Archbald, Pennsylvania is located in Lackawanna County – right off of the Lackawanna River. This small area, approximately 6,396 residents, is rich with Anthracite Coal history. Archbald fits the current stereotype of once-upon-a-time booming coal towns; a church and a bar on every corner filled with older ‘historians’ who can tell you what Archbald was like ‘in the day.’ Although Archbald is not currently an active coal-town, it once was and in this paper we will explore the different topics associated with this Anthracite Coal Region town.

1. **Society** – The multifaceted structure that is Archbald, Pennsylvania.

   King Coal once drove the society in Archbald, as Irish immigrants flourished the area to flee the potato famine in Ireland. The settlement of Archbald originated in 1845, and at the time was referred to as White Oak Run (the later name change occurred to recognize James Archbald.) The immigrants described the area as being a beautiful farming region, but it would not remain that way for much longer – as depicted by the 1892 map.

   The 1892 version of Archbald seems so much different than what the 1845 immigrants described, there is no visible farmland and there is very little vegetation remaining. Despite this fact, the map clearly shows three working collieries, and a working coal transportation railroad. It is evident that in 1892 the area was no longer used for farming, but instead ran by the king: coal.

   There were three working collieries in Archbald at this time, and six operating mines -- mines 1,2,3, 3 ½, 4, and 5. Six mines and three collieries operated by the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company drove the early society of Archbald, PA. In our opinions, it is easy to accept that from 1845 to 1892 coal mining ran the lives of Archbald residents.

   Coal may have driven the developing society of Archbald, but there were other elements also: immigration/ethnicity, religion, wealth, and culture. All these differentiating elements drove Archbald to develop into an Anthracite coal town.

2. **Religion** – The first driving element of society in Archbald.

   As in all early coal towns, religion appears to be very diverse in society. There are three visible churches located on the map, and on the lower right hand side there appear to be three congregations: St. Thomas Aquinas,
Presbyterian, and German Evangelical. This suggests that there was a flux of German immigrants also, who brought with them the evangelical religion.

As seen in the lower left hand corner of the 1892 version of Archbald, the St. Thomas Aquinas parish seems to flourish. People are outside on the front steps, and entering the church. There is a horse drawn cart passing by, suggesting that the upper-class citizens of Archbald were members of this parish. Women and their umbrellas can also draw this conclusion; the upper class was associated with large bonnets and gaudy umbrellas at this time period.

Since there is no larger portrayal of the two smaller scale churches, we have to draw upon the idea that religion was elaborate in the 1800’s. The St. Thomas Aquinas church seems to be large, and while the two remaining churches appear to be beautiful they do not appear to be as grandeur as St. Thomas.

It is these inferences that help us conclude religion was diverse, and an important part of society in Archbald. Three different churches, three separate congregations – all in one area – driving a common force: the importance of religion.

3. **Wealth** – The second driving element in Archbald.
In 1892 Archbald appears to be a booming coal town. The mining of coal and the transportation of coal is evidently a common theme in this town. Not only is this a theme, but it a major factor of Archbald’s wealth. This area was ruled by the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company at this point in time, suggesting that the company governed all money.

At this time period the borough probably had a sufficient amount of jobs, whether it was in the mine or on the railroad, which helped to increase the income of the population. At the same time, it is unclear if Archbald was a very wealthy area or if only a few were wealthy. Other coal towns at the time were found in deep poverty, with a few rich members of society – can this also be true of Archbald?

Referring back to the church enlargement of the left hand side, we assume that the area was embellished with poverty and contained a few upper-class citizens. Mining, while a difficult job, was not a very high paying job. Archbald appears to be a classic Anthracite town, poor miners and a poor society.

4. **Politics** – The third and final aspect of early development of Archbald, PA.
The Delaware & Hudson Railroad/Canal Company and its founders drove the politics of Archbald, Pennsylvania. The Company monopolized the area owning and operating all forms of transportation, money, and government. The money the company had
in their possession caused them to become the governmental leaders, and major politicians of Archbald in 1892.

Seeing as the Company was the largest employer citizens of Archbald could have felt threatened if they defied government, because they would also be risking their livelihood. It is our conclusion that the government was company ran, and therefore what the company wanted was what the government willed. Under these pretenses the company could have literally controlled people. We believe that the company ran the town’s government, meaning all driving factors of society were controlled by one common force: The Delaware and Hudson Canal Company. Employees were possessions of the company, and therefore the government.

Not only did the Company control the local government, they also controlled all of the area’s transportation lines. The Delaware and Hudson Canal/Railroad Company owned the only forms of long distance transportation. The Canal served the New York and Philadelphia areas, whereas the railroad served all other surrounding areas. Therefore if a member of Archbald society wanted to travel, they were feeding the monopoly of the Company that owned them. This perpetuated the power and influence of the companies owners and high-ranking employees on the local government. Overall, The Company owned and operated every aspect of Archbald, PA in our opinion.

In conclusion, Archbald like most other coal patches in Pennsylvania came to exist as a settlement for immigrants and as a home to many cultural backgrounds – and it remains this way today. However, the town does not have the prosperity it did in its earliest years due to the downfall of the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company. It is our belief that religion remains very diverse, but doesn’t have as much impact on today’s society as it did in 1892. All in all, Archbald – like most other coal patches in Pennsylvania – experienced the societal roller coaster brought about by the Anthracite boom and Industrial Revolution.
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