

Pittsburgh's Immigrants and Migrants

by Elizabeth Claytor

Teaching Objectives for the Teaching Unit

I have chosen Thomas Bell's Out of This Furnace as the centerpiece of this teaching unit because I have always been interested in the history of Pittsburgh and its environs. Thus, the first time I read the novel I was enthralled with the very human quest to improve the human condition and the hopefulness and strength of character required to travel across the ocean to an unknown land, where a different language was spoken and where the job prospects were both legendary and real. With the Pittsburgh area as the setting for the novel, it was a wondrously exciting experience to see the names of Pittsburgh streets, neighborhoods and locales brought to life on the printed page. Because of my own enthusiasm for the novel and its subject matter, I taught the novel to a class of eleventh grade gifted youngsters several years ago with little success. I was unable to overcome their pre-conceived notions that they should only read the so-called "classics" in an American literature course; they did not see Out of This Furnace as a book worthy of their attention. They articulated disdain for the immigrants depicted in the novel, and their disdain touched off some rather unpleasant arguments in the classroom. The school where I teach has a diverse population, and, since we are situated near several universities and colleges; we have many foreign-born and immigrant students. Thus, the parochial attitude of the majority of the students was surprising. One young female student, a native of Russia who had only been in this country for a year, spoke passionately about the courage of her parents who had left behind everything that they knew to come to Pittsburgh, start a business and make a success of their lives. Several other students felt that the common man, a lowly immigrant man or woman, was unworthy of their time and discussion. They argued that the ruthlessness of Andrew Carnegie and Henry Clay Frick as justified by the financial success of the steel industry. The conflict was never satisfactorily resolved. After this experience, I determined that I would have to do much more preparation to teach this novel successfully in my school; I needed to more to incorporate historical perspectives and compassion for the common man and woman--the worker. A teacher needs to know a great deal more about a subject than what she eventually imparts to her students through a lesson or a series of lessons. The teacher needs to understand herself, her community and most of all, her students.

I have given much consideration to my interest in Pittsburgh history. I realized that my generation is the last generation to have the opportunity to work in or visit a steel mill. In the late 1970s, most of us could not comprehend that Pittsburgh steel could or would ever die. Therefore, I attached little significance to an opportunity that I had to escort a group of high school students on a field trip to J & L Steel in Hazelwood. A colleague of mine had made the arrangements for the trip, but her mother passed away unexpectedly, and the funeral was scheduled for the same day as the field trip. Since I was the school's activities director and since tours of the mills were seriously curtailed because of insurance regulations, we did not want to cancel or postpone the trip. I was asked to chaperone the students in her place. My impression of the mill was that it was an incredibly hot, noisy, dirty and dangerous place to work. I, to this day, cannot imagine how my grandfather, uncles and other men that I knew survived the heat, avoided being run over by the tiny rail cars that careened out of nowhere across the mill floor or swung above their heads from wires coming out of the ceiling, and maintained their sense of hearing or sanity with constant the high-level of noise inside the mill. I can still see in my mind's eye the water dancing across the hot rolled steel in the finishing area and the huge ladle of molten steel being poured into forms. The ultimate irony was that the man conducting the tour offered me a job in the mill because they were attempting to hire more minorities and women in the mills during the middle and late 70s. The salary was tempting, much higher than I was making as a ten-year veteran of teaching, but I knew that I was not born for the steel mill. In retrospect, I would have been a displaced steelworker in a few years if I had accepted the offer. I guess I made the right choice for many reasons, for, by 1983, most of the local mills were closing down or were already closed. Coke ovens were being closed down in such a way that the experts in the community knew that the mills would never re-open. By the end of the 80s, the mills were almost gone from sight and new industrial parks with office buildings took their place. Recreational parks and bikeways sprang up where the mills used to be. As I look back, I realize how lucky I was to have the opportunity to visit

Jones and Laughlin Steel and see firsthand a working steel mill. It is something that my daughter and her generation as well as future generations will never have the opportunity to experience.

Examining Pittsburgh Myths

To understand Pittsburghers, one needs to look at the city's national image. As a collective group, the city's natives have very low self-esteem. For years, we have battled the image of being a dirty, ugly city with an uneducated, uncultured populace. Many people in other parts of the country think that Pittsburghers are still born, live and die under smoky, blackened skies that soil white shirts and dressed and stain faces before noon each day. . They believe that there is no culture or refinement among Pittsburgh's citizens. They believe that there is no culture or refinement in Pittsburgh. The city is no more than a "shot and a beer" town. Nothing could be further from the truth, but we Pittsburghers have heard the mythology about Pittsburgh and Pittsburghers so long that I think many of us believe it. I want to help dispel these myths about our city.

My own curiosity about why people chose to settle in the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania area and how my family history fits in to the history of the area has been influenced by my reading of Bell's novel. In response, I have contemplated my own family narrative relating how my family came to the city.

The Claytor and Brooks Families Join the Great Migration.

Ask any Pittsburgher, "When did your family come to Pittsburgh and why did they stay?" and you will usually get a fascinating story. As a child, I was intrigued by the stories both my father and mother told about coming to Pittsburgh in 1923 and 1925, respectively. My father, Lloyd Claytor, grew up on a 300 -acre farm in Blue Mountain, Virginia. The closest town was a little village called Christiansburg; the closest major city was Roanoke. After earning a normal school certificate, he put in a brief stint as a substitute teacher in a one-room schoolhouse. The previous teacher, a female cousin, had been assaulted by some of the bigger, older boys at the school, so the school board sought another bigger, stronger male teacher. Dissatisfied with his working conditions, poorly behaved children and low pay, he quit his job at the end of the school year and slipped away from home, in 1923. At the age of 16, he traveled to Montana with a friend who had bought a 1000 acres of land through the Homesteaders Act.

During one of our family reunions, my sister and I visited Blue Mountain, and I closed my eyes and tried to imagine my father walking away from the homeplace, his parents and his 9 brothers and sisters. Four more children were born after he left home. The walk was nearly 10 miles. I wonder what he felt: was he afraid? Did he consider turning back? What was he hoping to find? Following just one Montana winter with too much cold weather and too snow, my father decided to work his way back east. He ran out of money and job opportunities when he reached Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He had almost given up hope of finding work when he found a job in a Pittsburgh box factory. This job saved him from going back to Virginia. The year was 1925. My father remained in Pittsburgh where he owned and operated a successful heating and air conditioning contracting business until his death in 1989.

Two years later, in 1925, my mother's family moved to Pittsburgh from Flummington, Florida. My mother, Mary Louise Brooks, was the age my daughter is now, 12, and her sister was 10. Because they came from a school for coloreds-only in Flummington, Florida, the school officials in Pittsburgh decided that the educational program in Flummington was not equal to the program offered in the integrated public schools of the north; the girls were put back three grades when they enrolled in the Pittsburgh Public Schools. This gross inequity in educational systems changed the lives of my mother and her sister forever. The consequences of this horrible decision affected my mother and sister when the Great Depression overtook the world in 1929. However, in the decade just before the Great Depression, the economy was booming. My grandfather had heard that there were more work opportunities in Pittsburgh and higher salaries than what he had been earning as a switchman on the L & N Railroad, a major southern line. So, the Brooks family packed up their meager household belongings and boarded a train for the long ride to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Grandfather Brooks' first job in Pittsburgh was as a laborer on the crew that built the Liberty Tunnel that is one of the oldest tunnels of its kind in the United States. The tunnel, with two-lanes to the west and two lanes heading east, cuts through Mt. Washington, once named Coal Hill, and is slightly over one mile long. This tunnel is still a major artery from the southern suburbs in to the heart of the city. Upon completion of the tunnel project, he landed a job at the Crucible Steel mill where he worked until his retirement in the late 1950s. During the 30s, work was hard to find. The Crucible Steel Mill never shut down during the Depression, but sometimes Grandfather only had work one or two days a week.

The Great Depression Devastates the World and the Claytor and Brooks Families.

To make ends meet, my mother and her sister dropped out of school after completing the tenth grade and worked as live-in maids for a weekly salary of \$3.00. If the girls had not been moved back three grades in school, they would have been high school graduates and not high school drop-outs. Like the fictional character from Thomas Bell's Out of This Furnace, Mary Kracha, and so many immigrant and African-American girls, my mother's work as a domestic introduced her to new ways of cooking and a lifestyle much different from her own. Both my mother and her sister "stayed on the place" and kept their three dollars a week salary to take care of their own needs. This took a substantial financial burden off the shoulders of my grandmother and grandfather during the depression.

Shaping the teaching unit

After hearing these family stories for my entire life, and through my general interest in history, I discovered that historians have labeled the movement to the North by African-Americans during the 1920s as the Great Migration. Suddenly, it dawned on me that my parents were a part of this historical movement. This "discovery" led me to expand my reading and study focus for this unit to consider the role of African Americans in the development of Pittsburgh as an industrial center.

The Great Migration is roughly the period between 1916 and 1930. "Blacks poured into the community [Pittsburgh] and settled just at the time when immigration from Europe declined" (Carson 331). The role that African Americans played in Pittsburgh's growth is difficult to research because the work has yet to be done on this topic. Laurence Glasco's social history of Pittsburgh points out several areas where scholarly work would help to fill in some of the missing years: investigation of black neighborhoods, the role and position of black women, an examination of pre-World War I communities, and the period following World War II, and more (95-96). These are fascinating topics for other research projects that would be broader and wider and deeper than the one in which I am currently engaged.

Another area that is but lightly touched upon in Out of This Furnace is domestic life, a topic that has been ignored by the textbooks. For those interested in social history, the situations of the many diverse groups of people in the Pittsburgh area make for interesting reading, study and exploration. A little gem of a book written by a rather ordinary woman, Ethel Spencer, is a family memoir entitled The Spencers of Amberson Avenue. Spencer describes the life of Pittsburgh's middle class. Her father was a middle management employee of Henry Clay Frick. The Amberson Avenue of the title is a street in the "chic" section of Shadyside, a Pittsburgh neighborhood. It is important to note that Amberson Avenue is still "chic" as we move into the twenty-first century. During the heyday of steel manufacturing in the early twentieth century, Shadyside was a suburban area inhabited by the white middle class of Pittsburgh. It is now a neighborhood within the Pittsburgh city limits.

While the roles of African-Americans and women are of particular interest to me, these were not the issues foremost in the mind of Thomas Bell when he wrote Out of This Furnace. Thus, to develop this unit, it has been my job to work with the literature which is available to my students and included on the approved reading lists for the School District of Pittsburgh. By reading around in the historical literature and documents, I have

also developed a clearer understanding of my own experiences and the rich history of Pittsburgh. All of which I hope to use as a hook to capture the interest of my students.

Examining Thomas Bell's purpose and the limits he imposes upon his subject

Thomas Bell's purpose in writing Out of This Furnace was to tell the story of his family and other Slovak immigrants; however, the novel tells only one small part of the Pittsburgh story. The city's black population had a totally different view: Between 1910 and 1930, the period covered by the final section of Out of This Furnace, Pittsburgh's black population grew between twenty-five and fifty-five thousand people (75). Unfortunately, Black workers moved North at the same time the steel industry was slowing down. "As a result, blacks and other unskilled workers found 'increasing competition for work at the lowest levels of the occupational scale' (77). Because Blacks were relegated to the lowest paying jobs in the steel mills and coal mines and harassed by prejudiced white foreman, they were not interested in joining in the strikes led by fledgling labor unions. The scab labor referred to in the historical documents of the period seem most likely to be made up of Black workers, but the ethnicity of these workers is not discussed in Out of This Furnace or in most of the historical accounts of the period. Statistics show that Thomas Bell's Slovaks eventually found themselves living better lives by the 1930s. "...by 1930 only 1 percent of the residents of the lower Hill [Blacks] were homeowners, compared with 14 percent of the residents of heavily Slavic Polish Hill..." (79). The fourth book of Out of This Furnace, Dobie, depicts the successful strikes which improved working conditions and wages and sped the assimilation of the Slovaks into the mainstream of society. For African Americans and women full representation in the workplace and politics has yet to take place, even as we enter the twenty-first century.

Historical Background

Early Immigrants

It is not feasible or necessary to begin with earliest Pittsburgh history to teach this unit. For my purposes, I will present a brief overview of Pittsburgh and the areas which would become its suburbs during the early 1800s, but the emphasis will be on the late 1800s through the 1930s, the same period covered by the novel. The earliest immigrants to the Pittsburgh area were the English, Scotch Irish and Germans. According to historical accounts, they lived "...a hard life, relieved by Sun day church-going, occasional drinking bouts, merrymaking at weddings and house raisings, or spent long hours at wakes" (Allegheny County 39). Allegheny County was incorporated in the year 1788, and Pittsburgh, which became the county seat, was incorporated in 1794. Because of its location at the confluence of the Allegheny, Monongahela and Ohio Rivers, Pittsburgh was an important commercial and industrial site. Indeed, during the War of 1812, "...Allegheny County so well advanced industrially that it was able to furnish much of the equipment needed by the western armies and navies" (31).

Pittsburgh Creates a Niche for Itself.

Historically, the country has experienced economic recessions following major wars, and the War of 1812 was no exception. However, the Pittsburgh area, along with the country, grew dramatically during the Civil War period. "Steel manufacture which had hitherto been in small quantities and mainly for tools, was now expanded by the Bessemer process...the Carnegie associates and others made the Forks of the Ohio a great steel center. Steel towns sprang up on the banks of the three rivers: Homestead, Duquesne, Braddock..." (38). In 1868, Andrew Carnegie introduced the Bessemer process (Bodnar 15). "By 1909, the open hearth furnace eclipsed the Bessemer process in steel manufacture" (Allegheny County 156) and further increased steel productivity in the area.

Looking back in time, "Pittsburgh led the 10 largest cities of the country with the proportion of citizens who [paid] a federal income tax. Allegheny County [had] the world's largest food products company, the world's

largest by product coke plant, the world's largest manufactories of rolls, aluminum, air brakes, plate glass, window glass, refractories, plumbing fixtures, and rolling mill machinery. It also [had] America's third largest independent steel company, the world's second largest electrical equipment company, and America's largest independent oil company...." (Allegheny County 38).

It would be useful to compare these statistics with the decades of the second half of the twentieth century.

The Human Costs of Manufacturing Steel

Out of This Furnace delivers a highly personal reflection on the introduction of the manufacture of steel to the area: "So the mills came to Braddock, stripping the hills bare of vegetation, poisoning the river, blackening heaven and earth and the lungs of the workers..." (Bell Furnace122). The human costs of producing steel are documented in research conducted by Crystal Eastman in her Pittsburgh Survey. "'45 one-legged men; 100 hopeless cripples;...45 men with a twisted useless arms; 30 men with an empty sleeve; 20 men with but one hand;...70 one-eyed men--500 such human wrecks in all.' In the first such survey of industrial deaths in Pittsburgh, Eastman recorded 526 fatalities between July 1, 1906, and June 30, 1907. Nearly 40 percent of these deaths occurred in the steel industry" (Bodnar 17-18).

As the steel industry grew, Henry Clay Frick merged his holdings with those of Andrew Carnegie in 1882, thereby becoming a partner of Carnegie's. "This merger became the nucleus for the powerful United States Steel Corporation...." (153) The stories of serious accidents in the mills and deaths are part of the steel mill culture in the Pittsburgh area. In fact, I remember one of my uncles was missing the first section of three of his fingers, lost in three different mill accidents. My mother and father nodded knowingly and said, "Edward just isn't alert enough." A half century later those missing joints are still a strange and fascinating memory from my days as a four or five year old child. The dangers to individuals in the mills and the long working hours led to the need for some controls and protection for the workers.

Rise of Labor Unionism

Labor unionism was born in the Pittsburgh area in response to the dangers and inhumanity of the working conditions in the area steel mills. Nearly a century before the opening chapters of Out of This Furnace, laws were enacted to protect the owners and manufacturers from "greedy" and "lazy" workers. I was surprised to learn that as early as "... 1814 [,] it was a crime to organize a labor Union in Allegheny County....The trial of [the] Pittsburgh Cordwainers in 1814 on charges of criminal conspiracy to "organize a combination to raise wages" checked the early growth of labor unions" (123). Such controls on the labor force remained in place for many decades. When the Pittsburgh Bessemer Steel Company opened its Homestead Plant in 1881, more than fifty years after the Cordwainers' ruling, Bessemer required that its workers sign a statement that they would not join any labor organization (125). "The men refused to sign the 'yellow dog contracts and went on strike March 6, 1882. The strikers were evicted from the company houses and bitterness and violence marked the first strike in a steel mill in Allegheny County'" (125). These first strikers lost the battle, but it was not the end of labor unionism.

The Steel Strike of 1892

Five years before the Pittsburgh Bessemer Steel Company opened, a group called the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers had been formed on August 4, 1876 (124). This group launched a campaign to unionize every iron mill in Allegheny County; then, they moved on to unionize the steel mills. The Amalgamated Association's organizing efforts touched off the now famous clash with the ownership of the Carnegie Steel Company on July 6, 1892. Andrew Carnegie, who successfully managed to avoid confrontations throughout his career, was conveniently out of the country during the summer of 1892. Henry Phipps, another of Carnegie's partners in the company, spoke of Carnegie: "We as partners were of the opinion that the welfare of the company required he should not be in this country at this time. We know of his extreme

disposition to always grant the demands of labor, and all rejoiced we were permitted to manage the affair in our own way"(Long 6) Frick's comments are noteworthy because historically, Carnegie has not been remembered as a friend of labor; quite the opposite is true. Henry Clay Frick was left in charge to oversee the repression of organized labor with Carnegie's tacit approval. Henry Clay Frick, born in 1849 in Overton, Pennsylvania, organized the H. C. Frick Coke Company. Frick merged his coke interests with Andrew Carnegie in 1889 and served as Chairman of the Board from 1889 until 1900. It is generally believed that the Homestead Strike was prompted largely by Frick's harsh labor practices.

In Pittsburgh Memoranda, Haniel Long remembers the words of Alexander Berkman, the anarchist who tried to kill Frick: "Carnegie selected Frick, bloody Frick of the coke regions, to carry the program [Frick's assassination] into execution. Must the oppressed forever submit? Human life is indeed sacred, but to remove a tyrant is the giving of life and opportunity to an oppressed people...On and on rushes the engine..."(6). Berkman shot Frick, but the wound was not fatal. Frick refused hospitalization and chose to recuperate in his Point Breeze home, Clayton, which is now open to the public for tours.

The historical confrontation between labor and management is chronicled in Out of This Furnace and numerous other historical documents: "...the Carnegie Steel Company attempted to land Pinkerton guards, transported by the steamboat "Little Bill" to the mill property on the banks of the Monongahela at Homestead, PA. The Pinkertons were met by an army of striking millworkers and the two forces were soon joined in battle. The imported guards were defeated and forced to surrender. At least 10 workers were killed and scores were wounded. The militia was called and armed peace maintained, but the struggle broke the union in the Carnegie Mill" (142). The year is 1892. John Bodnar cites a report, Steel Workers, which includes the interviews of 145 men who had worked in the mills. One of the interviewees said, "Many participants in the Homestead disturbance were fired by the Carnegie Corporation. Owners circulated blacklists of labor agitators throughout the industry. Jacob Rush, who sought work elsewhere, revealed that 'the mills in Chicago were in need of men, but they went back here and asked if there was anything against these men before they would employ them'" (Bodnar 18). This strike is, most likely, an event students will want to study further and compare the various historical treatments and social commentaries extant in the local libraries and museums.

Students may also wish to explore public reaction to Andrew Carnegie whose name graces so many important institutions in Pittsburgh today. In life, he was a controversial figure who amassed a fortune of nearly four hundred million dollars; however, he gave away \$350,695.10 of this fortune before he died (Long 35). "A London paper said: 'Here we have this Scotch-Yankee plutocrat meandering through Scotland in a four-in-hand opening public libraries, while the wretched workmen who supply him with ways and means for his self-glorification are starving in Pittsburgh'" (8). Long's point of view will most likely spark heated discussion among the students, many of whom subscribe to the philosophy expressed by a character in Arthur Miller's Death of a

Salesman: "...business is business" (Miller 82).

Social History: Everyday Life

The lives of the Spencer family, wife and children, were largely untouched by the horrors of the steel mills and steel workers' lives; however, the two worlds do touch each other in an interesting, typical way for the time. The daughters of the Slovak immigrants who lived in nearby Homestead and Braddock often worked as domestics in the homes of the middle and upper class. "Immigrants girls were expected to help out financially at home when laborers in the steel mill received approximately \$10.50 per week; a family of four could subsist on \$12.00 per week. The \$1.50 per week that Mrs. Spencer paid her hired help no doubt went toward maintaining the immigrant family's meager standard of living. An added bonus...was the fact that the help boarded with the Spencers, thus saving their families the cost of food as well as providing space for other siblings or...a paying boarder" (Weber and Stearns xxix). Spencer's non-fiction accounting of domestic life dovetails with Bell's fictional work and the experiences of my own mother and women of her generation.

One of the central characters, the beautiful and delicate Mary Kracha, representing the second generation of Slovaks in this country, works as a nanny for a well-to-do family much like the Spencers. She is able to help out financially at home while she is educated about the finer points of domestic life: table linens, silverware, fine furnishings, carpets and more. Mary, lovely and delicate, leaves her employment and marries a genuinely good young man named Michael. Mary has too many babies, too quickly. But, too soon, Michael is killed in a mill accident and Mary is left to toil on and support her children. The additional strain destroys her fragile health and Mary dies; she is a victim of tuberculosis. She and Michael are never able to give their children a dream home like the Spencers' home. They were trapped in the mill workers' milieu. Mary and Michael's son, Dobie, the third generation, finally is part of the trade unionist movement that helps the average worker begin to move up the social and economic ladder. Once the Slovaks moved on to better positions, African Americans took their places in the mills and in the private homes of the middle and upper classes.

THE TEACHING PLAN

Time allotment:

The entire unit will take 6 to 8 weeks to complete.

Materials:

Students will need the following materials:

a copy of the text, Out of This Furnace by Thomas Bell

a notebook an adequate supply of loose leaf paper

writing tools: blue or black ink pens

Pennsylvania State Standards for Communication:

These activities are aligned with the Communications Standards established by the Department of Education for the State of Pennsylvania. On most days, more than one standard will be addressed.

Communications Standards for Pennsylvania are listed in Appendix B.

Standards 2, 3, 4.

Prior to beginning discussion of Out of This Furnace by Thomas Bell, students will be assigned to maintain a reader response, double entry log. Since the novel is divided into four books, it lends itself to a simple four-part reading assignment. Week 1 will be devoted to Kracha; week 2 to Mike Dobrejcak; week 3 to Mary and week four to Dobie. The double entry journal will contain pages that are divided vertically. The left page will contain the chapter numbers and a brief summary of each chapter with the book. The right half of the page will contain a chapter name assigned by the students and questions, comments or reactions from the student to the situations or ideas presented in each chapter.

Journal Pages will be set up as follows:

Book One: Kracha

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Chapter 1. | Chapter Title

|

Chapter Summary | Student Reaction

Standards: 2, 3, 4.

After students have read Kracha’s book, they will be asked to declare which project they intend to complete for their independent work for the unit. A one-paragraph prospectus is a useful writing task. Students may work cooperatively on the bigger, more comprehensive projects if they so desire. Class time should be devoted to student planning for their projects in the school library or computer lab, with teacher supervision.

Weekly discussion of the novel may consume days one, two or three; days four and five can be used for the presentation of student projects.

The following standards will be addressed through discussions of the novel: 2, 3, 4, 5,6,7 and 9.

Questions for Discussion and Writing.

Discussion of the novel may be conducted in various ways. For more self-directed students, teachers might divide the class into four teams and assign one book of the novel to each team. The team might develop questions of their own for the discussion and lead the class through questioning and/or directing classmates to specific textual issues. For students who need more guidance, the teacher will want to lead the class discussions and use the following questions to guide or shape the classroom sessions devoted to analysis and understanding of the novel.

Book One: Kracha

1. Using a map of Europe that pre-dates World War I, locate Kracha’s homeland and trace his journey from Hungary to New York City and Pennsylvania. Discuss why so many people immigrated to the United States.
2. Choices and Consequences. What is meant by choices? consequences? What are some of the choices young people your age of your must make? Have you ever made a choice and were ultimately unhappy with the consequences? Evaluate some of the choices and consequences related in this first book of the novel.
3. If chapter three was told from Elena’s point of view, what do you think she would say?
4. Andrew Carnegie is an important influence in the development of the Pittsburgh area. Where do we see his influence today?

5. We get some idea of how different the world's economic situation was in the 1880s. Where do we see these differences reflected in the novel?
6. Life is hard in the new country. Why do you think the immigrants chose to stay and work for low wages, long hours and live in squalor? Would you have returned home? Why? Why not?
7. Labor unionism had its birth in the Pittsburgh area. Discuss the Homestead Steel Strike of 1892. How does this strike affect the development of workers' rights?
8. When Kracha opens his butcher's business, his future looks bright. How do you feel about Kracha's success? What effect do you think Zuska's reappearance will have on Kracha's life? Do the choices and decisions that Kracha makes surprise you?
9. Notice how the events in the lives of the characters are woven into the current events and changes in the production of steel. What is the effect of developing a story in this way?
10. Kracha says that Zuska has a talent for making a man think well of himself. Evaluate this observation.

Book Two: Mike Dobrecjak

1. In what way is Mike different from Kracha and some of the other male characters we have met thus far?
2. What does Mary Kracha do for a living? What do you think a typical day at her job would be like?
3. Mike and Mary go to Kenny's Grove, now called Kennywood Park for an outing. What do you like or dislike about Kennywood? How does it compare to other amusement parks you have visited?

[This is a good time to view [Kennywood Memories](#).]

4. Mike and Mary take in roomers or boarders. What do you think a typical day in Mary's life is like now? How do you think boarders in your own room would affect your daily activities?
5. Why is Mike beginning to feel sad and old even though he is only thirty years old?
6. How was Mike's death foreshadowed in chapters 9 and 11?

Book Three: Mary

1. What are the options for a woman like Mary who is suddenly widowed with four young children? Would her options be different today?
2. Mary and her family have moved many times. Have you ever moved? What is it like to move your whole household? What effect does moving have on the entire family?
3. How would you rate Kracha as a father and grandfather? How would you rate Mary as a mother? How would you rate Johnny as a son? Use a scale where one is high and 1 is low.
4. Does it surprise you that Mike and Mary Dobrecjak are modeled after the author's own parents? How would you describe the tone of chapters 2 and 3? How is the tone different from that in describing Kracha and Elena's relationship in Book One?

Book Four: Dobie

1. Do you think young Johnny, now called Dobie will turn out to be a wastrel like Kracha?
2. Dobie works on brake parts for Ford automobiles. How did the automobile change American life?
3. The emphasis in the novel is on the Slovak immigrant, but other groups are mentioned in passing. What is the reaction to the Irish immigrants and the Negro migrants from the South? How has the succession of immigrant and migrant groups changed life in Braddock?
4. Evaluate the appropriateness or inappropriateness of the racist remarks present in chapter 9. In your opinion, should they be removed from the text? Do they contribute to the text or your understanding of the story being told?
4. What affect has the women's right to vote had on the thinking of the women of the steel towns?
5. Can you imagine what it would like if the banks failed and you and your parents lost your entire life savings? How would you manage to go on with your life?
6. What affect did FDR's programs have on the day-to-day life in the mill towns?
7. Dobie is thrust in to the position of being a labor union activist. In ways is he like his father, Mike?
8. When Kracha dies, we get glimpse of funeral customs. Identify these customs. Does your family or ethnic or religious group have any unusual funeral customs?
9. Mikie says that children should be given a choice about where they are born. What do you think of this idea? If you could choose your birthplace, what place would you choose and why? Would a certain period in the past or present or the future be a part of your choice?
10. The novel ends on a hopeful note. With your knowledge of what has happened in the Pittsburgh area since the 1930s, is Dobie's outlook a realistic one?

Student Activities/Authentic Assessments

Projects will be evaluated as follows: Peers - 25%, Self - 25% and Teacher - 50%.

Standards: 1, 2, 4, 6, 7 and 8.

1. Research the Bessemer process that advanced the manufacture of steel in this area. Prepare an oral report of your findings to the class. The written text of your remarks must accompany your presentation.

Standards: 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, and 8.

2. Select a person from the following Who's Who in Pittsburgh list. Research your findings and present them to the class. The written text of your remarks must accompany your presentation.

Henry Clay Frick Andrew Carnegie

Captain Jones Alexander Berkmann

Emma Goldman Eugene Debs

Henry Phipps John L Lewis

Franklin D. Roosevelt Andrew Mellon

Standards: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8

3. Compare this record of the Homestead Steelworkers Strike of 1892 with the description of the strike in Out of This Furnace. Find at least one other historical account for comparison and contrast.

"...the Carnegie Steel Company attempted to land Pinkerton guards, transported by the steamboat "Little Bill" to the mill property on the banks of the Monongahela at Homestead, PA. The Pinkertons were met by an army of striking millworkers and the two forces were soon joined in battle. The imported guards were defeated and forced to surrender. At least 10 workers were killed and scores wounded. The militia was called and armed peace maintained, but the struggle broke the union in the Carnegie Mill" (Allegheny County 142).

Standards: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8

4. [In 1938], Pittsburgh led the 10 largest cities of the country with the proportion of citizens who [paid] a federal income tax. Allegheny County [had] the world's largest food products company, the world's largest by product coke plant, the world's largest manufactories of rolls, aluminum, air brakes, plate glass, window glass, refractories, plumbing fixtures, and rolling mill machinery. It also [had] America's third largest independent steel company, the world's second largest electrical equipment company, and America's largest independent oil company...." (Allegheny County 38).

Compare these statistics with the statistics from the census reports of 1940, 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980 and 1970. How have Pittsburgh and Allegheny County changed as we approach the twenty-first century?

Standards: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8

5. Research General Braddock's defeat at the hands of the Indians and report your findings to the class. The written text of your remarks must accompany your presentation.

Standards: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8

6. Research the early history of Kennywood Park and report your findings to the class. [If the documentary film, Kennywood Memories is not used for an entire class project, students might view the film on their own as part of this project.] The written text of your remarks must accompany your presentation.

Standards: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8

7. To discover events in Pittsburgh history that runs parallel to the time covered in Out of This Furnace, students might view the 1984 film, Mrs. Soffel and report on their findings to the class. If desired, use the film as a class activity. [A film- viewing guide is provided at the end of this document.]

Standards: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8

8. Andrew Carnegie's epitaph is "Here lies a man who knew how to enlist in his services better men than himself." Students will view and study the film, Andrew Carnegie: The Richest Man in the World to try to find

out who was the real Andrew Carnegie. Was he the coward and ruthless plunderer of the Pennsylvania countryside or beloved philanthropist who has done so much for education and culture in the Pittsburgh area?

Standards: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8

9. Interview parents, relatives, neighbors, friends and teachers and compile an ethnic cookbook that represents the diversity of Pittsburgh culture. (Minimum of five recipes.) Provide a sample recipe. See the pierogie recipe in the appendix.

Standards: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8

10. Interview parents, relatives, neighbors, friends and teachers and compile a series of short first-person narratives of people who have stories by and about workers in the steel industry. See the sample interview format in the appendix.

Student Bibliography

Bell, Thomas. Out of This Furnace. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1976.

Kennywood Memories. Produced by WQED/Pittsburgh: QED Communications Inc. 1990.

Mrs. Soffel. Dir. Gillian Armstrong. Perf. Diane Keaton, Mel Gibson, Matthew Modine. MGM, 1984.

"Steel Food: Pierogies!" <<http://trfn.clpgh.org/sihc/stfoodl.html>> 26 May 2000.

"Steel Songs: I am a Labor Man." Available: <<http://trfn.clpgh.org/sihc/songs.html>> 26 May 2000.

"Steel Stories: Available: <<http://trfn.clpgh.org/sihc/ststor.html>> 26 May 2000.

"The Big Steel Journey: Homestead and the Carnegie Mill Towns." Available: <<http://trfn.clpgh.org/sihc/bigsteel.html>> 26 May 2000.

Weber, Michael P. and Peter N. Stearns. "Introduction. The Spencers of Amberson Avenue. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1983.

Annotations for student readings may be found on the teacher bibliography.

Teacher Bibliography

Allegheny County: A Sesqui-Centennial Review. George E. Kelly, Ed. Pittsburgh: Allegheny County Sesqui-Centennial Committee, 1938.

This official document is a published history of Allegheny County from the early 1700s to 1938.

Bell, Thomas. Out of This Furnace: A Novel of Immigrant Labor in America.

Pittsburgh: The University of Pittsburgh Press, 1976.

This novel chronicles three generations of a Slovak family who lived, loved, worked and died in the steel mining towns just outside Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The volume includes a scholarly afterword by David P. Demarest, Jr., a professor at Carnegie-Mellon University.

Bodnar, John, Roger Simon and Michael P. Weber. Lives of Their Own: Blacks, Italians, and Poles in Pittsburgh, 1900-1960. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982.

This study compares the experiences of two generations of the following ethnic groups: Poles, Blacks and Italians in the Pittsburgh area from 1900 to 1960.

Carson, Carolyn Leonard. "And the Results Showed Promise...Physicians, Childbirth,

and Southern Black Migrant Women, 1916-1930: Pittsburgh as a Case Study." African Americans in Pennsylvania: Shifting Historical Perspectives. Joe William Trotter, Jr. and Eric Ledell Smith, Eds. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997.

This article discusses the medical experiences of Black women who migrated to Pittsburgh during the period covered by a portion of the novel Out of This Furnace.

Glasco, Laurence. "Double Burden: The Black Experience in Pittsburgh." City at the Point: Essays on the Social History of Pittsburgh. Samuel P. Hays, Ed. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1989.

This essay outlines the experiences of African Americans who settled in Pittsburgh and touches upon their role in the steel manufacturing industry in Pittsburgh.

Harper, Frank C. Pittsburgh: Forge of the Universe. New York: Comet Press Books, 1957.

Two hundred years of Pittsburgh history are reviewed in economic, industrial and social terms.

Kennywood Memories. Produced by WQED/Pittsburgh: QED Communications Inc. 1990.

This video history of Pittsburgh's world famous amusement park parallels the discussion of Kenny's Wood, a popular recreation site mentioned several times in Thomas Bell's Out of This Furnace.

Long, Haniel. Pittsburgh Memoranda. Santa Fe: The Rydal Press for Writers' Editions, 1935.

This volume contains a social history of Pittsburgh from 1892 to 1925 in the poetry genre.

Lorant, Stefan. Pittsburgh: The Story of an American City. Lenox, Massachusetts: Authors Edition, Inc., 1975.

This pictorial history of the city covers the years from the times of the early settlers in the 1700s through 1975. This bicentennial edition contains over 1000 illustrations and photographs.

Lubove, Roy, Ed. Pittsburgh. New York: New Viewpoints, A Division of Franklin Watts, 1976.

This collection of first-person narratives chronicles Pittsburgh history from 1802 until 1968.

Miller, Arthur. Death of a Salesman.

A career salesman faces the successes and failures of his life head on. The ruthlessness of the business world speeds his descent into depression.

Mrs. Soffel. Dir. Gillian Armstrong. Perf. Diane Keaton, Mel Gibson, Matthew Modine. MGM, 1984.

Filmed on location in Pittsburgh, this historical account of a Pittsburgh warden's wife, Mrs. Soffel, re-tells the legendary story of her love for an inmate whom she helps escape to freedom.

Reiser, Catherine Elizabeth. Pittsburgh's Commercial Development 1800-1850.

Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1951.

Originally a doctoral thesis, this volume describes Pittsburgh's economic history from 1844 to 1850.

Serrin, William. Homestead: The Glory and Tragedy of an American Steel Town. New York, Random House, 1992.

One hundred years of Homestead, Pennsylvania is presented in this work which begins with the birth of the steel industry in the 1880s and ends with its death in the 1980s.

Spencer, Ethel. The Spencers of Amberson Avenue. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1983.

Spencer recounts the every day lives of her family and what it was like to live in the Shadyside section, a middle-class suburb of Pittsburgh during the days when steel making turned the area into a boom town. A thoughtful introduction by Michael P. Weber and Peter N. Stearns is an added bonus.

"Steel Food: Pierogies!" <http://trfn.clpgh.org/sihc/stfoodl.html> 26 May 2000.

Here you will find recipes for typical ethnic foods that were introduced to this country by Slavic immigrant and have remained with us as perennial favorites.

"Steel Songs: I am a Labor Man." Available: <http://trfn.clpgh.org/sihc/songs.html> 26 May 2000.

This site contains lyrics for ethnic songs that were popular during steel's heyday and are part of the area's social history.

"Steel Stories: Available: <http://trfn.clpgh.org/sihc/ststor.html> 26 May 2000.

Here you will find popular stories and myths associated with the early days of steel making.

The Ethnic Experience in Pennsylvania. John E. Bodnar, Ed. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1973.

The editor has brought together a collection of essays about various immigrant groups who settled in Pennsylvania.

APPENDIX A.

BOOK NOTES FOR OUT OF THIS FURNACE by Thomas Bell.

Characters. (Characters are listed in the order of their appearance in the novel.)

George Kracha (Crack-a)- 21 year old Slovak immigrant. Nicknamed Djuro(Dur-ro). Also called Dzedo. George left Abavuska, Hungary in 1881 for work in White Haven, Pennsylvania.

Zuska Mihula - an 18 year old immigrant from Zemplinska, Hungary, a city NE of Abavuska.

John Mihula - husband of Zuska.

Joe Dubik - a happy, trusting, carefree, 21 year old whom Djuro meets at the lumber camp in Pennsylvania.

Andrej Sedlar - Kracha's brother-in-law who works as a cook at the White Haven lumber camp.

Francka Sedlar - Kracha's sister.

Elena Kracha - Kracha's sickly young wife who follows him to White Haven.

Dorta Dubik - follows Joe to White Haven and marries him . She is a skilled midwife.

Mary Kracha - eldest daughter of Elena and Djuro Kracha.

Alice Kracha - Elena and Djuro's second daughter.

Anna Kracha - Elena and Djuro's third daughter.

Joe Wold - a Slovak Jew, realtor and owner of the First Ward's most popular saloon.

Michael Dobrejac (Dough-BRAY-Chuck)- eldest son of a Slav village carpenter. Mike came to Braddock and boarded with Dorta and John.

Borka - Kracha's younger sister.

Perovsky - encourages Kracha to speculate in land by purchasing some vacant property on Halket Street. Kracha stands to make a profit if the railroad decides to build on this property.

The Dexters - a middle class family for whom Mary works as a nanny.

Spetz- a Hungarian Jew who opens a butcher shop which competes with Kracha's shop.

Joe Dobrejac - Mike's brother who joins him in Braddock.

Sophie Dobrejac - Joe's wife.

Anna Kovac - a young girl who thought Mike Dobrejac would marry her.

John Joseph Dobrejac - Mike and Mary's firstborn daughter, later referred to as Dobie.

John Baraj - a young man who is engaged to Mary's sister, Anna. He Anglicizes his surname to Barry.

Bodnar - Mike's friend, co-worker, and some time drinking buddy.

Pauline - Mike and Mary Dobrejac's second child.

Mikie - Mike and Mary Dobrejac's third child.

Agnes - Mike and Mary Dobrejac's fourth child.

Mr. Keogh - Mike's boss in the mill.

Timko - a tavern owner who offers John Barry a bartender's job in Donora.

Dr. Kralik - Mary's Hungarian, American educated doctor.

Fannie Sellens - a woman who was found murdered in a Brackenridge alley during a strike.

Blackjack - a viciously mean state trooper who was ambushed and nearly beaten to death.

Agatha Holloway - a schoolteacher from Uniontown who is Mary's roommate in the sanitarium.

Walt Button - Agatha's fiance.

Martin - the widower Agnes marries.

Mr. Flack - general superintendent of the Braddock mill.

Chuck - Alice Kracha's son.

Frank - Alice Kracha's husband.

McLaughlin - mill foreman where Dobie works.

Todd- departmental superintendent where Dobie works.

Bill Hagerty - one of two E.R.P. company-sanctioned representatives; works in the electric shop with Dobie; father of ten children.

Walsh - union organizer for the Amalgamated.

Burke - local union president, a heater in the open hearth, elected with Dobie.

Graliji - local union treasurer, elected with Dobie.

Ziggy - one of Dobie's co-workers.

Peg-leg Cassidy - Dobie and Julie's next-door neighbor.

Miss Morrison - Dobie, Burke and Graliji's union stenographer.

Mr. Forbes - company representative from the city office.

Tighe - A.F.L. official who wages war on his own membership.

Steve - a staunch unionist who advises Anna on organizing for union and political activities.

Chapter Summaries.

Book One: Kracha.

Chapter 1.

George Kracha leaves his Hungarian homeland in 1881 for White Haven, Pennsylvania to

find work and a better way of life. He has enough money to secure his passage to his final destination. Once on the ship, he is taken with Zuska Mihula, a sultry teen-ager who is travelling to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, with her husband John. Kracha spends all but 55 cents of his money on Zuska's nineteenth birthday celebration that takes place on the ship. Kracha receives nothing for his time or money.

Chapter 2.

With only 55 cents in his pocket, Kracha bids the Mihulas farewell in New York City. He then begins his walk to White Haven, Pennsylvania. Kracha tells his family that he was robbed of his money in New York City.

Chapter 3.

Settling in to life in White Haven, Kracha makes friends with Joe Dubik, another 21-year-old immigrant. He confides how he lost his money and his lust for the sultry Zuska.

Chapter 4.

Kracha receives the news that his young wife has given birth to a son; shortly thereafter, he learns that the child has died. At the urging of his own mother, Kracha sends for his wife who arrives in February. She is much changed from the carefree girl he married. Elena is painfully thin, cries all of the time, and suffers from a thyroid condition that causes a large disfiguring goiter. Too soon, Elena is pregnant again; she gives birth to a baby girl, Mary.

Chapter 5.

The company moves the group from White Haven to Bear Creek where Kracha's second and third daughters, Alice and Anna are born. Dubik takes his family and moves to Braddock, ten miles south of Pittsburgh, where he finds work in a steel mill. Francka and her family decide to move to Homestead. Andrew Carnegie wins out over his striking workers putting an end to the eight-hour day in Braddock. In Homestead, Carnegie is unsuccessful in breaking the union. He signs a new contract that will expire on July 1, 1892. Kracha takes his family and follows his friends to Homestead for better wages.

Chapter 6.

Andrej, Kracha's brother-in-law, bribes a foreman and Kracha lands a job in the mill that pays fourteen cents an hour. Monthly rent averages three dollars a month.

Chapter 7.

Kracha plans to visit his friend Dubik, who has no time to visit anyone. He works seven days a week, fourteen hours a day. Every other Sunday, he works a straight twenty-four hour shift. Kracha is surprised to find Dubik thinner and possessed of an air of perpetual tiredness. Dorta announces that she wants to rent a house and take in boarders; this will bring more money into the house. As bad as life is, Kracha proclaims that it is still better than farming. Captain Jones, Andrew Carnegie's legendary General Superintendent dies in a mill accident. Carnegie is portrayed as a ruthless businessman.

Chapter 8.

Captain Jones is buried. Mike Dobrejcek, a young man from Dubik's native village, comes to Braddock and is one of three roomers or boarders in Dorta's new boarding house. After twelve years of marriage, Dorta discovers that she is pregnant. She gives birth to a son, Victor.

Chapter 9.

The Homestead Steel Strike of 1892 is chronicled here. Carnegie and Frick win this strike, and organized labor is shut down for a long time. As its consolation, Homestead gets a new library, but the workers do not have the time or energy to use the facility. Times are bad throughout the country. Kracha assumes a false name, bribes another boss and secures a slightly better paying job in the Homestead mill.

Chapter 10.

Kracha settles in to a boring existence of working and sleeping. He sees himself as an unimportant, insignificant cog in the steel-making machine. An anarchist named Berkman carried out an unsuccessful assassination plot against Henry Clay Frick.

Chapter 11.

Joe and Kracha have a beer together before going to work; it is payday. A terrible explosion caused by the use of a cheaper grade of ore injures Joe and thirteen others. Joe Dubik dies two days later. Two other men die of their injuries. The company contributes its standard seventy-five dollars to Joe's funeral expenses.

Chapter 12.

Kracha decides to leave the mill, buy a butcher shop, and go in to business for himself. It is October of 1895, and Kracha now owns two horses and wagons and has three employees. He has saved \$1000.00.

Chapter 13.

Kracha's business is doing well; his joy of not working in the mill is with him twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week. According to her doctor, Elena is experiencing an early change of life, and Mary is growing into a normal, but willful, teen-ager. Francka gives birth to a second son, Andy.

Chapter 14.

It is an election year, but Kracha, like many in Braddock, is not an American citizen. Therefore, he is an apolitical being. He thinks young Mike's interest in the politics of McKinley or Bryan is a waste of time. Kracha's sister, Borka, a younger plumper version of Francka arrives just before Christmas.

Chapter 15.

In April, Zuska suddenly and surprisingly appears in Kracha's Braddock butcher shop. Her husband has died, and she has two sons. The sight of Zuska stirs Kracha's old feelings for her.

Chapter 16

Dorta remarries, and Kracha's thoughts of Zuska are back stronger than ever. On the second anniversary of Joe Dubik's death, Dorta and Kracha note that the mill has new machinery, automatic skip hoists and a double-bell hoist which change the way blast furnaces operate. This equipment would have prevented the accident that caused Dubik's death if it had been in place two years ago.

Chapter 17.

Zuska leaves her sister's house and takes a single room. It is a bit crowded with her two boys, but there were more serious overcrowding problems and interpersonal problems with male boarders in the sister's house. Kracha tries to be strong, but he pays his first nocturnal visit to Zuska's home and bed.

Chapter 18.

Zuska moves into two rooms. Before long everyone seems to know of the Zuska-Kracha affair. Max Spetz opens a butcher shop in the area, but Kracha is too busy battling with his sister Francka and trysting with Zuska to take serious note of the competition. During a heated family argument about Zuska, he slaps Francka; Elena bows her head; Kracha storms out of the house.

Chapter 19.

Kracha continues his affair with Zuska, and he ignores some warning signs of impending trouble. Spetz, a Hungarian Jew, has opened a new butcher shop a few doors away. The streetcar line has not been built on Halket Street and the mortgages are coming due. Perovsky persuades Kracha to go to the bank and get an extension on his mortgages. This extension costs him seventy-five dollars for a mere six-month renewal.

Chapter 20.

Elena takes to her bed again. Visits from the doctor and priest draw attention to the house. Kracha will not allow Elena her deathbed apology mainly because he feels guilty about the way he has treated her. Elena dies quietly. Kracha gives her a grand funeral with ten carriages and a hearse; she is buried in the Irish cemetery. Francka, Andrej, and their two boys come to help with the funeral. Before the Sedlaks leave, Kracha and Francka get into another argument over Zuska.

Chapter 21.

Because Kracha feels guilty, he would not let Elena talk to him at the end; he could not talk to her. After a month, Kracha resumes his nocturnal visits to Zuska, and business does not improve. Competition from Spetz, the costs of Elena's funeral, mortgage expenses on the Halket Avenue property, the war in Cuba and public

opinion are combining to destroy his business. At the worst of times, Zuska announces that she is pregnant with Kracha's child. Zuska and Kracha are married; six months later Kracha is arrested for beating his wife. Simultaneously, Kracha loses everything: his business, his home, and his property.

Chapter 22.

Kracha is released from jail and met by his daughter Mary. He will stay with Dorta until he finds work. Spetz has bought his shop; he has lost his home and all of its contents. Coincidentally, it is the third anniversary of Joe Dubik's death. Kracha states that he would be better off if his friend had lived. Mary, now fourteen, has a chance to get a job as a nanny which pays \$1.50 a week. Kracha muses that he made two mistakes: letting Perovsky convince him to buy the lots on Halket Avenue and spending too much money on Elena's funeral. In his own mind, the business with Zuska, even though she stole from him at the end, was not a mistake because she had a talent for making a man think well of himself.

Book Two: Mike Dobrejczak

Chapter 1.

In December 1900, Mike is working in the Braddock mill, but he finds the time and energy to go to classes and learn a muddled version of American history and English. This is also the year that Andrew Carnegie invests in Bessemer steel rails and assembles a secondhand blast furnace in the town. The history of Austria-Hungary's immigrants is also outlined. Mike's brother Joe joins him in Braddock.

Chapter 2.

During the summer of 1901, Carnegie sells his steel company to J.P. Morgan, who incorporated the United States Steel Company. The mills in Braddock, Homestead and Duquesne were included. This is also the year that President McKinley was assassinated. Dorta thinks Mike should be thinking about marriage, but he is not serious. However, he has been going around with Anna Kovac who thinks that he will marry her. Anna's hopes are dashed when Mike discovers a grown-up, beautiful Mary Kracha, just back from a summer at the beach with the Dexters, the family for whom she works. Mike walks Mary back to the Dexter's house and makes a date to meet her on his next day off.

Chapter 3.

Mike begins to court Mary, and he visits her at the Dexters' house while the family is out visiting the local amusement park, Kennywood, formerly called Kenny's Grove. Mike is taken with the furnishings, table linen, silverware and general finery of the house. Mike dreams of what it would like to live so well and so comfortably. Mike and Mary are married in the spring, from Dorta's house.

Chapter 4.

In March of 1903, Mary gives birth to her first child, a seven-pound boy named John Joseph after Mike's father. Another serious mill accident occurs, killing or injuring fourteen men. One of the dead men had only been in this country two weeks; he left a widow and six children behind in Poland. Another left a wife and four young ones behind in Austria.

Chapter 5.

Mike and Mary move in the spring, and Mike and Mary's second child, Pauline, is born in November. Mike, a naturalized citizen, votes in his first election for Teddy Roosevelt. Mary's sister Anna eloped to Cleveland, Ohio with Frank Koval, and Anna took her place in the Dexter household. Mike feels deeply discouraged and restless because he wants more money in his pocket, more time for himself, and more time to live.

Mary expresses her belief in God and her hope for a better future. To bring in more money, Mary decides to take in boarders.

Chapter 6.

Having boarders is like running a business. Mary takes control of her household, and Mike is respected by all of their boarders. At Christmas time, they have cause to celebrate: unskilled workers will get a raise to sixteen and a half cents per hour.

Chapter 7.

Spring brings the annual spring rains and floods. Mike and Mary survive the flooding fairly well, and everything is cleaned up by the time Kracha arrives for a visit. He is worked up into a fuss because they have finally built a railroad on the Halket Street property he lost ten years ago. The strong economic period for the country is threatened by lay-offs in the plate mills that always presage lay-offs in the steel mills.

Chapter 8.

The economic picture worsens; the mill is paying the men in scrip. This lasts for three months. Mary gives birth to her third child, a boy. Anna is engaged to John Baraj. Unskilled laborers are raised to seventeen and a half cents an hour; Taft won the presidency; Halley's comet makes an appearance.

Chapter 9.

Mike and his good friend, Steve Bodnar go out for an evening of drinking, an unusual activity for Mike. The relationship of the men to their bosses and to the steel mill is explored. Mike feels old at 30, saddened by his role as an old Papa with his children. "Papas" are old and solemn and interested in things other than the children. He worries about his inability to take better care of his family. The children seem to be much closer to Mary; their relationship is warmer and more intimate. A visit to church lifts his spirits and gives him the strength to go on.

Chapter 10.

Mary is pregnant with her fourth baby. This is a difficult pregnancy, and Mike and Mary decide to get rid of the boarders and the work they generate. Agnes is born at the end of September; Mike begins making regular withdrawals from his saving account.

Chapter 11.

Mike grows increasingly angered by his inability to earn enough money to take good care of Mary and his family. He is hurt that despite the fact that he is willing to work, no one will give him work and pay him a livable wage. The mill owners treat their workers like animals.

Chapter 12.

It is election time again, and the men are told that they must vote for the candidates that will be favorable to the owners. Indeed, the men are marched to the polling place and told how to vote. Despite the admonitions of the bosses, Mike votes for Eugene Debs, the Socialist. He fears that his secret will be discovered, and he will be fired.

Chapter 13.

Mike and Bodnar go out for a drink before they report to their day's work. Bodnar warns Mike that he is too outspoken, and he should not call unwanted attention to himself. Mike is falling into deeper despair about the value of work and the poor compensation millworkers receive. He hates poverty and ugliness; he feels alone.

Chapter 14.

Kracha, who has broken his arm in an accident, stays with Mike and Mary while he recuperates. By chance, he discovers an article in the newspaper that he makes Mary read to him. Zuska's son has been ordained as a priest, most likely educated with the money she stole from him. Meanwhile, Mike's deepening gloom ends; he is killed in a mill accident. Kracha must relay this sad news to Mary.

Book Three: Mary.

Chapter 1.

Mike is buried. Mary receives thirteen hundred dollars in death benefits from the mill and five hundred dollars from his lodge. Mary is now a thirty-year-old widow with four children. Her oldest son Johnny is a responsible boy who works selling newspapers to help out at home. Mary and Dorta explore the options for widows: remarry or take in boarders.

Chapter 2.

John Timko offers John Barry a job in Donora; the family immediately moves to the new town, twenty miles upriver from Braddock. Mary moves to a small house in Munhall Hollow. Mary shames Kracha into moving in as her boarder at a rate of thirty dollars a month. He balks at her price, but he knows he should help her. He resents being obligated to her. Johnny finds a job delivering wallpaper during the summer, and he returns to school a month after the beginning of the school year. His unhappiness at being just another "Hunky" forces him to leave school early and take a job in a glass factory.

Chapter 3.

With the war going on, prices are going up and up. It is Christmas Eve, and Mary waits for Kracha to come home with money so that she can buy gifts for the children. Mary receives word through a neighbor that Kracha has been arrested. Because they have no money, Mary and Johnny walk through woods and underbrush to Homestead; it is cold and wet. They secure Kracha's release and take the long route back to Munhall. Exhausted, Mary cries, but she and Johnny pretend to be Santa Claus and tell the little ones that Santa will visit them on the Greek Christmas to cover up the fact that Kracha had drunk up and either lost or had stolen all of his money. Young Johnny finally quits school altogether, falsifies his age, and takes a job as an apprentice armature winder. Because expenses are high, Mary moves again, back to North Braddock. With each family move, Mary has fewer and fewer possessions.

Chapter 4.

Johnny's wages have been raised to twenty-five cents an hour. Mary falls ill and stays in her bed for two weeks; she gets up too soon. During a particularly bad coughing attack, her mouth fills with blood. Dr. Kralik confirms that Mary has consumption and makes arrangements for Mary and all of her children to go to a sanitarium for one year.

Before beginning her treatment, Mary changes the beneficiaries on her life insurance policies. She arranges for Johnny to stay with Alice and Frank in North Braddock; she tells the other children with her for the cure. One peaceful afternoon before her treatment begins; she visits Mike's grave. It will be for the last time.

Chapter 5.

Johnny secures a job in the mill in Braddock, and unionism is on the rise again. A strike occurs, and Johnny takes a job on the outside building a concrete road near Donora. Johnny discovers that two dollars are taken out of his pay each week for "expenses," but the money is really kickback money. Neither he nor any of the men can do anything about it. Meanwhile, the strike is proving to be ineffective, and men are going back to work. The union called the strike off in January and the company gave the men a ten-percent raise in their wages. For a time, in the sanitarium, Mary seems to be making a good recovery, but she suffers a relapse and is sent back to her bed.

Chapter 6.

It has been a year since Mary was admitted to the sanitarium. Her roommate, Agatha Holloway, a former teacher, quizzes Mary about married life. Agnes is engaged to be married to Walt Button, who owns a partnership in an automobile partnership and garage. Prohibition is making whisky prices very high, and Francka is making her own moonshine now. Mary has plenty of time to think about Mike and what she will tell her children about their father; she thinks about the pointlessness of their lives, their hard work, and Mike's death. She thinks about her own death although she is only thirty-six years old. She wonders what went wrong. Mary dies before she reaches her thirty-seventh birthday.

Book 4: Dobie.

Chapter 1.

Mikie and Chuck, Alice's son, are apprentice machinists in the Westinghouse. Pauline died a year after her mother. Johnny, now called Dobie, is a grown man, who has earned an armature winder's rating following the apprenticeship he began before his mother died. Dobie and Mikie live in Alice's house; Alice's husband Frank, having participated in three strikes, has been blackballed and cannot find work. Restless, Dobie moves to Detroit and remains there for five years working at various skilled and semi-skilled labor jobs. The automobile industry is growing, and Dobie lands a job at Budd Wheel on an assembly line riveting the brake bands for Fords. The company habitually shortchanges its workers on payday that brings about a wildcat strike. All of the strikers, including Dobie, are fired. Dobie returns to the Pittsburgh area and realizes that he is really at home. Luckily, he gets his old back as an armature winder.

Chapter 2.

The great depression deepens. Through the company's work spreading method, Dobie works only two days a month. Perovsky, the saloonkeeper and politician, has fallen from favor after he sided with the company during the 1919 strike. One by one, the mills shut down, and the women return to doing day work in private homes. But things are different now; they are in competition with Negro women for day-to-day domestic work. The Negro population was introduced to the area were as scabs during the 1919 strike. Dobie falls in love with a girl, Julie, whom he meets at Agnes' wedding.

Chapter 3.

Women have been given the right to vote and Anna has agreed to work for the Democratic Party because the Republican Party has failed the working class

during the depression. The intrepid Kracha has spent some time drying out in Woodville State Hospital. With Dobie's help, he secures his mill pension and comes to live with Dobie, his grandson. Julie accepts Dobie's proposal of marriage.

Chapter 4.

The nation's banks failed, taking Agnes' insurance money that has grown to \$1100. FDR is inaugurated and begins a series of government programs to bring the country out of the depression. Letters like the FERA, NRA, CCC, AAA are everywhere.

Dobie and Julie marry and settle into their little four-room house in Donora with Kracha as their roomer. Agnes' fiancé leaves for Cleveland in search of work, and she never sees him again.

Chapter 5.

The NIRA is passed; it includes a section giving workers the right to choose their own collective bargaining agent. In response, the companies create their own "union" called the E.R.P. Dobie and other men worked tirelessly to sign up men the Amalgamated, an effort designed to create a true workers' union. When the Braddock lodge of the Amalgamated is chartered, Dobie is elected union secretary. More than fifty percent of the men in the mill have joined the Amalgamated.

Chapter 6.

Agnes has rebounded from her disappointments and plans to marry Martin, a young widower. Dobie, Julie and Kracha live comfortably together.

Chapter 7.

Dobie and other mill workers grow restless as the union does nothing to gain official recognition or champion their causes. Dobie and the union organizer, Burke, exchange heated words.

Chapter 8.

The Amalgamated decides to withdraw its organizer and let the rebellious lodges fend for themselves. Dobie and the other officers request and receive a conference with the company leadership; however, the meeting ends without any changes. The Amalgamated's parent group from Pittsburgh backs down from a confrontation with the owners, the government and the A.F.L. Dobie has mixed emotions; in response to the union's actions; some of the workers tear up their union cards in anger and frustration.

Chapter 9.

Kracha, Dobie and Julie visit Dorta who still lives in her old house on River Street in Braddock. Kracha and Dorta reminisce about the old days. Things have changed. The steady stream of immigrants has stopped; the close knit community has gone. The Irish have moved; with better salaries and the advent of the automobile, the Slavs have moved on. Negroes have begun to move into the area. Both Dorta and Kracha call the Negroes

"shines" and "niggers." Dobie defends the "offensive" behavior of Braddock's Negroes by saying that they are just poor. Dorta and Kracha do not agree.

Chapter 10.

Work picks up in the mill. Dobie and Julie pay off their furniture debt and purchase their first washing machine. Kracha, Dzedo, suffers a mild stroke that temporarily paralyzes his left side. After two weeks, the numbness seems to have disappeared, and Kracha goes about his normal routine, only a little slower than before.

Chapter 11.

Because of his union activities, Dobie has been cut to two or three days a week, a secret that he is keeping from Julie. It is time to elect new E.R.P. leaders, and Dobie, Gralji and Burke decide to run against the incumbents and try to affect change from within. They are easily elected. Immediately, they ask for a twenty-percent wage increase, paid vacations, and cancellation of food box debts incurred during the depression. Management turns a deaf ear to their requests.

Chapter 12.

Dobie's group continues to work toward better wages and working conditions, but no changes come about. At an A.F.L. convention in Atlantic City, the heads of the coal miners' and carpenters' unions engage in a dispute which turns physical, and a new organization, the C.I.O., is formed.

Chapter 13.

Kracha dies.

Chapter 14.

Mikie comes home from New York City for his grandfather's funeral. Kracha is buried; his funeral coincides with the great Pittsburgh flood of 1936. Mikie and Dobie discuss the pros and cons of life in a mill town versus life in New York City. Dobie is content with his lot: he has a skill, a job, a wife and a home. Mikie wants more out of life; he wants to live in place where there is clean air and beauty.

Chapter 15.

Julie tells Dobie that they are expecting a baby in March or April; both are joyful and somewhat awed by the prospect of this new responsibility.

Chapter 16.

The C.I.O. takes aggressive action and forms the S.W.O.C. (Steel Workers Organizing Committee.) They have learned how to deal effectively with the government, the companies and the news media. Dobie goes into Pittsburgh to meet with the Labor Board on a regular basis, and he is called to Washington, D.C. to testify at government hearings about the abuses in the Braddock mills. Dobie's immediate supervisors, Flack and Todd, threaten to fire him, but Dobie and the other men leave their work and answer the federal subpoenas. Hegerty surprises the company side when he reveals in open court that he was asked to spy on his co-workers for the company.

Chapter 17.

The men return home from Washington on Christmas Eve. They go to the mill to see if they have paychecks and jobs after the Washington affair. They do because they are protected by the labor relations laws. There is a nasty confrontation with Flack during which Dobie speaks up for himself and the other workers. Flack backs down. He is angry, yet restrained. This is proof positive that the tide is surely turning in favor of the workers. Outside, Dobie pays a silent tribute to his father, Mike Drobecjak. Dobie is fulfilling his father's dreams.

Chapter 18.

There are discussions between the A.F.L. and the C.I.O. The unions are breaking a fifty-year strangle hold on labor. Dobie is hopeful for a better future for himself, Julie and their unborn baby.

APPENDIX B.

Pittsburgh Content Standards for Communications

Communications (Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking)

1. All students use effective research and information management skills, including locating primary and secondary sources of information with traditional and emerging library technologies.
2. All students read and use a variety of methods to make sense of various kinds of complex texts.
3. All students respond orally and in writing to information and ideas gained by reading narrative and informational texts and use the information and ideas to make decisions and solve problems.
4. All students write for a variety of purposes, including narrate, inform, and persuade, in all subject areas.
5. All students analyze and make critical judgments about all forms of communication, separating fact from opinion, recognizing propaganda, stereotypes and statements of bias, recognizing inconsistencies and judging the validity of evidence.
6. All students exchange information orally, including understanding and giving spoken instructions, asking and answering questions appropriately, and promoting effective group communications.
7. All students listen to and understand complex oral messages and identify the purpose, structure and use.
8. All students compose and make oral presentations for each academic area of study that are designed to persuade, inform or describe.
9. All students communicate appropriately in business, work and other applied situations.