to have followed that occupation."<sup>8</sup>

The lodges evidently functioned overtly as a kind of middle-class siphon-and-sprinkler system, absorbing dues and ceremonial charges from their members and disbursing them as benefits to their less fortunate members and as investments in improvement projects on behalf of the community as a whole. It cannot be doubted that the lodges also provided the opportunity, and the moral incentive, for an informal "old boy" network within the respectable Protestant community. This network acted as a kind of credit reference bureau for its members, as a clearinghouse for news of economic dangers and of opportunities for investment; membership, and especially membership in the advanced degrees of Masonry, was a testimonial to good character, as important as or more important than affiliation with a religious congregation.

But the obvious practical benefits of membership in this limited social-security system for artisans and businessmen do not entirely account for its form. In doctrine, symbolism, and ritual, the secret fraternal organizations, like the college fraternities growing up in America at the same time, evoked archetypal images. The rituals of initiation and of promotion to advanced degrees were rites of passage in a secret, hierarchical organization, a vast family, a network of adoptive kin into whose embrace the initiate was born during the dark night of initiation. It is difficult to estimate the proportion of the workingmen of St. Clair who in the 1850's belonged to one or another; to judge from the published accounts, it might be no more than 20 percent. Of the remainder, some could in principle expect to join, if they felt the need. But there were some who could never join, who were prohibited from joining by their Church, and most of these were the Irish, who needed help more than anyone else.

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### **TABERNACLES AND TAVERNS**

Mine workers had the reputation of being a hard-drinking lot, prone to boisterous singing and drunken brawling in the local saloons on Saturday night. Peter Lesley, the pious geologist, was distressed by the low morality, and particularly the fondness for alcohol, of the miners whom he first encountered in 1839 on his excursions into the mines near Pottsville.<sup>1</sup> But Eli Bowen of Mount Carbon, in his *Pictorial Sketch-Book of Pennsylvania* (published in 1852), made no mention of drunkenness as a problem in the

section on the "Moral Condition of Miners" and claimed that Pennsylvania miners were morally superior to miners of any other country:

They have abundance to eat, good clothes to wear, and *money* in their pockets. A more generous-hearted people, more devoted to their friends, and faithful to their domestic attachments, does not live.<sup>2</sup>

But Bowen was something of a chauvinistic booster of American industry and this rhetoric was prefatory to a condemnation of the English system of forcing women and girls to work half naked in the mines, debased in values, vulgar and obscene in language. The truth of the matter is that there were both drinkers and non-drinkers in St. Clair; the former patronized the hotels and saloons and bought beer and liquor to consume at home; and the latter went to the more severe Protestant chapels and the meetings of the Sons of Temperance and prayed for the salvation of their brethren.

Perhaps the most intensely devout among the church people were the Welsh—one might even say that they were devotedly contentious, for they were schismatic among themselves as well as apt to fall into angry disputes with "the Papists" over baptism (adult baptism by immersion vs. infant baptism by partial immersion). The first churches in St. Clair were built by Welsh miners: the Welsh Congregationalist in 1840 at the south end of town; the Welsh Calvinist at the north end in 1846; and the Welsh Baptist about 1847, a remodeled carpenter shop, replaced by a proper church building in the middle of town in 1853. To judge from the size of the congregations indicated in the local histories, they were prosperous churches and must have embraced most if not all of the Welsh-born population. Sermons were delivered and hymns were sung in Welsh; as late as the 1880's, both English and Welsh were used in the Sunday School.<sup>3</sup>

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After the raising of the Welsh churches, the other denominations quickly followed. The usual order of events was for a congregation to organize under the patronage of a Pottsville church and to hold its meetings in private houses or schools until it had sufficient members to pay for the purchase of a lot and the construction of a place of worship. The Primitive Methodist church was built in 1847; the Methodist Episcopal in 1849; St. Bonifacius Roman Catholic (for Germans) in 1852; and St. Mary's Roman Catholic (for Irish) in 1864.

The Primitive Methodists had the distinction of being, in America, not only a working-class church but the coal miners' special denomination.<sup>4</sup> Primitive Methodism had begun in England in the early years of the nineteenth century as a movement to bring back open-air preaching—what in America was called the camp meeting—to increasingly respectable pew-renting Methodist congregations. The established Methodists, convinced that more souls were conceived than saved at camp meetings, expelled the Primitive Methodists. Under the leadership of Hugh Bourne, and influenced by the field preaching of the American evangelist Lorenzo Dow, the Primitive Methodists flourished among the spiritually neglected working people of the Midlands, drawing them away from their traditional "paganistic" parish wakes, where all sorts of orgiastic excesses were alleged to occur. The first wave of English miners to emigrate to America included a number of Primitive Methodists and by 1829 the English Conference had resolved to "colonize" America. Missionaries, male and female, were sent over and a congregation was organized in St. Clair as early as 1831; it met in the old schoolhouse on Cemetery Hill, west of town. In 1845 and 1846, Hugh Bourne himself toured the American circuit and for a short time served as the designated minister to the congregation at St. Clair. St. Clair continued to hold one of the larger Primitive Methodist congregations and in 1850 took its turn as the site for the denomination's annual conference. These conferences, to which elected delegates were sent by the local congregations, assigned ministers to the various churches on a rotating basis, so that no one remained long in one place. The conference also approved the book of discipline, which, among other things, prescribed the minister's duties and daily schedule: seven hours sleep per night, six hours study per day, and eleven hours preaching, family visiting (twenty visits per week the maximum), and performing other pastoral duties, with meals squeezed in as opportunity arose. The minister's salary was on the order of a mine laborer's wage: unmarried male preachers got \$100 per year, unmarried females \$60, and married males \$260 per year plus a \$26 annual allowance for each child under fourteen. The affairs of the local congregation were managed by a board of trustees. The St. Clair board in 1852, for instance, appointed two men as a committee of ushers to maintain good order during services, "to keep the doors, and take up the cent collection, and keep out the dogs and babies, or keep them quiet."<sup>5</sup>

The local congregation also disciplined its members; in St. Clair in 1847 a certain sister was sentenced to "remain silent three months longer."<sup>6</sup> Ministers could and did intervene and adjudicate domestic disputes—for instance, persuading a nagging wife, who demanded that her temperate husband bring her a ration of beer each day from the grog shop, to join the ranks of the teetotalers.

Leadership among the Primitive Methodists did not usually come from the community's economic elite, but sometimes it did, as in the case of the Donaldsons at Tamaqua. Here the town's leading colliery operator was a Primitive Methodist; he provided land for the church and gave it his support until he was killed in a gas explosion in 1859. By and large, however, the ministers themselves were usually not formally educated in college or seminary; they were generally poor, plain-spoken, and zealous. In St. Clair a leading layman was William Yeo, an English miner who had come over during the 1840's, and who helped finance the purchase of the land for the 1847 church by buying half the lot from the church for \$100, with the stipulation that if he sold it for more than that amount, the balance would go to the church. The Carey group helped by selling the land at a reduced price. Yeo was also one of the ushers assigned to keep out babies and dogs and later served as a trustee. In the 1870's, when a new church was built (the foundation of the old one had been damaged by a mine cave-in), the Masons helped financially and the cornerstone was laid with Masonic ceremonies.

The religious style of Primitive Methodism was enthusiastic. Members of the congregation might spontaneously clap hands and ejaculate hallelujahs during the sermon. Conversions of the tempestuous sort were actively sought at periodic revivals where both male and female, black and white evangelists preached hellfire and redemption. The differences with established Methodism were not doctrinal. As the Reverend Dr. John H. Acomley, erstwhile minister at St. Clair, put it in his history of Primitive Methodism in America:

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The mission of Primitive Methodism is to all classes, but especially to the poor. Wherever hfe is thickest, wherever poverty is greatest, wherever sorrow is commonest, wherever crime is blackest, there she ought to be, telling of Jesus and His love

The grand old doctrines proclaimed with such earnestness and power by the fathers, she still continues to preach, and she is

never willing to tone down one atom of the truth.<sup>7</sup>

It was a church that conceived itself to be Methodist as John Wesley had intended it to be, essentially a church for workingmen and -women, egalitarian, inspired by song and spiritual drama. And, as in England, these characteristics would contribute to the milieu in which radical unionism began to develop in the later 1860's.<sup>8</sup>

The next congregation to form was the more conservative branch of Methodism: the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1848. Like the Primitive Methodists, the Episcopal Methodists were mostly English, but their principal sponsor was the Johns family, proprietors of the Eagle Colliery, who were among the first members and who were Welsh. The Sunday School was also organized by Thomas Johns. Besides the Johns, other early members included two carpenters, a clerk, a well-to-do merchant, two prosperous widows, two miners, and one Irish laborer—a "middle-class" congregation in St. Clair terms.<sup>9</sup>

The last of the denominations to establish themselves in St. Clair in the 1850's were all high churches. St. Bonifacius Roman Catholic Church was built in 1852 and dedicated in 1853 by Bishop Neuman. Its parish included not merely St. Clair borough but also neighboring New Castle, Norwegian, and East Norwegian townships, and it was intended specifically to provide for the religious needs of the many Catholic immigrants from the southern German states. The pastor spoke German and Latin but only broken English, if any English at all (to judge from his efforts to render English place names in Germanic syllables: e.g., "Wehtsvil" for Wadesville and "Kroholla" for Crow Hollow). Some Irish nevertheless attended mass presented infants for baptism, and claimed other ritual services at St. Bonifacius. In 1853, St. John's Reformed Church was organized to serve the needs of Protestant German immigrants and Pennsylvania German Lutherans in the area. As in the case of St. Bonifacius, the first pastor was German-born and German was, and remained for many years, the language in which services were conducted and records kept. It was a small congregation, numbering only fifty-five members in 1858, and grew slowly.<sup>10</sup> The last of the churches built in the 1850's was the Episcopalian Church of the Holy Apostles. The vestry was organized in 1848, largely in response to the efforts of Joseph Lawton, and Lawton also served as superintendent of the Sunday School. In addition to the Lawtons, the family

of Joseph Foster, a landowning miner from England, and Richard Coryell, M.D. (who would later marry a daughter of one of the Johns brothers), were among the first Episcopal families.<sup>11</sup>

But what of the Irish Catholics in St. Clair? Their religious needs were, in the 1850's and early '60's, somewhat neglected by the diocese. Although they formed the largest number of Catholics in the parish of St. Bonifacius, about 3,000 souls—far more numerous than the Germans—they were left without an English-speaking church with an Irish pastor for more than a decade, until St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church was built for them in 1864. In the meantime, they were expected to make use of St. Patrick's in Pottsville. This church had been established as early as 1828 and a cathedral had been completed in 1838. The pastors were Irish (Fitzpatrick, McCarty, Maginnis, Walsh . . .) and the congregation largely composed of the Irish miners and their families in Pottsville and the surrounding district. The few German Catholics in the area at that time were attended by a missionary from Reading, who held services for them in St. Patrick's, but, the arrangement proving to be unsatisfactory, a separate church for the Germans in Pottsville was established in 1840.<sup>12</sup> Although the Irish of St. Clair were welcome at St. Patrick's, it must have been inconvenient to trudge two or three miles over dirt roads, in all kinds of weather to get to a church with an Irish priest. A few families made do with the German pastor in St. Clair, calling on him for the administration of the necessary sacraments at birth, marriage, and death, but most did not. Many Irish families, one suspects, existed in a kind of religious limbo until 1864, considering themselves to be Catholic, and availing themselves of the indispensable sacraments at times of life crisis, but identifying themselves with no congregation and falling outside the pale of parish financial support. The separation of the Irish from the German congregation of St. Bonifacius did not end with death: Irish and German bodies were buried in separate parts of the graveyard, separated by a low stone wall. [164]

But the Irish—or at least Irish men—could avail themselves of another, strangely parallel set of institutions that catered to the spiritual and social needs of the community: the taverns and other drinking places. It is perhaps not a coincidence that the terms "tabernacle" and "tavern" have the same Latin root. But probably to most of the residents of St. Clair, to

speak of the House of God as comparable to the Den of Iniquity, to place the Lord and Lucifer in the same category, would have seemed blasphemous. And yet the very zeal with which temperance men and women attacked these resorts of Satan suggests that the tavern was viewed as an institution of great power, a dangerous competitor. For both tavern and tabernacle were places where men raised their voices in song; both administered the same beverage as sacrament.

Early in the town's history, it was realized by virtually everyone that liquor was a dangerous article in the collieries, where a drunken man's accident might bring death and destruction to all. At the Pine Forest Colliery and the Mill Creek Colliery, a couple of miles south of St. Clair, in 1851, Snyder and Milnes prohibited liquor and Parvin did the same at his slope shortly thereafter. The *Miners' Journal* was delighted:

No liquor is allowed to be used on the premises. It is stipulated with every man who engages at these collieries, that he must remain sober or lose his situation. The consequence is a different state of affairs exists here from that about those collieries where the use of liquor is unrestricted. The workmen attend punctually to their business, they do more labor, save their pay and render their families comfortable and happy, by judiciously expending it for their benefit, instead of squandering it foolishly in dissipation. Their houses are neat and clean—their furniture though scanty, nevertheless in good order, and everybody exhibits the wonderful difference between the condition of collieries where rum is and where it is not.

Where rum "is," the *Miners' Journal* observed, there are "scenes of riot and disorder—quarreling, and sometimes blood-shed."<sup>13</sup> And soon the use or sale of liquor around a colliery was universally grounds for dismissal.

The six taverns of St. Clair in 1850 had much in common. All were substantial establishments, the ground level containing, in addition to a bar and tables for drinkers, a dining room and (usually) meeting rooms, some of them large enough to be called "hall"; upstairs there were bedrooms for visitors and permanent residents. They were, in fact, hotels, and provided a multitude of functions, only one of which was the serving of alcoholic beverages. Another feature shared by the taverns was location in relation to the churches. All of the taverns were located west of First Street (down which coursed Mill Creek); all of the churches stood east of First Street, which thus served as a kind of spiritual meridian. Not surprisingly,

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the new school (built in 1847) stood on the east side, and so did the Johns and Lawton mansions. Curiously enough, all of the hotel buildings have survived; this cannot be said for all of the churches, the school, or the Lawton mansion.

The oldest tavern was the Cross Keys, which went back to 1829, when the work crews building the tunnel for the Danville and Pottsville Railway required temporary quarters. A two-story, mansard-roofed structure at the corner of Third and Hancock, then the main road through the town, it was occupied by the proprietor, Daniel Frack, and his wife and three children, all five Pennsylvania-born. Four other people lived there: a sixteen-year-old girl, who probably worked as a domestic servant; a male laborer, who probably was a paying guest; a young man of twenty-four, a painter, and his nine-month-old daughter, no doubt also paying guests. (Who was nursing the baby is not clear.) Daniel Frack moved on a few years later to found Frackville, another coal town, north of the mountains about five miles away.

Five other hotels were built in the years when St. Clair was being developed by the Carey interests, between 1843 and 1850. They were all on the new, wide main street, Second Street, and three stood in the north end of town where the stores and artisans' shops clustered. In 1850, in the north end, the landlords were Jonathan Johnson, Mark Shirk, and John Betz. Johnson's hotel was occupied by New Jersey-born Johnson and his Pennsylvania-born family plus five male boarders, one of them the town's leading physician, Richard Coryell. Johnson's place was a brick, two-story, mansard-roofed corner building. Two blocks to the south on Second, facing each other on opposite corners of Carroll, stood the hotels maintained by John Betz and Mark Shirk, who, like Frack and Johnson, lived with their families on the premises. Shirk's hotel had the distinction of being the first voting place in St. Clair. Shirk had seven guests, and Betz four. Betz and his wife were German-born and so were all of their guests except a two-year-old child living there with her father, who, like the other residents, was a miner. Shirk and his family were Pennsylvanians.

At the south end of town there would soon be two more hotels. The one at Second and Patterson had just been built and had no guests when the census enumerator arrived; its proprietor was an Englishman, James Wood, who occupied the building with his wife, two sons (both miners),

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and four daughters. He had lived in this country for about eight years. And, finally, just beyond the south borough line on the road to Mill Creek and Port Carbon would be built, within a couple of years, the establishment of twenty-nine-year-old, Irish-born Martin Dormer and thirty-three-year-old, Irish-born Thomas Canfield. The Dormer-Canfield place was a large brick building, located in virtually perpetual shade on the downhill corner of the intersection, and included a "saloon" in addition to the usual attached hotel, and a brewery; on the hillside across the street. Dormer later laid out Dormer's Park, a grove where groups could rent space for picnics, concerts, dances, and other entertainments. Dormer's hotel would later become notorious in St. Clair as a reputed hangout of the Molly Maguires, who allegedly met there on their travels between Port Carbon and Shenandoah. Martin Dormer's older brother Patrick, who operated a hotel in Pottsville in the 1870's (soon moving back to St. Clair to manage the hotel there), would figure prominently in the testimony of the Pinkerton detective James McParlan at the trials of the accused Mollies. The Dormer brothers in the 1850's were young pillars of the community—members of the St. Bonifacius congregation and public servants, Martin serving for a time as the postmaster of St. Clair, and Patrick as county commissioner.<sup>14</sup>

Indeed, if we look over the "taverns" and "hotels" of St. Clair in 1850, we do not find them to be rip-roaring saloons. Rather, they appear to have been more on the order of boardinghouses where a respectable resident family cared for permanent guests, mostly temporarily unattached males and females or widowers with children. In two instances (Johnson and Shirk) the male residents were all professional persons, merchants, or tradesmen; Daniel Frack's male boarders were a painter and a laborer. In the case of the German-born proprietor, the guests were German-born miners. But the Dormer-Canfield place was another story. At the beginning Dormer owned and operated the brewery and Canfield the hotel and saloon. Canfield, however, was by trade a canal boatman, often absent from home, and during his absences his wife, Catherine, managed the saloon and hotel. Their tavern did not conform to the pattern of the quiet, respectable inn. Being just outside the borough line, it was safe from the local magistrate's jurisdiction, but not from the county's, and in 1856 Catherine Canfield was prosecuted by the district attorney and convicted of keeping a "disorderly house."<sup>15</sup> The boardinghouse hotels remained in

St. Clair as places of respectable residence and refreshment. But saloons gradually became more common. By 1876 there would be twenty-one drinking places self-styled as "saloons" in the town directory, in addition to thirteen "hotels." The population had merely doubled since 1850, but the number of liquor-dispensing establishments had increased five times.

But the Canfield conviction reminds us that there was still a third kind of drinking place: the so-called "disorderly house." The "disorderly house" was invariably kept by a woman (although the property owner might be her husband) and at late hours provided "nice young men" with drinks and the social services of a small bevy of female boarders. "Disorderly house" was in fact the legal euphemism for brothel. In 1851 there were two establishments in St. Clair that came to the attention of the county court of quarter sessions. Charles Lawton, chief burgess, made the complaints. The first case was brought against Mary Sitler.

Witness testified to the "general character of the house" and some "swore positively" that they heard dancing and fiddling tunes, at all hours of the night, that at these times they saw the girls fighting, pulling hair, and drinking spirits, and some of the nice young men stated that they remained there courting the ladies until the small hours of the morning.

The evidence, although sufficient to convict Mrs. Sitler of keeping a "tippling house" (an offense not mentioned in the indictment), was not conclusive on the "disorderly house" charge and she was acquitted by the jury. The judge warned her to expect a different verdict the next time. Not so fortunate was Jenkin Edwards. Edwards suffered from a "personal infirmity" (whose nature was not specified in the newspaper account) that made him an object of sympathy to the jury. "Poor Jenkin," averred the *Miners' Journal*, "is but a cypher in his own house, consequently many honest persons wished the wife was only placed in his position." The evidence in this case was stronger and "poor Jenkin" pleaded guilty, was assessed a minimal fine of \$5, and, in want of the money, and his wife failing to assist him, was hustled off to jail. And at the same session Mrs. Elizabeth Parry of Pottsville was also convicted of keeping "a disorderly and tippling house" and fined \$50. "She boarded several ladies who gave Social Cotillion Parties, which adjourned at three or four o'clock, a.m., and sometimes at day break."<sup>16</sup>

## A PLACE OF SONG

St. Clair had no opera house (although there was one in Pottsville), but its residents made it a place of song nevertheless. English miners had their own traditional genre, the "collier's rant," which was quickly taken up by immigrant miners of all descriptions and became known as the "the miner's ballad." The devout Protestants sang hymns. The Primitive Methodists in particular brought from English fields and chapels the practice of loud singing of newly composed hymns set to popular tunes.<sup>1</sup> The Welsh had their own high tradition of bardic composition and minstrelsy and they applied these skills not only to the local eisteddfod or music fair, where prizes were awarded the most skilled musicians and composers, but also to hymn singing in their own churches. The Germans gathered in St. Bonifacius to hear music played on an organ made (after his arrival in 1855) by St. Clair's own resident organ builder, Maurus Oestreich; a chorus of parishioners no doubt sang Gregorian chants from the loft that looked down over the pews stretching from wall to wall between the stained-glass windows. The Odd Fellows had their own special odes and hymns in honor of their departed dead and in celebration of their values ("Truth," "Faith," "Wisdom"), which they sang in their own hall and on public occasions.. The schoolchildren sang their school lessons and even the stage driver set off in the morning bellowing his own chanty.<sup>2</sup>

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But much of the music was neither private nor sacred. Of special importance were the parades that formed part of the celebration of each event in the annual calendar of public ceremonies. Some parades were performed by special groups, such as the benevolent associations and the militia, for the entertainment and edification of the local community, on dates of special importance to the group itself (such as the anniversary of the death in 1861 of Thomas Wildey, founder of the American Odd Fellows). But there were also the celebrations of the community in general, such as New Year's and (later on) the Fourth of July, and on these days the marching units of the various orders joined with local brass bands playing marches and rousing popular tunes. They paraded through St. Clair, Port Carbon, Wadesville, Mount Laffee, and all the other little towns and patches, and wound up marching down Centre Street in Pottsville amid cheering crowds of onlookers lining the streets. On these occasions the uniformed, or at least regalia-wearing, marching units of various St. Clan-

organizations—the local militia company, known as the Wetherill Rifles, the Odd Fellows, the Masons, the Sons of Temperance, the German and Hibernian benevolent societies, and eventually the volunteer fire companies—would merge with their peers in the general procession, each, however, preserving its own identity in the line of march. Thus, for example, in Pottsville on the Fourth of July in 1855, the order of parade numbered thirty-three units, civil and military, and included no less than five brass bands.<sup>3</sup>

It is not the blizzard of sound created by brass bands, psalm singers, and chanting schoolchildren that has attracted the special interest of observers, however, but rather the songs and ballads of the miners, sung in the mines, in barrooms and saloons, on the steps of the general store, and on the green in remote patches, by mining men and their women and children. These ballads are now best known through the works of George Korson, a Pottsville newspaper reporter who in the 1920's recorded, preserved, and published in a series of books and phonograph records a collection of dozens of the genre. Two of the principal "minstrels of the mine patch" whose compositions were published in Korson's books came from the St. Clair area: William Keating from Oak Hill near Mount Laffee, in whose mines men from St. Clair worked, and Harry Tempest, who spent his early boyhood in St. Clair before moving to Shenandoah. Their songs and ballads were dedicated to bar owners and their working-class patrons, and they celebrated the amoral realities of the miner's life, funny or tragic. The boyish-looking William Keating sang songs that evoked tears and laughter because, in a mood mellowed by beer and whiskey, they recalled familiar scenes, personalities, and events. Social criticism was muted; the theme was the silliness of risk, the randomness of tragedy, the irrelevance of disaster to the miner's love of home and family. Growing out of Keating's experiences as a mule driver at Wadesville, his ballad "The Driver Boys of Wadesville Shaft" is typical of the genre. As published by Korson, there are innumerable stanzas detailing the pranks and exploits of a group of mad-cap mule drivers (some of them undoubtedly boys from St. Clair, half a mile away); only a small selection can be presented here:

The driver boys and the stable boss,  
From my song should learn a lesson,  
And now I'll begin with the bottom men.

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For some of them needs a dressin'.  
 There's easy-going, fat Jack Betzs.  
 Jack jokes and loafers all day,  
 While old "Dutch" Hen is humpty-backed  
 Pushin' cars from the cage away. . . .  
 "The breaker is waiting"; this won't pay,  
 Move those empties," Betzs will shout.  
 Then Dutch Hen will say in his dutchified way,  
 "Be der Lawd Kyist der twack is blocked out!"<sup>4</sup>

It is worth noting that Keating repeatedly draws attention to the economic and human cost of inefficiency. Henry Flynn, the mule driver; Willie Brennan and Bossy Donnaghan, the stable boys; Matt Reddington and Dutch Hen, the boys who push cars on and off the elevator—are all described as contributing to the colliery's failure to make money. Flynn is lazy; Brennan and Donnaghan are afraid of the mules; Matt Reddington drops a coupling on Dutch Hen's foot.

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As early as the 1870's, miners' ballads became popular in music halls in the larger cities. Some of the most successful songs were written for the stage, including "Down in a Coal Mine," probably the most widely known of all the ballads, and well liked in the anthracite region despite its literary origin; even the ladies sang "Down in a Coal Mine" as they promenaded on St. Clair's Second Street of an evening. It begins as follows:

I am a jovial collier lad,  
 and blithe as blithe can be,  
 For let the times be good or bad  
 they're all the same to me:  
 Tis little of the world I know  
 and care less for its ways,  
 For where the dog star never glows,  
 I wear away my days.

(Chorus)

Down in a coal mine, underneath the ground,  
 Where a gleam of sunshine never can be found;  
 Digging dusky diamonds all the season round,  
 Down in a coal mine, underneath the ground.<sup>5</sup>

And in the 1890's Harry Tempest from St. Clair sang "White Slave of the Mine" in Daniel L. Hart's play *Underground*. Dan Hart was mayor of Wilkes-Barre and Sam Boyd, composer of the song, was a Wilkes-Barre newspaperman.

I'm a little collier lad,  
 Hardworking all the day,

From early morn til late at night  
No time have I to play.  
Down in the bowels of the earth  
Where no bright sun rays shine,

You'll find me busy at my work, [171]  
A white slave of the mine.<sup>6</sup>

As the anthracite ballads circulated in the mass media, a selection for pathos seems to have occurred as the nation became increasingly aware of the need for industrial reform. But pathos in the mass media was complemented by the ribaldry of some of the songs sung in the saloons. Only bowdlerized and truncated fragments remain; of these, the best known are the few lines printed by Korson:

My sweetheart's the mule in the mines,  
I drive her without reins or lines,  
On the bumper I sit,  
I chew and I spit,  
All over my sweetheart's behind.

### **THE OLD COUNTRY IN THE NEW WORLD**

Most of St. Clair's residents in 1850 and for many years thereafter were either born in Europe or, if born in the United States, brought up by foreign-born parents. Those immigrant families brought with them important parts of the ways of life in their lands of origin. Consequently, St. Clair in the early days was a patchwork of ethnic groups stitched together by the common culture of the coal region that all immigrant groups shared.

This common culture included a virtually universal technology and material culture. Central to the economy was a modified form of the standard British coal-mining technology, knowledge of which was brought over by experienced English, Welsh, and Scottish miners, supplemented by imported English manuals on such subjects as pumps, ventilation, plans of working, methods of sinking, etc.

Members of all ethnic groups soon learned the map of the regional organization: that is, the physical layout of canals, roads, and railroads that joined the mines, the mine patches, the mining towns, the regional centers, and the county seat, and the corresponding economic and political network that managed the whole system and connected it with markets and competing coal regions and centers of money and political power, in

Philadelphia and New York, in Mauch Chunk and Wilkes-Barre, and in Harrisburg and Washington. They all traveled the same roads, rode the same trains, and, once naturalized (and sometimes when not), voted in the same elections. They all knew the social roles and ranks of miners, labor- [172]  
ers, engineers, lawyers, mine operators, coal agents, landowners, and railroad and canal officials. They all recognized that there were great inequalities of wealth and power, and, being European in origin, undoubtedly saw a clear-cut class structure. But undoubtedly they also believed that some working people, or their children, would climb the ladder of success.

All ethnic groups, as we observed earlier, shared fundamentally the same kinship system in ideology and in practice. This made possible a small but significant number of inter-ethnic marriages, at least thirteen in St. Clair by 1850, that take on an added importance when one recognizes that any such marriage made possible a widely ramifying network of economic alliances between members of two ethnic communities. The most common of these inter-ethnic unions involved an English-and-Welsh couple: in six instances a Welsh husband and an English wife, in two the reverse. There were two Irish cases: a Welsh man and an Irish woman and an Irish man and an English woman.<sup>1</sup>

For practical purposes, the English language was also a part of the shared culture. Many Welsh and German families continued to speak in their native tongue at home and among fellow ethnics in the street, there were Welsh and German newspapers in Pottsville, and church services were for years conducted in Welsh and German; nevertheless, the language of the schools, of government, and of business was English. A minimal facility in English—however modified by Old Country dialect, in the case of Irish brogue, or by marginal fluency, in the case of the newly arrived Germans—was necessary for getting along. Some immigrants, like Maurus Oestreich, the organ builder, insisted on the use of English by all the family even at home.<sup>2</sup>

The religious differences were, so far as one can tell, more conspicuous than important to working people, certainly less threatening to them than to the more evangelistic middle-class businessmen. Welsh Baptists might deeply deplore the failure of the Catholics to practice adult baptism by total immersion; the Protestants generally suspected the Papacy of dark plots against religious freedom. But, in a practical sort of way, the congre-

gations of the different denominations got along well. There were no riots; no churches were set afire; all the pastors agreed on the importance of temperance, even though some were teetotalers and some were not. And good people were recognized, whatever their faith: when Maurus Oestreich's Catholic wife died, one of the Protestant ministers praised her from the pulpit as a "good woman." a gesture gratefully remembered by her descendants. One suspects that a general ethic of ethnic tolerance was promulgated in the community as a necessary condition of getting along.

Such an attitude of good-natured tolerance of alien ways certainly was applied to some of the more superficial differences between those of different national origin. Games and entertainment are an example. Foot-races and boxing matches were a universal pastime, and whole mines emptied out when Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show came to Pottsville. Beginning in 1858, cricket teams were organized in the various towns and competed in the summer on a regular schedule. St. Clair had its cricket club, along with Pottsville, Port Carbon, Schuylkill Haven, Wadesville, Tamaqua, and other places as well. Some of these cricket clubs tended to be middle class in membership and included some of the best-known names in the participating communities: Colonel John Macomb Wetherill; Harry, the son of George W. Snyder; James Bannan; Charles Lawton; Henry Pleasants, the mining engineer; Carey's agent, Henry Russell; two sons of E. W. McGinness, Daniel and Theodore (who made an 800-foot hit, the longest ever recorded in Pottsville!). Pottsville teams even traveled to Philadelphia to meet the players of the renowned Germantown Cricket Club. The popularity of the game was not confined to lawyers, financiers, and mine operators, however; working people also played and teams were organized by fire companies, machine-shop employees, and miners. Baseball was introduced after the Civil War, however, and in the 1880's the interest in cricket began to wither away.<sup>3</sup>

English and Irish workers also introduced one of the Old Country blood sports, cockfighting. A cockfight was reported in St. Clair as late as 1874, with an audience of miners, and gamecocks were bred especially for the pit.<sup>4</sup> But betting on cockfights was hardly a respectable middle-class recreation in nineteenth-century St. Clair and, in fact, the Pinkerton reports and testimony are the only evidence of its existence there. The Irish union leader John Siney, when met at a cockfight, felt it necessary to

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explain that he did not keep birds himself and was merely a spectator.<sup>5</sup> Such a form of amusement would not have appealed to many religious workingmen either, who, like the German Maurus Oestreich, preferred to engage in family singing and to take the children to the circus when it came to town.

Food preferences also gave occasion for amused and critical commentary. One mildly annoyed Welshman complained about an Irish neighbor's love for potatoes in a letter to a newspaper back home:

I know a man from near Merthur who is laboring for an Irishman in these works and, from his appearance, I suspect that he did nothing but plant and pull up potatoes before coming to this country. This old sinner lives near where I stay and he thinks so much of the potatoes that one gets no peace from him even on the Lord's Day and he is continually busy with his hoe and his rake.<sup>6</sup>

The Irish in turn patronizingly referred to the Welsh as "soup drinkers" and no doubt some commented disparagingly on the English taste for mutton.

Cultural differences such as these could be expected gradually to fade as neighbor ladies borrowed recipes and miners and laborers watched each other's games, joined in each other's songs, and in the spring watched each other march on their national saint's days, the Welsh in honor of St. David and the Irish of St. Patrick. But there was a domain of cultural difference among the four national groups that would prove to be significant later on, and would, indeed, contribute to the Molly Maguire confrontations between Irish and Welsh street gangs and between all of these and English, Welsh, and German mine managers, local police, and the military. And these troubles, in turn, made it easier in the 1870's for the Reading Company to purchase 80 percent of the Schuylkill coal lands and to suppress, temporarily, the miners' union. These crucial cultural differences had to do with traditional conceptions of legitimate authority and of acceptable subordination, and of citizens' privileges and responsibilities, that the several ethnic groups brought with them to the United States from their European communities of origin.

The German immigrants came mostly from the principalities in the southern and eastern parts of the country—Bavaria, Alsace, Rheinbayern, Hesse, Saxony. Germans were mostly town dwellers, even the peasant farmers, accustomed to life in ancient villages and small cities, often walled,

that went back to medieval and even Roman times. It is difficult to generalize about Germany prior to the unification under Bismarck, for the country was divided not only politically among its principalities, but also regionally in religion and language; as the anthropologist Robert Lowie has put it, the old Germany suffered from an unrestrained parochialism of the sort "that recognizes no kinship or solidarity beyond the range of the village church bell." Nonetheless, within the walls, the social structure was extremely tight. Minute distinctions of rank governed social relations, even in the smaller towns, where a vestigial guild system still controlled craft specialization and ranked artisans as apprentices, journeymen, and masters, and where farm workers were separated into hierarchical categories, with the rich landowning farmer at the top, descending through successive levels of hired help to the illegitimate swillery maid and cow girl at the bottom. A myriad of regulations by church fathers, town councils, and princely courts governed daily life and movement, and courts and [175] lawyers adjudicated numerous petty disputes. Conscription into the army was a common fate of the young men.<sup>7</sup>

Broadly speaking, then, St. Clair's German immigrants of the 1840's and '50's came from the least-industrialized, predominantly Catholic part of the country. They were used to life in small towns rather than on remote country farms; and they were accustomed, if not to working the land, to getting a living as artisans and shopkeepers. In addition to the extended family, strong loyalty was focused on the village itself. And, most important for their mode of adaptation in America, they were accustomed to submit, albeit with grumbling, to the network of governmental bodies that regulated the town's affairs. They were pre-industrial peasants and artisans, but they were accustomed to civic and economic discipline.

When Germans came to the St. Clair area, they tended to seek out, or re-create, life situations for themselves that initially perpetuated this European past. Thus the Germans living in the St. Clair area squeezed into the town. Including both the borough and the patches in New Castle and East Norwegian townships, there were fifty-seven German households, and forty-nine of these resided in the town; the eight others were all located in Crow Hollow, the nearest of the patches to St. Clair. Furthermore, the Germans in 1850 were far more likely to be tradesmen than the Irish: of ninety-one employed adult German immigrant males, fifteen (or

16 percent) were artisans and shopkeepers. Among the 362 Irish workers, only fourteen (or 4 percent) practiced a trade.<sup>8</sup>

Something of the burgher quality of the ideal German lifestyle in St. Clair is revealed in the family history of the Oestreichs. A family of cabinetmakers and organ builders, the Oestreichs had lived for generations in the small town of Oberbimbach, near Fulda, in Hesse. Maurus, the progenitor of the St. Clair Oestreichs, emigrated from Germany in 1855 as a youth of nineteen in order to avoid conscription. Other members of his family also came to the United States in the following decade, but none of them settled in St. Clair. Maurus established himself as a carpenter, married Katherine Anschutz, a German girl from Crow Hollow, and proceeded to raise a family and to prosper. He built the organ for St. Bonifacius and other Catholic churches in Pottsville and the surrounding towns, and he built and repaired church furniture, such as altars and crucifixes. But he made his fortune by turning his skills in carpentry to use as a contractor for the construction of coal breakers. He believed firmly in the importance of conforming to the requirements of life in a new country, and to that end, after St. Mary's was built, he encouraged some of the family to switch to the Irish parish. At least one of his boys married an Irish girl. When the Civil War came, he volunteered and fought through to the end; after the war he became a leader in the veterans' organization (the Grand Army of the Republic) and gave speeches on Memorial Day. A strong believer in education (he is said to have briefly attended a university in Germany), he sent his son to the University of Pennsylvania, where he earned his M.D.

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While her husband was pursuing his successful career, his wife was busy with domestic matters. In addition to bearing and raising ten children, Katherine kept the house on North Second Street in a typically German style. The family lived mostly in the kitchen and dining room on the first floor, with open curtains and flowers on the windowsill facing the sidewalk, beside the bicycle shop and hardware store at the front (where Mrs. Oestreich sold ice cream). The "parlor" above was reserved for Sundays; on all other days its door was closed and the shades were drawn. A prudent woman, when her daughters' dresses were worn out, she ripped the seams, turned them inside out, and re sewed them on the reverse side. And she required her sons, once a week, to scrub down by hand the brick paving in the back yard and alley in order to remove the "slippery green-

ness." But Mrs. Oestreich (the "good woman" of the pastor's encomium) also had a professional career of her own as a midwife and curer; on Sundays her husband drove her around the town and out to the mine patches, visiting the sick and bringing them food delicacies and herbal concoctions.<sup>9</sup>

Maurus Oestreich, and other Germans like him, had come from an essentially pre-industrial burgher society whose social ambience emphasized rank and duty and strong local loyalty. These values made entry into the formal economic and political order of the new country relatively easy. The transition from pre-industrial tradesman, building organs and altars, to industrial contractor raising up coal breakers was accomplished with little difficulty in Oestreich's case; and these same values no doubt made it possible for German mine workers to graduate in a short time from underground jobs to surface trades. The closest the Oestreichs' children came to participation in the ranks of industrial labor was working as breaker boys in their youth. They hated it; the acid water on the coal, they complained, made their hands red and sore.

But for two of the other ethnic groups—the English and the Welsh—the transition from the pre-industrial to the industrial world had already been accomplished. The vast majority of these British immigrants came from the mining districts of South Wales and the north of England—Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Durham—where the Industrial Revolution had proceeded farther than anywhere else in the world. The English in particular, as their forest fuels became scarce, had been engaged in the intensive mining of coal since the sixteenth century. By the eighteenth century, English coal miners had developed a specialized subculture of their own, often compared for its uniqueness to the customary lifestyle of English sailors. The typical English miners lived a somewhat isolated existence in mining villages that huddled about the pits (the prototype of the American mine "patch"). In the eighteenth century, before the great expansion in the market for coal and the consequent increase in the size and impersonality of colliery operations, the relations between masters (many of them lords of the realm) and pitmen were ordered by traditional rules determining wage rates, the right of the miner to a minimum income averaging fourteen or fifteen shillings a week through the year whether "the works went on or not," work hours, house rents, free coal, fines for

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sending up dirty coal, and so forth; magistrates enforced these traditional understandings. The village and its colliery constituted a social and economic unit comparable to a plantation. Among the workers, there existed a clear hierarchy, with the miners who worked at the face of the coal, the "hewers," at the top, and the "putters," the inexperienced men and boys and girls and women who pushed the trams loaded with the corves (baskets) of coal along the rails, at the bottom. Young recruits to the mine were subjected to initiation rites that were apt to involve decorating the genitals with grease and coal dust, symbolizing subordinate rank in the colliery's pecking order. Adult male miners were sometimes able to earn more than mere subsistence wages, and spent some of it, of course, on drinking, gambling, and attendance at the bloodier spectator sports such as bull-baiting and cockfights.<sup>10</sup> But there were other traditional modes of displaying one's success. One was the purchase of large and expensive carved mahogany furniture—bedsteads, chests of drawers, and chairs—that graced the clean, bare interiors of humble miners' dwellings. And another mode of conspicuous consumption was the wearing by pitmen, on holidays or on visits to the larger towns like Newcastle, of a gaudy livery characteristic of the mining district where the pitman was employed. The prosperous miner in the Newcastle area, for instance, affected a flowery display (an irony perhaps reflected, in the St. Clair area, in the names given to veins and localities, like "the Flowery Field" and "the Primrose Vein"). An early nineteenth-century observer, John Holland, recorded the dress the pitmen on holiday in Newcastle-upon-Tyne "formerly" wore:

Their holiday waistcoats, called by them Posey Jackets, were frequently of very curious patterns, displaying flowers of various dyes: Their stockings mostly of blue, purple, pink, or mixed colors. A great part of them used to have their hair very long, which on work-days was either tied in a queue, or rolled up in curls; but when drest in their best attire, it was commonly spread over their shoulders. Some of them wore two or three narrow ribbands round their hats, placed at equal distances, in which it was customary with them to insert one or more bunches of primroses or other flowers.<sup>11</sup>

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In Staffordshire, on the other hand, it was shiny buttons rather than flowers:

Their working dress consists of trowsers and tunic of flannel; but their holiday clothes are generally of velveteen, rather profusely decorated with shining metal buttons: like their Newcastle brethren, they pique themselves on their garters, which are of worsted.

very gay in colour, and so tied on that a great part as if by accident, appears, below the knee.<sup>12</sup>

And there were other features noted by Holland that express a well-established miners' culture in England: a custom of substituting opprobrious nicknames for legal names, not only in address but in reference; and the prevalence of miners' drinking songs and ballads—the "colliers rant"—very similar to the ones recorded by Korson.

But the semifeudal paternalistic relations between masters and workers was breaking down as English coal mines became deeper, bigger, and more dangerous. Before 1840 the typical British colliery employed fewer than fifty men. and even in the north, in Durham and Northumberland, the best-developed coal region in the kingdom, there were only twenty pits that employed more than 200. But in twenty years 200 men became an average figure. The deeper the colliery, the more extensive were the workings and the more difficult the problems of drainage and ventilation. The variations in the market cycle alternately depressed and raised wages as production slowed down and speeded up. To protect their interests, and to stabilize relations in the old mode, miners began to petition and even to strike, but strikes were met with violence and the importation of strike-breakers, often from distant parts such as Ireland, Scotland, or Wales. Unions were still treated by the courts as illegal combinations, but the masters encouraged their employees to organize benefit societies that insured miners against loss of wages as a result of accident and paid burial expenses. And, of course, the Primitive Methodists were encouraging miners to see themselves less as feudal retainers of the mine owner and more as God-fearing, respectable, and educated (or at least educable) citizens.<sup>13</sup>

Thus it was from a context of economic change that English miners were coming to the United States in the 1830's and '40's. They were men (and women) used to industrial discipline: early rising, specialization of labor, strict measurement of output, access to "privileges" (such as housing and fuel) conditional upon continued employment, a measure of collective responsibility in event of illness or injury, and some experience with union organization and class-conscious political activity. They accepted the presence of hierarchy in the organization of work as well as of society. But they resented the disorganizing effect of periodic layoffs and reductions of wages that, the masters now said, were necessitated by mar-

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ket conditions. Asked how he compared America with England, an English miner writing in the 1840's from somewhere "near Pottsville" said:

With respect to that, I must say I would rather have this country by far than England, upon the whole, for several reasons, first, I would rather have the work, second, because provisions are cheaper. Third, because wages are always likely to be better than in England. Fourth, because we are always peaceable at our work compared with England. The times have been very hard, it is true, since I came, and during the winter there has been no money; but we had plenty to eat; and now, I trust we shall have cash winter and summer. . . . Dear friend, I am and ever shall feel grateful to you for the kind offer in your letter to get me back if this country did not suit me. But I am satisfied that the country is better for working men in general than England; the water is better than I have ever tasted about Staly Bridge; and I am lead to think it is better than any I ever tasted in England if possible. The land is one hundred dollars an acre, uncultivated, all about the coal region; I do not know what it is fit to cultivate. I have cultivated twenty-roods; and I can have hundred if I like, so long as I stop here, all for nothing. I pay half a dollar a week for the house.

There was a strike going on as he wrote, but still he was cheerful. "There is a better chance to get through a turn out here than in England, because the people are not so much afraid of their masters as they are in England." The strike was aimed not at resolving grievances about working conditions or work discipline, but at getting better wages from the mine operators. The English miner accepted the new industrial system, but in the United States he demanded more money for his work.<sup>14</sup>

The Welsh also came from an industrial region, albeit one more recently brought into the orbit of coal and iron. Most of Wales is a hilly country, not unlike the Appalachian highlands of Pennsylvania, and, before ironmasters and colliers began to exploit its mineral resources, rather a poor land. South Wales, particularly Pembrokeshire, had some anthracite, buried in deeply folded seams as in Pennsylvania, but until its use in smelting iron was discovered, the hard coals were neglected in favor of the rich bituminous beds to the north and east that supplied coke to great ironworks and steam coal to railways and steamships. In the 1840's and '50's the valley of Aberdare was growing rapidly as a colliery center, and a number of the Welsh residents of St. Clair and its neighborhood emigrated

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from there and from nearby Merthyr Tydfil. A few, including the Johns family, came from the anthracite district in Pembrokeshire. Clearly, St. Clair's Welsh population, and that of the surrounding districts, emigrated from the coal country of South Wales; most if not all of the men were experienced miners or practiced trades necessary to the operation of collieries and ironworks. They might not have had the depth of involvement in the culture of mining that the English immigrants had. but they were just as well trained in modern methods of mining. And they had the reputation for being "decidedly religiously inclined."

The main motive for emigration for the Welsh miners, as it was. presumably, for the English, was to escape from a situation of economic instability in the new, impersonal, market-dominated coal economy. Despite the constant long-term increase in the demand for coal. the seasonal and cyclical ups and downs of the market meant periods of unemployment or reduced wages in a land with a minimally developed system of social service. For some, it appeared that even unemployment in America was better than regular employment in Wales:

. . . there are dozens if not hundreds who have not had a day's work in five or six months. As this country is better than Britain, generally, they have plenty of food and their board is furnished with delicacies which are not even seen on a workingman's table in Wales even when they are working regularly.

In Aberdare there was an emigration company that gathered up the hopeful emigrants and shipped them off "almost for nothing." One miner described the way the system worked:

Another word about the plan adopted by some of the companies in the county mentioned for bringing emigrants here from Britain and other places and leading them here to confusion. I knew before I left Aberdare, that N. M. Jones, Cymro Gwylit, had been raised to be an agent in some emigration society and that he is transporting men to the western world almost for nothing. Once I called at his office at Cross Inn, Trecynon—God save us all!—it was full of men who had come from every part of the valley, some to ask when they would start and others to get their name on the list and my instructions were to find what his conditions were. As near as I can remember, the chief agent in Britain at Liverpool received passage certificates from the company and passed them onto the various agents up and down the country. Names were taken together with the number in the family, for example, a

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husband, wife and two children, money was handed over to bind the agreement and all they had to do was to keep themselves in Liverpool until the emigration company took them to their destination. A house and everything would be waiting for them. After they reached the other side, they would work a year for the company, which deducted a quarter of their earnings every month until all the passage money was paid.

He went on to complain that in some cases the emigration companies brought Welsh miners over as strikebreakers "at the expense of the master."<sup>15</sup>

The Welsh thus were emigrating, like the English, in the hope of finding in America not freedom from industrial discipline, but stability of employment and better wages. They were already beginning to rely upon the strike as a device for persuading "the master" and to recognize the value of solidarity, of union organization, in confrontations with capital. Some Welsh even considered that the "unwavering loyalty of the Welsh in time of strike" was a part of the national heritage and spoke proudly of "the unbending determination of the old nation in such struggles."

In contrast to all the rest, the Irish of St. Clair came for the most part from a land neither industrial nor urban. They were born not in the factory districts of Ulster nor in Dublin nor in the coastal towns of the south, but in the countrysides of Galway, Cork, Sligo, Cavan, and other agricultural counties.<sup>17</sup> Except for the region around Belfast, Ireland was still a pre-industrial country most of whose population lived on small farms scattered among the fields, some owned by the farmer himself and some rented from absentee landlords (usually English). The Irish emigrated not because they expected to find another, slightly better Ireland in the New World, but because they were being forced away. Some were being evicted by landlords who planned to enclose their estates and turn the land to pasturage for beef cattle, expecting a better profit from the sale of meat than from the collection of rents from cottagers. And some were being evicted for non-payment of rent, or were being forced to sell their holdings because the potato blight was ruining one of the country's staple crops. The estates of the Crown were shipping many off to America free of charge, whole villages at a time; others scraped together, or borrowed, passage money sufficient to escape the enclosures, the workhouse, and the famine. Many went to England, where some stayed while others moved on, to America,

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Australia, or other countries; many came to America directly.

The typical Irish countryman did not identify with the state, which was an English governmental apparatus that worked largely in the interest of English, or Anglicized Irish, landlords. Nor did he identify with the town, which was apt to be an old English garrison site with a veneer of English and Irish shopkeepers. Policemen and courts were instruments of oppression. Without access to any modern industry at all, he had no experience whatever in the work discipline of collieries and mills, where overseers and managers exercised an authoritarian prerogative to hire and fire, to lower wages arbitrarily, to set rigid hours of work, to dock piecework wages for poor quality, and to chastise workers verbally for violations of rules governing drinking, smoking, and the observance of safety procedures. He had no experience with craft unions and benefit clubs, so familiar to the English, Welsh, and Germans. More exclusively than the others, the Irish countryman organized his work, his financial obligations, and his social relationships around a network of cooperative extended families, and to these he turned when he was in trouble. Cooperation meant, in "Hibernia," that related households exchanged labor during the mowing, the "boys" from one farm working for their uncles and cousins on another. And this friendly cooperation was repeated at weddings and wakes, when relatives got together, all contributing food and services to their uncles and aunts and cousins and in-laws according to traditional rules of exchange. Reciprocity was required and relatives who failed to live up to their traditional obligations were apt to be reminded by force—perhaps a beating by irate in-laws resentful of a man's neglect of their sister, or bullets fired through the window of a cottage whose aged childless owner had failed to devise it to the proper nephews. Even the few Irish shopkeepers in town were caught up in the web of kinship, dependent upon country cousins for their trade, obligated to entertain them on their visits to town and to hire young rural kinsmen when assistants were needed.<sup>18</sup>

Thus, in contrast to the other ethnic groups, with their allegiance to town and colliery and their reliance on union and club, the Irish were "clannish." Their wakes and weddings were family, not community, events; to kinsmen they turned in case of accident, or illness, or financial need; and injuries to a kinsman were a matter for kinsmen to avenge. Thus, in the winter of 1851, when an Irishman about fifty years of age—"an old

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man"—was killed by a train near Coal Castle north of St. Clair, his Irish relatives became so threatening that the engineer was warned not to take his engine into the town. No matter that the man had allegedly been drunk and had fallen off the cowcatcher on which he was hitching a ride. As the *Miners' Journal* reported:

The deceased was extensively related, and had many friends about Coal Castle. They were greatly incensed by the accident, the more so because the same engine had run over and cut off a man's arm. . . <sup>19</sup>

This was all very well for those Irish who did have kinfolk living nearby. But for the growing number of young, unmarried Irish males without parents or brothers and sisters or cousins, it was a lonely, strange, and threatening new world.

Yet, with these differences in political custom and industrial experience, there seems to have been a general sense among working people that ethnic boundaries were of minor importance in the face of chronic disaster. The common danger alienated the workers and their families from the landowners and the operators, but it promoted solidarity within each class. In the next two chapters we shall see how the two classes went about creating a new cognitive world in response to the problems of mining anthracite.

## FOOTNOTES

1. The progress of St. Clair as a real-estate development from 1835 to 1854 is recorded in two lists of purchasers and lots sold (one in HSP, Carey Papers, Box 99, "St. Clair Papers," and one at HSSC, "Lots sold by Carey, Hart & Baird in St. Clair"). The lot numbers in these lists are located on two property maps at HSSC, the first made by Peter Simpson in 1850 and the second by Peter W. Sheaffer in 1858. Personal information about purchasers comes from U.S. census schedules for St. Clair in 1850 (NA).
2. See HSSC, Parry Papers, A. M. Nichols and John Hughes vs. Kirk and Baum, Dec. 1858, for data on Anna Maria Nichols' suit.

### **BOOM-TOWN GROWTH FROM 1845 TO 1850**

1. MJ, 9 Aug. 1845.
2. *The Act of Incorporation, and Ordinances of the Borough of St. Clair, Schuylkill County, Pa.* (St. Clair: Published by the Council, 1876). Personal information about borough officials is derived from the 1850 census schedules (NA).
3. The Simpson map of 1850 is located at HSSC. Much general information on the businesses, churches, and neighborhoods in early St. Clair may be found in the county histories. The earliest of these histories. *Historical Gleanings of Schuylkill County*, was compiled by Sarah McCool and published serially in the *Shenandoah Herald*; chapters

61-63 concern St. Clair and appeared in 1875. The other major county histories are the anonymously edited Munsell, 1881, and the more recent six-volume History of Pottsville and Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania (Zerbey, 1934-35). Both contain chapters on St. Clair and extensive biographical sections. Biographical encyclopedias of Schuylkill County are Wiley and Ruoff, 1893; Schaick and Henning, 1907, and Beers, 1916.

#### **THE CENSUS OF 1850**

1. The schedules of the 1850 U.S. population census of New Castle Township, Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania, contain, in addition to newly formed St. Clair Borough, the town of New Castle and the mine patches in between. The St. Clair portion can be identified by the heading written at the top of the pages by the enumerator. The locations of households can be found in the property-map/sales-list documents mentioned in footnote 1, this chapter, and in other sources, particularly Beers and Cochran, 1875.

#### **ETHNICITY AND OCCUPATION**

1. Conway, 1961, p. 185.
2. Aurand, 1980, p. 467.
3. Conway, 1961, p. 194.
4. See Aurand, 1980, for a discussion of the miner/laborer relationship.

#### **THE MINE PATCHES**

1. Korson, 1938, pp. 2-3, 13-14.
2. Zerbey, 1934-35, vol. 1, pp. 518-521.
3. The 1850 U.S. population census schedules of East Norwegian Township, Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania, include the separately identified town of Port Carbon and the rural area described here (NA).
4. These patches were enumerated in the section of the 1850 U.S. census schedules of New Castle Township, Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania, that is reserved neither for the town of New Castle nor the borough of St. Clair.

#### **WAGES AND SUBSISTENCE**

1. HSSC.
2. 1860 U.S. Census of Manufactures, St. Clair, earnings and production of house carpenters.
3. Personal examination of houses in Johns' Patch, St. Clair.
4. 1850 U.S. Census of Agriculture for East Norwegian Township, Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania.
5. MJ, 27 April 1850.
6. U.S. Census of Manufactures, New Castle Township (1850) and Borough of St. Clair (1860).
7. 1860 U.S. Census of Manufactures, St. Clair (NA).
8. MJ published weekly statistics on the quantity of coal shipped on the Mill Creek and Mine Hill Railroad, and on the other feeder roads, as well as the Schuylkill Canal and the Reading Railroad. Along with this statistical report it provided a brief analysis of the week's news of the coal trade, noting such events as strikes, new legislation, and market fluctuations. The freshet was described in the issue of 7 Sept. 1850.

#### **THE EXTENDED FAMILY**

1. Schalck and Henning, 1907, vol. 2, pp. 128-129.
2. In addition to the 1850 census, the Igos appear in the lists of lots purchased in St. Clair (HSP and HSSC).
3. Schalck and Henning, 1907, vol. 2, p. 128.
4. ARMI, 1876, p. 51.
5. 1870 U.S. census schedule, St. Clair (NA).
6. Conway, 1961, pp. 167-170.

7. Middle States Reports, 1876.
8. U.S. census schedules, St. Clair, 1860, 1870, 1880 (NA).
9. In addition to the census records, the Frantz family's career is recorded in ARMI for 1870 and 1874 and in Munsell, 1881, Biographical Appendix, p. 242.
10. Pinkowski, 1963, p. 15.
11. ARMI, 1870, p. 22.
12. HSP, "Molly Maguire Papers," Society Collection. See Cumming's reports of 10 March, 21 March, 1 April, and 14 April 1874.
13. U.S. 1880 census schedules. Borough of Shenandoah, Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania (NA).
14. Korson, 1938, pp. 300-301.

#### **OTHER BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATIONS**

1. Munsell, 1881, p. 210.
2. Schmidt, 1980, pp. 243-245; Ross, 1888.
3. MJ, 5 Oct. 1850.
4. Munsell, 1881, p. 210.
5. Schmidt, 1980, pp. 146-148.
6. Munsell, 1881, p. 210.
7. Schmidt, 1980, pp. 119-139-
8. Munsell, 1881, pp. 278-280.

#### **TABERNACLES AND TAVERNS**

1. Ames, 1909, vol. 1, p. 28.
2. Bowen, 1852, p. 212.
3. Munsell, 1881, pp. 211-212.
4. Most of the information on the Primitive Methodist Church in America, and in St. Clair, is provided by a onetime minister in St. Clair, the Rev. John H. Acomley (Acomley, 1909). See also the account in Munsell, 1881, p. 211.
5. Acomley, 1909, p. 60.
6. Ibid., p. 51.
7. Ibid., p. 5.
8. Ibid., p. 4.
9. Munsell, 1881, pp. 211-213.
10. Ibid., p. 212. The linguistic limitations of the first pastor are revealed in the parish baptismal record, in which the names and localities of Irish Catholic families are rendered phonetically.
11. Munsell, 1881, p. 212.
12. Ibid., pp. 284-285.
13. MJ, 29 March, 5 July, and 22 Nov. 1851.
14. The foregoing sketch of the respectable taverns and hotels is derived from several sources. Proprietors, names, and locations are given in the county histories by McCool, 1875, Munsell, 1881, and Zerbey, 1934-35; locations are further specified in the 1844-54 lists of lots purchased (HSP and HSSC) and in the property map and directory of St. Clair in Beers and Cochran, 1875; and details of occupancy are to be found in the decennial censuses 1850-80. Dormer's tavern is still a tavern and stories are still told of its service as a Molly Maguire hangout.
15. Columbia University, Butler Library, Charlemagne Tower Collection, Box 24, District Attorney Casebook 1854-57, p. 479.
16. MJ, 15 March 1851.

#### **A PLACE OF SONG**

1. See Colls, 1977.

2. Korson, 1938.
3. Elssler, 1910, pp. 409-410.
4. Korson, 1938, pp. 117-122.
5. Ibid., pp. 277-278.
6. Ibid., pp. 114-116.
7. Ibid., p. 65.

#### **THE OLD COUNTRY IN THE NEW WORLD**

1. U.S. population census, 1850, Schuylkill County, St. Clair Borough (NA).
2. Oestreich, 1966, p. 63. A copy is held by Robert Scherr of St. Clair.
3. Zerbey, 1934-35, vol. 1, pp. 128-140.
4. HSP, Society Collection, "Molly Maguires," report of agent Cumming, 28 Feb. 1874.
5. Broehl, 1964, p. 163.
6. Conway, 1961, p. 194.
7. See the outlines of German culture in anthropologist Robert H. Lowie's two books, 1945 and 1954.
8. U.S. population census, 1850, Schuylkill County, St. Clair Borough and New Castle and East Norwegian townships (NA).
9. Oestreich, 1966, passim.
10. Benson, 1980, p. 217.
11. Holland, 1835, chapter "The Colliers," pp. 286-304.
12. Ibid., pp. 293-296.
13. Benson, 1980, p. 185.
14. In Zerbey, 1934-35. vol. 5, pp. 2078-2079.
15. Conway, 1961, p. 174.
16. Ibid., p. 197.
17. The biographies of St. Clair residents in Munsell, 1881, usually reveal the county of origin for English, Welsh, and Irish immigrants.
18. The foregoing sketch of traditional rural Irish culture and attitudes toward family and authority has been drawn largely from Arensberg, 1968 and from Conrad Arensberg and Solon Kimball, 1940.
19. MJ, 1 Feb. 1851.

*A Workingman's Town*

TABLE 1: *St. Clair Population by Age and Sex, 1845*

	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Totals</i>
UNDER 5 YEARS OF AGE	54	62	116
5 TO 10 YEARS OF AGE	34	40	74
11 TO 20 YEARS OF AGE	50	47	97
21 TO 30 YEARS OF AGE	90	44	134
31 TO 40 YEARS OF AGE	66	37	103
41 TO 50 YEARS OF AGE	29	18	47
51 TO 60 YEARS OF AGE	13	6	19
OVER 60 YEARS OF AGE	6	9	15
TOTAL POPULATION	342	263	605

*A Workingman's Town*

TABLE 2: *St. Clair Population by Age and Sex, 1850*

	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Totals</i>
0-9	370	351	721
10-19	219	205	424
20-29	220	196	416
30-39	190	153	343
40-49	99	78	177
50-59	44	33	77
60-69	17	22	39
70-79	4	10	14
80-89	1	2	3
NO AGE ENTERED	2	1	3
TOTAL POPULATION	1166	1051	2217

TABLE 3: Miner/Laborer Status and Ethnicity, 1850

	<i>English</i>	<i>Welsh</i>	<i>German</i>	<i>Irish</i>	<i>Other Foreign-born</i>	<i>U.S.-born</i>
<b>MINER</b>	73	73	45	24	2	12
<b>LABORER</b>	10	6	36	167	2	33

TABLE 4: Age of Oldest U.S.-born Child and Ethnicity, 1850

<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>0-5 Years</i>	<i>6-10 Years</i>	<i>11-15 Years</i>	<i>16-20 Years</i>	<i>21-25 Years</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
<b>ENGLISH</b>	46	18	9	11	8	0	8.69	18.50	6.04
<b>WELSH</b>	40	22	7	5	6	0	6.57	17.17	5.58
<b>GERMAN</b>	45	29	8	7	1	0	5.23	18.67	4.76
<b>IRISH</b>	100	61	20	14	4	1	5.34	21.67	2.31

TABLE 5: Ethnicity in Rural East Norwegian Township, 1850

	<i>No. of Households</i>	<i>Foreign-born</i>	<i>U.S.-born</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>ENGLISH</b>	70	254	95	349
<b>IRISH</b>	70	197	132	329
<b>WELSH</b>	10	32	17	49
<b>GERMAN</b>	9	15	28	43
<b>SCOTS</b>	8	19	15	34
<b>U.S.-BORN (PA)</b>	17	—	118	118
<b>U.S.-BORN (OTHER)</b>	11	—	62	62
<b>TOTAL POPULATION</b>		517	467	984

*A Workingman's Town*

TABLE 6: *Ethnicity in Rural New Castle Township, 1850*

	<i>No. of Households</i>	<i>Foreign- born</i>	<i>U.S.- born</i>	<i>Total</i>
IRISH	46	147	100	247
ENGLISH	3	16	7	23
GERMAN	1	3	—	3
U.S.	1	—	7	7
TOTAL POPULATION		166	114	280

POTTSVILLE MARKETS

CORRECTED WEEKLY FOR THE JOURNAL

Wheat Flour, bbl.	\$5.00	Dr.'d Peaches par'd	\$3.00
Rye do do	4.50	do do unpar'd	1.75
Wheat, bush.	1.10	Dr'd Apples, par'd	1.50
Rye, do	.60	Eggs, doz.	.11
Corn, do	.50	Butter, lb.	.18
Oats, do	.35	Bacon,	.07
Potatoes, do	.50	Hams,	.09
Timothy Seed,	2.50	Hay, ton	15.00
Clover do	3.50	Plaster	5.00