INTRODUCTION

For the urban historian, the city of Pittsburgh presents rewarding opportunities to investigate the many-faceted aspects of urban growth and change. In almost classic detail, Pittsburgh evolved progressively from the 'pedestrian' city of the early nineteenth century to the 'streetcar' city of the late nineteenth century to acquire finally the highly complex, spatially differentiated characteristics of the 'automobile' city of today. Each stage of the transition involved tensions between the old and the new: between individuals who, for reasons of vanity, insecurity, or fear, wanted to maintain the city as it was, and those caught up in the exciting tempo of change who envisioned something new. In many ways, the sequence of Pittsburgh's development can be viewed as the outcome of the struggle between those who embraced the old and those who championed the new.¹

This present paper explores the ways in which successive generations of Pittsburgh elites contributed to the spatial differentiation of the city. The first section of this paper sketches a portrait of the dominant system of values and understandings embraced by most inhabitants of pedestrian Pittsburgh. Next, the paper examines

the ascendency and functional role adopted by the first generation of consciously aware Pittsburgh elites. To demonstrate the important role played by Pittsburgh families of wealth and standing in contributing to the processes of spatial change, this section focuses primarily on the village of Minersville, an early stronghold of ascendent elites. The final section of the paper explores an intriguing but frequently neglected aspect of urban social history, the tension between the values of the publicly-concerned first generation elites and the more privatistic values of successive generations. Once again focusing on Minersville, it shows how the resolution of this tension led to a redefinition of land use patterns along more rational lines.

Methodologically, the inferences drawn in the latter section derive from an examination of the Proceedings of the Quarterly Session of Pittsburgh's Orphans Court which provides important unobtrusive measures of differential values, intentions, and motivations essential to testing the validity of implicit assumptions concerning change over time. These data dramatize the behaviors of second and third generation elites, testifying to the extent of the perceptual and behavioral gulf separating them from their progenitors. At the same time, Orphan's Court records reveal the extent to which the courts facilitated spatial change by providing the legalistic framework through which to legitimize and implement the involuted social arrangements characteristic of the modern city.

In order to account for change over time, a study of the spatial and correlative social differentiation of Pittsburgh must first offer a description of the 'pedestrian' or 'walking' city. Most simply, the term walking city refers to a stage in the evolution of a city characterized by undifferentiated, non-specialized use of land. The time required to walk to work, school, market, and church became the primary criterion used in the location of these activities. Non-specialized land use encouraged social group integration in the pedestrian city. While social differentiation in terms of class gradations was clearly evident, geographical segregation of distinct social classes into distinct residential neighborhoods had yet to take place. Rather, rich and poor tended to mingle daily in close personal contact, their relationship made tenable by a system of values, beliefs, and understandings accepted by most residents of the walking city.

2. For a concise statement of characteristics of pedestrian Pittsburgh, see Samuel P. Hays, "The Changing Political Structure of the City in Industrial America,"
Like most walking cities of the period, Pittsburgh presented a bewildering visual array in which industrial smokestacks, retail shops, bustling waterfront warehouses, governmental buildings, religious facilities, and residential neighborhoods all merged to testify to the relative homogeneity of the community. The hills and rivers which surrounded the point and restricted outward growth retarded the development of the city along rational land use patterns. Unspecialized use of land encouraged social interaction among rich and poor alike. Within this setting, prominent Pittsburghers mingled daily with their social inferiors. Their homes along fashionable Penn Street were frequently adjacent to the meager dwellings and workshops of the city's artisans and wage-earners. Commonly-held values and understandings provided a central focus to daily life: respect for the family, faith in revivalistic religion, and participation in accessible community decision-making associations. Both physically and psychologically comfortable, the more prominent and wealthy families enjoyed relative security and acted to maintain the system.

Recent scholarship suggests some important qualifications needed to round out this social space model of pedestrian cities. Edward Pessen warns against exaggerating the quality of inter-class egal-

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tarianism and against minimizing the significance of the gulf separating the rich from the poor. In like fashion, Gary Nash contends that while walking cities did approximate the metaphor of an 'urban crucible' mixing differential classes, occupations, beliefs, and ethnic backgrounds, families of wealth continued to accept unquestioningly the axiom that rank and status must be preserved and social roles differentiated if society were to survive. These considerations suggest the fragility of social relationships in the pedestrian city. The apparent acquiescence of non-elite urban residents to the hierarchical orientation towards the proper arrangement of society held by elites suggests a society predicated on lower class deference. Yet that deference proved over time to be more cosmetic and illusory than real. For, as research on Minersville reveals, the very moment that the behaviors of second and third generation elites betrayed their repudiation of their traditional community responsibilities also signalled the moment for members of traditionally reticent and quiescent groups to become increasingly articulate. A comparison of the multi-dimensional social space experienced by early nineteenth century Pittsburghers with the image of society entertained by their offspring provides insights into the prerequisite roles they played in the spatial differentiation of the city.

THE PARAMETERS OF COMMUNITY LIFE

The articulation of values and standards commonly-held by rich and poor tended to accentuate the communitarian-egalitarian aspects of early Pittsburgh and preserve the delicate homogeneity of the community from dynamic and disruptive forces of change. When early Pittsburghers perceived that the activities of some individual or group either conflicted with conventional morality, assaulted the family, restricted economic growth, or posed a direct threat to the best interests of the community, they rallied together to protect the traditional underpinnings of social stability.

In 1815, for example, a conflict erupted between journeymen and master cordwainers which tested the sensitivities of larger Pittsburgh towards the meaning of community interest. Journeymen cordwainers organized a 'society' to extort higher wages from master

5. Nash, *The Urban Crucible*, chapter 1, passim.
shoemakers. Because the restraint on trade impeded local economic progress, masters called upon the Supreme Court to indict the journeymen conspirators. Although the trial lasted several days, the verdict was predictable. In his final summation of the Commonwealth vs. the Pittsburgh Cordwainers, Judge Samuel Roberts instructed the jury of peers to determine the guilt of those members of nascent craft societies for employing conspiratorial tactics and "using means prejudicial to the community." 6

The hostile response of larger Pittsburgh to the case of the journeymen cordwainers testified to the undisturbed and unchallenged supremacy of communitarian goals over private and selfish interests. One source of this communal orientation derived from the public's faith in and perception of the family ideal. Commonly accepted as an impenetrable bulwark of stability and order, the ubiquitous family pervaded every aspect of early Pittsburgh society. Both primary education and religion stressed the importance of filial duty and responsibility. Educational primers espoused the virtues of harmony and love associated with family life, while ministers spoke with the authority of God Himself about the relations between salvation and selfless devotion to the family. Voluntary associations, religious gatherings, and community assemblies attempted to duplicate the attributes of harmony, efficiency, and discipline reflected in the simple organization and operation of the family unit. 7


7. Both early American Spellers and Readers sought to inculcate steadfast moral virtues in the young. John A. Nietz, Old Textbooks, (Pittsburgh: 1961). Elihu Marshall, A Spelling Book of English Language, (1831), taught moral lessons on temperance. The highly popular Noah Webster, An American Selection of Lessons in Reading and Speaking, (1785) taught lessons "Largely moral in character;" the equally popular Caleb Bingham, The Columbian Orator, (1794-7), taught 100 moral lessons with such titles as, "On the Duty of School Boys," "Character of Fidelia," and "Filial Duty and Affection" (p. 66); the Preface to Lindley Murray, The English Reader, (1799), sought to "Inculcate some of the most important Principles of Piety and Virtue;" William Holmes McGuffey, Readers, emphasized "moral qualities of honesty, truth, and obedience" (p. 78). In Pittsburgh, probably the most popular text published was Lucius Osgood, Progressive Series of readers (1855-58) in which most lessons sought to teach moral precepts (p. 93). Nietz concludes that "Teaching religion and morality was totally the chief aim of education in early American textbooks" (p. 213). See also, Charles Carpenter, History of American Schoolbooks, (Philadelphia: 1963), passim, for similar findings.
Revivalistic religion provided another source of communitarian and egalitarian orientation and reinforced both the homogenizing and assimilating power of the family. Religious activities dominated early Pittsburgh social life and provided the main integrative force outside the family unit. While Sunday Sabbath Schools provided instruction to the young on the virtues of obedience, discipline, and Christian living, Pittsburgh ministers sought to inculcate steadfast moral and ethical standards in their adult flocks. The stately and imposing Dr. Francis Herron, third Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, rebuked immoderation and excessive individualism and extolled the virtues of temperance, charity, and mutual love for one's neighbors. The more phlegmatic, yet equally concerned, Dr. Elisha Swift of the Second Presbyterian Church appealed to the intellect and conscience of his congregation to live disciplined and responsible lives.

Lectures, reading rooms, and myriad social events sponsored by the Church carried the enthusiasm generated by the Sunday meeting throughout the remainder of the week.

Participation in an increasingly complex local associational network provided a third source of communal orientation. Possibly the most significant volunteer institution in pedestrian Pittsburgh, the Pittsburgh Fire Association represented an expedient response of Pittsburghers of all classes who understood that fire posed one of the gravest dangers to collective and individual life. One recent study


9. McKinney, *Presbyterianism*, pp. 138–153. McKinney cites one church member who observed Dr. Herron "is the only preacher I would fear in a personal encounter. He is all bone, all muscle; he has no fear, and would die before he would yield," pp. 139-40.


suggests that by the early years of the nineteenth century volunteer fire companies had become "select associations" generally organized and managed by the most affluent and prominent members of Pittsburgh society. Companies competed with one another in an effort to attract wealthy Pittsburgh merchants and professionals. Indeed, the admission of prominent Pittsburghers, the treasuries they supplemented, and the equipment they purchased were a source of pride to members and determined the relative prestige of the individual companies which comprised the Pittsburgh Fire Association.

The friendly competition for member recruitment and public recognition which characterized Pittsburgh's fire companies during the first decade of the nineteenth century hardened during the second and third decades into fierce rivalry and outright inter-company hostilities. Prominent and affluent members increasingly came to feel that they fulfilled their community responsibilities through their managerial and philanthropic function. As these "better" men chattered and socialized in the neighborhood fire companies and other "select organizations", the real work of fighting fires increasingly fell to working class Pittsburghers of differing ethnic and religious backgrounds seeking recognition and adventure.

The admission of this rowdy, more street-wise element into the companies which comprised the Pittsburgh Fire Association illuminated the tensions between the vision of community entertained by prominent Pittsburghers and the complicated reality the city had become. Demographically, in the forty years between 1810 and 1850, the population of the city swelled from 4,768 to 46,601 residents, the most remarkable increase of 120.6% occurring between 1840 and 1850. The growth and prosperity of Pittsburgh's iron,

12. For an excellent study of the evolution of informal volunteer Pittsburgh fire companies to a formal, paid municipal institution, see Ronald M. Zarychta, "Municipal Reorganization: the Pittsburgh Fire Department as a Case Study" in Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine, 58, #4 (October, 1975), pp. 471-486.
15. Ibid, p. 472.
glass, and coal industries attracted a mixture of native-born, immigrant, and free Negro workers. By 1850, immigrants constituted more than one third of the city's population. In the relative prosperity of the first two decades of the nineteenth century, the increasing complexity of religious, ethnic, and class differences was easily overlooked. But the economic slump of the 1830s which continued through the 1840s caused smoldering tensions to surface. Religious tension between Protestant and Catholic, xenophobic fear of immigrant groups by native born, working class hostility, and crime came to characterize an increasingly fragmented Pittsburgh community.

Confronted with the disproportionate rise in the size of the working class and immigrant populations, formerly complacent families of high social standing watched in dismay as they saw their city succumb to increasing expressions of crime, violence, and intemperance. The volunteer fire companies and local militias had become major sources of organized violence which disrupted city life. Increasingly, members of wealthy families began to concern themselves with the task of ordering a stable society. The desire for social order compelled them to establish religious, social, and familiar guidelines for responsible community behavior. At the same time, the unsettling presence of increasing numbers of working class groups who congested the inner city prompted them to depart gradually from their fashionable downtown homes and to search for both new areas and new symbols of their position in society. As early as 1830, prominent Pittsburgh families began to move away from the central city towards rural areas and thereby contributed to a redefinition of land use patterns.

THE PATERNALISTIC SOCIETY OF JOHN HERRON

The village of Minersville provides a useful framework through which to examine the ascendency of Pittsburgh elites as a conscious group and the dominant role they played in the spatial and social reorganization of Pittsburgh society. Located some two miles east

17. Ibid, p. 25.
of the city, Minersville emerged in response to the ambition, industry, and needs of a single individual. Like so many early and eventually prominent Pittsburghers, John Herron descended from tough Scotch-Irish stock. For his first twenty years, Herron submitted to the wishes of his grandfather Francis and his father James and remained on the large and profitable family farm in Franklin County. Unlike his three brothers, however, John craved the excitement and tempo of city life and only his reverence for the family ideal postponed the acting out of his determination to profit from the opportunities available in the exciting atmosphere of a growing Pittsburgh.

Herron’s success in every endeavor he undertook paralleled Pittsburgh’s explosive drive for regional economic autonomy and independence. On his arrival in Pittsburgh in 1812, Herron accepted a position as clerk in Blaine’s floundering lumber industry. Within a decade, Herron acquired sufficient monetary resources to purchase the company from Blaine. The combination of limitless energy and astute business acumen enabled him to revitalize the business into a profitable concern. To complement the business on a horizontal plane, Herron later purchased a brickyard, William Anderson’s steam-saw and grist mill, and John Irwin’s large saw mill. Herron used these various business enterprises to conduct an extensive business in contracting and building and soon became the foremost contract-builder in early Pittsburgh.

Herron quickly discovered that the lack of fuel in close proximity to his modest economic empire detracted from both efficiency and profitability. The trans-shipment of coal from neighboring regions cost a great deal of money and an irretrievable amount of time. Herron needed to find a supply of cheap coal to maximize his profits. Fortunately, Herron learned that the land immediately adjoining his property—land owned by prosperous Minersville farmer Jacob Ewart—contained an abundance of the precious fuel. Herron purchased the coal land from Ewart. Realizing that he needed a reliable work force in close proximity to the laboring site, Herron constructed at his own expense rows of tenement houses to accommodate his

workers. Certainly a paternalistic act, Herron was probably motivated as much by self-interest as by benevolence. For by keeping his workers in a distinct, spatially restricted area he could keep a close eye on their behaviors. Herron's farm, coupled with the rows of tenement houses close to the laboring sites and provided by the benefactor, became popularly known as Minersville.20

During his early period of social and economic ascendency, Herron and his wife resided close to his office at Thirteen Fifth Avenue in the midst of other prominent Pittsburghers. However, as demographic change threatened to upset the delicate spatial arrangements presumed adequate in the initial grid layout of the city, families such as the Herrons chose to move away from the central city to less dense and more coveted rural areas. Because only those with ample time and money could afford the luxurious isolation and privacy implicit in the rural ideal, the acquisition of desirable land began to symbolize sanctity, identity, and social power. The movement of families of wealth and respectability toward the seclusion of the country betrayed their increasing acceptance of spatial patterns of class distribution. Offered the best of two possible worlds, many socially and economically successful families found relief from anxieties by recoiling into the peace and security of their country estates after completion of their day's work in the city. The evacuation of their fashionable downtown homes constituted the first obvious assault on the communitarian underpinnings of Pittsburgh and resulted in the emergence of distinct elite neighborhoods such as Minersville, Oakland, Allegheny, and Hazelwood distant from the city.

In 1833, the Herron family moved from downtown Pittsburgh to their country estate in Minersville. Initially, Herron probably commuted to work in his own horse-drawn carriage. However, by 1853 a horse-drawn omnibus ran along Wylie Avenue out Center Avenue past the Herron estate, connecting the small village with downtown amenities and providing the necessary conveyance required for Herron's trek to his office.21 Although Herron spent most

20. See, for example, Wilson, Standard History, p. 991, who relates this history emphasizing how Herron knew every one of his worker-tenants.

21. On the impact of transportation on patterns of spatial distribution, see Tarr, Transportation Innovation, passim. See also, John Swauger, "Pittsburgh's Residential Pattern in 1815, "Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 68 (1976): 265-277 who argues that while geographical differentiation based upon social class standing did exist in pedestrian Pittsburgh, "transportation improvements were required to allow the preference for peripheral dwellings full expression," (p. 276).
of his time attending to his various business enterprises, his move to the eastern extremity of the village impelled him to become increasingly involved in village affairs and to assume the role of paternalistic village patriarch. Herron's unblemished credentials as elder of the First Presbyterian Church pastored by his cousin Dr. Francis Herron, and as an industrious and respectable member of Pittsburgh's influential families, enabled him both by example and imposition to establish the standards necessary for effective community relations.22

The village of Minersville duplicated in microcosm the threats which prompted elites to evacuate the downtown core in search of more space and hence more security. Popularly, the reputation of most of the workers who lived in Minersville for violent and decadent living far exceeded other areas of the city. Although Pittsburgh could boast of some one hundred and twenty-seven taverns to tempt and satiate the appetites of both men and women,23 the taverns located in Minersville were noted for their frequent brawls and outbursts of violence. "Inebriety, gambling, and especially desecration of the Sabbath" characterized this "moral waste". Contempt for the property of others resulted in occasional murders which sparked heated debates in both religious and political assemblies about what to do with the intransigent workers in the small community.24

Concern over the obvious moral decadence of his employees prompted Herron to attempt to elevate the moral values and standards of the community. Herron attributed the immoderation and

See also, Baldwin, Story of a City, p. 240 who finds that the Excelsior Line commissioned twelve new omnibuses in 1853, running them every five minutes. One of these ran out Herron Avenue to Minersville. See also George T. Fleming, "Via the Seventh Street Road" in the Gazette Times, (15 March 1925) who reminisces about what it was like to ride by horsecar to mid-nineteenth century Minersville. Located in folder entitled Pittsburgh: Minersville, Pennsylvania Room, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh.

22. According to Centennial Volume of the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1784-1884, (Pittsburgh, 1884), p. 216, John Herron was chosen for eldership in the church because of his sound judgement and firm character.

23. See Boucher, A Century, p. 525 who blames the increase in bars on increased immigration.

immaturity of his workers to their deficiency in moral and religious upbringing. Because the miners lived far from downtown churches and could not afford the high omnibus fares needed to transport their families to Sunday worship, their families suffered from the lack of Christian instruction. Because he respected the church as a positive source of community stability and perceived its use as a viable mechanism of social control, Herron decided to donate the necessary land, money, and materials required to construct a place of worship and instruction for his community of workers. Completed in 1833, the small Minersville or Seventh Presbyterian Church proved an effective counterbalance to the formerly unrestrained behaviors characteristic of Minersville workers.25

Herron's activities and perceptions of community life typified the benevolent concern displayed by most early families of wealth and prominence. Initially, early Pittsburgh elites accepted the values and standards which underpinned close-knit communitarian society.26 Because conditions of low population density posed no threat to their rather tenuous stability, early elites encouraged both through example and imposition the adoption of these values by families of lower social and economic position. But as the size and the composition of the population changed, successive generations of elites increasingly recognized the impending threat to their social position and security. Benevolent concern easily converted to social control. More and more, elites sought to accentuate their dominance over society by widening both the social and spatial distance between themselves and their social inferiors.27

25. See Minutes, pp. 2-4. For a statement of its original organization and founders, see The Seventh Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh in folder entitled Pittsburgh. Herron Ave. located in Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Pa. Baldwin, Story of a City, p. 237 cites the author of an 1837 directory who noted that “here on the hours of the sacred Sabbath, is to be seen an industrious and moral people, after the labors toils, and cares of the week, dressed in clean genteel apparel, attending church, their children the Sabbath school and at night the prayer meeting,” testifying to the success of Herron's Minersville Presbyterian Church.

26. James A. Henretta, Evolution of American Society, contends that family, church, and community dominated the lives of early Americans. Similarly, Robert Wiebe, Segmented Society, Michael Frisch, Town into City, and Gary Nash, Urban Crucible, each suggest that pre-industrial Americans regardless of class standing accepted social stability achieved through family, church, and community associations working together for the good of the corporate whole.

27. See, for example, John K. Alexander, “The City of Brotherly Fear: The Poor in Late-Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia” in Kenneth T. Jackson and Stanley K.
The importance which elites attached to the family derived from their conscious awareness of their role in society. Indeed, elites were the only group capable of transcending the mundane and of crystallizing a self-conscious force to advance their own interests. Often elders in the church and leaders in social and political gatherings, elites like John Herron recognized the gulf which separated them from other members of society. Although urban in outlook, elites increasingly feared the distressing conditions of the inner city which they ironically helped create. Demographic change with its concomitant increase in crime, disease, and congestion weakened their pretext for remaining in the city. The country estate provided both spatial and psychological barriers to the terrors of the transforming city which allowed the family lineage to establish secure roots. Increasingly, land, fortune, and lineage transmitted through the family became the identifiable characteristics of success, prestige, and status.

FROM PUBLIC CONCERN TO PRIVATE INTERESTS

The paternalistic society sponsored by first generation elites proved short-lived. Between 1850 and 1870, the isolation, sanctity, and identity of the established elite group suffered under the combined impact of both *nouveau riche* penetration and an inter-generational breakdown in values. The westward migration of industrialization facilitated the emergence of new competitors who vied with older established wealth for social power and recognition. The birth of Pittsburgh’s iron and steel industries generated fortunes overnight, many of which dwarfed to insignificance the ‘respectable’ holdings of the socially prominent first generation families of merchant elites.28

Schultz, eds., *Cities in American History*, (New York: 1972) who explores both the fear and anxiety experienced by late eighteenth century Philadelphians towards the growing numbers of impoverished immigrants residing in their city. See also Roger Lotchin, “San Francisco, 1846-56: The Patterns and Chaos of Growth,” Jackson and Schultz, eds., *Cities* who explains elite San Franciscans’ hegira to the suburbs as a quest for “pure air, living space, beauty, trees, solitude, retirement, and a respite from the dust, bustle, conflict, crowds, artificiality, utilitarianism, and practicality of a growing city,” (p. 159).

28. For the clearest, most concise statement of the status anxieties experienced by the “older elite” which prompted them to reject the newer, industrial, shirtsleeve millionaire, see Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Byron to F.D.R.*, (New York, 1955), especially pp. 135–140. For a subtle criticism of Hofstadter’s thesis of status deprivation, see John N. Ingham, “Robber Barons and the Old Elites: a Case Study in Social Stratification” in *Mid-America*, 52, no. 3, (July, 1970) who argues that *nouveau riche* industrialists like Andrew Carnegie were rejected simply because they did not follow the code of the older elite, nor play the game according to traditionally established rules.
Although some of the newcomers adhered to and emulated the values articulated by the older families of wealth, many more embraced values and standards which conflicted with upper class traditions and which derived from acknowledged changes in larger Pittsburgh society. Ostentatious display of wealth betrayed the renunciation of moderation by *nouveau riche* families: moderation formerly encouraged by concerned patriarchs such as John Herron. Increasingly, *nouveau riche* groups penetrated suburban neighborhoods sacred to the more refined and established elite. Seeking recognition by emulation, yet frequently lacking the refinement of the older wealthy group, men like Christopher Zug, A. A. Moore, and B. L. Fahnestock purchased large tracts of land in elite strongholds like Allegheny, Hazelwood, and Minersville.

Where older families of wealth conceived of land as a static symbol of their success which should be handed down and retained by their families, many men of new wealth began to conceive of land as a functional entity. The city's rise to regional economic prominence resulted in the elevation of businesses such as real estate speculation and banking to respectable avenues of social advancement. Increasingly, a functional business ethic became embedded in the elite perception of community. The activities of men such as C. H. Love, George and William Reis, and E. P. Jones dramatized the new businessman-investors' perception of community which profoundly altered the traditional elite's relation to larger community. The businessman-investor recognized that investment in land could provide large returns on the initial capital outlay through the sale of smaller plots at inflated costs. Parcelling out land in this way ought to meet the needs and demands of a constantly expanding population. Moreover, the predetermination of a price which would prohibit undesirable classes from encroaching on the sanctity of suburban life constituted a viable and innovative mechanism of social control.

The realization that the demand for land far exceeded its supply motivated many of the newer industrial elite and urban businessmen to become businessmen-investors. The increasing number of development areas which seemed to transform the formerly pastoral

29. A cursory examination of antebellum *Pittsburgh City Directories* compared to post-Civil War *Pittsburgh City Directories* dramatizes the extent to which occupations in real estate and banking proved increasingly attractive avenues for those interested in achieving financial success.
countryside overnight into monotonous rows of identical houses on precisely surveyed plots betrayed the trend away from disorganized urban sprawl and towards rationally controlled neighborhoods characterized by socio-economic segregation. The businessman-investor consciously developed land for the expanding middle socio-economic stratum, thereby enabling middle-class families to infiltrate neighborhoods once held sacred and inviolate by older families. More and more, families of middle-class workers, many of whom comprised the new semi-professional occupational ranks of bookkeepers, clerks, and factory foremen, chose to spend their meagre savings to purchase modest living accommodations in the newly developed neighborhoods and away from the adverse conditions of the inner city.

Second and third generation elites responded to the functional utility of land as a potential source of wealth on the basis of the economic successes evidenced by development promoters. In turn, their speculation in the use of land tended to deprive it of much of its former symbolic value. In an effort to increase their immediate fortune, for example, Jacob and William Ruch dispensed with their deceased father’s wishes to preserve their family estate and began to dissect the large Minersville farm prized by their father. They divided a large fifteen acre tract of land into well over three hundred plots, each averaging twenty-two feet by one hundred and ten feet. The family estate of Alexander Brackenridge encountered the same fate and toppled as second generation revealed the extent to which the symbolism formerly attached to land in general and the country estate in particular no longer affected the sympathies of money-dominant society. Increasingly, housing developments sponsored by *nouveau riche* as well as descendents of established wealth and characterized by both density and similarity dotted the disappearing countryside once reserved as the pride and privilege of elites.


Surreptitiously, the courts provided elites with an arena in which they could dramatize their changing conception of their role in society. Intergenerational disputes over the inventory and the distribution of the personal and real estate of the progenitor preoccupied the quarterly sessions of the Orphans Court as well as the attention of larger Pittsburgh. The pedestal of isolation from early elites guided the direction and development of the city teetered precariously as successive generations performed ungracefully before the courts and the press. Formerly perceived as irreproachable, families such as the Ewarts and the Zugs increasingly demonstrated their vulnerability to human weakness and failing.

The family scandal which followed the death of Jacob Ewart, for example, dramatized the symptomatic erosion of family ties and the gradual process of disintegration which increasingly undermined the family ideal. A prominent and respected member of the Minersville community, Jacob Ewart extolled the virtues and the strength of the family ideal. He believed that his sons inherited his respect for family cohesion and unity. Jacob stipulated in his last will and testament that his sons George and Samuel dispose of his personal estate valued at $144,000 on a 'share and share alike' basis. The scandal arose over alleged misadministration and unequal distribution of the assets. George's son, Samuel F. Ewart, complained that his uncle failed to divide or give true account. For almost thirty years, the two branches of the family battled each other in the Orphans Court. Pittsburghers watched in dismay and amazement as the formerly respected Ewart family opened itself to public examination and scrutiny.  

The case involving the Zug family represented another typical kind of scandal which offended the better tastes of Pittsburgh society. Charles Zug inherited his father's substantial interest in Zug & Company, Limited—a nail factory and rolling mill located in the city's Ninth Ward. The will further stipulated that Charles' four sisters divide the credit balance and the prorated profits of the father's share in the business. The scandal which ensued over the proper

32. For the will of Jacob Ewart, consult Will Book, 18-562-299. For the accusations of Samuel F. Ewart against his uncle Samuel Ewart, see Orphans Court Proceedings, 162-142-215—April—1906. The Court eventually demanded that Samuel Ewart show cause why he failed to give a true rendering of his father's assets and commanded him to provide a true accounting.
distribution of the Zug estate revealed the extend to which descendents of prominent families renunciated the values entertained by the former generation.\textsuperscript{33}

Not all families, however, behaved so disreputably in the public’s eye. A respected member of Pittsburgh’s commercial community, wholesale merchant Isaiah Dickey bequeathed to his progeny his perception of community and the role which influential families ought to play in that community. The Dickeys resided on a large piece of property on Francis Street between Center and Wylie Avenues. Isaiah counseled his children in his final will that, “. . . my views have often been expressed during my life that I think that children are better off, that is, they make better men and women more useful to themselves and better members of society, to inherit little than much.”\textsuperscript{34} Isaiah feared the adverse effects a life of ease would have on his children. Although a partial inventory valued his personal and real estate at $92,450, Isaiah left his children only $10,000 each concluding that, “. . . it is this power of parents, . . . [children] . . . should be left in a condition above dependence, so the sum left mixed with frugality and honesty industry (sic), they may rise to independence.”\textsuperscript{35}

Although some families such as the Dickeys, the Duffs, and the Fahnestocks continued to maintain their immunity to public condemnation and ridicule, the intra-familial scandals which plagued many prominent families began to undermine the public’s faith in and image of families of wealth. By demonstrating their susceptibility to human faults, the family intrigues of the Ewarts and the Zugs more than proved the inadequacy and the impotency of the cherished family ideal to ward off the adverse effects of modernization and change. The sanctity of the family suffered as descendents evidenced increasing expressions of preference for personal aggrandizement over maintenance of family unity and harmony. The repudiation of the family ideal by families of wealth and influence signaled irreversibly the beginning process of decline in elite leadership.

\textsuperscript{33} For the will of Christopher Zug, see \textit{Will Book}, 78-512-265; Zug left an estate valued at close to $500,000. See \textit{Estate Inventory}, 24-180-163; for a sense of the scandal which followed his death. See \textit{Orphans Court Proceedings}, 139-505-287-June–1902. For a brief vignette of Zug, see \textit{Biographical Review}, 24, (Boston, 1897), pp. 251–2.

\textsuperscript{34} For the will of Isaiah Dickey, see \textit{Will Book}, 16-117-64.

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.
The courts also provided the legalistic framework through which to legitimize and implement the involuted social arrangements characteristic of the modern city. Neighborhoods formerly accessible only to elites came increasingly within the financial purview of the aspiring middle and lower classes. Both businessmen-investors and the progeny of established wealth over-speculated in land development ventures. They hoped to actualize the profit potential in the growing demand of middle class workers for land removed from the smoke and congestion of industrial areas. The myriad land development plans recorded by 1870 dramatized the contagious disease which afflicted most men of wealth. Because they often lacked sufficient personal funds to purchase outright the large tracts of land required for development, men such as George Ledlie, E. P. Jones, and C. H. Love either pooled their resources in some form of limited partnership or turned to their friends or banks to underwrite the heavy mortgages. Often, other financial emergencies occurred while the speculator awaited his long-range profit. Rather than to sell a share of the land prematurely and thereby risk loss of eventual expected profit, many chose to borrow further sums of money. From 1870 on, Pittsburgh's Orphans Court devoted much of its time to satisfying the claims of creditors against the indebtedness of the estate.

On the death of the progenitor, the first inventories of many estates revealed that over-extension of funds left a critical shortage insufficient to meet the terms stipulated in the will. Disaffected progeny as well as the creditors who underwrote the heavy mortgages appealed their cases before the Orphans Court. Generally siding with the plaintiffs in cases of debt, the courts forced those in charge of administering the estates to sell either in public or private auction enough property to defray court costs and meet the terms outlined in the will.

The estate of Edward T. Cassidy, for example, owed over $10,000 in both taxes and debts to creditors. The estate owed most of the money to the Citizens Insurance Company for liens on real estate holdings. The Orphans Court forced Olivia Cassidy, executrix, to make the estate solvent through the sale of land. To this end, she sold the valuable Minersville property located on Wallace Street between Berthoud Street and Brackenridge Avenue. Private sale
enabled her to receive from one Eliza L. Sergeant the sum of $15,000 for the piece of property which measured about 225 by 380 feet.  

Although private auction generally produced higher prices for land and tended to restrict all but the wealthy from negotiations, expediency often required administrators to transact the business publicly under the fair auspices of the Sheriff's Department. This procedure enabled anyone who desired land and who could afford the down payment to break down the barriers of formerly exclusive neighborhoods. The case of Albert A. Moore typified this solution to the problem of estate indebtedness. Although his debts amounted to well over $3700, an appraisal of Moore's estate at the time of his death showed he left liquid assets amounting to only $300. His son George Moore petitioned the Orphans Court because of the number of creditors, "... a great many of which are pressing for payment without any funds... pay them." The court forced Moore to open the land to public auction. Both Moore and the creditors complained of the results of the first sale. Many people expressed a willingness to pay up to $5000 for a plot averaging 100 by 30 feet. But city auctioneer A. J. Pentecost refused to sell the land in small parcels which middle class families could afford. Moore and his creditors complained bitterly that the sale would have realized greater profit if the property had been sold in small, separate parcels. The court ordered the first sale invalid and charged Pentecost to conduct another auction. During the second sale, Pentecost offered the lands separately at prices which conformed to the pocketbooks of middle income groups. In this way, the courts facilitated both the breakdown of monopolistic control of land by families of wealth and influence and the separation of middle socio-economic groups from

36. For the will of Edward T. Cassidy, see Will Book, 61-539-237; for outstanding mortgages on Cassidy's real estate holdings, see Orphans Court Proceedings, 130-226-407-Sept-1900; for the Court order to sell a portion of the Cassidy estate, see Orphans Court Proceedings, 136-419-195-Dec-1901.
37. For the will of A. A. Moore, see Will Book, 13-104-5.
38. For an appraisal of the Moore estate at the time of Moore's death, see Widow's Appraisal, Orphans Court Proceedings, 34-73-144-Dec-1875.
39. For the petition of George and Hanna Moore to the Orphans Court empowering the co-administrators to seek a mortgage on their property to repay creditors rather than to sell their land "... at a great sacrifice of the interests of the heirs," see Orphans Court Proceedings, 36-78-131-Dec-1876. Ironically, of the many creditors hounding the Moores for repayment of debts, none seemed more insistent than George and Samuel Ewart who maintained that their father Jacob had lent Moore $4,240 which Moore never repaid. See Orphans Court Proceedings, 34-450-189-March-1876.
the lower classes still confined to the poverty-stricken areas of the inner city.\textsuperscript{40}

Several other developments which derived from fast-paced modernization worked to erode the public's faith in the propriety of elites to speak for Pittsburgh community. An ostensibly mysterious and unconquerable environment characterized by recurring floods and severe epidemics formerly confined Pittsburghers to a religious worldview. Between 1830 and 1860, for example, repeated outbreaks of cholera brought many Pittsburghers to their knees in a renewed period of religious enthusiasm. Although many Pittsburghers recognized cholera as a product of unsanitary conditions of crowded inner-city life, many other residents believed that the disease afflicted only the lower class population who they felt "indulged in excesses of all kinds."\textsuperscript{41} Increasingly from the 1830s through 1860s, Pittsburghers channelled their religious enthusiasm into areas of social concern. Intemperance became one of the first targets of Pittsburgh revivalism. By 1830, 129 taverns catered to working class groups primarily immigrant, working on the canal. To offset the immoderation and immorality associated with lower class drinking, the Temperance Hotel and Temperance Village were established in 1836.\textsuperscript{42}

In the twenty years between 1820 and 1840 church construction peaked as the number of churches trebled to 60, eleven of which were Presbyterian.\textsuperscript{43} Caught up in the religious enthusiasm of the period in general, and swayed by the temperance movement in particular, many tavern keepers replaced whiskey with ice cream.\textsuperscript{44}

But the unity of interest suggested by temperance activities and religious enthusiasm which ostensibly provided a common focal point

\textsuperscript{40} For the invalidation of the first sale and the Court's order to A. J. Pentecost to resell the lands in smaller parcels so that the Moores could realize sufficient profit to repay Albert A. Moore's debts, see Orphans Court Proceedings, 38-314-345-Dec-1877.

\textsuperscript{41} For a fascinating study of the social and psychological costs of cholera see C. Rosenberg, The Cholera Years: United States in 1832, 1849, and 1866, (Chicago, Ill.: 1962).

\textsuperscript{42} See, for example, Stryker and Seidenberg, Album, p. 18. Also, Baldwin Story of a City, maintains that Temperanceville was so named because property deeds stipulated no liquor could be sold in the village. A Mrs. Lusher ran the Temperance Hotel. p. 245.

\textsuperscript{43} McKinney, Presbyterianism. 209.

\textsuperscript{44} Stryker and Seidenberg, Album, p. 18; also Baldwin, Story of a City, p. 249, tells how the owner of Dravo House saw the light, dumped out his liquor, and laid in a stock of lemonade and ice cream.
among ‘respectable’ Pittsburghers proved more illusory than real. Even as the religious fervor of the 1830s peaked, hidden tensions began to surface revealing widening cleavages between old and new elites and among them and their social inferiors. The schism which fractured the traditional cohesion of the nine Pittsburgh churches which fell under the wing of the Old School Presbytery of Ohio, for example, testified to the vulnerability of the church to forces of change. The Minersville Presbyterian church established by John Herron played a particularly important role in the schism between the Old and New Schools.\(^5\) Caught up in the proselytizing evangelical activities of the New School, the defiant Minersville Presbyterian Church combined with the elite Third Presbyterian Church to withdraw from the Old School Ohio Presbytery on October 10, 1838.\(^6\) The schismatic action of the two churches contributed to both intra- and inter-congregational tensions which ultimately dampened the intensity of religious enthusiasm. The Third Presbyterian Church’s decision to withdraw from the Ohio Presbytery, for example, caused a scandalous division within the membership on the departure of six families who demanded a return of 75% of the money they had contributed to the erection of the church.\(^7\) At the same time, Pittsburgh’s New School churches competed with other Presbyterian churches for membership, thereby generating intense inter-denominational hostility. When the tension between Pittsburgh Presbyterian churches finally ceased in 1869, Pittsburghers experienced a diminished concern for religion in their private and community lives.\(^8\)

Years of dissension worked to challenge the perception of the church as a viable institution of community life. Where the efficacy and honesty of elite spiritual lay guidance formerly went unquestioned, intra-congregational division frequently over the politics of the distribution of church funds split congregations into hostile

\(^{45}\) For the best retelling of the role played by the Minersville Presbyterian Church in the schism between the Old and New Schools, see McKinney, *Presbyterianism*, pp. 286–291.

\(^{46}\) For an explanation of their behaviors, see folder entitled *Herron Avenue Presbyterian Church*. Courtesy of the Westminster Foundation of Pittsburgh in cooperation with the General Board of Education of the Presbyterian Church. See also *Minutes of Session of Minersville Church*, p. 5. cited in McKinney, *Presbyterianism*, p. 289.


\(^{48}\) See, for example, *Presbyterianism Historical Society Journal*, 18, (1938–1939), passim.
camps. Often, the inner church conflict illuminated tensions between competing elites as well as the growing dissension between them and their social inferiors.

A deficit in the yearly revenue of the Third Presbyterian Church, for example, resulted in an emotional eruption which divided the congregation into two antagonistic factions. One group led by the businessman-investor railroad magnate William Thaw believed that a shortage of a “few hundred dollars less in revenue of over $10,000 betokened a waning power and usefulness of the pastorate”. The other group led by commercial merchant John Watt of Minersville felt differently. Thinking more of congregational harmony than astute financial administration, Watt accused Thaw of splitting the church and thereby “giving a serious blow to the cause of religion”. Thaw denied Watt’s allegations. In response to Watt’s charges of playing factional church politics, Thaw accused Watt of dividing the congregation. He rebuked Watt for raising as a major issue before the congregation his refusal to stand during singing, arguing he refused on the grounds of personal liberty rather than in a spirit of discord or rebellion.

Watt and his sympathizers entertained an older vision of the role which prominent families should play in the life of the community. Like John Herron, Watt drew no sharp distinctions between public office, philanthropic concerns, and religious life. And like Herron, he felt responsible for shaping by personal example an orderly society based on religion, moderation, and the family ideal. He experienced only confusion and dismay at the behaviors of men like Thaw who represented a new attitude towards the role played by prominent men in the total life of the community. To Watt, Thaw’s refusal to stand during singing symbolized the newer generation’s rejection of every value cherished by him—values essential to an orderly and harmonious society.

Prophetically, the attitudes of the new generation of William Thaws gradually supplanted the more archaic perceptions of community life entertained by the John Watts and the John Herrons.

The older generation watched uneasily as the newer generation displayed themselves irreverently and obtrusively in the public foreground. More concerned with immediate personal profit than with abstract conceptions of social etiquette and social order, the newer generation began to break down the barrier of formerly isolated elite neighborhoods like Minersville cherished by earlier generations. More and more, these formerly secluded neighborhoods lost their distinctive beauty and openness as hordes of strangers began to move away from the city and into the monotonous rows of homes now open to them.

Pursued by the city, many prominent families began to search for new areas far removed from the growing city. In order to regain the security implicit in the rural isolation, many of these families sold their homes in older elite strongholds and moved to such outlying areas as Wilkensburg, Sewickly, and Squirrel Hill. Others affected by the businessman ethic attempted to assert more strongly the psychological distance separating them from larger society. Private contribution to charitable organizations provided them with the convenient illusion of public concern, enabling them to rationalize their growing ignorance of and indifference towards the city which encroached upon them. Increasingly, philanthropy became a private concern which elites used effectively as a substitute for the more difficult to obtain spatial isolation.\(^{50}\)

CONCLUSION

For the generation between 1820 and 1850, elites came to dominate positions of community respect and influence in religion, politics,
and community social affairs. Although they continued to espouse the basic values of larger society, they redefined community in terms which best served their own interests; that is in terms of moderation, temperance, and social order. Self-conscious awareness of the responsibilities implicit in their assumed role of paternalistic social overseers compelled elites to multiply the psychological distance between themselves and their social inferiors. Perception of social distance easily converted into a demand for spatial distance. Improvements in transportation provided the means for many prominent families to flee from the inner city to the growing number of suburban neighborhoods which dotted the periphery of the city. The migration of early elites like John Herron to such geographically and socially distinct communities as Minersville constituted the first assault on pedestrian Pittsburgh's communitarian social structure.

Ironically, the era of paternalistic elite concern for shaping orderly urban social relations lasted but a short time. A newer generation of prominent business-minded Pittsburghers, frequently the offspring of the older generation, recognized that they could profit greatly by championing social change. Repudiating traditional values, this newer generation undermined the last vestige of communitarian Pittsburgh by hastening the processes of spatial differentiation. Attaching proportionately greater significance to the accumulation of wealth as a symbol of personal status than to the possession of land, they began to break down the country estates cherished by the earlier generation. Quite frequently, the courts facilitated the process of urban spatial change by providing the legal framework needed to open opportunities for increasing numbers of skilled artisans, semi-professionals, and managerial types to move into respectable homes in coveted suburban neighborhoods. More and more, as divergent groups which comprised the middle stratum of Pittsburgh society began to recognize themselves as different from their social inferiors trapped in the inner city, they sought to separate themselves geographically from the groups below. By both creating and catering to the growing middle class demand for modest homes removed from the congested arrangements of central Pittsburgh, the newer generation of prominent and successful Pittsburghers facilitated the spatial differentiation of a formerly communitarian city. As a result of their activities, the geographic segregation of distinct social classes into distinct residential neighborhoods became a reality.