THE WORLD SEEMED TO AGREE THE 20th CENTURY WOULD BE THE AMERICAN CENTURY.

THIS ONE FRENCHMAN GOES INTO A PACKING PLANT AND HE LOOKS AROUND AND HE COMES OUT AND HE SAYS TO HIS FELLOW PASSENGERS WHEN HE COMES OUT, HE KEEPS A DIARY, HE SAYS--

"THESE PEOPLE ARE GOING TO CAPTURE THE WORLD." THESE OBSERVERS SAW THIS COUNTRY AS DIFFERENT.

THEY DIDN'T ACTUALLY LIKE IT.

THE GUY I WAS QUOTING FROM IS PAUL BOURGET.

HE'S A CONSERVATIVE AND HE HAS GREAT TREPIDATION ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENING.

THE SAME KIND OF TREPIDATION THAT JEFFERSON HAD.

HE SAID, "THIS IS COMING."

HE EVEN USES THE WORD--

"THE NEXT CENTURY WILL BE THE AMERICAN CENTURY"

"AND I DON'T WANT TO LIVE IN IT, BECAUSE I DON'T WANT TO LIVE IN A WORLD WHERE CAPITALISTS ARE HEROES."

"THEY'RE NOT HEROES TO EVERYONE"

NOT TO JOHN MITCHELL AND THE COAL MINERS WHO TOOK ON THE MIGHTIEST CAPITALIST IN THE WORLD, J.P. MORGAN.

THE MAKING OF THINGS GIVES RISE TO THE MAKING OF MONEY.

AND THE BLOODY CONFLICTS BETWEEN "CAPITAL AND LABOR"

TODAY ON A BIOGRAPHY OF AMERICA.

"THE 20th CENTURY
WILL BE AMERICAN.

"AMERICAN THOUGHT WILL DOMINATE IT."

"AMERICAN PROGRESS WILL GIVE IT COLOR AND DIRECTION."

"AMERICAN DEEDS WILL MAKE IT ILLUSTRIOUS."

BUT THE QUESTION WAS-- WHICH AMERICA WOULD DOMINATE THE NEW CENTURY?

IN THE DECADE LEADING UP TO 1900 CAPITAL AND LABOR CLASHED IN ENORMOUS STRUGGLES IN 1894 ALONE, THERE WERE 1,400 INDUSTRIAL STRIKES.

NEW YORK BANKERS.

67 01:03:25:18 01:03:27:09  THE NOVELIST THEODORE DREISER
68 01:03:27:11 01:03:30:17  HAD THOUGHT CHICAGO WOULD BE
69 01:03:30:19 01:03:31:24  OF THE 20th CENTURY.
70 01:03:31:26 01:03:33:23  THAT'S BEFORE
HE'D SEEN NEW YORK.
71 01:03:33:25 01:03:36:23  WHEN HE ARRIVED THERE
FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 1894
72 01:03:36:25 01:03:37:29  HE WAS OVERWHELMED.
73 01:03:38:01 01:03:40:09  NEW YORK WAS BIGGER,
AND MORE POWERFUL.
74 01:03:40:11 01:03:42:22  AND VASTLY MORE IMPERSONAL
_THAN CHICAGO.
75 01:03:42:24 01:03:45:04  AND THE ENTIRE CITY
HAD WHAT HE CALLED
76 01:03:45:06 01:03:46:25  A "CRUEL, MECHANICAL LOOK."
77 01:03:46:27 01:03:49:28  DREISER HAD GROWN UP A POOR KID
WHO WANTED TO BE RICH
78 01:03:50:00 01:03:52:24  SO ONE OF THE FIRST PLACES
HE WENT WAS WALL STREET.
79 01:03:52:26 01:03:54:23  THERE HE FOUND
WHAT HE DESCRIBED
80 01:03:54:25 01:03:56:25  AS "A SEETHING SEA
OF FINANCIAL TRICKERY
81 01:03:56:27 01:03:59:26  A REALM CROWDED WITH SHARK-LIKE
GENIUSES OF FINANCE."
82 01:03:59:28 01:04:01:22  THE STREET, LIKE THE CITY ITSELF
83 01:04:01:24 01:04:03:21  MADE HIM FEEL
SMALL, INSIGNIFICANT.
84 01:04:06:02 01:04:07:29  LATER, WRITING
ABOUT HIS EXPERIENCE
85 01:04:08:01 01:04:10:16  HE SPOKE FOR ORDINARY AMERICANS
OF THAT TIME.
86 01:04:10:18 01:04:12:23  "HOW COULD THE AVERAGE PERSON,"
HE SAID
87 01:04:12:25 01:04:15:09  "CONFRONT THESE WIZARDS
OR CONTEND WITH THEM?
88 01:04:15:11 01:04:16:24  "THEY WERE LIKE OGRES"
89 01:04:16:26 01:04:19:27  "WHO IN HIS WORDS "ATE THE LABOR
AND STORES OF LITTLE MEN."
90 01:04:19:29 01:04:21:25  THEN HE WENT
TO UPPER FIFTH AVENUE.
91 01:04:21:27 01:04:24:29  THERE WERE THE GAUDY PALACES OF
THE VANDERBILTS AND THE ASTORS.
92 01:04:25:01 01:04:27:03  THE WHOLE NEIGHBORHOOD,
DREISER THOUGHT
93 01:04:27:05 01:04:30:02  "SMACKED OF TRAVEL, THE SEA,
EUROPEAN CAPITALS, YACHTS
94 01:04:30:04 01:04:32:20  GREAT FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS
AND INDUSTRIES."
95 01:04:32:22 01:04:35:00  HERE WAS THE HOME
OF CAPITALIST ARROGANCE
96 01:04:35:02 01:04:36:26  AS WELL AS SELF-INDULGENCE.
97 01:04:40:14 01:04:42:24  DREISER FOUND THIS WORLD
THRILLING AND ALLURING
BUT HE WANTED TO KNOW BOTH THE BEST AND THE WORST
OF NEW YORK CITY
AND THIS TOOK HIM INTO RUN-DOWN NEIGHBORHOODS
WHERE AS A STRUGGLING WRITER HE WAS FORCED TO LIVE.
HE WOULD DESCRIBE THIS OTHER NEW YORK IN SISTER CARRIE
WHERE WE WATCH THE SLOW UNMAKING OF CARRIE'S LOVER, HURSTWOOD
A BIG MAN IN CHICAGO BUT A SINKING STONE IN NEW YORK.
WHERE OVER A MILLION PEOPLE LIVED IN DARK, AIRLESS TENEMENTS.
IN HIS NOVEL, MAGGIE, A GIRL OF THE STREETS
STEPHEN CRANE CAPTURED THESE CANKEROUS SLUMS WITH ALMOST PAINFUL ACCURACY.
BUT IT TOOK THE INVENTION OF FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY TO EXPOSE THIS HUMAN HELL TO A NATIONAL AUDIENCE.
RIIS CAME TO AMERICA FROM DENMARK IN 1870, AND SEVEN YEARS LATER LANDED A JOB AS A NEW YORK POLICE REPORTER.
RIIS' BEAT INCLUDED MULBERRY BEND, THE WORST NEIGHBORHOOD IN NEW YORK.
RIIS COULDN'T RECONCILE AMERICA AS A LAND OF OPPORTUNITY WITH WHAT HE SAW IN THE BEND AND HE WANTED TO SHOW COMFORTABLE PEOPLE WHAT THEY PREFERRED TO IGNORE.
HE WAS ABLE TO SHOCK PEOPLE, TRULY UNSETTLE THEM BECAUSE HE RECORDED THIS DISPIRITING PLACE IN PICTURES CALLED HOW THE OTHER HALF LIVES.
RIIS MADE HIS READERS FEEL AS IF THEY WERE THERE RIGHT AT HIS ELBOW, AS HE TOOK HIS FLASH PHOTOGRAPHS WITH HIS HAND-HELD
DETECTIVE CAMERA.
01:06:09:07 THE FLASH POWDER EXPLODED WITH SUCH SUDDEN FORCE
01:06:11:18 THAT IT LEFT MANY OF HIS SUBJECTS WITH LOOKS OF FRIGHT
01:06:14:09 AND SURPRISE ON THEIR FACES.
01:06:15:20 THEY WERE SHOCKED BECAUSE RIIS HAD COME AT THEM
01:06:18:00 ALMOST LIKE A MUGGER.
01:06:21:23 IT WAS CALLED FLASH-AND-RUN PHOTOGRAPHY.
01:06:23:29 RIIS WOULD GO ON ALL-NIGHT TOURS WITH THE COPS.
01:06:26:19 HE'D BURST INTO THE HAUNTS OF THE POOR
01:06:28:22 EXPLODE THE FLASH IN THEIR FACES, AND THEN RACE OFF.
01:06:31:20 BUT AS WE SEE HERE
01:06:32:29 SOME OF HIS MOST HEART-STABBING PHOTOGRAPHS
01:06:35:18 ARE CAREFULLY POSED SHOTS OF STREET KIDS
01:06:38:06 AND STRUGGLING FAMILIES.
01:06:39:21 RIIS WAS A BETTER PHOTOGRAPHER THAN HE WAS A WRITER
01:06:42:27 BUT SOME OF HIS PROSE PASSAGES
01:06:44:25 HAVE A GRIPPING "YOU ARE THERE" QUALITY.
01:06:47:24 HERE'S RIIS:
01:06:50:00 "HERE'S A DOOR, LISTEN!
01:06:51:14 "THAT SHORT, HACKING COUGH, THAT THIN, HELPLESS WAIL.
01:06:54:25 "WHAT DO THEY MEAN?
01:06:56:17 "IT'S THE SOUND OF ANOTHER CHILD DYING.
01:06:58:19 "WITH HALF A CHANCE, IT MIGHT HAVE LIVED
01:07:01:08 BUT THAT DARK BEDROOM KILLED IT."
01:07:07:26 BUT RIIS WASN'T FREE OF THE PREJUDICES OF HIS TIME.
01:07:10:15 JEWS, TO HIM, WERE GREEDY AND MATERIALISTIC
01:07:12:20 THE CHINESE, WHO HE LOATHED WERE, AS HE PUT IT,
01:07:14:15 BLACKS WERE BEST FIT FOR MENIAL JOBS
01:07:16:06 A "MENACE TO SOCIETY."
01:07:18:11 FOR BEGGARS, THEY SHOULD BE LEFT TO STARVE
01:07:21:01 AS FOR JANE ADDAMS
01:07:24:25 RIIS'S WORK LEAD TO TENEMENT HOUSE REFORM.
01:07:26:08 HE TRIED TOO HARD TO AMERICANIZE IMMIGRANTS
TO GET THEM TO GIVE UP WHAT HE CALLED "THEIR ETHNIC CLANNISHNESS."
THAT'S WHY HE HATED THE CHINESE.
THEM ON TOO STRONGLY TO WHAT THEY WERE.
RIIS ALSO TRIED TO STEER IMMIGRANTS FROM CORRUPT POLITICAL BOSSES.
IT'S TRUE-- ALMOST EVERY PRECINCT CAPTAIN OF TAMMANY HALL
NEW YORK'S DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL MACHINE WAS OUT TO ENRICH HIMSELF.
BUT THESE POLITICAL THIEVES PROVIDED JOBS AND SERVICES IMMIGRANTS DESPERATELY NEEDED HELPED TO CHANGE WHO THEY WERE.
BY 1900, TOUGH-MINDED JOURNALISTS LIKE LINCOLN STEFFENS AND IDA TARBELL WERE WAKING UP TO THE FACT THAT POLITICIANS NO LONGER RAN AMERICA, BIG BUSINESS DID.
TAMMANY'S POWER WAS NOTHING COMPARED TO THAT OF MORGAN'S.
MORGAN WAS PHYSICALLY IMPOSING-- A MASSIVE MAN WITH A FEROCIOUS GLARE AND A PURPLE, HIDEOUSLY DISFIGURED NOSE THE RESULT OF A CHILDHOOD SKIN DISEASE.
HE SMOKED HAVANA CIGARS SO BIG, THEY WERE CALLED HERCULES' CLUBS AND HE HAD A TREMENDOUS PHYSICAL EFFECT ON PEOPLE.
ONE MAN SAID THAT A VISIT FROM MORGAN LEFT HIM FEELING "AS IF A GALE HAD BLOWN THROUGH THE HOUSE."
UNLIKE CARNEGIE, MORGAN WAS BORN RICH.
HE GREW UP IN A PROMINENT BANKING FAMILY AND GOT HIS START IN HIS FATHER'S LONDON BUSINESS AT THE AGE OF 19.
AFTER THE CIVIL WAR, MORGAN BEGAN INVESTING IN RAILROADS AND SOON RULED THE TRANSPORTATION EMPIRE.
HE DIDN'T BUILD ROADS;
HE TOOK OVER OR CONSOLIDATED, UNDER HIS CONTROL
RAILROADS THAT HAD RUN INTO FINANCIAL TROUBLE
A PROCESS THAT CAME TO BE CALLED "MORGANIZATION."
MORGAN WAS A DIFFERENT TYPE OF CAPITALIST THAN ANDREW CARNEGIE.
CARNEGIE BUILT A BUSINESS AND LOVED COMPETITION.
MORGAN TOOK OVER OTHER PEOPLE'S BUSINESSES
CARNEGIE BUILT A BUSINESS AND LOVED COMPETITION.
MORGAN TOOK OVER OTHER PEOPLE'S BUSINESSES
THE BOOM AND BUST AMERICAN ECONOMY
TO PREVENT PRICE WARS BETWEEN BUSINESS RIVALS
FROM DESTROYING BIG CORPORATIONS AND UNHINGING THE ECONOMY.
MORGAN'S PROGRAM WAS COMPATIBLE WITH MANY CORPORATE TITANS
WHO WANTED TO ABSORB THEIR COMPETITION
JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER HAD DONE THIS
BY CREATING THE GREATEST MONOPOLY OF THEM ALL
THE STANDARD OIL COMPANY WHICH BROUGHT ORDER TO A WILDLY CHAOTIC INDUSTRY.
BUT NO OTHER CAPITALISTS IN THE COUNTRY, EXCEPT CARNEGIE
HAD MONEY TO FORM SUCH GIGANTIC COMBINATIONS.
SO EMPIRE-BUILDING INDUSTRIALISTS WERE DRAWN INTO THE ARMS OF MORGAN
AND OTHER FORMIDABLE WALL STREET BANKERS.
THIS BEGAN THE GREAT CORPORATE DRIFT TO NEW YORK.
POWERFUL CAPITALISTS LIKE PHILIP ARMOUR, THE MEAT KING
AND COLLIS HUNTINGTON, THE RAILROAD KING
MOVED TO NEW YORK IN THE 1890s
TO BE NEAR BIG INVESTMENT HOUSES LIKE MORGAN AND COMPANY
LEHMAN BROTHERS AND KUHN, LOEB.
BY 1895, NEW YORK WAS THE HEADQUARTER CITY
FOR AMERICAN CORPORATIONS.
ALMOST HALF
THE AMERICAN MILLIONAIRES

228 01:10:13:23 01:10:16:05 LIVED IN THE NEW YORK METROPOLITAN REGION

229 01:10:16:07 01:10:18:28 AND MORGAN CONTROLLED A WALL STREET SYNDICATE

230 01:10:19:00 01:10:21:18 THAT THE FINANCIAL WRITER JOHN MOODY CALLED


232 01:10:25:11 01:10:28:06 AT THE PEAK OF HIS POWERS, IN THE EARLY 1900s

233 01:10:28:08 01:10:30:16 MORGAN DOMINATED A HUNDRED CORPORATIONS

234 01:10:30:18 01:10:32:22 WITH MORE THAN 22 BILLION IN ASSETS.

235 01:10:32:24 01:10:34:00 AMONG THEM WAS THE FIRST BILLION-DOLLAR CORPORATION IN HISTORY--

236 01:10:34:02 01:10:36:21 U.S. STEEL.

237 01:10:36:23 01:10:37:26 MORGAN HAD FORMED THIS GIANT STEEL TRUST IN 1901

238 01:10:39:14 01:10:42:10 OUT OF MILLS HE'D PURCHASED FROM CARNEGIE

239 01:10:44:26 01:10:46:13 IN A COLOSSAL CASH DEAL.

240 01:10:46:15 01:10:50:12 THIS TRANSACTION MARKED THE HIGH TIDE OF BANKER POWER IN AMERICA.

241 01:10:50:14 01:10:53:16 MORGAN'S DEFENDERS SAID HE NEVER ABUSED HIS POWER.

242 01:10:53:18 01:10:54:27 BUT THE QUESTION WAS-- SHOULD ANY PERSON, IN A DEMOCRACY, HAVE THIS MUCH POWER?

243 01:10:54:29 01:10:58:12 MORGAN SAW HIMSELF AS A FORCE FOR THE GOOD.

244 01:10:58:14 01:11:01:12 HIS BANKS, HE THOUGHT, HAD HELPED TO TRANSFORM AMERICA

245 01:11:01:14 01:11:03:27 INTO THE WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL NATION

246 01:11:03:29 01:11:07:13 AND PRIVATELY, SECRETLY, HE GAVE MONEY TO THE URBAN POOR.

247 01:11:07:15 01:11:10:04 HIS PARTNERS CLAIMED HE COULD HAVE MADE A LOT MORE MONEY THAN HE DID.

248 01:11:10:22 01:11:13:06 WELL, THAT'S TRUE

249 01:11:13:08 01:11:14:12 BUT ONLY BECAUSE HE LIVED A LIFE OF SELF-INDULGENCE

250 01:11:14:14 01:11:16:11 SPENDING TIME COLLECTING PAINTINGS, RARE BOOKS, TAPESTRIES, TREMENDOUS HOUSES, OCEAN-GOING YACHTS

251 01:11:16:13 01:11:17:27 AND HIGH-SPRITED MISTRESSES.

252 01:11:17:29 01:11:19:22 WHEN MORGAN DIED IN 1913 HE HAD AN ESTATE OF $80 MILLION, THAT'S 1.2 BILLION TODAY

253 01:11:19:24 01:11:22:28 AS COMPARED TO ROCKEFELLER'S WORTH OF NEARLY A BILLION

254 01:11:23:00 01:11:26:11 THAT'S 190 BILLION TODAY.
260 01:11:41:28 01:11:44:11 WHEN ROCKEFELLER READ THIS IN THE PAPER
261 01:11:44:13 01:11:45:19 HE SUPPOSEDLY SAID
262 01:11:45:21 01:11:48:08 "AND TO THINK, HE WASN'T EVEN A RICH MAN."
263 01:11:48:10 01:11:50:26 BUT ROCKEFELLER'S REMARK MISSES THE POINT.
264 01:11:50:28 01:11:54:03 MORGAN'S POWER WASN'T IN THE NUMBER OF HIS MILLIONS
265 01:11:54:05 01:11:56:07 BUT IN THE BILLIONS HE CONTROLLED.
266 01:11:56:09 01:11:58:08 SENATOR BEVERIDGE CALLED MORGAN
267 01:11:58:10 01:12:00:20 "THE GREATEST CONSTRUCTIVE FINANCIER"
268 01:12:00:22 01:12:03:29 IN THE HISTORY OF MANKIND," BUT NOT EVERYBODY AGREED.
269 01:12:04:01 01:12:07:21 IN 1900, THE GREATEST OPPONENT OF CORPORATE CONSOLIDATION
270 01:12:07:23 01:12:10:08 WAS NEBRASKA'S WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN.
271 01:12:10:10 01:12:13:28 BRYAN WAS PREPARING FOR ANOTHER RUN FOR THE PRESIDENCY
272 01:12:14:00 01:12:17:05 AGAINST THE REPUBLICAN INCUMBENT WILLIAM MCKINLEY
273 01:12:17:07 01:12:19:27 WHOSE 1896 CAMPAIGN MORGAN HAD BANKROLLED.
274 01:12:19:29 01:12:21:26 TO BRYAN, MORGAN WAS A PREDATOR
275 01:12:21:28 01:12:25:08 WHOSE BANKS AND CORPORATIONS WERE DESTROYING COMPETITION
276 01:12:25:10 01:12:28:11 MANIPULATING PRICES, BUYING AND SELLING POLITICIANS.
277 01:12:28:13 01:12:31:13 WHILE SEVERAL HUNDRED MILLIONAIRES LIVED IN LUXURY
278 01:12:31:15 01:12:35:18 80% OF AMERICAN FAMILIES EARNED LESS THAN $500 A YEAR.
279 01:12:35:20 01:12:38:03 IN NO OTHER COUNTRY IN THE WORLD
280 01:12:38:05 01:12:40:27 WAS SUCH POWER HELD BY MEN OF WEALTH.
281 01:12:40:29 01:12:42:11 IN HIS CAMPAIGN
282 01:12:42:13 01:12:44:22 BRYAN HIT HARD ON THIS THEME OF CORPORATE INJUSTICE
283 01:12:44:24 01:12:46:20 BUT HIS MESSAGE REACHED VERY FEW PEOPLE
284 01:12:46:22 01:12:49:02 IN THE COAL FIELDS OF NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA.
285 01:12:50:21 01:12:53:10 THERE, MINERS AND THEIR FAMILIES LIVED LIKE SERFS
286 01:12:53:12 01:12:56:11 IN AN INDUSTRIAL FIEFDOM THAT MORGAN HAD HELPED CREATE.
287 01:12:56:13 01:12:59:02 THE COAL BARONS CONTROLLED POLITICS AND THE PRESS
288 01:12:59:04 01:13:02:03 AND HAD THEIR OWN POLICE FORCE AND COMPANY-OWNED TOWNS
289 01:13:02:05 01:13:04:14 AND THEY SMASHED EVERY ATTEMPT BY THE WORKERS
290 01:13:04:16 01:13:07:00 GOING BACK HALF A CENTURY,
TO FORM A LABOR UNION.

THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTION WASN'T A FACT OF LIFE IN THE COAL TOWNS OF NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA.

HERE, COAL WAS KING. A SINGLE INDUSTRY, HARD COAL—ANTHRACITE—DOMINATED THE REGION AND HERE THE INDUSTRIALIZING PROCESS ASSUMED ITS MOST NAKEDLY BRUTAL FORM.

IN LESS THAN A GENERATION AN UNSPOILED WILDERNESS WAS MADE OVER INTO A WASTELAND OF ACID-POLLUTED STREAMS AND SMOKE-SCARRED TOWNS.

WORKERS WERE TREATED EVEN WORSE THAN THE LAND. DEEP IN THE COAL SEAMS, MEN AND BOYS WORKED IN TOTAL DARKNESS AT THE MOST DANGEROUS JOB OF THE DAY.

ACCIDENTS WERE ALMOST A WAY OF LIFE AND FEW MINERS PAST THE AGE OF 40 FAILED TO CONTRACT BLACK LUNG FROM INHALING THE DUST OF THE MINES.

BLACK LUNG WAS—STILL IS—INCURABLE AND SLOWLY KILLS ITS VICTIMS.

NO OTHER AMERICAN INDUSTRY INFlicted MORE DESTRUCTION ON MAN AND THE ENVIRONMENT THAN ANTHRACITE MINING.

YET CLEAN-BURNING ANTHRACITE WAS INDISPENSABLE TO THE INDUSTRIALIZING PROCESS. IT WAS USED TO MAKE IRON, TO POWER FACTORIES TO RUN LOCOMOTIVES.

AND IT WAS THE NORTHEAST'S CHIEF DOMESTIC HEATING FUEL.

AND ALMOST ALL OF THIS COAL, ALMOST ALL THIS ANTHRACITE WOULD BE PARALYZED OR THROWN INTO CHAOS PARTICULARLY IN WINTERTIME.

MAYBE THE MINERS HAD MORE POWER
THAN THEY THOUGHT.

THE ANTHRACITE INDUSTRY HAD EVOLVED IN THE CLASSIC CAPITALIST PATTERN FROM SMALL FIRMS OPERATED BY INDIVIDUAL ENTREPRENEURS THROUGH BIG, FAMILY-OWNED COMPANIES TO GIANT CONGLOMERATES.

THE OWNERS OF THE MAJOR COAL-HAULING RAILROADS BEGAN BUYING UP HUGE AMOUNTS OF COAL LANDS MERGING INTO INDUSTRY-WIDE COMBINATIONS UNDER MORGAN'S GUIDANCE AND WITH MORGAN'S MONEY.

BY 1900, MORGAN'S RAILROAD CARTEL CONTROLLED ALMOST THE ENTIRE REGION.

MEANWHILE, MINING WENT ON MUCH THE WAY IT HAD FOR ALMOST A CENTURY.

THERE'S NEVER BEEN A MORE PERILOUS OCCUPATION.

THE MINERS WERE SOMETIMES A THOUSAND FEET AND MORE UNDERGROUND AND THERE WERE DEADLY GASES THERE THAT COULD KILL IN A MINUTE OR SET OFF TREMENDOUS EXPLOSIONS AND FIRES.

THERE WERE RATS ALL OVER THE PLACE AND THE TIMBER THAT HELPED HOLD UP THE ROOFS OF THE TUNNELS WAS CREAKING CONSTANTLY UNDER THE TREMENDOUS WEIGHT--

A THOUSAND FEET OF EARTH AND ROCK RIGHT ABOVE THE MINERS.

AND EVERY DAY THESE MINERS WERE DYNAMITING UNDERNEATH THAT MOUNTAIN OF ROCK.

SOMETIMES, THAT MOUNTAIN COLLAPSED AND TRAPPED MEN UNDERGROUND OR FLATTENED THEM TO THE GROUND LIKE PANCAKES

SO THE BODIES HAD TO BE SCRAPED UP WITH SHOVELS.

ON AVERAGE,
THREE ANTHRACITE MINERS

01:15:47:28 01:15:49:20 WERE KILLED EVERY TWO DAYS.

01:15:49:22 01:15:51:09 WHEN A MINER WAS KILLED

01:15:51:11 01:15:54:10 HIS BROKEN BODY WAS DEPOSITED

01:15:54:12 01:15:56:22 ON THE FRONT PORCH OF HIS HOUSE.

01:15:56:24 01:15:58:28 THE REMAINS OF MEN ANNIHILATED

IN MINE BLASTS

01:15:59:00 01:16:01:10 WERE BROUGHT HOME

IN COFFEE CANS.

01:16:01:12 01:16:03:13 MINING WAS UNLIKE

OTHER INDUSTRIAL WORK

01:16:03:15 01:16:06:03 AND MINERS CONSIDERED THEMSELVES

A SPECIAL BREED

01:16:06:05 01:16:08:10 DISTINCT FROM FACTORY WORKERS.

01:16:08:12 01:16:11:09 ANTHRACITE MINING WAS

A CRAFT OR COTTAGE INDUSTRY

01:16:11:11 01:16:14:16 REQUIRING HAND LABOR

AND SKILLED WORKERS.

01:16:14:18 01:16:16:29 MINERS WORKED IN CREWS

OF TWO OR FOUR MEN

01:16:17:01 01:16:18:26 AND THESE CREWS WORKED

ON THEIR OWN.

01:16:18:28 01:16:20:22 CLOSE SUPERVISION WAS IMPOSSIBLE


PASSENGES AND TUNNELS.

01:16:24:00 01:16:27:15 THIS KIND OF WORK BRED WHAT'S

CALLED "THE MINER'S FREEDOM."

01:16:27:17 01:16:29:08 MINERS WERE FIERCELY

INDEPENDENT.

01:16:29:10 01:16:31:25 THEY WERE THEIR OWN BOSSES AND

THEY DIDN'T TAKE ORDERS WELL.

01:16:31:27 01:16:33:28 YET THEIR INDEPENDENCE

WAS BALANCED

01:16:34:00 01:16:36:08 BY A STRONG SENSE

OF WORKER SOLIDARITY

01:16:36:10 01:16:39:21 BECAUSE, UNDERGROUND, THEY

HAD TO DEPEND ON ONE ANOTHER.

01:16:42:03 01:16:44:16 BECAUSE ANTHRACITE SEAMS

ARE SHARPLY PITCHED

01:16:44:18 01:16:46:17 MEN USUALLY HAD

TO CLIMB TO THEIR WORK

01:16:46:19 01:16:48:13 THROUGH NARROW,

90-DEGREE PASSES.

01:16:48:15 01:16:51:19 CARRYING CAPS AND POWDER,

PICKS AND SHOVELS, AXES

01:16:51:21 01:16:53:20 AND LUMBER FOR SHORING UP

THE ROOF.

01:16:53:22 01:16:55:18 AS THEY INCHED AHEAD,

THEY CHECKED

01:16:55:20 01:16:57:28 FOR DEADLY GASES

WITH THEIR SAFETY LAMPS.

01:16:58:00 01:17:00:10 BY THE TIME THEY REACHED

THE COAL FACE

01:17:00:12 01:17:03:05 THEY WERE OFTEN ON THE DOWNSIDE

OF THEIR SHIFT.
AT THE FACE, THEY DRILLED HOLES IN THE WALL OF COAL.

FILLED THEM WITH BLASTING POWER, RAN A FUSE TO A FIREBOX.

AND BLEW THE COAL AWAY FROM THE SEAM.

THEN THEY LOADED IT ON CARS.

AND MULES WOULD PULL THE CARS TO THE SURFACE.

THE AVERAGE MINER MADE ABOUT $400 A YEAR-- NOT ENOUGH TO SUPPORT A FAMILY.

SO HIS WIFE HAD TO TAKE IN BOARDERS AND HIS SONS HAD TO LEAVE SCHOOL AT THE AGE OF EIGHT OR NINE.

TO WORK IN A PLACE CALLED A "BREAKER--" A HUGE FACTORY FOR PROCESSING COAL.

THE BOYS WOULD WORK, SITTING DOWN, IN STEP-LIKE CHUTES.

AND ROCK WITH THEIR BARE HANDS FOR 45 CENTS A DAY.

AND THEY'D PICK OUT THE SLATE AND THE WHOLE BUILDING WOULD SHAKE.

THE COAL WOULD COME ROARING DOWN AND THE BOYS WOULD WORK, SITTING DOWN, IN STEP-LIKE CHUTES.

THE BOYS WOULD WORK, SITTING DOWN, IN STEP-LIKE CHUTES.

THE DUST WAS SO THICK THE BOYS COULDN'T BREATHE AND THEY'D WEAR HANDKERchieFS OVER THEIR NOSES AND MOUTH AND CHEW TOBACCO TO KEEP FROM CHOKING.

BEHIND THEM, SUPERVISING THE WORK WERE FOREMEN WITH CLUBS AND LEATHER WHIPS.

AT AGE TEN OR 11, THE BREAKER BOYS GRADUATED FROM THE BREAKER AND WENT INTO THE EARTH WITH THEIR FATHERS.

THERE THEY WORKED UNTIL THEY DIED A NATURAL DEATH OR CONTRACTED BLACK LUNG.

WHEN THEIR LUNGS FILLED UP WITH COAL DIRT THEY WENT BACK TO WHERE THEY STARTED, TO THE BREAKER.

AS THE MINERS USED TO SAY: THE ONLY HOPE FOR CHANGE WAS A UNION.

IN THE FALL OF 1899,
JOHN MITCHELL

THE NEW 29-YEAR-OLD PRESIDENT
OF THE UNITED MINE WORKERS

ENTERED ANTHRACITE COUNTRY
WITH A GROUP OF ORGANIZERS.

MITCHELL’S UNION WAS PREPARING
FOR AN ALL-OUT LABOR WAR

A STRUGGLE THAT WOULD SET THE
COUNTRY’S LARGEST LABOR UNION
AGAINST THE MIGHTIEST
FINANCIAL COMBINATION

OF AMERICAN CAPITALISM.

THE CORE ISSUE WAS THE RIGHT
OF MINERS TO ORGANIZE.

MITCHELL KNEW
WHAT HE WAS IN FOR.

IN THE PAST, ONE UNION DRIVE
AFTER THE OTHER HAD FAILED

BECAUSE OF COMPANY OPPOSITION
BUT ALSO BECAUSE WORKERS
THEMSELVES

WERE BITTERLY DIVIDED
ALONG ETHNIC LINES.

EARLIER IN THE CENTURY,
IT WAS THE IRISH

AGAINST THE WELSH
AND THE ENGLISH.

NOW IT WAS ENGLISH-SPEAKING
MINERS

MOSTLY IRISH, WELSH AND GERMANS,
AGAINST NEW IMMIGRANTS

SOME OF THEM ITALIAN,
BUT MOST OF THEM SLAVS

AN ALL-EMBRACING TERM
USED BY OTHER MINERS

TO INCLUDE POLES, SLOVAKS,
LITHUANIANS, CROATIANS, SERBS

AND OTHER EASTERN EUROPEAN
CATHOLICS.

THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING MINERS
BELIEVED

THAT THESE NEW IMMIGRANTS HAD
BEEN BROUGHT BY THE COMPANIES

TO DEPRESS WAGES.

AND SOME OF MITCHELL’S
ORGANIZERS BELIEVED

THEMSELVES

SO DOCILE AND EASILY LED.

SO WHEN TRAINLOADS OF SLAVS
ARRIVED IN THE REGION

THEY WERE GIVEN
A GREAT AMERICAN WELCOME.

THEY WERE STONED
BY IRISH MINERS.

TO PROTECT THEMSELVES
SLAVS DEVELOPED AN INTENSE COMMUNALISM BANDING TOGETHER FOR MUTUAL PROTECTION AND COMFORT. THEY ORGANIZED MUTUAL AID SOCIETIES TO BURY THEIR DEAD IN DIGNITY... YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS TO INSTILL ETHNIC PRIDE IN THEIR KIDS... SAVINGS AND LOAN SOCIETIES TO HELP ONE ANOTHER PURCHASE PROPERTY. AND ON SUNDAYS, THEY GATHERED TOGETHER AS A COMMUNITY IN ETHNIC FEASTS AND PICNICS LETTING OFF STEAM WITH A WILD DRINK THEY CALLED "POLINKI." THAT'S BEER LACED WITH WHISKEY AND HOT PEPPERS. CATHOLIC PRIESTS IN THE ANTHRACITE REGION SAID MASS IN THE NATIONAL LANGUAGES OF THEIR PARISHIONERS AND CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS HELPED PRESERVE SLAVIC CULTURE GETTING THESE PEOPLE TO ACT AND THINK TOGETHER AS A GROUP-- THE ONLY WAY TO BREAK DOWN PATERNALISM. WHEN THEY WERE STRONG TOGETHER, THESE MINERS WERE READY TO TAKE ON THE BOSSES. AN INCIDENT IN 1897 AT A TOWN CALLED LATTIMER SHOWED WHAT THEY WERE MADE OF. THE SLAVS IN THAT PART OF THE REGION TOOK THE LEAD IN A SMALL STRIKE AGAINST COALOWNERS. 300 STRIKING WORKERS MARCHING FROM MINE TO MINE SHUT THEM DOWN. THEY WALKED PEACEFULLY, BEHIND A MINER CARRYING AN AMERICAN FLAG. BUT WHEN THEY GOT TO LATTIMER THEY WERE MET BY THE LOCAL SHERIFF AND 150 DEPUTIES ARMED WITH WINCHESTERS, WITH STEEL-PIERCING BULLETS. WE'LL NEVER KNOW WHO GAVE THE ORDER TO FIRE. BUT IT WAS A MASSACRE. AT LEAST 19 MINERS WERE KILLED AND 32 WOUNDED. DEPUTIES WERE HEARD SHOUTING, "SHOOT THE SONS OF BITCHES!"
THEN THESE DEPUTIES BOARDED TROLLEYS LAUGHING AND BRAGGING ABOUT HOW MANY SO-CALLED "HUNKIES" THEY'D TAKEN DOWN.

IN A HIGHLY PREJUDICED TRIAL A JURY DECLARED ALL THE DEPUTIES INNOCENT.

THE LATTIMER MASSACRE SPARKED A NEW LEVEL OF MILITANCY--- AMONG THE WOMEN, ESPECIALLY.

ONE SLAVIC WOMAN, "BIG MARY SEPTAK" ORGANIZED A BAND OF 150 WOMEN AND TRIED TO KEEP THE STRIKE GOING AFTER THE MEN STARTED BACK TO WORK.

ARMED WITH ROLLING PINS AND FIRE POKERS AND CARRYING THEIR CHILDREN IN THEIR ARMS BIG MARY'S "ARMY OF AMAZONS," AS THEY WERE CALLED BY THE PRESS BATTLED COAL POLICE AND SHERIFF'S DEPUTIES BEFORE THEY WERE BROKEN UP BY THE STATE MILITIA.

THESE PEOPLE-- THE MEN AS WELL AS THE WOMEN-- WERE CONSERVATIVES, BUT IT WAS THEIR CONSERVATISM THAT FUELED THEIR INSURGENCY, IRONICALLY-- THEIR DESIRE TO HOLD ON TO WHAT THEY HAD.

SLAVIC MILITANCY GAVE MITCHELL HOPE. HIS ORGANIZERS ALSO NOTICED THAT MINING ITSELF WAS BRINGING THE MEN TOGETHER. IF THERE WAS A MELTING POT IN AMERICA IT WAS AT THE BOTTOM OF A THOUSAND-FOOT MINE SHAFT WHERE 26 NATIONALITIES WORKED IN WHAT WAS A DEMOCRACY OF MISERY.

MITCHELL SKILLFULLY BUILT ON THIS. AS HIS MEN WENT THROUGH THE REGION THEY HAD ONE MESSAGE: IF YOU'RE IRISH YOU DON'T HAVE TO DRINK WITH SLOVAKS BUT YOU WORK WITH THEM.

AND TO GET ANY IMPROVEMENTS
AT THE MINE SITE

YOU GOT TO BURY YOUR HATRED AND JOIN WITH THESE PEOPLE IN A COMMON EFFORT.

OTHERWISE, YOU'RE JUST CANNON FODDER FOR THE CAPITALISTS.

EVERYWHERE MITCHELL WENT, HE HAD THE SAME MESSAGE:

MITCHELL WORE A JEWELLED RING AND A PRINCE ALBERT SUIT

BUT THE MINERS LIKED HIM AND THEY TRUSTED HIM.

HE WAS ONE OF THEM, A FORMER MINER FROM ILLINOIS.

TO CATHOLIC MINERS, MITCHELL LOOKED LIKE A PRIEST

WITH HIS LONG FROCK COAT BUTTONED UP TO THE TOP

AND HIS HIGH WHITE COLLAR.

"JOHNNY DA MITCH,"

THEY CALLED HIM AFFECTIONATELY.

MITCHELL'S ORGANIZERS STARTED TO MAKE PROGRESS

BUT THE OWNERS REFUSED TO DEAL WITH HIM OR HIS UNION.

SO HE ROLLED THE DICE

AND CALLED FOR A STRIKE ON SEPTEMBER 17, 1900.

AT THAT TIME, ONLY 9,000 OF MORE THAN 140,000 ANTHRACITE MINERS HAD JOINED THE UNION.

ON THE MORNING OF THE STRIKE, WHEN THE WORK WHISTLE BLEW

90,000 MEN STAYED OUT OF THE MINES THAT FIRST DAY.

WITHIN A WEEK, ONLY 9,000 WERE STILL WORKING.

McKinley and his running mate, the New York Governor, Theodore Roosevelt, were running on the theme...
OF AMERICAN PROSPERITY.

THEIR SLOGAN WAS "A FULL DINNER PAIL" FOR THE AMERICAN WORKER.

AND SWING THE ELECTION TO BRYAN.

BRYAN BEGAN HITTING ON THE UNDERLYING ISSUE OF THE STRIKE:

WHO OWNS AMERICA--THE PEOPLE OR THE PLUTOCRATS?

THEN, WHEN THE PRESS STARTED SYMPATHETICALLY TO REPORT THE STRIKE

MCKINLEY HAD TO DO SOMETHING.

SO HE SENT HIS FRIEND AND POLITICAL MANAGER, MARK HANNA

TO MEET WITH THE MINEOWNERS.

WHEN THEY REFUSED TO BUDGE

HE WENT OVER THEIR HEADS TO J.P. MORGAN

AND MORGAN GOT THEM TO AGREE TO A TEN PERCENT WAGE INCREASE

BUT THEY WOULD NOT ACCEPT UNION RECOGNITION.

THAT'S ABOUT ALL MITCHELL THOUGHT HE COULD GET, HOWEVER

FOR THE MINERS WERE STARVING

AND WOULD SOON BE FORCED TO RETURN TO WORK.

THE STRIKE WAS OVER.

MCKINLEY WON THE ELECTION, MORGAN WAS PLEASED.

MITCHELL KNEW THAT A BIGGER BATTLE WAS AHEAD

AS THE COMPANIES BEGAN STOCKPILING COAL IN PREPARATION

FOR A COMING FIGHT OVER UNION RECOGNITION.

BUT AS HE LEFT ANTHRACITE COUNTRY THAT FALL

HE WAS A HERO.

HIS UNION HAD WON WHAT HE DESCRIBED

AS "THE MOST REMARKABLE CONTEST BETWEEN LABOR AND CAPITAL

IN THE INDUSTRIAL HISTORY OF OUR NATION."

AS HE RODE OUT OF THE TOWN OF HAZLETON

EIGHT HOURS AFTERTHE STRIKE WAS OVER, MITCHELL RODE TOWARDS HAZLETON

THOUSANDS OF CHEERING BREAKER BOYS ACCOMPANIED HIS CARRIAGE.

LESS THAN A YEAR LATER, PRESIDENT MCKINLEY WAS DEAD

SHOT BY A DEMENTED ANARCHIST.

MCKINLEY HAD OFFERED
NO OPPOSITION

TO THE CONSOLIDATION OF AMERICAN CAPITAL.

BUT HIS SUCCESSOR, THEODORE ROOSEVELT

HAD HIS OWN IDEAS ABOUT THIS.

AND HE'D BE TESTED BY BOTH CAPITAL AND LABOR

IN ONE OF THE FIRST CRISSES OF HIS PRESIDENCY--

ANOTHER AND EVEN MORE BITTERLY FOUGHT ANTHRACITE STRIKE.

[Captioned by The Caption Center WGBH Educational Foundation]