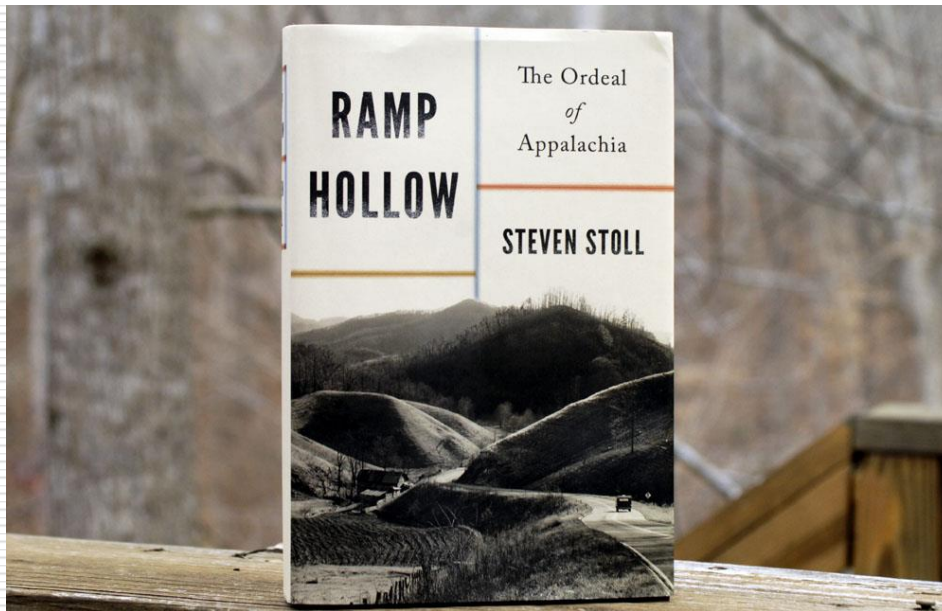


Shaping the 'Rust Belt' Working Class

How 'Our Neck of the Woods'
Came To Be What It Is Today



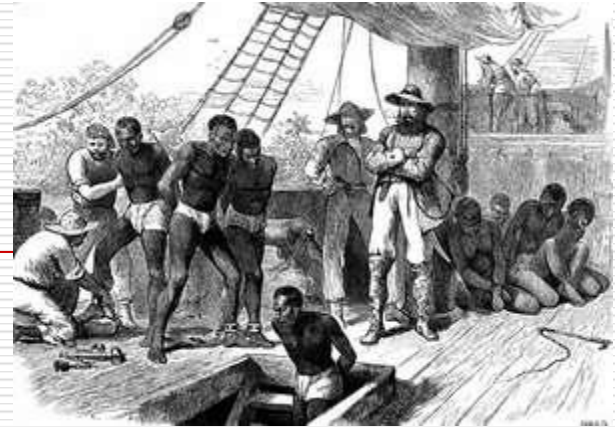
Drawing lessons from...

**'Ramp Hollow: The
Ordeal of Appalachia'**

By Steven Stoll

Presentation by Carl Davidson

Part 1: Readings and Concepts

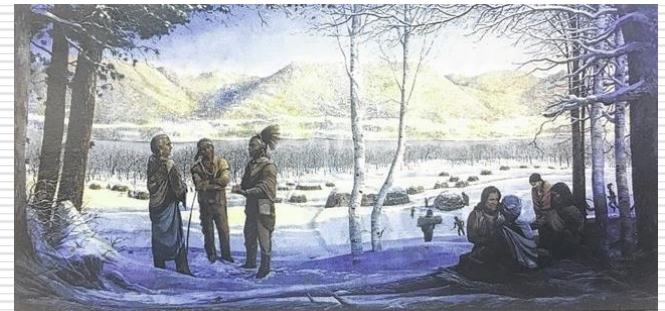


- ❑ Marx and 'Primitive Accumulation': The difference between *expropriation* and *exploitation*. See [Capital, chapter 31](#), 'Genesis of the Industrial Capitalist'
- ❑ 'What White Supremacists Know: The violent theft of land and capital is at the core of the U.S. experiment: the U.S. military got its start in the wars against Native Americans.' – Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, [Boston Review, Fall 2018](#)
- ❑ Emigrate or Starve: 'The Scotch-Irish & the Eighteenth-Century Irish Diaspora'. [HistoryIreland.com](#)
- ❑ **Activities:** 1) Identify names of rivers, towns in the area and how these are connected to Native histories; 2) Do research on the native groups that lived on the land where your political education course is taking place, talk specifically about this history.



Lesson One: Long before it was 'our neck of the woods', it was the home of many others...

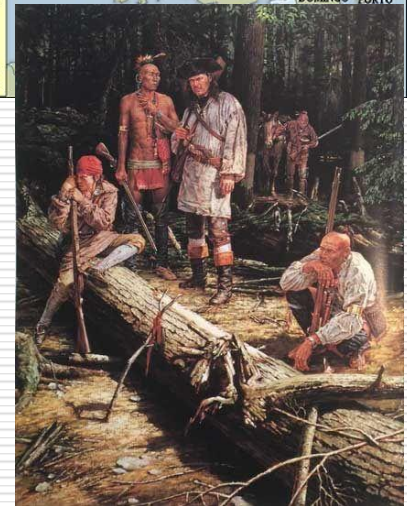
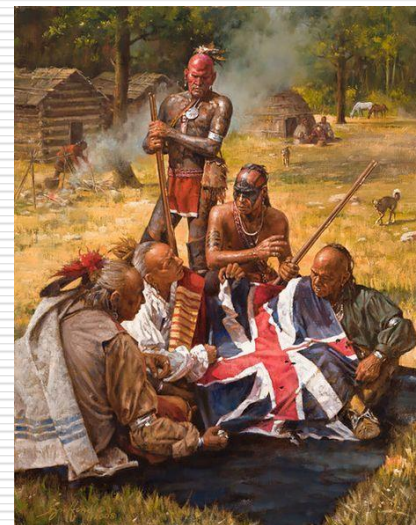
- ❑ Before European traders and settlers arrived, the present-day Rust Belt was home to a diverse group of Indian nations, including Shawnees, Iroquois, Hurons, Delawares, Miamis, and others, some reaching back 1000 years or more.
- ❑ They largely lived on settled farms. The Shawnee shown here had 'long house' villages, and planted corn, beans and squash. The entire region was for common use by designated peoples. 'Private property' was alien.
- ❑ The 'three rivers' Ohio-WVA-WPA area was the 'hunting lands' of the Wyandot, the Seneca (a branch of the Iroquois), and the Shawnee. Transition from matriarchy to patriarchy was far from complete.



With the arrival of Europeans, the region became 'contested territory' several ways.

- ❑ The northern area of the Americas saw large numbers of French and English claim large territories, seeking wealth. Their rivalry in Europe, the 'Seven Years War', was reflected here as 'the French and Indians Wars.'
- ❑ The Native Peoples primary contact was with French fur traders, who had claimed the area but had little interest in settlements, save for the Quebec area. Elsewhere they built forts to protect trading and supply posts.
- ❑ The Anglo-Americans, however, wanted the land for its wealth and new settlers.
- ❑ This represented two types of colonialism, 'extractive' and 'settler'. One manly wanted to take out resources for wealth via trading, the other wanted to bring in settlers and take wealth via agricultural products—tobacco, cotton—and land speculation itself.

Our area shown here as part of 'New France', just before the French and Indian Wars (1754–63).



Shawnee with French (above), Wyandots with Brits (left)

Opening the Gates: French Defeat and Shawnee Retreat

- Britain defeated France in Europe and here, and took possession of French claims to eastern North America, including Fort Duquesne (top).
- Native peoples nonetheless refused to accept British efforts to rule the region and defended their homelands against invasions from colonists. They made their own tactical alliances with one or the other. **But they were severely weakened, however, by European disease, mainly smallpox.** The Europeans were fighting and killing survivors.
- During the 1770s, VA and PA colonists flooded into the region, sparking new wars. **Settlers perpetrated massacres against Native peoples**, as at Yellow Creek in 1774 near what is now Wheeling, WV (middle). As early as 1730, Virginia's British-controlled government, thinking ahead, offered 1000 acres free to each European family willing to move to the area
- In 1777, US soldiers murdered Shawnee chief Cornstalk and his son during a diplomatic visit to Fort Randolph at present-day Point Pleasant, WV (bottom). **By 1779, the region was clear** for new settlers, mainly Germans and Scots-Irish.
- This represented what has come to be called 'war capitalism' (or '**primitive accumulation**' by Marx), ie, violent expropriation.



Settler Colonialism as a Source of 'Conflicted Consciousness'

'In making new homes for themselves, they took the homes of others.' *Ramp Hollow, preface*

- Why did poor newcomers to Virginia head for the hills in the West? **In a word, slavery.** The best lowlands were slave plantations, first tobacco and hemp, and then cotton, and weren't suited for the hills.
- The new settlers, desiring their own farms over being servants, had little hope of owning slaves. But with land of their own in the hills and hollows, they could grow corn, beans, squash and fruit. (Following the pattern of the Natives). And they could raise chickens, cows and hogs, and hunt game.
- They could stake out their own 'crop patches' with a cabin and barn, but the vast mountain forest served as a 'commons' that provided everything else.
- **Their concept of 'property,'** however, was one tied to conquest and guns.



Mountain folk circa 1880 (above) followed streams into the highlands. Their **patriarchal structure**, visible here, came with them,

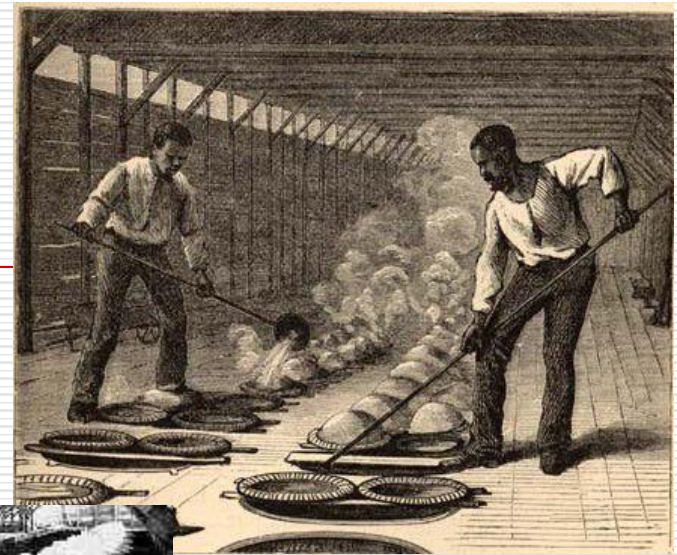


Mountain farm: Note that the buildings are on the hollow flat, and the area for corn goes upward on the hillside. The forest beyond is 'the commons.' **Garden. Tillage and Woods:** the three necessities.

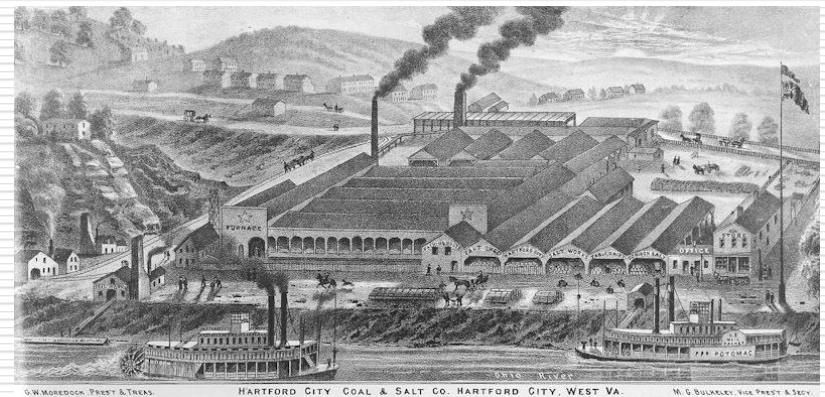


A 2nd Conflicted Consciousness Settlers Were Not the Only Newcomers. Among the Region's Workers Were Slaves

- ❑ Salt was one of the first exports from western Virginia. The vast majority of salt workers were enslaved Africans, leased by companies **not finding free labor that was willing to endure brutal conditions**
- ❑ The salt mines were incapable of operation without **the color line**, a legal, political, and economic structure that made massive human trafficking possible. **Thus settlers were not only Scots-Irish or German, but now also 'white' and not 'red' or 'Indian.'**
- ❑ By 1828 sixty-five wells along the Kanawha River produced 787,000 bushels of salt per year, and by 1835 the industry used the labor of nearly 3,000 men, mostly slaves. Much of Charleston's growth was a result of this resource.
- ❑ With the end of the Civil War, Blacks remained in certain areas of W VA, largely as wage labor in the mines.

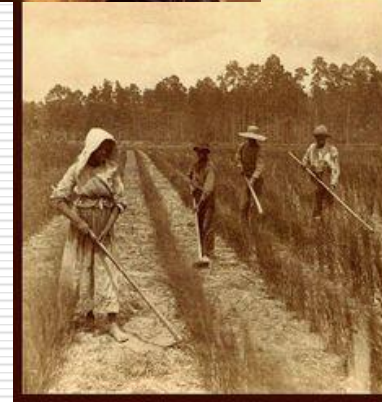
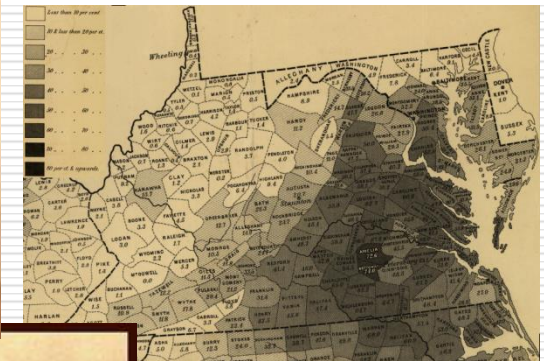


Top: Slaves working the salt mines and distilleries. Bottom: Joint Coal and Salt Company a few decades later.



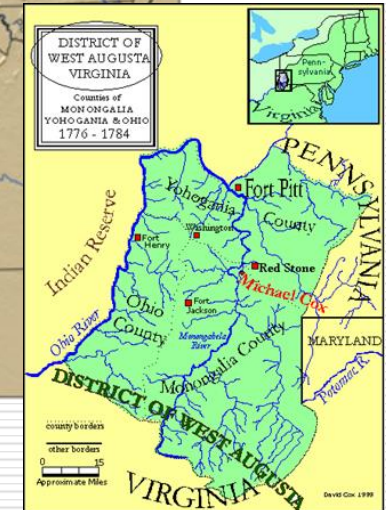
The Two Virginia's: Slavery Pushed the Early Economic and Cultural Divide

- ❑ The map shows eastern Virginia dominated by slave capitalism, and its aristocratic pretensions.
- ❑ The graphic to the right is a period painting of a Scots-Irish 'pioneer' yeoman who had to move West to make a living.
- ❑ 'Cohee' and 'Tuckahoe' were mutually derisive terms used at the time. A critical difference was their view of Black slavery as a moral institution.
- ❑ The 'Cohee' typically exhibited ambivalence or antipathy toward slavery; while 'Tuckahoe' sentiments were overwhelmingly in favor. Also reflective the differing 'slave' and 'household' modes of production.
- ❑ The two terms disappeared at the end of slavery, but 'hillbilly' replaced it soon after. Also 'cracker' and 'white trash.'



'Regionalism' as Another 'Conflicted Consciousness' What To Call the New Highlands? Failed Attempts at a 14th State

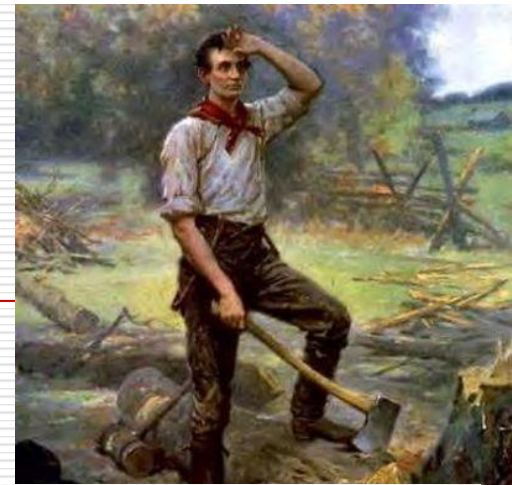
- Previously just called 'the Ohio country,' the region's distinctive nature led to a few failed efforts to make it a new state.
- The first to be proposed was '**Vandalia**,' followed by '**Westsylvania**.' Around the same time, the 'District of **West Augusta**' existed briefly, until Virginia and Pennsylvania settled their border disputes. It's now reduced to a much smaller Augusta County, W VA.
- The Civil War saw the area break away and become West Virginia as a pro-union, anti-slavery state, even though about half of its counties still favored the slavocracy.
- **Appalachia**, a name given to Southern mountains by the Spanish, is too elastic, stretching to Canada. But it works for many.



In 1782, Hugh Brackenridge, a Pittsburgh lawyer and federalist, convinced the PA legislature to declare that agitation for a separate state was treason.

Part 2: Readings and Concepts

- ❑ The '**Household Mode of Production**.' Because it was a settler colony and nation-in-the-making, the laboring classes developed differently, especially the slave and the frontier yeoman. The latter subsisted for a while outside of markets and the cash economy. See '[The Agrarian Origins of American Capitalism](#)' by Allan Kulikoff.
- ❑ The **Expropriation** of women and children within the settler **patriarchal household** as critical to 'makeshift' sustainability. See '[Expropriation and Exploitation in Racialized Capitalism: A Reply to Michael Dawson](#)' by Nancy Fraser.
- ❑ When '**the Commons**' become enclosed. '[Why Appalachia's Economic System Keeps People Poor, Sick, and Stuck on Coal](#)' by Roxy Todd.



'Ramp Hollow's' Main Theme: How Did the Mountain People Become 'Poor' and 'Vulnerable?'



- ❑ Mountain settlers had 'subsistence' and 'hardscrabble' livelihoods, but they were neither 'poor' nor 'isolated.'
- ❑ The '**household mode of production**' described their economy, whereby families produced nearly all they needed—meat from deer and pigs, corn, beans, squash and other vegetables, chicken and eggs, and cows for milk and cheese.
- ❑ The household was **patriarchal** with a sexual division of labor. But while only the males had civil rights, everyone worked
- ❑ There was no perfect equivalence in each household, and some specialized in things like leatherwork, clothing, or blacksmithing. So households would exchange through barter, keeping accounts but **without cash markets**.
- ❑ Some necessities required cash, so some corn and rye turned into whiskey. It was sold for cash downriver, all the way to New Orleans and back, and cash goods got along the way.



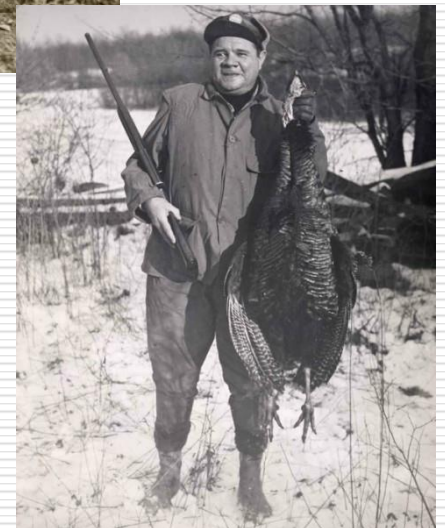
Top: Garden, then
hog butchering,
bee keeping, and
whiskey still.

Beyond the Homestead Was the 'Commons', the Forest.

- ❑ The forest was **the ecological base** for the mountain settler's household mode of production.
- ❑ In 1774, following the Treaty of Camp Charlotte, title to this area came to **John Murray**, 4th Earl of Dunmore, representing King George as governor of Virginia.
- ❑ After 1776, **Patrick Henry** was governor, and tried to claim parcels of the western land himself, while the legislature sold them to speculators.
- ❑ Larger areas were given as 'land grants' to the wealthy, while smaller lots sold to local speculators, selling them again to settlers, some who were squatters. A lot of settlers got cheated.



The forest provided deer, wild turkey and lumber for homes and barns.



Key Problem for the Overlords: Turning the Wilderness into Private Property

- Below: Early map of part of Augusta County, now in West Virginia. **Note the surveyed rectangles** along the hollow flats, designating homesteads reaching slightly up the **hillside tillage** (corn and rye).
- But the large higher areas, marked only with streams and symbols for trees, was the forest, or what 'Ramp Hollow' calls '**the commons.**'
- Technically, 'the commons' was owned by the King, then by the Commonwealth of Virginia, but in the early **years it was considered inaccessible and worthless** by its owners, even if it was a valuable part of the 'household mode of production' ecosystem.



Top: English peasants work manor fields and their own 'commons.'
Left: Manor lords 'enclosed' farmlands and woods for sheep pastures, driving off peasants to become homeless beggars.



The Fatal 'Flaw' in Mountaineer Households and Their Commons



- ❑ They are largely cashless. They produce 'enough,' but not enough as commodities. Thus **outside normal capitalist markets**, they are very hard to tax.
- ❑ They are networked horizontally, but not vertically. They don't like being subordinate to any 'outsider' or alien state power.
- ❑ They are **expansionist regarding land**. As their children come of age, new families require more land for new homesteads.
- ❑ Thus it was not long before the mountain householders came under fire by both the new government and rising capitalism.



Whiskey Rebellion: Alexander Hamilton Wants Taxes from the Mountain Folk

- Two economic visions contended in the new nation: Jefferson's required rich earth for slave production and open lands without Indians for yeomen. Outside the cities, Hamilton's required **turning yeomen into commodity-producing, indebted and tax-paying farmers.**
- The only sizable cash product the settlers produced was whiskey. Corn was too bulky to ship to markets. Transport was not yet developed. But whiskey travelled easily.
- **Whiskey was major.** Hard cider (7% alcohol) and whiskey were considered normal food, and better for you than water. Everyone, from children on, consumed it daily with every meal.
- Hamilton's tax was unfair. Gentry with large distilleries paid less or nothing. Those with small stills had high rates, with the idea on **creating debt.** Debt would then require they to sell more commodities, and thus more taxes.
- The result was mass rebellion against tax collectors. It was defeated. **Some rebels moved further west.**



Top: Tarred and feathered.
Below:
Washington's
mass counter-
attack



Shaping a 'Settler Culture' for Moving West

Daniel Boone as a warped legend to justify expansion

- Almost everything claimed about Daniel Boone is wrong. He was a medium-sized man, never wore a coonskin cap, killed only one Indian in his life, and was dead and buried long before the Alamo. He also preferred social life and neighbors. He died a comfortable farmer in Missouri (home in photo). **So why the cultural myth the claims the opposite?**
- He did run a household economy, helped by hunting and furs from 'the commons.' The fur trade gave him knowledge of trails westward, so he led migrant parties. He settled a few times, ran a tavern, owned 7 slaves and tried to get rich via land deals, most of which failed.
- Escaping his multiple land-speculating creditors is what drove him to Missouri, then part of Spain and beyond the reach of the law. The Spaniards made him a minor official, and when the US took over, his 'legend' gained him ease in retirement.



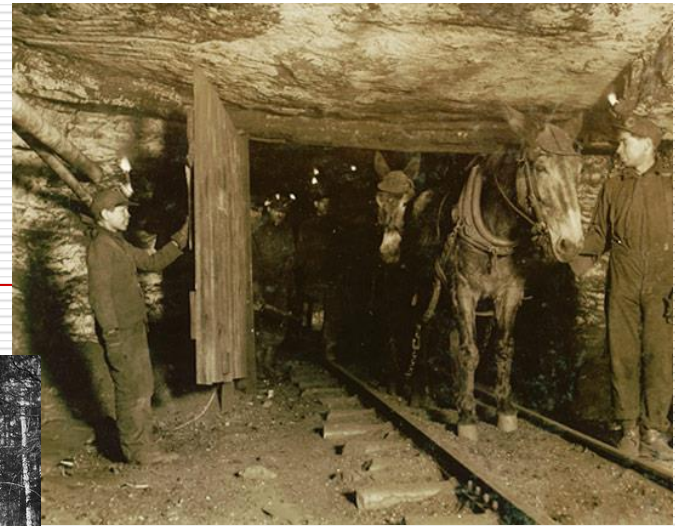
Above: Boone got along with Indians, and was once adopted into the Shawnee. **But this didn't serve the need for the Indian-killer myth**



Transforming the 'Commons'

The forest was awash with lumber and coal.
The trick was turning it into property

- With the growth of shipping, rail, and steam, the **need for lumber and coal soared** in the East and along rivers.
- Aristocrats held title to large grants, where many asserted 'squatters rights' and other ill-defined claims. While the remote owners never did anything with the land, their back taxes still grew.
- Speculators gained land titles by paying the taxes, then offered 'surface title' to those living on it, but not the 'minerals' under it. Otherwise, settlers faced steep rents or evictions. Similar agreements with counties and the state got 'land rights' in the forests.
- Cut off from the forests and its support, the yeomen were **offered cash wages**, first in lumbering, then in mining. Thus **they were becoming proletarians**.

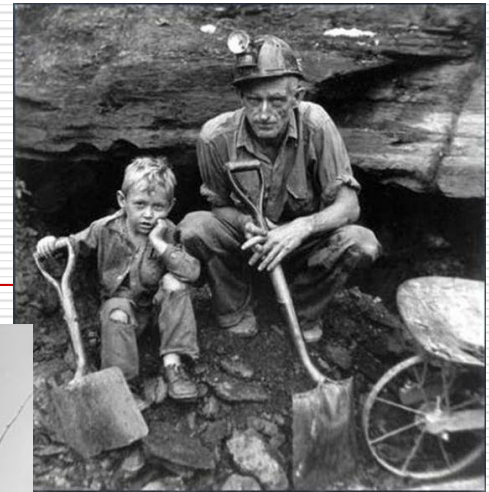


Mules got the coal and logs out of the mountains, and the rivers did the rest.

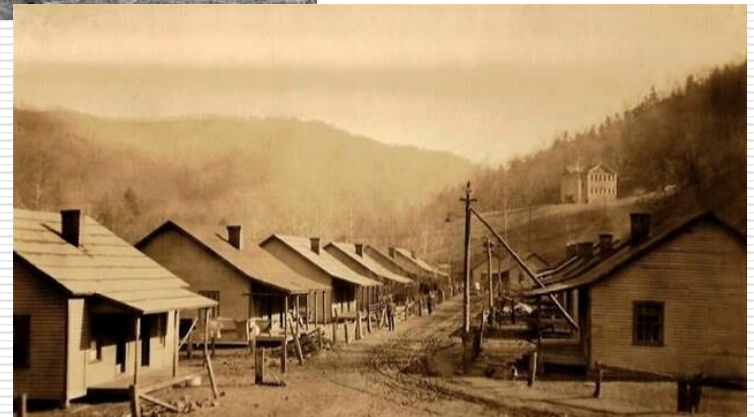


Being Turned into Wage Workers Made the Mountain Settlers 'Poor'

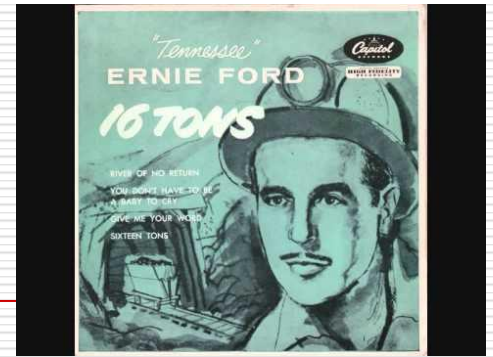
- ❑ The mountain household, **without its forest**, couldn't produce enough. So men and boys worked the mines, and moved into mining camps. Only some of the old folks remained in the cabins for a while.
- ❑ Wages were too low and rents too high, so miners **went into debt at the 'company store,'** some paying their debts with what was left of their farms, until their equity ran out.
- ❑ The more miners and loggers were stripped of their heritage, the more they became totally under the control of the timber and coal bosses.
- ❑ But rather than raise wages, the owners drew in more workers, some locally, some from distant lands.



Top: Child labor was needed in the mines to reach into tight spaces. Left and below: Shack lots in coal towns and camps had little room for gardens.



Sixteen Tons... I owe my soul to the company store –Tennessee Ernie Ford



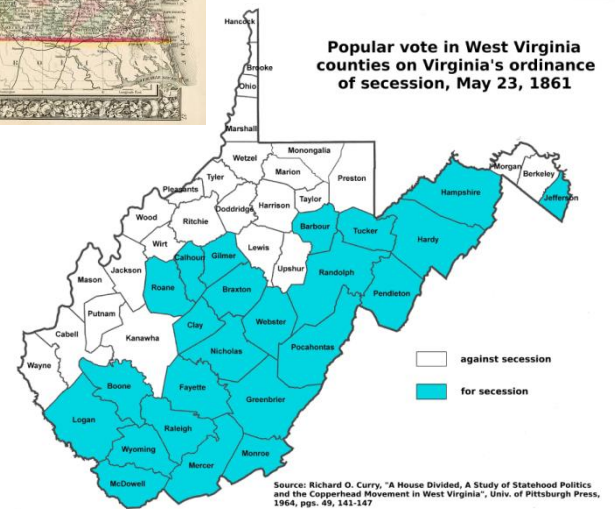
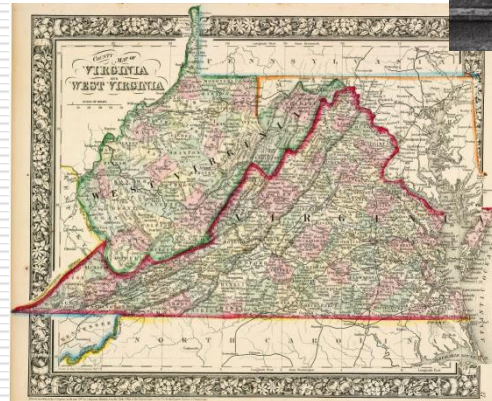
Sixteen Tons: Tennessee Ernie Ford

Some people say a man is made outta mud
A poor man's made outta muscle and blood
Muscle and blood and skin and bones
A mind that's a-weak and a back that's strong
[CHORUS] You load sixteen tons, what do you get?
Another day older and deeper in debt
Saint Peter don't you call me 'cause I can't go
I owe my soul to the company store
I was born one mornin' when the sun didn't shine
I picked up my shovel and I walked to the mine
I loaded sixteen tons of number nine coal
And the straw boss said "Well, a-bless my soul"
[CHORUS]
I was born one mornin', it was drizzlin' rain
Fightin' and trouble are my middle name
I was raised in the canebrake by an ol' mama lion
Can't no-a high-toned woman make me walk the line
[CHORUS]
If you see me comin', better step aside
A lotta men didn't, a lotta men died
One fist of iron, the other of steel
If the right one don't a-get you, then the left one will
[CHORUS]

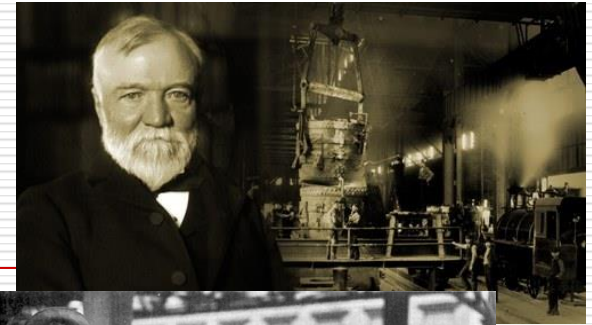
More Conflicted Consciousness

Civil War Creates New State: West Virginia

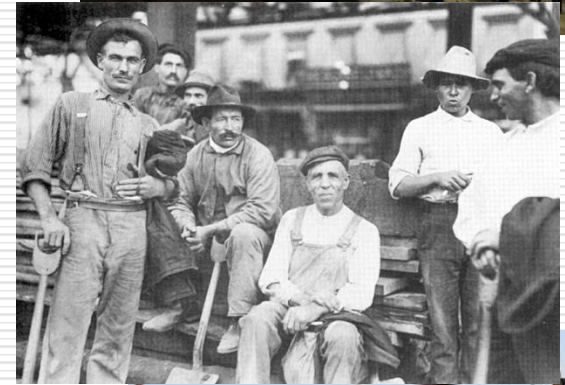
- ❑ Virginia in the Mountains did not support slavery, especially on the Western edge near the Ohio. These rising industrialists near Wheeling, and much of the population there, pushed for a new state.
- ❑ Lincoln and the Congress approved it, even though many of the counties still sympathized with Virginia and secession. This was a cause for turmoil among the mountain people even after the war ended. The legacy can be seen in **the strength of white supremacy** even now.
- ❑ One result of the Confederate defeat was freeing the slave salt miners, but many of them soon found work in the region's coal mines. **This helped reduce racism**



Part 3: Readings and Concepts

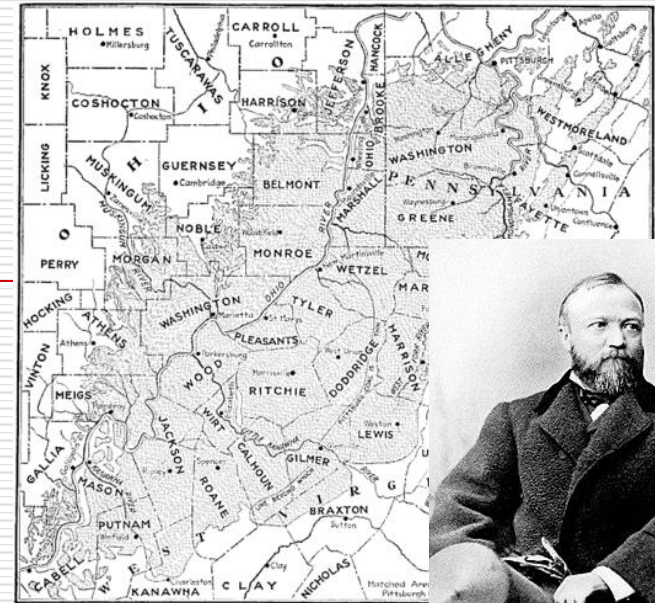


- ❑ Before Rust, There Was Steel. Carnegie, and the Robber Barons Privatize Everything. [Biography](#)
- ❑ An Expanded Working Class Draws More Newcomers from the Hills, the South, and the European Poor. [Steel City and Mill Towns](#)
- ❑ Impact of the Crash. [The Great Depression Strikes Pennsylvania.](#)
- ❑ Shaping the industrial Worker on the Job and at Home. ['Gramsci on Americanism and Fordism'](#), by Richard Seymour



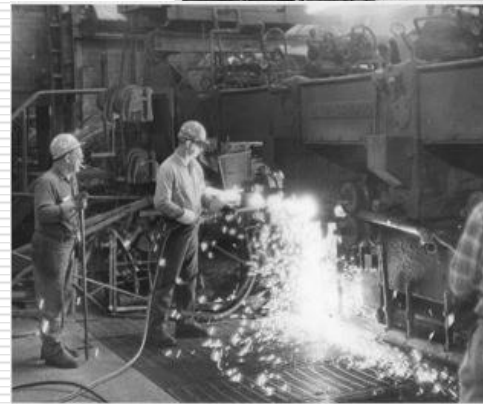
Coal's Importance Surged: 'The Pittsburgh Seam' and new immigration

- ❑ **The 'Pittsburgh Seam'** was under Western PA, West Virginia and Eastern Ohio. (Top)
- ❑ It was a type of coal most suitable to making coke, and its transport, along with local limestone, could be concentrated over two main rivers—the Allegheny and the Monongahela.
- ❑ Along with iron ore, these were the three ingredients needed to make steel. Iron ore from the Mesabi range could be shipped to Lake Erie, then **through canals and secondary rivers**, to Pittsburgh.
- ❑ Andrew Carnegie (middle) was the first to put it together, and via the Ohio, Pittsburgh steel (bottom) could go anywhere. Demand surged from the Civil War to 1900, to build railroads and everything else needing steel.
- ❑ The demand for steel put a huge demand for more coal and more miners across the region.



A New Wave of Workers Arrives for Mines and Mills

- ❑ The region's working class started with the Black enslaved salt miners, but quickly added the German and Scots-Irish settlers forced into lumbering and mining for wages.
- ❑ Women went into textile mills.
- ❑ The demand for steel and the need to keep labor cheap saw the rapid additions of Italians, Slavs, Serbs, Croats, Greeks, 'Hunkys' (top) and more Blacks from the Deep South (below).
- ❑ Major W VA steel mills (middle left) also grew in Wheeling, Weirton and other river towns.



The Paint Creek Strike

Harshly exploiting a New Class Brings
on Union Battles and Union Consciousness

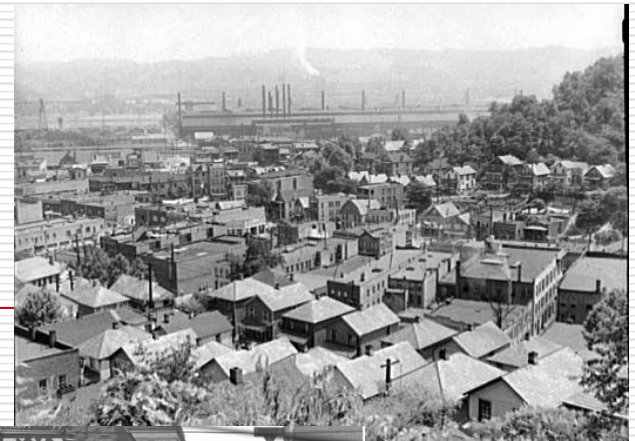
- ❑ The strike lasted from April 18, 1912 through July 1913. The strike and ensuing violence cost \$100,000,000. It directly caused perhaps fifty violent deaths, as well as many more deaths indirectly caused by **starvation and malnutrition** among the striking miners.
- ❑ In the number of casualties it counts among the worst conflicts in American labor union history.
- ❑ The miners were fighting for their union and an end to starvation wages, which were lower than average. The UMW held back violence at first, but armed mine police opened fire, killing many.
- ❑ **The miners fired back.** Mother Jones agitated and was arrested.



West Virginia & Regional History Center

Industrial Growth Needs Even More Labor: Urbanization takes off: Down from the Hills, Up from the South, in from East Europe

- ❑ **Even as they became proletarianized**, there were not enough people from the hollows in the hills or the farms on the river flat and plateau farms to meet the demand for labor.
- ❑ Additional workers and their families were brought into Pittsburgh and the upper Ohio River Valley by the tens of thousands **from Italy, the Slavic countries and the Black South**. This added to a **multicultural and urbanized** order.
- ❑ Entire towns were built in a few years after 1900, reaching to Cincinnati, Cleveland, Erie, Buffalo and Detroit.
- ❑ The working class that started with Black salt slaves and hillbilly loggers and miners was now multinational and **more urban and more anchored in factories and mills near the waterways**.
- ❑ The surge lasted from 1900 through 1929, when the 'crash' started 'The Depression.'



Above: J&L and Aliquippa, built in less than 20 years. Below: Scenes from Logan, W VA, a coal center.



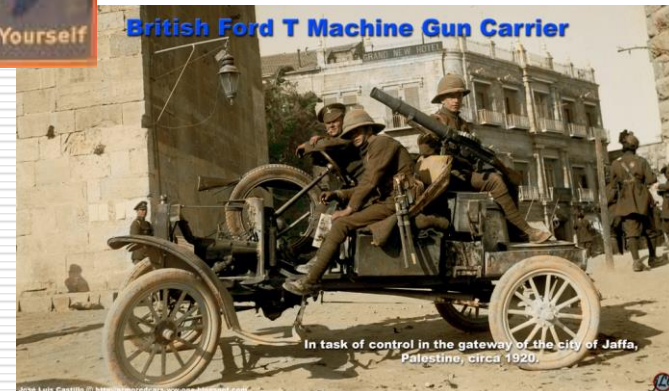
War and Wall St:

Military Production and the Roaring 1920s

- ❑ From the start of the war in 1914, some 250 Pittsburgh-area war plants grew to employ 500,000 men and women in non-stop production. Same with coal.
- ❑ From 1916 on, US Steel alone delivered more steel each year than all the plants of Europe combined.
- ❑ Ford's factories converted to make machine-gun trucks. Women made uniforms and helmets.
- ❑ Pennsylvanians bought more than 3 billion dollars worth of bonds to support the war effort.



British Ford T Machine Gun Carrier



Crash & Depression: Rebellion and Reform Efforts

- ❑ Many factories closed. Those still functioning forced longer hours and lower pay.
- ❑ Unemployed veterans marched on Washington demanding relief.
- ❑ Employed workers began organizing industrially, demanding a right to a union and a contract.
- ❑ At the J&L Aliquippa Works, a strike battle went all the way to the Supreme Court, which finally decided favorably, allowing the enforcement of the Wagner Act and unions.

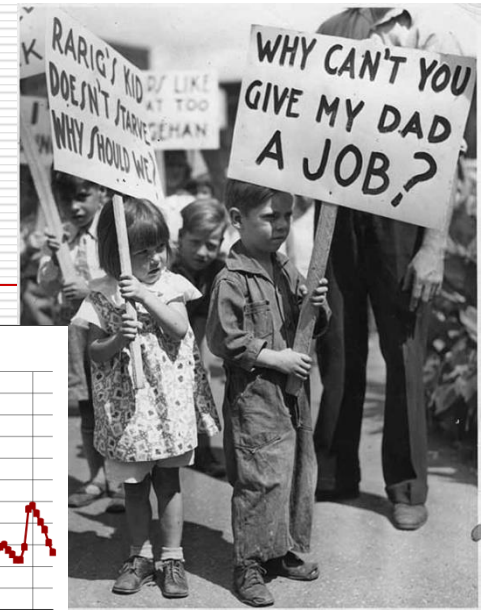


Top: Aliquippa workers defend picket blockade.
Middle: Unemployed Black workers in Pittsburgh. Bottom: Struggle shaped a new consciousness

FDR's First Attempts at Relief

'Hard Times' Were Even Harder Here...

- ❑ 'The Crash' peaked in 1931-33, with the highest US unemployment in history, made harsher by the fact that there was no Social Security and little relief.
- ❑ The first drops were due to FDR's **CCC and WPA projects**. There were 150 in PA alone, with 15 of them for Blacks, (in photo). The **segregated camps, keeping the color line**, gave workers a small allowance, but sent most of their pay back to parents or wives.
- ❑ The second drop is in 1941, when war production takes off in a big way.



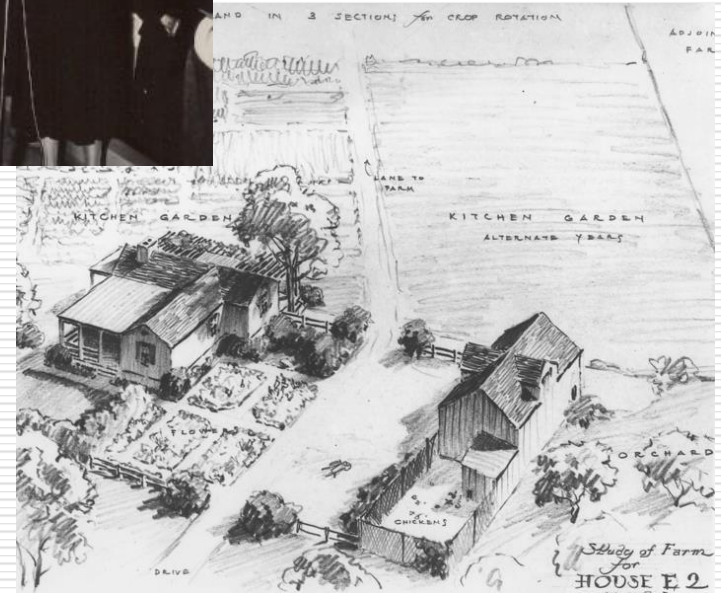
The 'Arthurdale' Attempt at Reform

A 'Fordist' Plan Joining Home Garden & Factory Work

- ❑ Shocked by poverty in a visit near Morgantown, W VA, **Eleanor Roosevelt** launched 'Arthurdale' as a New Deal plan for model workers towns.
- ❑ The plan's core idea was '**Fordist**', ie, to link the old settler cabin gardens with new homes joined with a local GE factory. **With one family member working for wages, other family members would tend the gardens for food. The worker's family life changed.**
- ❑ One problem was the workers were not involved in the planning. Another was GE not wanting independent workers. GE set earnings at \$450 a year—35 cents per hour, 36 hours a week for 35 weeks a year. Plus GE wanted \$180 kicked back yearly to pay for the factory they still owned.
- ❑ Thus the workers **started off in debts** they never made enough to pay off. GE pulled out, and Congress refused to back any other plans as 'socialistic.' Families scattered, and the project failed.



Top: Arthurdale home. Left: Eleanor on site. Bottom: Plan of home with adjoined garden.

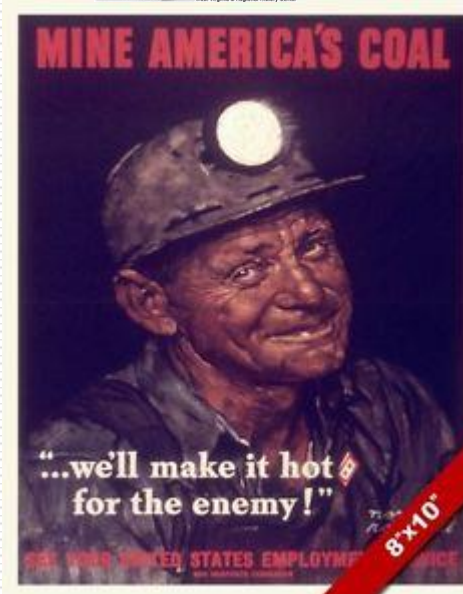


One Step Forward, One Step Back: WW2 Reshapes Coal & Steel Country

- ❑ **Warrior Tradition:** W VA reported the fifth-highest percentage of servicemen during the war, with 218,665 West Virginians, including 66,716 volunteers.
- ❑ Mountaineers supplied more than 600 million tons of coal to fuel the war. In the Kanawha Valley, the world's largest synthetic rubber plant helped replace Japan as its primary supplier. The valley, together with the Pittsburgh region to the North, also housed the world's largest producer of **steel used for battleships, tanks, and other military equipment.**
- ❑ Mountaineers were encouraged to increase the yield of their cropland, while workers families in and around factories along the Ohio Valley set up '**victory gardens**' in their yards and vacant lots.
- ❑ Unions were pressured to give up their **right to strike** for the war's duration, which let to unfair abuse by the bosses.



PENNSYLVANIA
CAPITOL BUILDING
YOUR VICTORY GARDEN
counts more than ever!



US Farm Policy Was Conflicted: Hampered Both 'Swidden' and Mountain Tillage

- ❑ In the post-war years, government restrictions **fully 'marketized' farming**, requiring tractors, fertilizers, and price controls
- ❑ Small-scale family farming became difficult and debt-laden, leading only to home gardens.
- ❑ The region faced not only low employment, but also severe limits on self-sustainability.



Top: 'Slash & Burn' before planting. Left: 'No Tillage' area. Right: Miner's backyard garden
Lower right: Modern farmers' market



1950s-60s Boom: But Uneven Growth

Pittsburgh and the Coal Country Feeding Its Energy

- ❑ Pittsburgh and the mill towns continued to grow and demand coal. But in the mountains, **'striping' coal from the surface** began to outpace coal from mine shafts.
- ❑ 'Surface mining' required more and bigger equipment, but far fewer miners.
- ❑ A huge expansion of surface mining in Wyoming and other Western states drew some young miners and machine operators to migrate to the West.
- ❑ Older miners and their families were **stuck in the hollows** without wages or land in a 'commons', and thus 'poor.'



Chart: Surface mining rises over shaft mining

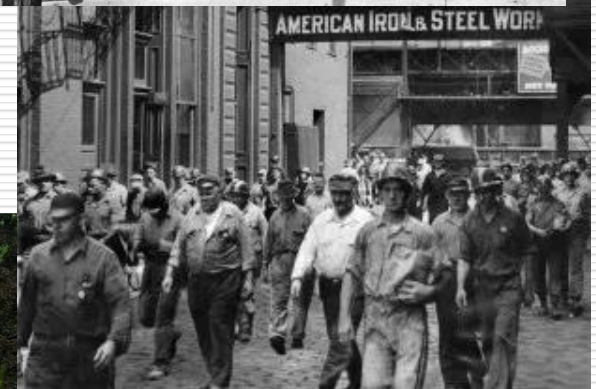


1970 Extremes: Suburbia near the Rivers, the 'Other America' in the Hills & Hollows

- ❑ As the mountain areas declined, the steel mills and auto plants **hit their peak** by the mid-1970s.
- ❑ LBJ launched his 'War of Poverty' in 1965, making sure to visit Appalachia to highlight that the 'poor whites' were included.
- ❑ War production kept the demand for steel up, but **other required investments suffered** from the war.
- ❑ 'Stagflation' described the economy as the 1980s began—prices were rising while old industries were stagnating compared to competitors abroad.



Top: Keeping house. Above: LBJ visits W VA miner's family out of work.

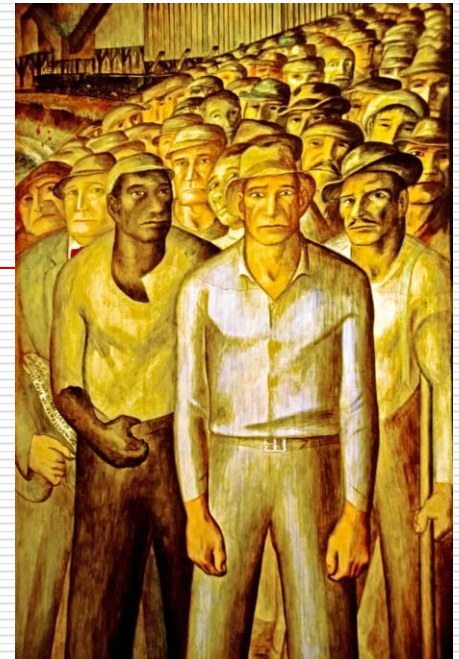


Left: new postwar worker housing near Pittsburgh. Above: steelworkers changing shifts.



Part Four: Readings and Concepts

- ❑ Neoliberalism and Globalization. [The Cybernetic Revolution and the Crisis of Capitalism](#), by Jerry Harris and Carl Davidson.
- ❑ The 'Smokestack Worker' Fades, Replaced by a New Mosaic. [The Los Angeles Revolt: Its Lessons for the World](#), by Alvin and Heidi Toffler.
- ❑ Is Structural Reform Enough? [U.S. Steelworkers to Experiment with Factory Ownership, Mondragon style](#), by Carl Davidson
- ❑ Envisioning the Future. [A Study Guide for David Schweickart's 'After Capitalism.'](#)



1980s Collapse: 'Rust Belt' Is Born

Neoliberalism, Globalization and De-Industrialization

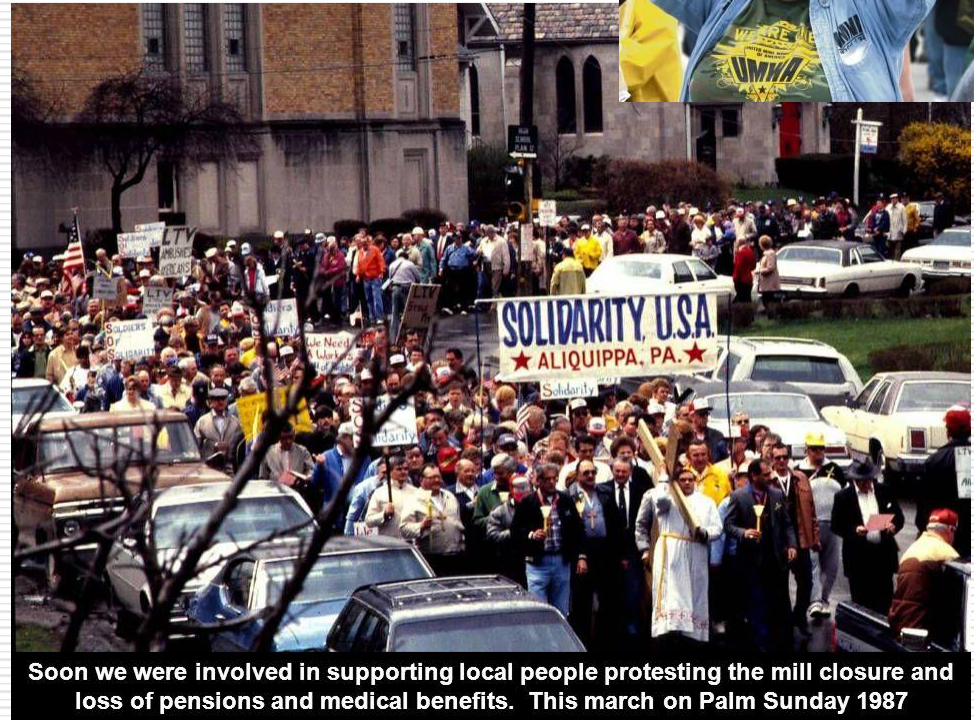
- ❑ Postwar reconstruction and growth worldwide meant US industrial firms were **competing with more modern factories and less regulated conditions**.
- ❑ 'High road' vs 'low road': Owners faced a choice: modernize mills and use fewer workers. Or gut the plants entirely and move abroad where faced with **fewer environmental or labor restrictions**. Either way, US workers suffered.
- ❑ Some areas, like Gary IN, continued to make steel with new machinery and 1/3 of the workers. Others, like Youngstown and Aliquippa, were shut down entirely.
- ❑ When mills closed, entire towns were depopulated.

Top: Closed mill. Right: Workers try to protect a little and save pensions. Bottom: Empty street in Aliquippa and new mill in Brazil.



'Clawback' Protests Swept the Region to Save Pensions

- ❑ Unions formed community wide alliances, especially with churches, to save and least part of their 'safety net.
- ❑ Nearly 20,000 filled the streets in Aliquippa, site of the large LTV mill, formerly know as J&L.
- ❑ Victory was partial, with many workers only saving half of the pensions. Some got nothing.
- ❑ New 'Export': **Younger workers began leaving** the region, looking for work in the South and Southwest.

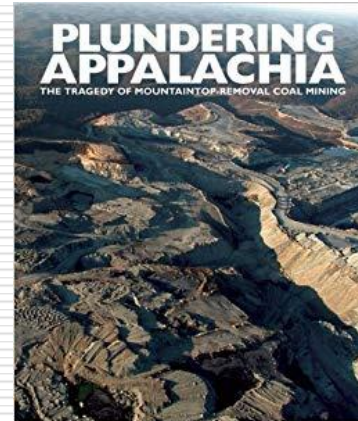


Soon we were involved in supporting local people protesting the mill closure and loss of pensions and medical benefits. This march on Palm Sunday 1987

Pick One: Your Health or Your Job

Mountaintop Removal and Ecological Disaster

- ❑ In coal country, we get 'slurry' more than rust.
- ❑ Slurry starts as a mixture of coal dust and ground water. Then sulfides and other chemicals are leached into it. It is held in pools where bacteria also grow in it.
- ❑ Water is used extensively in mining mountaintops, and the slurry is held in makeshift ponds. [See Kayford Mountain, W Va, here.](#)
- ❑ Slurry ponds break up and the mountain streams and rivers are polluted, becoming serious health risks.

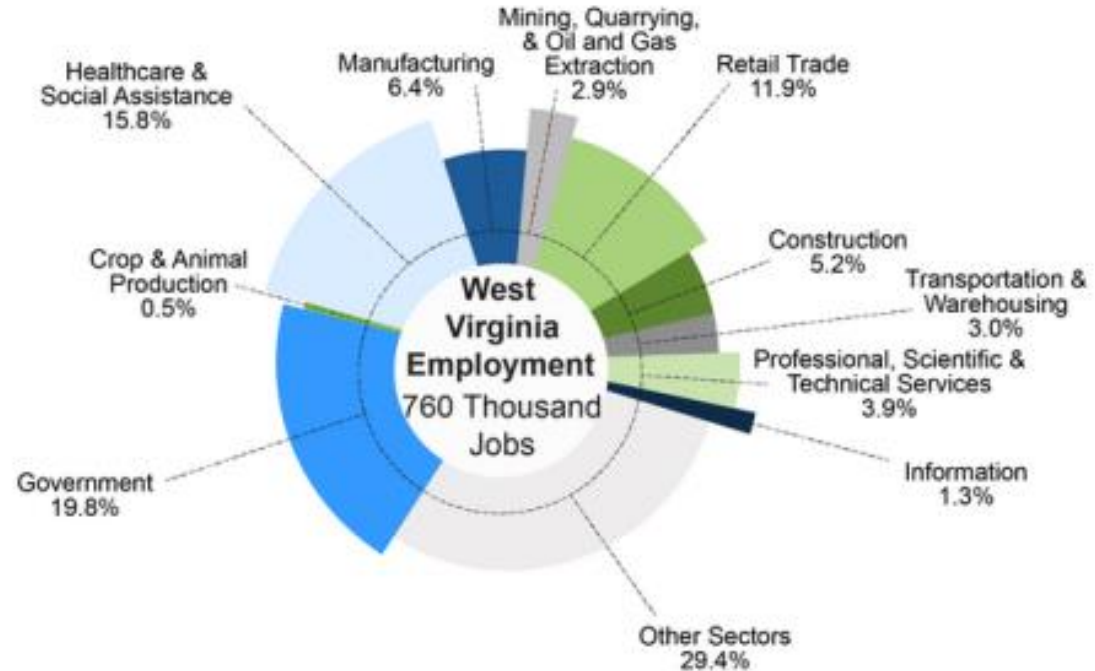


Schumpeter's capitalism of 'Creative Destruction': A New Working Class Takes Shape



- The 'smokestack' economy **is shrinking**, while the service and information sectors **are expanding**.
- The **counties become older**, as young people migrate to large cities, or leave the region entirely.
- The power of **unions decline**. Public worker unions become larger than manufacturing or extraction, but all are less than 10%, a loss of 2/3rds
- Without unions, **work is 'precarious'**, and young workers with some college are burdened with debt that holds back family formation

'...a process of industrial mutation that incessantly revolutionizes the economic structure from within, incessantly destroying the old one, incessantly creating a new one"



SOURCE: EMSI, 2017.1

What Are Some Solutions?

'Ramp Hollow' and Land Trusts

- ❑ The book recommends land trusts, a solidarity economy **'radical structural reform'** suited to modern 'organic' or ecological family farming.
- ❑ The state designates tracts of land as 'trusts' for current residents plus newcomers who want to buy in. Uses of the land are restricted against mineral and similar extraction, nor can it be sold to outside interests
- ❑ The trust include farm parcels, areas for schools, markets and services, **plus a small but designated highland 'commons'** for wildlife and gathering.
- ❑ Trusts can prosper, but family household **growth is limited**.



More Energy and Urban Alternatives Rust Belt Worker Cooperatives

- ❑ Worker **coops and green energy startups** are taking root in rust belt areas.
- ❑ Mountain wind farms offer green energy jobs for displaced miners.
- ❑ A few urban industrial-scale coops and farms are working well in Cleveland's inner city
- ❑ Rural solar power networks and installer coops are spreading across the mountains.
- ❑ 'Sustainergy,' a home winterization worker coop, has taken root in Cincinnati.

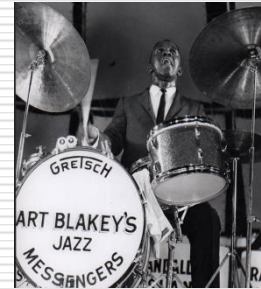
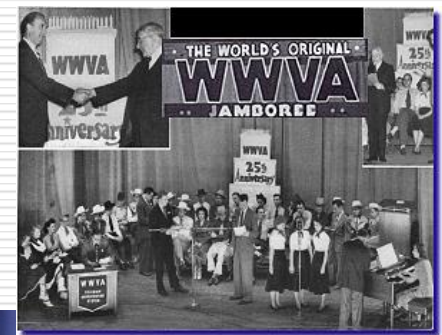


Above: Spraying insulation to winterize home in Cincinnati.
Right: 'Green' capital as wind farm in W VA



Are There Noteworthy Traits from History Carried Forward in Rust Belt Culture?

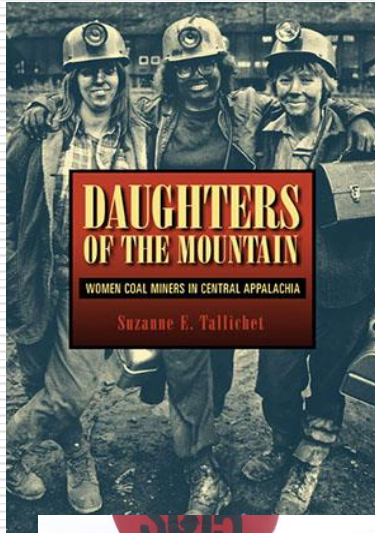
- ❑ *'11 Nations of North America'* describes the Appalachian culture as 'characterized by a **warrior ethic** and a commitment to **personal sovereignty** and individual liberty.' It remains today in the **wide ownership of guns** and hunting. Seizing property by guns was justified
- ❑ One key 'warrior' source is Scots-Irish Presbyterianism, with a **conservative theology and radical democracy** in its churches, **under local control**. which also served as schools and political centers. They also dominated the early steel industry, although steel workers were multicultural.
- ❑ Waves of immigration also forced a unique **mixture of cultures**, from jazz and blues in the cities, to polka and doo wop in the milltowns, to **rockabilly** broadcast from WWVA in Wheeling. C&W is still very popular.
- ❑ Ethnicity was also bound with religion—Catholic Italians and Germans, Orthodox Slavs, AME and Baptist for Blacks. Early Presbyterianism softened.
- ❑ Until World War 2, the 'color line' was enforced strongly. Music helped break it down in the 1960s



Above: WVA rifle champ. Below: WAMO's Porky brings together Blacks, Italian and others in the new youth music scene.



Challenges to today's organizers: Wider Diversity and Precarity in the Rust Belt Working Class



Nearly all Rust Belt workers today face **'precarious' work, few unions and heavy debt.**

Clockwise: **New insurgencies** Healthcare, Teachers & Adjunct Profs in Pittsburgh, Steel workers in Weirton, Wait staff in Pittsburgh, Fast food workers in Ohio, Women Miners in West Virginia.

