

SEWN IN COAL COUNTRY



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An Oral History of the  
Ladies' Garment Industry in  
Northeastern Pennsylvania,  
1945–1995

ROBERT P. WOLENSKY

The Pennsylvania State University Press  
*University Park, Pennsylvania*

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To the people affiliated with the Wyoming Valley garment industry  
of northeastern Pennsylvania

*and*

To Min and Bill Matheson and the many other oral history subjects  
who have generously contributed interviews to the Wyoming Valley  
Oral History Project

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History studies not just facts and institutions; its real subject is the human spirit.

—NUMA DENIS FUSTEL DE COULANGES, 1864

People are trapped in history, and history is trapped in them.

—JAMES BALDWIN, 1955

One has only to scratch the surface of memory and the stories gush out.

—ALESSANDRO PORTELLI, 2003

In the present and the future, there will certainly be thoughtful activists who—seeking resources for making sense of what is happening and for finding pathways to a better future—will want to know something of these insurgent experiences and ideas of the past.

—PAUL LE BLANC AND TIM DAVENPORT, 2015

Labour movements, whatever else they were, were also “cultural revolutions.”

—ERIC HOBSBAWM, 1978

There is no higher religion than human service. Working for the common good is the greatest creed.

—MIN MATHESON, 1982

I have tried to be objective. I do not claim to be detached.

—RALPH MILIBAND, 1962

