

Conditions in Nanty-glo and Cambria County transformed an area once noted for working-class consciousness and militancy into conservative political strongholds. While the United Mine Workers of America did not support any Presidential candidate in either 2016 or 2020, in both Presidential elections, Cambria County, Pennsylvania and Nanty-glo voters cast their ballots heavily for the Republican Party candidate Donald Trump. In 2016, Donald Trump, the first Republican Presidential candidate to win Pennsylvania since 1988, took Cambria County by 66% (42,258) to 30% (18,867). In the two Nanty-glo election districts, Donald Trump led Hilary Clinton 62% to 35% and 69% to 26%. In 2020, Cambria County, Pennsylvania and Nanty-glo voters went even more heavily for President Trump. In Cambria County, Donald Trump received 48,085 votes (68%) to Joe Biden's 21,730 (30.7%) In Nanty-glo, Donald Trump led Joseph Biden 68% to 32% and 75% to 25%. (Pesto, 2020; Bloch, Buchanan, Katz, and Quealy, 2018; Park, Smart, Taylor and Watkins, 2021; WBOY 12, 2020; Cambria County, n.d.).

In the lead-up to the 2020 Presidential election, Reuters interviewed Pennsylvania coal miners about their views on the candidates. Twenty-five out of the 26 interviewees said that they supported Donald Trump's reelection bid. Most expressed fear that Biden's commitment to clean energy meant that his election would be the final deathblow to the bituminous coal industry. Coalminers remained loyal to Donald Trump despite his failed promise to revive the coal industry. During the first three years of the Trump Administration, the number of bituminous coalminers in the United States fell by more than 6,000, including a decline in Pennsylvania from 4,559 in 2017 to 3,979 in 2019. This was despite the appointment of a former coal industry lobbyist as the head of the Environmental Protection Agency and the relaxation of Obama-era environmental rules that limited power-plant emissions and protected local land and water from coal waste (Rhys and Garner, 2020; Nark, 2020).

After the 2020 election, many of Cambria County's Republican voters supported Donald Trump's claim that the election was stolen. A New York Times article quoted a retired truck driver from Nanty-glo who called Joseph Biden a "total fool," Kamala Harris a "very scary woman," and argued that a Biden Presidency would be illegitimate and disastrous. Other people from the region had similar attitudes (Gabriel, 2020: 10).

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