

FROSTBURG 1882: GERMAN STRIKERS vs. GERMAN STRIKEBREAKERS

Edited by RICHARD LOWITT

PREFACE

Several months after publication of *The Maryland Germans* (Princeton, 1948) I received a letter from Mrs. Olive Patton of Frostburg, Maryland—a letter which I should have liked to receive prior to the publication of my book. It is a rare occurrence when historians find that a recent letter about past events is worthy of editing and publishing. However, so meager is our knowledge of the industrial and labor history of western Maryland that I thought this letter, based on conversations, memories and research was interesting and important enough to be published. One of my colleagues, Dr. Richard Lowitt (Department of History, University of Maryland), who has done a great deal of research in the history of industry and labor relations and who therefore is much more qualified than I myself to evaluate this letter, kindly agreed to take over the editing job. I should like to express to Dr. Lowitt my deep appreciation for the competent and conscientious manner with which he edited and annotated the following document.

DIETER CUNZ

* * *

INTRODUCTION

The following letter gives an insight into the activities of one of the largest Maryland corporations in the second half of the nineteenth century, as well as an interesting sidelight on immigration history. Footnotes present the reader with necessary background information about persons and events discussed in the body of the letter. Some of the text, largely material of a genealogical nature and other information not directly pertinent to the main theme, has been altered or deleted. By and large, however, the letter is presented as Mrs. Olive Patton wrote it. Miss Helen Hough, Librarian at the State Teachers College, Frostburg, Maryland, who encouraged the author of this letter, likewise aided the editor by suggesting a preliminary bibliography.

RICHARD LOWITT

73 Bowery Street
Frostburg, Maryland
June 21, 1949

Professor Dieter Cunz
University of Maryland
College Park, Maryland

Dear Professor Cunz:

I have read your book *The Maryland Germans* and found it to be very good reading as well as informative. As I like history, especially that of my own state and county, I was deeply interested in it. . . .

From your book I've chosen the names Charles F. Mayer,¹ George, Adam and John Eckhart,² and the German miners to write about. They made local and state history, as they helped to develop the mines and the western part of our state especially the Georges Creek region above Cumberland and which the city of Frostburg is the heart of.

Some of this history I learned from my grandmother, Mary Martha Dudley Thompson, who was half German. . . . She came to Maryland with her father in the 1840's and helped him keep the Toll Gate on the National Pike between Cumberland and Frostburg. . . . Grandmother married Andrew Patrick Thompson of Eckhart Mines, a Civil War Veteran, a member of the organization Grand Army of the Republic and of the local order of the Knights of Labor.³ He was of Irish descent and a Catholic, also a

¹ Charles F. Mayer (1832-1904)—president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (1888-1896). In 1865, after a career with the mercantile firm of his uncle, Frederick Koenig, one of the large importing merchants of Baltimore, he became interested in the coal resources of Maryland and West Virginia. After helping to organize several coal companies, Mayer in 1877 was elected president of the Consolidation Coal Company and of the Cumberland and Pennsylvania Railroad. For a discussion of Mayer as president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad see Edward Hungerford, *The Story of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad*, (New York, 1928), II, 166-179.

² Eckhart, George, Adam and John—early German settlers in western Maryland who probably founded in the 1790's the community discussed in this letter. In 1814 or 1815, while the National Road was being constructed, coal was found here and the vicinity soon became a mining area.

³ For an excellent overall study of this important early labor union, see Norman J. Ware, *The Labor Movement in the United States: 1860-1895*, (New York, 1929). A monographic study of the organization in the Maryland coal fields is sorely needed.

very faithful follower of "John Barleycorn," as many a miner was and is.

Grandmother knew the Eckharts and often talked about them. . . . They, the Eckharts, settled and claimed a piece of land about two miles long on the west side of the old National Pike, Route 40 going west.⁴ . . . Now, the Eckhart Mines which had the best "Big Vein"⁵ of any mine in the region, and underlay all the Eckhart ground . . . the whole length of Eckhart Flat and the East end of Frostburg . . . belonged to the Eckharts by state grant or was claimed by squatters rights when they settled there. You would naturally think that the Eckharts and their heirs would have been rich, but they weren't. They had no deeds or papers to show that the land legally belonged to them. Therefore, the state of Maryland must not have recognized their claims to the ground and leased it to the Consolidation Coal Company⁶ without a by-your-leave, a thank you, or any compensation to these Germans for the settling and opening of the mine. . . .

The Consolidation Coal Company was chartered by the Maryland legislature in 1860, when Thomas Holliday Hicks was Governor of this state. Its organization was delayed by the Civil War, but by May, 1864 its capital stock was \$6,000,000 and it then acquired 6,890 acres of coal land [from

the Mount Savage Iron Company], together with machinery, tools and other property of every description, including the Cumberland and Pennsylvania Railroad, and equipment in exchange for 22,000 shares of capital stock. . . .

The Maryland Mining Company operated what is now known as the Eckhart Mines, east of Frostburg. It is probable that the Maryland Mining Company, later renamed the Cumberland Coal and Iron Company, was absorbed under that name by the Consolidation Coal Company in 1870.⁸ The early importance of this concern as a factor in the development of the Maryland coal deposits, is shown by the fact that in 1852 the area of the Pittsburgh seam owned by this company, namely 6,000 acres, exceeded by 100 percent the number of acres owned by the second most important [coal-mining] concern. Their mines yielded 3,130,282 tons of coal up to 1869 and was still going strong in 1882 when the first major strike of the region was called by the Knights of Labor for an increase of wages on each ton of coal dug.⁹

In 1870 the Consolidation Coal Company obtained 7,000 acres of coal lands which included the Astor, Old Eckhart and Hoffman mines, [through the absorption of] the Cumberland Coal and Iron Company whereby it obtained the above mines as well as the Eckhart Railroad, canal boats,

⁴ For an historical discussion of this famous road, the old National Pike, see Philip D. Jordan, *The National Road*, (Indianapolis, 1948).

⁵ "Big Vein" refers to a vein in the main bituminous coal field of Allegheny County. The whole extent of this area, called the eastern coal field of Allegheny, is about thirty miles in length by an average of four miles in breadth, making altogether one hundred and twenty square miles lying in Maryland. The "Big Vein," a fifteen foot vein, was the richest in the entire coal field; it gave Maryland coal its high reputation and constituted the chief source of revenue for most of the corporations in the area. According to an estimate made in 1854, the "Big Vein" contained 354,933,333 tons of coal; cf. J. Thomas Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, (Philadelphia, 1882), II, 1315-1316.

⁶ The Consolidation Coal Company, in 1877 when Charles F. Mayer became president, had a capital of \$10,250,000, owned over 7,000 acres of "Big Vein" coal lands, and 14,000 acres of smaller vein deposits; its lands constituted two-thirds of the George Creek deposit. Aside from the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, the Consolidation Coal Company was the wealthiest corporation in the state. The company was chartered in 1860 and organized in 1864 by the consolidation of several independent coal companies; it quickly became one of the largest and strongest in the country. Indeed, at the time of the strike discussed above, it possessed the largest area of semi-bituminous coal property held by any single corporation in the country; in 1880 the mines were capable of an output of 4,000 tons per day.

⁷ In May, 1864 the Consolidation Coal Company also acquired the Ocean Stream Coal Company and the Frostburg Coal Company, including their lands and properties in exchange for 38,000 shares of capital stock. Cf. Charles E. Beachley, *History of the Consolidation Coal Company*, (New York, 1934), 17, 23; Scharf, *op. cit.*, II, 1441.

⁸ W. L. Fairbanks and W. S. Hamill, *The Coal-Mining Industry of Maryland*, (Baltimore, 1932), 37. The Maryland Mining Company was chartered in 1828,

⁹ *Ibid.*, 37. The Pittsburgh seam was known throughout Maryland as the "Big Vein."

wharves at Cumberland and Baltimore, New York barges and other real estate. . . . By these transactions the company became the owner of five-sixths of the "Big Vein" coal in the region and of the outlets to it, namely, the Baltimore and Ohio, the Western Maryland, the Eckhart Branch, and the Cumberland and Pennsylvania Railroads.¹⁰

By 1877, the Consolidation had monopolized all of the best coal lands and owned all the railroad tracks in the Georges Creek region. They were the law and the very life of Frostburg and its surroundings. What they said and did was right and the little fellow had very little to say.

Charles F. Mayer of Baltimore was elected president of this large sprawling company in 1877 and a number of Baltimore merchants and capitalists . . . were made directors. Thus Baltimore financiers secured control of one of the largest bituminous coal producing companies in the country, and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad was automatically assured large revenues

from the coal trade of Allegany County.

Charles F. Mayer had keen business insight and had had previous experience in the Despard Coal Company of West Virginia.¹¹ He put these abilities and his energy into solving the Consolidation's problems. He had his office at 13 German Street, Baltimore, from 1878 to 1896 at which time he was president of the "Consol." . . . However, this man demanded much from the laboring man and gave him little in return. Most of the profits were turned back into mines and railroads after each investor had received a goodly share on his investment. His methods for breaking strikes were widely and long used. I do not think that he would be a very popular man today.

By 1881-82, Charles F. Mayer and the directors, namely: William Whitewrite 1872-1896,¹² George B. Warren 1872-1896,¹³ Robert Garrett 1876-1896,¹⁴ William F. Burns 1876-1896,¹⁵ Edward de Rose 1876-1877, 1880-1896,¹⁶ Galloway Cheston 1877-1882,¹⁷

¹⁰ The main line Cumberland and Pennsylvania Railroad extends from Cumberland to Piedmont, West Virginia. The Eckhart Branch Railroad extends from Cumberland to Eckhart, and other mines on the eastern edges of the coal fields. Both of these roads as well as the State *Line* Railroad, connecting the Cumberland and Pennsylvania Railroad with the Pennsylvania Railroad and thereby giving Allegany coal entrance to the New York market, were owned by the Consolidation Coal Company. Coal from Cumberland and Piedmont would find its way to market via the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad to Baltimore, or by the Chesapeake and Ohio canal to Georgetown and Alexandria. The Western Maryland Railroad had an office at Cumberland whence freight and cars were shipped over the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal to Williamsport, a distance of over one hundred miles, and then over the tracks of this railroad to tide-water at Baltimore, the eastern terminus of the road. The Georges Creek Railroad was another important outlet for Allegany County coal. Its line extended from the center of the Georges Creek coal field to the city of Cumberland.

¹¹ He helped organize this company in 1865 and served first as its vice-president and then president. In 1871, Mayer organized the coal mining and shipping firm of Mayor, Carroll and Company. Probably the Despard Coal Company was consolidated in this firm.

¹² William Whitewrite (1815-1898)—a prominent New York financier who served for many years as vice-president of the Union Trust Company. He was a director of a number of railroads and interested in numerous charities and fraternal groups in his native city.

¹³ George B. Warren—a former mayor (1861-62) of Troy, New York, and one of this community's prominent citizens. A director of the United National Bank and other organizations in his native city.

¹⁴ Robert Garrett (1847-1896)—banker and president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (1884-87) as was his father, John Work Garrett (1858-84). He was one of the incorporators of the American Union Telegraph Company which later became part of Western Union. He was also president and director of the Baltimore Drydock Company, and a director of several other Baltimore concerns. It was he who brought Frederick Law Olmstead to Baltimore to lay out Mt. Vernon and Washington Squares. Throughout his entire life he was interested in philanthropic and public spirited work. For a discussion of his career as president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, see Hungerford, *op. cit.*, II, 160-162.

¹⁵ William F. Burns (1820-1905)—president of the Eutaw Savings Bank in Baltimore and of the People's Gas Company until this firm was merged into the Consolidated Gas Company in 1880. He became a director of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad in 1880, and also served for many years as a director of the Western National Bank, the Safe Deposit and Trust Company, the Marietta and Cincinnati Railroad Company, among others.

¹⁶ Edward de Rose, (died 1916), a New York banker, a member of the Union League Club and other similar organizations must remain a most elusive individual since extended research has yielded no further information.

¹⁷ Galloway Cheston (1806-1881)—a prominent Baltimore merchant who served as a director of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, the Baltimore Savings Bank, the Farmers and Planters Bank, and the Peabody Fire Insurance Company. For many years he was president of the Board of Trustees of John Hopkins University, and a trustee of the Peabody Institute.

James Sloan Jr. 1882-1901,¹⁸ superintendents, mine bosses and company men broke the first major labor strike in the region. William T. Hamilton¹⁹ was Governor of Maryland at that time. I do not know who our representatives in the legislature²⁰ were at this time, but Dr. W. H. Ravenscraft²¹ was mayor of Frostburg. He was well known and liked. He was a member of the Frostburg Lodge 590, the Knights of Labor and the Young Men's Christian Association. . . . Frostburg was hard hit and suffered severe financial setbacks due to a five month strike caused by labor differences. But if one had lived in Eckhart at that time, he or she would have understood the labor difficulties. Most of the miners' houses were mere shells and there was no money to make them comfortable. Sickness was prevalent, and wages were so low that if one traded at company stores, which most did, one was always in debt to the "Consol" or to whichever store be bought from. The miners did not make enough to keep body and soul together, let alone dress themselves and their families. It was nip and tuck with the wolf at the door more than away. With such long hours in the mines, from daylight to dark, it is no wonder men, yes, and even the women, turned to drinking. Those were very hard times and if men wanted to rise above themselves they had to struggle and

fight for their rights. This the miners did through the Knights of Labor.

This organization originated in Philadelphia in 1869 as the result of efforts put forth by a garment cutter, Uriah Stephens. In the beginning the affairs of the Knights were garbed in secrecy, even the name of the society was never mentioned but was indicated by five stars. As the members increased in numbers, all secrecy was abandoned and a Declaration of Principles²² was made public. Labor, down to the present day, has formed its organizations on these basic principles which are part and parcel of the "Declaration of the Rights of Man." Through them the laboring man and his family improved their economic, moral, social and intellectual conditions. They also have enabled him to perform and understand his duties as a citizen. . . .

By 1877 when Mr. Mayer became president, the Knights had gained a good foothold in the Georges Creek region. By 1882 most of the "Consols" miners, man and boy were members.

The "Consol" prospered during the first three years of Mr. Mayer's presidency; markets for coal expanded, and by 1881 about 6,000 miners were employed. "Consol" railroads were kept busy. . . . The company was booming in every phase of its undertaking, but wages remained the same.²³

¹⁸ James Sloan Jr. (1833-1901)—president of Farmers and Merchants National Bank which was the depository for the State of Maryland. He was a member of the Finance Committee of the city of Baltimore and of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. He was also a director of several other corporations in his native city of Baltimore.—There were four other board members besides those cited in the text.

¹⁹ William T. Hamilton (1820-1888)—forty-first Governor of Maryland (1880-1884), a Democrat who previously served as a congressman (1848-54) and United States senator (1868-1874). He was a native of Hagerstown.

²⁰ B. L. Turner, Reuben Anthony, and D. D. Shearer—only Turner served in the 1882 session. The state senator representing Allegheny County at the time of the strike was John S. Combs; he was replaced at Annapolis at the next session of the assembly.

²¹ W. H. Ravenscraft—had also previously served as mayor in 1877. He was a prominent figure in many of the organizations participating in the social life of the community.

²² The Declaration of Principles of the Knights of Labor was adopted at the first session of the General Assembly in 1878. It called for progress in the direction of the better distribution of the "material comforts and mental and moral opportunities of mankind." In part the declaration stated that "the alarming development and aggressiveness of great capitalists and corporations, unless checked, will inevitably lead to the pauperization and degradation of the toiling masses." The Knights of Labor wanted to halt this development and remedy this evil through the organization of all laborers, and the direction of their united efforts toward measures that would eventually promulgate a new society based on cooperatives. The first step in the direction of this change "is to secure to the workers the full enjoyment of the wealth they create, sufficient leisure in which to develop their intellectual, moral and social facilities, all of the benefits of recreation, and pleasures of association; in a word, to enable them to share in the gains and honors of advancing civilization."

²³ During the decade of the 1870's, when beginning in 1873 and lasting for almost seven years, the nation experienced the most severe depression in its history to that year, the Cumberland and Pennsylvania

The Knights of Labor at this time proclaimed themselves to the public and working on the principle of "strike while the iron is hot" presented a contract to the company asking for an increase of wages in mining, higher rates for labor, better working conditions and many other stipulations, wages being the most important.

Mr. Mayer, the directors and investors held a meeting and decided to ignore this proposed contract, the first ever set before them. They gave out this statement to the Knights of Labor miners: the wage demands would make the cost of production much higher than in competing regions and that the rules and regulations set up by the Knights governing the conduct of work were as injurious to business as the higher prices set for labor. Altogether, he said, the whole contract was impossible, and to make his decision final he announced a reduction in wages. A ton of coal was now worth only twenty-five cents to the man who mined it, and that had to be good clean coal, free of slate and rock. A miner averaged between four and five tons per twelve hours by the pick and shovel method. This was the lowest wage ever payed in these parts for coal.²⁴ Labor was not only insulted because the company would not even sit down and talk the contract over, but to act in such a high-handed manner as to reduce wages when they had made so much money in the preceding years, that was piling insult upon injury and so labor got its back up, and with good reason and called a strike.

The Knights of Labor had two fine leaders at that time, Mr. John Chambers²⁵ of Frostburg who had lived in Eckhart until '81. He was District Master Workman of the Knights and came to Frostburg to start a grocery business. He was commissary for the Knights and went into debt \$40,000 for the miners during this strike and others. By the time of his death in 1917 he had been payed all but \$200. Men like him were the very backbone of the labor movement. . . .

Mr. Francis Brady was another leader that my grandmother talked about. He had studied for the priesthood, then decided to give it up for one reason or another. Uncle Eugene Brunner says he remembers his father telling him about an "Immortal Letter" that Brady sent to the President of the United States and to the Governor of Maryland. This letter told of the wrongs of a people working under total and unsupervised capitalism or rather, unfettered capitalism. Of course the "Consol" didn't like this. The letter also stated the rights of working or common people under state and national government. He wrote and he talked, and what he said made sense. The miners listened and acted.

The "Consol" paid no heed to the miners or their leaders. Neither did the miners receive any help or assistance from the outside. The company demanded the return of the miners and the unconditional control of their operations without any interference from the Knights. This was to be effective March 15, 1882. The Georges Creek miners had already made their

Railroad was shipping as much as two and a half million tons of coal per annum; while the yield of the Georges Creek region alone had been maintained at upwards of a million and a half per annum.—Cf. George W. Howard, *The Monumental City*, (Baltimore, 1880), 725-726.

²⁴ "Big Vein" coal was selling in Cumberland in 1881 at prices ranging from eighty cents to one dollar and a half per ton depending on the type of coal desired. A recent *History of Allegany County, Maryland*, by J. W. Thomas and T. J. C. Williams (Cumberland, 1923), Vol. I, p. 457, states that in 1882 the operators reduced the mining rate from sixty-five to fifty cents per ton, and that it was this reduction that brought about the strike. These figures differ from those paid by the Consolidation Coal Company as stated in this letter. However, Charles E. Beachley in his official history of the Consolidation Coal Company notes (p. 30) that in 1896 labor in the employ of the company was obtaining only forty to forty-five cents per ton. He further writes (p. 33): "Early in 1900 the company, with other operators in the Georges Creek region, increased the rate of mining wages from forty-five to fifty-five cents per gross ton . . . bringing wages to the highest level paid in the region at any time during the previous eighteen years."

²⁵ John B. Chambers (1845-1917)—settled in Frostburg in 1880 after working on the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, dealing in grain and coal, and serving in the Union Army. In 1881 he opened a grocery at Frostburg where he was identified with public interests throughout the remainder of his life.

decision. The result was a total suspension of operation during the most important time of the year. Consequently, coal production dropped from 844,368 tons in 1881 to but 472,048 in 1882. . . .²⁶

By June the "Consol," under the capable charge of Mr. Mayer, decided to do something about the strike of the Georges Creek miners. The miners were a stubborn lot. He'd show them and he did. Germany was in a bad state of depression at that period. This had affected the Bremen-Baltimore ship line that hauled freight for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad which used the "Consol" coal.²⁷ Men in that country were looking for a way to the good old U. S. A. and Mr. Mayer was looking for a way to break the strike. Mr. Mayer got the men to work the mine and some Germans and Central Europeans came to Eckhart Mine, Maryland, U. S. A.²⁸

In the meantime barracks had been set up near the mouth of the Old Eckhart mine in the center of Eckhart on the National Pike. Bunks, rough tables, chairs and a big cook stove had been hauled in. . . . The Knights called a meeting. They talked and surmised and anticipated what was coming, but could do nothing as the buildings and the high board fence around them were well guarded.

One day in June or July 1882, the Cumberland and Pennsylvania box cars stopped on the Eckhart siding and well-armed guards were stationed and waiting for them. The men, who were in the boxcars, were grouped and marched from the siding up the pike to the barracks. The next day they were taken into the mines on big

flat cars under the same guard. Among these Germans was my husband's grandfather Joseph Patton. He was called Old Jose by the old people and his son was called Young Jose. His children were born in Eckhart. Other names were Hoover, Keller, Groter, Seibert, Machinsky, Hess, Kammauf, Peterson, Madasky, Schriver, Bollinger, Hosraths, or Houserats as they came to be known, Linnenbroger, Tashenburger, Cobyock, and Decker—to mention but a few. They were unknowingly the strikebreakers of that strike, and were called "Hoodlums," "The 82ers" and "Box-car Hunkies" and were looked down upon by the people of this section. They were sturdy, stocky, ruddy faced men who smoked pipes and who didn't know A from B about mining. . . .

These Germans lived for a time a confined, slavelike existence. Knowing nothing of the language and ways of our country and, of course, being without money, this was their only course. The constitution of Maryland, Article 26, abolished slavery, saying in this way—that slavery shall not be reestablished in this state, having been abolished under the policy and authority of the United States.²⁹ Of course, Francis Brady knew this and also Article 6 of the Maryland constitution, stating that all persons invested with the legislative or executive powers of government are trustees of the public, and as such are accountable for their conduct; wherefore, whenever the ends of government are prevented and public liberty manifestly endangered and all means of redress are ineffectual, the people may and of a right ought to reform the old, or establish a new govern-

²⁶ Charles E. Beachley, *op. cit.*, 26.

²⁷ John Work Garrett, while president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (1858-1884), in order to restore Baltimore as a major port, entered into an agreement with the North German Lloyd steamship line. As a result of this agreement huge wharves were built at Locust Point to accommodate the ocean liners and the immigrant traffic. Storage elevators and warehouses were also built. Besides coal, the most important export, grain, sugar and coffee were the chief products handled on the wharves. Most of the Consolidated Coal Company coal was shipped from Locust Point, but the company also had at the Cumberland Basins of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, large piers for shipping coal to Georgetown.

²⁸ Most of the immigrant strike breakers were Germans; however, there were some Swedes and Slavs among them.

²⁹ In 1867 a new constitution, the fifth in the state's history, went into effect; Article 24, not Article 26 as stated in the letter, of the Declaration of Rights abolished slavery. Slavery was first officially abolished in Maryland by the Constitution of 1864.

ment. The doctrine of non-resistance against arbitrary power and oppression is absurd, slavish, and destructive of the good and happiness of mankind.³⁰

This last clause fitted exactly the conditions that existed in this mining region in '82 and at other periods of mining history. This power and oppression by the "Consol" of its miners demanded that they do something drastic about the situation as existed when the company had installed the Germans to mine the coal. There was no one to speak for the miners before the law and legislature of Maryland. . . .

Anyway, my grandmother said my grandmother said my grandfather, Patrick Thompson of Frog Hollow, Eckhart Mines, and a number of others under the leadership of Francis Brady of Washington Hollow, same place, decided at a meeting there was nothing else to do but blow the barracks and the "Hoodlums" all to hell and be done with it. They knew that labors' back was broken and their chances of advancement in living retarded for many years. Many of them would have no work and those who lived in company houses (grandpa didn't) would be turned out. The "Consol" men found out the miners' plans and every piece of property was doubly guarded and they went after the men who instigated this insurrection against the powerful "Consol." Francis Brady was a hunted man and escaped with his life from this section. The company had deputized its men to shoot to kill him. . . . He hid in the woods and mountains among friends who provided a horse and a little money as well as provisions so that he could get out safely.

The strike was broken and most of the miners went back to the "Consol." . . . They were required to give their word and promise in written statements to never uphold or belong to the Knights of Labor and to do what

they were bid under company management. Conditions of the miners were no better and, indeed, they were worse because of lowered wages and working with men who did not speak our tongue and who knew nothing of mining, thereby endangering life that much more in that dangerous occupation.³¹

After the Germans had learned to speak the language they asked the miners where the money came from. The old miners told them that it grew on trees, and they, the "Hoodlums," would go around looking and climbing trees and asking people they met which tree was it that the money grew on. Everyone laughed at them, finally they caught on.

These people lived in boxcars, shanties, and company houses. Most of them lived at a lower level than when they were in the old country. A lot of them were disgusted and dissatisfied with their way of life and as soon as they got a little money left the section.

By 1885 these immigrant Germans had formed a society known as "The Order of Saint Sebastian," and had badges or emblems with this inscription printed on them. . . . This organization held weekly socials that served beer, soft drinks, sandwiches and sweets. They had formed a bank and also held dances. Anyone could attend for a dollar. So it seems these people had an education back in the old country, musical and otherwise. They were a kindly, hospitable people when the oldtimers came to know them, and many became friendly and married with the local girls. But they were always known as the "Hoodlums" as they represented the bad times in which they came. My grandfather always remained bitter and resentful to them, for his heart and soul was wrapped up in the Knights of Labor. Many of the older folks were like this.

So you see, Professor Cunz, how

³⁰ Maryland Constitution of 1867, Declaration of Rights, Article 6.

³¹ The strike lasted from March 15 to August 28, 1882, when the defeated miners went back to work.

the Germans and their children determined the policy and development of western Maryland, especially this Georges Creek region and how the Consolidation Coal Company took millions of dollars from the people in labor and in the form of very low wages. The company gave nothing. Schools, churches, public buildings and hospitals were built by the miners and civic leaders locally. Of course

the company developed a good transportation system which we pay to use. There were many long and bitter strikes and the hard times caused by them were terrible.

Thank you so much for reading this long, long letter.

Sincerely

(Signed)

MRS. OLIVE PATTON