

## **Introduction to the Study**

A great deal of empirical research in sociology, history, and political science has documented the propensity of working class (“blue collar”) individuals to support more liberal or progressive political parties who present themselves as advancing the interests of workers and their communities over the interests of employers (“business” or “industry”) who, for economic reasons, often seek to keep wages low, minimize investment in worker safety, externalize the costs of production through pollution, etc. The pattern is evident in many nations. However, the United States presents many exceptions to the general pattern.

The Republican Party has emphasized issues of conservative family values and morals ([www.gop.com](http://www.gop.com)). The Republican platform combined with a working class income creates a tough choice when selecting a political preference. “Republicanism has become the Baskin Robbins of academia: maybe not twenty one flavors, but it’s getting closer all the time” (Ross 324). Party politics are attempting to appeal the largest amount of voters as possible. If there are several “versions” of what could be called a “Republican”, then like the twenty one flavors of ice cream each voter is bound to find a candidate to support.

There is, however, less research on events at the local level that help to create a political culture among working class communities that makes them respond so strongly to these non-economic issues. Is the national Republican Party, generally considered to be the party of business, simply appealing to a “natural conservatism” among the working class, or are there processes of political socialization that are subject to influence by industry that create the value systems that make these appeals successful?

“In neglecting local processes and workers' lived experiences, scholars have necessarily disregarded the constituency branches of political parties and their relationships to local workers' movements” (Langford 1).

The overarching research question I would like to examine objectively is **is there evidence that the coal industry has shaped the political culture of Tazewell County and, if so, through what mechanisms did it exert this influence?** This question also leads to a significant set of ‘sub questions’ that need to be addressed in the research.

They are as follows:

- Did the mining industry help create this religious culture historically?
- Does the mining industry continue to influence the religious culture today?
- What influence has the mining industry had on religion in the area?
- Are the conservative Christian political attitudes of this area due to the political socialization that the mining industry has created?
- What role does the education system play in shaping the conservative values of a mining community?

I want to understand the development of the current political culture of the county. I consulted prior research completed both historically and politically. The research should add to the knowledge of the reader by describing the links between the mining industry and political socialization of the area.

Political socialization, for the purposes of this study, may be defined as the way people obtain their political views and values from their respective contacts. Contacts may include parents, family, peer groups, social groups, work cliques and church

organizations, etc (Burns 194). Conservatism, by definition (and for the purposes of this study) is a “political philosophy based on tradition and social stability, stressing established institutions, and preferring gradual development to abrupt change...” (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Conservatism>). Conservatism is “...the ideology arising out of a distinct but reoccurring historical situation in which the fundamental challenge is directed at established institutions and in which the supporters of those institutions employ conservative ideology” (Huntington 456). Samuel Huntington describes a set of ideas that he calls the “essentials” to Edmund Burke’s creed of conservatism. Here he describes ideas that are applicable to this study as he says “...the community is superior to the individual...” and “Man is basically a religious animal and religion is the foundation of a civil society” (Huntington 456).

On an academic level, I realized while researching the county that there is significant historical research on coal, education, religion, churches, and cultural values of the area. However, there is no research weaving all of these elements together to tell a story of the county and its political development. “Historians at the very least need to be informed by an understanding of the [concepts political culture] tangled history in both history and political science”(Formisano 393). Tazewell County has primarily been researched by locals. This area is one that has not had much attention from outside researchers or academics.

Tazewell County, Virginia is in the heart of the coalfields is an excellent place to explore the links between industry, specifically the mining industry, and political culture. Tazewell County, with a population profile typical of Democratic strongholds and its conservative values, in addition to a low population turnover lends itself to researching

this phenomenon. The dominant industry that clearly exists there in addition to the physical isolation from national trends creates an environment in which to research the links between dominant industry and its subsequent effects, specifically, on the political culture. Tazewell County is nestled in the Appalachian Mountains. Physical isolation has been documented a disadvantage to incoming roadways, as well as deterrent for commercialism (R- W. Lester). A study of political socialization in a locale where a single industry has impacted the culture since the mid 1700's (Mullins 12) should reveal the cultural influence that the industry has made to the locality. "There are now five incorporated towns in the county...they were all transformed in terms of business, population and wealth when the great development of the coalfields came to the region at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century....within a few years, Southwest Virginia coal had become known worldwide, and the story of Tazewell County coal continues to shape her economy and people" (Leslie and Mullins 7).

The impact of specific industrial sectors on processes of political culture forms the basis of much recent political socialization theory. How can one explain the observed conservative political culture of Tazewell County? Tazewell County has been researched, historically, in depth. The historical southwest Virginia County is rich in heritage and has attracted many local historians. The Tazewell County Historical Society has over 300 members nationwide. The society has an active publication program, and has produced six pictorial histories of the county, while the seventh (about the Jewell Ridge Community) is currently being prepared. It is my observation that many local historians are concerned about the history of their surroundings, and are actively seeking

to preserve their ancestral roots. Most of the Historical society's books are dedicated to coal camp communities, and a majority of the research done relates to genealogy.

Several books have detailed the industries and people who developed the county. The rural communities in the area were pioneers of coal. Many local historians have taken notice of the significant contributions made by the county to the world energy market. Tazewell County Virginia by Louise Leslie follows the historical progression of the county, and the significant events and cultural aspects that exist there. Tazewell County Virginia, Images of America by Leslie and Dr. Terry Mullins compiles historical pictures of the County and documents its history, especially individual towns' developments with the coming of the train and the Industrial Revolution. All these local histories speak of the coal camps, and the churches. What, however, is the tie that binds these two together? How is society, today influenced by these historical and cultural roots? As these texts exemplify, there is major interest in religion and industry in Tazewell County. Yet there is a missing link of politics.

The research completed has focused on the coal industry and local culture. Research to tie the mining industry to these cultural aspects of the County needs to be completed. External variables are not as influential in Tazewell County, and therefore the research being done can clearly explain the mining industry's direct contributions to the political culture.

Most of the political research that I found on the county dated back to the 1920's. The authors Harman and Pendleton contributed greatly to the research that has been done on the politics of the county. However, each of these authors wrote in the 1920's and did not do so objectively. Harman, a Democrat, wrote his piece first and Pendleton, a

Republican, came approximately four years later to write a retort of Harman's work from the Republican side. The two works were written strictly from the points of view of each respective author.

## **Literature Review**

Several authors have turned their attention to single industry dominated communities, such as Tazewell County, and the type of culture that these industries facilitate. These types of dependent communities may be called “resource communities.” According to the Canadian Encyclopedia “resource towns are... characterized by the simplified occupational structure inherent in them”. “The middle class is relatively weak and usually includes only a small group of managers, merchants and professionals who are oriented, as far as careers are concerned, to organizations outside the town. Workers often migrate between resource towns in search of employment. Several factors discourage the development of a diversified economy that would generate a more heterogeneous work force. Isolation from major markets, relatively high wages paid by resource industries and high development costs combine to prevent the influx of secondary [industries]”. Most research emphasizes a distinct culture and the presence of a dominant industry.

This study may be compared, in part, to a study conducted in Canada during the Cold War. The Canadian study attempted to explain ‘labor unity politics’ by comparing two mining towns during the Cold War. The goal of this research was “...to explain how local processes influenced the character of working-class politics...” (Langford 1). Researchers in this instance felt it necessary to understand the respective influences that each locale had on the political behavior of its inhabitants.

Thomas Weaver also researched the issue of behavior in a rural development. In his model he described culture as “...a holistic principle that encompasses the notions, values and desires utilized by a particular group or people living in a single locale to

guide their behavior and adjust to the physical social and political culture...”(Weaver 841). Margret Conway adds to this notion of the importance of socialization and its effect on political culture by saying “...religious affiliation, ethnicity, and social structure have both direct effects on political party registration and indirect effects through political culture...” (Conway 6). She goes on to say that “...other research also provides evidence of the contributions that political culture can make to explaining patterns of political behavior” (Conway 6). Portions of Conway’s work may also tie the mining industry’s presence to the political behavior of the people who live in industry dominated communities. She says that “Patterns of political influence largely continue to reflect the predominant role of a small group of economic and political leaders...”(Conway 6). Rhys Williams has also examined the effects of religion on political behavior. He cites the “culturist approach.” “The assumption is that religion forms deeply held values that are the basis for more ephemeral political values. These values and their attendant political attitudes produce ‘opinion publics’ of like minded individuals...” (Williams 369).

The most significant piece of work contained in this Literature Review is the work of Charles Anderson’s article entitled “Religious Communalism and Party Preference”. Anderson, as a part of a study conducted at the University of Utah conducted quantitative research seeking an understanding of the greater phenomenon of religious communalism and party preference. Anderson’s study, much like this one, was concerned with the effect of religion and its place in the process of political socialization. “A majority of Protestant blue-collar workers with a religious communalism voted

Republican in Protestant City, whereas their less communal counterparts voted Democratic in the more customary working-class manner”(Anderson 36).

John Gaventa’s text *Power and Powerlessness Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley* also adds significantly to the argument that the coal camps were mechanisms of power and thus had an effect on the political culture of the area. “The key to control was the workplace- the mines. It only requires talking to miners, often coughing with ‘black lung’ from coal dust or gesturing with gnarled limbs from accidents, to know that the conditions in the mines were rough. But these men were dependent upon their jobs”(Gaventa 87). Gaventa also provides an understanding of the greater question at hand. He implies that the behavior of coal camp residents was an ‘industry behavior.’ Gaventa points out, during the coal camp times that he is studying that (late nineteenth century to early twentieth century), “One should also not forget that substantial numbers of the blue collar workers of the metropolitan centres of the North- car workers in Detroit, plant workers in Ohio, factory workers in Newark- are displaced Appalachians whose social background is still reflected in their industrial behaviors and attitudes” (Gaventa 95).

Many sources term Appalachia’s culture as unique and attribute this to its isolation and lack of outside influence. Authors such as Ron Eller have described Appalachia as an isolated region with its own identity. “...a single-industry economy frustrated the diversification of local enterprises and ties most mountain communities to the vagaries of national and increasingly international markets. Local political leaders, many of whom benefited economically from the outside interests, continued to defend the *status quo*. As the economy stagnates the gap between Appalachia and the rest of the

country grew” (Eller 198). Eller is not the only author who describes Appalachia as an isolated region. Authors Helen Lewis and Edward Knipe researched the Appalachian culture in the 1970’s as if it were an area facing colonization. These authors write about Appalachia being dominated by outside companies of wealth with the sole purpose of mining coal as cheap and efficient as possible without regard of the consequences to the area or the residents. They compare coalfield Appalachia, specifically Central Appalachia, to an example of colonialism. “It cannot be disputed that the coal interests came into the regions “uninvited,” that cultural patterns changed as a result of this intrusion, and that the area is controlled by the representatives of that industry” (Lewis and Knipe 36). These authors described coalfield Appalachia as a place where mining companies created churches, schools, stores and all the essential social gathering places of a community. Therefore this situation isolated them from influence outside the industry created town. “All of these changes resulted in a new system of social stratification hither to unknown in the traditional mountain society” (Lewis and Knipe 3). The authors of the article also pick up on some of the same themes that Gaventa is attempting to emphasize. What Lewis and Knipe are trying to explain is the idea that Appalachia is, in the Colonialism model, an example of the powerful (mining industry) and the powerless (camp inhabitants). “With the Exploitation model, however, one describes the Appalachians as a sub society structurally alienated and lacking resources because of processes of the total economic political system. Those who control the resources preserve their advantages by discrimination. The people are not essentially passive; but these "subcultural" traits of fatalism; passivity, etc. are adjustive techniques of the powerless” (Lewis and Knipe 9).

A review of recent election results reveal that residents of Tazewell County are in strong support of the modern Republican's conservative platform, particularly in recent Presidential elections. "Tazewell County [...] supported George W. Bush in the last two presidential elections. According to unofficial vote totals for 2004, Bush received 10,039 votes and John Kerry received 7,184 votes" (www.epodunk.com). There is evidence that Tazewell County has recently voted as a part of this "working class Republican" constituency.

Is this phenomenon, in Tazewell County, due to the presence of the mining industry? Eric Mathison, of the *Des Moines News* has his own theory on the working class constituency. He says this: "One theory offered is that evangelicals have aligned with business conservatives in hopes of getting their social agenda enacted. Business conservatives like Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush talk up their 'family values'..." (www.highlinetimes.com). A 2005 article reaffirms this claim, as the Pew Research Center states that "Working class voters are a key swing constituency, and in recent years the Republicans have made significant gains among this economic group, even as the Democrats have retained their strong support from labor union members and their immediate families"(http://people-press.org/commentary/display.php3?AnalysisID=114).

There is evidence to support the assertion that working class individuals are indeed attracted to the conservative Republican platform however, there are exceptions to this theory as well.

In 1960, John F. Kennedy's traveled to Appalachia to address a group of unemployed miners served as the 'exception to the rule.' He prepared his speeches to address the mining constituency that he was sure he could "win over" by addressing the

issue of religion. While this was an important portion of Kennedy's campaign, he was taken by surprise when the mining constituency was more concerned about the economic crisis, and the fall of the coal boom they were currently facing (Eller 201). After Kennedy realized by playing on the economic situation and the priority of the coal industry, he learned he could sway this mining community's vote. After the monumental televised "great debate" of 1960 where he promised economic relief for miners, he then received 60 percent of the voters in the primary forcing his challenger out of the race (Eller 202). As a senator, Kennedy came to the area with stereotypical conceptions of the political beliefs that he needed to emphasize in order to win an Appalachian constituency over. All he had to do now was address the needs and follow through with his campaign promises.

John F. Kennedy may have been the exception to the rule, as a majority of residents supported his presidency on the Democratic ticket. However, his commitment to the people of the area and their priorities played a large role in his election and the support he received from the area. "Appalachia was a hotbed of social activism in the 1960s, and the War on Poverty fueled the desire for change" (Eller 210). Kennedy's story is significant here as his attempts to win the "Appalachian vote" changed the course of politics in American History. Although he did not live to see the outcome, his efforts led to the passage of what is known as the Appalachian bill. "In 1960 with a Catholic heading the Democratic ticket religious differences in party preference between Protestants and Catholics were much greater than differences between social classes in religious groups" (Anderson 32). Anderson's study of political socialization is incredibly significant here. "The findings tend to confirm the hypothesis that a person's degree of

involvement in his religious community is positively related to a person's tendency to vote in the religion's traditional political direction for the Protestants and the Mormons, but not for the Catholics" (Anderson 38).

President Lyndon Johnson "...praised the act as 'landmark legislation', not only because it committed the nation to fulfilling the promise of human dignity and destiny in this long neglected region but because it reflected close cooperation between all levels of government. This measure, he believed, was 'the truest example of creative federalism in our times'" (Eller 208).

## **Background Information**

Mining remains the main industry of the region. “Prior to the 20th century, the people of Appalachia were geographically isolated from the rest of the country” (<http://micronations.wikia.com/wiki/Appalachia>). Tazewell County consists of a land area that is 522 square miles. The population of Tazewell County is 45,000 ([www.uvawise.edu/gmec/Counties-Cities/tazewell.html](http://www.uvawise.edu/gmec/Counties-Cities/tazewell.html)). Tazewell County, specifically the studied mining communities, are surrounded by the Appalachian Mountains and physically as well as socially isolated from a significant amount of interaction from outside the County. The mountainous terrain created physical obstacles to travel and the Tazewell County was formed from portions of Wythe and Russell counties to avoid travel over the mountainous terrain (Mullins).

Appalachia, in its entirety “...as defined in the legislation, from which the Appalachian Regional Commission derives its authority, is a 200,000-square-mile region that follows the spine of the Appalachian Mountains from southern New York to northern Mississippi. It includes all of West Virginia and parts of 12 other states: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia...” ([www.arc.com](http://www.arc.com))

“About 23 million people live in the 410 counties of the Appalachian Region; 42 percent of the Region's population is rural, compared with 20 percent of the national population. The Region's economic fortunes were based in the past mostly on extraction of natural resources and manufacturing. The modern economy of the region is gradually diversifying, with a heavier emphasis on services and widespread development of tourism, especially in more remote areas where there is no other viable industry...”

([www.arc.com](http://www.arc.com)) The mining industry brings with it thousands of jobs, in turn, drastically impacting the society. “The coal-mining industry, measured by the number of men it employs, outranks any single manufacturing industry and stands next to transportation and agriculture. As of the 2000 census the mining industry employs some 820,000 men of who 680,000 work underground. A 2006 survey reflects that 3.7 % of Tazewell County’s employment is specifically coal mining. The same source has cited Joy Manufacturing and Pemco Corporation (mining manufacturing companies) in the top list of employers in the county. Statistically, this percentage may seem relatively low however, one must bear in mind that the majority of the aforementioned employers are involved in designing, manufacturing, hauling and marketing mining supplies. There is a ‘ripple’ affect in the mining industry. In addition to the occupation of mining these manufacturing industries are responsible for creating mining equipment, roofing supports, and other necessary equipment for safe and efficient mining. Heintzmann Corporation, for example, specializes in steel roofing supports, arching and other mining products (<http://www.heintzmann.com/heintzmann/products.html>). “Since 1973 when America first experienced the energy crisis, coal has played an important part in meeting the nation’s energy needs and Tazewell County has felt the effects....Since 1973 when economic and industrial growth was given priority by the Tazewell County Board of Supervisors, *twenty-seven new manufacturing companies* have located in Tazewell County and four existing ones have expanded their operations substantially. The thirty-one new and expanded companies have spent *a total of \$22 million in capital expenditures and have provided 1,100 new jobs*” (Leslie 480).

The rugged terrain makes life difficult but the communities of the county are strong and closely knit ([www.uvawise.edu](http://www.uvawise.edu)). Tazewell County is found in a region of Appalachia called “Central App” by Heintzmann CEO John Breedlove. The “Central App” is home to the majority of the research in this project as it is home to the majority of the mining industry due to its proximity to resources, waterways, and hauling venues.

<sup>1</sup> Heintzmann Corporation, HEICO, Taylor Hydraulics, Simmons Equipment, Mine-Quest Equipment, Joy Equipment and Monk Mine Supply are a few of the many mining supply companies that employ thousands of workers throughout Tazewell County. ([www.city-data.com/county/Tazewell\\_County-VA.html](http://www.city-data.com/county/Tazewell_County-VA.html)). “It is estimated that 70 to 80 percent of the southwest Virginia minerals is owned by four or five large corporations. And David Walls (1969, 15) lists seven firms which produce one-third of the coal in Central Appalachia” (Edward and Knipe 16).

People of various education levels are employed across the county in these types of production and manufacturing fields.

The main industrial force of Appalachia is in place obviously due to the natural abundance of resources found on site. Thomas Jefferson noted as early as 1785 that “...Coal is known to be in many places in the Laurel Mountain and in the Ohio...” (Mullins 12). At this point Jefferson was unaware of the significance coal would play into shaping this culture. The land he was referring to is present day Tazewell County, and present day West Virginia regions that was at the time a portion of the Virginia County. There are several mentions throughout local histories that indicate that Tazewell County was rich in resources, and as early as 1852 historian George Bickley noted that

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<sup>1</sup> Please refer to Appendix 2 to obtain a map and geographical information about Tazewell County.

mining would be a driving industrial force in the county as he observed that coal exists everywhere (Mullins, 12). The mining industry, over the course of several years, has led to the development of company towns, and abundance of oral history, lifestyle changes, and the tradition of the miner.

Local tradition says that the potential importance of the coal seams in the mountains of Tazewell County would someday be a great asset to the community. However, it was not until 1860 when a local man by the name of “Jordan” burned a ‘big black rock’ and realized this could be consumed by the fire. He later began using this resource as a source of heat for his own home, and profit from a backyard business where he sold this mystery black rock that fed fires for a penny a bushel (Mullins 12-16).

It is my observation that coal is the foundation of the culture and contributes to all aspects of life in Tazewell County. The mining industry’s presence, via it’s various influences, has shaped the religious, educational and political culture of the three coal camp communities in Tazewell County. Coal mining is said to be the “engine that drove a nation towards modernity.” According to Mining Engineer John Breedlove, “the coal industry is the driving force for the Appalachian Economy.” But the number of miners is decreasing with intensive surface mining. “Despite the decline in mining employment, coal production has remained high and has boomed in the 1970’s” (Edwards and Knipe 6).

Also community infrastructures are being destroyed. People are leaving the area; there are a variety of problems causing population loss in many coalfield areas. The United States leads in coal production surpassing Germany, South Africa, Poland, and

others in the “ton per man” production, with the majority of the mining taking place in the Appalachian Mountains (R-Breedlove). “The United States has been among the top seven countries in the share of international coal market exports since 2000”

(<http://usasearch.gov/search?affiliate=commerce.gov&v%3Aproject=firstgov&query=coal+production>).

Why all this mining in a rural community such as Tazewell County? According to Heintzmann CEO, John Breedlove “it is ‘cheaper’ to use the region as a base” for production and shipping because of the geographical location. The region is geographically an excellent position as haulers can reach both extremes of the entire region. Tazewell County is easily accessible to Interstate 81, Interstate 77 and US Route 19/460. The County’s terrain is actually quite rough, despite its relative location to a few major roadways. US 19/460 is actually the only major roadway that runs through Tazewell County, however, the two major interstate highways can be reached within an hours drive from the majority of geographic areas in the county. Haulers can easily utilize these interstate highways and waterways, specifically the Clinch River. Many would argue that the world’s largest coal reserves are located on the opposite side of the United States; however, most Western coal reserves are Government controlled, and the type of coal found in the West requires too much maintenance to be profitable (R-Breedlove).

The Appalachian region is rich in history and culture ([www.uvawise.edu](http://www.uvawise.edu)). The “Plain Folks” image is important to any politician interested in the area’s constituency. In David Billing’s 1990 review he makes this point evident. “To exercise moral and intellectual leadership over a society, a group must win the support of dependent groups

by connecting their perceived interests of these groups with their own. The ability to shape such preconceptions is an important power resource (Gaventa 1980, pp.15-20)” (Billings 6). Politicians and office seekers recognize the size and importance of the Appalachian constituents. Recently Hilary Clinton, in her race against Barack Obama has paid special attention to Appalachia in her primary campaign. “...The Democratic primary vote is low in many parts of Appalachia (outside heavily unionized areas of West Virginia and portions of Kentucky, Pennsylvania, and Virginia), where Republican voting loyalties go straight back to the Civil War. And Appalachia is also not much of a fertile territory for political independents, partisanship being a fighting matter for many residents.”([http://www.thedemocraticstrategist.org/strategist/2008/04/wine\\_trackmoonshine\\_track.php](http://www.thedemocraticstrategist.org/strategist/2008/04/wine_trackmoonshine_track.php)).

President Harry Truman visited Southwest Virginia (Tazewell County), I believe he said it best. He asked “what made Democrats in the southwest so different from those in other parts of The Commonwealth” (Leslie 487). He was told that “In the rest of Virginia Democrats were fighting Democrats. In Southwest Virginia Democrats fight Republicans” (Leslie 487). “Political pots have boiled for generations in southwest Virginia. In some areas there have been killings resulting from political disagreements. It’s been said that the slogan for Ninth District politics might be ‘All’s fair in war and politics’ “(Leslie 488).

Pop culture has taken notice of the positive attitudes in the face of strife and challenges. Non-natives are quick to recognize the unique culture that exists within these mountains as well. “You just don’t know until you live there what it is like” (R-W. Lester). There are multiple songs and movies throughout recent history that draw

attention to the coal boom, the hard work of the miner, and the pride associated with being a part of this workforce. Homer Hickam's *October Sky* and *Matewan* both were box office hits. Homer Hickam's book *Rocket Boys* discusses the importance of the company town. The author, in his text, describes a town that has been dominated by the industry of the mining corporation. "Our house was on a corner where the state highway turned east toward the mine.....A mile down Main was a large hollow in the mountains, formed where two creeks intersected. Here were the company offices and also the company church, a company hotel called the Club House, the post office building, which also housed the company doctor and the company dentist, and the main company store (which everybody called the Big Store). On an overlooking hill was there turreted mansion occupied by the company general superintendent..."(Hickam 3). Hickam's description of the coal town exemplifies, through a child's eyes, the influence the mining industry on a rural community and its dominating control of the culture. He also draws a reference to the superior socio-economic status of the 'big shots' by pointing out that the company 'higher ups' live in the mansion, as opposed to a similar company house.

This research is focused on three coal camps in Tazewell County: Jewell Ridge, Pocahontas, and Bishop. Coal Camps were the communities created by coal companies. The companies often provided housing, recreation, general stores and worship centers for their employees. "As in many other coal-mining areas, the coal companies in southwestern Virginia dominated the towns they founded and their inhabitants. Despite divisions along the lines of class, race, and national origin, these towns often had a sense of community. If they could find nothing else in common, families found solidity in the hardships of mining coal."

([www.lva.lib.va.us/WHATWEHAVE/notes/coal\\_mining\\_camps.pdf](http://www.lva.lib.va.us/WHATWEHAVE/notes/coal_mining_camps.pdf)).

### Jewell Ridge background information

Jewell Ridge is located approximately seven miles from the nearest town of Richlands, named for the rich resources that exist there, and it occupies approximately 18,000 acres. The town was actually built for the sole purpose of creating living quarters for those who extracted the coal from the mines in 1915. There were two men who had quite a bit of influence in the forming of this town: Mr. George St. Clair, and Mr. Thomas Righter. These men owned the land they intended to work; and with their savvy professional judgement and community clout, they convinced the railway to extend tracks to their property. The “coal camp” site was chosen so that the residents would be far away from the coal dust that lingered over the mines. The highest ridge of the 18,000 acre tract, almost 3,500 feet above sea level would become the company town (Leslie 104-109).

“Life in the coalfield towns was tough. Nevertheless, the promise of a job, a better life, and a brighter future for the miner and his family attracted hundreds of new residents to the coalfield communities” (Mullins 30). Jewell Ridge was no different. The promise of employment, housing, and some sense of community was enough to entice 650 male employees by 1920 to move their families to the row of 120 “neat white houses” in Jewell Ridge’s company town. “One hundred and twenty neat white houses were built, a row on either side of the road running along the spine of the ridge” (Tazewell County Heritage 7). The town eventually became complete as a community, and individuals took root rather quickly. The amenities of the company town came to include a school, many churches, a clubhouse with a gymnasium, a post office, and a

large company store in a central plaza. Throughout the coal boom and later development in the community “the ridge,” as it is known by locals came to have a theater, its own radio station, water purification, and the electrical plant.

After World War II, the coal company began to scale back. Coal camp housing was no longer the responsibility of the mining company. The corporation sold the company houses to the residents privately. Jewell Ridge didn’t become a total ghost town because the people recognized what a wonderful, nostalgic, and breathtaking place they had to live. In addition to that, a simple scale back of the industry’s expense by selling homes did not mean that coal was not still being mined. The mining industry was the binding factor that held this group of people together as a community. There are still residents who live in the original coal camp. Jewell Ridge School is now closed and their students are bused to Richlands area schools. The old elementary school is used as an off-campus site for Southwest Virginia Community College.

The mining industry’s decline in the 1980s left Jewell Ridge barren. Local oral history says that by the river is the area known as “Jewell Valley” in which lives the souls of those who died in the mines of Southwest Virginia. The mining families of the area who remember the coal camps still pay homage to their cultural roots and, as I would phrase it, demonstrate a pride of place. Gaventa also emphasizes this theme in his work. “A common language and pride in work are important. The single industry of mining has added an integrative bond to the existing bonds of traditional culture”(Gaventa 129). “Today the residents, many of which are descendents of the original employees, still have a great pride in their community and host a Homecoming Festival each summer” (Tazewell County Heritage 7). Memorials grace the countryside of Appalachia in

remembrance of hard working individuals who dedicated their lives to the regional industry. Each person indicated that they continue to live in the region partly because of the pleasant environment.

Interviewee Dot Dye recalls some of her fondest memories at the Coal Camp “Clubhouse” of Jewell Ridge. She says, [. . .] we’d all get together and play games, and we’d have the biggest time. We never even left the place.” Dot Dye was a great resource on the topic of coal camps and community. She seemed to really enjoy speaking about these topics and has significantly more to say than other interview participants. She went on to say that they did everything as a group in the coal camp. “The kids would get together and sleigh ride, eat meals and snacks at the clubhouse[. . .] we did everything as a group [. . .] were one big family.” A sense of camaraderie was evident amongst all interview participants as they spoke about their ‘raising.’ Strouth said, “...everyone knew everyone.” Each participant fondly remembered their former lives on their respective involvement with the coal camps, and look back with nostalgia.

#### Pocahontas background information

“Any history of Pocahontas, Virginia must necessarily be a history of the Pocahontas Coal Field. As early as 1860, coal was used in a blacksmith shop. The seam used was 13 feet thick” ([http://wvweb.com/www/pocahontas\\_mine](http://wvweb.com/www/pocahontas_mine)). Pocahontas was developed by the Southwest Virginia Improvement Company in 1881-83 ([www.coalcampsusa.com](http://www.coalcampsusa.com)) which recognized a need for housing and a sense of community among its workers.

“The coal seams—Pocahontas No. 3, No. 4, No. 6, and No. 11—are some of the best coal to be found in the world, and are rated at 15,000 Btu/lb...”

([http://www.com/www/pocahontas\\_mine/](http://www.com/www/pocahontas_mine/)). The mines thrived because of their rich and vast resources as well as the proximity that they had in relation to railways and shipyards. Norfolk and Western railroads did a great deal of hauling the coal mined from these seams. It was a man named Graham who initially was able to persuade the rail company to take notice of the vast variety of local resources in the mountains of Tazewell County. The New River railroad was hesitant at first, but after testing the supply of coal in the county they found the product to be superior. A group of Philadelphia entrepreneurs teamed themselves with a local entrepreneur and purchased prime land that they expected to yield a great deal of profit in the upcoming years (Mullins 12-18).

The Southwest Virginia Improvement Company bought 406 acres from Mr. Jordan Nelson, the man responsible for the 'black rock' discovery, for \$1,932.00. In addition to this they paid \$4,000.00 for an additional 500 acres of mineral rights (Tazewell County Deed Book 18, Page 93). The Southwest Company became the first to mine the coal in the small Tazewell County town of Pocahontas.

Faith is a significant part of the coal community and this is where Pocahontas coal companies contributed greatly. Religion and Christian values are deeply rooted in Tazewell County. In the minute locality of Pocahontas, for example, there are eight Christian churches and one synagogue. The Southwest Virginia Improvement Company, when building the company coal town, built the Union Church (Brewster 54) thus contributing to the development of a religious community. Nine places of worship are not an overwhelming number until the demographics of the area are taken into consideration. As of the census of 2000, there were 441 people, 190 households, and 122 families residing in the town ([www.answers.com](http://www.answers.com)). Church numbers are amazing when

considered relatively with the population of the town. One structure in Pocahontas that is still in good condition is St. Elizabeth Roman Catholic Church. St. Elizabeth was founded in 1896 for all of the European immigrants in Pocahontas. Some of their descendents may still live in the area, since the church still hosts an annual Hungarian Cabbage Roll ("Hunky hand grenades") Dinner ([www.coalamposusa.com](http://www.coalamposusa.com)).

### Bishop background information

The mining industry of Southwest Virginia, and the need for expansion actually led to the creation of the Bishop Community. Eventually Pocahontas Fuel Company needed to expand so Crockett's Cove, now known as Bishop, Virginia, was formed. "In reality, the work force at the new mines was growing so rapidly that many miners and their families had to wait for months to obtain housing. Meanwhile, many miners and their families live in make- shift 14' x 14' tents which lined the holler where Bishop was coming into existence" (Mullins 92). "Bishop was a bustling coal company in Northern Tazewell County during the 1930s and the 1940s. Long Row was the home of many coal miners and their families as the 'model' coal camp" (Leslie 89).

Crockett Cove's mines were much anticipated in the rural Tazewell County community. Pocahontas Fuel Company was moving into the industry and a report proposed that "Crockett's Cove was destined to become one of the leading mining communities in the country. It was said that the throbbing of the industrial revolution would shatter the stillness of the forest-clad hills..." (Mullins 75). The industrial revolution in the region, and the success of the mining industry created a common sense of hope and optimism amongst residents.

### Religious Culture

It is my observation that religion, education and politics are particularly important in defining the area as there seems to be a correlation between all of these elements. What is it about Tazewell County that makes this interesting mix of cultural elements so unique? In order to fully understand the culture of the county, one must first understand the components that exist there.

“Religion in Appalachia is as diverse as the landscape it encompasses...” (McCauley 179). There are numerous churches in Tazewell County, most of which are Protestant Christian churches such as Methodist, Presbyterian, and Episcopal. Also existent were the fundamentalist churches such as the ‘Assemblies of God’ and other independent churches. “The majority of [the] faithful[...]classify themselves as Christian and claim either Baptist or Holiness Pentecostal as their church tradition...”(McCauley 179). There are over 125 churches labeled ‘Christian’ churches currently in Tazewell ([www.roots.web](http://www.roots.web)). “In terms of geography, Appalachia is distinguished by having the largest regional religious tradition in the United States[...]Appalachia is also distinguished by having the nation’s oldest religious tradition” (McCauley 190, 191).

A 1978 article written by a faculty member of West Virginia State University offers an alternate explanations as to why the religious and subsequent political culture of mining communities have developed the way they have. The article targeted the entire United States and is no way specifically referencing Tazewell County. However, the way that the authors explain the emphasis of religion in mining communities across the United States is quite applicable to the project at hand. “The major hypothesis suggests that fundamentalism persists because it acts as a buffer for the large number of rural and low income Appalachians who feel alienated because of dislocations that took place in the

region in the last few decades.”(Photiadis 32-44) The findings of this report are relevant because they draw conclusions that religion in Appalachian areas has a direct connection to the socioeconomic status of the region. “Findings indicate that aspects of religiosity involving strong potential for alleviation of anxiety (for instance, need to use religion as a buffer to the outside world) tend to be associated not simply with lower socioeconomic status [...] but also with alienation” (Photiadis 32-44). They also have this to say: “Membership in churches with fundamentalist attitudes tends to be positively associated with the anxiety of alleviation aspects of religiosity while membership in institutionalized churches is associated with aspects that involve status recognition.” The churches, specifically of the coal companies, seemed to serve to alleviate anxiety and promote strong ties in social peer groups. “Within the churches there continues the development of an intensely felt, other worldly, fundamentalist religion which served as an outlet for community expression and an important agent of socialization” (Gaventa 92).

### Educational Culture

“The tie between religion, conservative values and education in many communities of this era was also present in Tazewell County” (Mullins 47). The local clergy men served as the first officials in the Tazewell County Public School System. The idea of a company town flourished and as education became more popular a school house and a church became the trademark gathering buildings of a coal community in Tazewell County (Mullins 47-49).

Education, and the priorities that is places on society directly relates to political culture. The way individuals are socialized, the values they maintain, and the issues they consider important are directly related to education. The two sources of higher

education in Tazewell County reflect the relationship between the mining industry and the Christian, conservative value system that the mining industry has played a major role in creating. Despite the small size of the county's population there are two higher education centers located within the County's limits. Bluefield College is a four year private, conservative Baptist College ([www.bluefield.edu](http://www.bluefield.edu)). The second higher education center is Southwest Virginia Community College. SVCC is a two year junior college on the western edge of the County. The two higher education centers of Tazewell County exemplify the priorities of the community, and thus become applicable in the discussion of the relationship between the mining industry and the culture it creates. Southwest Virginia Community College provides vocational programs relevant to the mining industry while Bluefield College was founded with Baptist religious affiliations ([www.sw.edu](http://www.sw.edu), [www.bluefield.edu](http://www.bluefield.edu)).

Bluefield College was founded in 1922 by three Baptist men who wanted to give land, effort, and money to form a Christian center for formal education. ([www.bluefield.edu](http://www.bluefield.edu)) Bluefield College began as a two year college but in 1977 it was accredited as a full four year college. Today Bluefield College offers traditional and non-traditional degree programs in a variety of academic subjects.

Southwest Virginia Community College was the solution to many Tazewell County residents' problems in the 1960's. "It was apparent that a shifting trend toward more technical-level careers was developing, requiring education and training beyond high school, but fewer than four years of college" (Leslie 606). Vocational skill-based programs were implemented to cater to this ever-growing need in Tazewell County.

Often times an education in Tazewell County is a result of the parents passing down and teaching their skills to their respective offspring as opposed to a college experience. 17.9 percent of Tazewell County residents have attended some college, and mere 7.3 percent inhabitants complete a Bachelor's Degree according to the 2000 census ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)). The result has led to a strong connection to the traditional industries (farming and mining) of the region as they have been the "family business" for multiple generations ([www.tazewellhistory.org](http://www.tazewellhistory.org)). Historically, formal education in Tazewell County was a novel concept. "The proportion of people in Tazewell County over the age of 25 without a high school diploma is 76% higher than in Virginia."([www.uvawise.edu](http://www.uvawise.edu)) College was typically thought of as a foreign idea, and a rebellion from the traditional culture of Appalachia. Mining tended to be taught to the upcoming generation, and the mining techniques began to replace farming and agricultural skills as "traditional education". "It's in your blood....something about the smell of coal being cut. [I'm a] third generation coal miner..."(R-Breedlove).

However, the industrial boom in Appalachia facilitated a growing interest in a formal education, and an interest in the means to finance such a venture. In the coal camp era (1837-1939) natives acknowledged the rural setting in which they lived and saw a formal education as a way to better themselves. "...it [college] seemed like a good idea...I didn't know what I wanted to do then, but a college education gets you farther even here..."(Geisen 71).

Currently, as culture shifts and grows Appalachians are more aware of the benefits of a formal education. Mining foremen in the 1950s were expected to have a minimum of a high school diploma and sometimes were even dropouts. Currently a

Master's Degree in Mining Engineering is a pre-requisite for the position of foreman (R-Breedlove). A recent report indicates that only 11% of adults 25 and older in Tazewell County have obtained a Bachelor's degree ([http://www.city-data.com/county/Tazewell\\_County-VA.html](http://www.city-data.com/county/Tazewell_County-VA.html)).

Education and the attainment of 'formal education' have been studied by various non-profit research organizations in the state. According to [www.yesvirginia.org](http://www.yesvirginia.org) the educational achievement of Tazewell County doesn't reach far past the level of high school diploma. Even in current times "Appalachia lags behind the rest of the nation in educational attainment" (Billings 318). These statistics lend themselves to further prove that a significant amount of the population works within the realms of traditional occupations that require no formal education. Mining safety and certification classes are offered through county high schools and vocational schools incorporated with the public high school system ([www.tazewell.k12.va.us](http://www.tazewell.k12.va.us)).

### Political Culture

Dating as far back to the Civil War and Reconstruction there was this idea of Democratic-Republicanism in Tazewell County. The Reconstruction era was a confusing political time in American History. Despite the political unrest there were still Conservative Republicans in the Tazewell County area. "Virginia was one of the strongest powers of the Confederacy and those who fought for the Southern cause were Democrats. But there was a pocket in the Southwest Corner of Virginia[...]where men had held out for the Union, and their sons and grandsons were usually Republicans"(Leslie 488).

The association that Tazewell County had with the platform of the Republican party led to the election of Col. Campbell Slemp. “In order to win an election to Congress, he lined up with the Republican party, which elected him for several terms” (Leslie 488). There were several Republican victories in the Ninth District, which encompasses Tazewell County, after Slemp’s election. This is important to note as these victories came “at a time when there were few Republicans east of the Blue Ridge and those in the Ninth District were the only ones who were able to keep their heads above water” (Leslie 488).

There are several elections, both statewide and locally, that support this claim. The Virginia State Board of Elections reports on several specific elections. In 2006 Tazewell County voted 55.58% in favor of a Republican Senator G. Allen. In the same election 85.97% of Tazewell County voters supported an amendment about marriage that stated “That only a union between one man and one woman may be a marriage valid in or recognized by this Commonwealth and its political subdivisions”(Virginia State Board of Elections).

It is fair to say that Tazewell County has a mixed yet atypical voting record. In recent years there have been victories from each party in the various elections. There is evidence that links Republican results to the coal camp community precincts. For example, in the Primary Election of June 2005, 100% of the Pocahontas and Bishop Precincts voted for Republican candidate J.W. Kilgore, while 85.7% of the Jewell Ridge Community supported him. In the 2005 race for Attorney General Republican S.E. Baril received 57.1 percent of the Pocahontas precinct, 50% of the Bishop precinct, and 28.6% of the Jewell Ridge precinct. Two out of three of these coal community precincts swayed

in favor of the Republican candidate, and significantly added to the 34.52% of votes he received from Tazewell County, as a whole (Virginia State Board of Elections).

Locally, it appears that residents of Tazewell County are influenced by how these candidates may improve the quality of life as well as contribute to the rural conditions of the area. “Local contests... are more intense, though party identification is rarely mentioned...” (Gaventa 143). Rick Boucher, for example is a Democratic House of Representatives member who represents the Ninth district of Virginia. Residents of Tazewell County voted with overwhelming approval for his continued place in office. According to the 2005 Virginia State Board of Elections Boucher received 129,705 votes from Tazewell County equaling a percentage of 67.76.

Locally, Congressional Representatives are the ones who are in a position to improve the quality of life, specifically in their respective constituencies. This is Rick Boucher’s forte. It appears as though the long run of this Democratic candidate and his secure political future is attributed to the ability to follow through with campaign promises. Boucher is held to social mandates by his constituency. Congressman Boucher is serving his thirteenth term in the U.S. House of Representatives representing Virginia’s Ninth Congressional District. He has contributed greatly to the area through a variety of public service programs. His work bringing public water, technology initiatives, and jobs to Southwest Virginia has secured him a long tenure in Congress representing Virginia’s ninth district (Office of Rick Boucher). The vote for Boucher comes from an obvious connection with the constituency of the area.

Objectively speaking, does the mining industry, as the main employer in the county, act as a mechanism to affect the political culture of the county? The main

industry in Tazewell County is the mining industry and all of its related vocations. Historically Tazewell County is known for the literal mining of coal. Modern day coal-related industries still thrive throughout the county. “Single industry communities are, by their very nature, relatively homogeneous. Related concepts of the ‘occupational community’ and of the ‘isolated mass’ are often used to explain the political and industrial behavior of the mining areas” (Gaventa 150). “They were historically characterized by a ‘homogeneity of ethical [...] character...’”(Dunaway 1).

This research incorporates case studies, which will link the mining industries’ effect to the region and better define their relationship with the mining industry include personal interviews and comments from residents of the county regarding topics surrounding the culture of Tazewell County. I issued each interviewed person a ten question survey in which they are to self-evaluate and answer questions about the county. The survey will provide structure for the discussion, while simultaneously leaving room for the interviewee to elaborate if he or she wishes.

This is a qualitative research design in which I plan to describe the observed social phenomenon, and relationships between the mining industry and religious, political, and educational beliefs. The research intends to investigate why the mining culture of Tazewell County has impacted the religious, political and educational culture of the area because of its presence in the county.

## **Methods**

The qualitative research will be done by examining case study sites and obtaining information from those interviewed. The research will investigate the nature of the processes affiliated with the mining industry that either did or did not serve to develop the political culture of the Tazewell County. It will allow the reader to understand the mechanisms by which the conservative political values are evident within Tazewell County largely because of the mining industry's presence.

The purpose of this research is to examine how the mining industry has helped to culturally define the area of Tazewell County, and in turn, significantly impacted the religious as well as political culture. The end result of this study should be an examination of the role of the mining industry in the shaping of the political culture.

All participants were interviewed using the same open-ended questionnaire. The open-ended questioning format was designed specifically in hopes of facilitating discussion and detailed responses.

The questions were general and intended to guide the interview and provide structure to the interview discussion without limiting the responses. The same questions were asked of each participant, yet the answers vary in their own right. Fifteen participants, five from each case study area were chosen as interview subjects.

The three coal camp study groups were chosen to represent the geography of the county. Jewell Ridge camp is at the Southern tip of the County while Pocahontas is at the far Northwestern corner. Bishop lies in between these two points. I will make

observations from the interview and then evaluate if these observations serve to answer my research question. <sup>2</sup>

In addition to interview participants I contacted companies who specialized in the complementary mining industries. I asked to speak with management. Most people were more than willing to participant, suggested colleagues, and led me to my next interview.

### Questionnaire Guidelines

Each interviewee was greeted with the same welcome and introduction. I followed the same format in order to move the interview along, yet allowed elaboration in responses in order to obtain as much information as possible.

These interviews were intended to obtain information about the mining industry and its respective relationship with interviewed subjects. I obtained personal experiences of interviewees with facts about the county and its respective industry in order to form a thesis that is suitable for the field of Political Science while incorporating some historical background information. The main subjects of research in this project are humans, and their perspectives on his or her experiences.

### Interview

1. How are you related to the mining industry?
  - Number of years in contact with the industry?
2. How long have you lived in Tazewell County? Why are you here?
3. What is your highest level of educational achievement?
  - Where did you receive your education?

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<sup>2</sup> Biographical Sketch of Interview Participants may be found in Appendix 1

- Did you receive your education in a mining community?
4. Do you consider yourself to be a political person?
    - Do you follow parties?
    - Tell me about your political values. Do you have any? If so, what are they?
  5. Do you consider yourself to be a spiritual person?
    - How important is church to you?
    - What experiences led you to church?
    - How has your work/career shaped your spiritual beliefs, if at all?
  6. What do you consider your top priority in life? Why?
  7. What do you feel like impacts your attitudes towards life?

## **Results**

It is important to note that the findings of this study are specifically related to the three studied coal camp areas, and are not meant to be a reflection of Tazewell County as a whole.

## **Historical Findings**

Tazewell County's religious roots are based in several very conservative groups of churches, and these churches in Tazewell County's early days were all tied into the mining industry. There is a clear correlation between these conservative schools of thought and the mining industry's presence. Deed Books in the Tazewell County Courthouse expose the relationships between early Tazewell County conservative churches and the mining industry. In a short research of the deeds in the County, I was able to find twenty five churches within a relatively short period of time whose land was deeded to them by coal companies.

In 1892 the Southwest Virginia Improvement Company (affiliated with coal) conveyed, as a gift, land in the Town of Pocahontas to the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church (Deed Book 34, Page Number 71). The Pocahontas Collieries Company conveyed, as a gift, land in the town of Pocahontas to the Trustees of the Baptist Church (Deed Book 63, Page Number 110). The list continues and similarities among these first churches in Tazewell County become evident. All of the first churches in Tazewell County are quite theologically conservative. Obviously there is a relationship between the two. The evidence found in the in the deed books of Tazewell County prove that these coal companies made many of these establishments possible by giving them land on which to gather. Based on the historical evidence, one could assume that the "Big Shots"

as they were sometimes referred to, who made the decisions within the coal companies realized that religion, gathering, fellowship and worship were necessary components of the “mini-societies” that they were trying to create in their coal camps. . “....A person’s depth of participation in his religious sub society seemingly has important implications of his political behavior” (Anderson 37).

Is there a connection between religion and political behavior in Tazewell County? There is evidence to suggest that being involved in religion, which plays a significant role in Tazewell County, directly effects a person’s political involvement and behavior. I have gathered results that justify the assumption that religious communities yield politically and religiously conservative residents. “...Membership not only has substantial influence on religious beliefs...but also contributes to political expression of those beliefs. One of the main ways in which religious adherents come to understand the connections between their doctrinal beliefs and politics is through the messages delivered from the pulpit and social interaction with other parishioners” (Layman 290).

In her article, "The Power of the Mustard Seed," Shulevitz considers group behavior and its relationship to conservative Christianity. She paired her research with that of sociologist Laurence R. Iannaccone of Santa Clara University. Together they suggest that “...that "strictness" is the clearest indicator of congregational strength and potential for growth. He defines strictness in terms of "complete loyalty, unwavering belief, and rigid adherence to a distinctive lifestyle." Thus, the churches that require members to hold definite doctrinal beliefs and to share common moral commitments are more likely to grow and remain strong than churches who have lower expectations in terms of both belief and behavior”( [www.albertmohler.com](http://www.albertmohler.com)). This explains the growing

trend of conservative churches; however, in this context it also lends itself to a greater understanding of how religion and religious communities, particularly conservative Christian, affect the political behavior of the congregation. “The most recent analyses of political behavior employs religious commitment as a conditioning variable...” (Layman 290).

### Results from Interviews

In Tazewell County, I have found that there are several important variables including, but not limited to, religion, education, family and community ties, social groups, peer groups, sense of pride, work ethic, coal camps, and the mining industry. The coal camps of the County through educational facilities and social structures that emphasize religion have cultured a sub society that affects patterns of behavior, specifically political behavior, throughout the county. My findings (specifically in the personal interviews) and observations offer evidence that the mining industry does facilitate a traditional value system characterized by traditional morals, family values, and mostly Christian beliefs in Tazewell County and thus this contributes to the political culture of the area.

I have found that the participants had similar responses to each of the questions. The participants were selected purposefully throughout the county, and thus I feel as though their similar responses reflect their similar life experiences and how the mining industry of the county has subsequently affected their lifestyles. Their answers to the interview questions as well as additional information provided has led me to a greater understanding of the processes by which the conservative religious, political and educational culture of Tazewell County has come to exist. As a native of the area under

investigation, I am not surprised by my findings. In truth, I anticipated religion to be discussed more throughout the interview process than it was. All participants indicated that they were engrained with a distinct culture. They each agreed that religion was saturated into the three studied coal camps and was an important factor in their respective lives that was distinctive from non-coal camp cultures. Participants made this observation. A similar response was because of family tradition in the form of involvement in a geographically dependent vocation. When discussing this aspect many reflected that they had a close tie to the county as their family remains here, and this is a value to them. “I lived in a coal camp since I was a little girl [...] we always lived here[...]it just felt like home” (R- Dye).

Many indicated that their career path shaped his or her lives. Each person interviewed went on to explain how and to what extent the mining industry has affected them. Each indicated in the interview that they were working-class individuals who held conservative beliefs despite the fact that they came from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. It is my observation that religion in the area is the key to unlock the understanding of political preference. Religion was emphasized by the industry as the company town’s built and endorsed centers of worship, religious peer groups aided in the socialization of the coal camps, and religion was interwoven into the coal camp communities. “Within churches there continued the development of an intensely felt... fundamentalist religion which served as an outlet for community expression and an important agent of socialization” (Gaventa 92).

Several interviewees asked to remain anonymous; therefore, I have assigned an alphabetical letter to those participants in order to use their respective information throughout this project. For example, a quote may appear as “Interviewee A”.

### Results Regarding Religion and Education

“Protestantism... [has]...historically been linked with the Republican Party[...] the higher the involvement of the individual within the Protestant...group...the greater the chance he will vote Republican” (Anderson 32). All interviewees indicated that they were indeed church members and that they had been so for their entire lives. “Churches can be understood as institutions that shape their member’s behavior” (Campbell 156). This observation supports the theory that the churches of the area have provided an opportunity for religion to be an agent of political socialization in the county, especially in the coal camp areas. A study in 1996 by Marsden suggests that there is a strong correlation between religion and its effect on political behavior. “Marsden claimed, not without reason that combined with ethnicity, religion ‘has been the best predictor of political behavior throughout most of the History of the United States...’” (Williams 368). This information further lends itself to explain the mining industry’s impact on the political culture of the area. “Religion influences political relationships [...]. religion affects political lives “behind the backs” of its participants....Religion is ‘implicit culture’” (Williams 370). The constant exposure to religion in a small community, and the identity of community that most industries facilitate (by creating company towns) are just avenues for the influence of religion on political behavior: “religion’s role as an ‘identity marker,’ [is]...remarkably robust in quantitative analysis of political behavior[...].That is, identity, particularly a sense of collective identity has important

political impact distinct from any given set of religious beliefs or political opinions” (Williams 369).

Most participants indicated that the mining industry had indeed had a direct impact on their Christian faith. Unfortunately, in a coal community there are always constant reminders of mortality. Incidents have developed a religious culture in these types of communities that is quite strong. “In the same way that a human group can not be without culture it cannot act politically without an ‘ideology’. In this sense any set of political attitudes, beliefs or values could be designated as at least a part of an ideology” (Williams 371). Ronnie Gillespie says this: “There were always people getting hurt[...]always people gettin’ killed[...]. It had a lot to do with religion. You had to deal with it [...] sometimes it {religion} was the only thing to get ya’ through” “There are probably few sections in the United States where religion is called upon to bear so many of the burdens of life”(Gaventa 92).

When asked how his career has shaped his beliefs, Rusty Ward, pastor and mining inspector responded “Working in the mining industry has given me an opportunity to witness the saving power of Jesus.” Beverly Farmer responded by saying that “working in it puts you in a position to realize your own mortality on a daily basis” Miner Participant “A” added to this sentiment saying that “anything could happen[...]spiritually I would say mining had a lot to do with it [career shaping beliefs]”. Margaret Conway’s research may also provide a link between religious life experiences and political attitudes. She describes the relationship between environment and political culture. In her research she includes Verba and Nie’s research: “views life circumstances

as influencing voter registration as well as other forms of political participation” (Conway 6).

Beverly Farmer, widow of a miner and raised in a coal community, speaks heavily of religion in her interview as well. She says this: “Everything I’ve done and endured has prepared me for the life I have now. I believe that God places certain people and situations before us so that we may learn lessons and strengthen our faith and spirituality...” (R-Farmer).

Two participants noted that religion was intertwined into their daily lifestyles in the coal camp. Dot Dye specifically recalls from her days in the Jewell Ridge Camp that teachers incorporated Religion into the daily curriculum: “schoolteachers used to take kids on gospel trips. They made sure we were always involved in church”(R-Dye). Dwight Billings, in his research regarding religion in the coal camps, speaks about religion being intertwined in the coal camp culture: “rural workers shared amongst themselves and their employers a religious tradition of evangelical Protestantism” (Billings 4).

Dye’s recollection of Sunday school teachers being a part of her young life is not a lone memory. There are historical references that speak about ‘educational wings’ being a part of churches throughout the county. Church and state were intertwined and also reliant on the mining industry for financial purposes specifically. A reference of Abb’s Valley Baptist Church exemplifies these ties in Tazewell County through 1941. “Rev. Bob Tyler, pastor, of Boissevain Baptist Church, saw the need for a mission church in the area. He and others began the long and tiring hours necessary for raising money

for construction. Rev. Tyler took some of the young people to various coal mines nearby on paydays to solicit funds for the building” (Tazewell County Heritage 8).

I have observed that mortality, injury and death are often elements of a coal community that facilitated this common priority placed on religion, church and spirituality. This is not to say that religious culture does not exist to this extent elsewhere. The point here is that the people who live in these communities within this county have developed this level of emphasis on religious culture because of the life events that have forced them to ‘find religion’. “Churches provided an important social gathering places as did the school in the community” (Mullins, 150). Religion, therefore, in Tazewell County is a mechanism that has contributed to developing the political values of the residents. “Another way to conceptualize the cultural influence’s on politics in through the lenses of interpretive anthropology. Geertz (1973a; 1983) has produced a number of important essays that explore the connections between ‘sacred cosmos’ and political order[...].Religion is a shaping force for political life” (Williams 370).

Ralph Childress has this to say about his mining and religious experiences: “Everyone needs to go to church. I’ve had a lot of close calls in the mines. One time I went down[...].cart loaded down[...].and went back. The whole intersection [of coal] in front of my buggy fell down [...].eight feet thick [...] shoved the canvas back in my face. Ten seconds earlier [...] that would’ve been me[...] puts ya’ to thinking[...] about what’s important in life and how you live”. Dye says that being around accidents all the time made you aware of “how precious life really is” She attributes her religious habits to some of the things she had to realize and face as a child and young adult. She also makes note that she felt as though she was made aware of such mortality and religion at such a

young age, and that these memories are so vivid to her because of her father's position in the mining community. Dye's father was the foreman of Jewell Valley. "I can remember there was a phone inside my house. We had the only phone in the camp because Daddy was a 'Big Shot'. Nobody else had a phone directly to their home, and when an accident happened they called Daddy. He had to tell the family." This memory also is evident in the Hickam novel about life in a company town. The father in the story is scolding his child as he says "I'm a company man, and that makes you a company boy, understand? [...] the black phone rang. He rushed past me into the foyer, snatched up the receiver, and yelled in it before whoever was on the other end had time to say a word. 'I'm coming, damn you!' (Hickam 122).

Rusty Ward mentioned that he attributed his hard days work to the fact that he had the Lord's guidance on his side: "God is what has changed my attitude toward life. Life in general is hard but even harder outside of God. God equips me each day to handle what comes my way[...] good or bad [...]" Daniel Orr thought along the same lines as he replied that what keep him going was a " [his] wife and trying to make a good life for the both of us and our future". Beverly Farmer makes note that she believes the struggles she has had to endure during her own lifetime has made her a stronger individual. "Being involved so closely to the mining industry [...] has put me in a position where I either had to handle what life gave me, move on, or be taken over by it. I made the choice to deal with it, and to move on. The struggles I have come through, in the end, have made me a better person" (R-Farmer).

Church groups also added to the political socialization of residents in a variety of ways. "A lot a missionaries came to the elementary school [...] at least once a month to

bring Bible stories and songs. We had to recite Bible verses”. (R-Miner Participant “A”). “The missionaries that came were the sweetest, sweetest people you would ever, ever meet. They helped us. They were kind to us, they helped us. People respond to kindness” (R-Lester). “I was three years old, got up sang ‘Silent Night’ in the church that the missionaries [who came to our school] built” (R-Miner Participant “A”). Bible school, conducted in the public school buildings was also a common occurrence amongst Appalachian coal company towns. Dot Dye, specifically remembers this being a part of her education experience in ‘the camp’.

Schools, in the coal camps, often served as a venue to promote religion. Religious values of the camp became intertwined in school, church, and the community and thus affecting political behavior. Schools in Tazewell County coal communities may also be considered a mechanism of political socialization. “Coal companies in the region had gained a reputation for supporting education in the coalfields” (Mullins 143) Education, particularly in the case study coal camps, helped to create a political value system. “Education, as well as coal mining, introduced the native mountaineers to new ways of thinking and to the values of an industrial rather than agricultural society” (Mullins 143). “Other than the workplace, the only organizations or institutions in the camp which both the community together were the schools and churches. Both were encouraged and controlled by the same interests which controlled the workplace. As for the schools, the teachers were usually hired and the buildings usually financed by the companies” (Gaventa 91).

### Results Regarding Politics

The most interesting similarity among participants that I found was the participant's responses when asked about political affiliation. None of the participants in the Jewell Ridge group had registered with either party. All interviewees indicated that they were working-class individuals, and all responded, in their own way, that their political beliefs were conservative. Conservative political followers have "The tendency to prefer an existing or traditional situation to change" (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Conservatism>).

Farmer says that her political values are "somewhat parallel to personal values. The difference between right and wrong, truth and lies" Rusty Ward mentioned that he preferred candidates with "good moral values". The responses from each participant implied that their political choice would be made on the issues each candidate presented despite party lines. These responses also indicate a Tazewell County native's desire for a candidate who is Christian as well as conservative in policy matters. "People associate Christians as being conservative in all aspects of their life. The Republican Party in these last few years has seemed to have a monopoly on Christian salvation. They think if you are a Democratic then you can't be a Christian"(R-Miner Participant "A").

Is there a link between the religion evident in Tazewell County and the political behavior? According to an 1897 study by Durkeim, this assumption may hold true. He studied what he called "moral communities" and their effect on behavior. "The moral community is based on two elements. The first is *social integration*, the density and intimacy of attachment among group members. The second is *moral integration*, the collective conception of the norms, and especially of the religious beliefs that legitimate the norms (Stark 276). Stark's study in the 1980's began as an evaluation of delinquent

behavior and how religion and church membership played a part in the behavior. “In communities where kids are religious, then those who are [religious] will be less delinquent than those who aren’t” (Stark 275). “When [...] networks are religious, religious concerns will be amplified and made a valid part of everyday interaction” (Stark 275).

During the interviews no one mentioned a party preference. Comments were focused on candidate’s issues, and beliefs. Is this a true indication that the voting behavior of this study group is clearly candidate-based and evidence that the mining industry and all it’s mechanisms of socialization have significantly impacted the area’s political culture? If so, these results lead me to believe that there is a clear identification between values, and the way Tazewell County voters cast their vote. Typically, one would think that a Democratic, working class candidate may be more attractive to this group of people. During this research I have discovered that areas with a single industrial influence, such as Tazewell County, may be the exception to this stereotype of blue collar workers voting as Democrats.

I also observed during interviews the process by which this political culture developed. Not all memories of church and religion specifically had to do with the mining industry; however, most responses were in some way, if not directly, related to the mining industry. This career choice has created a lifestyle for those involved as well as their immediate families. What I found in my research of Tazewell County was a ‘working class Republican’ type of voter.

Generally, from my interview group, I found a hardworking individual who would be considered ‘working class’, religious and tended to vote conservatively despite

the fact that they may be crossing party lines. Most participants indicated that they did not follow parties. The interview process reaffirmed that this self-proclaimed 'non-followers' of political parties, whether they knew it or not, were voting for a Republican platform. Miner "A" responded by saying: "Not really [...] I vote everything. I would vote for someone if I think they have their priorities in line. I try to follow the Presidential election more; I found out here lately though that these delegates can help you out too." Miner "A" indicated throughout the interview that he was impressed by candidates that followed through with their promises, and remained truthful. He indicated that he felt betrayed by his vote for George W. Bush in the last presidential election.

Ralph Childress recalled an incident locally that has led him to vote for delegates who become involved aiding the "hard working man". The results I have found indicate that respondents judge candidates on the basis of merit, values, and how they may contribute to the betterment of the lives of the voters.

## **General Research Results**

What must be noted is not that this link between the mining industry and Tazewell County exist, but why does it exist. It should be noted that the research results are limited to the three studied coal camps. What has caused these residents to acquire these attitudes? What events in their lives, because of their situation, have allowed them to express these influences in their everyday lives? What mechanisms exist, in the community; have helped to facilitate a conservative political attitude?

Family and community are obvious mechanisms of political socialization in that they form the peer groups from which people most likely obtain their personal value systems and political attitudes. “This process starts in childhood, and the family and the schools are probably the two most important political teachers” (Burns 194). I have observed that the industry through its coal camps facilitates strong family ties, contributes in this way to the development of political culture in Tazewell County. The coal camps serve as an excellent breeding ground to form and foster these types of relationships.

Heritage and pride are also mechanisms of political socialization. Generations of people choosing the same work as their ancestors, and therefore leading similar lifestyles offers an explanation as to why Tazewell County residents have consistently held similar conservative political values. Industry, in Tazewell County, is a matter of heritage according to John Breedlove. He says that “...anyone who’s worked underground will tell you the same thing...its addictive”. “The workplace experience of the underground miner also bred a certain dignity and collective pride, still apparent today as retired miners describe their work”(Gaventa 88).

The desire for productivity and the demands of a long day in the mining industry also facilitate a political culture in the county. Work ethic is a characteristic closely tied to the mining industry as it may be tied to the religious values of the areas as well. “Weber tied religion and personality through a link between Protestantism and Capitalism, contending that Protestants appeared to work harder, save more and do better economically than other religious groups. He stated that certain Protestant ideas and beliefs encouraged hard work...” (Chusmir 252) The Protestant work ethic, sometimes called the Puritan work ethic, is a Calvinist value emphasizing the necessity of constant labor in a person's calling as a sign of personal salvation (Chusmir 250-253). Other sources document the observation of work ethic in Southwest Virginia. “They [coal miners of Tazewell County] are just different; friendlier; harder working and honest. You can depend on them” (Mullins 158). This Calvinistic principle is tied to politics by Williams. “Covenant theology, original sin, and the status as the chosen people were Puritan theological commitments....Again the logic is that culture wide religious values were transferred into features (either values of institutions) of the political system” (Williams 370). Dye mentioned in her interview that she felt as though non-natives of Appalachia do not fully appreciate the work ethic of a coal miner. “...you just about have to be a miner or be a part of a miner’s family to appreciate it...if a man worked in the mines, he has to be a BRAVE person... I don’t think people respect the work of a miner...”(R-Dye).

Each participant acknowledged that there was a distinct culture with a tremendous work ethic throughout the society, which complemented the productivity. Statistics and election results confirm these observations. “These working-class folk like the G.O.P.'s

social and foreign policies, but the big difference between poor Republicans and poor Democrats is that the former believe that individuals can make it on their own with hard work and good character. According to the Pew study, 76 percent of poor Republicans believe most people can get ahead with hard work. Only 14 percent of poor Democrats believe that..." (www.nytimes.com). "Central App" has also proven to be industrially productive in the United States. In 1978, a single mine produced approximately 20 million tons per 20 years of coal, an incredible feat for the time. Now technology has refined this 20 million ton yield to a mere four years (Breedlove). According to the United States Commerce Department the production of coal in the United States in 1980 was 830 short tons, and in 2005 the production had increased to 1,133 million short tons (<http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/tables/08s0884.xls>).

An honest day's work is associated with conservative values that are a part of the Republican platform. The desire of productivity displayed in Tazewell County also exemplifies how the industry present, which requires an incredible amount of physical work, is potentially an avenue that may lead to the development of political attitudes. Extreme work was emphasized by all participants. "Hard work makes a man a better person, and wasting time is as bad as wasting money" (Chusmir 255).

## **Coal Camps as a mechanism of Political Socialization**

Life in the coal camps significantly affects the lifestyle of those who inhabit such a community. My observation is that the three coal camps studied contributed in a variety of ways to the political culture of the county, and should be considered a significant mechanism that formed the political culture due to its contributions to the community. Crandall Shifflett discusses this relationship in his text *Coaltowns*. Reviewer, John Glen, writes “Shifflett effectively highlights the diversity and dynamism of coal town and culture...Shifflett asserts that the relationship between culture and company paternalism is the key to understanding coal towns” (Glen 291). This dominance is echoes in Gaventa’s writings. “...their utter dependence...develops an attitude of submission and servitude which undermines their confidence and self-reliance. A sense of powerlessness was instilled which could lead to an introjection of the values of the controller or a loyalty to the powerholders” (Gaventa 92-93).

“...Characteristics of coal towns [were] the influence of the company. Companies built hospitals, hotels, recreation halls, schools, and stores for miners and their families. They paid for medical personnel and teachers. The companies sponsored garden awards and gave chocolate and fruit to children at Christmas. Coal companies encouraged sports, and camp rivalries were intense...”(www.lva.lib.va.us). The mining industry defined the lifestyles of coal camp residents. Owners of the coal camps, specifically in Southwest Virginia, had an incredible influence on every aspect of the inhabitant’s life from schooling, to recreation, to political preferences. A similar political thought and value system is not surprising among this group of people. “Loyalty to the company was expected, if not demanded...” (Mullins 158).

The community atmosphere emphasized family values, close knit communities, influential peer groups. All of these elements, which Jewell Ridge fostered, served as mechanisms of developing political thought. Shiffletts' work is quite applicable here. He writes that "From the perspective of mining families company towns improved their health and housing; company stores functioned as social centers..." (Glen 291). Statements like these reinforce the thought that the residents of the coal camps felt as though they owed some allegiance to the mining company. "Naturally, if a man worked in a coal company, and he traded at the company store, and lived in a company house, then he felt like maybe politically and socially he ought to go along with exactly the way they felt..."(Gaventa 93).

The company store is a focus point for most coal communities; however, it had significant importance in the mixed and diverse Bishop community as it served as a central location and meeting place. This particular store was known as Pocahontas #33 Colliery. "The store became a meeting place for the entire community. In fact, the company store, in many ways dominated the coal camp...Besides containing the grocery store, or the "commissary" as miners often called it, the company store merged numerous enterprises under one roof" (Mullins 116). Residents bought food, clothing, furniture, and basic necessities at the store. It provided everything a miner and his/her family needed for day to day existence. Not only did Pocahontas #33, controlled by the company, provide for the physical needs of resident it provided a social outlet as well. Peer Groups, and relation to the development of political culture were formed here. "Miners and their families enjoyed their leisure times by visiting neighbors, going to the movies, having card parties, and picnicking."(www.lva.lib.va.us). "The company store

also proved to be the biggest drain on the miner's wages" (Mullins 116). The sales people often became the most well-known individuals in the county as they interacted on a daily basis with most residents in the camp (Mullins 116). This serves as merely one more example to describe the role of the coal company on the lifestyles of its residents.

In Bishop, the Company Store was located directly adjacent to the place in the community where the miner would pick up his paycheck, the payroll office. By the time the Bishop community came to be, company scrip was an option, not a mandate. The payroll office was even more important to the miner than as he could obtain cash for his work in place of company scrip and coupons (Mullins 116- 119).

These findings reflect the differences amongst the individual coal communities. The Jewell Ridge community was notably affected by community, family and social groups. This was the mining industry's main mechanism of influence in this particular camp. Community activities and the 'clubhouse' as a gathering point allowed strong social ties to form.

The Pocahontas coal camp's forte of socialization was its religious foundations. Institutes of religion and church groups in the area mainly affected the way that this camp molded the society that inhabited its boundaries.

Bishop, the third camp studied, also had distinct 'gathering points' which served as a meeting ground. Bishop also brought quite a bit of diversity to the coal camps and because of its time and place in history Bishop was under far less company control.

### The Mining Industry, in general, as a mechanism of Political Socialization

Obviously there are a myriad of ways in which the mining industry has served as a mechanism of political socialization. Improving the standards of living and providing employment are a few significant factors.

The standards of living and the quality of life in the region rank low on an overall scale. “Economic conditions both locally and nationally attracted many people to jobs in the mines with a steady paycheck...” (<http://www.swvamuseum.org/coalcamps.html>). “A coal companies’ primary purpose was to mine coal, but since many of the seams were located in isolated and sparsely inhabited areas the companies had to build housing, offer general stores, and provide basic services like sanitation in order to attract and keep labor” (Fishback 128).

## **Conclusion**

Politics in Tazewell County are surprising. The working-class rural society that exists in Tazewell County would lead most to believe that the county would primarily support the Democratic Party. The political culture, however, is mixed in the county, and it is actually made up of what some call “Democratic-Republicanism.” Working class Republicanism is prevalent in Tazewell County. Historical documentation, the observed influence of the mining industry on its residents, and recent election results affirm this observation.

The County obviously meets the criterion of a rural resource community. The fact that the industry defines a significant portion of the lifestyle here is not surprising. “In industrial society, where the factory was the center of production, a mechanistic view of the universe seemed natural...this gave rise to God as the great watchmaker who had constructed the universe and then left it to run largely on its own...” (Norris 20). The industry, probably most significantly, contributed to the creation of the coal camp communities. It is within the bounds of these coal camps that behavioral norms were created, and religious values were fostered as well as interwoven into society. Dye’s, Lester’s and Participant A’s recollection of living in a coal-dominated community and the religious activities exemplify this point. The high risk industry and the accidents and mortality surrounding it lends itself to further explanation as to why residents have chosen to retreat to religion in hopes of finding comfort, anxiety relief and camaraderie. Mullins, Hickam, and the study completed at West Virginia State University all add to this understanding of the industry’s influence.

Multiple examples exist throughout the years of Tazewell County supporting conservative politicians and conservative political ideas despite their partisan label. A demographic description of the area would lead many to deem the area as stereotypically Democratic, largely because of the mining industry's blue collar jobs and working-class population. "Bible Christians are indeed more likely ... to oppose abortion under every circumstance, to believe that homosexuality is always wrong, and to advocate restrictions on pornography. They are also more likely to vote Republican. However, not all Conservative Christians are consistently pro-life..." (www.press.uchicago.edu). However the element of religion, and involvement in Protestantism, specifically work ethic, has allowed Tazewell County to become a haven for working class Republicans. The conservative politician and pieces of legislation typically fall under the Republican label. There are, however, exceptions to this rule as we have seen with the popularity of Kennedy, and Boucher in Southwest Virginia. These Democrats have served as the 'exception to the rule' in many ways; however, they have a common characteristic. Although they may represent the Democratic Party, nationally, they made a conscious effort, each in their own way, to reach out to the residents of Appalachia, specifically mining communities. These candidates made a genuine effort to pass legislation that would be beneficial to the mining community, improve the quality of life, and serve as a liaison to the Government for a group of seemingly disadvantaged Appalachians. Perhaps, a more accurate conclusion is that the voters of Tazewell County are heavily influenced by the candidate, and their positions rather than party affiliations. The recurring choices of the electorate most would think of a typical Democratic, blue collar, medium income coal community. "There may be a link between Conservative Christian

religious convictions and political behavior but it is modest, even by social science standards” (www.press.uchicago.edu).

My argument, however, is that Conservative Christian influences paired with the ‘group think’ behavior pressure of a big business coal companies has influenced has created an atypical Republican voting group in Tazewell County. “While the coal camp served to shape certain individualistic values, it also served to shape certain collective values...”(Gaventa 91).

The presence of the mining industry obviously influences religious, educational, and political culture of Tazewell County. The way that the religious roots and conservative political culture of the county survived the boom and decline of the mining industry, while remaining constant, is fascinating. The mining industry has created a community in which the social aspects are decided by the industry’s administration. This, in turn, affects the resident’s behavior. The behavior observed is, in general, seemingly homogeneous. The mining industry has fostered a religious atmosphere, for a variety of reasons. This religious sub society lends itself to patterns of behavior including, but not limited to political decision making. “...the religious sub society is in fact a pivotal variable in voting behavior” (Anderson 34).

It is my observation that conservative values are evident in the political, religious and educational venues of the county and those values were instilled largely by the coal industry’s presence. The coal camps and the homogeneous religious societies they created in the County are arguably the most substantial contribution to the political behavior and the value system observed in Tazewell County. The results of this study exemplify how involvement in a Protestant religious community can potentially foster

work ethic, traditional Christian values, and the pattern of being involved in such a group therefore effects behavior, specifically political behavior. The physical isolation of the County and the lack of outside influence have also led me to believe that tradition is important in Tazewell County. This further exemplifies that the presence of the mining industry contributes to conservative political culture.

It is my observation that the religious culture, because of the mining industry's presence, is interwoven through the County, and therefore affects the political culture. Religion mixed with morals has always been a foundation of the American System of Government. I feel that this study has been advantageous on a variety of levels. This research, in my opinion, has contributed to the understanding of resource communities, and occupational behavior. Industry's can dominate a community via their presence, and their effects may be seen through religious, educational, and political realms. This study, in the future, may be used to compare the effects of the mining industry's presence to the effects of other industry's presence and how that subsequently affects occupational behavior and society. This work provides a great understanding of the intersection of geographic isolation and socialization dominated by a particular industry. My research is an important element to comprehending a full understanding of physical, social, political isolation, occupational behavior, and its effects on political culture. The research done here will allow others to expand their own knowledge about socialization and the process by which it develops, specifically, in rural resource communities.

## **Appendix 1 Biographical Information regarding Interviewed Participants**

The subjects used for this case study came from a variety of backgrounds, and were more than willing to discuss their lives and share information with the researcher. During this investigation I had the great opportunity to speak with a variety of very informative and very different participants. For example, in the case study of the Jewell Ridge community I was offered the opportunity to speak with the daughter of a mining foreman, the widow of a mining engineer, a mining inspector who is also a pastor in the local community, a miner and an electrician in the mines.

All individuals seemed to be unique despite their close cultural similarities. Most participants were most all natives of the community, and continued to live their throughout their adult life. This indicates that there is indeed some tie to the region whether it is an emotional tie, or a financial and career-related necessity to stay in the immediate area this is yet to be determined.

### **Introduction to Participants**

1. Beverly Farmer is a 51 year old nurse. She is the daughter of a mining foreman, and the widow of a mining engineer who perished in a fatal mining accident. She has been involved with the mining industry all her life, and has grown up in a coal community since age two. She has lived in Tazewell County, with the exception of college since age two. Beverly received her high school diploma from Richlands High School (feeder high school for Jewell Ridge community), her R.N. from Roanoke Memorial School of Nursing, her B.S. from Old Dominion University, and her M.S. from King College.

2. Miner Participant “A” is a 54 year old miner who has worked in three different mines in Tazewell County. He has worked in direct contact with the industry for over 23 years, and now is indirectly related as he drives a truck for a local mining corporation and delivers mining parts. As a miner, participant “A” worked as the maintenance foreman underground. He has resided in Tazewell County Virginia all his life. He lives with his wife, and spends his time enjoying his two children and grandchildren. He received his diploma from Pocahontas High School.

3. Rusty Ward is a mining engineer, and local pastor at Bethel Assembly of God in Richlands, Virginia. He has lived in Tazewell County for 24 years, and has been involved with the mining industry for 23 of those years. He received his education in a coal community as well. Rusty obtained his high school diploma from Whitewood High (then feeder school for Jewell Ridge Community), and his college experience was also in Tazewell County at the local community college. Southwest Virginia Community College offers a variety of vocational programs, and tends to cater specifically to coal-related vocations. He enjoys spending time with his wife, and two children.

4. Dot Dye is a 64 year old daughter of a mining foreman of Jewell Ridge. Her father, Beecher Lester, was killed in a fatal mining accident there. Although some are painful, Dye has fond memories of living in the midst of the coal camp, and was more than willing to share these experiences with the researcher. Dye is a native of the region, and, with the exception of touring with her husband during his military stint, she has always resided in Tazewell County.

5. John Breedlove is a mining engineer and CEO for Heintzmann Mining Corporation located in Cedar Bluff, Virginia. He is a third generation miner, and mining

engineer as well as the CEO of a company who produces mining equipment and roofing supports. John is 51, and a native of Tazewell County. He has spent extensive time inside the mines of Tazewell County as well as time in Germany, home of Heintzmann headquarters investigating the long-wall mines there. John lives in the Cedar Bluff area with his wife and two children.

6. Robert Lester is a 72 year old miner who grew up in a coal camp, came from a coal family, and worked in the coal industry until retirement. He has worked for a variety of coal companies in his tenure in the industry, however, he has the most experience with the Jewell Ridge and Jewell Valley areas. Robert still resides in the immediate area and lives with his wife and daughter and is enjoying retirement.

7. Wayne Lester is a 60 year old entrepreneur who has fond memories of growing up in the coal camps of Tazewell County. Wayne's father was a 'fire boss' in several mines, and was killed in a fatal mining accident. His father is remembered amongst several brave miners on the Tazewell County Miners Memorial placed directly in front of the Town Hall of Richlands, Virginia. Wayne is quite a resource as he reflects fondly on the culture and the distinct society he lived as a part of in the coal camps. In his adult life Wayne had little affiliation with the mining industry but remains close to his roots and considers his father's fatality a watershed event in his life.

8. Daniel Orr is a 22 year old mining electrician. He received all of his education in Tazewell County. He is a graduate of Tazewell High School, and went on to a local community college to obtain his license as a mining electrician. He is a Tazewell County native, and has been involved in the mining industry for approximately four years. He spends his free time with his wife, and their dog Toby.

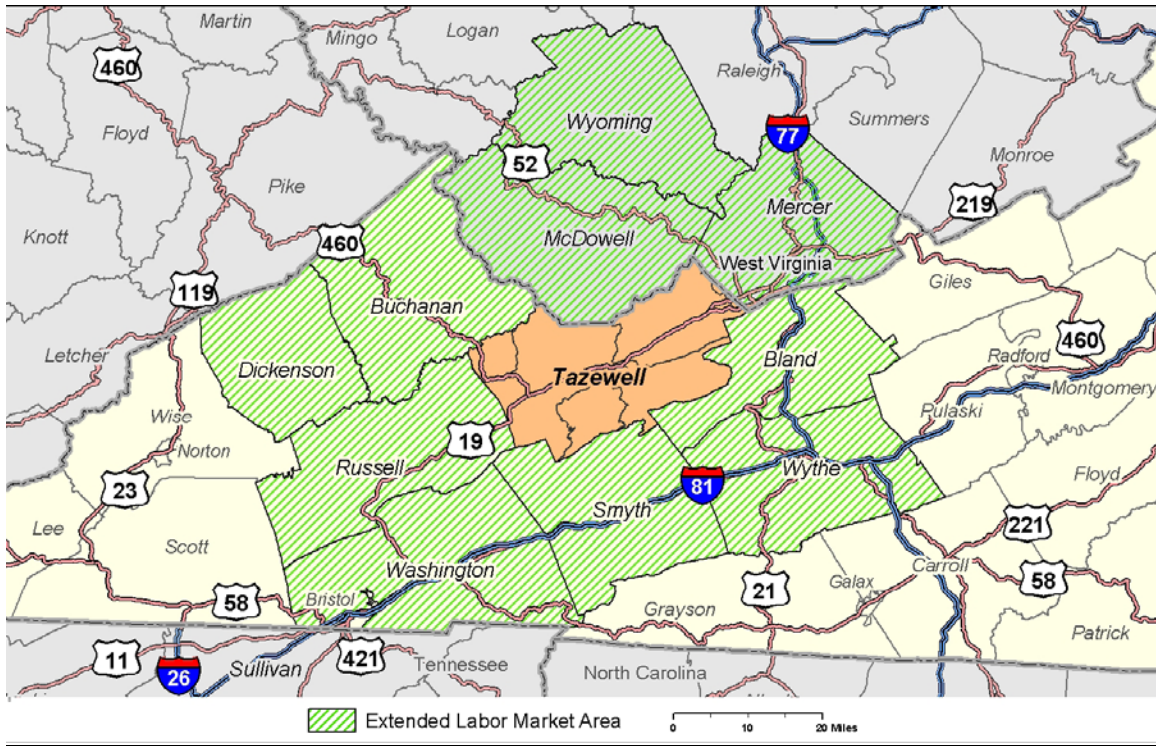
9. Jackie Strouth is the daughter of a miner who also remembers living in a coal camp with her family up into most of her adult life. She married and moved away from the area, but returned soon and now resides close to the area where she attributes most of her upbringing. Jackie is an excellent resource as she reflects upon her young adult life in the coal camp and the distinct culture that existed there.

10. Miner “B” is affiliated with the coal industry in several ways. He has worked in production of equipment, hauling equipment and has worked underground. He chooses to remain anonymous for personal reasons.

11-13. Miner “C”, “D”, and “E” have been a great resource. These individuals wish to remain totally anonymous.

## Appendix 2 General Tazewell County Information

### Location and Demographics of the Case Study Area

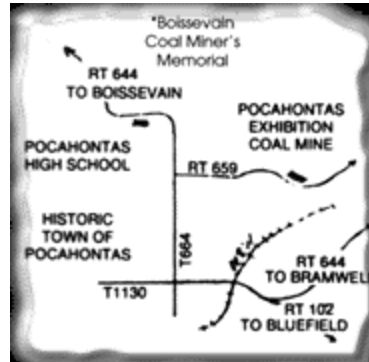


Tazewell County is in the southwestern portion of Virginia, on the border of West Virginia. It is a region of beautiful green mountains, rolling hills and wide-open valleys that cover 522 square miles. The county's accessibility to Interstates 77 and 81 makes it a convenient location for all markets east of the Mississippi and the Midwest. ([www.yesvirginia.org](http://www.yesvirginia.org))

### Appendix 3 Maps and Pictures of Studied Coal Camps and Company Towns

#### Pocahontas

##### Map of the Area



##### Exhibition Mine ([imagebase.vt.edu](http://imagebase.vt.edu))



*Pocahontas Exhibition Mine, near Bluefield, West Virginia: Here's a coal mine with seams so large tourists can drive their cars through it... the only such mine in the world. Here, Mine Superintendent, W.F. Wyrick, explains operation of coal cutting machine.*

*Source: Earl Palmer Collection*

#### Bishop

Bishop, VA, Abundance of Coal in Car (Mullins)



**Jewell Ridge**

Jewell Ridge Clubhouse, Jewell Ridge, VA (Mullins)



Office and Store, Jewell Ridge, VA (Library of Virginia)



Jewell Ridge Power Plant, Jewell Ridge, VA (Library of Virginia)



Jewell Ridge Company Town, Jewell Ridge, VA (Mullins)



PORTION OF THE EAST END OF MAIN STREET  
JEWELL RIDGE COAL CORPORATION, JEWELL RIDGE, VA.

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