

REMEMBERING LABOR CONFLICT

as an

AMERICAN BATTLEFIELD



PAUL SHACKEL

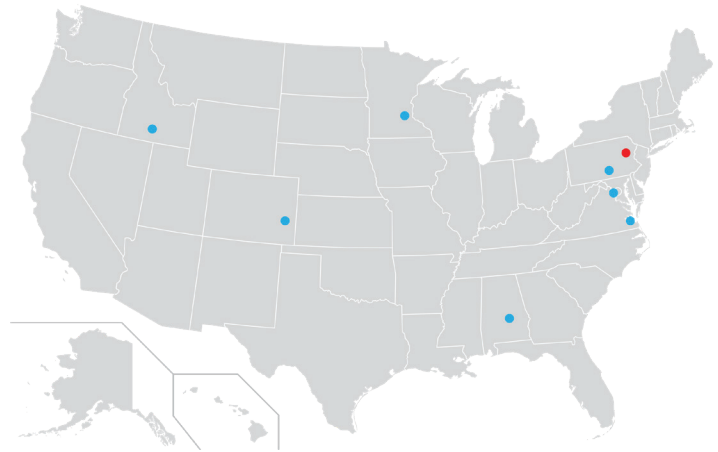
ABSTRACT

Anthracite coal extraction developed in northeastern Pennsylvania during the late 18th century, and through the early 20th century the industry was supported by new waves of immigration. New immigrant workers faced various forms of structural racism, often being underpaid, assigned the toughest jobs, and provided substandard housing. In 1897, as 400 men marched on a public road with the goal of closing a company mine, a sheriff and his posse fired upon them, killing 19. An additional six men died a few days later of gunshot wounds. While the incident, known as the Lattimer Massacre, was noted as one of the most tragic labor strikes in US history, the event faded from national public memory within a few decades. A type of historical amnesia settled in until 75 years later when the community and labor organizations erected a memorial near the site. Although annual commemorations are now held at the site, the Lattimer Massacre remains absent from textbooks and it is still not part of national public memory. Over the past two decades, as the Hispanic population has increased significantly in northeastern Pennsylvania, so, too, have anti-immigrant attitudes increased in the US. Now more than ever we need to remember the history of racism and xenophobia directed at immigrant laborers.

INTRODUCTION

The United States has a long list of battlefields where labor and capital have clashed. These

places have changed the trajectory of the fight for labor rights. Some of our history books have documented these confrontations related to the struggle for labor justice. The most well-known include the Great Railroad Strike (1877), Haymarket (1886), Homestead (1892), Pullman (1894), the Anthracite Coal Strike (1902), the Bread and Roses Strike (1912), Ludlow (1913), Patterson Silk Strike (1913), the Battle of Blair Mountain (1921), and the Textile Workers' Strike (1934), to name a few (also see Loomis 2019). Of course, we can augment this list depending on one's background and perspective.

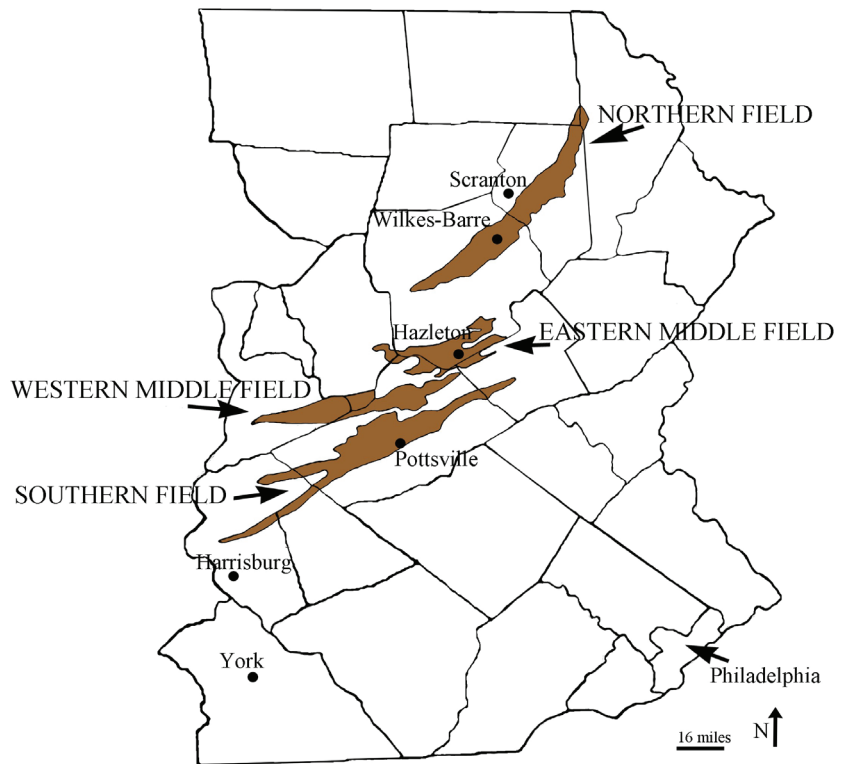


I have found it curious that the 1897 Lattimer Massacre, a confrontation that had one of the highest death tolls compared to these other significant strikes, has been omitted from the national public memory of labor wars (Pinkowski 1950; Novak 1978). The Lattimer Massacre, missing from the official memory of our country, reflects the control capital has over the memory of America's industrialization. For instance, Howard Zinn's (2003) *A People's History of the United States* emphasizes how the accomplishments of capitalists often overshadow labor wars. The Lattimer Massacre is one of the major miscarriages of justice in US history, and at one time, was considered one of the five

most significant strikes in America (*Grand Forks Daily Herald*, September 8, 1901). However, its impact on the national stage faded in the early-20th century as capital thwarted the memorialization of labors' battle for justice. It took 75 years for the local community and labor organizations to erect a memorial at the labor battlefield site (Shackel 2018, 2023).

Lattimer, a coal patch town in northeastern Pennsylvania, is now considered a suburb of Hazleton (Figure 1). Its location is off the beaten path, and you have to go out of your way to find the place. Approaching the town from the west, you will find the memorial at the end of a winding road. A 10-foot-tall shale rock, the Lattimer Memorial, greets you. At that point, the road splits. The coal company supervisors lived on the southern road running through town, and miners lived in duplexes, or what the locals call

FIGURE 1. Map of Northeastern Pennsylvania. Lattimer is located in the eastern middle fields, adjacent to Hazleton. PAUL SHACKEL



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double houses, along the northern road. A manicured landscape surrounds the monument with a concrete walkway leading to the boulder. A bronze pickaxe and a shovel are attached to the boulder, and smaller pieces of coal rest at its base. A bronze plaque attached to the boulder describes the massacre scene and lists the names of the men killed while marching for better working and living conditions (Shackel 2016; Shackel and Westmont 2016; Roller 2018) (Figure 2).

THE MASSACRE

Several waves of new immigrants worked in the anthracite coal fields. This new immigration often led to ethnic tensions and conflict between labor and capital. While the first miners to the region were Welsh, German, English, and Scots, by the 1840s and 1850s Irish immigrants became the new mine laborers. By the 1880s, the coal barons encouraged a new migration from Eastern and Southern Europe. The coal operators believed that recruiting workers from many different nationalities, who spoke many different languages, would make it difficult to organize the coal workers. They also recruited more workers than jobs available, allowing them to easily replace workers who were injured, died, or went on strike. Surplus labor allowed the coal operators to keep wages at near-starvation levels. This steady, large-scale migration from Eastern and Southern Europe continued until the Immigration Acts of 1921 and 1924 limited migration through national origin quotas (Wallace 1987; Shackel 2018; Roller 2020).

The UMWA (United Mine Workers of America), established in 1890, faced a difficult situation in 1897. The organization supported Pennsylvania's Campbell Act, which taxed the coal operators 3 cents a day for each non-US citizen

FIGURE 2. Lattimer Memorial. The memorial is a ten-foot shale boulder surrounded by a carefully manicured setting. It sits across the road from the massacre site. PAUL SHACKEL



working in their collieries. At the same time, the foreign-born workers were paid about 20% less than the “English speakers.” When the coal operators passed this tax along to their workers in August 1897, it ignited a set of wildcat strikes throughout the region. Some collieries were on strike for a few days, others for weeks. Tensions continued to boil, and there was rarely an easy truce between the workers and the coal operators. At times workers went from colliery to colliery to close all of the mines in the Hazleton area. The sheriff and his posse zigzagged throughout the region, confronting and turning back these strikers when they could catch up to them (Novak 1978). At this point, the UMWA re-entered the anthracite region and began organizing the “foreign speakers” (Shackel 2019a).

Thirteen sworn statements by witnesses and workmen collected by the a diplomat of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which was looking out for the interests of immigrants from the empire, describe the events leading up to the march to Lattimer, and the strikers’ attempt to close the last operating mine belonging to C. Pardee Company.¹ If they could close this colliery, all of the company’s mines would be silent, and the workers could pressure the coal operators for better pay and working conditions. These testimonies, along with newspaper accounts and oral histories, help reconstruct the events surrounding the Lattimer massacre.

John Eagler, 19 years of age, was not yet an American citizen; however, he became secretary of the UMWA, local number 84, and was employed at the C. Pardee Company. He explained that on “September 3 we, laborers at Harwood and employees of the aforesaid company, started to strike, owing to the inducement from the laborers at McAdoo, where the Lehigh and Wilkesbarre Company have its [sic] mines” (John Eagler in Hengelmüller 1898). Jacob Stiver, a coal worker, confirmed that the men of the Lehigh and Wilkesbarre Company convinced the workers of the C. Pardee Company to strike for better wages and terms when buying provisions from the company store. According to Stiver and others who testified, John Glavati of Lattimer came to Harwood and explained that a march on Lattimer would encourage the workers to join the strike (Jacob Stiver in Hengelmüller 1898).

Andro Stiver, a member of the local committee of the UMWA in Harwood, explained that at a union meeting on September 9 they developed a strategy to march to Lattimer. Through several interpreters, UMWA organizers told the men to proceed unarmed to show they were not anticipating violence. On the morning of the 10th, Andro Stiver went with Eagler to Humboldt, a nearby town, to acquire an American flag for the march. They began their march from Harwood to Lattimer at about 1:00 PM with their American flag front and center (Andro Stiver in Hengelmüller 1898). The protest march grew from about 250 to 400 men as they passed through some of the small patch towns to Lattimer. Along the route, they were harassed by the sheriff and his deputies. Finally, at about 3:45 PM, after a five-mile march, they met the sheriff at the outskirts of Lattimer (Pinkowski 1950: 14; Turner 1977: 32) (Figure 3).

Charles H. Juscott, Lattimer’s schoolteacher, stood on the schoolhouse grounds about 300 yards from the incident. He explained that the workers were about 40 yards from the company houses when the sheriff met them. He noted, “The sheriff, with about 60 of his deputies, who formed a line almost parallel with the public road, but not across it, stepped out to meet the strikers” (Charles Juscott in Hengelmüller 1898). John Welsh, a resident of Hazleton who was within sight of the incident, confirmed that the deputies “formed in a line alongside the fence” (John Welsh in Hengelmüller 1898).

Andro Novotry, a naturalized American citizen, explained that he was at the head of the procession. When the sheriff walked out to meet them, he seized Novotry’s companion by the coat. “When the sheriff let him go, he caught me by the coat with one hand and with the other pointed his revolver, which he then drew, at my breast. The sheriff asked me, ‘Where are you going?’ and I answered, ‘Let me alone,’ at the same time throwing off his arm with which he was holding the revolver against my breast. At this movement of mine the sheriff gave the command ‘Fire,’ and the shooting began” (Andro Novotry in Hengelmüller 1898). John Welsh confirmed that he “heard somebody halloo to shoot” (John Welsh in Hengelmüller 1898).

George Jancso, a striking coal worker, explained, “I think I heard the sheriff call to the deputies, ‘Give two or three shots.’ At first, I thought that the deputies were firing blank cartridges, but when I saw my companions fall wounded to the ground I realized the seriousness of the situation, tore myself from the hands of the sheriff, and ran to a ditch not far away” (in Hengelmüller 1898). John Andryonski (in Hengelmüller 1898) confirmed that when the firing



FIGURE 3. Lattimer Strikers. On September 10, 1897, striking mineworkers marched from Harwood, around Hazleton, to Lattimer. This is the only known image of the event. PENNSYLVANIA STATE ARCHIVES, PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION, MG 273, CHARLES H. BURG COLLECTION

began, “Five men fell dead around me. I flung myself flat on the ground and stayed there for about ten minutes.... As I lay on the ground, I lifted my head, and I could see that the deputies were firing at my fleeing companions, already about 300 yards away.” Some deputies broke rank and followed the workers for about 30 yards. The local newspaper reported, “The deputies taking cool deliberate aim, bringing down their men as if some choice fowl....” (*Daily Standard* September 11, 1897).

Watching from the schoolhouse, Juscott (in Hengelmüller 1898) explained, “The strikers turned and ran up over the ridge and toward my schoolhouse. The deputies continued their firing after the running men, dropping men as they ran. The firing lasted from three to five minutes. Some men were about 200 yards from the deputies when the firing ceased.” The *Hazleton Sentinel* (September 10, 1897) reported, “The groans of the dying and screams of the wounded filled the air.” Andro Stiver (in Hengelmüller 1898) noted, “As I arose I saw men lying around me who had been struck down by balls. I did not see any of the deputies lend a helping hand to the wounded men.”

The following day, the pro-labor local newspaper, the *Daily Standard* (September 11, 1897), declared, “It was not a battle, because the strikers were not aggressive, nor were they on the defensive because they had no weapons of any kind and were simply shot down like so many worthless objects, each of the licensed life takers trying to outdo the others in this butchery.” The *Hazleton Sentinel*, a pro-capital newspaper, (September 10, 1897) reported, “A battlefield was reproduced, and many a battle has been fought with less carnage.”

The *Hazleton Sentinel* (September 15, 1897) also reviewed reports of the massacre from selected newspapers nationwide. They all contain a racist view about the strikers and condemn them, rather than the sheriff and his posse. For instance, the *New York Times* claimed that the sheriff's actions probably stopped an episode of widespread killing and looting. *The Washington Star* described the strikers as "ignorant men" and "a dangerous class" who did not know the language and customs of the land. However, the paper explained, the coal operators should be held responsible for bringing them to the United States. The *Pittsburgh Gazette* described the strikers as "vicious fellows." The *New York Sun* described the protesters as "an ignorant and turbulent crowd." The editor also criticized some papers for "inciting the ignorant to violence, and thus luring them on to death." The *Philadelphia Inquirer* called these men part of a foreign swarm and said that the US should create laws that would prohibit immigrants from entering the country if they did not know how to write and speak English.

Foreign-language newspapers voiced support for the workers. For instance, a Polish newspaper published in Scranton rephrased Lincoln's Gettysburg address for those who died in Lattimer—"May their death not be in vain, may they become the patron saints of the working people in America" (*Stranz*, September 18, 1897, quoted in Turner 2002: 22). The headline in the Slovak newspaper in Pittsburgh, *Amerikánsko-Slovenské Noviny*, read, "Massacre of Slavs—in the Freest Country Under the Sun—People are Shot at like Dogs—Slavs are the Victims of American Savagery" (quoted in Turner 2002: 22; Stolarik 2002: 35). Associating Americans with the term "savagery" reverses the contemporary definition of civilization, where Westerners were civilized and other races were not. The Slovak newspaper questioned the contemporary accepted hierarchical order.

Baron Hengelmüller, a diplomat for the Austro-Hungarian Empire, wrote a report to the Department of the State that produced a list of 10 Austrian and Hungarian citizens killed and the names of the 11 men hospitalized in Hazleton. In addition, Hengelmüller asked the US government for compensation for the citizens of Austria-Hungary who were wounded or injured and hospitalized. Two of those with gunshot wounds were priests, Fr. Fagyas (identified as Hungarian), "injured in the back of arm and leg," and Fr. Roman (identified as Austrian), "wounded in the back" (Hengelmüller 1898). In total, 19 men died that day and several more succumbed later from gunshot wounds (Shackel 2018).

THE VERDICT

That following February, the sheriff and his deputies were placed on trial for killing one of the strikers. The jury consisted of local businessmen of German, English, and Irish descent, and the judge was far from impartial, as he owned shares of a coal operation. Despite testimony from numerous witnesses making a solid case in support of the miners, the defense successfully labeled the immigrant strikers as foreign invaders from the Steppes of Hungary who only knew mischief and destruction. The defense lawyers asserted that the miners were foreign invaders who came to America to destroy peace and liberty. The sheriff and his posse were found innocent. The jury declared that riotous conditions existed, and therefore the killing of the miners was justified (*Daily Standard*, March 8, 1898; *Plain Speaker*, March 8, 1898).

Soon after the verdict was announced, the news spread quickly throughout the anthracite region. The newspapers that sided with the sheriff, and by extension the mine owners, praised the decision and noted that the ruling was a way to stave off anarchy. The pro-union newspapers and the Slavic-language press condemned the decision, explaining that the evidence was overwhelmingly in favor of the miners. The scales of justice weighed against labor and the new immigrant workers. As a result of the trial's outcome, miners involved in the strike and other miners who publicly supported the strikers lost their jobs. The coal operators threatened that any person involved in the strike, and any relative of those involved, would never work in the coal industry again (Roller 2018; Shackel 2018). (Figure 4).

REMEMBERING LATTIMER

The massacre has been largely forgotten in the national public memory. The beginning of this amnesia is probably related to the racial attitudes toward those slain and the power of those who controlled the anthracite coal fields to command the narrative of the event. It was beneficial for the coal barons to forget the conflict at Lattimer and the demands of the coal workers. Within the context of remembering Lattimer, we also can view the recreation of

FIGURE 4. Lattimerský Súd. In 1899, *Národné Kalendár*, the annual almanac of the National Slovak Society, denounced “Lattimerský Súd.” (“Lattimer Justice.”). The almanac was published in Chicago annually from 1878 through 1958. PUBLIC DOMAIN IMAGE VIA PAUL SHACKEL

these xenophobic fears and prejudices in our contemporary society (Shackel 2019a).

There is a long history of individuals and groups working to keep the memory of Lattimer alive, despite efforts of the coal barons to erase this event from the national memory. To the coal workers, the community, and a growing number in the UMWA, the men who died at Lattimer were immediately transformed into martyrs. They became a symbol of the struggle of the labor movement. With grand ceremonies, they were buried in four different cemeteries in unmarked paupers’ graves. Thousands of mourners joined the processions to the different graveyards. The amassing of these grand processions also created great fear among Hazleton’s capitalists and civic leaders (Greene 1968: 140).



LATTIMERSKÝ SÚD

After the trial, workers and union leaders began discussing how to memorialize the Lattimer martyrs. The *Daily Standard* reported that placing a memorial on the massacre site would be impossible because the coal company still owned the land. However, the newspaper suggested it could be placed in St. Stanislaus cemetery, where 14 miners are buried (*Daily Standard*, April 22, 1898). Nothing came of the immediate call for a physical memorial; however, anniversary memorial services were held in the churches in Hazleton. In 1898, it was reported that about 2,000 miners marched through the streets of Hazleton to remember their martyrs (*Daily Standard*, September 6, 1898; September 9, 1898; *Philadelphia Inquirer*, September 11, 1898; *Plain Speaker*, September 12, 1898).

On September 17, 1900, the UMWA announced a strike in the anthracite region. The UMWA president, John Mitchell, called for a more inclusive union due to being able to organize the “foreign speakers” at Lattimer. He exclaimed, “The coal you dig isn’t Slavish, Polish, or Irish coal. It’s just coal.” This phrase became the rallying slogan for the successful 1900 strike and subsequent actions. Mitchell continued with his speech, “You are all working under the same working conditions, and while you don’t have to drink, if you’re Irish, with Italians, but you work with them and to get anything done in the way of improvements in the workforce at the job, at the job site, you’ve got to bury your antagonism temporarily and join with these people in a common effort. Otherwise, you know, you’re just fodder, cannon fodder for capitalists” (quoted in Klein and Hogenboom 1980, 331).

After the long and hard-fought 1902 Anthracite Coal Strike, which lasted about six months, the UMWA officially recognized Lattimer as the event where new immigrant labor could play a role in the union’s success. So, in 1903, the UMWA locals collected over \$5,000 to erect a monument to the miners killed at Lattimer. The goal was to place it in the Public Square in Wilkes-Barre, the county seat, where a large number of people could view it (*Wilkes-Barre Semi-Weekly Record*, July 31, 1903: 7).

In addition to being the county seat, Wilkes-Barre also was far removed from the crime scene. The coal company continued to own the land where the massacre occurred, and they refused to allow the erection of a memorial at the massacre site (*Wilkes-Barre Semi-Weekly Record*, July 31, 1903: 7). However, the local newspaper reported that there was also some opposition to the erection of the monument in Wilkes-Barre, “as it will recall the deplorable labor troubles which it would be better to forget than to perpetuate in stone” (*Wilkes-Barre Semi-Weekly Record*, July 31, 1903: 7). Civic leaders also feared that placing the monument in a public space would become a focal point for future labor demonstrations.

After about 1911, there was little mention of memorializing the Lattimer Massacre. For several decades a type of amnesia fell over the Lattimer incident. In part, the rise of the militant International Workers of the World (IWW) in the 1910s, the Red Scare, and the perceived threats of a radical labor movement contributed to a public memory that shied away from promoting the memorialization of a labor battlefield. By the 1930s, the *Wilkes-Barre Sunday Independent* was referring to the event as the “Lattimer riot.” The same article mentions that, “Indeed, the worst actions that they brought against the miners would, in a New York City strike, scarcely have justified the mild use of a policeman’s billy” (*Sunday Independent*, June 20, 1937: Section 3:1).

The earliest reference I found documenting a memorial event close to the massacre site appeared in 1966. The coal company still owned the massacre site; however, adjacent lands were now privately owned. About 100 people attended the event: a mass at the Catholic church and a memorial service close to the massacre site. The UMWA, the state AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations), and Bishop John Dougherty of the Diocese of Scranton spoke about respect for life, including those who work (Pinsky 1966).

In 1971, there was new discussion among community leaders and labor organizations (AFL-CIO and UMWA) about creating a memorial and a historical roadside marker to honor those killed at the Lattimer massacre. This effort succeeded. Mr. and Mrs. Albert Cherko donated land for the monument, which sits adjacent to and across the road from the massacre site. A 10-foot-tall shale rock for the memorial came from a nearby strip mine (Lattimer Labor Memorial Year 1972). The plaque on the monument uses the lines from *The Daily Standard* (September 11, 1897): “It was not a battle because they were not aggressive, nor were they on the defensive, because they had no weapons of any kind and were simply shot down like so many worthless objects; each of the licensed life takers trying to outdo the others in butchery.” It also lists the names of the 19 men who died on September 10, 1897. Over 500 people attended the 1972 commemorative event. Cesar Chávez participated as the main speaker. Chávez is best known for organizing migrant farmworkers into the United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO. He spoke about the sacrifice the miners made to improve their working conditions. He asked that we compare the new immigrant worker of Lattimer and the new immigrant worker of today. He noted, “Farm workers, they too are immigrants; they too have strange-sounding names; they too speak a foreign language; they face the guns and clubs of hired strikebreakers and police in the employ of anti-union employers.” He ended his speech by saying, “Let there be peace, let there be justice, and let there be love among all people” (Cesar Chávez at Lattimer, 1972).

An annual memorial service continued through the decades. For instance, Richard Trumka, then president of the UMWA, spoke at the 1992 Lattimer Memorial event. He explained, “John Fahy, a union organizer of that era, told the miners, ‘You can be Hungarian, Irish, Polish, Italian, Slovak, German, or Lithuanian, but you could also be union.’” Charles E. McGlynn was, for a long time, the groundskeeper and the spiritual protector of the Lattimer massacre memorial. To him, the monument is about one word—“dignity.” He explained that the lessons of the past, the ability of various ethnic groups to organize together, are important today. “The Lattimer massacre memorial is a symbol that tries to include all races, creeds, and ethnic groups. The memorial includes the idea that different ethnic groups are in solidarity, and the reason they are in solidarity is because they march under the banner of labor” (quoted in Pavloski, September 9, 1993).

The 1997 centennial commemorative events helped to solidify the memory of the Lattimer massacre in the community. A state historical marker was dedicated where the march began in Harwood. Located on the side of a highway (Route 924), the marker refers to the nationalities of the marchers—Polish, Slovak, and Lithuanian—as well as the cemeteries in which they are buried—St. Stanislaus, St. Joseph’s, and Vine Street cemeteries in Hazleton, and St.

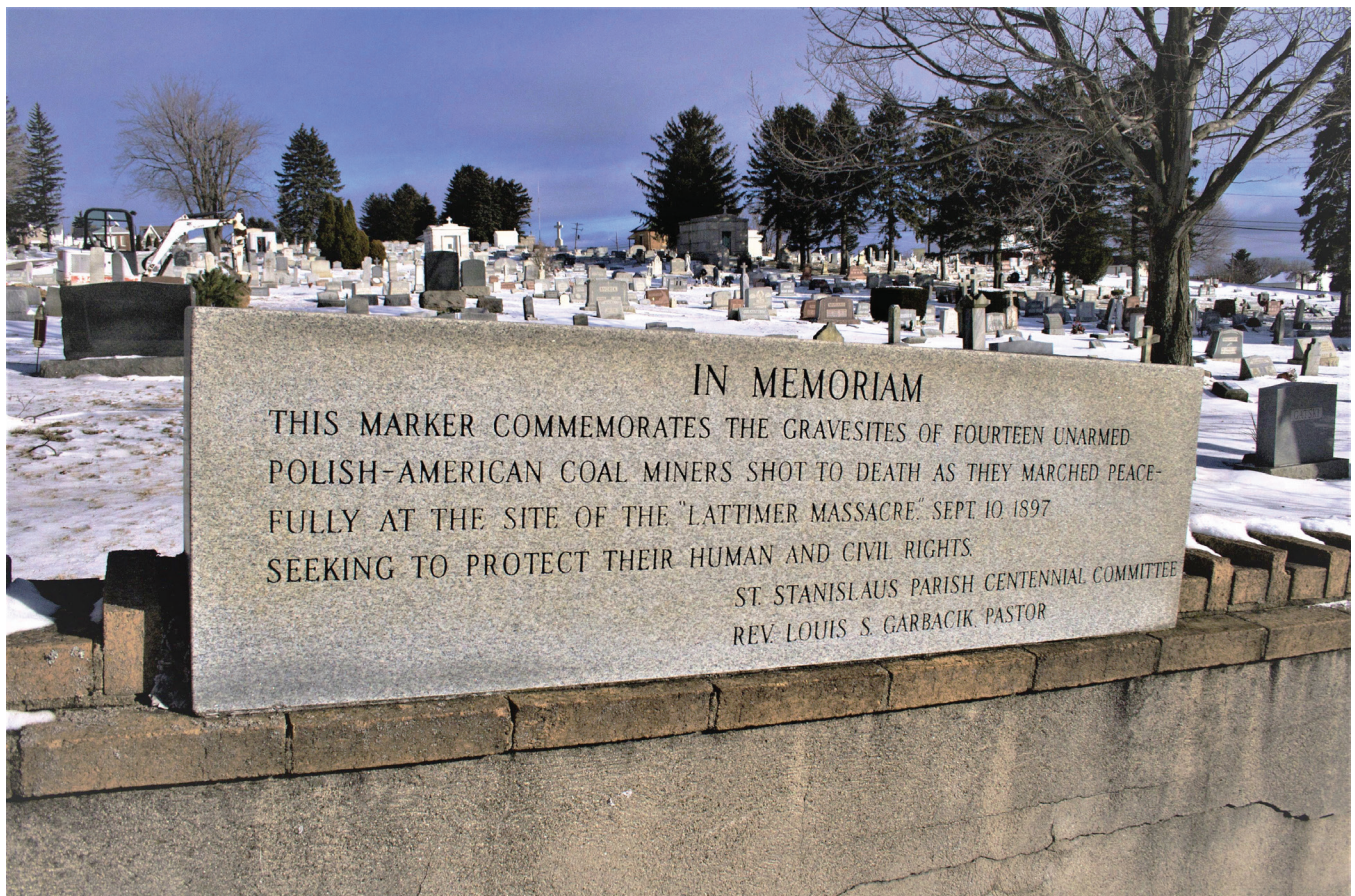
Patrick's Cemetery in nearby McAdoo. In addition, a new state historical marker was placed near the site of the massacre and adjacent to the "Rock of Solidarity." It explains that the men were unarmed and marching for higher wages and fair working conditions. "This was one of the most serious acts of violence in American labor history." A commemorative stone marker also was anchored on the boundary wall of the St. Stanislaus Cemetery adjacent to and above the row of fourteen martyrs' graves. The stone memorial faced the street containing text that "Commemorates the Gravesites of Fourteen Unarmed Polish-American Coal Miners Shot to Death as they Marched Peacefully at the Site of the "Lattimer Massacre" September 10, 1897, Seeking to Protect Their Human and Civil Rights..." (Figure 5).

In 1997, Cecil Roberts, president of the UMWA, Congressman Paul Kanjorski, State Senator Ray Musto, State Representative Todd Eachus, and president of the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO William George, led a commemorative march to the massacre site. They arrived at the site at 3:45 PM, the same time the strikers reached Lattimer one hundred years earlier. They all spoke about the importance of unions and the great sacrifice of these martyrs. A Mass was held at the monument, with about 200 people attending. Bishop James Timlin conducted the full-service Mass, and in his sermon, he echoed Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. He proclaimed, "The world will remember what happened here 100 years ago, not what I say here today. Nineteen men were mowed down, killed, right here" (quoted in Tarone 1997).

HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

Labor histories have often been omitted from the national consciousness. The story of organized labor's struggle is often missing from the school curriculum. With the weakening of the labor movement in the 21st century, I fear that people have forgotten the many hard-fought battles for justice in pay and working conditions. For instance, Howard Zinn (2003: 54) questions why the Colorado Coal Mine Wars, which cast a dark shadow on American corporate

FIGURE 5. St. Stanislaus Cemetery Memorial. When erected in 1997, as shown here, the memorial faced the street and was above the graves of 14 of the Lattimer martyrs buried in the cemetery. PAUL SHACKEL



capitalism, is not part of the national memory of Americans. Meanwhile, our grade school textbooks celebrate John D. Rockefeller's building of Standard Oil. Americans are led to remember the building of corporations rather than the bloody events associated with their failings. To emphasize class struggle would be considered bold and even radical, when in fact, class struggle is still very much part of America's world today. These complicated histories are important stories that need to be told at national public places to make people more aware of the many inequities that still exist today.

Because Lattimer is little known, very few people intentionally make a pilgrimage to visit the memorial. The occasional visitor will get out of their car, take a picture of the monument, read the roadside marker, and then return to the road. The visits tend to be neither somber nor contemplative, but rather unexpected and curious (Shackel 2012: 25).

A Roman Catholic Mass was held at the site on the anniversary of the massacre from at least 1972 until the early 2000s. The two state-sponsored historical markers commemorating the event still stand—a bit tarnished after two decades of weathering. The stone memorial on the wall of St. Stanislaus Cemetery commemorating labor's martyrs buried nearby, which once faced the street, has been placed inside the wall, on the ground, with the inscriptions facing the wall and not visible to any visitor (Figure 6). The Lattimer massacre memorial bolder still stands tall with a few new cracks, a testament to the fragility of the labor movement (Shackel 2019a). And across the street at the massacre site, the township's street sweeper will dump its refuse (Figure 7).

Recently, an interdenominational service has resurrected memorialization on the anniversary of the massacre (Figure 8). Except for two years during COVID, the services have been held annually, although the crowds seem to be diminishing. I was the keynote speaker at the 2019 annual Service of Healing and Remembrance, which gave me an opportunity to reflect on the lessons learned from Lattimer—about how new working-class immigrants are treated. The men who marched on Lattimer were part of an eternal, racial drama endured by most immigrants, which continues today. The social injustices and anti-immigrant sentiment evident in the United States over a hundred years ago still exist. That legacy is reasserting itself today, in chanting crowds and demagogic politicians whose idea of “real Americans” looks painfully close to that of the anti-immigrant activists of a century ago.



FIGURE 6. St. Stanislaus Cemetery Memorial as it is today. After the reconstruction of the cemetery wall, the Stanislaus memorial commemorating 14 of the miners killed at Lattimer has been placed inside the wall. Therefore, it can no longer be easily seen or read. PAUL SHACKEL

The past is present, and we need to think about how Lattimer's history can be connected to the present. Cesar Chávez, who spoke at the dedication of this memorial in 1972, made the same point. He asked that we think about the new immigrant worker of Lattimer and the new immigrant worker of today (Cesar Chávez at Lattimer, 1972). In tribute to Chávez, I and several colleagues worked with the Anthracite Heritage Museum in 2022–2023 to develop an online exhibition on immigration, with a focus on the newest Hispanic residents of the region. The exhibition, “We Are Anthracite,” bridges the experiences between past and present immigration (www.anthracitemuseum.org/we-are-anthracite/). In



FIGURE 7 (top). The site of the massacre, shown here, sits across the road from the Lattimer memorial. Occasionally, the township street sweeper dumps refuse on the site. PAUL SHACKEL
FIGURE 8 (bottom). Interfaith memorial service. While a Catholic Mass once was held on the anniversary of the massacre, beginning in 2011, an interfaith memorial service was conducted at the site. PAUL SHACKEL

drawing parallels between heritage and modern experiences, the exhibit positions modern immigrants within the larger narrative of the region's history. The museum is using its authority to lend validity to the immigrants' place in this area, legitimizing their presence against voices who would claim otherwise. Sending the message that the immigrants are not so dissimilar from those who came to the region in the 19th century, the museum works to interrupt centuries-old cycles of xenophobia. The museum validates modern immigrants' place in this region, creating a narrative that their experience is similar that of earlier immigrants. While the northeastern Pennsylvania immigrant story is not well-known, it is rich and complex, like that of many Rust Belt communities undergoing this major demographic shift.

We can never fully recapture the violence that happened at Lattimer. However, remembering Lattimer allows us to consider the unfortunate plight of the new working-class immigrant. It enables us to ponder our values as an immigrant nation, built on values held in common by working people, as we decide how we accept the new immigrant to our communities today.

ENDNOTE

1. These sworn statements were collected by the Austro-Hungarian government in a report, sometimes referred to as the Hengelmüller report, to provide evidence of the unprovoked violence against their citizens. The goal was to petition the US government to gain compensation for the deceased workers' families, and the injured workers who survived.

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