

William S. Dietrich II. *Eminent Pittsburghers: Profiles of the City's Founding Industrialists* (Lanham, MD: Taylor Trade Publishing, 2011). Pp. viii, 224. Illustrations. Cloth, \$24.95.

How often in the history of writing history has a wealthy industrialist and philanthropist written about the lives of other wealthy industrialists-turned-philanthropists? That is precisely what we have in William Dietrich's *Eminent Pittsburghers*. It is estimated that the author of this book gave \$265 million to Carnegie Mellon University and another \$125 million to the University of Pittsburgh. It is fair to say that Dietrich knows his subject. Not surprisingly, the author harbors a celebratory attitude toward entrepreneurial industrialism and, of course, capitalism. To his credit, however, Dietrich does not hesitate to cite the obvious weaknesses of his fellow Pittsburghers, stories known to almost anyone who has studied American history. The biographical profiles presented are very readable. The writing might be described as breezy and chatty.

The first profile focuses on Andrew Carnegie, the feisty and energetic little Scotsman who rose to prominence with the help of Tom Scott of the Pennsylvania Railroad. Scott, incidentally, might be one of the most important Pennsylvanians not known to the general public. Carnegie is generally associated with the consolidation of not only the steel industry, but also the bridge-building industry that is a logical outgrowth of iron and steel production. His name will also always be associated with the lockout at Homestead in 1892, even though he was out of the country at the time.

Carnegie's charitable giving focused on the creation of Carnegie Tech and over 3,000 libraries that were also social centers. He donated 8,000 church organs and from time to time pontificated on stewardship. The steel baron also created the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace at The Hague. Noted biographer Joseph Wall, Dietrich, and others are all left with the same question: Did Carnegie's philanthropy outweigh the glitches and shortcomings of his prolific business career?

H. J. Heinz seems a bit out of place in this collection that obviously favors steel and heavy industry. However, Heinz keenly understood, as an aspiring businessman in the Gilded Age, the plight of the overworked housewife who had not yet been blessed with modern labor-saving devices. In addition to endless cleaning, washing, and sewing, there was laborious food preparation. Heinz grew up helping his father with a brick kiln and a large family garden. As early as the Civil War years, the family garnered a few thousand dollars annually selling their excess produce. As the business grew, the young entrepreneur

saw an opportunity to do more than simply can or preserve food; he envisioned processing fruits and vegetables in a factory. Heinz determined to guarantee high quality through contracts with growers provided with his own select seeds. His goal included spotless factories that would place fruits and vegetables in clear bottles so that consumers could plainly see the product. Accordingly, a cadre of small Heinz factories flourished in the 1870s and 1880s.

Heinz had a strong interest in advertising, beginning with horses and wagons bearing the company logo to make his products known. Over time the advertising grew more sophisticated and included renting hillsides and ultimately substantial space at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. "Heinz's 57 Varieties" would go on to become one of America's most-recognized slogans.

Heinz's intense commitment to quality and cleanliness made him a natural ally in the push to create the Pure Food and Drug Act shortly after the turn of the century. Heinz intuitively understood that the battle against adulterated food would be endless. He might also have appreciated the fact that federal legislation could obliterate some marginal competitors.

The food baron's charitable interests were essentially merged with his ally John Wanamaker in America's Sunday School movement, a crusade that initially grew out of the horrors of the Industrial Revolution and endeavored to provide moral guidance and a better life for children.

George Westinghouse is presented with an emphasis on his creative genius, and Dietrich ranks him just behind Thomas Edison as an inventor. The general reader may not recall how dangerous and accident-prone the early railroads were, and therefore not appreciate the importance of the Westinghouse air brake in advancing safety. Prior to this patent in 1869, and many additions to the patent through 1873, brakemen had to work brakes manually on each car by turning a wheel, and many were crushed to death between two cars. The air brake was sufficient to guarantee his place in history.

Westinghouse made truly extraordinary contributions in the history of energy and electric power. He was one of the early drillers for natural gas, and this included drilling in his own back yard. His vision also included the creation of the Niagara Falls power plant in upstate New York. Perhaps Westinghouse's greatest contribution to the advancement of modern American technology was the introduction of alternating current (AC) and a distribution system under the stewardship of Western Electric in 1886. Prior to this, obviously, there was only direct current (DC), which was less efficient

and generally more dangerous. Indeed, perhaps after Edison, this is truly one of our great inventors.

For those readers who would like to know more, there is the George Westinghouse museum in Wilmerding, Pennsylvania; however, there are no foundations as the inventor left everything to his children. Surprisingly, Dietrich notes that there were no Westinghouse papers left behind to consult.

Perhaps the most tragic story in the collection of profiles is that of Andrew Mellon, who achieved so much and yet managed to be so miserable, assuming we can trust the recent biography by David Cannadine. The Mellon family clearly cut a wide swath through the banking industry in Pittsburgh, to say nothing of their achievements in creating Alcoa Aluminum and Gulf Oil. When the family oil business was being strangled by a transportation monopoly, the Mellons built a 271-mile pipeline from Pittsburgh to Marcus Hook; obviously they were movers and shakers of the first order.

Beyond business triumphs, Andrew Mellon is best remembered for not only his eleven years as secretary of the Treasury but for his extraordinary influence in the role, leading some to say: "Secretary Mellon had three presidents serve under him, Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover." Dietrich repeats the thought that Mellon was the most distinguished secretary of the Treasury since Alexander Hamilton. In many respects Mellon set the ideological tone for the Republican 1920s.

His personal life was marred by a nasty divorce that generated a lot of vicious newspaper publicity, particularly from a Philadelphia newspaper that portrayed Mellon as a heartless millionaire. His somber and dour personality made it quite clear that he could never make a serious run for the presidency, though some had mentioned his name in that context. Later in life the Justice Department sued Mellon for underpayment of taxes. Andrew Mellon was a candidate for the most miserable/successful man in Pittsburgh or anywhere else. His obsession with business matters apparently left little time for other considerations.

The profiles continue with Henry Clay Frick, arch-demon of the Homestead Strike, whose career was aided by his connections with the Mellon family; "Smilin' Charlie Schwab" who became president of Carnegie Steel in 1897 and was credited with making the Homestead steel plant profitable; Michael Late Benedum, the leader in Pittsburgh oil who won the title "king of the wildcatters"; George C. Marshall, commander-in-chief of the Allied forces in World War II, known to some as the finest soldier America ever produced; Mayor David L. Lawrence, arguably the most successful politician to come

out of the Pittsburgh area; Thomas Detre, renowned for his work in health care; and, finally, Richard P. Simmons, a modern steel baron.

Author William Dietrich has carried out his mission of celebrating famous Pittsburghers, with an emphasis on the steel industry. There is considerable merit in this work, and yet just how this book might be put to use in an academic setting remains an open question.

THOMAS R. WINPENNY

*Elizabethtown College*

Matthew F. Delmont. *The Nicest Kids in Town: American Bandstand, Rock 'n' Roll, and the Struggle for Civil Rights in 1950s Philadelphia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012). Pp. xi, 294. Illustrations, notes, index. Cloth, \$65.00.

More than fifty years have elapsed since the popular television program *American Bandstand* first appeared in homes across the United States, and still mere mention of the show continues to conjure images of teenagers, black and white, boppin' to the sounds of emerging musical talents from Jackie Wilson to Dusty Springfield. This very image, and the potent memory of a racially integrated youth demographic dancing together in harmony, Matthew F. Delmont argues in *The Nicest Kids in Town: American Bandstand, Rock 'n' Roll, and the Struggle for Civil Rights in 1950s Philadelphia*, is precisely the problem. Contrary to the recollections of *Bandstand's* celebrated host, Dick Clark, whose praise of the show as a powerful force resisting segregationist pressures is often cited in popular histories of the program, Delmont argues that the reality of 1950s Philadelphia was considerably more complex. As Delmont states, "Rather than being a fully integrated program that welcomed black youth, *American Bandstand* continued to discriminate against black teens throughout the show's Philadelphia years" (2). Simply, *American Bandstand* was hardly the bastion of racial integration Clark purported it to be.

This argument, Delmont admits early on in *The Nicest Kids in Town*, is not one he expected to make. Envisioning his work as contributing to the burgeoning scholarship on civil rights in the North by providing an exemplar of resistance in the face of entrenched segregation, Delmont instead found the cultural icon *American Bandstand* to be a battleground on which the struggle over civil rights was fought.<sup>1</sup> Not only was Dick Clark incorrect in his