Chapter Eight – Conclusion and Personal Observations

I believe that this reconstruction of Ellen Dawson’s life offers several valuable insights into the world of working class women in Scotland and the United States during the early twentieth century. Specifically, it provides a meaningful example of the difficulties of researching the life of a working class individual, especially the life of a woman worker; it contributes to our understanding of the important role played by women in the labor movements of the 1920s; and it illuminates the bias of a male dominated society against women workers, even among men who worked with women activists and shared their goals and experiences. This thesis also offers insight into previously unexplored connections between seemingly unrelated events, including the lack of attention given to the transatlantic influences upon and the experiences of immigrant workers in the United States; the influence of Red Clyde upon labor movements in the world outside of Scotland; and the connection between the strikes in Passaic, New Bedford and Gastonia. Beyond this, Ellen’s life story helps to provide a human face to the often ignored communist workers’ movement in the United States during the 1920s, a very different perspective from the traditionally accepted view of American communists; and it also offers a vivid example of the isolation and fear of activists who were forced to hide their radical activities during the later years of their life. Finally, as Ellen’s biographer, I believe my own personal
experiences in researching her life offer unique insights into her story and the world in which she lived.

Reconstructing Ellen’s life required research in Scotland, where she was born; England, where she worked as a young textile worker; and the United States, where she lived most of her life and was a leader in the labor movement. While our archives are filled with information about the rich, the famous and the powerful, only bits and pieces are left to tell the story of working class women, and to provide their perspective of the world in which they existed. News accounts from the period, which often provide the only surviving record of key events, provide a decidedly masculine point-of-view. Although women shared the speaking platforms and picket lines with men, journalists tended to focus their attention on the men, ignoring or downplaying the role of women whose actions were equal to and sometimes more important than the men. Men were considered the “hard” news story, while the activities of women were covered from the “soft” news perspective, mostly in the feature sections of the newspaper. During the Loray Mill strike, for example, Ellen and the women strikers were not covered by the local news media until the daughter of the editor of the *Charlotte Observer* went to Gastonia to write a feature story about the women. In the Passaic striker’s documentary film, male speakers were identified, while women speakers, clearly shown in the film, were rarely named.¹ Written accounts by men, such as Albert Weisbord’s account of the Passaic strike and Fred Beal’s accounts of the New Bedford and Gastonia strikes, seldom identify women activists by name. These masculine accounts are in sharp contrast to Vera Buch (Weisbord)’s record of Gastonia, which provides detailed coverage of both men and women, and helps to illuminate the central role played by women in that strike.² Even professional historians are sometimes remiss in reporting the activities of women.
Only recently have Scottish labor historians begun to focus on the role of women in the events associated with Red Clydeside. In the United States, it has only been since the late 1970s that women workers have become the focus of serious research.

With respect to the role played by women in the labor movements of the 1920s, Ellen’s story provides a clear example of the courage and commitment of women workers. Ellen was a charismatic speaker, an effective organizer, and a dedicated supporter of the women’s movement and the worker’s cause. Beyond that, she was a fearless campaigner who faced violent attacks by local police and mill thugs. Even when her own organizations – the American Federation of Labor’s United Textile Workers and the communist sponsored National Textile Workers’ Union, which she helped to found – expelled her, Ellen refused to go quietly, protesting both verbally and physically on behalf of the workers she represented and whom she felt were being ignored by these organizations. Ellen provides historians with a meaningful example of the idealistic spirit and sincere determination of many women workers in the United States during the 1920s, characteristics that came directly from her immigrant experiences.

In addition to the perspective of women workers, Ellen’s life also provides important insights into previously unexplored connections between seemingly unrelated events. This is particularly true with respect to transatlantic connections. Conducting research about a single individual on both sides of the Atlantic highlighted for me the nationalistic myopia of historical scholarship. Scottish historians study events that occurred within the borders of Scotland. Even research related to the Scottish Diaspora often ends when the emigrants reach a foreign shore. As for U.S. historians, many have even narrower and highly nationalistic views of the world. The problem with such restrictive approaches is that scholars often miss
important connections. I believe that Ellen Dawson’s experiences as a young worker in Glasgow during World War I, where she was a witness to the events of Red Clydeside, directly influenced her actions in the United States and help to explain why she made the decisions she did. William Murdoch, a native-born Scot who worked with Ellen in New Bedford, is probably another example of the influence of Red Clydeside in the United States. And, I suspect that they are but the tip of the iceberg, as several other Scottish-born activists can be found in both Passaic and New Bedford. Ellen’s life story clearly supports the idea that to fully understand immigrant workers, we must research their lives in both their native and their adopted homes. By doing so, we begin to understand the multitude of connections that can be found in comparing life in different countries. The numerous connections between working class life and the textile industries in Scotland, England and the United States provide an excellent example.

With respect to Ellen’s activities in the U.S., I was struck by the failure of labor historians to recognize the group I call the Passaic Radicals and the connections between the textile strikes in Passaic, New Bedford and Gastonia. In almost all of the research associated with these events, scholars focused their attention on an individual strike, making few if any connections to the other two events. It is as if activists suddenly materialized at the start of a strike and disappeared at the end. This is a significant oversight, and it may be one of the most important findings of this thesis. During these three confrontations, Ellen matured from an anonymous weaver into a leading labor activist. In Passaic, she stopped being an observer and began working for change. During the long and difficult campaigns in Passaic and New Bedford, she honed her leadership skills, preparing herself for her most important role – co-director of the Gastonia strike. There she proved herself to be a very effective
leader, ultimately leaving North Carolina as a battle-weary veteran of the American labor movement.

An exploration of the three strikes also offers insight into different regions of the United States, each with a well developed textile industry. The companies that owned the various mills were equally diverse – from local ownership in New Bedford, to national ownership in Gastonia, to international ownership in Passaic. Textile companies in all three communities made concerted efforts to prevent their workers from organizing. In Passaic, it was by intentionally attracting a highly diverse, immigrant labor force. In New Bedford, it was by recognizing and negotiating with a select group of native-born, skilled workers and then using these skilled workers as a wedge against the mass of unskilled immigrant workers. In Gastonia, the only region with a homogenous group of workers, mill owners isolated workers in paternalistic mill villages, as the mill owners of Paisley had also done, restricting opportunities to improve conditions or escape. They also used racism, dividing black and white, as a way of preventing workers from uniting against the abuses of mill owners. This “divide and conquer” approach was similar to the ethic division encouraged by mill managers in the northern textile cities, and the religious divide that often separated Catholic and Protestant workers in Glasgow.

In all three strikes, local police used force, often violent, to control and break the strike. Official law enforcement agencies augmented their numbers with vigilante groups drawn from local organizations associated with the mill owners and the local business community. In some cases, these individuals were nothing more than hired thugs. These groups, especially in Gastonia, intimidated striking workers and increased the level of violence. National Guard troops supported local law enforcement in New Bedford and Gastonia. In New Jersey, the governor declined to
supply guardsmen, although Passaic officials requested them. This was a common practice in labor disputes. In both New Bedford and Gastonia, militia forces proved ineffective in protecting individuals or property, or in ending the strike. Interestingly, in Gastonia, when National Guardsmen were sent home, violent acts by mill-controlled special deputies increased dramatically.

Throughout all three strikes, the news media played a central role. Local newspapers tended to support the mill owners blindly. Larger regional newspapers outside the striking community provided more objective coverage. National and international news coverage, especially in Passaic, tended to support the strikers. In Gastonia, where a small number of activists were ultimately convicted of conspiracy to murder the local police chief, their fate might have been far worse if the national and international news media had not covered the trials.

Local religious leaders tended to support the perspective of their congregations, particularly those who provided financial support to their church. Only in Passaic and New Bedford, where most of the striking workers were immigrant Catholics, was a strong voice raised from the churches in support of the workers. Although opposed to communism, several Catholic clergy actively spoke out in support of the strikers. Most Protestant ministers either turned a blind eye to the workers or actively supported the mill owners.

As for the unskilled textile workers, all suffered from severe economic deprivation. Their low wages contributed to numerous problems, especially those associated with lack of proper diet, housing, medical care, education and economic opportunity. The southern workers were by far the most disadvantaged. Their poverty reflected the region as a whole. As for the willingness of the workers to heed
the messages of communism and unionism, clearly immigrant workers were far more receptive than were the native-born workers.

With respect to the more established labor organizations – the American Federation of Labor and its member unions – it almost universally failed to recognize the opportunity that a united labor force offered. In other parts of the world, including Ellen’s native Scotland, organized labor became a strong, united voice for the workers, often developing, at least for important periods of time, into effective political organizations. Despite similar efforts in the United States, a national labor party has never risen to power in the U.S.

Ellen witnessed the conflict between skilled and unskilled worker during World War I in Scotland, the rise of the Labour Party in Great Britain, and she fought for a unified voice for American workers. Unfortunately for her, and many other American workers of the time, their strongest outlet for protest was the communist labor movement, a group that was destroyed by the propaganda of American capitalism and the international power politics of Joseph Stalin and the rise of the Soviet Union. This helps to explain why Ellen retreated into silence in the early 1930s and why her contributions to U.S. labor history were invisible for so many years. In the United States, communism was positioned as the archenemy of capitalism. As such, there was no room for a sympathetic view of communist labor activists. This wall of silence began to crumble in the 1990s, with the collapse of the Soviet Empire and the end of the Cold War, but American scholarship that presents a sympathetic view of workers such as Ellen is still clearly a minority perspective. I believe that the international perspective afforded by the transatlantic University of Aberdeen/University of North Carolina at Charlotte postgraduate program allowed
me to develop a more accurate interpretation of individuals within the communist
workers movement in the United States during this period.

Ellen’s life story offers the often ignored human side of the communist
workers’ movement in the United States during the 1920s. Ellen was very different
from the traditionally accepted view of American communists as atheistic and sinister
individuals committed to the violent overthrow of the government. Ellen’s sincerity
and idealism are evident in her words and actions. Concern for the workers,
especially women and immigrants, was a top priority throughout her activist career.
Her later silence is a vivid example of the isolation and fear that activists of her time
were often forced to endure as the price for participation in the fight for worker
rights.7

Finally, I think it is important to note my own personal observations with
respect to Ellen and this reconstruction of her life. I have spent more than three years
of my own life searching for every available scrap of evidence pertinent to her life.
During that period, I traveled to the communities in which she lived and worked. I
searched countless documents related to her life, the world in which she lived, and the
events in which she was a participant. I communicated with her surviving relatives in
Scotland, the United States and Canada. I tried to understand how the world might
have appeared to Ellen by drawing upon the lives of individuals whom I believe
influenced her life, the events that swirled around her, and the memories of those who
knew her. As a result, I believe that I began to experience the unique bond that often
develops between biographer and subject, because, while I never met Ellen, I know
more about her than any other living human being. There are times, when I look at
the photograph of Ellen8 sitting on my desk, that I honestly believe that I can feel the
intensity of her dark brown eyes. At such moments, I believe that I can sense what
she must have been thinking at some of the important moments in her life. It is
difficult to explain, totally unscientific I admit, but it is real.

Looking back at the past three years, there are several events that stand out in
my memory. They include the first photograph I found of Ellen, the first time I saw
the Loray Mill, my trip to Barrhead, the evening I spent at the Whitworth Heritage
Museum in Lancashire, walking past the school at St. Nicholas Roman Catholic
Church in Passaic, and the evening I found Ellen’s grave in Lodi. Beyond this, there
were the connections I was able to make with Ellen’s surviving relatives and the
caregiver who assisted Ellen’s husband in the final years of his life.

As I explained in the introduction to this thesis, I believe that the experiences
of the biographer, in researching and reconstructing the life of the subject, are relevant
because they offer the reader a more comprehensive understanding of the work.
Through an understanding of these experiences, the reader is offered valuable insights
into the research process, including connections between scholarship and imagination,
and the empathy a researcher develops for the subject. For these reasons, I have
added these final comments. This section is for the scholars who attempt a working
class biography in the future, because I believe it will help to demonstrate that amid
the countless blind alleys that must be searched there are moments of great joy and
satisfaction. This section was also written because it provides the opportunity for me
to express my own personal perspective of Ellen and because I believe these events
deserve to be recorded.

The first image I found of Ellen\textsuperscript{9} was in Vera Buch Weisbord’s autobiography,
\textit{A Radical Life}. Ellen was standing with Vera, Albert Weisbord and Fred Beal outside
the union headquarters in Gastonia during the Loray strike. One must ask the
question, “why is a picture so important?” Is it our twenty-first century perspective
that demands visual connections to make events real? Would Ellen or her contemporaries have needed pictures? I suspect that pictures may actually have been more important to individuals in the past, because while newspapers and magazines of the time were using more photographs, they were still more of a novelty, as compared with our world in which we are bombarded with visual images. Regardless, that first photograph suddenly made Ellen’s life more than simply words on a page; she started to become a real person. The day that the Gastonia picture was taken, Ellen was dressed in the style of the 1920s, with a “Flapper’s” hat pulled down over her ears. The expression on her face and her position in the group seem to demonstrate a shyness, a reserve that became clearer to me as I pieced together the events of her later years. It also appeared to convey a sense of friendly whimsy and childish energy that Vera mentions in her own descriptions of Ellen, a part of her personality that seemed to disappear as she grew older, except perhaps for moments when she was with her husband or her brother David Dawson. Comparing this photo with others taken before and after, Ellen’s nose appears swollen, perhaps as the result of a confrontation with local police or vigilantes. Ellen talked about such violent confrontations in her speeches. According to Vera’s account, the women strikers and strike leaders were attacked more than once during the Loray strike. For me, that apparently swollen nose was a mark of Ellen’s courage and determination. It appeared as a mark of the warrior inside her, and is evidence of the violence that Ellen and her associates faced almost daily.

Gastonia was a dangerous place in 1929, and the first time I saw the Loray Mill is a day that I will also long remember. I had read about the strike, seen pictures of the mill during those turbulent weeks. I had also heard that Loray was once promoted, at least locally, as one the largest textile mills in the world.¹⁰ Even with all
that, I was not fully prepared for my first encounter with this dark, sinister structure, squatting on a small hill, surrounded by abandoned streets and dilapidated mill houses. I felt a real sense of uneasiness as I parked my car and walked up to the main gate, where strikers had once walked the picket lines. Gazing through the chain link to the spot where the National Guard once pitched their tents, I recalled the early confrontations between workers and the police. Standing there, alone, looking up into the darkened windows of this silent mill, I tried to imagine what it would have been like to have been a worker in such a place, this looming structure that seemed more like a prison than a workplace.

Some months later, I had an opportunity to tour the ground floor of the Loray Mill. The machinery was gone from the enormous rooms, rooms where workers spent twelve hours a day, six days a week. The floor was littered with scraps of peeling paint, puddles of rainwater blown into the building through the broken windows, and the waste of rodents that hide in the hollows of this industrial ruin. I will confess to a sense of relief at leaving the building, a feeling of liberation. It must have been the same feeling that workers had at the end of their shift. Today, there is an effort to convert the Loray Mill into a mixed-use center with a small shopping mall with a variety of housing units. Personally, I have very mixed emotions about Loray. Ideally, it should be converted into a textile history museum, but such a course of action seems unlikely. If it does survive the wrecking ball, perhaps as housing, I doubt if anyone will ever enjoy a good night’s sleep in such a place. The ghosts of Loray will certainly keep them awake.

Unlike my impromptu visit to Loray, my trip to Barrhead was well planned. I secured a copy of a 1913 map of Barrhead from the National Library of Scotland and noted all the key locations from Ellen’s childhood before I left Aberdeen. I took a
train to Glasgow and then another train from Glasgow to Barrhead, along the same route Ellen must have traveled many times. Amid the urban renewal of the late twentieth century, I focused on the buildings that were there when she lived in Scotland and on what this part of the world must have looked like during the early years of the twentieth century. When the train stopped in Nitshill, where Ellen’s maternal grandparents once lived, I began to understand more fully the poverty of the Halford Family and the Irish immigrants of the nineteenth century, as well as the realities of industrial Scotland during World War I. Barrhead was the last stop on the commuter train. Disembarking with me at the railway station was a young woman with a backpack and a bicycle. I thought of Ellen and wondered what this little village must have been like when more people traveled by foot and bike than by motor vehicle.

Even today, in a country of remarkable beauty, Barrhead is not an attractive place. It sits in the middle of a large valley that once, several hundred years earlier, must have been a lovely part of pre-industrial Britain. While there have been significant modifications since the days when Ellen lived in Barrhead, it is still a rather grim place, a community that clearly reflects its working class roots and the workers’ struggles to survive in a rapidly changing world. I began my exploration at a rapid and excited pace, walking up the Paisley Road toward Main Street, along Cross Arthurlie Street in the Craigheads area, toward the area of town where Ellen and her family lived. I passed several Protestant churches and the red stone municipal buildings that were begun in 1900, the same year Ellen was born. Then, as I neared the site of Ellen’s birth, I discovered the old houses had been replaced by an odd collection of retail buildings, joined together several decades earlier as part of a civic development project. Ellen’s birthplace, and most of the places where she and her
family lived, were gone. It was the first of many disappointments I would have that
day.

My next destination was St. John’s Roman Catholic Chapel and School. The
church, I discovered, had been destroyed by fire in the 1950s and a new modern
chapel had been built closer to town. There, a church staff member explained that all
the records from Ellen’s days had been destroyed in the fire. I explored the remains
of the old churchyard, a few hundred yards down the road. There I found a few
broken and crumbling tombstones, none of which were related to Ellen’s family.
Beside the churchyard, however, was the old school building, currently being used as
the local social services office. The staff kindly listened to an explanation of my
research and allowed me to explore the building. It was here, and no where else in
Barrhead, that I sensed Ellen’s presence, because it was in these same halls and
classrooms that she studied as a child. I visited the new Roman Catholic school, but
they were unable to find any record of a student who had been gone for almost ninety
years. I walked along the Glasgow Road, where the old Dovecothall branch of the
Co-operative Society had once stood, but it had been replaced by a new traffic circle,
and so I spent the remainder of the afternoon in the local library, searching through
old newspapers and census records. Even the mills along the Levern River had been
torn down and replaced with a public park. I found no one who had ever heard of
Ellen Dawson, and even those I spoke with about her were only politely interested.
Several months later, I would learn that one of Ellen’s nieces lives in a nursing home
in Barrhead, but old age has robbed her of her memories. All in all, my trip to
Barrhead was a truly frustrating experience. It demonstrated far too convincingly
how the lives of working class women and men quickly vanish from our historic
memory – gone without a trace. It was a reminder of the shortness of our existence, the fragility of our efforts, and the smallness of individual human life.

My trip to Lancashire and the Whitworth Heritage Museum proved to be much more productive and evocative for it introduced me to people who shared some of the same roots as Ellen. Taking the train south to Manchester, I knew only that at some point during or after World War I, Ellen’s family had moved to a village near Shawforth, between the larger communities of Bacup and Rochdale. The big mystery was when they arrived and when they left.

Again I planned my trip carefully, spending much of my time visiting several different libraries, collecting bits and pieces about the area and life there during the years immediately following World War I. My final stop was a small museum I had discovered on the internet. It was open only a couple of hours, twice a week. What I discovered was one of the most rewarding moments of my research. The museum was almost like a small private club, managed by a group of gentlemen in their late seventies and early eighties. These old guys have done a remarkable job of collecting a wide range of documents and artifacts pertaining to the area and to the major local events of the past hundred years or so. The museum is clearly their labor of love. They are working class men seeking to preserve the world into which they were born and in which they lived. Their efforts reminded me of the Dylan Thomas poem about old age and raging against the dying of the light. They do not want their world to go gently into the darkness of night.

Once I explained my project, I was immediately taken under the wing of several very friendly fellows. The two most important questions I had about Ellen’s life from that period were about when her family had lived there and about what happened to her father. To answer the first question, I was given the rent books from
the years immediately following the war. Quickly I documented when the family arrived, where they lived, how much they paid in rent and when they left. As for the second question, I was offered the local death records, where I discovered Patrick Dawson. When I explained the significance of my finds, I was told the remarkable history of how these records had survived. Apparently, when the village council closed, all of their records were discarded, simply tossed into the trash. One of the museum members had literally climbed into the dustbin and retrieved them. It was then that I understood how truly fragile our historical memory can be, and how historians are all too often dependent upon pure chance for the information that they are able to collect as they attempt to reconstruct the past.

A somewhat similar experience occurred during my research trips in the United States. During my research in Passaic, I had the opportunity of passing St. Nicholas Church School. St. Nicholas was the church Ellen attended. It was where she was married and where her funeral was held. Looking up at the classroom windows, I found a message from the students, a quotation handwritten on large strips of paper and taped to the windows. “Together we stand as one.” I stopped and wrote the words in my notebook. I could almost hear Ellen – the striking worker, the communist labor leader – speaking these words. The church is now Hispanic, the priest delivers his sermons to an immigrant congregation in English and Spanish, but the ideals of the Passaic workers of 1926, knowingly or unknowingly, lived on in that simple phrase. I knew Ellen would have smiled if she had been with me that day, just as I smiled when I read those words. We both understood that while individual workers may be forgotten, the ideals that made them strong continued to live. For me, however, the emotional climax of my search for Ellen came on the eve of what would have been her 103rd birthday. By pure chance it was the day I found her grave. It was
a bitterly cold and cloudy day in mid-December. As the light of day faded beyond the working class homes of Lodi, New Jersey, I walked through St. Nicholas Cemetery for more than an hour, searching for the word Dawson or Kanki among the seemingly endless parade of grave stones. Finding Ellen’s grave was one of the personal goals I set for myself when I began this project. Finally, just when I had given up hope of finding her grave and had started back toward my car, the word Dawson suddenly appeared. It proved to be the combined graves of four Dawson women – Ellen, her mother and two of her sisters. I stood in front of her grave, silently, for several minutes, my lips so numb from the cold I could barely speak. Finally, I introduced myself. “Hello, Ellen,” I said, my voice choking with a sudden, unexpected surge of emotion. “I’m David McMullen. I’m your biographer.” For a moment I could not speak any more, my words were caught in my throat, as tears began to swell from behind my eyes. It seemed a bit foolish, speaking to the grave of a woman I never met, a woman about whom I knew so much and yet so very little. Then and there I promised Ellen that she would not be forgotten.

If I could rewrite history, our paths would have crossed in life, we would have had at least one opportunity to sit down together, to get to know each other, to talk about her life. I suspect that is a common fantasy among biographers. Yet we came so close. She died in Florida, a few dozen miles from where I was born. Her husband died in the same town where I was born. I suspect her husband and I lived only a few miles from each other during the mid-1980s. We may have passed each other in a local shopping mall, or sat at adjoining tables in a restaurant. I will never know.

During my research, I was fortunate enough to establish contact with several of Ellen’s surviving relatives. At first, I was surprised at how little they knew about Ellen’s radical activities, but the more I grew to understand Ellen, the more I was not
surprised at all. Ellen was a private woman who seldom let down her guard, except with those who were closest to her, such as her brother David. I believe she was a proud woman, who would not have enjoyed admitting her failure. I believe she loved Scotland, but like countless Scots before and since, she recognized that economic prosperity was more readily available in other parts of the world. And, I think she loved her adopted country.

Perhaps the saddest moment of my research was when I spoke to the woman who had cared for Louis Kanki, Ellen’s husband, in the final years of his life. Despite thirty years of marriage, Ellen’s memory had been completely erased from his life. The caretaker found not a single mention of Ellen in all of Louis’ remaining possessions. He never spoke of Ellen in those final years, although he shared other memories of his earlier life.

Today, I am reminded of the words of another American communist, the activist and folk singer Pete Seeger. For me, his words offer an insightful conclusion to my account of Ellen’s life. He said, “Don’t mourn a fighter who made a mistake and lost, but mourn the suckers who never bothered putting up a fight.” Above all else, Ellen, the radical activist of the 1920s, was a fighter. She was as brave and courageous as any woman or man who ever lived. She should not be mourned, but neither should she be forgotten. Ellen Dawson should be remembered. That is why I wrote this thesis.
Viewing the film at the Library of Congress in Washington, I believe I saw Ellen at work in the strike headquarters, but unlike leading male activists, she was not identified. Interestingly, Vera criticizes Beal for remaining at the union headquarters with his bodyguards while the women lead marches and picket lines. In Beal’s account, he presents himself as the most important activist, yet local news accounts from the time tend to support Vera’s perspective. Philip Foner’s two volume history of women workers in the United States, published in 1979 and 1980, is still the only comprehensive study available. Despite criticism of Foner’s work, criticism that was often motivated by opposition to his political beliefs rather than a serious academic evaluation of his work, I found his research, when compared to primary source materials associated with the Passaic, New Bedford and Gastonia strikes, to be accurate. Philip Foner is the only historian I have found who recognized this connection. In the years after World War I, the Labour Party became a major force in Glasgow and throughout Britain. It is clear that American capitalism was supported in its campaign by government at the national, state and local levels, and by representatives of the skilled workers. Other historians have encountered striking workers from the period who were not only silent, but who had no conscious memory of events in which they were active participants. The picture is of Ellen as a young woman, probably taken shortly after her arrival in the United States in 1921. It is the first photograph in the small collection of photos that I have included with this thesis. This photograph is also included in the photo section of this thesis. Loray was certainly one of the largest mills in the Southeastern United States. It was, however, comparable in size to numerous mills I have seen in both Lancashire and in New England. The claims, I suspect, were more the result of local boosterism than of fact. The building now houses the local community theatre. These relatives are all individually acknowledged at the beginning of this thesis. Seeing Red (A documentary film by James Klein and Julia Reichert, Heartland Productions, 1983).