



The Face of Decline: The Pennsylvania Anthracite Region in the Twentieth Century

Thomas Dublin

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The anthracite coal region of Pennsylvania once prospered. Today, very little mining or industry remains, although residents have made valiant efforts to restore the fabric of their communities. In *The Face of Decline*, the noted historians Thomas Dublin and Walter Licht offer a sweeping history of this area over the course of the twentieth century. Combining business, labor, social, political, and environmental history, Dublin and Licht delve into coal communities to explore grassroots ethnic life and labor activism, economic revitalization, and the varied impact of economic decline across generations of mining families.

The Face of Decline also features the responses to economic crisis of organized capital and labor, local business elites, redevelopment agencies, and state and federal governments. Dublin and Licht draw on a remarkable range of sources: oral histories and survey questionnaires; documentary photographs; the records of coal companies, local governments, and industrial development corporations; federal censuses; and community newspapers. The authors examine the impact of enduring economic decline across a wide region but focus especially on a small group of mining communities in the region's Panther Valley, from Jim Thorpe through Lansford to Tamaqua. The authors also place the anthracite region within a broader conceptual framework, comparing anthracite's decline to parallel developments in European coal basins and Appalachia and to deindustrialization in the United States more generally.

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