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TOGETHER WE WORK, TOGETHER WE GROW OLD: LIFE, WORK AND
COMMUNITY IN A COAL MINING TOWN

City University of New York

PH.D. 1986

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TOGETHER WE WORK, TOGETHER WE GROW OLD:
LIFE, WORK AND COMMUNITY IN A COAL MINING TOWN

by

PATRICIA SACHS

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in
Anthropology in partial fulfillment of the require-
ments for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The
City University of New York.

1986

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Anthropology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Preface

When I moved to Decker's Creek,¹ West Virginia at the end of 1977, I had no idea that I would do fieldwork there. I did think that I might eventually work somewhere in Appalachia, studying the local economy, or perhaps working with women and children, following the interests I had had in graduate school. Although I had been warned that field situations rarely matched one's expectations of them, I was really not prepared to "discover" a field site quite literally at my back door.

It took me a few weeks to realize that I had begun fieldwork the day I moved into Decker's Creek. I arrived there after spending two months in northern Nigeria. I suppose that when I got to West Virginia, my mind was still "in the field". When I looked around at the small community of Decker's Creek, barely four blocks long, I saw the work the women did quilting, noticed the sorts of comments they made to me, and wondered why there were so few young children. Rather than wanting to settle down into the new home I had, I wanted to take notes. The community reminded me of the small New Hampshire town in which I grew up, but I was convinced that I understood it as little as I had understood Kano, Nigeria. What was life in this former company town like for the residents who had lived there for forty years?

Slowly, I settled into the pace of life in the community. My first weeks there were in mid-August when the weather was hot and steamy, and the gardens were luscious. When I opened the back door to my kitchen I frequently would find a large brown sack full of produce from a neighbor's garden. Its giver's identity was usually a mystery, but I could easily discover him or her with enough snooping. This activity inevitably led to getting to know most of the neighbors. Meeting them was casual and simple; since it was summertime, most people spent time outside in their gardens during the days, or visiting with one another in the evenings. As I met and watched them, they watched me back, seeing how well I kept house and noting whether I ate all the produce they left me. The interest they had in me intrigued me. They exhibited neither the New England reticence I automatically associated with small town life, nor the suspicion of me which the residents of Kano had. Together we developed the sort of "grandparent-grandchild" relationship one hears about in more exotic sites for fieldwork.

I was one of only a few younger couples who resided in Decker's Creek. Living with older people who suffer the ailments typical of old age and who have survived a coal-mining life into old age was a humbling and rich experience. While I was there I gave birth to my elder daughter and became pregnant with my younger one. The intensity of sharing

early parenthood with people who were old and dying strongly influenced both my experience of living in the community as well as the framework I developed in thinking about it in terms of the life cycles of its residents as well as the life cycle, if you will, of the community itself.

Decker's Creek is not very old; it was built at the turn of the century. Life there has been closely tied to coal mining from its beginning. When Decker's Creek was a company town the residents lived there because the men worked in the Decker's Creek mine. The local history of the past 60 or 70 years can be learned first-hand from the residents of the community who both witnessed it and participated in making it. While the stretch of those years has lasted a full lifetime for the residents, during these same years major industrial changes have taken place in the region. Coal mining has waxed, waned and waxed again; glass factories have prospered and died; the university has flourished and the population of the area has fluctuated, with large numbers of miners, blue collar workers, skilled craft workers and more recently, young professionals alternatively living there. As industrial changes occurred, Decker's Creek ceased to be a company town. When I lived there, it was primarily a community of retired people. It is gradually becoming a bedroom community for Morgantown. Its residents have lived out full work lives there and are now retired. The work world as they knew it--both the world of

mining as well as other forms of work in the area--has changed drastically. It is isolating to stop working when one's friends continue to work, but it becomes even more to do so when one's former work world changes so much that it ceases to exist except in memory. When the residents of Decker's Creek retired, the reality and memories of having worked together and lived together for 40 years have endured.

In the late 1970s, when I happened to move into the community, just a few other young people lived there. Looking back on the two years that I lived there, I realize that I unwittingly witnessed the end of an era for the retired families there, and the beginning of the demise of the community as they had known it for forty years.

I am very grateful to the residents of Decker's Creek for a number of reasons. They welcomed my small family, fed us, taught us how to garden, generously approved of us when we did things "right", and also reproved, thereby teaching me the hidden rules which were so apparent to them. There are a few people who became particularly important to me during my two years in the community. I want to thank Kate for teaching me to quilt, and for spending many hours piecing and stitching and chatting about life in Decker's Creek. Her insights about the community have been extremely valuable. I came to love and admire Tony as much as his

neighbors did; he lent us his lawnmower more times than I wish to remember as a gentle reminder that the back yard needed work. George provided a nonchalant wisdom about work and life, and a great deal of humor. Libby taught me how to make cabbage rolls, Jo served me coffee and homemade cookies and muffins, and they both made me feel at home at their kitchen tables, even while they canned, cooked and cleaned. John did his best to teach me that there is a strong connection between the decisions one makes in everyday life and those that are made by world leaders. Ray and Hazel poured out stories of the mining days were content to let me spend hours poking about their antique shop. Some of these people have died since I left the community. To those who are still there, I hope that as this dissertation will give back some of what I gained while living there.

I am also grateful to the women on my dissertation committee. June Nash has always supported this work, she listened to my early, unformed ideas and urged me to continue working them out. Without her belief in what I was trying to say, or her understanding of the specific nature of mining communities, I doubt I could have written this dissertation. Jane Schneider has been an articulate critic, seeing the general importance of this work and challenging me to create a more coherent vision. Eleanor Leacock encouraged me to write with better understanding of the Cherokee, and hence reminded me of the importance of all

ethnographic data.

There are several other people whose support has been important to me. My parents have been unfailing cheerleaders for a number of years. They not only have been convinced that I would write a book ever since I was about nine, but always taught me that one should respect the ways and ideas of others. I owe my father the debt of intellectual curiosity; beyond the wonderful childhood discussions we had about how one might distinguish between brain, thought and idea, the visit we made to ghost towns "out west" many years ago, and his stories of the people he thought might have lived there, fired my imagination in a way I have never forgotten. My mother has given me the ability to understand the human dilemmas with which people are always confronted, urged me to listen more carefully to what people say, watch what they do and consider what they mean. My sister, Ann, cheered when I finally decided to study American culture, she has understood the importance of looking at it for a long time.

Geoffrey M. Frankel shared the two years in Decker's Creek with me. He arrived there two weeks before I did, set up our home and trimmed the yard, endearing our neighbors to us instantly. He participated in the community as much as I did, and I hope that his memories of that time are as fine as mine are.

Megan and Kate Sachs-Frankel, my daughters, consider

West Virginia to be "theirs" largely because of my obsession with writing this dissertation for the full duration of their lives. They are happy mommy is finally going to be a doctor, and hope that this means I will spend more time playing with them.

I am very grateful to Peter S. Smith, who has been proud of every accomplishment, and who has offered many samplings of "write it, it's only a dissertation". His support has taken many forms--cooking dinner, doing the laundry, and sharing computer time--and it has been marked with humor and grace.

NOTES

1. Most of the names of people and places in this dissertation have been fictionalized.

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CHAPTER I

Theoretical OverviewIntroduction

This dissertation is about generational process in an American community. In communities that have experienced little social change, generational succession proceeds "normally," that is, the descendants of the people who work and live together move into the roles of their elders when the older generation grows old and dies. In communities that have undergone social change, such "normal" succession is drastically altered. The older families (widows and widowers) of Decker's Creek, a mining community in West Virginia, are facing this latter situation. The place in which they have worked and lived is slowly, but inevitably, being transformed into a "bedroom" suburb for the expanding university population of Morgantown. The newcomers to Decker's Creek are young, professional couples. They differ in class, in background, and in aspiration from the older residents. Old age, Erik Erikson¹ has pointed out, is a time during which people struggle and negotiate what sort of legacy they will leave behind. The legacy--coming to terms with what life is about, and how it is understood--is usually passed from one generation to the next. When the succeeding generation is composed of strangers, to whom is this legacy left? What do older people do when confronted

with such a crisis?

In this dissertation I explore the way in which the residents of Decker's Creek have responded to the social change occurring in their community. Understanding the notions of generation and community are essential in this thesis. I begin with Arensberg's enduring article about the relationship between community and industry, written in 1942, as a basis for thinking about communities. Mannheim's ideas about generation, published in 1952, organize my sense of how being involved in a major technological change wrought by the industrial revolution (the mechanization of the mines) served to cement the older mining families as a generation. The remainder of Chapter I reviews the relevant discussions about ethnography in the U.S., old age, and work and economy.

I next describe the historical industrial and cultural changes that have been taking place in Appalachia since it was first subject to mining in the sixteenth century (Chapter II); then I explore how the process and conditions of mining during the 1920s and 1930s, when the older residents worked the mines, affected their "world view" (Chapter III). Chapter IV describes the end of company town life, and then the social life that had replaced it by the late 1970s, when I lived there. Chapter V outlines two dramatic crises experienced by the retired miners in the 1970s and shows how the miners' consciousness--their world view--engendered

during the company town days, shaped their response. In each crisis, the gap between the generations of Decker's Creek was strikingly apparent and a final, concluding chapter reassess the issue of generational process and community change.

Communities

In 1942 Arensberg called for a coherent method through which to study both industrial and community organization. He felt that the intellectual division of the worlds of community and work prevented a full understanding of the continuum of social relationships likening them to each other and of their mutual influence.

The anthropologist's idea of a residential community was different in 1942 from what it is today. Then communities were thought to be discrete, bounded entities, inhabited by families with attributes of class, kinship and religious organization. It was assumed that multiple generations, related by kin, lived in them. No doubt these assumptions were largely correct. After all, 1942 preceded the upward and outward mobility that has characterized post-war America. Certainly businesses were more likely to be owned by one company (even if not absolutely local) than by a subsidiary of a multinational corporation, as is the case today.

In many ways Arensberg's analysis of the relationship between industry and community as a continuum of social

relationships, both ends of which must be understood in order to comprehend how they affect one another, is appropriate for the early decades of Decker's Creek. Such mutual dependence was especially strong in a coal mining community in the early part of the century. But communities have changed, industries have changed, and the patterns of employment have also changed. One has only to think of the rampant factory closings current in the Northeastern and Midwestern United States in recent years. Such massive industrial change disrupts how communities are connected to the larger world, and how they are structured internally structured. As industries change and move to new sources of labor or forms of technology, what happens to the people who are left behind? I examine this question from the perspective of shifting economic and industrial circumstances, and with regard to the symbolic meanings that people attach to their place of residence.

Generation

Over thirty years ago Mannheim (1952) developed his idea about what a generation is. His great contribution was in understanding that beyond the importance of producing descendants, members of a "generation" become defined through their similar location in history. He noted

The fact of belonging to the same class, and that of belonging to the same generation or age group, have this in common, that both endow the individuals sharing in them with a common location in the social

and historical process, and thereby limit them to a specific range of potential experience, predisposing them for a certain characteristic mode of thought and experience, and characteristic type of historically relevant action.(1952:291).

Members of a generation, he suggested, can only participate in a temporally limited section of the historic process. While members of any given population may experience the same social and political conditions, their participation in them can differ considerably. A generation can crystallize, he suggests, around a particularly significant event or major crisis, and by participating in this process, people come to ally themselves as members of a generation. How does this occur?

Whereas the adolescent, peasant, emigrant, and social climber can only in a more or less restricted sense begin a 'new life', in the case of generations, the 'fresh contact' with the social and cultural heritage is determined not be mere social change, but by fundamental biological factors. We can accordingly differentiate between two types of 'fresh contact': one based on a shift in social relations, and the other on vital factors (the change from one generation to another). (1952:294)

The residents of Decker's Creek were not only members of a single cohort but were also an aggregate of immigrants within a single community. They faced and lived through a very clear and major shift in their social and historical situation: the mechanization of the coal mines. This reorganization of technology, together with the social circumstances of company town life, cemented the network of relationships within the community. The strength of the "fresh contact"--which for them was confronting and fighting

technological change when they sensed a loss of control over their work--served to define them, I contend, as a generation. This definition became especially apparent in old age when, as the "older generation," they were confronted with younger people who did not share their attitudes, experiences or expectations about work and life.²

In this case study of a community of retired coal mining families³ the people have witnessed and been affected by changes in technology during the very course of their lives. As they have grown old, the industrial structure in the region has changed and technological changes have altered the manner in which work is carried out. Since these people worked and lived in an industry-dominated community for most of their lives, understanding them illuminates the changing relationship of the community to industry.

In gathering the data for this dissertation, I was initially concerned with the notion of work during old age. During the two years of data collection, it became evident to me that the "world view" of the older residents with whom I lived rested upon their view of the mining life. When the men first worked as miners, the industry was composed of relatively small, family-owned mines. Their work experience reflects that sort of organization of production. I will examine how the relationship of the of the community to the mine during the "company town" days acted as a source of consciousness and identity, and how this consciousness and

identity became restructured in late life.

Examining the lives of these mining families during retirement sheds light, I suggest, on social organization at other points in the life cycle. And it illuminates aspects of life other than mining itself. The employed work of mining and life in a company town can be seen as more clearly intertwined when viewed from the perspective of old age, when mining is no longer present but the perceptions of work and the feelings about mining are.

The notions of age and work therefore dominate this thesis. The descriptions of work, non-monetized domestic labor, occupation, and community life are illuminated by the fact that the social actors are, by and large, over age 65. In turn, the social structure of old age is illuminated by the fact that the social processes which one tends to associate with earlier phases of the life cycle in fact never quite disappear, even though the contribution of elders in formalized statuses in our society is greatly diminished. I will explore how the values and meanings normally associated with the work world continue to operate during retirement.

Ethnography in the United States: Work and Age

Anthropologists have sought to define work in a broad manner which refers both to productive wage-labor and to folk definitions of work. Nash, for example, thinks of work

most broadly as "purposive activity directed toward meeting physical and social needs satisfying to those who either produce or consume goods and services" (1981:3). The broad applicability of such a definition is important, since it offers a method for interpreting a vast array of economic and social behaviors cross-culturally. It stands in contrast to the ethnocentric notion that work is only wage labor, i.e. that "all economically useful activities are fully comparable by a yardstick transcending their diversity... that labor [is] a commodity" (Schwimmer, 1979). In viewing work as process, rather than as a particular economic activity, we can see it as behavior which is at once cultural and economic, exemplified both by the monetized activities in labor production, distribution and exchange, and by non-monetized activities outside of strictly "productive" labor. Anthropological research on various forms of work in pre-industrial societies⁴ has provided the tools to undertake analysis of non-commoditized labor in industrial society, thus broadening the approaches toward work which have been useful for other disciplines (such as labor history, the sociology of work and occupational sociology).⁵ By shifting the focus of work from the ethnocentric notion of wage-labor to a wider variety of economic activities, it becomes possible to envision a cross-cultural continuum composed of kinds of work activities, ranging from hunting and gathering to wage-labor.

An "economic" approach to old age in American society tends to take the form of studies of retirement which focus on income levels, social security benefits, medicare, medic-aid and a variety of entitlements (see, for example, the last several volumes of The Gerontologist). These are formal economic aspects of retirement. The direct financial relationship between older individuals and the substitute wages they receive merely reflects formal economic analysis, and neglects to analyze the broader aspects of older people's position within society. Retirement occupies a place in the economy, defined, of course, as exclusion from the labor force on the basis of age or length of tenure in a job.

Although retirement is a structured transition, there is little definition of the state-of-retirement for individuals who enter into it. (This is changing somewhat with the advent of politically-active groups such as the Gray Panthers.) What might be called the social organization of retirement, however, remains largely undefined. There is abundant mythology regarding this status. This includes notions such as "the golden years", "doing everything we always wanted to do", "enjoying one's final years" and so on. The current economic realities of this status--decreased income and an inflated economy--make such hopes for such a retirement virtually unattainable. Further, retirement "ideals" fly in the face of stereotypes of old age (by which

an individual may take on a new identity such as "old geezer", or may suddenly become "frail" or "crotchety"⁶). This leaves individuals who face retirement with conflicting sets of expectations about life- after-65 and poor images of old age well-worth resisting. Many people simply decide that they "aren't old" or "won't retire"--decisions that provide negative evidence for the existence of these ideals and expectations. This formal economic view is a culture-bound framework for analyzing retirement, and is useless for researchers trying to understand the social reality of retirement for particular groups of people. Since retirement involves an economic restructuring, it is important to analyze exactly how retired people "fit" in productive society or, in other words, to analyze the structure of retirement within productive society.

Retirement is a familiar but odd phenomenon in our society. It is broadly defined as exclusion from the labor force on the basis of age. It is a structure which socially differentiates people on the basis of age, although it is actually a shift away from being a wage laborer to a non wage laborer. Retirement is an incomplete rite of passage, in which the first two phases of the rite are present and the third--incorporation into a new social status--is not. The first phase is the structured occupational position of the wage laborer, the second phase is the rite of retirement (sometimes formalized, sometimes not) during which the

individual is "betwixt and between" two structural situations. The third phase is retirement, which is not formally structured and is ambiguous. The individual is simply "retired", a status which confers no particular "ought to's" or models of behavior. The ritual roles accorded to older persons, such as one finds among other societies, are lacking in this society.

Broad cultural expectations of old age in this society tend to focus on retirement as an opportunity for leisure time or an extended holiday. While not all individuals endorse such a notion, expectations which people have about their own retirement often do not adequately prepare them for its reality. It has been documented⁷ that retirement is often highly idealized throughout the work life, but the high ideals are seldom realized during retirement itself. The result is frequently depression, disappointment, a sense of disruption and fright. Today, people can easily live 20 to 30 years beyond the moment of retirement, and few people ever anticipate their "golden years" lasting that long.

Surprisingly few studies have focused upon the communities in which retired people live. Those which do tend to center upon "retirement communities", i.e., age-homogeneous communities into which older people move upon retiring. Few studies of what might be called "indigenous communities" of primarily older people have been made.⁸ While retirement communities vary greatly, they nonetheless do share certain

characteristics. One of these is a well-defined boundary--old age--which to outsiders unifies the residents into one category--old people. Within this boundary, the issue of old age usually disappears and other issues of greater daily importance emerge (see Ross, 1977). Unlike many "traditional" community studies, studies of retirement communities have a particular type of population which may be homogeneous on a number of grounds other than age. These could be economic position, occupation, or political affiliation (see Byrne, 1974; Ross, 1977; Hochschild, 1973). These conditions enable a set of relationships to develop which may not have developed within the communities from which the residents moved. It is not unusual for there to be a "creation" of community in which residents call upon previously unimportant identities (ethnic, political, occupational) which, in the new context, become relevant vis à vis their new neighbors. These relationships are often symbolically reinforced. While retirement communities characteristically include a new place to live, new people to meet and new rules of behavior, communities in which people have grown old and in which they will remain until death characteristically include long-term friends, long-term places of residence and long-standing rules of behavior. One concern which studies of "new" retirement communities has not been able to address is the temporal quality of long-term community relations. Does the social behavior of

residents in new retirement communities differ from that in older communities? If people have grown old together, how does this affect friendships, helping each other out and neighboring? What happens when an older community begins to disintegrate?⁹ What happens when the social and emotional support which occurs within a familiar environment begins to dissolve? These questions can only be answered by studying communities or localities in which the elderly have lived for a number of years together.

Coal-Mining

Coal-mining is not like other 20th century occupations because of the uniquely intimate relationship between the mine and the community. Industry-dominated towns, however, are not so unusual. The process of coping with shifting industrial conditions, industry-dominance and community patterns may provide some insights into similar situations which exist in North America today--notably the transition to "high-tech" industries which are quickly displacing smokestack industries. How does the relationship between the community and local industry change when industrial work is altered? Although this dissertation does not pretend to offer any solutions to this contemporary crisis, it does examine how the mechanization of the coal mines during the 1920s and 1930s affected the coal-mining families of Decker's Creek, and aims to provide insights into worker

consciousness. Consciousness and identity not only define how workers respond to the crises which confront them, but are rooted in the extent to which workers are aware of the conditions within the workplace, the household, and the community. I examine the ethnographic context in which consciousness and identity arise.

Studies of consciousness among workers have been the focus of many major thinkers ever since Marx initiated discussions of class consciousness. He viewed human beings as actively engaged in structuring nature as a meaningful totality of social relations, that is, he saw that each socioeconomic formation produces in humans an awareness of its defects and the remedies to correct them. To Marx, the condition of workers was shaped by their relation to the means of production and to surplus value. Class was defined as the common objective point in relation to the means of production, and class consciousness was the awareness by workers of this common position.

In a cogent review of studies of consciousness, Richard Weiner¹⁰ contends that Marx failed to have adequately posed the problem of how proletarian class consciousness is actually constituted. This problem, he notes, was addressed by Lukacs and the Frankfurt School. The Frankfurt School attempted to uncover the concept of practical reason, and appreciated how ideology legitimized changing relations of production. They

came to emphasize how the mechanisms of socialization have been altered in a qualitatively distinct manner in the advanced industrial societies--both capitalist and state socialist. Along the way, the critical functions of the ego are weakened as social controls penetrate to a new depth level of consciousness. And men and women are further estranged from their potentiality for being self determining agents.¹¹

Lukacs contended that people can only know a socially mediated reality. To him, class consciousness is activated by the contradiction the worker experiences "between... being...an object in capitalist production and his human quality expressed in its special character in use-value" (1981:94). Lukacs reifies the proletariat himself, and sees that the struggle for power is the struggle for consciousness, since history is an "uninterrupted constituting process relentlessly overturning already constituted forms of objectivity" (1981:91). Habermas viewed class consciousness somewhat differently. He saw it as a cognitive frame that "symbolically integrates, formulates and gives expression as well as direction to a set of constituting ideas and projects that strive toward a new order". Habermas focused class analysis on the organizational aspects of social formations rather than upon the social relations of production. This focuses on how learning occurs in the social formation; he saw practical reasoning as practical learning, and the praxis of how one implements new institutional arrangements.

All these notions of consciousness--one's common

position within the social relations of production, the human quality of people as inherently contradictory to the industrial situation in which they find themselves, and working to change how the industrial world is organized, locate the source of consciousness at the workplace. While all these ideas focus attention on the human qualities and needs of workers, none uses the arenas in which these human qualities are enacted to find sources of consciousness. One reason may be that these studies lack the empirical data which would illustrate how consciousness is engendered. Using anthropological methods, it is possible to focus ethnographic questions not only on the workplace, but on the community and the household--equally arenas in which critical events in the lives of workers are enacted.

The notion that the source of consciousness is located not only in the workplace but in the community as well can be "tested" by examining particular ethnographic contexts. Mining is an especially good case to use for this because of the closeness of the mine to the community, and because miners tend to be a very conscious group of workers. Studies of mining (Dennis, Henrique and Slaughter; Nash; Greaves) have focused on the relationship between the community and the mine as well as upon the political, social and ritual contexts in which mining occurs. Although Godoy (1985) criticizes anthropological studies of mining on the grounds that they focus too much on the social organization

of mining, and not enough on the geological and economic infrastructure of the mining industry, the fact remains that these studies provide the most humanistic approach. Perhaps more to the point, anthropological studies include data on households and communities in which mining families live, and on the local economy, which are not found elsewhere. In her article on kinship groups Colombia, de Friedemann¹² demonstrates how these groups recreated a mining economy after a multinational company had moved out of the area, pronouncing it depleted of profitable resources. The fact that the local black miners were able to mine gold and supply the local market is an example not only of the adaptation of which people are capable, but of the fact that the same mineral resource can be differently--and successfully--exploited by groups with very different technological means and social organization. Only a focus on the community and social organization of mining will reveal such information, and illustrate the diversity of production which occurs within mining.

Theoretical Concerns

The "new economic anthropology" seeks to blend an understanding of worldwide economic systems with ethnographic detail in order to link the various levels of social and economic organization (Nash, Clammer, Kahn, Smith).

Studying local economic process is well within the domain of

ethnographers. "What is economic" from an anthropological perspective includes not only descriptions of production, distribution, consumption, relations of production, ownership and power, but other, less obviously market-related activities. Relevant are local-level patterns of exchange (reciprocal, general); kinship studies, such as how family form relates to production¹³, ethnicity and gender, definitions of "locality" or community, and political process.

There are a number of ways to study local economic process, and anthropological research about hunters and gatherers (Lee, 1979; Leacock, 1954; Draper, 1975), markets (Mintz, 1964), the incorporation of peasants into capitalism (Greaves, 1979 & 1986; Long and Roberts, 1978; Godoy, 1985) and petty-traders (Mintz, 1964; Buechler, 1982; Sudarkasa, 1973) demonstrate the variety of case material. Regardless of the kind of economy--market or non market--one studies, economic processes are carried out through work in daily life. Work can take the form of wage-labor or a pig-hunt. It is measurable and marks a social as well as economic relationship. As a focus for investigating economic process, work allows an investigator to go beyond formally defined of "jobs" and wages into the shadier and rich area of social behavior. Cross-cultural comparisons illuminate the fact that "work", as defined by western theorists, suffers from the problem of culture-bound categories. Although mainstream economists are considerably more

sophisticated than other social scientists with regard to analyzing the economic systems of western, industrialized society, their concern with the formal aspects of the economy keeps them from analyzing the informal or underground economy from any perspective other than one which is market-related. To them, the definition of what is properly "economic" centers around material output and activities which are tied to the market. They divide work into two broad categories: wage-labor and all other work. Wage labor (or any monetized labor) is really work. Other work includes a wide variety of activities--housework, fishing, anything which might be considered part of the underground economy. The "formal" and "folk" categories that permeate American perceptions of work actually obscure the variety of styles of work that exist within American society. (See Wallman, 1979, especially the article by Parkin). The research of Myerhoff and Bourdieu on the work of maintaining social relations provides excellent examples of this variety.

Cross-cultural studies also illustrate that a broader interpretation of economics includes the relationship of production to community life, residence and family form, or work which is not necessarily tied to the market. Studies of work within other disciplines links aspects of the labor process and the organization of work to social life. The focus of feminists, for example, has been on the changing

position of women both in the family and the work force during the course of industrialization, and analyzing the family as the locus of tensions and cooperation (see Malos, 1978; Secombe, 1974; Rapp, 1978; Hartmann, 1981). Demographic and labor historians have concentrated on the complementarity of family form and industrial form at the turn of the century as well as the relationship between the family life cycle and work histories (Hareven, 1975; Modell, 1978; Elder, 1976; Gutman, 1977). Sociologists have examined the important, supportive role which the family has come to play in an industrial world (Lasch, 1977). All these studies document the basic shift in the organization of work which has moved away from domestic production with the advent of industrialization. The shift of production out of the home into the workplace has altered the relations of production, site of production, and conditions of production. The nature of work within the household has shifted dramatically, as the research of feminist scholars attests. Understanding the new relationship of the household to the mode of production becomes especially interesting in the case of retired coal mining families, since all of the work during retirement is domestic, and since the work during the years of mine employment was so closely tied to the household.

In view of this, the analyses of uncompensated domestic labor in relation to productive labor (see Dallacosta, 1972;

Secombe, 1974; Benston, 1969), which aimed to validate the position of women in the household by linking their labor to the production of surplus value, become a useful model. Basing their arguments on Marx's observation that domestic work comprised the "maintenance and reproduction of the working class, which is, and must ever be, a necessary condition in the reproduction of capital"¹⁴, the authors of these analyses suggested that women's work (1) maintained the working-class home and (2) reproduced the labor force through the bearing and rearing of children. Through maintaining and reproducing the labor force, women's domestic labor, the argument goes, is linked to production and is therefore a critical component of it. Malos (1978) calls this the work of social reproduction.

The notion that social reproduction unites biological reproduction with the reproduction of the labor force has been cogently criticized by Edholm, Harris and Young¹⁵ who suggest that biological reproduction and the reproduction of the labor force are analytically separable. The latter, they contend, is socially, not biologically, constituted: certain people become members of the labor force while others are excluded from it. The issues at stake in this argument about social and biological reproduction mirror some of the problems, writ small, about analyzing the division of labor and the family in general. As Friedl (1975) has pointed out, there have been two schools of

thought about women's work. She describes these concerns as being either "biologically" (sometimes referred to "naturally")-oriented or "culturally"-oriented. The biological proponents argue that

if certain cultural and social forms occur in all known societies, such universals must imply traits that can be ascribed to genetic factors.... In general, they inform us, men operate in both public and domestic contexts; the range of variation of opportunities available to them is greater. In contrast women's tasks, the "nature" advocates continue, are remarkably similar the world over and lack the diversity characteristic of men's tasks. Women work in a domestic context, within the household, and are very frequently limited to that context (1975:2-3).

The "cultural" proponents provide cases which contradict the view of the "naturalists" by showing that throughout the world a variety of social roles are assigned to both men and women. Women might be warriors, brick-carriers, industrialists or shamans. Women's work in one society might be men's work in another.

These questions are at the root of discussions about how to interpret what "the family" is and what "work" is. Efforts to better understand just how family structure and work are connected have become more concrete--historically and ethnographically grounded. In this vein, Rapp (1978), for example, examines exchanges within the households of working class families; and Hareven (1978) examines how members of a family replace one another on the job in a New Hampshire textile family. The ideas that have emerged have

made it clear that as the Industrial Revolution pushed more women into the marketplace than had been there before, the power relations within the family began to shift to the point of creating conflict and duress for family members. The family, which Lasch suggested was a "haven" in the growing formality of relationships characterizing the workplace, nonetheless served as contested terrain for family members.

How do these arguments and insights bear upon looking at the domestic work of retired families? Retired people, like women for so long, are excluded from the labor force. As the early feminist research pointed out, women in the home, excluded from the labor force, were for a long time socially invisible. In the same way that women disappeared from conventional social analysis retired, "non-productive" people are socially invisible. While it was once argued that the distinct spheres of work for men and women made it easy to analyze their work separately, this is a misleading idea, because "it can then be argued that women are of only marginal relevance in the analysis of fundamental social structures and relations"¹⁶. The very exclusion of the aged from production is a fundamental social structure. Looking at domestic organization and work from the perspective of old age and retirement offers a different view of family structure from those which have focused on the middle of the life cycle. As Goody (1958) pointed out, the development cycle

of domestic groups clarifies how particular family organization is altered over the course of a life cycle. I therefore examine the lives of the aged residents of Decker's Creek in relation to their earlier work lives (Chapter IV) when they were directly involved in production.

The work performed by older miners in old age is socially visible among themselves, even if the work of most older people is invisible. More importantly, much of their work aims at making itself visible to the younger residents. The aim of the elders--to share their system of work with the new generation moving into their community--is their way of leaving a legacy. Chapter IV explores this process.

The extensive economic, technological and family changes over the past century have been documented through photographs, written records and histories, but the details of daily life both at home and at work can be discovered within the memories of older people. Eliciting information of this kind from older people along with a fuller ethnographic description of the social context of their lives,¹⁷ provides a fuller dimension and addition to the literature which already exists about "the family," "the wage" and coal mining in contemporary Appalachia.

The exploitation of the rich mineral resources and the impoverishment of people is the process that describes the mining of Appalachia as a region. This process has occurred

over and over again in both colonized and underdeveloped areas. In the next chapter, I explore the history of the industrial and cultural development of Appalachia as a region, and describe the foundation upon which the lives of the mining families of Decker's Creek were eventually built.

NOTES

1. Erik Erikson, Childhood and Society, W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., New York, 1963.
2. Generation has been used to mean cohort, life stage, descent, historic period, age group and age. What the term has gained in provocative implication it has lost in clarity. Kertzer, in a lucid article on the notion of generation, advocates using the term in its genealogical sense only. This has been a long tradition in anthropology where generation refers to kinship descent between parent and child as well as between larger kinship groupings. Generation is, Kertzer notes, "a relational concept bound to the realm of kinship and descent, it is not an appropriate tool for dividing societies into segments or populations into aggregates" (1983:128). The definition of terms for which the notion "generation" has been used are as follows. Cohort refers to an aggregate of individuals who were born within a particular period; for example, between the years 1900 and 1905. I use the term age-group to mean cohort. Individuals within one cohort may share a set of characteristics which may reflect either (a) the historic period in which they were born, or (b) the point in their life stages which they currently occupy. When a particular cohort shares a set of characteristics, these are analyzed according to variables other than age, such as life stage or historic period. Age refers to chronological age. These terms represent the structure in which one may analyze the meaning of the age of individuals. To analyze the process of aging, however, requires a fuller treatment of what aging means. This has been extensively studied from a psychological point of view through developmental studies (beginning, in fact, with embryology, moving into developmental psychology, and latterly, studying the "stages of growth" in mature adults).
3. The term "family" here refers to the domestic group, which is generally composed of the aged couple, a widow or widower. I prefer the term "family" to domestic group because it matches the usage by the participants themselves, and because it fits well with other literature notably that of the demographic historians, particularly well. However, note the discussion of family and work in this Chapter, on pages 10-11.

4. Such studies would include descriptions of work in such ethnographic classics as those by Boas, Malinowski, Chagnon, Bohannan, to name only a few. However, one example of a study of a simple society which focuses directly on work is Richard Lee's The !Kung San: Men, Women and Work in a Foraging Society, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1979 which focuses on work in a hunting-and-gathering society. His analysis of how work is mediated through social relations is a good example of how the holistic anthropological perspective which we are so used to seeing in simple societies, can apply to a subject matter in a similar manner in both simple and complex societies. That is, work, which we often think of in terms of wage, is here analyzed in terms of effort, time expenditures, by age and gender, 'housework' and the social relations of production. The tools that anthropologists use--studying kinship, doing caloric counts, and contemplating categories of behavior, might not ordinarily be thought of as work. "When a hunter consults the oracle disks, is that work? When he spends the evening in a camp listening to reports of game sighting on the eve of a hunt, is he working?" (1979:252) Questions such as these broaden the scope of inquiry and when the broadened scope is applied to industrial situations, the result is a "new" way to study society.

5. See Anthropological Quarterly Special issue on "Industrial Ethnology" 50(1), 1977; Arensberg, C. "Industry and the Community" American Journal of Sociology 48(1):1-12, 1942; Burawoy, Michael, "The Anthropology of Industrial Work" in Annual Review of Anthropology 8:213-66, 1979; Chapple, E.D., "Organization problems in industry" in Applied Anthropologist 1(1):2-9; Goldschmidt, W. As You Sow Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch, N.Y. 1947; Richardson, F.L.W., "Community resettlement in a depressed coal region" in Applied Anthropology 1(1):24-53, 1941; Gamst, F., "An integrating view of the underlying premises of an industrial ethnology in the United States and Canada" in AQ, 1977., to name only a few references. See also the review article "Anthropology and Industry: Reappraisal and New Directions" by Carol S. Holzberg and Maureen J. Giovannini in the Annual Review of Anthropology (Volume 10) 1981.

6. There is an increasing amount of information about the debilitating disease, Alzheimer's, whose symptoms include forgetfulness and disorientation, often attributed to "senility" in old age.

7. Robert C. Atchley, "Retirement and Leisure Participation: Continuity or Crisis" in The Gerontologist 11(1), 1971; also The Sociology of Retirement, Schenkman Publishing Co., Inc., Cambridge MA. 1976; and Social Forces in Later Life, Wadsworth Publishing Co., Inc., 1977. See also James E. Birren and K. Warner Schaie (eds.) Handbook of the Psychology of Aging New York, Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1976; and Robert N. Butler Why Survive? Being Old in America, Harper & Row, N.Y. 1975.

8. See Sula Benet Abkhasians for an excellent study of an "indigenous" community with many older people. This society is not age-homogeneous, but age-integrated.

9. Some work has been done in this area by Graham D. Rowles, a geographer who has studied the "psychology of space" among the elderly. His article "Between Two Worlds: A Spatial Dilemma for the Appalachian Elderly" (Presented at the 1981 Annual Meeting for the Association of American Geographers, Los Angeles) discusses outward trajectory of people from a community and how the crisis is experienced by the aged.

10. Richard R. Weiner, Cultural Marxism and Political Sociology, Sage Publications, Los Angeles, 1981. In this book Weiner reviews the various perspectives about consciousness, and his review is summarized here.

11. Ibid. Weiner, 1981:96-97.

12. Nina S. de Friedemann, "Trunks Among Black Miners in Colombia" in Miners and Mining in the Americas, Manchester University Press, 1986. "Troncos" are a kind of kinship group which has been defined in the anthropological literature as a "ramage".

13. Studies of the peasant family are a good example, see Goldschmidt and Kunkel 1971; Goody, 1973; Wolf, 1972. So are studies of families during early industrialization, the best example of this is in Amoskeag by Tamara Hareven, which illustrates how particular families send in any family member to perform a certain job at the mill, and gain some flexibility both on the job and at home in so doing.

14. Karl Marx, Capital, I, page 572.

15. "Conceptualizing Women" in Critique of Anthropology, 3(9 and 10):101-130; 1978.

16. Edholm, Harris and Young, 1978:126.

17. Myerhoff, in Number Our Days, has provided the most eloquent example of this sort of research.

CHAPTER II

Cultural and Industrial History:
The Creation of Appalachia

Appalachia has a dual reputation which reaches nearly mythical proportions on both sides. On one hand, there are strong stereotypical images of "hillbillies", independent rugged people, yesterday's pioneers somehow left behind in the modernization of America. On the other hand, there is the image of poverty, of barefoot children with ragged clothes and uncombed hair, and of deserted mines pitting the mountains. The first image perpetuates the myth of the untouched native, the second one perpetuates the image of a land devastated by industrialism. These stereotypes are contradictory. What is the "real" Appalachia?

The question of the "cultural identity" of Appalachians demands an understanding of the regional settlement pattern over the last five hundred years. During that time there have been migrants from several nations; how did some of them eventually become "the mountaineers"? How have different migrant streams affected the use of the land, the settlement patterns and sorts of work? The question of who arrived in Appalachia when becomes, by the end of the 19th century, a story intertwined with full-blown industrialization. The inhabitants of Appalachia differed from its owners as early as the late 18th century, and the dilemmas of those who paid rent versus those who owned land were (and

are) characteristic of those faced by any people subject to economic domination. "Staking a claim" on the land has proved to be important to the various settlers in this region, and symbolizes the difference in those who have claimed the mineral rights and those who have claimed the land which lies above the mineral deposits.

The first written accounts of this region, published in 1557 by the de Soto expedition,¹ indicates that Appalachia's natural resources have long been sought by those not native to the region. The development of Appalachia has a history of the exploitation of the land in one form or another.

The succession of immigrants that displaced the native Cherokee settlement includes the immigration of Virginians as well as the Scottish, Irish and Welsh, and later the eastern Europeans and Italians with coming of coal mining. The transformation of Appalachia from an aboriginal to a mature industrial land is discussed within the framework of colonization and underdevelopment as it occurs within the United States.

The Cherokee

The aboriginal inhabitants of Appalachia were the Cherokee, and according to archaeological records, they inhabited the land from about 1,000 A.D. until the early 19th century. In his article "The Origins and Development of Cherokee Culture",² Roy S. Dicken, Jr. discusses several

excavations which took place beginning in 1880 and continuing into the 20th century. Through an analysis of pottery and burial sites he proposes a scheme that describes Piedmont, Ridge-and-Valley and Blue Ridge Cherokee settlements ranging from 1,000 A.D. through the historic period. During the historic period, the Cherokee lived in clusters of towns scattered throughout the mountains and valleys of Appalachia. There were linguistic divisions among them (the language was Iroquoian, but there were several dialects which varied so much that some were mutually unintelligible). According to Reid (1970:11), the separate "regions" or areas in which clusters of Cherokee lived meant that each had a variety of allies and enemies, and competing trade partners. Therefore, although one nation, the Cherokee were not "unified" in a political sense. Their social structure, based on the clan, was like other "simple" societies in which political and economic institutions were mediated through kinship. The land which is now North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky, West Virginia and Virginia was, until 1830, Cherokee territory. The first written accounts of the Cherokee are from the Hernando de Soto expedition in 1540.³ The Spaniards were looking for gold during the 16th century, and the Appalachian region was as interesting to them as were any of the other areas in the world they were exploring and exploiting. "If the bullion flowed through Spain," Wallerstein

(1974:168) noted, "if Castile could soar into the center of the European sky" it would be due to the ability of Spain to find a non-Portuguese source of bullion. Indeed, Spain's exploits in the New World helped keep it in a dominant position during the early 16th century.

Spain was not insulated from the framework of Europe; it received, in its turn, the influence of and reflection of the economic necessities which came out of the latter's financial centers and were communicated to her in one way or another. Whether these were the needs of Spanish consumption . . . or the requirements of the military campaigns of the monarchy, the Indian colonies formed a protective backdrop, without whose help it would be impossible to explain Spanish predominance.⁴

The Cherokee thus did not live in isolation, out of touch with other peoples or new social patterns. Documentation of their way of life has been provided by a number of scholars. John Phillip Reid, who studied their primitive law, has provided valuable description of their egalitarianism, and James Mooney⁵ who lived with them during the late 19th century, learned their language, recorded volumes of their mythology and wrote articles as well. (Many Cherokee scholars consider Mooney to be a basic source, as one of the first reliable writers who wrote from experience of having lived with the Cherokee rather than from a missionary viewpoint. His observations, however, occurred during a period of contact and conflict and he witnessed a response to white invasions, not a pristine society.) Mooney noted that when the Spaniards reached the Cumberland, they sought Indian guides to lead them toward

the mines they were sure existed. Members of their expedition had found some copper hatchets which appeared to be inlaid with gold (Perdue 1979:176). Mooney notes:

Long before the end of the sixteenth century . . . the existence of mines of gold and other metals in the Cherokee country was a matter of common knowledge among the Spaniards of St. Augustine and Santa Elena, and more than one expedition had been fitted out to explore the interior. Numerous traces of ancient mining operations, with remains of old shafts and fortifications, evidently of European origin, show that these discoveries were followed up, although the policy of Spain concealed the fact from the outside world. (1975:19)

Like other Indians in North America, the Cherokee were part of the relatively new world system. Europe's growing business classes expanded in relation to its foreign interests: exploration, missionary activities, trade and settlement in the "new world" provided early resources for wealth. As Leacock notes⁶

In the sixteenth century, Spain, fresh from the reconquest of her territory from the Moorish kingdoms, and expanding through Europe both in the north and south, was the first to take advantage of the newly discovered Americas. Looking for gold, she settled primarily on silver to fill the coffers of the court, and she forced Indians to work in the mines under intolerable conditions. The conquistadors and their successors, largely landless gentry, set up haciendas dependent on Indian labor. Only superficially did they follow the lines of the feudal manor, for they were not aimed at self-sufficiency, but oriented toward the market for agricultural produce, both in the mining centers and in Europe. (1971:6-7)

However superficial this social organization may have been, it contrasted dramatically with the egalitarian social organization of the native Cherokee. A strongly matrilineal

and egalitarian society, these early contacts were largely unsuccessful.

In about 1560 the de Soto expedition captured an Indian "queen", known also as the "The Lady of Cofitachequi". This very powerful woman had a retinue of her own captives. Several of these, mostly female, were captured along with her by expedition members. The Spaniards wanted the Cherokee women to lead them to the copper mines, and pressed toward the province of Chisca (which today is northern Georgia, and a copper belt). Their lack of success in finding the mines was due to the fact that the "Lady" led them on a circuitous path for a period of about one month (Mooney 1975:14-17) before escaping. The story has it that she and a former black captive lived together as husband and wife. This tale reveals some typical aspects of Cherokee life: they were matrilineal, they resisted the influx of the Spaniards into their territory, but through their kinship structure (including intermarriage and adoption) created a multicultural "mix" among themselves in early contact times. The Cherokee did not, it seem, ever view the African slaves as people to be exploited, and probably treated them in accordance with their own rules of kinship which was clan-based and matrilineal. Although the Cherokee had a system of aboriginal bondage, it was nothing like European slavery. Captives who lived within Cherokee society were not necessarily considered kin. According to Cherokee kinship, clan

membership was the basis of kinship and of one's claim to humanity. Lacking such a relation, captives were relegated to the position of animals. However, as was common in many Indian nations, adoption into the clan was possible, and upon adoption the new member could gain full respect in accordance with the norms of kinship. There are many accounts of adoption. One describes a captive who "replaced" the slain son of an Indian woman. He was given full ritual adoption ceremony and thereafter was treated as a full member of the tribe. Unlike the way in which Europeans treated captives, the Cherokee supported captives and did not use them for economic gain (as laborers, for example).

The relationship between blacks and Cherokee during the 18th century varied considerably. At times mutually supportive, and even related by kinship, at times mutually hostile, and at times equally enslaved by the Europeans, blacks and Cherokee were both exposed to the exigencies of early colonization.

Cherokee bondage must have looked a great deal like slavery to European eyes. Europeans did not, however, view the Cherokee like themselves but considered them to be more like blacks; some Cherokee were themselves taken into bondage by Europeans. Blacks were evidently more desirable as slaves--Indians could escape more easily. According to one record, between 1722 and 1730 an African slave cost L333

while an Indian one cost only £250 (Perdue, 1985:24). By the 18th century, the Cherokee began to trade their own captives with the Europeans, sometimes trading them for weapons. By 1775 some Cherokee made a business of catching escaped slaves--and even of abducting slaves from one plantation and selling them to another--a practice for which they became notorious. A few black slaves managed to find refuge among the Cherokee: the mountainous terrain offered protection against all but the most persistent slave catchers (Perdue, 1985:24-27).

Pioneers and Cherokee

The Cherokee had a reputation for violence in the eyes of the immigrants and pioneers. Although Cherokee belief included retribution for a death, they were not a violent, warring nation. Indeed, according to Reid, other Indian nations considered them cowards.

In the early 1700s young men "gained status in Cherokee society by demonstrating courage and valor in relatively non-destructive warfare" (King, 1979:xi). Before long, however,

deerskins were traded for ammunition, firearms, metal knives, axes, garden implements, beads, baubles, vermilion for paint, clothing and rum (King 1979:x).

Europeans were the enemies of the Cherokee both before and after they began trading, but "the introduction of firearms and perhaps, the economic motivation of the fur trade,

brought changes in the previous balance of power" (King, 1979:xi). By the late 18th century, the Cherokee themselves referred to warfare as "their beloved profession". As Reid says:

One might suppose that with so inefficient a war machine, their propensity for losing battles, and the contempt in which their martial abilities were universally held by Indians and Europeans alike-- "old Women" the Shawnees called them with good reason--the Cherokees would have eschewed warfare. On the contrary, they sought it. True, they do not seem to have regarded it a sport. It was a test of manhood perhaps, but not a means to social status or political influence. Rather, warfare to the Cherokees was a business, a grim, dangerous, exciting business so important to their way of life that its mores and values dominated their culture. (1970:185).

The guiding Cherokee belief about warfare was vengeance: one killed a kinsmen of the person who had killed your kinsmen. Inevitably, with the pressing westward of the immigrants through the Cumberland and the Blue Ridge, the killings multiplied exponentially. To the newly immigrating Irish, Scottish and Welsh, the Cherokee were a warring, dangerous people. They undoubtedly did not realize that they themselves were part of the process which produced the conflict and invited the warring response of the Cherokee.

The experience of these pioneers was difficult as they confronted the Cherokee. During this time the Appalachian migrants did not live in dispersed mountain settings as they did many years later, but instead lived in forts to "fight the Indians". Arnow⁷ describes the fort settlement pattern as a response to the learned dangers which the Cherokee

posed to the pioneers. Earlier pioneer settlements had been more dispersed. The residents of these fortified settlements were not always living as nuclear families in independent households, as one might expect, but were instead composed of groups of kin who, often as not, had all immigrated to the region at one time. Arnow notes that:

One is struck by the many family relationships [among the settlers]; early settlers had migrated in groups of kin and in-laws, the marriages of the Ramseys, Eatons, Blesdoes, Montgomerys . . . were so common that an outsider who married a young woman would become instantly an in-law to a large percentage of the population (1984:22).

Most settlers in the area were, if not related, at least very familiar to the others. Complete strangers were a rarity.

Family life in the frontier was not necessarily organized around either a nuclear or an extended family or household. The exigencies of pioneer life were marked by danger whether trail-blazing, hunting or planting. Settlements were clustered in forts in the 1780s and 1790s, as a means of protection against attack.

Men . . . who risked death to put in a crop of corn or grow a little cotton seldom had the luck to harvest it.... Most who survived knew hunger, the buffalo and deer, once so plentiful, had, even as early as 1780, almost completely dispersed from the neighborhood of the French Lick (1984:11).

It was not uncommon for men or women to meet death by scalping or in childbirth, and survivors were likely to become stepparents to their new spouse's children (1984:11).

The tightly-knit groups of kin, clustered in forts, were cooperative through utter necessity. The closeness of their surroundings was undoubtedly unpleasant. Although the size of forts varied, on the average a fort covered about one acre. Upon that sat as many as seven families (some with slaves), enclosed by a fence. Smaller forts were easily wiped out in raids.⁸ These settlement patterns and family and household forms preceded the later dispersed settlement, which is so frequently referred to as the "traditional Appalachian" family form.⁹

Many pioneers were experienced, however, in living a hard life. Such a one was Daniel Boone. Boone was born near Reading, Pennsylvania in 1734, and when he was 16, in 1750, his family moved to North Carolina. He was soon influenced by the hunters he met who had traversed the mountains. One of the more impressive was

probably John Findlay, a Scotch-Irish trader . . . [who] had been through Ouasioto, or Cumberland Gap about 1752, and recounted to Boone in glowing terms his memories of the immense herds of buffaloes he had seen in Kentucky, the abundance of bears, deer and elk, the great salt licks where they gathered and the innumerable flocks of wild turkeys, geese and ducks".¹⁰

By 1755, when Boone was 21 he, along with Findlay, fought as "civilian teamsters" at Little Turtle Ford near Fort Duquesne (later to become Fort Pitt, and then Pittsburgh) in what became known as Braddock's Defeat. Major General Edward Braddock of the British Army was charged with the responsibility of driving the French from British territory,

and of taking possession of the Fort. Although the British and French each considered it to be their territory, the Cherokee still considered it theirs. Thus, their attack at Turtle Ford on the eve of the intended British attack on the French was an effort to maintain control of their land. This was, most likely, Boone's first exposure to Indian warfare and, given the reports of the extent of scalping and death, it probably affected him deeply: he immediately returned to farming and hunting in North Carolina. Although he loved hunting, Boone was evidently a man with other aspirations. By 1760, he had made the acquaintance of Richard Henderson, a lawyer who was interested in purchasing large tracts of land to sell to the growing stream of European immigrants. He knew that in order to facilitate such a venture, the land had to be accessible. He hired Boone to scout the frontier. This early scouting became, over the next several years, part of the early effort to establish a westward route.

Findlay's trips to and from his trading post at the Cumberland Gap were among many which helped to establish these early tracks for the Wilderness Road. So were the buffalo tracks to salt licks, and the "traces" which Boone laid out for Henderson. In 1765, Boone hired several gentlemen to lay out the Wilderness Road in better form, from Watauga (in North Carolina, where the Boone family settled) to the Cumberland Gap (significant because of its

break through the mountains to the west). The men he employed became, 10 years later, the owners of the Transylvania Company. This company, formerly Henderson and Co., was founded by Richard Henderson.

At the same time that Boone was intent upon pushing westward and settlers were trying to survive, the lines were being drawn for the American Revolution. The Cherokee were allied with the British through their loyalty to John Stuart, the British superintendent for the southern Indians (King, 1979:xiv). Stuart hoped that internal wars with the settlers could be avoided and that the Cherokee would eventually be able to supplement British forces in the South. Diplomatic attempts to bring this about failed, and the Cherokee launched a large attack against the settlers in late 1776. By the end of the year, they had lost many battles and their nation was devastated (King, 1979:xiv). It was not until 1794, however, that the hostilities between the Cherokee and white settlers ended, and these were ended through a defeat by the Cherokee at the hands of General James Robertson's forces. According to Reid (1970:196-197) this defeat was possible because the whites had as their guide through unknown country a white boy who had been captured and adopted by the Cherokee and who had learned their military tactics and invasion routes. It is a sad comment that the Cherokee egalitarian way of adopting and accepting outsiders into a clan backfired so dramatically.

In 1775 the Transylvania Company negotiated extensively with the Great Council of the Cherokee to discuss the "land transaction" which resulted in an illegal treaty at Sycamore Shoals. In this treaty, the eight or so members of the Transylvania Company purchased 17 million acres of Cherokee territory, all that lay between the Ohio and Tennessee rivers. (The egalitarianism of the Cherokee was evident during the Great Council meeting, at which about 5,000 people appeared to participate in the decision to sell the lands.) The treaty was illegal because only the Crown had the authority to purchase land from the Indians (King, 1979:xiv). Boone's part in the Treaty was clear: as a member of the Transylvania Company, and long-time employee of Findley, he stood to gain, if nothing else, the job of building the Wilderness Road. At best, he stood to profit from the sale of the lands to westward migrants. As he wrote some twenty years later to the Governor of Kentucky:

(dated "feburey the 11th 1796"). Sir, after my Best Respts to your Excelancy and family I wish to inform you that I have sum intention of undertaking this New Rode that is to be Cut through the Wilderness and I think My Self intiteled to the ofer of the Bisness as I first Marked out that Rode in March 1775 and never Re'd anything for my trubel and Sepose I am No Statesman I am a Woodsman and think My Self as Capable of Marking and Cutting that Roade as any other man. Sir if you think with Me I would thank you to wright mee a Line By the post the first opportuneaty and he Will Lodge it at Mr. John Miler son hinkston fort as I wish to know Where and When it is to Laat So that I may atend at the time. I am Der Sir your very omble Sarvent, Daniel Boone. To his Excelancy governor Shelby. 11

The Cherokee were a people attacked, murdered and pushed aside during the early settling of Appalachia. To simply state that the Cherokee were pushed aside is a truly inadequate comment to make. Fifty years after the Treaty at Sycamore Shoals, in 1830, they were forcibly ousted by the U.S. Government from their lands and moved west of the Mississippi to what is now Oklahoma through Andrew Jackson's Indian Policy. Their westward journey became known as the "March of Tears". This event was a result of U.S. Policy, but the social and economic pressures which led to it may have included the fact that as a land-based people, they posed a very clear threat to the southern plantation owners who needed the land for tobacco. The removal of the Cherokee, a bitter and political move, may also have been related to the alliance between southern escaped negroes and the Cherokee which posed a threat to southern plantation owners. McNickle¹² has suggested that many Georgians thought that the Cherokee would free their slaves, or ally with them and attack the whites. "...this suggestion that the Cherokees might be contemplating the freeing of their slaves must have set many Georgians to thinking that the time had come to take action" (1949:233). Not all the Cherokee left however, a sizable group escaped into North Carolina, and became known as the "Eastern Branch". They still live there today.

The suffering and pain experienced by the colonists during the Indian Wars could not have exceeded the pain and suffering experienced by the Cherokee at this time. Although American lore provides mythical dimensions to the importance of Daniel Boone's pioneering and to the horror of the Indian, in fact, both the colonists and Indians had shifting allies and enemies in the gradual negotiating of the territory. By 1830, the pushing west of the frontier had been going on for about 100 years. It had become more formalized by Jackson. As a result, Appalachia became settled through the sloughing off of people on their way to somewhere else. The early fights over the territory--where the Cherokee tried to keep others from staking a claim on their lands--shifted from searching for access and control over the contours and wild richness of the land, to the minerals which lay beneath.

Pioneers and Immigrants

The relative speed of westward expansion was tempered somewhat by the needs of the travelers. Frederic Jackson Turner (1893) notes

The early settlers were tied to the coast by the need of salt; without which they could not preserve their meats or live in comfort.... They ... require salt and other necessities which they can neither manufacture nor raise. Either they must go to Charleston, which is 300 miles distant ... or else they must go down to Boling's Point in Va. on a branch of the James and is also 300 miles from here.... An annual pilgrimage for salt thus became essential.... But when the discovery was made of

the salt springs of the Kanawha, and the Holston, and Kentucky, and central New York, the West began to be freed from dependence on the coast. It was in part the effect of finding these salt springs that enabled the settlement to cross the mountains.¹³

The first discovery salt was in 1800, made by James Collins, by following buffalo tracks. In 1804, a salt mine in Ballenger, Tennessee was sold to James White, a Virginia native. By 1846, the mine was producing 200,000 bushels of salt annually. Campbell suggests that "so great indeed was the attraction of the salt works as to lead to a back settlement of this section from central Kentucky, and tradition presents the picture of wealthy landlords from the Bluegrass living on baronial mountain estates in almost feudal fashion, surrounded by slaves and retainers" (1921:42). Salt thus became one of the first mineral industries in Appalachia. It was quickly followed by the discovery of gold in Georgia in 1826. The gold rush drew hundreds--perhaps thousands--of people into the mountains. The rush was short-lived when, it turned out, the lands were not rich. Many of the immigrants remained in the mountains, buying up what had suddenly become cheap land.

Gold was looked for in all these Cherokee counties, and so the lots were only 40 acres in size. When gold was not found, and there was no indication of it, the lands were very cheap; from \$10.00 to \$20.00 was the price of a single lot, and many a man bought a small farm for the price of an Indian pony. The cheapness of the lands led to rapid and thick settlement. The country was soon filled up with enterprising young people, and numbers who became substantial farmers on the large farms began life in one of these Cherokee Counties on forty acres of poor land".¹⁴

The early mineral industries served to pull immigrants further into the mountains. Most of these immigrants established farms. Between 1794--the end of the Cherokee Wars--and 1880, when industrialism became the strongest segment of the economy, the "traditional" mountain farmer came into his own. During this period the threat of death by Indians ceased, and the settlers lived in what one tends to think of as "the" cultural past in Appalachia--dispersed mountain households. There were actually five different patterns of settlement in the mountains: gap, cove, hollow, ridge and meadow communities, but the cove and hollow settlements were the most common.¹⁵ The typical pattern was clusters of two or three households, rarely more. The settlers lived in a farming and trading economy. Unlike the large plantations to the south, worked by slaves, these farms were smaller in scale, and didn't specialize in selling the raw products of cotton and tobacco. Instead, the farm was worked by a large family, or group of families, especially since there were many widows at the beginning of the 19th century, growing wheat, oats, buckwheat, barley, corn, rye, peas, flax, beans and potatoes. The mountain farmers manufactured less than the farmers of New England, who preferred to sell their products as cider and cheese and, later, textiles; but they manufactured more than the Southern farmers who sold raw products. Corn would be made into whiskey, hogs sold as lard and cured meat, and milk

turned into butter. Grains might be made into flour, but were often as not sold as grain. The mountain farmers were tied into a different system of trade from that of the southern and northern farmers. The economy was situated largely within the Appalachian region, but extended along trade routes as far north as Montreal and south as New Orleans. The farmers themselves did not travel this far, but their goods could. Arnow writes:

Farming was for most, not a job, but a way of life, and though forever at the mercy of the seasons and the markets, the farmer was essentially his own boss. He had constantly throughout his life to be making troublesome decisions on what to plant and what to sell and what to buy. In spite of the great deal of advice on farming in current books and periodicals, nothing could tell the farmer how much corn he planted in April would bring in December, or as long as Spain controlled the lower Mississippi, if it could be got to market at all (1984:233).

The decisions an individual farmer might make were subsumed within the larger realities of business trade.

In spite of being rooted in the traditions and laws of England, business on the Cumberland had a flavor all its own. Once any settler had crossed the Appalachian Mountains, he became part of the old French trade pattern. At the settlement of the Cumberland it was almost a hundred years since La Salle had come down the Mississippi in 1684....¹⁶

So the families of the Cumberland went about their lives running their farms; this meant keeping track of their tools, building fences to contain the livestock, and growing corn. Fields were tilled by hand--there doesn't seem to be any record of pulling plows in this area--men used hoes. There were several types of hoes: a long-handled, hickory

hoe with a thick blade at right angles to it; there were grubbing hoes, hilling and "widding" hoes, a narrow-bladed hoe for cane, a "sang-hoe" for using in the woods.¹⁷ Hoes were made by blacksmiths out of iron and were fairly inexpensive. The iron, of course, came from the early iron mills, and the melting of it was fueled by coal from the few coal mines which operated in the early 19th century.¹⁸

Early Industrialization

Gutman has pointed out that the difference between pre-industrial society and agrarian society is the change in work habits which occurs with industrialization. In pre-industrial society, there were only a few factories, mills and mines, which demanded organizing time and labor by those other than the workers themselves. From 1815-1843, he suggests, American society was predominantly preindustrial, in which most of the workers "drawn to its few factories were the products of rural and village preindustrial culture" (1966:13). From 1843 until 1893, "a profound tension existed between the older American preindustrial social structure and the modernizing institutions that accompanied the development of industrial capitalism. After 1893 the United States ranked as a mature industrial society" (1966:13).

The period of the most intense agricultural life in the Southern Highlands occurred during the pre-industrial period

and during the "tension" of the transition to mature industrialism. It is difficult to assess just how the mountaineers experienced this tension. The shift from the family farm to life in the mills and the mines was indeed profound, and altered the pattern of settlement to more nucleated towns. It would be a mistake, however, to think that the shift in settlement patterns caused by industrialization occurred without prior notice; the farmers certainly had plenty of contact with people who didn't farm, especially the traders. In fact, given the number of currencies in use at the time,¹⁹ the farmers undoubtedly witnessed evidence of a larger world through their contract with traders.

In 1880 the size of an average farm was 187 acres; 50 years later it was 76 acres, with some as small as 46 acres. Eller points out that "while the total number of farms increased [between 1880-1930], the total amount of land in the farms decreased almost 20 percent as a result of the purchase of farm properties by timber and mining companies, and for inclusion in national forests and parks" (Eller 1982:xix). Agriculture declined and patterns of settlement changed with the beginnings of these industries. By 1900, the population began to shift to centers of industrial growth. Most of these centers were company towns. Between 1900 and 1930, over 600 company towns were constructed, and these outnumbered independent towns five to one (Eller 1982:xx).

The existence of coal was known at least as early as 1785, when Thomas Jefferson wrote "coal is known to be in so many places, as to have induced an opinion that the whole tract between the Laurel Mountain and Ohio yields coal".²⁰ The coal was left relatively untouched for a century. During the Civil War there were only 1600 miners in the state, employed in 185 mines. These mines were to the south in Kanawha County, and the coal was primarily used for boiling the brine in blacksmithing.²¹ It was impossible to exploit the coal because of the difficulty of transportation in and out of the mountains. By 1880 money became available to build the railroads necessary to wind into the mountains, and the money for a network of roads became available through a set of competing investors--J.P. Morgan, John D. Rockefeller, E.H. Harriman, Abram Hewitt, Peter Cooper, Henry H. Rodgers and John Camden. The largest railroad was the Norfolk and Western (N & W), and its owner, Frederick J. Kimball, was enticed by Jedidiah Hotchkiss, a northern capitalist, to the possibilities of wealth which could derive from ownership of the coal lands. "Kimball believed that the rich coal deposits of this district would not only provide cheap fuel for his growing railroad but would also allow the N & W to compete with the C & O in the profitable eastern coal trade".²² The N & W began construction into the heart of the Flat Top fields in West Virginia, and aimed

to promote coal mining to the point that it provided the livelihood of the railroad itself.

To profit more directly from the wealth they had uncovered and to assure a steady flow of traffic on their railroad, the directors of the N & W took an active role in the development of the Flat Top coal and timber lands. Shortly after the decision to build the New River branch, Edward W. Clark, senior partner of E.W. Clark and Associates, moved to acquire ownership of the best lands in the Flat Top region. (Eller, p. 71.)

At the same time, Hotchkiss bought up large tracts of nearby land, and threatened to sell his lands to the C&O, scaring Clark into a negotiation to acquire Hotchkiss' lands to consolidate his monopoly. In 1888, Clark formed the Flat Top Land Association. This early pattern of owning large tracts of coal-rich land characterized the development of the coal fields in general in West Virginia and elsewhere in Appalachia. So, at this time, the ownership of Appalachia began to shift from internal ownership--or ownership by the people who lived on their own land--to ownership by outsiders, who rented the land to residents, and who exploited the minerals below the surface.²³

Gaining access to the mountains was the first step in developing the coal industry. Finding good markets was the next. Before 1898 the market for Appalachian coal was the eastern states and the transoceanic trade; this was a good but limited market. The opportunity for growth came with the penetration of the Great Lakes trade. This was lucrative due to the presence of iron ore mines around the lakes

and the steel mills in Detroit. The Appalachian coal was of better quality than the midwestern (Illinois, Ohio and Indiana) coal, and it could be delivered to the Great Lakes cheaply, since the N&W extended to the Ohio river, where the coal could be transported on barges. Further, the cost of labor for mountain miners was cheaper than that of midwestern miners, so the cost of production was cheaper, making the Appalachian coal more competitive. The penetration of the Great Lakes market fueled the extraordinary growth of the coal industry.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, coal was king of the industrial world. The black dusty mineral not only fired the boilers of locomotives, factories, and ships, but it also fueled the generators of the new electric power plants and warmed the homes of the urban middle class. In its processed form (coke), coal was a critical element in the manufacture of iron and steel. Until it was dethroned by the rise of oil and gas after World War I, coal was the primary source of cheap energy for the United States and much of Europe. Without the ready availability of coal, the American drive for industrial maturity after 1890 would have been considerably slowed. (Eller, 1982:128.)

Starting a coal mine was relatively easy. It took little capital investment because labor was cheap, little machinery was required, and men used their own tools. As I describe in Chapter III, the early mine owners operated mines which used slope the mining technique, that is, the coal was extracted from a hillside from which the ore protruded, the miners simply entered the mine through the seam at the side of the hill. This required no large outlay

of capital to build machinery (such as elevators for a shaft), it only involved purchased mules, tonnage cars and track. The mood of the time was eager: companies and railroads were anxious to develop their properties. As Richard Hathaway Edmonds, the editor of the Manufacturers' Record, put it:

In this great Appalachian area are great latent resources, awaiting development, resources great enough to enrich empires. [The region is like a central bank], the richest on earth, more feasible of financial development than anything on the American continent. ²⁴

The pouring of money into the mining industry powerfully affected the population and the settlement pattern. West Virginia experienced the most profound transformation of any state with the concentration of mines there. The increase in coal was matched by an increase in population.

Demographic Changes

In 1871, West Virginia became interested in attracting foreigners to the state. A State Immigration Commissioner was appointed that year by the name of Joseph H. Diss Debar, who recruited agricultural workers from his native Switzerland. Many, of course, also came from elsewhere in Europe. The total West Virginia population in 1880 was 3,701, and by 1917 it had reached 88,665. In 1890 much of West Virginia was unsettled. Between 1890 and 1920, portions of the state had a fourfold increase in population and some counties had a ninefold increase.

The people who came to live in the state were both mountain natives, who left their farms to go to the mines to get high wages²⁵, and immigrants. The chart illustrates the national

National Origins of W.V. Miners²⁶

	<u>1880</u>	<u>1900</u>	<u>1911</u>	<u>1917</u>
White*	2,777	12,028	30,094	48,237
Italian	----	554	8,184	7,388
Hungarian	----	----	4,106	4,346
Polish	----	220	2,181	2,117
English	447	1,053	505	----
Slav	----	----	1,841	1,215
Negro	----	4,620	11,950	18,128
Other	477	1,812	11,783**	7,234***
Total	3,701	20,287	70,644	88,665

 * "Whites" here refers to native Appalachians.

** In 1911, this large number of "other" miners was composed largely of Russian, Austrian, Roumanian, Scotch, and Irish.

*** In 1917, the "other" miners were Austrian and Russian.

origins of the miners during this time span.

Different accounts report some variety in exactly how many miners there were during these early years. While the chart shows that there were no Italian, Hungarian, Polish and Negro coal miners in 1880, other sources indicate that there were indeed some. Corbin (1979:8) suggests that in 1880 there were a total of 924 European miners, which expanded to 28,000 by 1910. Northrup (1985:159) puts the total number of coal miners in 1880 at 9,605. Austro-Hungarian and Slav miners increased after 1915, with the entry of Italy into the war. After 1900, the census of miners included quarrymen along with coal miners, so the figures are inflated a bit.

While native white mountaineers composed the majority of the work force in the mines, it is easy to see that number of the European immigrants swelled between 1880 and 1911, and that the number of negroes swelled between 1911 and 1917. During this period time coal operators recruited negroes from the south (where they worked on plantations) as strikebreakers. The operators assumed that racial differences would serve as sufficient deterrent to the formation of the union--they thought that the white northern miners would not mobilize inexperienced, black miners. They hoped that the consequence of this recruitment would reduce the strength that the northern miners were gaining as a group, and the miners in northern West Virginia were the most mobilized and unionized. How were the operators able to

entice black southern agricultural workers to the northern mines, and invite them to play a role in demobilizing the workers? The relative success in recruitment was due to the following factor: as agricultural rather than industrial workers, the southern negroes were unaware of the nature of industrial conflict, and initially unaware of their role as strikebreakers. On the 'recruiting trips' negroes were brought north under false pretenses.

The coal companies often desired to recruit Negro miners in order to have a "judicious mixture" of white native miners, Negroes and immigrants in order to forestall unionism by playing one group off against another.... In order to attract Negro miners, agents were often employed to travel to the South to recruit the men. Some of the companies employed tough "Baldwin-Felts guards" to be agents. They usually traveled in pairs, were well armed and carried a large amount of cash to use in enticing the miners to come to the State. The mine guards were accompanied by two colored recruiters "who were skillfully selected for their persuasive eloquence and conscienceless disregard of the truth". At their destination, the agents would disappear while the colored recruiters held mass meetings in such places as churches where the "spellbinders" described the advantages and opportunities of working the West Virginia mines.... Once on the train, the men were placed under the control of the Baldwin-Felts men who kept the coach doors locked until it arrived at its destination. (Northrup 1985:163).

The United Mineworkers of America (UMW) was founded in 1890 as a merger of the Progressive Miners Union and the Knights of Labor District Assembly No. 135. It organized on an industrial basis, including all people who worked in and around the mines. Regardless of the particular position a miner worked (in the tippie gang or as an undercutter, for example), the "special feeling of unity among all mine

workers engendered by the isolation of the mining towns" was present (Northrup, 1985:163). Although the negroes were brought in as strikebreakers, they were not effective because the union was careful to recruit them into its ranks. In so doing, it reduced potential violence along racial lines at the same time that it swelled the union ranks. Nonetheless, the recruitment was not as smooth as some union officials hoped, as the rank and file tended to divided themselves along the lines of "mountaineer and immigrant" versus "black". The coal operators took full advantage of this internal conflict, telling the black miners that if the UMW became successful, they would lose their jobs (Northrup, 1985:165).

From 1880 until 1917, the beginning of World War I, as the mining industry entered the mountains via the rails, mines of all sizes from "snowbird" operations (seasonal mines which operated with a handful of miners, operating usually during the winter when coal demand was at its peak) to the beginnings of giant corporations prospered.

. . . at times during this period the demand was almost unlimited. Between 1909 and 1917, the total numbers of coal mines in the United States increased by more than a third, and the largest percentage of that increase came in the South. (Eller, 1982:153-154).

Prices of coal at a national level stabilized in 1917 with the War, but the demand for coal remained unlimited. This continued until 1923. That year bituminuous coal production reached its height.

Yet, just as coal reached the pinnacle of its power, inherent weaknesses in the industry became apparent and began to take their toll. The first sign of trouble came in the fall of 1923, when orders for winter fuel supplies began to decline. The European mines' return to production and slower growth rates in midwestern industries caused a sharp drop in the demand for American coal. The slump was aggravated in 1924, when coal consumers continued to utilize the large reserves they had accumulated in anticipation of a possible labor strike. (Eller:1982:156.)

The decline of the industry in the 1920s affected the workers deeply. Violent strikes broke out in southern West Virginia where many non-union miners were employed, and the union began a big push for recruitment. This was particularly successful in the northern part of the state, where Decker's Creek is located. The miners, mostly Italian and eastern European immigrants, saw a marked increase in union activism. In 1928, however, the Decker's Creek was closed, forcing miners into a constant search for work, hopping from one mine to the next.

At the same time that there was a decrease in the national demand for coal, mine owners were investing capital to mechanize the mines. Putting more miners out of work, and giving the coal operators greater control over the mining process, this fueled the unionism movement. (See Chapter III for further discussion of these events.) The immigrants had few options available to them for other sorts of work, since they had grown up, in a sense, in the coal industry, and the native mountaineer miners were just as

limited in their options, since they had lost their family farms.

Caught up in the social complex of the new industrial communities, many mountaineers found themselves unable to escape their condition of powerlessness and dependency. By coming to a coal mining town, the miner had exchanged the independence and somewhat precarious self-sufficiency of the family farm for subordination to the coal company and dependence on a wage income. (Eller, 1978:41.)

The coming of the mines thus restructured Appalachian society both socially and economically. The entire region was physically linked to the highly industrialized east coast and prosperous Great Lakes region via the railroad. Tracts of land which, in 1880 were small family farms, were by 1920 owned by wealthy men from the north. Eller notes in a survey of coal operators between 1880 and 1930, 80.8% of these coal barons in southern West Virginia were from non-mountain areas, mainly the north (Eller, 1982:202). By the turn of the century some of the small, independent mines began to be consolidated into larger ones, and the process of outside corporate ownership had begun.

The proliferation of coal companies and the rapid increase in coal production [at the end of the 19th century] soon left the field overexpanded. Unable to meet the rising competition and growing expenses, many operators began to sell out to larger firms. By 1906, a movement to consolidate the small independent mines into large mining corporations was evident, and an increasing number of mines were coming under the direct control of major coal consumers such as U.S. Steel, International Harvester, and the Ford Motor Company.... As corporate executives gradually replaced owner-operators in the management of the mines, company policies toward business problems and community relations changed as

well. With few exceptions, the new generation of professional managers continued to reflect the migration of outside businessmen into the region, but now, more than ever, many of the decisions that affected economic growth and social welfare in the mountains came from nonresident corporation heads. (Eller, 1982:203)²⁷

The Cultural "Invention" of Appalachia

The history of the settlement and change in Appalachia from the 16th to the 20th centuries illustrates the dramatic way in which an entire region is affected by the emergence and maturing of industrialization. Although this process is familiar to us in other parts of the world--notably Latin America and Africa--where studies of the effects of colonization, outside ownership, modernization and development and underdevelopment are commonplace, these same models require more of a conceptual leap to explain and understand change within the United States . They do shed light on uneven development in our own history, and of the particular way in which the underdeveloped segment of the country is integrated in the nation. The cultural enclave that results is broadly categorized as "hillbilly" terrain, resistant to mass society and a preserve of archaic forms.

The creation of the idea of the hillbilly coincided with the industrialization of Appalachia. At that time the notion of industrial progress was made all the more apparent by setting it next to the "backward", non-technological, non-developed southern mountain region.

The settling of Appalachia from the late 1700s to the late 1800s is a case in which immigrant-pioneers moved westward away from growing industrialization in the east. They were caught, willy-nilly, in the industrialization of the mountains two generations later. The way of life which these settlers appeared to have sought was quickly idealized by "outsiders" to the region, within a generation of the ascendancy of coal. While it is clear from tracing the history of immigration that the people who settled in the mountains were by turn English, Welsh, Scottish, as well as second generation "American" (Virginians, North Carolinians), this diverse group soon came to be known as "native Appalachian". The process of becoming unified into a cultural group can be understood as a process of ethnic identification. In the case of the Appalachians, it is less a question of the inhabitants of the mountains categorizing themselves as "Appalachian" projecting a particular mountaineer image, than a case of definition by others.

The imposition of a cultural identity onto these people emerged at about the same time as the coal boom. At the beginning of the 20th century several magazines--Harpers and Lippincotts, for example--began to publish "local color" stories about the Appalachian territory. Eller explicates this process as

The belief that time and geography somehow set the southern mountains off from the rest of the American experience has been part of our understanding of Appalachia for almost a hundred years. As early as

the 1870s, writers for the new monthly magazines which flourished after the Civil War had begun to develop and exploit a literary image of the region. [Several writers] were quick to turn the quaint and simple lives of the mountaineers into grist for the literary mill. Between 1870 and 1890, over two hundred travel accounts and short stories were published in which the mountain people emerged as a rude, backward, romantic and some-times violent race who had quietly lived for generations in isolation from the mainstream of American life. (Eller 1982:xvi)

These travel accounts, full of adventure, described the hardship of travel in "a strange land" and among "Peculiar People" (Shapiro, 1978:3). The traits distinguishing them from the rest of the United States, were cast as a remnant of early America, and not part of modern America. As Shapiro argues (1978:5):

The cumulative effect of the publication of the numerous descriptive sketches and short stories of local color which took Appalachia as a subject was the establishment of a conventional view of the mountain region as an area untouched by the progressive and unifying forces that seemed to be at work elsewhere in the United States.

By 1890, concern about the degradation and degeneracy of Appalachia emerged in the form of "uplift" literature and action, and missionaries (also called "benevolence workers") moved into the region. Shapiro notes (1978:32)

The local-color writers saw Appalachia as an 'unknown' land because they had never been there. In the same way, the home missionaries of the northern Protestant churches saw Appalachia as an "unchurched" land because their denominations were not represented there. The same kind of assumption concerning the otherness of Appalachia, which made the region seem an appropriate field for literary exploitation, thus made it seem a suitable field of action for home missionary endeavor.

Among the missionaries were John C. and Olive Dame Campbell who in contrast to many others, were able to describe the region physically and culturally, with some objectivity. They distinguished the heterogeneous population living there, characterizing the several immigrant groups according to their history of arrival in contrast to most "benevolent" workers and writers who viewed the mountaineers as a homogeneous a group of transported Irish and Scotch. This putative culture accounted for their feuding and moonshining. Set apart from Americans, being more European, meant that they were still not "of" America, yet shared enough of a civilized past to warrant helping them out. This gave reason for remedial, uplift work. As William Goodell Frost wrote in 1900:

It is well to remember that the whole South is still far nearer than the other parts of the country to the age of chivalry when all gentlemen wore side arms and felt that the Government was simply to defend them from foreign foes, while they were to rely upon their own prowess to protect their households and their honor.... Add to this that the mountaineer has the independent spirit born of solitude.... It gives us hope for their future that the frequent homicides are not committed wantonly nor for purposes of robbery, but in the spirit of an Homeric chieftain on some "point of honor".... Their exaggerated individuality is only offset by a spirit of clannishness with which they gather around a leader in the old feudal way.²⁸

Frost actually conceptualized, hence "invented" Appalachia. In the late 19th century the region was referred to as either the Central South or the "mountainous backyards" of the eight southern states. It was, Shapiro says,

seen to be characterized by the persistence of rude and primitive patterns of social and economic organization more appropriate to the frontier status it once had, than to its current location at the very heart of the oldest and most civilized area of the nation. Appalachia was simply "behind the times", but this very fact, repeated often enough in travel accounts, short stories and in the literature of social uplift, seemed sufficient basis for the construction of a generalization concerning the coherence of mountain culture and the homogeneity of the mountain population. And it was this which made possible the redefinition of Appalachia as a discrete region of the nation and the redefinition of the mountaineers as a distinct population, and thereby made possible the legitimation of Appalachian otherness (1978:115).

In 1899, Frost suggested calling this area "Appalachian America" and defined, by way of naming, the region itself.

The "discovery" of Appalachia as a distinct region with a distinct culture occurred at a time when social theory sought to understand individuals in relation to "place". This strategy contrasted with social theory in the 17th and 18th centuries, in which the relationship of the individual and the society lacked reference to space or time (Shapiro, 1983:112). By the end of the 19th century, explanations of culture focused largely on environment, so that "the ladder of eighteenth-century social hierarchy...was turned and laid on its edge" (Shapiro, 1983:132) and the component steps of the ladder became distinct units, to be analyzed according to cultural content and relative physical distance. Accordingly, the discovery of Appalachia was described in these terms, seeing the environment as a critical aspect of "mountaineer life", and assessing the sort of people mountaineers

were according to their social, cultural and physical distance from other Americans.

The view of Americans toward Appalachia, though, reflected their concerns with progressiveness, or lack thereof, in a region which at the time was a rich resource in both timber and coal. At the same time that local color writers described the wild native population, the railroads were being built, mines were increasing in number, and the industrialization of the mountains was in full force. Plaut (1983) and Lewis (1978) argue that the irony of this view served to justify removing these "uncultured" inhabitants from the land they wished to develop.²⁹ Whether or not this is so, it is clear that the sketches drawn of Appalachians in the late 19th and early 20th centuries provided the basis upon which later 20th century Appalachians derived pride and identity, redefining the "hillbilly" image, and reconstructing it as a means of defending their way of life against the industrial onslaught of their land and lives. After some reflection, Appalachians might best be described as "other" on the basis of their control--or lack of control--over the major resources in the area, rather than on the basis of cultural peculiarity.

The "hillbilly" stereotype popularly refers to the pre-industrial era of dispersed households as though they existed in pristine society. It is clear, however, that pristine society never existed, and the earliest written

records show that the Cherokee, who preceded the mountaineers living in dispersed households by 200 years, were themselves negotiating turf and kin with the Spaniards and escaped Negro slaves. The settlement patterns and form of small-scale agricultural production which were disrupted by industrialization had, in fact, only been in place for about 80 years.

The critical period of the late 19th century and early 20th century altered--for the second time--the settlement patterns and mode of production in the mountainous south. This transition from pre-industrial to industrial and capitalist society meant that the Appalachians were caught in a major social and economic shift. Mining families experienced this change both within the home and at the workplace, because as the region was industrialized, new patterns of work underground emerged as did new patterns of ownership of the mines and towns.

The mining families of Decker's Creek began their working lives during the height of this change. They moved into a region which had housed an old iron mill--left from the earlier industrial wave--which was home to Scotch and Welsh immigrants of the 19th century. Decker's Creek was built in 1906 nearby other small communities which had already met their industrial demise. (See Appendix II for a WPA description of these communities.) The Decker's Creek miners were, between 1906 and 1915, the new immigrants,

newcomers and strangers to a milltown area. Unlike their neighbors "on the mountain" behind their community who were of Welsh and Scotch descent, intermarried and deformed and, at the time unemployed, the Decker's Creek residents represented a variety of nationalities, spoke a variety of languages and all were becoming coal miners.

The following chapter illustrates the nature of life underground and aboveground in the 1920s for the mining families of Decker's Creek. It examines the source of work consciousness both within the community and the mine.

NOTES

1. Chroniclers of the de Soto expedition began their observations in 1540, but did not publish until 1557. The narratives have been collected in a volume entitled Narratives of the Career of Hernando de Soto, 2 volumes, New York, 1922 by Edward Gaylord Bourne.
2. In The Cherokee Indian Nation: A Troubled History, ed. Duane H. King, University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, 1979.
3. Perdue, Theda; Slavery and the Evolution of Cherokee Society 1540-1866; University of Tennessee at Knoxville, 1979.
4. Vilar, quoted in Wallerstein, 1974:168.
5. Historical Sketch of the Cherokee, (Aldine, Chicago, 1975 reprint).
6. "Introduction" North American Indians in Historical Perspective, ed. Eleanor Burke Leacock and Nancy Oestrich Lurie; Random House, N.Y., 1971.
7. Harriette Arnow, The Flowering of the Cumberland, University of Kentucky Press, 1984.
8. "Notes on Settlements and Indian Wars of the Western Parts of Virginia and Pennsylvania" by Rev. Jas. Doddridge, in S. Kercheval A History of the Valley of Virginia, 1833.
9. Both sociologists and labor historians have referred to the traditional Appalachian family and settlement pattern which they view as having been substantially altered by growing industrialization. (See Lewis, Corbin, and Eller, for example, all of whom provide insightful treatment of the shifts brought about by industrialism, but all of whom refer to "traditional" social patterns as if they were pristine). Although it is certainly true that industrialization did alter the settlement patterns, one should be wary of viewing these forms as "traditional", they had scarcely existed for 100 years when full-blown industrialization occurred. Such a view is prey to the idea of the traditional Appalachian as pristine native.
10. Campbell, 1921:28.
11. As quoted in Robert F. Collins, A History of the Daniel Boone National Forest, 1770-1970, USDA Forest Service, 1975.

12. D'Arcy McNickle, They Came Here First, The Epic of the American Indian, New York and Philadelphia, Lippincott, 1949.
13. Frederick Jackson Turner; The Frontier in American History, Report of the American Historical Association, 1893.
14. George Gillman Smith; The Story of Georgia and the Georgia People, 1732-1860; in Campbell, 1921:43.
15. Wilhelm, Gene Jr., "Folk Settlements in the Blue Ridge Mountains" Appalachian Journal 5(2):207-240; Winter 1978.
16. Ibid.
17. Op. cit., Arnow, 1984:239.
18. See Corbin, 1981:2.
19. Arnow notes that during the Revolution the British brought gold with them, the Spanish and French brought in their own currencies--both paper and silver. Traders had to reckon cost in terms of shillings, beaver hides, spanish dollars, gold and silver, and not all reckoned these the same way. "James Shaw...thought in terms of colonial law and pounds and pence. The trouble was that to Martin Armstrong, come out from North Carolina in 1784, the pound meant 966-3/4 grains of fine silver, while to Captain John Donnelson, lately of Virginia and Kentucky, it meant 1,289 grains, and hence, each a different number of shillings" (1984:339, quoting Ashe, Travels).
20. Notes on Virginia, quoted in Phil Conley, History of the Coal Industry of West Virginia, Charleston 1965).
21. Op. cit., Corbin, 1981:18.
22. Joseph T. Lambie, From Mine to Market: This History of Coal Transportation on the Norfolk and Western Railway, New York: 1954; quoted in Eller, p. 69.
23. In his chapter entitled "A Field for Capitalists", Eller gives considerable detail about the people who were involved in purchasing the tracts of land in Appalachia, and who provided the capital to them. He clearly illustrates the origins of land ownership in Appalachia which have developed in almost total outside ownership today.
24. Richard H. Edmonds, "Latent Resources of the South", Appalachian Trade Journal May 1910.

25. Kenneth R. Bailey, "A Judicious Mixture: Negroes and Immigrants in the West Virginia Mines, 1880-1917", in Blacks in Appalachia, Ed. William H. Turner and Edward J. Cabbell; University of Kentucky Press; Lexington; 1985:117.

26. From Kenneth R. Bailey, 1985:119.

27. Eller devotes a full chapter in his book to the owners of the mines at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. He interviewed several of these men in the mid-1970s, by then old men, and drew upon their reflections to gain insight into the pressures and competition they experienced at the time.

28. William Goodell Frost, "The Southern Mountaineer: Our Kindred of the Boone and Lincoln Type" in American Review of Reviews, 21:303-311; March 1900.

29. This is similar to the current view of Brazilian Amazonians that Chagnon perpetuates.

CHAPTER III

Community, Work and the Union
Life in the 1920s and 1930sIntroduction

In this chapter I describe the interrelationship of the forms of work in the community and in the mines in Decker's Creek. The lack of a distinct border between the domestic and work worlds in the company town marks the extreme example which coal mining communities provide in understanding work process, gender relations and power relations. The older people in Decker's Creek shared the experience of having lived through the company town days. This experience--outlined in this chapter--was so powerful that it unified them first as workers, as mining families and as community members. Later in their lives, this shared experience distinguished them from their younger neighbors on the basis of generation. The days of welfare capitalism and company towns may be gone, but the people aren't. To the families of Decker's Creek, those days don't seem to be very far in the past. These families live in the same houses they lived in when the company owned the town, and although today the houses are paneled, have new aluminum siding, basements and garages, the mark of the company is still evident. The architectural style of the company house--a small, wood-frame, two-story structure, with a front porch and back door into the kitchen--is stamped upon each dwell-

ing in the community. The sheds in the back yards, which today house lawnmowers and shears, once stored coal for the stoves. These visual, material reminders, however, are simply more obvious than the other ways in which the company and the times left their mark. The subtler reminders can be discovered in memories and in social patterns still played out today. In this chapter, I explore what life during company town days was like for the inhabitants, focusing on men's work, women's work, the company town and unionism. I argue that the work conditions, the social relations of production and the subjective experience of these underlies the "social rules" which operate within the community today. In the next chapter, I describe community life today, and examine how present day social patterns reflect the consciousness about work and community engendered 50 to 60 years ago.

To analyse life in the company town I attempt to blend a variety of theoretical approaches. While these could be broadly categorized as "emic" and "etic", I find it more useful to use other, more specific terms. To illustrate how the residents interpret their own lives, I rely upon life stories of two particularly articulate individuals, Raymond and Kate.

The stories themselves reveal how the residents view their lives in the social contexts which they deem relevant. This approach has been used by symbolic anthropologists who

seek to discover the meaning of people's lives. In order to place the stories in a wider historical and political and economic context, I look at the writing of observers during the 1920s and 1930s, and at the parallel studies of company towns during that era by a political economist and labor historian. To a degree, I use the approach of early cultural ecology-cum-economic anthropology, remembering that Leslie White linked technological change with the harnessing of greater energy, which in turn influenced changes in social organization.

One of the salient features of the coal industry during the 1920s and 1930s was the shift in how extraction processes. Although some mechanical devices had been invented as early as 1870 (Eller, Gaventa) they did not become widely used in Appalachia until about 1930. The miners with whom I worked did not begin to use machines until that time, and started their mining lives hand-loading coal. This change in the technology of extracting coal was important to the miners because it altered the organization of work within the mine. The technological changes will be described below.

During the mining years the nature of life underground affected the full flow of life within the family and the community. The social relations of production were small-scale, face-to-face and intense. The inherent danger of mining, hostile management-worker relations and the unpre-

dictability of work only exacerbated the fact that the company town provided no security to the workers and their families. Family and friends were important providers of care, the necessary anchors to an unpredictable worklife and home.

Work has been the keystone of social relations, values and identity for the residents of Decker's Creek for many years. When the men of the community worked as paid laborers the organization of these values stemmed from the importance of the coal company to the community. When they retired, these values became organized around unpaid, domestic work.

The nature of the work experience differed for men and women. Looking at the labor process for each gender enables one to better understand the social structure of the community, as the difficult conditions of the company town required such a large output of labor. After a discussion of immigration, I examine the labor process of men, then that of women. I proceed to the company town and finally look at unionism.

Immigration, Labor and Work in the 1920s and 1930s

Who were the men who worked the mines? Many were agricultural workers from the Appalachian South, white and black, who were either recruited, or who found work when coal operators bought their farms and turned them into mines.

Many were immigrants. In Decker's Creek children of immigrants--Italians, Hungarians, Poles and Slavs predominated among the miners. They were born in West Virginia or Pennsylvania but grew up speaking their native tongues. A few were born in Europe, and immigrated in childhood. The Decker's Creek residents were unlike the immigrants who entered the country as adults, and the native Appalachians who grew up as agriculturalists. They grew up in the company town with a strong ethnic identity, and shared their parents' dream of returning home, prosperous, to their families abroad. Some saw this dream fail. Tony, for example, was born in 1909 in Kingwood, West Virginia. His parents, born in Ravello, Italy, were farmers who migrated to West Virginia at the turn of the century. Tony's father died in 1912, and his mother remarried another Italian immigrant. When Tony was 14, he went to mine with his stepfather.

Loading coal, that's what I was doing at the age of fourteen. That's what I helped my step-daddy do is load coal. That was back in '24. I don't know what he got for a ton of coal back then... [I gave him] the money, that's why he taken me in the coal mine. At that time we wanted to go to Italy, and I went about six months in the coal mine so he could make extra money, load more coal cars, so we could have money to take to Italy with us.

In 1925, Tony, his mother, stepfather, two sisters and stepbrother left for Italy. There, they worked in an olive grove, lived in housing which Tony remembers as "just awful". He felt his mother and sisters had to work too hard,

and he missed West Virginia. After several months they decided to return to the U.S. Tony returned first, going back into the mines to earn enough money to bring the family back. When he sent the money, his stepfather wasn't allowed to re-enter the country, since he had no biological relation to Tony. The rest of the family stayed in Italy. In 1950, Tony managed to bring his two sisters over, but by that time they couldn't adjust to American life, and after a year returned to Italy. Tony's only relatives in the U.S. are some cousins (children of his biological father's brother and sister, five of whom live in West Virginia, and four of whom live in California). Perhaps as a result of his lost kin ties, Tony was considered to be the lynchpin¹ of social relations in Decker's Creek. He had fictive kin ties with one family, and affinal kin ties with others (see Chapter IV for further detail about these relationships).

One other Italian family also returned to Italy, remained there for 26 years, and eventually came back to Decker's Creek and the mines. The mother of this family, 85 when I met her, has not seen some of her children for 20 years; they were born in Italy and didn't migrate.

The generation of immigrant's children was caught between two cultures, and their transatlantic journeys in search of a "real home", stability and prosperity resulted in the fragmentation of their families. The social relations which developed within the company town, organized

around the work of mining and survival under domination, partially alleviated the pain of this fragmentation. It also strengthened the ties within the town.

According to Montgomery (1979:32) most immigrants (54% of the males and 44% of the females) came from an agricultural background, rather than an artisan or industrial one. But only 10% of these immigrants found work in agriculture in the U.S. The others worked in the fastest-growing industrial sectors in the U.S. in 1880-1920: the rubber, chemical and oil factories. Others went into the steel mills and coal mines. They came with no industrial skills. They knew how to farm, how to garden and how to tend groves. This meant that while their work was controlled by the seasons, the daily labor was controlled by them: when to rest and when to work hard, was their own decision.

When they reached Appalachia, these immigrants were not, as Gutman has pointed out², passive clay to be molded by American industrial requirements. They had established work habits and were experienced craft workers. The alternating bouts of intense labor and idleness, which E.P. Thompson has noted exists in self-determined craft work, did not completely change when workers entered the factory. The workflow in a factory would sometimes be controlled by external factors (as when shipments of materials would arrive) suddenly requiring three days of intense labor, or by the internal factors of the work process itself. As I will

discuss below, the "alternating bouts" of intense labor and idleness persisted within the coal mines because of the kind of technology and work organization in coal mining during this period.

Men's Work: The Hand-Loading Era

Tony was a strong miner, deeply respected for his work abilities. Men would frequently comment to me "you should've seen Tony, he was as strong as two men". They spoke with awe about him. When the men talked about mining, they generally referred to the days of hand-loading. Often, sitting on the back steps in late afternoon, reminiscing about those days, they would make disparaging remarks about miners today: "These young'uns don't know a good day's work. All they do is sit up in them big machines and work the gears. Ha! Try letting them load five tons a day, and see what kind of a miner they are!"

The values placed on working hard and the hostility toward what the retired miners deemed as its opposite--working machines--make sense when one understands the work conditions of the mines during the 1920s and 1930s.

Raymond has lived in Decker's Creek since the late 1940s. His home is located at one end of the community. Originally built for the company store manager, it is larger and sturdier than most, with hardwood floors and a fireplace. Ray and his wife, Hazel, operate a small antique

business out of their home. One room and a glassed porch house a myriad of antiques, from old coke bottles to depression glass. Their home is so crowded with furniture that it is difficult to move around.

Sitting in his favorite armchair in their small, crowded, warm living room, Raymond spoke to me about the mining days. He gives the appearance of a large man; although not tall, he is heavy and large-boned, balding with thin gray hair, wire-rimmed glasses, an old plaid shirt and a shoe-string tie. Like many of the other miners in the community, he has black-lung: his breathing is labored and he tires easily. During our conversations he often dozed off or his speech became slow and hard to understand.

Somehow or another I was always so close to coal mining, that it didn't seem to me that people did anything else.... All my relatives, all my neighbors, the whole town was built around the mines, and I didn't know anybody who wasn't hooked up with the mining life. I never thought there was anything else that was worth foolin' with.

Ray went into the mines at age 14 to help bring money home to his family.

I started high school, I went 2 months to high school, we were poor people and just my dad supporting a family, and he couldn't afford to send me to school. I had to ride the train every day, to the high school, and it cost \$10 a month for train fare, and we couldn't afford it. So I just simply went to work.

The money which Raymond earned went to his mother who managed the family's finances. In return he was given meals and a place to stay. He was also given some money for

"recreation". There was little time for recreation, however, given the long, hard working days. The world of mining so dominated these little company towns that there seemed to be few available options for any other sort of life. Even when the idea of leaving became a reality, it didn't last very long.

It seemed to me like all my life was built around the coal mines, in the bituminous coal field, and regardless of the job I had, I would always go back to that. I was tempted to leave a couple of times. I went to Cumberland got a job in the tire factory over there one time; I got a job and was determined the I was going to get out of the coal mines. But eventually I got back... You get used to that pay, you can't hardly do anything outside the mines if you get used to that pay. Although the mining game itself is rather rough, that pay is what swings the deal. Today they make about \$80 a day, that's nothing to sneeze at even today. The skilled workers make up to \$100 I guess. It's good pay. You're practically raised in the mines, you know, you never had a chance to do anything else that would pay.

He served a sort of apprenticeship, although it was not formally called that, with his father and other older, experienced miners.

My dad was a coal miner, and I worked with him for maybe a year or so, but then I was put out on individual jobs I could do myself; I was put out to work alone. I started working in Pennsylvania at 14. I worked till I was 17, then we came to West Virginia, and I worked in the mines up here.... I think I was intended to be a mine foreman. I think the good Lord was kind of guiding me along. I made a good mine foreman, too, incidentally, not because I'm saying it, but others did too.³

The style of learning the work of mining was dependent upon being trained by other workers inside the mines rather than upon formal schooling. Goodrich noted (1927:37) that in

practice the miner picks up most of his knowledge from his buddy or neighbor, and hardly learns at all from his boss.

When Ray first began to work, coal mining was exclusively a hand-loading operation. During the hand-loading era, coal was extracted by underground mining, there was no "strip" mining at that time.

Extracting Coal

Underground mining involves extracting the ore without changing the contour of the surface. There are three methods of underground mining: shaft, slope and drift. When the coal is far below the surface it is necessary to sink a shaft, a long vertical hole from the surface to the seam. At the seam, horizontal entries are made. Today, the coal and the men are lifted out of the mine by elevators. If the coal is less deep, it is possible dig a tunnel horizontally into the slope of a hill. This is called "slope mining". The rock strata are blasted out until the seam is reached, and the miners and machines enter the mine on track. If the seam is very close to the surface--as occurs when there is an outcropping--the "drift" method is used. The miners and machines enter the mine directly at the seam, and no blasting of rock is required.

Shaft mining was extremely expensive prior to mechanization for a number of reasons. The equipment required for blasting a deep, vertical entry necessitated a larger capi-

tal investment for the owners than did drift or slope mining. In drift and slope mining, the owners relied upon the miners themselves to roll dynamite and blast the "rooms" from which the ore would be extracted. The miner bought the tools, the dynamite, and was paid by the ton. In shaft mining, the cost of gaining access to the mine came from the owner himself. Drift mining was therefore used most frequently. Since it allowed the miners to enter and exit the mine without use of equipment (or "man-trips"), it was very easy for the miners to leave the mine on their own and for whatever reason. Before 1920, the mine owners complained about this practice, but they had essentially no control over it. After 1920, when shaft mines became more common, the man-trip gave the owners more control over the amount of time the miners spent in the mine. . Dix (1979:157) has noted that when shaft mining did become more prevalent--due to the development of less expensive machinery-- the "cage" or "man-trip" was located on the surface of the mine, under the management's supervision. He notes "over the years, as coal output shifted to shaft from slope mines, it became increasingly difficult for the miners to leave the mine at will". The development of shaft mining did not occur as a technique for managerial control, however, shaft mining made the extraction of deep coal easier, and could develop with advanced mechanical devices and an enhanced understanding of the geological and engineering conditions. However, the

result of these engineering advances affected the work relations at the mine.

Once the ore is reached there are two main systems for getting it out of the ground. "Room and pillar" extraction involves the cutting of a series of rooms in the seam, and columns or pillars of coal are left standing to help provide support to the roof.

Longwall extraction has been described as the digging away of the entire seam of coal and filling the open space either by allowing the earth overlying the coal to fall down and close in behind the miners as they advance, or by packing in such waste rock as comes with the coal. (Lubin 1924:18.)

There are four parts to the process of extracting coal. There are undercutting, drilling, shooting and loading. Undercutting, or "mining", requires cutting into the lower edge of the coal seam with a pick, and involves swinging the pick in a confined place, usually bending over or lying on one's side. The miner had to be able to judge the quality of the coal so it wouldn't loosen so much that it would fall on him. This procedure usually took between three and six hours. If a mine were poorly drained, the miner worked in wet clothing during this time. According to Tony, the mine at Decker's Creek was "low seam"--about knee-high--so that this work was always hard on the back. Like many other miners, Tony attributes his arthritis and gnarled hands to the damp and crowded conditions in which he worked for so many years. The second part of the the extraction process was drilling. Holes were drilled in the face of the coal

with an auger which was about five and one-half feet long. The auger had a "U-crank". The angle of the drill was important, since the amount of coal which would be blasted depended on the strategic placement of the dynamite in the hole. According to John Brophy, a Appalachian miner who wrote a book about mining

If the miner judged his boring accurately, the explosion would not only break loose the coal below the hole, but it would also jolt the roof hard enough to dislodge any coal which might adhere to the roof--a prudent calculation, to get the most loose coal for the powder expended.... (Brophy 1964:44.)

The third part of extraction was blasting.

A squib--a thin roll of waxed paper about the size of the needle, with a little powder in its upper part--was then inserted into the entrance of the channel, to act as a fuse. The lower few inches of the squib contained no powder, because the time it took the paper to burn up to the powder was the time the miner gave himself to get to safety in the main entry. The miner lighted the end of the squib with his lamp and then ran to his refuge. When the powder in the squib ignited, it flashed flame up the channel, the cartridge exploded and the coal was shattered away from the face, a ton or more by a single explosion. (Brophy, 1964:44.)

After this, the fourth part of extraction--shoveling, occurred.

"mere shoveling, if you like, although the process the loader must also clean the coal by throwing aside at least the larger pieces of slate and other impurities, shoveling itself may involve a considerable knack under underground conditions--particularly in the many cases where it is necessary...to throw shovel after shovel of coal against the roof from which it carooms into the car. This cycle of shooting, picking, cleaning and loading is repeated until the place is 'cleaned up' several days later and ready for the next cut. (Goodrich, 1927:26-27).

In addition to these tasks of mining, there was plenty of unpaid or "company" work which the miners had to do in order to gain access to the mine. They had to lay track, "take up bottom" in thin seams in order to get the cars into the "room", and timber the rooms (put up the wooden pillars to hold up the roof). They had to take care of their tools, handroll their own dynamite (which they purchased from the company store), keep their tools sharpened (done at home after work), keep their lights in good shape (wicks clean, dry and long enough), and their clothes mended. This work was completely unpaid but had to be done in order to proceed with the actual mining. The miner was a pieceworker and it was his own living, as well as his life, which was immediately affected by what he did or failed to do at the work site. Even though miners were aware of being exploited, they could not resist by not doing the unpaid work, for it was part of the production process, and doing it safely was critical to their survival. It was not until the union was formed that the miners were able to get the company to hire "company men" to do this otherwise unpaid work.

Being a miner required a high level of diverse knowledge and much dexterity. Although the of work was difficult, dangerous and exploited, it had certain elements of craftsmanship associated with it. The men worked in groups of two to four throughout the mine. There was little supervision from a foreman, and the work process was essentially con-

trolled by the workers themselves. One writer in the 20s noted:

The miner is first of all a workman in a unique relation to the working place which he is said, with little exaggeration, to 'own and inhabit'.... The mine is made up of 'rooms', which may be as wide as 24 feet, and which are held up by solid walls of coal. One or two men might work each 'room', so that isolation and independence remained very much the same, and the miner and his buddy worked month after month, pressing forward slowly into the seam of coal by the light of their caps, left alone except for the track and the boss's brief visits. (Goodrich, 20-22).

The closeness to the production process, and the extent of control over extraction provided a sense of importance to the work of mining. The miners were conscious of the importance of coal to the national economy. Even today, I've been told by the Decker's Creek residents: "Coal, you know, runs the world."

Pride in their work and awareness of the importance of coal did not, however, obscure the fact that they were exploited. The miners were deeply aware of the conditions in which they worked and lived. The extraction of coal was really the only arena in which they had control. When machinery was introduced, they began to lose control over the work process.

The Shift to Mechanization

The mines gradually became mechanized over a period of twenty years. Machinery was introduced bit-by-bit, so that the changes it wrought in work organization occurred rela-

tively slowly--not overnight. Mechanization began in Appalachia in 1920, and penetrated the West Virginia mines in the late 20s and early 1930s.

The machine cutter was the first piece of machinery which was introduced. This equipment, resembling a large, underground tractor, had a saw-like protrusion in the front, which "undercut" a seam of coal. The work which this machine performed obviated the need for the miner to spend several hours lying on his back or side in the damp coal, manually cutting the coal. The cutter loosened the coal, but the miners--who became "loaders"--still shoveled it into the cars. The introduction of the machine cutter changed the organization of work underground.

The machine runners work in teams of two, the cutter and his scraper or helper, moving their machine from place to place and cutting the coal for a number of loaders. This means, of course, a very different position in the organization of the mines from that of the loaders themselves or of the pick miners. A pair of men working in a place of their own have little to answer for to anyone but themselves, but if a single machine crew lays off, a dozen loaders may have to go home for lack of work; the job carries with it a definite responsibility for the work of a number of places. As a result the machine runners are held more strictly to account for failures in attendance and workmanship than the men at the face, and they do come to work much more regularly and on the whole put in longer hours (Goodrich, 1927:44-45).

Before the introduction of the machine cutter, all underground miners performed the same work. With mechanization, the work became more categorized--miners became cutters, loaders or trainmen. Mules became unnecessary when trains

could be used to pull the coal out of the mine. Loaders, however, were still paid by the ton, shoveling coal into the cars. Their work was more erratic since they had to wait for the cutter to do their preliminary work. According to Raymond, supervising under these conditions carried new responsibilities for organizing the new components of the work process. "These men [the cutters] worked hard and the work was dangerous. A boss had to be alert at all times to the dangers to the men, as well as attempting to get every ounce of production he could get. He had to plan the work for several hours ahead to meet his schedule (1977:21).

The mines were further mechanized with the introduction of a machine cutter-and-loader, also called the "continuous mining machine". This piece of equipment updated the ordinary cutter. In addition to cutting the ore, it had a mechanized ramp which hoisted the coal from the wall into a waiting car. Yarrow⁴ describes this machine this way:

Continuous miners are constructed much like machine loaders but have an additional maneuverable eight-foot-wide cutting drum with steel bits to claw out the coal at the average rate of six tons a minute. With the drum rotating just under the roof, the operator moves the machine forward into the face and brings the drum down to tear out a swath of coal; it falls on to the 'dust pan', is gathered onto a conveyor belt, and is deposited onto a shuttle car. (1979:179)

This machine eliminated the work of the loaders and altered the general organization of work in the mine. The introduction of the continuous mining machine brought with it a shift to greater standardization underground--there

were more bosses per man--as well as more standardized ways of carrying out the work. The "new technique" in mining required a daily output of tonnage, so that each man had to produce a certain number of tons. No longer reliant upon muscle or diverse knowledge, the advent of the continuous mining machine meant that miners were put on wages rather than piecework, and the amount of work they carried out personally did not influence their pay. While this may have guaranteed a more stable and expected income, it took away their control and craft in the extraction of the coal itself. (It also contributed to poorer health: the sawing motion which churned the coal out of the wall produced "coal dust", the cause of black lung.) Raymond noted that the miners

resented the new mining with mechanical loaders or mechanical loading systems [because it] changed pay from piece work or tonnage to an eight-hour day or labor pay to the miner, and cut the overall number of workers at any one mine (1977:28).⁵

This alteration in the work of mining, the income of workers and the change in control over the work day was an enormous shift in the mining industry. While I lack detailed information about the particular responses of the miners--largely because this shift in work organization occurred 50 years prior to my research--the way in which the community residents talked about it, and how I learned about it, was in the context of the union. Therefore, I have come to think that the loss of control over the work process

played a considerable role in the formation the union. So, however, did the conditions in which mining families lived.

The following descriptions and accounts of women's work and of the union is a reconstruction this process.

Women's Work

The company town was the work site for the women in mining families in the sense that as domestic workers with few material resources, their days were full of demanding work tasks. Women never worked in or at the mines themselves. Although their work tasks varied considerably from men's work tasks, the sort of work required of them was derived from the operation of the mine. The housing, for example, was poorly constructed with no running water and little electricity so as to require great effort on their part throughout the day. Decker's Creek was similar to many other mining camps: people could live there only if they had a job in the Decker's Creek mine. Without the job, there was no house for the miner's family. The houses, such as they were, provided minimal shelter. Raymond described them this way:

They repelled the rain most of the time. There was nothing to turn the cold except one layer of construction boards and many times these were not put together very tight, with the result that you waited until a warm day to take a bath. There was no running water in the houses. The water came from a pump that served at least four houses by means of a water pail. All the water used for cooking, bathing or washing clothes was carried into the house by the

housewife, or if a family was lucky, by one of the boys...

The work in a woman's day was structured around the rhythms of the mine. Although the sexual division of labor was divided along the "traditional" lines of domestic work for women and wage work for men it was mutually supportive and organized around the operation of the mine. The following description of a woman's day was provided by Kate, who has lived in Decker's Creek for 40 years. Her husband was a boss at the mine, he trained some of the younger men in the community how how mine. She remembers what life was like above-ground when the men worked the mine. The rhetoric reflects the rhythms of the mine.

Early to bed, early to rise. In bed by 9:00, most of the time 8:00. Up at 4:00 a.m. Winter time (first thing) pot-bellied stove to get going. The fire had been banked (or covered) at night to keep. Open draft, shake ashes. Build the kitchen stove fire with kindling chopped during summer. Kids big enough did this chore. Cook breakfast. Slab bacon, eggs, fried potatoes was the menu. Pack lunch pail. Water in the bottom, sandwiches and fruit in the top. Apple mostly. Mix bread two mornings a week. There was no bakeries those days. Everything was baked at home, sometimes on the hearth outdoors. Get the kids up by 6:00. Feed, pack lunches, off to school. Make the beds, clean the stoves of ashes. The ashes were piled up in the back yard. After this, everything must be washed off, floor mopped. The evening meal was started mid-afternoon. When the husband came home determined the time to eat. Usually 5:00 to 7:00. In the summer the garden was cared for, picked and canned day-by-day. Nothing had to be store-bought but coffee, sugar and flour. Yeast was set with potatoes and water. After the evening meal dishes and cooking pots was washed and dried and put away. Dish towels (from flour sacks weighing 100 lbs.), two large pans of hot water, bar of yellow homemade soap was the cleaning articles.

Nothing was wasted. These women had great pride in their resourcefulness. Their grandchildren, by contrast, find the insistence of their elders on frugality and shopping for the best price boring at best. They do not relate such frugality to survival the way their grandparents do. It was the responsibility of the women to be able to manage on very little, and their status in the community was built on that.

The clothes were made at home. Sewing was a big item. Comforts were made from worn woollens. Quilts were pieced from cotton scraps and quilted in large frames. Frames were up the year 'round. Sheets and pillow cases were made from brown muslin yardage. Every sheet had a seam down the middle. These were bleached with lye until white as snow.... Darning and mending was done in the evenings. Clothes were patched and repatched until nothing left to work on. John said "one's butt sat on patch on top of patch!" (He remembers well!).

In the late 1970s, some women still used the sheets and pillowcases which their mothers had made from bleached flour bags 50 years earlier. At the wedding of one woman's daughter in 1978, such pillowcases were collected from several households, washed and ironed, and slipped over the backs of the chairs at the wedding feast to keep everything perfectly white. Pride in their work seems to be expressed metaphorically through old material life. The muslin pillowcases, once a necessity, are now ritual symbols in celebrations, indicating, it seems, pride in their production. Sitting upon "patch on top of patch" also indicates a pride in their resourcefulness.

The laundry for the week took a whole day. No running water, so it was carried from wherever it

came out of the ground. Usually a spring near the house. Sometimes there was an outbuilding with a stove where water was heated and laundry was done on the washboard and in tubs. If no outbuilding, this all took place in the kitchen. Every house handmade soap from bacon grease, strained and cooked with lye. Allowed to harden and cut in bars. The table in the kitchen was the center of family life. Reading school lessons, writing, sewing. All took place on kitchen table.

Raymond further described the conditions in the community and household.

Sometimes the kitchen had one electric light, which many times was supplied by the company and was hooked into the mine electric lines. So, when for any reason the mine did not work, there was no power to the houses... most of the lighting was done by kerosene lamps.³

The coal companies, aware of the criticisms aimed at them for the conditions in mining towns, maintained the prevalent view of the people and the region as a land in need of progress, a land of 'backward' people. They saw their role as one of enlightenment. In a series of advertisements on the inside cover pages of the West Virginia Review (1924) the West Virginia Coal Operators Association published essays about company town conditions. The magazine was a monthly, homey sort of magazine, with poems about rhododendrons, character pieces about West Virginia individuals, pictures of religious buildings in particular towns, and short stories about West Virginia.

The modern mining town is as well equipped with electricity as is the small town or city. Every house is well wired, has plugs not only for lighting purposes, but also has facilities for electric irons, washing machines and electric fans. Very few mining towns have meters installed.... Because of

the waste of power, and the careless neglect of lights during the daytime, the companies have generally adopted the policy of cutting off the power from the houses during daylight hours. That is, every day but "wash day and ironing day". In one town, a family of eleven has the only electric washing machine in the community, and the power is left on Monday so the mother may use her machine. And of course on Tuesday for ironing.

When one goes into the mountains of West Virginia, visits one of the modern mining towns where only a few years ago there were to be found only rough log cabins, he cannot help thinking of the great transformation that has come about within incredibly short time. Here were sturdy pioneers who lived a simple life with few or no conveniences such as are found today.... Electricity has replaced the crude methods our forefathers used in lighting their homes. The coal company that furnishes their electricity at such low price [25 cents per plug per month] is doing great service to the workmen who live in their communities.

The provision of shelter, water and electricity by the same company which employed the men of the town, meant that the entire family was as affected by the company as was the wage worker himself. Company domination extended beyond the workplace, the low wage, the "docking" of tons of coal, to the pattern of community life.

In Decker's Creek, as in other company towns of the era, the miners were paid in scrip. That is, the rent for one's house and the purchases at the company store were debited against the paycheck. Since the prices at the company store were four to five times the prices at stores in town, the miners usually drew no cash on their paychecks. They were constantly indebted to the company. The company didn't allow other stores into town to sell (Corbin, 1981), so

if you bought anything at all you had to buy through the company store, and if it happened that you didn't buy out of the company store, you didn't work. The first time that they learned that you bought someplace else, you just didn't have a job. The store was dominated by the mine management. There was nothing done about that until after the men organized.⁶

In his book Raymond noted "there was a record of purchases of each family that lived in the town. Most times when a man happened to draw some pay on payday he was called into the company office for an explanation of the fact and given warning to the effect that it better not happen again if he expected to keep his job". Some single men were allowed to draw pay to meet boarding house expenses, "but if a family man tried, there was trouble to pay".

The coal operators didn't view the situation this way. In one inside cover essay in West Virginia Review (1925), was written:

There have been criticisms directed at coal companies on account of the company-owned stores. But if a person will stop and think about the matter, he will be convinced that the company entering an isolated section is duty-bound to provide facilities for food and clothing for the great many people who come to live in the community. It would not be reasonable or expected that the company could afford to supply these items at a loss. Many so-called investigators have made rash statements relative to the profiteering indulged in by mining town stores. They have not backed up their statements by facts.... Many people have not taken into consideration the tastes of the people who live in mining towns. They demand the best.... Men in the coal fields have been referred to as extravagant. It is true that many miners live up [sic] their wages as fast as they receive them. But the same may be said of any other class of people."⁷

The women in the town experienced the availability of items in the store quite differently. One told me

You know, so many things were scarce--coffee, sugar, yardage . . . you couldn't beg a piece of muslin hardly. And he [the company store manager] used to get it in by the bagload up here, and the dirty devil would sell it out you know, and make a profit on it for himself, and the people here never got it. You just couldn't hardly buy anything. Well, he got kicked out because of it. I was there one day and I wanted some material, we used to wear little housedresses you know, and I wanted to sew up things like that for everyday things, and I was told through the underground that there was some that come in, you know. I went up there and he was there, and I asked about it, and he said 'no such a-thing, where did I get such an idea?' and all that business, you know. And, I don't remember, I said some pretty snotty things to him.

I asked her if she weren't afraid of the consequences of speaking back to the manager, given the power of the company in the town. "Well, no", she answered, "'cause I knew the butcher in the store".

The mutual dependency between people within the community helped them to survive the exigencies of company town life. Depending upon one another served as a necessary buffer to the company owners. This dependence between neighbors, among men, among women, and between spouses gave the relations between genders and within the household a different quality from that in other occupations. Both men and women were conscious of the way in which their work intertwined during the course of a day.

The men and women of Decker's Creek regarded each others' work very highly. Women were conscious of the

danger of mining and the consequences to themselves and their children should they become widowed. Men were conscious of the difficulty of domestic life, and their dependence on the work which women carried out. Not only did men and women utterly rely on one another, they relied on other families in the community as well. To survive and resist the conditions of company town life--the daily possibilities of losing life, job or home--the people in the mining community developed a web of reciprocal relations involving the exchange of food, aid, comfort, joys and sorrows.

Perhaps one of the strongest forms this took was when men and women participated in fighting for the union, in order to protect the men at work and the families at home. The company fought back in ways which affected both the worker and his family:

It was the custom of the coal company officials, when they learned of men who joined the workers' union, to have their families moved out into the road. They cared not for children or sick folk or elderly people. To help alleviate this condition, the union built shacks for these people to move into and supplied tents for hundreds of families. I remember my uncle living in such a tent town, and walking for miles to get groceries that were shipped in by boxcar on the railroad to the nearest town.⁸

The domination by the company over the workers thus extended directly over family and household, even at the most basic point of the mere provision of shelter. In a more subtle manner, this domination was carried as far as rewarding the residents for keeping a clean home. A coal company official from Pennsylvania would make monthly visits to Decker's

Creek to inspect the cleanliness of houses, yards and gardens. Prizes were awarded for the best-kept house. When I asked the residents who won prizes, no one could remember, or even thought it important. They thought the prize might have been money, but weren't sure. Most were insulted by the presumption on the part of company officials that the town needed inspection, feeling that they kept it clean themselves.

The relation of the company town to mining work and domestic life was important. The town provided the arena in which one's daily life was played out. For women this meant doing the hard work of maintaining a house without amenities, and living with the knowledge that they could become widows at any time; for men this meant working in dangerous circumstances; and for both it meant living at the whim of the company. Both men and women were equally affected by whether or not the mine operated. They were both affected by layoffs, and neither had a great deal of choice about living another sort of life.

These circumstances provided the setting for mining families to develop a great deal of solidarity. Even while experiencing exploitation they were proud of their work--both the men in the mines and women in the town. The adverse circumstances in which they lived served to encourage the development of close social ties, sharing of resources and the reliance upon one another. Being able to survive

such circumstances along with feeling important within the national economy, underlay the sense of dignity they had about their work. It also provided the solidarity which was necessary to the formation of the union.

Unionism

Raymond described what it was like to fight for the union.

I worked [at a nearby mine] for awhile; had a union meeting one Sunday, and of course you weren't supposed to have any union meetings you know. The local legal section was all for the company, so that the men organizing for the labor union was practically on their own as far as the law was concerned, you always was violating the law. And they attempted to block off [the mine], they wouldn't let anybody up there unless they had sanctioned it. The company would send paid employees in to break up the meeting, and the men resented it, and they didn't have anything to lose, you see, you work for nothing you don't have anything to lose. And they really was barking up the wrong tree, and they got into a fight and somebody got killed [at the meeting]. Several men got killed here, and fortunately I happened to miss all that. You could say that their union activities primarily was the cause of them dying, was the fact that they was trying to organize the mining.

I asked Ray if they could organize informally at someone's house, rather than at a meeting.

You didn't get to nobody's house. I remember before we came here to Decker's Creek, my uncle was an electrician who lived right down here, about your house, along in there. Another uncle of mine brought us here for a visit, and we was in there eating a Sunday dinner, and the fella came in and somebody said "Well, hello Zeke", and here this guy had just walked in, never knocked or nothing, he just walked right in packing a gun, wanted to know who we were. Nice times. We were just visiting.

But you didn't do anything that they didn't know about.

During the 1920s, when the workers were trying to organize the union, Bethlehem Steel took excessive measures against them.

you had the mine head up here on the hill, and the road at that time coming into the town came right down behind the store building here, and that was designed so that nobody came in that the superintendent didn't see. Anytime. Then they had a place up on top of that cliff over there, a searchlight, the men would hide with rifles, and there wasn't nobody moved around much that they didn't know about. There was a man killed here at Dellslow, organizer.

The rifleman who shot the organizer was a "yellowdog"⁹ from Millton. He was tried and let free. The local story was that a few years later he went crazy.

Who were the union organizers? Organizers from outside the community have unfortunately remained a mystery to me, while in the field I did not collect that information. Whenever I tried to find who the local union organizers had been, the people I "suspected", if you will, denied any such role. Some individuals who talked about "the days of trying to get the union" were clearly still community leaders--their opinions were clearly sought after--but this was a role which they also denied. It seemed less important to them who was a leader or an organizer than the fact that the unionizing occurred. There were, in fact, two men who I felt were community leaders and who had both been "boss men" earlier in their lives, although not at the same mine. They

did not seem to get along well together. While I always suspected that the reason was related to their relative power within the mine, I could never find enough evidence to support this notion.¹⁰ What may be more significant than their leadership roles is the way they interpreted the meaning of the union. Both men would talk about the importance of the union for the workers, identified themselves with workers rather than with management, and spoke about the importance of the union for all miners. It seemed that being a leader did not carry popular weight among these people--perhaps such a role was identified with those who had greater power: the company owners. Union formation, as far as I could tell, was seen as moral act, being good for all.

What role, then, did the women play? Although participating in strikes and meetings was limited to men, I believe that the women exerted pressure through their concerns about family life which affected the issues in the strike. During the strike of 1978 a group of miners' wives marched at one mine to voice the need for better health and death benefits. This event prompted many older Decker's Creek women to comment that women had to drag men to collect the benefits to which they were entitled. While I lack the data I would like to have, I suspect that the concerns of women fired the strikes and union-building during the 20s

and 30s. Considering the extent of mutual dependence and domination, I think this was probable.

The hard times of the 20s and 30s made the success of the union all the more valuable. Once the union was formed, in the late 1920s, the workers had contracts and the recourse of a strike to struggle for their rights. A contract with the owners would run one or two years, and then

The men had to strike in order to get a new contract. That was part of the procedure. And that's part of the procedure today, and of course the company breaches that contract in any way then the men call a strike to get that straightened up. Well, they just simply say, "the devil with you, we're not going to work". All you have to do is get four or five men not to work and the rest of them stand around with them. So, pretty hard to get by without a strike... that's the nature of the coal company, they'll do anything in order to make a dollar, see. So they're constantly doing things against the union, against the miner, in order to make a dollar, and the miner says, "now look, you can't do that", and then they call a strike.

In fact, before the union--you can understand why they got the union--before they had the union, the coal companies had them. About 90% of their sale was profit, after they got the union they had to divvy up with that part, you see, they wasn't about to. Of course that still goes on. Today, with the continuous miner, I think their profits is running almost again as high, so the men today won't let them get away with very much before they call a strike. And then you're talking to a man not a little bit prejudiced against the coal companies because I know from being a boy I know how they operate.¹¹

Although Raymond was a mine foreman, and thus officially management, his sympathies and actions were with the workers. It is particularly interesting that a foreman considers himself to be labor rather than management, and this

perception reveals elements of the consciousness of a coal miner and the subtleties involved in labor-management relations. If Raymond were to identify with management, and act on its behalf what would he stand to lose? In all probability, he would lose the social ties and kinship connections he had within the community, among people who counted themselves as workers not managers. Counting himself a worker, not manager, Raymond maintained the support of these people. How did he negotiate his position with the operators? Being in a somewhat liminal position, Raymond used ethnic similarities he shared with the mine operators to mask their differences in position.

I had people there that seemed to take me under their wing too, and--the Pursglove family--you may have heard of the Pursgloves here, they own a coal company here, they have four or five mines up there. The members of that family seemed to take a likin' to me, they were English people, and me being a Scotchman it seemed like I fit right in with them--I was contrary enough! But they always looked after me, so I always had a job. A couple of times I'd get mad and walk off, and go somewhere else for a week or so, and invariably I'd go back to Pursglove. But they's give me the top job that was goin', so I didn't miss anything.

Unfortunately, I have no data which would correlate the existence of strikes with the advent of new machines, or of particular management practices during the days of union formation. The men tended to speak generally about the company and the union, and more specifically about how jobs got done before and after the union (such as the "company work" or the "checkweighman").

The men of Decker's Creek worked in the mines from the time they were teenagers, and most worked there until they retired 45 years later. Thus the experience of hand-loading coal was, for most, their first work experience. They were there to help their fathers in order to increase the daily tonnage and bring home greater income to the family. They were, at a very young age, conscious of the importance this worked played in the survival of their family. While they recognized the importance of the income, and had pride in what they did, they also recognized the oppressive situation in which they lived and knew (especially after mechanization) that the coal they produced benefited the owners of the mines and not themselves. The particular value of work in the mines was related to the fact that they were the central figures in the production of the ore which fueled the economy of the nation.

Control over this part of the work process--the timing and choice of tasks in the workplace itself--is unusual in comparison with workers in factories or offices. It is due in part to the craft-quality and skilled aspect of the work. This process was valued by the miners, who could point to their specific, personal contribution to mining. This was the only aspect of work over which the workers had control, however. As hard as they might work, how much tonnage actually became recorded (undervalued or docked) was beyond their control and could undermine their efforts. As mechan-

ization became more prevalent in mining, the control over the work process diminished, and the overall organization of work changed. This may have been more satisfying to boss men who had to be conscious of the many operations within the mine and be certain to make them integrate effectively, or for the machine men, upon whose work others depended. It is impossible to conclude from this satisfaction in work and a sentiment that mining was a desirable "career". None of the miners wanted their sons to enter the mines, and when asked, none expressed a sense of choice about having entered the mines themselves.

Unlike other sorts of labor, in which workers feel alienated from the product, coal miners feel pride in their work at the same time that they feel exploited. This consciousness of work conditions was one factor which enabled these miners to unionize so readily and effectively in extraordinarily adverse conditions. Not only was the work underground dangerous, but life above ground was difficult and unpredictable: one could lose one's home as quickly as one could lose one's job. The domination of the company extended from the labor within the mine to family and household within the community.

NOTES

1. This is my term.
2. H. Gutman, Industrializing America. Note also that Tamara Hareven has carefully documented the response of workers in industrial settings in New England who had been agricultural workers prior to moving to the city. In her work, she notes that the families rely extensively on their own social patterns, ethnic patterns and create informal networks which sustain them in an otherwise difficult transition.
3. During the 1920s several universities in West Virginia operated "mining extension schools" for training mine foreman and supervisors. About 1500 men attended these annually. It took Raymond about 12 years before he "made foreman". I asked him if he stayed in school the full 12 years. Well, I went most of the time. I was working but I went to school three nights a week. It was quite a load. That took care of any extry running around!
4. Michael Yarrow, "The Labor Process in Coal Mining" in Case Studies on the Labor Process ed. Andrew Zimbalist, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1979.
5. I don't have any direct quotes from Decker's Creek residents about this transition in the work process. When they did talk about working the mines in "the old days", they spoke about digging by hand rather than about working with the mechanical loaders. When I asked them which positions they held in the mine, I was told "cutter", "brakeman", and so on, indicating that they did work with machinery. On the whole, they contrasted their work experiences underground with that of young miners today who operate extremely large, crane-like machines in strip-mining. They were disparaging about the current work, finding it unskilled, undemanding and "not a real day's work".

Unfortunately, I have no data which would correlate the existence of strikes with the advent of new machines, or of particular management practices during the days of union formation. The men tended to speak generally about the company and the union, and more specifically about how jobs got done before and after the union (such as the "company work" or the "checkweighman").

6. Densmore, taped interview. As far as I can determine, the shift from piecework to wage work did not affect the level of indebtedness at the company store.

7. West Virginia Review, inside cover, January 1925
"Stores in Mining Towns".

8. Densmore, 1977:8-9.

9. A "yellowdog" was an individual who was a "hired gun" for the company, and would use violence to break unionism.

10. When I asked direct questions about the relationship between these two men, I was informed that there was no difficulty between them.

11. From a taped interview with Raymond.

CHAPTER IV

CULTIVATING RESOURCES:
Gardens, Food, Family and Community

This chapter focuses upon life and work in Decker's Creek when it was no longer a company town. In 1950, when the company closed the mine and sold the houses, the residents were released from company domination for the first time. Ironically, the community residents did not consciously focus upon the importance of the transition from being a company town to an "unincorporated" one when I lived with them in the late 1970s. This was probably because they were in the throes of the new crisis which was about community-definition (see Chapter V). In their efforts to identify themselves amid this crisis, they talked about the company town days far more than they did about the early days after the company closed. My research in 1978 and 1979 thus recorded the patterns of community life as it had developed during the 25 years since the mine shut down, but analyzed--and reconstructed--the source of their self-identification and consciousness in the social and political relations of the company town. This chapter first describes the changes which occurred within the community during the 1950s, and then describes "life today".

The shift in Decker's Creek from a company town to an unincorporated community was clearly an important social

political development in the lives of the residents. The closing of the mine coincided with a general decrease in coal production at a national level. Yarrow notes

The fourfold increase in productivity between 1930 and 1969 combined with a postwar decline in coal consumption to produce a drastic reduction in employment. Two-thirds of those employed in 1948 were displaced by 1969. This caused a terrific social and economic dislocation in one-industry Appalachia.... (1979:171)

When the Decker's Creek mine shut down, everyone in the community was put out of work. The relief of no longer living under company domination was compromised by having to scrounge for a living. Since the predominant occupation in the region was coal mining, fewer mines were open and it was harder to find work. Many men found sporadic employment in several of local mines, and some tried working in other occupations altogether. Others went into the mills and factories for brief periods. Most, however, retired.¹ Some women entered the work force for the first time. Two of them went to work in the faucet factory, one worked in a dry-cleaning store, and a few worked in homes performing a variety of tasks such as hanging wallpaper and cleaning. One family moved to Baltimore for a year, but found urban living such a strain that they moved back to Decker's Creek, preferring the more familiar if arduous life of mining. They lived on their pensions and social security. In 1969, when Federal Black Lung benefits became available, this supplemented their income.²

In the 1950s, the children of the miners were teenagers. Unlike their parents they finished high school,³ but the diminished opportunities for employment meant that they did not become coal miners. It also caused some outmigration.⁴ The children who lived in Morgantown worked either in local businesses (as salespeople, for example) or in the local factories (there were several glass factories, a shirt factory and a faucet factory). They tended to work in blue-collar rather than professional occupations, although one man had become an engineer and one woman a medical technician at the hospital. Two men had joined the military and become career officers. Many of the children lived in West Virginia, some lived in Ohio, and others had gone as far as California, Alabama, Florida and Tennessee. As the children left home, the community was populated by their parents, people who had lived there through the mining years and who, because of their age, poor health and lack of alternative employment opportunities, had nowhere else to go. This is not to suggest that they wanted to leave. To the contrary, the community was theirs, and it was home.

There were also a few new families in 1950. One or two of the very old miners in the 50s did not buy their houses⁵ and outsiders moved in. Some newcomers were mining families who had mined nearby but not at Decker's Creek. One or two relatives of the families who already lived there also moved in, so that the relationships of the community residents was

cemented through mining ties and kinship ties. One new family in 1950 was several years younger than the mining residents and had never worked in the mines. By the late 1970s this family was already a long-term resident, but its members did not share the understanding of the community that the mining families had. The kinship network of that family were, in fact, on "the mountain".

Bit by bit, the Decker's Creek families began to make their mark upon the community. One way they did this was by improving their homes. The houses were originally coal shacks built by the company for the miners and their families. Nearly all the houses were identical, built 60 to 80 years ago by Bethlehem Steel for the Decker's Creek mine. Like most "camp houses" built near the turn of the century, these were shabbily constructed, with raw beams, little plumbing, and no bathrooms. They were heated by coal stoves which took a great deal of work. The men plastered walls using hand-mixed plaster which cost little. Years later, as their financial resources accumulated through careful savings, they panelled as many rooms as possible. After a day at work in the mines, the men used to work together and dig basements below their houses. They used shovels, digging by hand; no machinery was available to ease the task. Sometimes these basements were as large as the house itself. The men used railroad ties to support the house itself, and these can still be seen stretching along the basement

ceilings. The railroad ties were swiped in the dead of night from the coal train tracks which ran behind the houses part way up the mountain. Basement floors and walls were cemented, and the cement was mixed by hand and slathered across the floors. The slightly uneven quality of the floors and walls attests to their hand-rubbed construction. In some houses, showers were built, plumbing for washing machines and sump pumps installed, and outside entrances built which made it easier to step outside to hang the wash. The men built the basements in groups, neighbors helping one another, moving from house to house. Not every house has a basement today: some houses were built upon damp ground, and it was impossible to dig too deeply. The fact that today these houses are so sturdy, neat and well-kept is due to the constant amount of domestic labor put into them over the lifetimes of the mining families who have inhabited them. The work of improving the houses has never ceased. While I was there, one man built a new garage, another panelled his and laid carpet in one section of it which he used as a workshop, some houses had aluminum siding added, kitchen carpeting installed, windows re-paned, porches rebuilt, roofs fixed, driveways tarred and sidewalks refinished.

Domestic work, in fact, completely defined the course of the day in Decker's Creek. Too old to continue working in the mines, or too ill with arthritis, black lung or silicosis to perform any wage work whatsoever, the residents

devoted their time and energies to keeping their town in shape and keeping in touch with each other. In addition to the tasks in and around the houses, a great deal of effort was expended on gardens.

Today Decker's Creek is located along a coal route where trucks loaded down with coal pass every few minutes. About 30 feet behind the houses on the south side of the street is a creek. All the back yards border the creek, the gardens are near it. Behind the houses on the north side of the street is a great stretch of yards connected in one long strip. These are about 40 feet wide, and border a public "alley", a 15 foot strip of yard which is identified more by one's knowledge of it than by any physical markings. Beyond the alley is another 20 feet of yard, which has been turned into gardens by most of the residents. The visual effect is of one long back yard, and one long garden which reaches from one end of the community to the other. (See Appendix III). Behind the gardens is a steep small hill, climbing up to "the mountain". The mountain used to be covered with huckleberry bushes and the people of Decker's Creek used to go picking there. Today, the hill has been defoliated and a new development has been built to house the constant influx of people from West Virginia University in Morgantown, a quickly-expanding community. Chapter V describes the crisis this precipitated for Decker's Creek.

At first glance, the rhythm of this community seems easy-going and quiet. Upon closer inspection it becomes apparent that the vigor and intensity with which the people work is a subtle, but communally defined way of life. Their gardens provide a form of work as well as a symbolic statement to each other about their commitment to the community.

Today Decker's Creek has a population of 87 living in 42 houses. (See Appendix I).⁶ Over half (52%) the residents are elderly, over age 65. Nineteen percent are middle-aged (40-65), 11% are young couples and 13% are children. The older residents occupy 69% of the houses. Since there are nearly as many young than old people in the community, these numbers might lead one to believe that the impact of the young would be at least as great, if not greater, than the impact of the old on the community. The opposite, however, is true. The older residents effectively "define" the unspoken "rules" of the community, rules about which the younger residents complain or with which they cooperate. These rules are expressed through discussions, complaints or more rarely open conflict, about how one should properly "neighbor", operate a household, keep one's yard, define the boundaries between houses, sweep the sidewalk, or care for one's garden. These are essentially domestic concerns. The "rules" of the community emerge from the importance of these aspects of daily life to the older residents. What friction exists is organized around domestic issues, and occurs be-

tween age groups, both between those who are eighty and sixty, as well as those who are sixty and younger. It also occurs between neighbors.

One distinguishing feature of the community is how differences in age are paralleled by differences in occupation. The older male residents were miners, the older female residents were coal-mining wives. They are currently retired. The middle-aged residents, male and female, are either factory workers or employees in local businesses. The young people, male and female, are professional workers--engineers, nurses, and doctors--who work in Morgantown at West Virginia University, or at local power plants. (See Chapter V for a discussion of the transition of the community to a dormitory town.)

There are a number of reasons why the older residents have such a strong "say" in the community. The reasons are the sorts of social relationships which exist and the nature of the experience which the older residents have shared over the years; part of this shared experience is the life of a coal-mining family in a company town. These reasons effectively give the older residents more solidarity than the younger ones. This set of patterns provides the backdrop against which the activity of gardening occurs and can be understood.

Studies of gardening in anthropology range from symbolic studies in Oceania (Bateson, 1936; Fortune, 1963; Malinowski, 1935; Weiner, 1976; for example) to human ecology studies of time allocation (Gross, 1984). Both sorts of study focus on societies in which gardening is an important aspect of the subsistence economy. Unlike these other locations, Decker's Creek has always existed as part of an industrial economy. Economic life was organized around coal-mining during the early part of the life cycle of its present residents, and around retirement at the end of it. Gardening has been less a matter of survival than of stretching one's resources during an impoverished life, yet it is much more than the provision of extra food.

Gardening

The labor put into the gardens varies according to household. The labor of one individual in particular, Tony, is considered exemplary by his neighbors. The progress of growth on most gardens is compared to his. Although many residents feel that Tony worries too much about his garden (he frets about going away for a few days to visit his daughter, on account of not overseeing the progress of the garden), they generally agree that he does the best job, knows the most, and really keeps a good garden.

Gardening lasts 9 months of the year for Tony. The bulk of the work was from April to September. In March--even

when snow is still be on the ground--he clears off a patch and covers it with plastic (in case it snows again) to prepare the ground for the first planting of onions. He does this because he plants by the moon. The signs of the moon dictate when it is optimal to plant particular crops, to turn the soil, to weed and so on. When the moon points down, for example, one should plant below ground crops such as onions, potatoes, garlic and carrots. When the moon points up one should plant above-ground plants such as beans, peppers, squash or tomatoes. Tony studies the almanac as well as the moon. The almanac indicates further signs for crop planting and care. Certain signs (such as scorpio or pisces) are especially beneficial for planting while others are particularly detrimental. Particular crops grow well under particular signs, and should be planted under them. To weed on a day good for planting is somewhat foolish, for the weeds will grow back again too quickly. To plant on a day indicated for weeding will only result in poor growth. The timing of gardening, therefore, is mediated by the phases of the moon and the emergence of particular astrological signs. These are calculated against the amount of time it takes a crop to grow. Tony times his crops carefully so that he can have two of corn during a summer, and successive crops of onions and lettuce. The daily care of seedlings is determined by the weather as well as the almanac and moon. Tony keeps a small "greenhouse" (a

wide trench near the garden covered with an old glass door) to protect early plantings, which are transplanted to other ground on a "good" day. If the weather is especially hot or cold, he adjusts the opening of the greenhouse cover. As the weather and temperature can change within a single day--hotter at noon, cooler in the morning and evening--he checks on his plants throughout the day to see that they are growing under the best possible conditions. Gardening work, therefore, not only has to be carried out on particular days and in particular ways, but it is a daily concern which takes a good deal of mental effort in order to keep abreast of the various crops, various stages of growth and weather conditions.

The planning of the garden includes how many plants per crop will be planted. The gardens produce enough to feed the couple for the summer. It feeds them for much of the year since the produce is canned. I was told that it was always important to can, even if "last summer was good", since one never knows when a "bad year" will hit. Consequently, Tony annually keeps about 60-75 tomato plants, 25 sweet peppers, 15-20 hot peppers, 20 cucumbers, 50 each of onion, garlic and lettuce, Italian green beans and string beans. Occasionally he tries something new, such as cauliflower, spinach, broccoli or peas. He and his wife annually can up to 125 quarts of tomatoes, and additional cans of peppers and sauce. They freeze green tomatoes and during

the course of the summer give tomatoes away to kin, friends and neighbors. They do, of course, eat them everyday themselves. Although not every household has so large a garden as Tony, most gardens provide enough food for a household, for others and for canning.

Exchange

When I first moved into Decker's Creek I found a large shopping bag full of fresh vegetables on the back porch every day. A few months later, I would receive a couple of slices of bread, or cake. or half a bowl of pasta with sauce. I continually received bits of produce from neighbors' gardens. "Take some of my parsley, Pat, use it in your dinner tonight". "You okay, Pat? You got enough for your salad? You take some green peppers, some hot too; now, don't you go without". Receiving food gifts from my neighbors made me realize that informal, easy going food exchange occurs regularly among many neighbors. During chats, visits and strolls down the alley, food or some other small token is frequently offered to one's neighbor such as produce from the garden (a bunch of parsley, some fresh basil, one or two particularly choice tomatoes), a piece of cake or bread, or a handmade towel or pillow. Clearly not offered out of need--everyone has a garden--these gifts are shared, reinforcing the relationships which exist. The exchanges of food for food, food for service and food for a visit are

common. One day a neighbor came over with her mother and brought us one-half a pie. She asked my husband to look at her mother's sore elbow and wondered if I might take her to the hospital. The message was very clear: we were asked to exchange services for food. Whenever I was asked to help out a neighbor, I felt obliged to do so because I had inevitably been given so much produce or cooked food, that I felt I couldn't refuse. Being held in obligation to our neighbors was not, as I first imagined, purely a function of age, even though we were 50 years younger than they, and referred to as the "community's kids". Since I was interested in participating in the exchange, and appreciated the tokens I received (indeed, felt guilty for taking so much) I became an accessible part of the system which was already firmly established.

My own participation in the exchange network made me aware of its existence, and once aware, I noticed comments which were regularly made and which showed the extent of interest which neighbors have in each other's gardens and houses. "Oh, her flowers are always blooming and her lettuce grows all years, I don't know how she does it", or "he just lets those tomatoes rot there, why doesn't he tie them up?", or "she keeps such a clean house, I'm afraid to let her come into mine." Neighbors take a generous interest in each other's work. The carrying out of such tasks seem

to indicate the identity of an individual within the community.

"A man just ain't a man when he can't keep his garden any more" Rosa told me one afternoon after a hard rain, when neighbors were huddling around puddles comparing notes on the storm's effect. The storm had flattened the corn, and mud had slid off the mountain into the gardens. Cucumbers and peppers were lying in the thick mess. Rosa was lamenting the condition of her husband who was unable to tend his garden. He suffered from black lung, and had to spend 24 hours a day hooked up to the oxygen machine. Rosa made the rounds, however, talking with her old friends who had the biggest and best-kept garden in Decker's Creek, and checking out who was working at getting the mess cleaned up. The clean-up effort was important to the older members of the community. "You're lucky you didn't get it too bad", I was told, "but we know you'd clean it up. Annette over there, she didn't never clean up her garage last time it got flooded, and she let that mud harden and it's still sittin' there. Hard as a rock".

Not all exchange and sharing was focused around the gardens. When Tony had a car accident, for example, he was afraid to drive for several weeks. His neighbors took his wife and him shopping and to their doctor's appointments. When a neighbor's kin died, food was contributed to the household. If someone became ill, neighbors would visit

more attentively, make phone calls, do favors for the ill person and his or her spouse. Their behavior can be viewed as planting and cultivating resources in each other which could be harvested in time of need.

This work of maintaining one's house and garden is highly visible work, especially in such a tiny community. Because this work is private, self-directed and carried out separately by members of each household, the social value of such labor is made apparent in the product of the work itself. The work, which results in well-kept gardens, clean houses and trimmed lawns is shaped by the seasons and weather rather than by ceremonial or ritual events. It is also shaped by one's neighbors. While the tasks are not prescribed--one doesn't "report to work"--the communally shared values and morals about work behavior constrain the extent to which the work is "volitional".

Gamst⁷ describes volitional work as non-market, and which can help us to shed our culturally constrained notions of folk and formal work. He defines two categories of "volitional" work: "do-it-yourself" work and "reciprocal" work. Do-it-yourself work, he says, is "all manner of uncompensated activity for one's self and family in and around one's domicile", and this work includes housework, gardening, auto repair work, and so on. Although this could be gainful work, it isn't. Volitional work is

at times in accord with a largely un verbalized
cognitive map of generalized, long-term reciprocity,

such forms rendered to kin, friends or neighbors for an immediate or eventual return of the same or other service and thereby becomes reciprocal work (1981:8).

In Decker's Creek this kind of work and exchange interpenetrate so as to provide a system which enables the participants to funnel their financial resources toward vital services (hospitalization, doctor's visits, medication), home improvement (paneling, aluminum siding, new roofs), as well as family (education and gifts for children and grandchildren) while maintaining a daily meaningful lifestyle.

The fact that Gamst views volitional work as potentially but not actually gainful suggests that the work itself is carried out by choice by the workers. In the case of people who are employed in waged jobs, friendly and reciprocal exchange may in fact be a voluntary activity. However, for retired people, "volitional" refers more to the particular choices they people make about the actual work tasks they carry out rather than to the choice to work at all. In the absence of wage-labor the performance of work is not voluntary but mandatory. It is serious, important work which is uncompensated and which is vital to daily life. The implications of this are that the wage-work which a person performs is regulated in part by his/her age, and by extension, the "volitional" work which people perform is related to the specific relation they have to the labor force. Marx would view this sort of work as "use-value" rather than

"exchange-value", since the latter refers to commodity exchange. The volitional aspect of this work, however, does not imply that it is without structure. Use-value can be extended to reciprocal patterns, something which Marx did not consider, which are a form of exchange in the non-market sphere.

Gamst's "largely unverbilized cognitive map" is a notion which provides the key to expanding his analysis. This "map", in Decker's Creek, is patterned in the work process and in the scrutiny of the work process through continual observation and sharing of the "products" of labor. What appears to be an informal structure becomes formally constituted in the minds of the participants. The volitional work in Decker's Creek is communally established, and provides strictures to how it is accomplished through social peers. The value of work is important within the community, and it is the community who set the standards for its performance.

Living up to communal standards provides a limit and goal to achieve vis à vis such labor. The exchanges reinforce the neighborly, kin and ethnic ties which already exist as well as the pride in the work. These transactions weave the participants in a web of reciprocal relations that serve as a tacit guarantee for aid from others during times of crisis; thus the gift exchanges are the warp and woof of a voluntary support system. The exchanges enable the elders to depend upon one another in a graceful way helping them

avoid a dependence upon the social services provided by outsiders.

The relationships among the residents of Decker's Creek are of three sorts: neighborly, kin and ethnic. These systems of relationships cross-cut one another, sometimes reinforcing but at other times undermining social ties. Fifteen households (35.7%) have a kinship link with at least one other household. There are two sets of five households in which each set is linked by kin ties, and these two sets are connected by a fictive kin tie. These ten kin-linked households represent 23% of the total households in the community (see Appendices I and II). The other five households which have kinship links are composed of two groups, one with three households and the other with two. The smaller group has extensive kinship links with people on "the mountain". That little community is extremely inter-married and is of primarily Scotch and Welsh descent.⁸

The ethnic composition of Decker's Creek is largely East European and Italian. Essentially all the families in Decker's Creek are immigrants--those who were not born abroad had parents or grandparents who were. In only half the households, however, is ethnicity important for self-identification.⁹ In eleven households, residents know how to speak their native tongue, (Italian or Hungarian) but do so only during a crisis or in a particularly intimate

situations, as in the death of a parent.) Among the twenty-one households which consider ethnicity important, eleven are Italian, two are Hungarian (also self-described as "Austro-Hungarian"), two are Polish, one is Yugoslavian, twelve are English, Scottish or Welsh, and one is French-German. Among the others are "newcomers" (my own household, other young couples, and some renters). The rest includes individuals who, although members of a particular ethnic group, do not care about it.

Since many of the ethnic groups are represented by only one or two households, which may mean three or four people, it is difficult to ascertain whether or not particular attitudes or actions by the residents are ethnically based, as opposed to being either kin-based or simply a matter of an individual's personality. Although the largest ethnic group within the community is Italian, its members are also members of the same family. Even those who are not related have known one another since childhood.

While the residents of the community use ethnicity as a way of differentiating among themselves (which generally means noting "Italian" as distinct from any other group) they do not tend to notice the other strong sorts of relationships which are present. One Italian woman, for example, described the community to me as "one big happy family," seemingly unaware of how many people she was actually related to (five affective and consanguineal kin in

four households, and two fictive kin in one household. This totalled nine households within the community, or 21.4%).

Non-Italian residents occasionally refer to the Italians in a derogatory fashion. When Decker's Creek was a company town, for example, there were two boarding houses for the miners, an "American" one and a "foreign" one "which smelled, you know, of garlic". Italians, not Hungarians or Poles or Scots, were considered "foreign". When describing daily events, I heard: "Them Italians spend so much time on a wedding. Why at our granddaughter's, we was out of there in two hours flat. No cookin' or nothin'".

Neighborly relationships generally operated as a spatial rule. "Neighborliness" is expected between people who live next door to one another, and is less expected between households which are separated by a few houses. Neighboring involves visiting, chatting, cooperating about how the back lawns should look, keeping one's garden weeded, exchanging produce and food, and generally helping one another out. It requires communicating with one's neighbor, being available for aid, but not necessarily forming a friendship. The importance of neighboring is most clearly seen when it fails. One neighbor, long an acquaintance of the older residents, has been mentally ill for a number of years. Her neighboring takes an exaggerated form. She knows the patterns well, and comes to visit at odd moments (such as 8:00 in the morning), for odd reasons (to warn me, as she

once did, of the devil being next door); she sweeps the sidewalk, as do all good neighbors, but does so for six hours at a time. She is treated kindly, although occasionally with some fear. Another neighbor, a young woman, moved into the community with her husband and one-year old daughter. She didn't speak when spoken to and didn't chat with the next-door-neighbor, even when they would hang laundry in the back yard at the same time. She was referred to as "Lady Smith" with some disdain, and her behavior was likened to the woman who had gone mad. Even her dog, which rant up and down the street barking and snapping at passers-by, was considered to be "mad". Not to neighbor in Decker's Creek is indeed viewed by the older residents as demented behavior.

In addition to the ethnic and kinship relationships which presently exist within the community, the older residents of Decker's Creek are bound by their occupational ties. These ties stretch beyond the familiarity and understanding of what it is like to work together to the experience of living in a company town. Even before living in Decker's Creek, many residents knew one another while growing up in other coal camps in the region. The difficulty of living in coal-camp conditions was familiar to them, and the relative ease of life after-the-company was an unspoken understanding they shared. When they talked about events occurring in the community, and I asked for explana-

tions, their answers would often refer to other events which occurred in the 50s. The residents did not articulate the closing of the mine in 1950 as a political and social transition, but instead viewed that time as the historical point when the company and the jobs it provided were gone. Their comments were referential. The best example took place about one year after I completed my research, when I visited Decker's Creek for a week. One resident (the one who had been a "newcomer" in 1950, from the mountain) had recently proposed that Decker's Creek purchase a fire truck. This idea was met with fury and resistance. Those who opposed the idea did so, I first imagined, on financial grounds. Why, after all, would a community of 75 people want a fire truck? During my visit the issue was not resolved, but the town meetings being organized and the amount of discussion within the households ("why the hell do we need a gal-durned fire truck? Creekhollow's got one") convinced me of the importance of this event. I asked one man why the fire truck was such a big deal. "Well Pat," he said, "it all began with the hydrants". When I asked "what about the hydrants?". he began to talk about the disputes in deciding to install hydrants within the community. These disputes, I discovered after 20 minutes of conversation, took place in 1951. The fact that these events required no explanation among the residents themselves, even though they were 27 years displaced, verified for me the coded understanding the

residents had about the meaning of events within their community. Although they could not state "1950 was an important transition to us because the community became our own", their coded meanings said it for them.

The older people "automatically", therefore, allied with one another. By inviting the younger residents to cooperate with them by participating in food exchange, in gardening, and in neighboring, they attempted to extend their system of domestic work, exchange and community support to another generation.

To the new outsiders, though, unfamiliar with the lives of these families, their work during retirement--their gardening and domestic concerns--seemed ordinary. The reliance they had upon each other in old age seemed predictably rural, perhaps quaint and frequently nosey. Over the past few years, the newcomers have found the interest which the older residents take in their lives, in how they care for their houses and lawns, and whether they want to partake in the exchange of produce and information about when and what to plant, both unwarranted and unwelcome. The work worlds from which the newcomers come (as professionals in the university and hospital) is one which fosters and rewards individual achievement, upward mobility and the severance of non-instrumental ties. To them, neighbors really don't have anything to do with going to work or surviving in today's world.

Work in Decker's Creek has always occurred within the bounds of the community--when the mine was working as well as during retirement. Women's work was and is focused in the home. During the mining days men, women and children were subject to the vicissitudes of a mining life. Coal-mining families could live in their homes because their men worked in the mine. The homes were a part of the industry and production of the mine in the sense of providing a readily-available labor force. The homes were also vulnerable to the whims of the mine owners (lose a job, lose a home) and the foibles of the mine itself (lose productive streaks of coal, lose a job; lose electricity in the mine, lose electricity in the home). While the mine no longer operates in Decker's Creek, and the focus of all work is domestic, the older residents have developed a pattern of taking care of one another within the confines of the community. Decker's Creek is a company town grown old; a town in which neighbors have lived and worked together for 30 to 40 years and retired together as well. Work to these older people is a way of taking care of one another, a way of maintaining a relationship. Not to work is a sign of alienation from the community.

The fact that the mining families communicate with and sustain each other through work reverses the usual conceptions of work in this society. One normally links work to alienation in industrial society, and escape from the work-

place with sustenance, which is generally expressed through leisure but in Decker's Creek the opposite occurs. Work is the means by which the residents communicate, take care of and invest in their community, and this work is primarily the work of gardening. The "underlying rules" which provide the logic for their behavior stem from the shared background of living in a dominated community, performing work which frequently resulted in injury, disability or death, and living in a family whose members were as affected as the worker himself by the haphazard availability of work and the whims of the company. This shared experience of having grown up in company towns is a kind of "grammatical knowledge" for the residents of Decker's Creek. The structuring of relations: organizing the home-as-workplace, allowing work to provide sustenance and be a measure of one's moral stock in the community--is a transformation of the pattern of having to sustain one another under the heel of a dominant company. Work has become a visible and nurturing symbol for stating one's investment in the community. By gardening and engaging in exchanges with one another, the residents have been able to plant cultivate resources in each other which can be harvested in time of need.

NOTES

1. When I was doing my research, I was not particularly concerned with how the end of company town life and the closing of the mine affected the particular work patterns of the residents. I thus lack the data about just what they did at the time as well as the exact dates of retirement for the men. The importance of this has become clear during the course of analyzing the data. Documenting these transitions would be an important historical task to undertake for this or any other similar community which was industry-dominated.

2. Getting the federal Black Lung Benefits was not easy: one not only had to have medical evidence of black lung, but had to prove employment in the mines for a certain period of years. Since the mines had closed down and work was sporadic after 1950, this was no easy task. The fact that most men in the community did receive Black Lung benefits was due to the efforts of the women, who "dragged them down there" to sign up, and a local physician, who not only performed the medical verification for the presence of black lung or silicosis, but helped the men fill out forms which documented mine employment.

3. Most of the men completed grade eight, and most of the women completed at least grade 10. A few women graduated from high school. This is one reason that the women handled all the finances, wrote the letters, and generally negotiated with bureaucratic entities in Morgantown.

4. I have some information about the children of the residents who do not live in Decker's Creek. Some live in Morgantown, but during the two years that I lived there, I met only a handful of them. It seemed that the parents were more likely to go visit the children than vice versa. The children I did meet were those who lived out of town or out of state, and when they visited we were invited over for dinner to meet them.

5. I have no data about what happened to these miners.

6. All the information regarding the population size, percentage of the aged population, and systems of exchange refer to 1978 and 1979 when I lived in the community.

7. Frederick Gamst, "Considerations for an Anthropology of Work" Anthropology of Work Newsletter 2(1), 1981. Gamst outlines the sorts of "volitional" work described here.

8. The Scotch and Welsh immigration to the U.S. and to Appalachia occurred prior to the change in the Blue Laws in 1882. Before 1882 only northern European and British immigrants readily found their way to this country, after 1882 southern Europeans were able to immigrate. Most of the people who live in Decker's Creek participated in this second wave of immigration.

9. Collecting this data was relatively simple. The day I arrived in Decker's Creek I was invited over to my neighbors for a cup of coffee and homemade date muffins. We talked for awhile, and as I prepared to leave I was told, "Well, its a been real nice meeting you. I think you'll like it here. You'll remember me, Sophie, a real Italian name". In nearly every conversation I held with the residents, they would talk about their national origins. Bill would say, "We're Austro-Hungarian, you know, my brother and me like to get on the CB and talk Slovenian, that really get's 'em! You should'a met my mother, she could speak eight languages, even jewish". When Sophie's mother got ill, just before she died, I heard Sophie talking on the telephone in Italian with her mother, her sister and a neighbor in Decker's Creek. One sister and brother in the community were Yugoslavian--the only Yugoslavians in the community--and they had made a trip there the year before I arrived. These "facts of life" were apparent in everyday conversation.

CHAPTER V

Floods and Festivals:
Old Patterns and New Pressures

This chapter describes two turbulent events which occurred in Decker's Creek in the late 1970s. One was a series of floods which resulted in a lawsuit, and the other was the creation of a five-town community association which sponsored an annual festival. The lawsuit resulted in a divisive court trial, and the festival was regarded and attended with ambivalence. Both these events were responses to the influx of newcomers to the region and the community who, as I described in Chapter IV, were not particularly interested in learning about or participating in Decker's Creek life. This chapter describes the crises which the older residents experienced, and analyses these in terms of "social drama". I also note that the struggles by the older residents were an effort to reproduce their patterns of social behavior and belief on behalf of the newcomers. The difficulties they experienced in making this happen were due to the fact that the people who were part the younger generation within the community were a of a different class and background from them. The fight against a changing community--embodied in the court trial and the ambivalent reaction to the new festival--was not simply a fight against change (these families, after all, were experienced in fighting for

change), but was rather an effort to forestall the disintegration of the community as they had known and defined it.

Decker's Creek is a community undergoing change--brought on largely because of the changing industrial order of the region. Industrial change has meant an increase in the numbers of professional jobs available locally. As a result of this shift people who move into the communities have different backgrounds and occupations from the long-time residents. The change in the industrial order of the area has altered the way in which the outlying communities are defined by outsiders. Rather than being defined as a coal-mining town and/or a company town as it was 30-50 years ago, Decker's Creek is now viewed as a small, marginal community to Morgantown. Local real estate agents refer to it as "rough", although some acknowledge that it has "potential" as an area due to the increase in commercial building in Ranton, at the outer city limits, but on the whole the realtors try to steer incoming young faculty toward the new and expensive developments. The quick growth of Morgantown during the 1970s wreaked some havoc on the housing which was--or wasn't--available for the increased numbers of students and faculty at West Virginia University. The outlying towns and hills became the targets for new developments. It was fairly easy for Morgantown to expand outward; most small communities have been "unincorporated" since their founding, and although their residents have had the

opportunity to incorporate, and thereby gain leverage in access to services, they have decided not to. Decker's Creek is proudly, if not defiantly, "unincorporated". The small green sign at the western end of the community announces in neat white letters: "Decker's Creek, Unincorporated". The new residents who have moved into Decker's Creek, however, are professionally trained (there was a social worker, two engineers, a nurse, and a doctor). Decker's Creek, redefined by the immediate outside world as a bedroom community to Morgantown--if somewhat on the low end of the scale of desirability--has posed a vague threat to the long-time residents. The threat began when the new residents in the community showed a lack of interest, if not a rude and complete refusal, to participate in the system of exchange. It was exacerbated by the flooding of the community which was caused by the construction of a new housing development. These external events began the what Victor Turner would call a "drama" for the residents. Decker's Creek experienced the flooding more seriously than the other small nearby communities. The flooding represented a threat to a way of life which consisted of gardening, domestic work, neighborliness and gift exchange. Their response to the crisis of physical damage--a lawsuit--was possible because they were able to draw upon their experience as union fighters. They perceived that the flooding had been

caused by the actions of a powerful local developer, and they were unafraid to challenge him.

While traveling east from Morgantown along the state route, one can take a right hand turn about half a mile before entering Decker's Creek. The road winds quickly up a hill toward what the local residents refer to as "the mountain", a dispersed community of intermarried families of Scotch and Welsh descent. After crossing the tracks for the coal train, one immediately comes upon the bare new development of "Thomas Manor". The new houses have not yet grown lawns, and the site is muddy and treeless. If one could peer sharply enough down the hill, it would be possible to look down directly upon Decker's Creek.

The land for Thomas Manor was incorporated in early 1974, and two days later it was purchased by two developers, one of whom was an influential Morgantown businessman. Beginning in the fall of 1974 and lasting into the spring of 1975 the hill was gradually, but completely, defoliated. In July 1975, the first lot was sold. Soon after the hill was defoliated, new culverts were installed under the railroad tracks to prevent any water from interfering with the running of the coal trains. It was the responsibility of the railroad to keep the culverts clean. This usually failed to be done. The culverts did indeed save the train tracks, but

they tended to be constantly filled with mud and gravel.

The first flood occurred in March 1976. Two heavy rainfalls broke loose a small reservoir of water which surrounded the home of one of the residents at the east end of the community, water filled his garage, ran into his furnace room and filled the basement with mud. The storms were worrisome.

You could hear the water when it rained; it had a roaring sound. You'd look out the window, and you'd see it coming down the sidewalk like a river.

Beginning in 1976 there were at least a dozen floods over a period of thirteen and one half months, and each time lawns were covered with three to four inches of water, mud slid off the hill into the gardens, rocks were carried into gardens and lawns, and basements were filled with water and mud. The new culverts, one resident said "shoved all of the water on me". The houses at the east end of town routinely received the greatest damage. Dominique, who lived in a former boarding house at the east end said that the damage to his home was so severe that he had to buy two pumps, a jack to hold up his front porch and a new shed among other things, totaling \$3,970. Like the other men, Dominique was a retired coal miner, living on social security, black lung insurance and his pension, totaling no more than \$600 per month. These expenses for repairing his home as a result of the flood were therefore especially high. Most of the resi-

dents, however, complained less of the expense that they had to go to in order to address the damages inflicted by the floods, than of the work it entailed. Dominique estimated that he spent 400 hours cleaning mud out of his house. His entire house became moldy, his garden was ruined, and lawn was destroyed. Mrs. Martini, in her 70s, had to do all the cleaning of mud in her home. Her 81 year old husband was too disabled to help her at all. Although she only had to spend about \$100 for damages, she spent about 500 hours cleaning up. She also had to fix the road near the house. Since she had suffered a cancer operation several years before the flooding, she found that carrying "hundreds of buckets of rocks" out of her garden which were washed there by the running waters was particularly difficult: "I was just so sick and sore, I didn't know what to do".

The flooding always seemed to occur during the night, after a long steady, rain. Whenever it rained at night, the residents would become concerned, phoning each other to report on the state of the water and to see if any flooding had begun. During one flood which occurred when I lived in the community it was the older residents who awoke early. Mike went up to the culverts at 3:30 a.m. to be sure they were cleaned out; Carmela, who had moved out of Decker's Creek into nearby Creekhollow, called Tony at 4:30 a.m. to tell him that her community had flooded, and the creek may have overflowed. At 7:30 a.m., Tony, although limping

because of his total hip replacement and his arthritis, unable to move easily or use his gnarled hands with any facility, climbed up the muddy hill behind the community to see where the water broke through. Up in the early hours, the residents would turn on the sump pumps in their basements to keep the water levels as low as possible, and get out in the rain on the sidewalks, to try to sweep it aside and prevent a mud buildup. They were anxious about the damage, and worried about their health as they worked out in the rain in the middle of the night.

Later in the day, Tony went out to inspect the damage to his garden. Mud had oozed down the hill, and the water-laden plants were drooping into it. Tony came to our house to collect old newspapers, and spent the later part of the morning spreading the newspapers over the mud to keep his pepper plants from touching it. The new developers, he said, kept porta-toilets up on the hill, and one of the other residents had reported smelling feces from the hill a few weeks earlier. He spread the newspapers to keep his produce from being contaminated.

Trying to understand and describe the everyday lives of people in a way which makes sense to them and to outsiders requires understanding the dynamic quality of social life rather than simply its more static social structure. Victor Turner proposed a method for analyzing this dynamic by

looking at the drama which occurs in everyday life. Drama has its own quality of intense, observable action. One can see who the relevant social actors are, and can listen to what they say the drama is about. Turner looks at how social actions acquire form through metaphors and paradigms in the actor's heads.¹ A metaphor may act as tacit knowledge to the actors. Turner views social life as continually changing, full of flux, to the extent that terms like community or society are static, too static to accurately describe the dynamic quality of social intercourse. What might have been seen as an anomalous event becomes, as Sahlins² suggests, worked into people's lives according to structural patterns they already have. A dramatic event therefore heightens the patterns which already exist in a community and casts them in more a defined light. The dramatic event therefore represents ordinary, everyday dynamism, and one might expect that the event is interpreted by the actors in terms of the metaphors they use in structuring their daily lives. When conflict erupts it is a social drama. The four phases of a drama are a breach of regular, norm-governed social relations, the expansion of the breach by the involvement of more and more people until it reaches a crisis, redress in order to limit the crisis, and reintegration or the restructuring of the social order.

The initial drama for the Decker's Creek residents was in their perception that their property--their well-defined

space--was being compromised. It was first compromised by the new residents who moved in and refused to participate in their system of exchange and support. It was physically compromised by the flooding, caused by newcomers in need of housing. The flooding was a crisis.

Redress: The Trial

In May of 1978, nineteen Decker's Creek residents sued the development companies and railroad company up on the hill behind their community for damage to their properties due to flooding, brought on by the negligence of the developers to prevent overflow of the culverts. They sued because of the amount of flooding which had occurred in Decker's Creek since 1976. During the trial each resident was sworn in and told his or her story. They described themselves by occupation, age and length of residence in the community. Ronnie, owner of an auto repair business, was 54 and had lived there for 30 years. Dominique, 63, was a retired coal miner, disabled because he had a lung removed due to black lung, had lived there 33 years. Jimmy, speaking on behalf of his 84 year old mother who was in the hospital, had grown up in the community and lived there for 40 years. Raymond, 78; Sal, 85; Mario, 70, and Maria, 81, testified about the hardship they suffered sweeping the water away, cleaning out the mud and repairing their gardens and lawns. They had all lived there between 25 and 40 years. Many shed

tears while on the stand, and their voices choked and quavered.

The trial lasted four days. Each day fewer women attended, staying home to get their work done, but the men continued to go. When the case went to the jury, it deliberated only a few hours before finding the two developers guilty and the railroad not guilty. The jury awarded a total of \$370,000 to the plaintiffs, which meant an average of \$20,000 for each one. The awards ranged from \$31,000 to \$3,400.

The plaintiffs were delighted with the verdict. One week later the developers sought to set aside the verdict and set a new trial, but this action was denied by the judge. They evidently then sought to appeal. The attorneys for the Decker's Creek residents called a closed meeting of the plaintiffs. My notes from the day read as follows:

I saw Tony and Sophie after the meeting and they said there had been a settlement but wouldn't say anymore. John also acknowledged that there had been a settlement but suggested that they had been instructed not to say anything about it. Esther just came over, and in a secretive tone told me that her mother had spoken with her sister [Esther's aunt Dorothy, who was a plaintiff]. Dorothy told Esther's mother, Mary, that there had been a meeting. Mary played as if she knew nothing about it. Dorothy said that she and Dominique had been awarded \$31,000 by the jury [the highest award] but were actually getting \$16,000. Esther was positively gleeful, and assumed that the awards had all been reduced by one-half.

There was a certain vindictiveness on the part of the non-suing residents toward the residents who sued. "Heck, I

wish someone would pay me for my troubles" one 35-year old woman told me. Esther was mad at her husband Bill for not suing; they had been among those who originally filed but withdrew when the trial began. Bill said "I won't miss what I won't get", but nonetheless confided in me that he intended to buy enough dirt to put in his backyard to keep the water from getting on his property. When I suggested to him that it would back up the water on his neighbor's property, he replied "well, she can fix up her place with all the money she's getting".

In the weeks after the trial and the settlement there was evidence of the money being put to use. One woman built up her sidewalks enough so that she could still walk along them during the next flood. Another older widow put aluminum siding on her house, and whispered to me when I wandered over to inspect it that "it cost just \$25 less than \$4,000". Another was all set to build a garage next to his house and decided that he was too old; so he hired some men and paid \$3,800 for them to do it. Most of the residents, however, simply put the money in the bank or the money markets.

Levels of Conflict

The trial was a political confrontation and a public conflict which aroused more subtle, inter-household conflicts than had previously been evident. Some of the people

who helped each other out during the actual floods soon began to plot and complain about one another's behavior when faced with their different reactions to and choices about the trial. These conflicts made apparent the fact that when cooperation and exchange did occur, it happened in face of differences which were usually glossed over. The sorts of differences which existed became clear later in the summer.

The settlement of the trial award came in July, about a month before the annual "Decker's Creek Valley Days" festival. The festival, unenthusiastically if faithfully attended by the Decker's Creek residents, represented an uneasy liaison among the five local outlying communities. Three of these communities--Decker's Creek, Billington and Ironstone--were originally built in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as the area first became industrialized. Creekhollow was originally farmland which became subdivided, and Brook Road is a newer community, built during the last 10 years, as Morgantown expanded (see Appendix IV). Currently, the communities are inhabited by working-class people who are employed at the factories or who do domestic work in homes.

At the time, it did not seem as though there was any relationship between the conflict which occurred within the community during the trial and the five-community festival.

But upon analysis, it has become clear that the two events were organized around a definition of "who we are".

Drama in a Larger Field:

The Decker's Creek Community Association and Valley Days

Decker's Creek Valley Days is an new annual festival which was dreamed up and implemented by Eliza, a woman who had operated the local Neighborhood House for the past twenty years.³ The Neighborhood House is part of a Presbyterian ministry. Although the festival purportedly celebrated the "joint cultural heritage" of the five communities, there was no actual communication among the five communities, nor any joint heritage. Eliza felt, however, that there was a common condition which the communities in the area shared--powerlessness--and this was sufficient reason to prove (and celebrate) to outsiders who they were. Eliza was a real "mover and shaker", a local grass-roots sociologist, and her religious status gave her liminal power. Her roots--from a mining family on the other side of town--made her enough of an "insider" and an "outsider" for people to listen to her.

There is different makeup in each of the five communities that (well now we have six with Thomas Manor). Billington is the old mill town, Decker's Creek is a coal mining, Ironstone is a coal-mining town with a history of iron, Brook Road was a farming area, but now it is a bedroom community, same with Creekhollow, it was farming, and then it was divided and subdivided with the children, and then new housing developments came in up there. Just three are tied to industry. We were always the outside of Morgantown, we were the working people

who either farmed, or who worked in the grist mill or they may have worked in the iron furnace and the plants and the coal mines and this kind of thing. Morgantown used to be--in the 20s--always was the town for the coal operators. We were outside. This was true of our churches (the presbyterian church) were operator churches. Now, of course, coal operators are no longer local, they're big concerns. But I always think in terms of the church. The Morgantown University church is made up of university faculty and business people. Ours are made up of the maids, the seamstresses, the maintenance people, the cooks, the truck drivers and people of the coal mines, you know. I think we'll always be that, because I think we want to say this is where our roots are. I think we could have organized. We cooperate but we do not incorporate. It's informal.

She felt the communities suffered as a result of being unincorporated, and forming the Decker's Creek Community Association was her way of trying to do something about it.

We thought, that sooner or later, the way Morgantown was growing, that they would be incorporating, that eventually something would happen. We thought, hey, it would be great, that we would become incorporated, the five towns, and [then] we would have a say in what happened to us.

When we organized the Decker's Creek Community Association we got going real well for quite awhile, got the Valley Days going, but one of the things that some of us got to talking about that wasn't so great is what if we were to incorporate these five communities. And it was done almost as a joke too, to see if we could get anybody to come out, and well, I'm telling you they came out of the woodwork. They came stamping out. Oh, we had about three or four months there that was rough, rough going. They were down on it. They weren't going to incorporate. If you incorporate somebody's telling you what to do. They had moved outside of the city limits to keep from paying taxes, they didn't want zoning. They were not going let anybody to tell them where they could build a house or what they could do on their property. Ohhh.

The resistance to incorporation was evident during the summer of 1978 when there were a number of meetings organ-

ized by some university people, informing the residents about the housing shortage, and letting them know that Decker's Creek would be infringed upon. Researchers from the university had written petitions and circulated them, urging people to incorporate, but nothing came of it.⁴

The lack of services which the towns experienced made Eliza feel that the residents would be eager to incorporate. It had taken years just to get a Decker's Creek defined as a public service district which was finally organized in late 1960s.

One of the big reasons we did not get an ambulance service out this way sooner, is that the only political entity we have to work with is county court, and every time we got to the county court we were turned back. I will give it credit because I think as a result of being a kind of thorn in their side, we were a consciousness-raising group to them, that's how we've got EMS today. We kept pushing to get money to help us. We had subscriptions for the ambulance service, but no political entity for us to work with. Whereas if we were organized, we would have our own mayor, or our own council.

Given the reluctance on the part of the five communities to have anything formal to do with one another, it was somewhat surprising to me that any of them participated in the Decker's Creek Valley Days festival. The three-day celebration, which began in the mid-1970s, occurred annually each August in the large field next to what used to be the company-run schoolhouse. There was lots of food (hot dogs, baked beans, corn bread) cooked up inside the schoolhouse kitchen; upstairs there was a quilt and canning competition, as well as an exhibit of local art work. There was usually

a bluegrass band, and games typical of county fairs, such as penny tossing. The residents would wander up the road to the event, usually having spent the week before deciding whether or not they would go, or whether they to enter any quilts or canned goods in the contest. Sitting on the porch one festival afternoon, I recall seeing 15 or 20 residents from "the mountain" walking through Decker's Creek to the festival grounds. Decker's Creek residents watched them quietly. No one knew anyone else, and the mountain people, very inter-married, had a large number of individuals with club feet. This deformity set them apart even further than they already were, and the very act to going to a festival to celebrate the "joint cultural heritage" of the five towns was ironic.

Nonetheless, the Decker's Creek residents believed that the festival was "a good idea, because people don't really appreciate this kind of life, the way it used to be and all". In fact, when I spoke with friends who were professionals associated with the University, they showed only a dim awareness of the towns outside Morgantown, only 7-15 miles away, and the knowledge they did have came from local announcements of the Valley Days.

The residents wanted the outsiders to know about them.

Bill joked to me:

Too bad its not ramp season. What we ought to feed them up there at the schoolhouse is ramps. Then they'll learn a little about real West Virginia cooking.

Ramps, a wild local onion, are the "real hillbilly food" according to regional folklore, and are so strong that when in season parents reputedly keep their kids out of school for a week while they eat them. Not one resident actually ate ramps while I was there, but many threatened to. Using ramps as a kind of threat against newcomers at the same time they were being invited to share food with the "natives" symbolized the ambivalent feeling the residents had toward the changes occurring around them. The residents wanted to use the festival to exhibit their crafts, to show off their cooking and present a proud if not defiant visage to the perceived danger of Morgantown's growth. They seemed to want to show that there was something which existed in the areas into which Morgantown was expanding, and that it couldn't continue to do so unwittingly.

Discussion

The ideas of Victor Turner, who is interested in the way in which actors understand and symbolize their world, and how they therefore act upon it, provide a useful framework for analyzing these events.⁵ To Turner, "changefulness" is basic to human social life, and thinking about culture, society, social life or community in strict, structural or formal terms is too static, and misses the dynamic which characterizes everyday life. Action serves as a text. How people interpret action is the sub-text--their symbolized

understanding of the world, which acts as 'tacit knowledge'.

As discussed in Chapter IV, the "tacit knowledge" for the Decker's Creek residents was expressed through the metaphor of work. Work involved not only caring for one's garden, household and yard, it included exchanging produce, cooked food and small handmade items. Participating in this system, defined and implemented by the older residents, symbolized a way of taking care of one another and maintaining social relationships. Work was a sort of "grammatical knowledge" representing the shared experiences of having grown up in a company town, and it served as a way of measuring one's moral stock in the community.

When Decker's Creek flooded, just how the residents reacted to the flood mattered. Not to clean up was not simply a matter of laziness, it was a signal of nonparticipation in maintaining community life. Cleaning up and caring about the cleanup therefore meant fighting against what was an affront to community social organization.

When the fight got serious it took the form of the trial. There were nineteen plaintiffs who took part in the court trial. Seventeen of these were old-time miners or widows of old-time miners. Only one still continued to mine. All the others worked back when the company owned the town and before mining was mechanized. Going to court was a formal, institutional step taken by the residents. Legally,

they could sue for property damage and mental anguish. They needed to sue in order to compensate for the anxiety brought on by the flood crisis. The fact that it was primarily the old miners who filed suit is no surprise, the very act of hiring lawyers and acting in a mobilized fashion recalls the solidarity of the union-building era. These people knew how to fight for what they considered to be critical aspects of their way of life.

There were many people in the community who did not join the suit. Some who might have--because they too were flooded and had damaged houses--did not for reasons which were never very apparent. Bill and Esther, for example, were among the original plaintiffs, but chose to withdraw just as the trial began. They would only comment that they wouldn't miss what they wouldn't get. Some newcomers--like myself--could not have participated because they moved into the community after the lawsuit had been filed. Others never received enough damage to warrant filing. However, all the plaintiffs who did file were, without exception, "old time" miners, that is, community residents since the company town days.

The aggregate of plaintiffs was an aggregate, however, not a group speaking on behalf the "the community", so it was individuals who stood to profit from the suit, not the community as a whole. This proved to be a sore point and source of discussion and conflict between those who did and

didn't participate in the trial. Some who withdrew made caustic remarks about those who remained plaintiffs, and some conflicts between households and families which emerged made apparent the shifting allegiances between households. For the oldest residents, who had lived in the community while it was a mining town, the primary definition of who they were derived from their long term association, their work together underground and in the company town. Their community solidarity was metaphorically expressed through work. For the somewhat younger residents--those in their 40s and 50s--work was less critical in their self-definition, to them work referred more to the workplace itself than to the transformation of the home-into-workplace, but their homes were important. For the youngest residents--the newcomers--work was irrelevant, and the property in question represented a good "beginning house" for starting a family.

Since the "community way" was largely defined by the older residents in Decker's Creek, as discussed in Chapter IV, the perceived dangerous "other" was also largely defined by them. Suing the developers meant standing up for their way of life, a form of self-defense, more than it meant trying to stop the inevitable changes of time. The power to do this came largely from their marginal, liminal position within the contemporary world. They were in a liminal position because of being retired, a position which exists

in this society without definition or structure. They were marginal on the basis of "outsiderhood". As Turner states:

As well as the betwixt-and-between state of liminality there is the state of outsiderhood, referring to the condition of being either permanently and by ascription set outside the structural arrangements of a given social system, or being situationally or temporarily set apart. Such outsiders would include, in various cultures, shamans, diviners, mediums, priests, those in monastic seclusion, hippies, hoboes and gypsies. They should be distinguished from 'marginals', who are simultaneously members (by ascription, optation, self-definition, or achievement) of two groups or more groups whose social definitions and cultural norms are distinct from, and often even opposed to, one another.... These would include migrant foreigners, second-generation Americans, persons of mixed ethnic origin, parvenus... and declasses,...migrants from country to city, and women in a changed, nontraditional role. What is interesting about such marginals is that they often look to their group of origin, the so-called inferior group, for *communitas*, and to the more prestigious group in which they mainly live and in which they aspire to higher status as their structural reference group.... (1974:232-233)

By seeking redress through a highly defined structural framework --the courts--the older, retired residents sought to resolve the crisis of the flooding. The floods were not only a crisis, but took on metaphoric meaning about their lack of power vis à vis shifting forces which were affecting the definition of their community. At the same time, by participating the structure of the festival, although it represented a coalition of towns which they fundamentally believed didn't belong together, they sought to stave off the destruction of their community and the crumbling of the old social order before newcomers who could not share their values.

Barbara Myerhoff, in Number Our Days, suggests that there may exist incomplete social dramas. There may not be, for example, any restructuring of the social order, but only efforts to dramatize the importance of one's existence to one another--especially if there is no other audience--in an attempt to become visible, and in order to tolerate the conflicts and crises which characterize a diminishing world. If this is what happened in Decker's Creek, it was done on a daily basis and with unfailing vigor. Every possibility was clearly sought. Newcomers to the community, representatives of a changed world, were routinely invited to garden, hang laundry, visit and exchange with the residents. Lawyers were hired for redress. Festivals were attended for visibility and pride. There was, amid this vigor and hard work which defined each day that I was there, also a sadness and lament for the very difficult world which the residents of Decker's Creek had managed to survive:

You should have seen Decker's Creek back then. It was boomin'. The mine was goin'. And everybody, oh just everybody, just took care of each other. It was really somethin'.

NOTES

1. He uses the following terms:

Fields: abstract cultural domains where paradigms are formulated, established and come into conflict.
Paradigm = sets of rules.

Arenas: concrete settings in which paradigms become transformed into metaphors and symbols with reference to which political power is mobilized and by which there is a trial of strength between influential paradigm-bearers.

Social Drama: phased process of the contestation.

Metaphor: is transformative; a "means of effecting instantaneous fusion of two separated realms of experience into one illuminating, iconic, encapsulating image" (1974:25).

2. Sahlins, M. Islands of History, University of Chicago Press, 1985.

3. In Ironstone's annual report of the Neighborhood House, the following "brief history" notes:

"Our roots go back to the late 1920's when First United Presbyterian Church, Morgantown, began work at Purs-glove. The 'Great Depression' had left many miners in [this area] jobless. Many people were hungry and in need of all the bare necessities of life. The Presbyterian workers came bringing "food" for both the body and the spirit. The pattern was set for a twofold ministry... the forming of a community of faith through worship and teaching plus service to the larger community of faith through distribution of food and clothing, creation programs and other social services. In 1946-47 the work expanded to include eight other coal mining communities. Ironstone was one of them....

In 1960...the Neighborhood House became a reality.... In moving to a new facility the work spread beyond the little community of Ironstone to reach people living in other communities in the Deckers Creek area.... The Ironstone Presbyterian Church and Neighborhood House occupy one structure and continue to be the two facets of a single ministry, providing both spiritual and physical nourishment to people and to the communities where they live. In addition, to continue emphasis upon small groups concerned with education, recreation

and fellowship, the Neighborhood House has been instrumental in helping to spawn and develop such groups as...Decker Creek Valley Days."

4. I don't know who actually wrote the petitions. I found one at my doorstep one day, describing the fact that as Morgantown was expanding it was inevitable that more and more building would take place close to Decker's Creek. Thinking that incorporating would be a grand idea, I talked with the neighbors, asking them if they were going to sign. "Sure, Pat" was the response I got, "great idea". But they dumped the petitions in the garbage.

5. The notions he developed are discussed in Dramas, Fields and Metaphors (1974 Cornell). In observing social life and social process--meaning the general course of social actions--Turner noticed a form to social time, which was dramatic. Cultural systems, Znaniecki (1936 The Method of Sociology N.Y., Farrar & Rhinehart) maintained, depend upon the participation of volitional conscious human agents and upon people's continuing and potential changing relations with one another. Sociological data is collected and analyzed by looking at how persons are the object of action of and by others. This is not simply a subjective view, but the way to discover how cultural systems act and are.

CHAPTER VI

Conclusion

Social Change, Growing Old and Leaving a Legacy

This dissertation has been about the re-creation of a community through generational process. When they grew old, the residents of Decker's Creek restructured patterns of reciprocity and support in order to cope with new exigencies in their lives and to find a way to leave a legacy.

The lifetimes of these people have paralleled and reflected the great changes in technology, social organization, economy, and patterns of work which have occurred over the past 80 years. Their community was built eighty years ago--in 1906--as a camp for the workers and families at the Decker's Creek mine. Eighty years ago most of the current Decker's Creek residents had just been, or were about to be, born. Growing up and growing old during a century of dramatic social and industrial change has defined the pressing conditions of life for these aging, former mining families. Forces external to them--such as the changing national demand for coal--altered the need for production in the coal mine where they worked, and consequently changed the relationship of their community to the larger world. Over the course of the century their community shifted from being a company town to an unincorporated community, to a bedroom

community, all due to its altered relationship to the changing regional and national economy.

Until the late 1970s, when some older residents died, the population of Decker's Creek remained very stable. While their children who were born in the 1940s and 1950s grew up and moved away, the parents remained. The "newcomers" who moved in became the focus of the elder's desire to share their meaning of the community. They also posed a symbolic and actual threat to the community as it had "always" been defined.

In this thesis I have described the process of coping with profound social change in terms of generational process. The model provided by Mannheim about generations has proved useful because the notions he used to describe a variety of situations. These include the context in which people live (the community), the economic and social conditions which they confront (industrial and technological change), the manner in which people become politicized ("fresh contact", and consciousness), and the period of life belonging to a generation becomes relevant (old age). I have argued that the integration of these processes has created particular "work cultures". The crises which the residents of Decker's Creek experienced in old age reflected the different work cultures of the older and younger generations.

To conclude, it is useful to review the arguments I have made about the conditions which produced the work culture for the older coal mining families in Decker's Creek, and the dilemmas they faced as they grew older and the larger world changed.

Social Change

Appalachia has been a richly endowed if contested terrain throughout its difficult history. From the time that it was Cherokee territory its land has been deeply valued. Perhaps only the Cherokee, who lived there hundreds of years before anyone else, respected it without exploiting it. Appalachia was never a pristine place, although it has been described as such by some labor historians.¹ Since Appalachia is now so heavily industrialized, it is easy to think of its history as beginning with the building of the railroads and the coming of the coal barons. Early records reveal that the battles that have been fought there involved the struggles to find gold, to shelter escaped slaves, to build a westward route, and to rally for or against the Revolution. Since the sixteenth century when Spanish explorers first arrived there, Appalachia has been sought for its rich resources.

Decker's Creek came into being as a result of relatively recent industrial change in the region: the building of the railroads and the proliferation of the coal mines. As

Chapter II shows, the company towns that were built at the turn of the century displaced family farms as the coal mines flourished. Between 1880 and 1900--a period of only about twenty years--production in Appalachia shifted from being primarily agricultural to mining. With the change in immigration laws in 1880, there began a large influx of eastern Europeans and Italians. Decker's Creek is a typical little mining community from this viewpoint. Its very existence is attributable to the major shift in the mode of production, and its population of eastern Europeans and Italians reflects the changed immigration code of the late 19th century.

By 1880, Appalachia was a "mature industrial region". Decker's creek was dotted with small communities. There was a prosperous iron mill and forge alongside many small family farms. By the time the Decker's Creek mine opened in 1906 and the first "shacks" for the company town were built, some of the nearby communities--the forge and milltowns--were already on the decline.

Most of the people who now reside in Decker's Creek were born shortly after the mine first opened. At that time mining was a hand-loading operation. When boys went to work at age 14, they accompanied their fathers and with spade, shovel, and sticks of dynamite to begin a mining life. Their young sisters, more often than not, married before

finishing high school and began housekeeping in a company town.

Growing up and growing old during a century of dramatic industrial change have defined the conditions of life for the residents of Decker's Creek. It is significant that the residents of Decker's Creek were long-term residents of the community; the meaning of their work in later life was enhanced by having known one another over three to four decades and of having experienced the difficult conditions of living in a company town. In addition, the community as a physical unit had symbolic significance which changed over the years. At first, as a company town, it was wholly-owned by the company. Moving in was initially possible only through employment in the mine, and remaining there was possible only by working in the mine and living a life which the company itself approved. As I described in Chapter IV, a family could be expelled from a company town on a variety of counts including union activism, not buying from the company store, or not meeting approval for keeping the grounds neat. The company completely dominated its workers and their families. Because the company town was so dominated, the solidarity which developed was particularly strong. It was because of this solidarity that the miners were able to participate in building the union. When the mine shut down in 1950 and the company sold the houses, the town experienced a shift in definition. The change was

dramatic since the direct domination by the company ended at the same time that it became more difficult to find work. Men had to scrounge for mining jobs, some went into the factories or timber mills. A few women went to work in businesses in town as well. The population of the community remained stable after the closing of the mine. Over the years that the community residents lived in Decker's Creek, their sources of work and in some cases kinds of work changed, the relationship of their jobs to their community changed and the relationship of the community itself to Morgantown changed.

The groundwork for community relationships was laid during the company town days. It was reinforced over the next few decades. The community gained meaning for the residents during the 25 years after the company closed the mine and sold its houses. Chapter IV describes the changes that occurred during those 25 years. The mining families bought their houses but the miners were put out of work. Decker's Creek became redefined as a community: it was no longer a company town, and no longer under the heel of the company. The neighbors who had shared a specific, turbulent history now faced new exigencies brought about by lack of employment. There was relative joy in no longer having to live under company domination. The "improvement boom" within Decker's Creek--plastering and finishing their homes--represented a shift in the focus of work culture. While

domestic work had always been very important within the community because the mining families relied upon it for survival, when the mine closed, domestic work was refocused with new vigor.

As Chapter IV further illustrates, the late 1970s marked the most recent upheaval in the community. Then, coal mining was again on the upswing, resulting not only in booming coal mines throughout the area, but booming research and teaching at West Virginia University. As the population of that city increased, it produced a housing shortage. Newcomers to the area looked to new developments, or old ones, for a place to live. Some of them moved into Decker's Creek as some of the older residents died. The new residents were themselves typical of the latest industrial shift. They were professionals who moved in along with the increase in the blossoming service sector. The very different milieu from which these new residents came presented a serious dilemma for the older residents. The new people neither shared the same value system about work, nor understood the idea that neighbors are critical partners for surviving turbulent work conditions. The patterns of work and exchange which served as a medium for maintaining social relationships among the elders came under attack. The newcomers were uninterested in participating in "the way things were" with the older residents: they did not garden, neighbor or exchange.

This situation was made worse by the flooding of the community. The residents did not consider the floods to be "natural" disasters, but rather man-made ones, and they pinpointed the men who they felt were responsible for them. There was no question in their minds that the defoliation of the hill for the new housing development was at the root of their troubles. Their willingness and ability to fight the local powers reflected their skills honed during the coal mining days. They were prepared to fight for what they considered to be an insult and injury to their valued homes. Their experience and skill in activism, gained in the 1920s when building the union, along with a well-developed consciousness about community life, enabled the older residents to mobilize. They sued the developers for compensation of their losses, which were incurred as visible damage to their gardens, yards and houses--the very symbols of their moral stock in the community.

The expansion of Morgantown thus constituted a major threat and crisis for the older residents of Decker's Creek, one which threatened the very definition of who they were. Not only had the community been physically assaulted by floods, it was becoming home to young professionals who did not share the values of work and life of the older residents. The newcomers' different approach to home and to mutual support effectively served to reject the elders' values. Further, the influx of newcomers to the region

reinforced the fact that the forces which had created the older communities were no longer operative.

Although the Decker's Creek residents didn't feel much solidarity with neighboring communities, they realized that they were all imposed upon by the expansion of the city. The similar position shared by becoming bedroom communities to Morgantown was "celebrated" through the Decker's Creek Valley Days festival, which provided a way of asserting pride in a life they had survived and endured. The celebration was forced and the feelings about it were ambivalent. Since the festival was an annual event, concern about it mounted only during the summer. It did not represent a daily worry.

The erosion of earlier definitions of the community was experienced on a daily basis through the tension with newcomers, and the threat of flooding was worrisome whenever it rained. The older residents fought these symbols of community decay with great intensity--their efforts to demonstrate the importance and value of their daily work were expressed to the newcomers through invitations to exchange produce and visit, and in court, where they fought for compensation.

Daily life in Decker's Creek was thus full of vitality in the late 1970s. The vigorous effort involved in gardening, canning, and exchanging served to make the residents visible to one another and to the newcomers. The system of gift exchange embodied the values of work engendered during

the coal mining days. The intense interest that the older residents had in passing on information about gardening, work, and gift exchange to the newcomers was a process of trying to reproduce their community.

Social Reproduction

This dissertation has explored generational process by looking at the social location of the community in history and the symbolic meanings of work for its older residents. Generational process has been fraught with crisis, conflict and ambivalence for the older residents of Decker's Creek. Rather than being a process of transmitting to their children the knowledge, values and meanings about work which they have accumulated through their years, these older people have, as a group, tried to transmit these meanings to the new residents in their community. Teaching a new generation the ways of the old--a process of cultural continuity--was here a process of social discontinuity. Social reproduction is more than a process of reproducing the labor force, but it is not normally attributed to older social actors. Bourdieu, following the ideas of Mauss in The Gift, notes² that the work of maintaining social relationships through exchange is critical to the perpetuation of the group.

...the basis of gift exchange, and, perhaps, of all the symbolic labour intended to transmute, by the sincere fiction of a disinterested exchange, the inevitable, and inevitably interested relations imposed by kinship, neighbourhood, or work, into elective relations of reciprocity: in the work of

reproducing established relations--through feasts, ceremonies, exchanges of gifts, visits or courtesies, and, above all, marriages --which is no less vital to the existence of the group than the reproduction of the economic bases of its existence, the labour required to conceal the function of the exchanges is as important an element as the labour needed to carry out the function. (1972:171)

Following this perspective, the gift exchanges and work which the residents of Decker's Creek carried out comprised the social reproduction of the group. The work of exchange, of gardening and therefore of maintaining social relations characterized the domestic work of the Decker's Creek families.

Mannheim's ideas about generation remain useful for thinking about the social meaning of the life cycle because he described a way of understanding how individuals "intersect" the particular historical conditions in which they live. People become defined as members of a generation, he said, through their "similar location" in history and through "fresh contact". By describing generation as a process of social identification rather than only an attribute of age, he was able to view individuals as conscious, social actors. Unlike many other theorists of his day who tended to analyze societies from an ahistorical, functional perspective, Mannheim looked at societies in terms of history and process, and at how individuals interacted with their world. His model offers a way of understanding the conditions which motivate people to action, and

why groups of people ally themselves around a particularly potent idea.

The early lives of the Decker's Creek residents, dominated by the company, fueled the process of social identification. The process of becoming conscious about one's social conditions and position, emerged in the life stories which the residents have told about themselves. In Chapter III these stories describe the way in which the miners' consciousness about work was engendered. During the 1920s and 1930s the coal operators increased their efforts to control the process of mining. They did this through the mechanization of the mines which served to take away the control which the miners had over the work process. They lost what little control they had over their lives. In addition, company town conditions were such that the family as well as the miner was affected by what happened at the mine: if the electricity were turned off in the mine, so was it in the houses; if a miner lost his job, the family lost its home. The fragility of life, combined with its arduous conditions, served to cement the social relationships among neighbors within the coal mining community. They were able to survive through solidarity. Becoming unionized, I suggest, was the result of both the mechanization occurring in the mines and of the unbearable conditions which existed within the company town. In Mannheim's terms, the mining families' common location in history predisposed them to

"historically relevant action" which was fighting for the union.

The consciousness about work by workers is symbolically critical in how the workers perceive themselves and organize themselves throughout their lifespans. For the Decker's Creek miners, having worked underground before there was mechanization meant that they knew what it was like to work when they had some control over the work process itself. When machines were brought in, not only did the daily organization of work change, but piece work changed to salary, and the very decisions about when to start and stop working during the course of the day were no longer up to the miners themselves. Having experienced this shift from non-mechanization to the mechanization of the mines, and having participated in the labor and union movement, gave these individuals the knowledge, awareness and skills to fight for work conditions which they considered safe and tolerable. These very skills and experiences enabled the mining families to recognize and act upon what they considered to be a loss on control over their way of life later in their lives. The closeness among the mining families during the mining days established a pattern of support which continued throughout their lives, and which intensified toward the end of their lives through domestic work.

Work

It is common for work to be analyzed in terms of production rather than in terms of morality or symbolic worth, since many analyses of work in American society are made by economists rather than by anthropologists. Both these sorts of interpretations are credible, however, and make it clear that work itself is multidimensional: it is both economic and social. Looking at the way in which work functions socially, which entails looking at the physical details of how it is performed, enables one to understand the relationship of the social actors to the larger world. By considering "what work is" outside of the workplace, its definition can be immediately differentiated from wages, surplus-value, the internal labor market, the external labor market, and the dual labor force. A "social" view of work is, in other words, distinct from a market definition of work. Looking at work without relying on a strict market approach is fruitful in understanding the work patterns which link people to "productive" society.

One of the best models for understanding work in its social context has been provided by feminists, who have analyzed women's domestic work in the home. This has been extremely important in understanding the validity of women's domestic work (see Dallacosta, 1972; Secombe, 1974; Benston, 1969; Edholm, et al., 1978). Their ideas linked women's domestic work to the workplace through the social reproduc-

tion of the labor force. The great value of that model, when applying it to individuals who are not tied to the market at all, was in linking the importance of the domestic domain, through the institutions of the family and marriage, to employment and wage labor itself. The data analyzed in this dissertation differ from the feminist research in three ways: the domestic workers are not just female, they are male and female. Their exclusion from the workplace is on the basis of age rather than gender, and is a more complete exclusion. Women's exclusion from the labor force relates to a poorly paid wage in relation to men's wage, whereas old people are totally excluded because the economy cannot absorb them. Finally, the domestic work itself is done by old people, not just young and middle-aged "housewives".

Feminist research enabled scholars to see that the work within the domestic and "productive" (or informal and formal) domains are linked through the family. Much of that research, however, analyzed the value of domestic work for women who were married to wage-earning men and who were raising children. Although their domestic work itself was not part of the market economy, it became validated through and in connection to it. A drawback to these analyses is that the domestic conditions of old women, divorced women, or single women could not be considered to be valuable since they lacked the vital connection of a spouse to production. Further, these early feminist analyses focused on one

"slice" of the life cycle, and did not analyze how work might vary throughout the life cycle. The "problem" of understanding retirement in relation to social reproduction arises when confronting these questions. The value of domestic work can be reexamined by looking at the social lives of people during retirement. This developmental cycle approach sheds light on social organization at other points in the life cycle, and illuminates aspects of life other than mining itself. Instead of validating domestic work solely in relation to the market economy, one can validate it in terms of the residents' perception of the meaning of informal, nonmonetized or "volitional" work. By following a nonmarket approach to work, and focusing upon the meaning of work for the residents themselves in relation to the shifting social circumstances in which they live, it has become apparent that the work of the older residents in Decker's Creek made them socially visible both to themselves and to the younger residents.

Studying a mining community has been especially fruitful for analyzing the different domains of work. Mining is unusual as an occupation from the perspective of the closeness of the workplace and home, and because miners tend to be a very conscious group of workers. The intimate relation of the coal mine to the community, and the domination of the company over so many aspects of daily life for the mining families affected the way in which the residents ordered

their lives. They were able to overcome control by the company through their relationship to home; their sense of belonging, usefulness and meaning emerged out of solidarity they developed in opposition to the company. As I illustrated in Chapters III and IV, although the conditions of the workplace affected the daily routine of work and the level of control which the worker had over the work process, it was within the community and within the household that the successes, frustrations, consciousness and attitudes about work were played out. Analyzing labor processes clarifies the point that the awarenesses engendered in one domain may be enacted in the other, and that consciousness garnered during earlier life is reenacted in later life.

Old Age and the Creation of Community

Erikson's idea of "generativity" states that one task of adult development is to search how one might outlive oneself. The psychological dimension of this task involves negotiating "what to leave behind"; failure to come to terms with this results in "stagnation" or the failure to leave a conscious legacy.

The tendency in late life to seek a way to pass on information which one has learned during one's life greatly enhanced the vigor with which the Decker's Creek residents fought for their community and struggled to invite newcomers to participate in their system of exchange. The need to be

heard and to be visible is particularly acute in later life. Lacking a receptive audience, lacking children on hand to whom they could pass on their knowledge, they continually reaffirmed who they were to each other and never ceased trying to invite the newcomers to become part of their world. They did this through their gardens, their lawns and their houses, all highly visible activities. Even one very old and disabled miner, housebound because his black lung was so severe he could not breathe without an oxygen tube, made sure his son planted his garden every year, a visible and verdant sign that he was still alive and part of the community.

What made the older residents different from the newcomers to their community, from whom they felt alienated, was their network of social ties, their system of exchange, and their common understanding that being neighbors and community members was a moral concern. Mutual support was a critical component of survival within the company town. Acting to help one another became a way of life which existed until old age, when new neighbors refused to cooperate. So powerful was this rejection, that it served to create an awareness of generation among the older residents, which was expressed largely through their tireless efforts to pass on the values about work, neighboring and community to the young people who, it seemed, clearly did not understand what life was all about. At the same time that they

"became" a generation, the need for generational succession emerged³. One could easily argue that the residents of Decker's Creek experienced "fresh contact", as Mannheim would describe it, twice in their lives: once when they were moved to unionize forty years ago, and again in old age, when they were moved to pass on their values to their new neighbors.

Analyzing how older people cope with the problems of leaving a legacy leads one to focus on how generational succession occurs. Not all older people seek to bring younger ones into their fold, nor do they try to do so through gift-giving and exchange. Seemingly, the way in which one generation tries to impart its wisdom to another varies culturally. Exactly what is handed down reflects values both from the past and for the future. The imparted wisdom, however, is not necessarily well-thought out in advance. Instead, it is negotiated along the way. The cultural and psychological tasks faced by older people differ from those faced by people in earlier life. The perception of what elders feel must be accomplished is wholly-defined by what has gone on throughout life. Thus stories about what used to be, what has gone wrong and how things have changed express what the critical struggles are for the older person who is trying to figure out what he or she can leave behind. For the Decker's Creek residents, the flooding of their community focused the dilemma of who they

were, who they had been, and what they wanted to fight for. These late-life struggles make it apparent that old age is a vital, creative and visible time of life. By the time the Decker's Creek residents grew old, their definition of the community had become synonymous with making visible their contribution and stake in the community. This stake was symbolically expressed through work, which stood as a metaphor for the moral investment in maintaining the social relationships within the community.

Growing old is difficult in this country. Many studies attest to the loneliness, the poverty and ill health which older persons endure. The Decker's Creek families certainly had their share of ill health, and they lived below the poverty line. The deaths of friends and spouses made many lonely. Yet the story that unfolded for me during my research was one of vibrant daily work lives, strong community and kinship ties, enduring consciousness about work, and persistence in the struggle to make life worthwhile. I suspect that the Decker's Creek families are not the only aging families in America who are facing social change, who have lived through extensive industrial change, and who have fought to keep their identities and their communities intact. Eventually, theirs is a losing battle: too many deaths and too many newcomers inevitably make the community unrecognizable. The persistence, however, in the way these

families took care of each other and put up a good fight
marks the way they lived their lives.

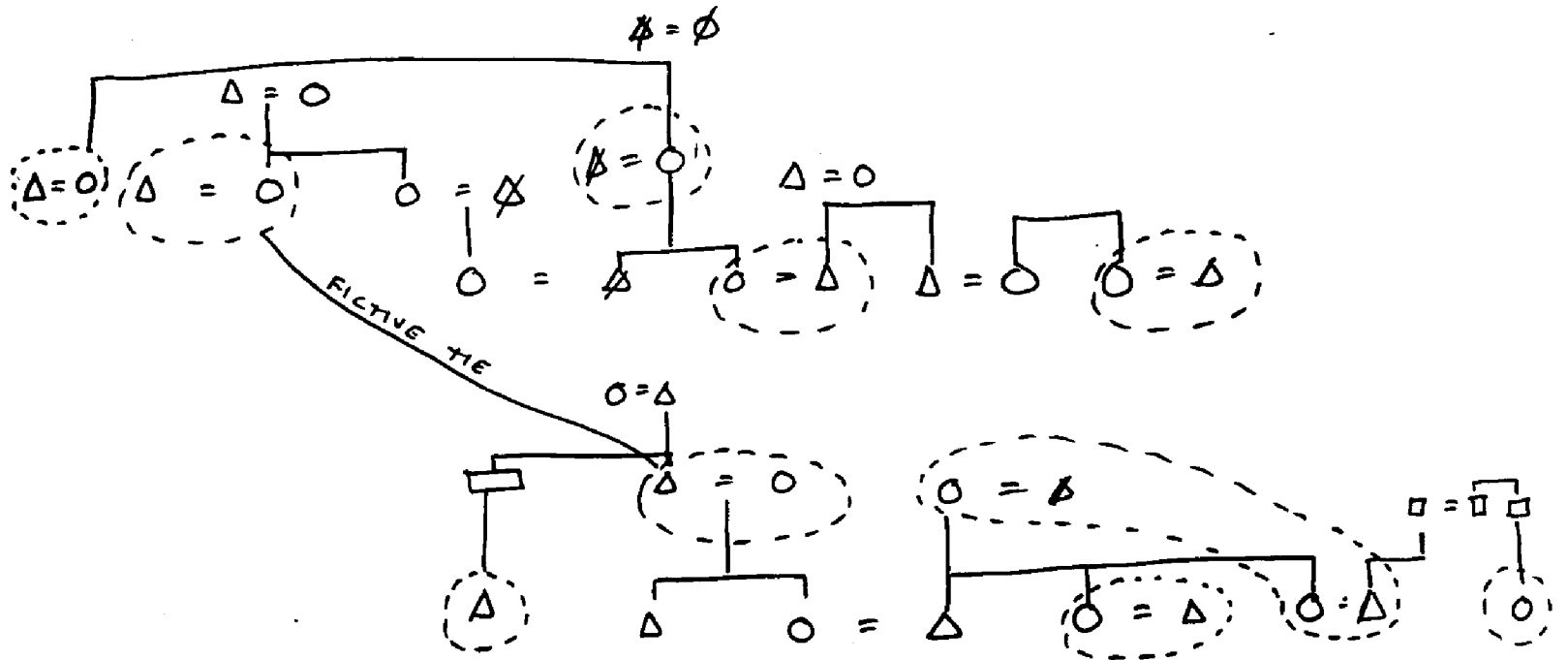
NOTES

1. See Eller, Gaventa.
2. Pierre Bourdieu, Outline of a Theory of Practice, Cambridge University Press, 1972, p. 171.
3. Barbara Myerhoff, in Number Our Days, describes a similar process among the older people in a senior center in California. They "became visible" to one another through dramatic story-telling, and in the process discovered their past and a means for fully living in the present.

APPENDIX I

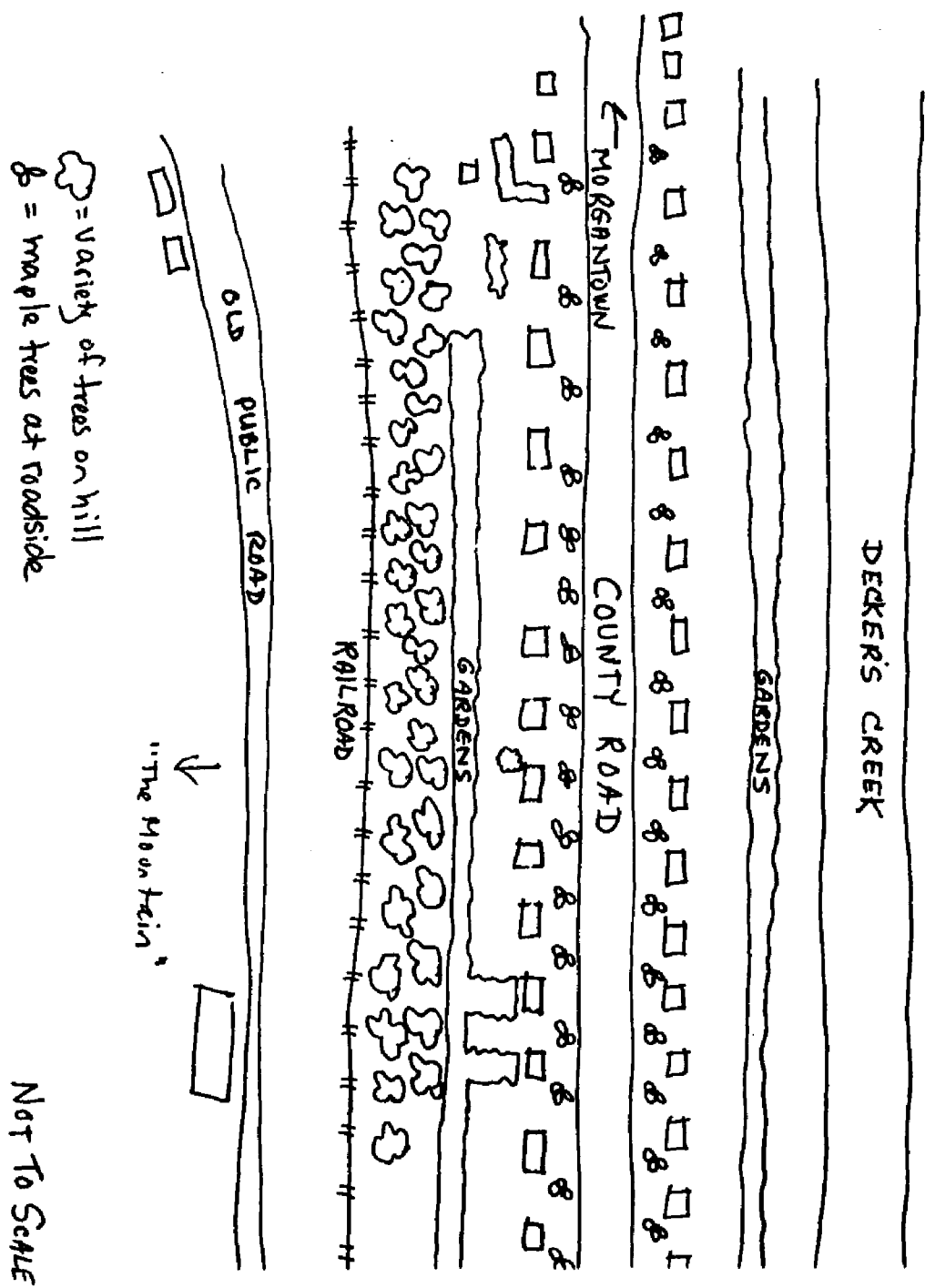
<u>Item</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>#</u>
Houses in Decker's Creek		42
Total number of residents		87
Total number of older residents (age 65 and older)	(52%)	46
Households with older residents (age 65 and older)	(69%)	29
Households with middle-aged residents (ages 40-65)	(19%)	8
Households with young residents (under age 40)	(11%)	5
Number of children (age 20 and younger) (one family had six children)	(13%)	11
Widows	(14%)	12
Widowers	(1%)	1
Households Linked by Kin	(35.7%)	15
Households with Long-Term residents (since coal mine was working)	(61%)	26
Households with Newcomers	(9%)	4
Italian Households (husband Italian)	(41%)	17.5
Hungarian Households (wife Hungarian)	(6%)	2.5
Polish Households	(4%)	2
Yugoslavian Households	(2%)	1
English-Welsh-German Households	(30%)	13
Unknown Ethnicity: (includes newcomers, some middle-aged residents who did not participate in exchanges and who did not identify them- selves by ethnicity)	(16%)	7

APPENDIX II
KIN-LINKED HOUSEHOLDS



----- = Household in Decker's Creek

APPENDIX III
MAP OF DECKER'S CREEK



☁ = Variety of trees on hill
⊗ = maple trees at roadside

NOT TO SCALE

APPENDIX IVTHE APPALACHIAN REGION

Northern West Virginia lies is an "in-between" territory: the Mason-Dixon line runs directly through it, (indeed, as one drives between Morgantown and Decker's Creek, one crosses it several times). During the Civil War West Virginia was considered a "border" state. Some scholars include it in their definitions of the Southern Appalachians (Campbell, 1921) while others consider it too northerly (Corbin, Eller).

Geographically, West Virginia is part of the Appalachian Highlands, a segment of the mountain range which reaches from Canada (the Laurentians) through New York State (the Adirondacks) into the south (the Allegheny Mountains, the Blue Ridge and Appalachian Plateau). There are three main land regions in the state: (1) the Appalachian Ridge and Valley Region, (2) the Appalachian Plateau, and (3) the Blue Ridge. Most of the state lies along the Appalachian Plateau, a rugged area in which streams have carved narrow valleys, and hills have sharp slopes. It is in this region that most of the coal mines deposits are found. Decker's Creek is located in the Appalachian Plateau. The Appalachian Ridge and Valley Region cover a wide strip of land along the state's eastern border. This region is formed by sedimentary rock. The Allegheny Mountains are characterized by long ridges and valleys which run northeast to southwest.

Rivers flow along the valleys, and occasionally break across the ridges in water gaps. The Blue Ridge, at the tip of the eastern Panhandle, formed by igneous and metamorphic rock, is a mountainous but fertile region, where peach and apple orchards abound.

The specific area in which I carried out my research was described in geographical detail in a WPA Guide to West Virginia in 1941.¹

This is a description of towns along state route 7, where Decker's Creek is located, and the towns in which many of the miners lived during their lives of moving from one coal town to another. These paragraphs include only a minor description of Decker's Creek itself, included in that of Ironstone.

West of the Monongahela River, State 7 traverses the Scotts Run coal field, and then forsakes the sound of drill and crusher for the soft murmur of lazy streams and the earthy smells of agriculture, following Fishing Creek Valley to its junction with the Ohio River. State 7 crosses the rolling plateau of the 'buckwheat belt' of Preston County, which annually produces almost 40% of the State's buckwheat crop. Between Masontown and Morgantown the route follows the course of Decker's Creek, which tumbles noisily down its narrow rocky gorge. The iron mines of pioneer days have been abandoned; today coal tipples, glass sand mines, the ruddy glow of coke ovens, and the smoking stacks of factories indicate the region's diverse industrial activities.

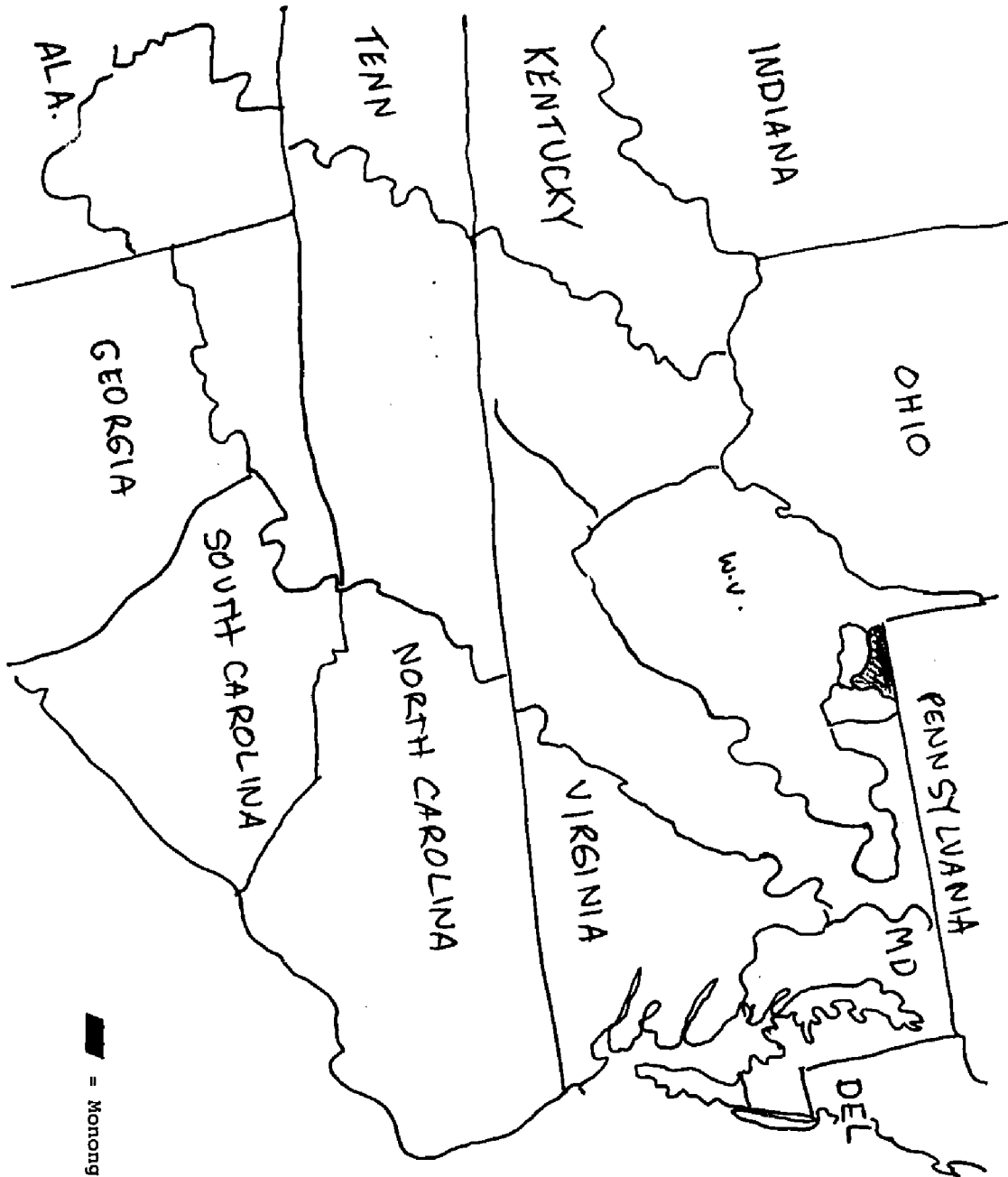
MASONTOWN is an industrial and coal-mining center built along a main street lined with plain two-story business houses of concrete block. West of Masontown the highway follows the course of Decker's Creek which dashes tumultuously down a narrow boulder-strewn ravine, along which are several small settlements clustered about coal tipples, limestone quarries and rows of beehive coke ovens. Reaching Cascade, a once thriving mining town,

the highway ascends a series of gentle grades, passing hill meadows dotted with tortured masses of gray rock.... Greer, a daub of color on the landscape, is the child of the Greer Limestone Company; a red tipple spans State 7 to empty limestone slabs into the crushers, which reduce the rock to fine powder or nugget-size ballast. Little green and white houses nestle close to tremendous piles of crushed limestone, gray heaps that loom imperiously over steam-shovels and cranes working in the loading yards.

IRONSTONE, the ghost of a twice-born town, has a double row of deserted houses that sag on their foundations beside weed-grown mine dumps and crumbling coke ovens. Iron fathered the town in 1796 when a furnace and forge were erected here. The settlement prospered until the development of the Lake Superior ore deposits checked iron-mining operations in West Virginia. By 1848 little trace of Ironstone remained. Coal revived the dead town in 1905 when a large mine was opened, and the village thrived until the depression following the first World War forced the mine to close. Ranton, on the site of the settlement founded by Thomas Decker in 1758, was destroyed by a party of Mingo the following year.... [Later rebuilt], sheet steel, tin plate and varied glass products are manufactured in this predominantly industrial town. pp. 499-502

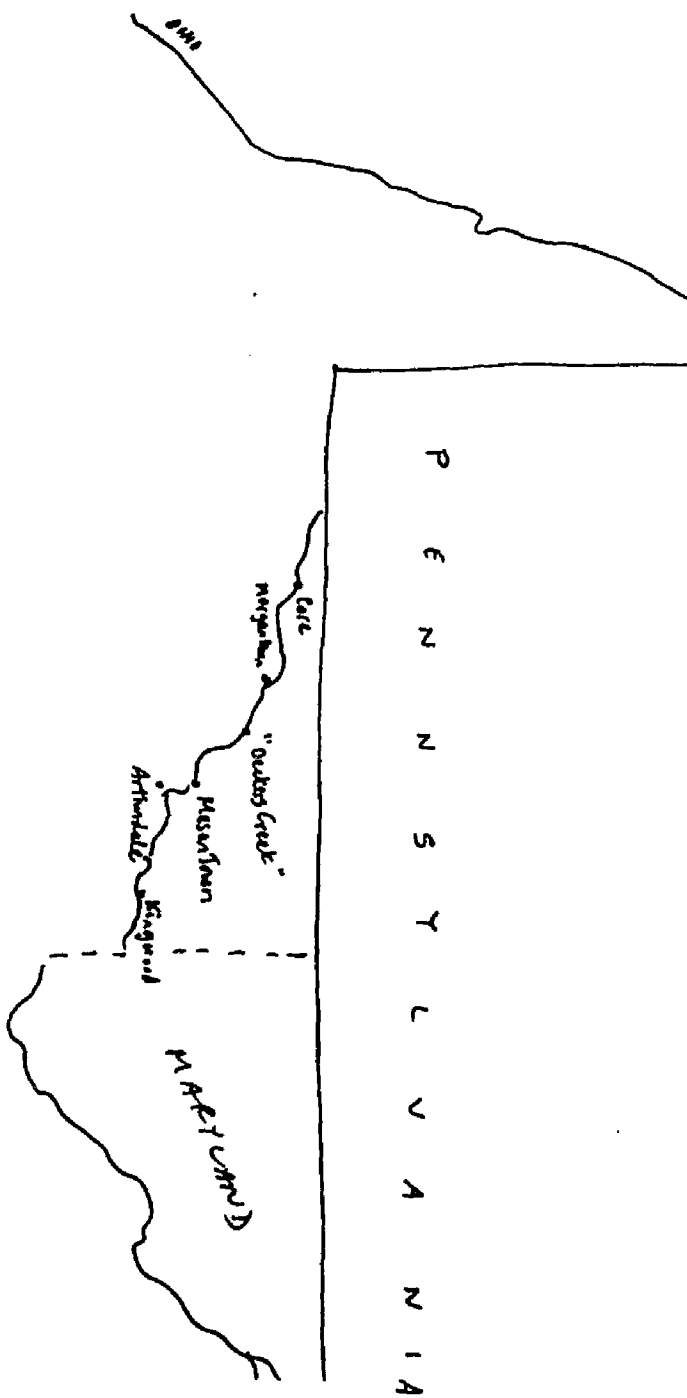
The following maps illustrate the region and location of Decker's Creek.

THE SOUTHERN HIGHLAND REGION



■ = Monongalia Co

STATE ROUTE, LOCATING DECKER'S CREEK



NOTES

1. West Virginia: A Guide to the Mountain State, was compiled by the WPA and published in 1941 by Oxford University Press.

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