

Lubove's Pittsburgh

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When Roy Lubove first arrived in Pittsburgh in 1962, I suspect he anticipated seeing a smoky, dismal Dickensian landscape. He came to discuss his manuscript entitled *Progressives and the Slums* with Frederick Hetzel, Director of the University of Pittsburgh Press.¹ In view of his interest in housing, social welfare, and city planning, it is almost a certainty that he was already familiar with the 1909 *Pittsburgh Survey's* dreary picture of the city, its social pathologies, and ineffective civic culture.² The Press arranged for Philip S. Broughton, then Secretary of the A. W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust and the critical link in bringing documentary photographer Roy E. Stryker to Pittsburgh in the 1950s, to show Lubove the city.³ While the two photography buffs enjoyed the visual spectacle of Pittsburgh, probably confirming some of

1. Roy Lubove, *Progressives and the Slums: Tenement House Reform in New York, 1890-1917* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1963).

2. See Maurine W. Greenwald and Margo Anderson, editors, *Pittsburgh Surveyed: Social Science and Social Reform in the Early Twentieth Century* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996).

3. Interview by author with Frederick Hetzel, August 26, 1995. In a letter that was part of a nearly 15 year correspondence between Lewis Mumford and Lubove, Mumford asked Lubove in 1964 if he had met Broughton yet. Letter from Mumford to Lubove, April 22, 1964, Roy Lubove Papers, Archives of Industrial Society, University of Pittsburgh. As Chief of the Office of Health Education in the U. S. Public Health Service during the New Deal, Broughton had Stryker photograph public health conditions during the 1930s. He and Wallace Richards, Secretary of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, established the Pittsburgh Photographic Library in 1950 at the University of Pittsburgh under the direction of Stryker for the purpose of documenting the city's redevelopment renaissance. Stryker was most well known for directing the famous photography of rural life project under the Farm Security Administration. Although Stryker resigned after 17 months, the Pittsburgh Photographic Library produced approximately 20,000 photographs in its four years. Several of its photographers won national awards. See Constance B. Schulz, "Introduction" in Constance B. Schulz and Steven Plattner, eds., *Witness to the Fifties: The Pittsburgh Photographic Library, 1950-1953* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999). See also Roy E. Stryker and Mel Seidenberg, *Pittsburgh Album, 1758-1958* (Pittsburgh, 1959).

his Dickensian expectations, I imagine Lubove was also struck by the brightening skies and emerging, modernistic redevelopment of downtown Pittsburgh, which Renaissance I was effecting. If not during that visit, then at least within the next few years, Lubove decided to write a book on Pittsburgh, which would explore the city's transformation from an archetypal example of the deleterious consequences of nineteenth century urban industrialism to the nation's shining model of twentieth century urban renewal.⁴ Of course, in his hands the book would adhere strictly to that story line.

With the completion of his doctoral work at Cornell in 1960, Lubove embarked on an ambitious intellectual agenda that would result in five books, five edited volumes, and numerous chapters and articles in barely a decade. He set out to examine the progressive reformers' response at the turn-of-the-century to the transformation of America from a rural to an urban industrial society. He argued that nineteenth-century voluntary organizations were incapable of addressing adequately the social and environmental problems accompanying the emergence of a pluralistic, mass society. In four books on housing reform, the rise of the social work profession, community planning in the 1920s, and the battle for social security, he described both the debate over the proper role of public intervention and the professionalization, centralization, and ultimately bureaucratization inherent in the progressive's prescriptions.⁵

Lubove's fifth and final book of this incredibly productive decade, *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh: Government, Business, and Environmental Change*, published in 1969, applied the same themes to a single city.⁶ While *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh*, now referred to as Volume I, closed the most productive phase of his career, it also opened a second phase, in which he produced two books, two edited works, and three articles and chapters on the history of Pittsburgh in the twentieth century. He

4. Letter from Roy Lubove to Frederick Hetzel, February 6, 1963. Expressing delight that Lubove was writing a book on Pittsburgh, Mumford revealed that "...the Mellon Foundation [and therefore Broughton] invited me to look at the city for them in 1950 [and] later; but never followed up any of my suggestions." Letter from Mumford to Lubove, July 23, 1967, Roy Lubove Papers.

5. Roy Lubove, *The Professional Altruist: The Emergence of Social Work as a Career, 1880-1930* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965); *Community Planning in the 1920s: The Contribution of the Regional Planning Association of America* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1964); and *The Struggle for Social Security, 1900-1935* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968). See Edward K. Muller, "Roy Lubove, 1934-1995," *Journal of Urban History*, Vol. 22, No. 6 (September, 1996), 675-686.

6. Roy Lubove, *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh: Government, Business, and Environmental Change* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1969; reprinted in 1995 by the University of Pittsburgh Press).

chronicled not so much the dramatic economic transformation of Pittsburgh, but instead the shift in the city's leadership and means of addressing its crises. Whereas business interests and the voluntary institutions they controlled powered early and mid-twentieth century responses to demanding social, environmental, and economic problems, a noticeably more diffuse, inclusive, and neighborhood-centered reform approach characterized late twentieth-century Pittsburgh's efforts to rebound from massive industrial collapse. Moreover, in delineating this experience, Lubove also emphasized the natural and man-made qualities of the urban landscape. Altogether, his writing on the history of twentieth-century Pittsburgh constitutes his second significant scholarly achievement, second only to his initial exploration of the progressive response to urban industrialization.

Voluntaristic Pittsburgh

Pittsburgh and its surrounding industrial metropolitan region symbolized the awesome power of American industry at the beginning of the twentieth century. However, it also represented the grave social consequences of undue emphasis on economic enterprise. Pittsburgh displayed the problems of grinding poverty, substandard housing, a severely polluted and degraded environment, a demoralized and often combative labor force, extreme political fragmentation, and an ineffective civic community. In the first chapter of *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh, Volume 1*, Lubove drew heavily on the 1909 *Pittsburgh Survey*, sponsored by the Russell Sage Foundation, for his analysis of Pittsburgh's problems. Recognized as the pathbreaking and pre-eminent social investigation of its day, the six volumes and many articles of the *Survey* laid bare the city's most squalid and unsettled conditions from a progressive perspective and agenda.⁷ Lubove understood and accepted the perspective; he was less comfortable with the agenda. Although he seemed to embrace the *Survey's* plea for political consolidation into a

7. Maurine Greenwald and Margo Anderson, *Pittsburgh Surveyed*. Also see Roy Lubove, "John A. Fitch: *The Steel Workers* and the Crisis of Democracy," an introduction to John A. Fitch, *The Steel Workers* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1989; originally published, New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1911 as part of the six volume Pittsburgh Survey). In this essay Lubove stressed Fitch's central concern that the repressive conditions of work in Pittsburgh's steel mills threatened the fabric of citizenship and a democratic society through substandard wages, long hours, and a lack of civil rights. "The supreme irony of industrial relations in early twentieth century America was that the steel companies, not the labor organizers, threatened the welfare of American society" (pg. xii).

unified metropolitan government through annexation, he deemed the progressive's reliance on governmental regulation and voluntary civic organizations largely ineffectual because it depended on the city's "business and professional leaders," who in fact "initiated and dominated" reform. In this context, he argued, "issues are defined and programs established largely in response to business objectives." Reforms that challenged business prerogatives, the private market creed, and specific industries, or appeared too expensive failed to garner sufficient political support and withered.⁸

The failure of nineteenth-century voluntaristic methods to solve twentieth century social problems had been a central theme of his earlier work. Returning to familiar topics as well, Lubove expounded on voluntaristic efforts for housing reform, smoke control, and city planning in Pittsburgh. In each case, civic reform organizations promoted the issues, gained some governmental intervention, and ultimately failed to effect significant change. In each case, reform threatened business interests or received limited support from politicians. Thus, new regulations were either weak or not vigorously enforced, and new governmental agencies, such as the City Planning Commission, were not adequately supported.

Efforts by civic organizations and city government to develop parks and playgrounds, on the other hand, presented less conflict with private prerogatives and, accordingly, Lubove argued, enjoyed more success. Contemplation, recreation, and play in city parks and playgrounds promoted "Americanization, good citizenship, and industrial peace," goals the business community heartily embraced.⁹ The establishment of the public parks system with connecting boulevards was a notable achievement, brought about largely through the work of the Director of Public Works, Edward M. Bigelow, who was also cousin of the powerful Republican party boss Christopher L. Magee. Playground development, while also having broad support, moved forward more slowly due to governmental ineptitude. It remained a reform quest into the 1920s. In contrast to these initiatives, civic leaders ignored Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.'s proposals for taking advantage of the city's natural assets, the rivers, riverfronts and steep slopes, which he included in his 1910 plan for Pittsburgh entitled *Pittsburgh: Main Thoroughfares and the Down-*

8. Lubove, *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh*, Vol. I, vii.

9. *Ibid.*,

town District.¹⁰ Terracing the steep hillsides and building overlooks, for example, entailed considerable expenditure, and practical Pittsburgh had not yet seen the economic advantage accruing from investment in aesthetically oriented projects.

Lubove traced the familiar topics of housing reform and planning through the 1920s into the early 1930s. He saw little progress on both fronts, arguing that business interests, voluntaristic approaches, and political fragmentation continued to limit significant accomplishments. However, with his eye for design quality and faith in the virtues of community planning, he extolled the communitarian and design principles embodied in the Buhl Foundation's Chatham Village project. Consultants Clarence Stein and Henry Wright, architects familiar to Lubove from his 1965 book on the Regional Planning Association of America, adapted to the region's hilly topography the visionary design features of superblocks, separated pedestrian and vehicular traffic, verdantly landscaped inner courts, and ample recreational space of woods and trails. Chatham Village was a direct descendent of the architects' now famous residential community designs for Sunnyside Gardens, New York (1923) and Radburn, New Jersey (1927).¹¹ For Lubove, Chatham Village was a model of both residential design and the way to take full advantage of the region's natural assets. But, he also pointed out that as a model of how capitalism might solve the nation's housing problem through large scale, limited-dividend projects Chatham Village had failed. "Chatham Village ...demonstrated the bankruptcy of voluntarism as a strategy for mass housing betterment."¹²

Whether viewing Pittsburgh in the 1930s or twenty years later in the 1950s, one can accept Lubove's harsh assessment of private market and voluntaristic solutions for Pittsburgh's housing predicament. The same cannot be said for his severe judgement of planning in the 1920s as

10. John F. Bauman and Edward K. Muller, "The Olmsteads in Pittsburgh: Part II, Shaping the Progressive City," *Pittsburgh History*, Vol. 76, No. 4, Winter, 1993/1994, 191-205; and Pittsburgh Civic Commission, *Pittsburgh: Main Thoroughfares and the Downtown District* (Pittsburgh: 1911).

11. In a letter to his wife dated March 29, 1932, Clarence Stein wrote "I think it [Chatham Village] is the best moderately priced housing development in America. ... most of the Radburn ideas have been followed in Chatham Village." By the end of the twentieth century many critics, developers, and homeowners agreed with Lubove's favorable assessment of Stein and Wright's residential communities. Many of their design features have influenced better quality suburban developments since World War II and are recognized by scholars as part of the new urbanism so popular today. Kermit Carlyle Parsons, *The Writings of Clarence S. Stein: Architect of the Planned Community* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), xviii, 106, 175, and 237; Roy Lubove, *Community Planning in the 1920s*; and Lubove, Vol. I, 77.

12. Lubove, *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh*, Vol. I, 82.

"Form Without Substance."¹³ Similar to the first decade of the century, Lubove noted, an elite voluntary organization stimulated both the rejuvenation of city planning and the preparation of a comprehensive plan in the 1920s. Representing powerful businessmen and assiduously promoting the advantages of comprehensive planning, the Citizens Committee on Community Planning worked closely with the revived City Planning Commission, especially through Frederick Bigger who held key positions in both organizations. Nonetheless, Lubove averred, it was "a bleak era for those who advocated comprehensive planning and constructive public intervention in the physical environment", because governmental decisions were "made on the basis of interest group pressure and coalitions, rather than a commitment to a comprehensive plan that expressed the public interest."¹⁴ In part he was conveying Bigger's own disillusionment with the difficulties planning encountered in the battle against entrenched speculative interests that profited from haphazard real estate development.¹⁵

Having judged comprehensive planning a failure, Lubove overlooked city planning's solid achievements in the decade, most attributable to the skill, knowledge, and persistence of Bigger. In particular, Bigger's Planning Commission spent much of the decade retrofitting a nineteenth-century city to a new technology, the automobile, which had rendered the narrow streets, high building density, and pedestrian scale inadequate for efficient transportation and communication.¹⁶ The Planning Commission also promoted and implemented zoning, although as Lubove indicates, it failed to control many problems resulting from speculative development. Moreover, several important projects such as the Liberty Tunnel and Bridge, Boulevard of the Allies, and Schenley Park Plaza, were completed. Other plans for relieving downtown congestion and providing access to outer neighborhoods, such as the Penn Lincoln Parkway, were prepared, although the Depression and squabbling among public agencies delayed their implementation until after World War II. Finally, and importantly, Bigger succeeded in profes-

13. Lubove, Vol. I, 87.

14. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, 96 and 91.

15. John F. Bauman and Edward K. Muller, "The Planning Technician as Urban Visionary: Frederick Bigger and American Planning, 1913-1954," *Planning History Studies*, 10, (1996), 21-40.

16. Scott L. Bottles, *Los Angeles and the Automobile: The Making of the Modern City* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

sionalizing the planning department and carving out a permanent role for it in the development process in a city that had eschewed such public intervention little more than a decade earlier.¹⁷

Perhaps, the assessment of the 1920s is similar to the question, is the glass half full or half empty? Although not accomplishing the perceived benefits of comprehensive planning, Bigger and his associates had laid the foundation for the mid-century renewal known as Renaissance I. From Lubove's vantage in the 1960s, however, the voluntaristic approach had again failed to alleviate the city's glaring social and environmental deficiencies, which led to the crisis facing Pittsburgh after World War II. He clearly favored the more controlling, comprehensive planning model that was expected to curb private developers' tendencies to ignore aesthetic assets and community interests.

Renaissance Pittsburgh

If the initial four decades of the century underscored the failure of voluntaristic reform, then the environmental clean-up and massive downtown redevelopment of Pittsburgh's post-World War II Renaissance must surely have been voluntarism's triumph. As Lubove wrote in 1976 in his edited collection of documentary articles entitled *Pittsburgh*, "The Pittsburgh Renaissance represented an object lesson in elite-initiated environmental and economic change, the catalytic role of a small, but cohesive, influential and determined element of the social structure."¹⁸ Faced with an unprecedented crisis that threatened the city's future and could not be rationalized away any longer, corporate presidents followed the lead of Richard King Mellon, now head of the powerful Mellon family interests, and his galaxy of bright advisors, and created a new voluntary organization, the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, which forged a community consensus on the need to diversify the economy and make downtown more attractive to business. Finally, Mellon, whose Republican lineage was generations deep, teamed up with the powerful Mayor and longtime Democratic party boss, David L. Lawrence to obtain essential political support.¹⁹

Lubove expressed admiration for Mayor Lawrence's political risk-taking on behalf of the city in cooperating with Republican corporate lead-

17. Bauman and Muller, "Frederick Bigger," 25-28.

18. Roy Lubove, editor, *Pittsburgh* (New York: New Viewpoints, 1976), 177.

19. Shelby Stewman and Joel Tarr, "Four Decades of Public-Private Partnerships in Pittsburgh," in R. Scott Fosler and Renee A. Berger, eds., *Public-Private Partnerships in American Cities* (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath & Company, 1982), 59-127.

ers over issues such as smoke control, which inevitably incurred the wrath of his traditional party base. Both coal miners and homeowners who heated with coal were hurt by smoke control legislation. In contrast, Lubove questioned the motives of the business elite. What galvanized them to act this time, and not earlier in the century, he believed, was self-interest. In a 1965 review of Stefan Lorant's *Pittsburgh: The Story of an American City*, he derided the popular view that the civic improvement program was simply the product of public-spirited corporate leaders. "What, one might ask, were the redeemers doing before the enlightenment, in more prosperous days? What a curious coincidence that redemption coincided in time with an economic and population decline that threatened the investments of banks, property owners, downtown merchants, and other business interests in the region."²⁰

Lubove argued that it was precisely the achievement of consensus between the private and public spheres and the use of public resources at all levels which made this reform effort work. Without large-scale public cooperation and intervention on behalf of business's agenda for revitalization, this latest voluntaristic effort would have failed like those before it. Underscoring his ability to craft a poignant phrase, Lubove wrote that the "dramatic expansion of public enterprise and investment to serve corporate needs...established a reverse welfare state.... The irony [was] that [the] use of public resources was so closely identified with the corporate welfare."²¹

While Lubove captured the essence of Renaissance I as a state and local process, he ignored the national context within which the idea of massive redevelopment and the means to implement it had been created.²² Slum clearance and urban renewal had been topics of national discussion among urban and housing experts in the 1930s and the war years. The federal government experimented with slum clearance during the New Deal, and Pittsburgh's own Frederick Bigger codified renewal procedures in 1941 for the Federal Housing Administration.

20. Roy Lubove, review of *Pittsburgh: The Story of an American City* by Stefan Lorant, editor (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1964), in *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 59, No. 3 (July 1965), 394-396; quote on page 395. See also Roy Lubove, review of *Don't Call Me Boss: David L. Lawrence, Pittsburgh's Renaissance Mayor* by Michael P. Weber (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1988), in *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, Vol. 71, Nos. 3/4 (July/Oct 1988), 287-290.

21. Lubove, *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh*, Vol I, 106 and 112.

22. Mark I. Gelfand, *A Nation of Cities: The Federal Government and Urban America, 1933-1965* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975) 3-156; Jon C. Teaford, *The Rough Road to Renaissance: Urban Revitalization in America, 1940-1985* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990).

Bigger, Mellon – who was stationed in Washington during World War II – and Mellon's advisors such as Wallace Richards had all been privy to this exchange of ideas on the future of America's old, industrial cities.²³ Drawing upon this national discussion and adapting it to local circumstances, Pittsburgh's corporate elite moved ahead before federal legislation precipitated urban renewal in other American cities.

If Pittsburgh used national ideas of urban redevelopment to its advantage, it also imported with them the typical array of problems that accompanied massive urban renewal in the 1950s. By the mid-1960s critics were making headway against the tide of urban renewal policies and projects washing across America.²⁴ Herbert Gans, Jane Jacobs, and Martin Anderson, among others, decried the wholesale destruction of low-income communities and small businesses and their replacement with low density, single use developments of commercial activities and middle or upper income residential complexes.²⁵ Lubove left little doubt that Pittsburgh's Renaissance should not escape such criticisms at a time when it could not have been popular in the city to doubt Renaissance's unqualified success. While he praised the city's dramatic environmental and physical transformation and acknowledged limited success in obtaining economic goals, Lubove chastised civic leaders for failing to nurture cultural resources (despite avowed goals to the contrary), ignoring natural assets, producing sterile modernistic architecture such as the Gateway Center project, and neglecting social concerns. He especially lamented the failure to address the needs of working-class neighborhoods, the dislocation of African-Americans by slum clearance, and the persistence of substandard housing.²⁶

But Lubove finished his analysis of Pittsburgh's half-century of reform on a hopeful note by describing recent innovative approaches to

23. Bauman and Muller, "Frederick Bigger," 30-34. In the mid-1930s Wallace Richards worked for Bigger as Regional Coordinator for Greenbelt, Maryland, when Bigger was Chief of Planning in the Suburban Division of the Resettlement Administration. Bigger recommended Richards to Howard Heinz for the position of Director of the Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association in 1937. Richards was a moving force behind Pittsburgh's redevelopment.

24. Teaford, *The Rough Road to Renaissance*, 168-199.

25. Herbert Gans, *Urban Villagers* (New York: Free Press, 1962); Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961); and Martin Anderson, *The Federal Bulldozer* (Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press, 1964).

26. Lubove, *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh*, Vol. I, 137-141.

housing and neighborhood development.²⁷ Of particular importance was the private sector's establishment in 1957 of Action-Housing Incorporated as a voluntary nonprofit agency to solve the housing needs of moderate income families. Action-Housing leveraged local and federal funds for new and rental housing as well as rehabilitation of older homes. It also worked to develop citizen participation and community organizations as a means to halt neighborhood deterioration and initiate revitalization through self-help. By the 1960s, Action-Housing engaged in neighborhood extension efforts that emphasized conservation over renewal. It was too soon to assess the impact of these activities; but in neighborhood-based development Lubove prophetically identified a theme that would be prominent in his second book on Pittsburgh, even though at the time he surely had no conception of such a book project. "Thus," he wrote, "the 1960s witnessed the emergence of a new neighborhood-centered quest for power whose long-term consequences cannot be predicted."²⁸ According to him, elite-initiated reform without substantial public cooperation and intervention had been a failure; elite reform with public intervention had produced impressive results that supported a business agenda. Perhaps, he implied, citizen participation and community development with public sector support would finally address the city's longstanding social problems.

Post-Steel Pittsburgh

Beginning with the publication of his first book in 1963, Lubove had a long and productive relationship with the University of Pittsburgh Press and its Director Frederick Hetzel. In the 1960s the Press published four books for him, two of his own authorship and two he edited. It reprinted two more of his books in the 1980s. Hetzel recalled that Lubove was one of the more difficult authors with whom he had worked, but also one of the most gifted. Lubove took pride in the clarity of his writing and was dedicated to getting it right as a scholar.²⁹ When John Wiley & Sons relinquished the rights to *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh: Volume I* in the late 1980s, Hetzel agreed to reprint it if Lubove would write an epilogue about the years since 1969. The epilogue soon burgeoned into four chapters as Lubove sifted through his clippings files and stash of reports and put his thoughts on paper. Even-

²⁷ *Ibid.* Vol. I, 146.

²⁸ *Ibid.* Vol. I, 176.

²⁹ Interview with Frederick Hetzel, August 26, 1995.

Courtesy: Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh



Land cleared for the Lower Hill District urban renewal project, 1958. The Civic Arena would soon arise in the center of this site.

tually, the project grew to the ten chapters and a conclusion which became *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh: The Post-Steel Era*.³⁰

As with Volume I, Lubove did not purport to write a comprehensive history of Pittsburgh in *The Post-Steel Era*. Rather he again focused on civic leaders and institutions as they attempted to address the city's third major crisis of the century. Deindustrialization in the 1970s and 1980s ravaged the traditional manufacturing base of the region, most dramatically the steel industry. City neighborhoods and surrounding mill towns reeled from the decline of jobs, population, local shops, and tax revenue, while middle class flight to the suburbs further weakened the city's stability. Even corporate headquarters employment, the backbone of downtown, diminished markedly as corporations struggled to sur-

30. Roy Lubove, *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh: Vol. II, The Post-Steel Era* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996).

vive, downsized, moved away, or were victims of takeovers. Despite the apparent success of Renaissance I only a few decades earlier, the city and region faced the economic and social debacle that unheeded observers had predicted overspecialization in smokestack industries would eventually create.³¹

Drawing upon the Renaissance I experience, Pittsburgh leaders turned again to its public-private partnership tradition, supported a host of downtown office projects and infrastructure improvements, and tried to recapture the old spirit of rebirth by proclaiming a second Renaissance. This time, however, the situation was different. Decline was palpable, not simply a prospect. Despair reached far beyond the city to towns throughout the region. Environmental and urban renewal fixes could not resuscitate century-old, familial-like factories and the communities dependent on them. Moreover, some of the earlier renewal projects, especially the East Liberty and North Side business district redevelopments, had ultimately proven to be failures. Finally, the Allegheny Conference, Renaissance I's leading voluntary organization, no longer exercised the authority it once had because corporate headquarters operations were so weakened.

For those living through the 1980s in Pittsburgh, it was difficult to figure out, among the array of institutions and programs addressing the crisis, who was in charge and to what it might all add up. In *The Post-Steel Era*, Lubove described the emergence of an informal consensus to move away from heavy industry and modernize the region "into a diversified professional, service, research, informational processing, and advanced technology economy graced by an improved quality of life."³² In addition to economic development initiatives, civic leaders proposed to effect this transformation by supporting the "system of neighborhood citizen organizations and [the city's] cultural image."³³ In order to compete with other cities and regions for the footloose industries searching America for profitable locations and liveable homes, Pittsburgh would have to take advantage of and improve its environmental, cultural, and recreational assets. "Renaissance II," Lubove wrote, "was an extraordinary episode in American urban history. It marked a widespread commitment on the part of a city's public and private leaders to

31. *Economic Study of the Pittsburgh Region*, conducted by the Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association, in four volumes, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1963).

32. Lubove, *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh*, Vol. II, ix.

33. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, viii.

abandon its industrial past and create a new economy and cultural identity.”³⁴

For a second time in the city’s history civic leaders redefined the public-private partnership to fit new challenges and altered circumstances. In *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh: Volume I*, Lubove described the post-World War II shift from business dominance over a politically self-serving municipal government to a partnership in which government worked closely with corporate interests on a shared, though business-oriented, agenda. In the post-steel period, the partnership expanded to include and nurture nonprofit organizations such as the universities and community groups, which represented a broader constituency and could tap additional funding sources. In particular, “private foundations supplemented (and to a degree supplanted) the contributions of corporations and government. More flexible and less accountable ...to

Courtesy: Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh



This early 1960's view of the construction of Point State Park shows both the old point bridges and the new ones still under construction. The old bridges had to be replaced with new ones farther from the point for the park's design to work.

34. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, ix.

external pressure, foundations comprised a powerful element in the civic coalition."³⁵

From his vantage of studying Pittsburgh leadership over the entire century, Lubove recognized that with this shift in the public-private partnership also came a shift in the way the city did business. The progressive's mode was "rule by technocratic benevolence" through government regulation and voluntaristic activism. The technocrats were still present at mid-century, but the new corporate activism and greater public intervention emphasized a centralized top-down approach, enlarged the bureaucracy's role, and resulted in a massive scale of change. In contrast, Lubove believed the more inclusive partnership at century's end diffused leadership and incorporated the social-work concept of revitalization through "community-based organization."³⁶

While some of Renaissance II still functioned in the top-down manner, for example the development of the downtown cultural district through the foundation-sponsored Cultural Trust, this addition of a neighborhood-centered strategy represented a historic change for Pittsburgh. Surveying the city's history of social welfare in a 1989 essay, Lubove observed that Pittsburgh's heterogeneous society early in the century inhibited the formation of a social consensus, around which civic organizations could rally. Economic goals filled the void. Spatial segregation, ethnic and racial organizations, and paternalistic welfare capitalism stabilized the community. Elites endeavored to reconstruct society in their image through progressive reforms such as settlement houses and through constructive philanthropy for public libraries, schools, or parks.³⁷

In the 1960s, neighborhood activism, the community program of Action-Housing, and Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation's historic preservation initiatives in older neighborhoods emerged in reaction to Renaissance's massive redevelopment and, Lubove argued, shaped the character of Renaissance II two decades later. The Allegheny Conference, foundations, city government, as well as state and federal programs, supported the neighborhood strategy in the 1980s, especially commercial development corporations (CDCs). Community organizations stressed not only commercial and housing redevelopment but also

35. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, viii.

36. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, 15.

37. Roy Lubove, "Pittsburgh and the Uses of Social Welfare History," in *City at the Point: Essays on the Social History of Pittsburgh*, edited by Samuel P. Hays, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1989), 295-325.

the development of local leadership capacity in city neighborhoods and mill towns. Lubove devoted four chapters of *The Post-Steel Era* to the CDCs. He believed the self-help strategy of these organizations diminished the negative consequences of governmental paternalism and ignorance, and protected the architectural and cultural heritage of neighborhoods, which were of "no concern to commercial developers, political leaders, bureaucrats, and—not least—nonprofit institutions [such as universities and hospitals], in an expansionary mood."³⁸

Lubove also praised the belated understanding by some civic leaders that natural assets, historic architecture, and traditional Pittsburgh landscapes were complementary, not antithetical, to economic development. Although he pointedly charged some leaders with indifference and outright hostility to both historic preservation and sensitive re-use of riverfronts, Lubove believed that nonprofit pressure had begun to sensitize city hall, the Urban Redevelopment Authority, and other civic institutions to a more balanced evaluation of landscape assets. He saw some optimism in the preservation of downtown's distinctive older architectural qualities and ambience, in plans for riverfront recreation and housing development, and in the designation of the Oakland Civic Center, one of Pittsburgh's nationally distinctive historic landscapes, as a historic district. This attention to neighborhood revitalization, cultural institutions, historic preservation, and natural amenities further distinguished Renaissance II from its post-war predecessor.³⁹

Although Lubove hoped that the "civic barbarity" of mass demolition under the banner of urban renewal would never happen again, he did not feel that the civic culture had been fully enlightened.⁴⁰ The power of private property rights sentiment, business's strong political influence, and meddling by politicians to wreak havoc on the city's fabric always remained very real. Unfortunately, his concerns were not misplaced. The futile battle, in which he participated, to regulate billboard sizes and placement underscored his point. As he had in 1969, Lubove continued to deride modernistic architecture and poor landscape

38. Lubove, *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh*, Vol. II, 128.

39. *Ibid.*, 68, 202, and 232; Roy Lubove, "City Beautiful, City Banal: Design Advocacy and Historic Preservation in Pittsburgh," *Pittsburgh History*, Vol 75, No. 1 (Spring 1992), 26-36; and Roy Lubove, "Pittsburgh's Allegheny Cemetery and the Victorian Garden of the Dead," *Pittsburgh History*, Vol. 75, No. 3 (Fall 1992), 148-156.

40. Roy Lubove, "Letter to the Editor," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, March 26, 1991. Lubove especially decried the destruction of the business district of the central North Side in the 1960s, once the downtown of Pittsburgh's sibling city, Allegheny City, and its replacement with a suburban-style shopping mall that failed in the 1990s.

design. Since his death second-rate architectural designs in prime river-front locations, a proposed large-scale downtown retail renewal project, and the prospect of an air-polluting industrial development in the Hazelwood neighborhood threaten the more aesthetic, amenity-oriented vision of the new Pittsburgh. As Lubove feared, political leaders might succumb to short-term economic opportunities that are incompatible with that vision.

For all of his concern for "getting it right" by sending drafts to interviewees, conducting second interviews, and updating the text as current events unfolded (much to his annoyance), Lubove's personal tastes and philosophy showed in the pages of *The Post-Steel Era*. He could not contain his disgust with paternalism, whether public or private. By the end of *Twentieth Pittsburgh: Volume I*, he seemed to be edging away from an earlier, more sympathetic view of public intervention explicit in his history of progressive reform. In *The Post-Steel Era*, his personal libertarian ideology was evident. Governmental arrogance, according to Lubove, intruded too deeply into citizens' lives and trampled community interests. He also could not resist belittling the suburbs and attacking public environments not free of tobacco smoke.

Despite frequent acerbic comments, Lubove's last book does not have the sharp interpretive bite of his earlier writing. It overwhelms the reader in a deluge of detail and lacks the masterful conceptualization that characterized *Twentieth Pittsburgh: Volume I*. Much of it is devoid of the scholarly perspective that comes from command of current literature on similar topics in other places. Lubove ignored the shifting context of federal urban policy between 1970 and 1990. Although he recognized the issue of race in this period, he chose not to explore its role in the transformation he depicted. Finally, in view of his concern for retaining the vitality of city life (as he experienced it all of his life in Queens, Cambridge, and Pittsburgh) and his antipathy for the suburbs, it seems odd that he did not take the opportunity to develop an argument for redressing the historic imbalance of governmental policy at all levels, which encourages the development of suburban greenfields at the expense of redeveloping older industrial (brownfield) sites and communities. Thus, while Lubove chided Renaissance II leaders for not having a vision for the Monongahela Valley's future, he neither attacked policies impeding its redevelopment, nor advanced alternative means for its revitalization.

Lubove concluded his Pittsburgh odyssey on a guardedly optimistic note. He could never be sure that McDonald's and Disney's visions of

America would not triumph. And, he recognized the region's current economic fragility as well as the city's problems of declining population, an increasing proportion of elderly citizens, and escalating crime or at least an image of unsafe neighborhoods. Lubove could never be accused of truly being an optimist. But, he observed:

"The future of Pittsburgh will be influenced by how well it maintains a stewardship over its unique environmental and architectural assets, and how generously it supports its cultural institutions, small as well as large. These give Pittsburgh its identity ... and justify living in the city rather than the suburbs (or in another city). ...In the post-steel era, Pittsburgh has moved constructively toward economic diversification and neighborhood and cultural revitalization. This has laid the foundation for a prosperous post-steel city, but nothing is guaranteed."⁴¹

Conclusion

Nobody has contributed more to the understanding of Pittsburgh's history in the twentieth century than Roy Lubove. From a complex array of people, organizations, and programs, he crafted a portrait of the changing character of civic leadership and reform over three periods of crisis in the city's past. He has provided students of American urban history a case study of sweeping breadth, of considerable significance. As he described Pittsburgh's transformation from business-dominated, voluntaristic progressivism to mid-century's top-down urban renewal coalition and most recently the empowerment of entrepreneurial nonprofits and neighborhood organizations, he made clear his antipathy for paternalistic and centralized bureaucratic solutions and his support for inclusive strategies that derived inspiration and knowledge from local communities. For a man who did not suffer fools gladly, who held a Mencken-like pejorative opinion of the average American's intelligence and the consequences for democracy, this position presented a curious contradiction that he had not resolved.

Lubove admired the progressives' emphasis on expertise, informed leadership, education, and high standards, especially in architectural and landscape design. However, he also recognized that isolation from the average persons' everyday concerns as well as the fabric of the city made even informed leaders and their technocrats vulnerable to misunderstanding and arrogance. He understood the inevitable conflicts

41. Lubove, *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh*, Vol. II. 259-260.

that arose between private property rights and community interests, and the irony that "constructive philanthropy" following from pronounced wealth accumulation may benefit the community in the long run more than a more equitable distribution of profits in the short term did. In short, he knew there were no simple solutions to social welfare betterment.

Lubove's twentieth-century history of Pittsburgh implores Pittsburghers to learn from their past, to be wary of developers and politicians with quick economic fixes and fashionable design visions. His emphasis on design, aesthetics, and culture asks Pittsburghers to recognize what gives their city its identity, what enhances their quality of life. Ironically, for those struggling with daily existence in the city's tepid and changing economy, his position smacks of elitism. In the long term, however, his vision holds an enduring and promising future for the city. Lubove has produced a body of work that the city would be wise to discuss; he would ask for no less.