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COVER ILLUSTRATION: Lithograph of famed African American composer and bandleader Frank Johnson, after a daguerreotype by Robert Douglass Jr., 1846. Courtesy of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. See Aston Gonzalez's article, "The Art of Racial Politics: The World of Robert Douglass Jr., 1833–46," in this issue for an examination of how Douglass produced images such as this one to argue against the racist images and ideas that permeated American culture in the early 1800s.

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Contributors

ANDREW CASE received his PhD from the History Department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. A native of Kutztown, PA, Dr. Case currently teaches in the Lyman Briggs College at Michigan State University.

MARK GALLIMORE was born and raised in Allegheny County and has ridden Pittsburgh's buses and remaining trolleys since he was a small child. He earned degrees from West Virginia University and Lehigh University and specializes in the history of infrastructure and other capital-intensive technology systems. He currently lives in Buffalo, NY.

ASTON GONZALEZ is a PhD candidate in the History Department at University of Michigan–Ann Arbor. His research focuses on nineteenth-century African American visual culture and politics. The American Antiquarian Society, Library Company of Philadelphia, Social Science Research Council, and Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation have supported his research.

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The Art of Racial Politics: The Work of Robert Douglass Jr., 1833–46

THE VIBRANT BLACK COMMUNITY LIVING in Philadelphia during the 1830s counted among its members a wide array of professionals, including merchants, educators, master craftsmen, and artists. In 1833, an article published in the *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, a Baltimore-based abolitionist periodical, and subsequently reprinted in the *Liberator* noted the recent artistic turn taken by twenty-four-year-old Robert Douglass Jr., “the son of a very respectable colored gentleman” in Philadelphia. Douglass was already well established in the “business of sign and ornamental painting”—a line of work, the writers hastened to add, in which “few persons in our country, if any, have made greater proficiency”—and “evidence of his skill” could be observed not just in his shop but in the “many other parts of the city” where his creations were displayed.¹ In addi-

With much gratitude, I thank Martha S. Jones for her incisive feedback; Mary Kelley, Kevin Gaines, and Kristin Hass for their suggestions about earlier iterations of this article; Richard Newman for discussions that helped frame this work; and Tamara Gaskell and the anonymous readers of the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* for their constructive criticism and editing. Short-term fellowships at the American Antiquarian Society, where Gigi Barnhill and Lauren Hewes provided knowledgeable guidance, and the Library Company of Philadelphia, where Phil Lapsansky and Erika Piola provided immeasurable assistance, made this article possible. I greatly appreciate my family’s support and encouragement, especially that of Yariv Pierce.

¹“Robert Douglass Jr.,” *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, Feb. 1, 1833, 59; “Robert Douglass Jr.,” *Liberator*, Mar. 23, 1833, 48.

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tion to ornamental works, the artist had recently taken up portrait painting and was now “eminently successful” in both pursuits. Douglass’s turn from sign-painting to portraiture would provide him with a livelihood—and connections to the abolitionist movement in the United States and Britain—for decades.

Between 1833 and 1846, his most prolific artistic period, Robert Douglass Jr. created images of black people and white abolitionists that challenged flagrantly racist messages commonly presented to nineteenth-century audiences. He also lithographed one image that was alleged to have attacked several prominent black Philadelphian men. Much of his work, however, subverted racial stereotypes popular in visual culture and offered his viewers messages that supported black social equality and the abolition of slavery. Historians have increasingly expanded the chronology of abolitionist activism, included African Americans among its participants, and studied the various strategies to secure black rights in the United States.² Scholars have also demonstrated the importance of print and visual culture in disseminating the message of abolitionism.³ An investigation of the life and work of Robert Douglass Jr. during the 1830s and 1840s provides insight into the intersection of racialized political discourse and artistic production, as well as an object lesson in how the scholarship of visual culture and African Americans’ involvement in nineteenth-century struggles for black rights intersect. Using art as propaganda, Douglass hoped to convert viewers of his work to abolitionism and inspire them to dismantle the peculiar institution. Very few of Douglass’s artworks survive, but layering what we know of his artwork with documentation of his civic activities—which sought to ameliorate racial prejudice and produce black citizens recognized by society as upstanding, moral, and intelligent—reveals the visual means by which a black abolitionist artist expressed his views concerning black emigration, the educational role

² Richard Newman, *The Transformation of American Abolitionism: Fighting Slavery in the Early Republic* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2002); Benjamin Quarles, *Black Abolitionists* (New York, 1991); Timothy Patrick McCarthy, *Prophets of Protest: Reconsidering the History of American Abolitionism* (New York, 2006); Patrick Rael, *Black Identity and Black Protest in the Antebellum North* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2002); James O. Horton and Lois Horton, *In Hope of Liberty: Culture, Community and Protest among Northern Free Blacks, 1700–1860* (New York, 1998).

³ Richard Newman, Patrick Rael, and Phillip Lapsansky, eds., *Pamphlets of Protest: An Anthology of Early African-American Protest Literature, 1790–1860* (New York, 2001); Grey Dundaker, “Give Me a Sign: African Americans, Print, and Practice,” in *An Extensive Republic: Print, Culture, and Society, 1790–1840*, ed. Robert Gross and Mary Kelley (Chapel Hill, NC, 2010), 483–94; Jean Fagan Yellin and John C. Van Horne, eds., *The Abolitionist Sisterhood: Women’s Political Culture in Antebellum America* (Ithaca, NY, 1994).

of visual culture in the abolitionist movement, and the “genius” of black achievement in antebellum Philadelphia.

Representations found in a variety of media during the early nineteenth century worked against Garrisonian abolitionist principles that stressed black social and civil rights by depicting abolitionists and black people in a derogatory light.⁴ Some of the most widely circulated and visible of these images appeared in the streets and parlors on the Eastern Seaboard. In Boston, for example, by as early as 1816, several crudely printed pictures mocked free black Bostonians’ commemoration of the abolition of slavery in Massachusetts. These “bobalition” prints derided African Americans by presenting them with cartoonish bodies and disproportionate clothing, speaking in stereotypical black dialect.⁵ Such caricatures, which taught and reinforced racist ideology, worried some African Americans, such as the black minister Hosea Easton, who lamented:

Cuts and placards descriptive of the negroe’s [*sic*] deformity, are every where displayed to the observation of the young, with corresponding broken lingo, the very character of which is marked with design. Many of the popular book stores, in commercial towns and cities, have their show-windows lined with them. The barrooms of the most popular public houses in the country, sometimes have their ceiling literally covered with them. This display of American civility is under the daily observation of every class of society, even in New England.⁶

These ubiquitous images taught the young and the old alike how and what to think about African Americans—specifically, to imagine African Americans to be incapable of social graces, intellectually inept, and unworthy of rights that white Americans enjoyed.

⁴ Scholars have increasingly identified visual culture as an important site to study antebellum racial consciousness. See Erica Armstrong Dunbar, *A Fragile Freedom: African American Women and Emancipation in the Antebellum City* (New Haven, CT, 2008), 120–47; Elise Lemire, “Miscegenation”: *Making Race in America* (Philadelphia, 2002); Phillip Lapsansky, “Graphic Discord: Abolitionist and Antiabolitionist Images,” in Yellin and Van Horne, *Abolitionist Sisterhood*, 201–30.

⁵ Corey Capers, “Black Voices, White Print: Racial Practice, Print Publicity, and Order in the Early American Republic,” in *Early African American Print Culture*, ed. Lara Langer Cohen and Jordan Alexander Stein (Philadelphia, 2012), 107–26; John Wood Sweet, *Bodies Politic: Negotiating Race in the American North, 1730–1830* (Philadelphia, 2006), 378–92; Joanne Pope Melish, *Disowning Slavery: Gradual Emancipation and Race in New England, 1780–1860* (Ithaca, NY, 2000), 171–82; Karen Weyler, *Empowering Words: Outsiders and Authorship in Early America* (Athens, GA, 2013), 68–75.

⁶ Hosea Easton, *A Treatise on the Intellectual Character and Civil and Political Condition of the Colored People of the U. States; And the Prejudice Exercised Towards Them: With a Sermon on the Duty of the Church to Them* (Boston, 1837), 41–42.



Edward Williams Clay, *Life in Philadelphia* series. Courtesy of the Library Company of Philadelphia.

Derogatory depictions of black men and women could be found in many forms and in many spaces: in popular literature, in prints hung in shop windows, and in musical scores. Perhaps the most popular of these were the *Life in Philadelphia* prints created by Philadelphia artist Edward Clay between 1828 and 1830, which mocked white and free black Philadelphians. Deeply influenced by the people that he saw in Philadelphia and the racist caricatures he viewed while in Europe, Clay communicated the idea that African Americans aspired to—but could not attain, and did not deserve—respect within the United States.⁷ One of the figures in his prints, Miss Chloe, says as much. When an African American man,

⁷ Martha S. Jones, "Reframing the Color Line," in *Reframing the Color Line: Race and the Visual Culture of the Atlantic World*, ed. Martha S. Jones and Clayton Lewis (Ann Arbor, MI, 2009); Martha S. Jones, "Edward Clay's *Life in Philadelphia*," in *An Americana Sampler: Essays on Selections from the William L. Clements Library*, ed. Brian Leigh Dunnigan and J. Kevin Graffagnino (Ann Arbor, MI, 2011).

Mr. Cesar, asks how she feels in the hot weather, Chloe, overdressed in an ostentatious gown and enormous hat, responds with a revealing malapropism: "Pretty well, I tank you Mr. Cesar only I aspire too much!" The elements of Clay's scene—stereotypical black dialect, misshapen bodies, and ill-fitting clothing—signaled to nineteenth-century viewers that black men and women deserved a station in life that was less than that which they desired. In adopting the fineries of white society, such as the cane held by Mr. Cesar and the fan and parasol carried by Miss Chloe, black men and women, argued Clay, brought derision upon themselves; they wrongly assumed that they could imitate the genteel society those accoutrements denoted. Though they might attempt to replicate genteel white culture, their failures further marked their status as outsiders.

Clay's satire hit close to home for the wealthiest African Americans in Philadelphia, a group that included the Douglasses.⁸ Robert Douglass Sr., upon his arrival in the United States from St. Kitts, had established a lucrative business as a hairdresser and perfume merchant in Philadelphia.⁹ He married Grace Bustill—the daughter of wealthy black Philadelphian Cyrus Bustill, who had established one of the first schools for African Americans in Philadelphia—and with her raised six children, of whom Robert Jr. and Sarah Mapps Douglass are the two best known today. Robert Douglass Sr. also heralded the cause of black education, despite the white racial prejudice in Philadelphia that severely sought to limit it. In 1831, he sat on Philadelphia's provisional board for the proposed manual labor Collegiate School along with other elite black Philadelphians Robert Purvis, James Forten, Joseph Cassey, and Frederick A. Hinton. Together they worked to raise money for a collegiate school that would allow "the sons of the present and future generation [to] obtain a classical education and [training in] the mechanic arts in general." The committee's appeal to "all who know the difficult admission of our youths into seminaries of learning, and establishments of mechanism," underscored several of the obstacles facing African Americans in Philadelphia, even those, such as the Douglasses, who ranked among Philadelphia's black elite.¹⁰

Certainly many elements of Robert Douglass Jr.'s life—his prominent abolitionist friends and his financially privileged family—hinted at his

⁸ Pennsylvania Abolition Society Census of 1837 as cited in Gary B. Nash, *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community, 1720–1840* (Cambridge, MA, 1988), 248.

⁹ Newspaper advertisements as early as 1818 list his perfume business with another prominent black businessman, Joseph Cassey, in Philadelphia. See "Equal to any, inferior to none," *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, Jan. 19, 1818, 4.

¹⁰ "An Appeal to the Benevolent," *Liberator*, Sept. 24, 1831, 155.

exceptional qualities. When taking into account the social, economic, and racial landscape of 1830s Philadelphia, however, we see the parameters that shaped the trajectory of his life. From the educational barriers for black youth against which his father campaigned in 1831 to the bigotry in the textile, metal, and shoe industries from which black Philadelphians were largely barred, black Philadelphians experienced the maleficent consequences of racism regardless of family income. Robert Douglass Jr.'s occupation as an artist placed him squarely within the artisan class in which many black Philadelphians worked, though the proportion of black Philadelphian artisans shrank during the 1830s due to white employers' refusal to hire black apprentices.¹¹ During this decade, the most common occupations for black men were laborers, porters, dockworkers, and mariners.¹² Douglass's struggles to overcome the obstacles created by racial prejudice, his desire to foster the educational development of black Philadelphians, and his passion to improve the livelihood of black Americans were shared by most African Americans in the City of Brotherly Love.

Robert Douglass Jr. demonstrated his commitment to training elite African American men in Philadelphia when, in 1833, he founded the Philadelphia Library Company of Colored Persons with Frederick A. Hinton, James Cornish, William Whipper, and five other black men. This literary society not only cultivated the knowledge of literature and science but also inculcated debating and public-speaking skills among its free black male members.¹³ Just five years later, more than 150 free black men claimed membership.¹⁴ Like many institutions founded by members of the free black elite during this era, the society had a strong moral and social mission to counter middle-class and affluent whites' beliefs that the African American community was degraded. Organizations such as the Philadelphia Library Company could give evidence that free African Americans in Philadelphia had "progressed in the melioration of their moral and physical condition."¹⁵ A visitor to one of these debating clubs admiringly reported

¹¹ Nash, *Forging Freedom*, 251.

¹² Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, *The Present State and Condition of the Free People of Color, of the City of Philadelphia and Adjoining Districts . . .* (Philadelphia, 1838), as cited in Nash, *Forging Freedom*, 251.

¹³ Joseph Willson, *Sketches of the Higher Classes of Colored Society in Philadelphia. By a Southerner* (Philadelphia, 1841), 97. See also "To the Public," *Liberator*, Mar. 23, 1833, 43.

¹⁴ Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, *Present State and Condition of the Free People of Color in the City of Philadelphia*, 30.

¹⁵ "Colored People in Philadelphia," *Abolitionist: Or Record of the New England Anti-Slavery Society*, July 1, 1833, 107.

that, “the discussions were conducted with a degree of spirit and propriety, and displayed a cogency and acuteness of reasoning and an elevation and elegance of language for which he was little prepared.” He continued:

The subjects of discussion generally relate to their own rights and interests, and frequently result in decisions from which the prejudiced mind of the white man would startle with apprehension. A change is rapidly coming over this people. They are now numerous, united, and bitterly conscious of their degradation and their power.¹⁶

The three academic components that supported the Philadelphia Library Company of Colored Persons—“an adequate library, a reading room, and a debating society”—provided opportunities for Douglass to develop his ideas of abolitionism and emigration while sharing and learning from other black Philadelphians.¹⁷

Douglass further promoted black progress by creating and disseminating abolitionist visual material. In 1833, he painted his earliest known image related to abolitionism, an oil portrait of William Lloyd Garrison. Garrison was a friend of the Douglass family who seems to have followed the young artist’s career with interest; in an 1832 letter to Robert’s sister, Sarah Mapps Douglass, he wrote: “I hear nothing from my friend Robert; but I trust he continues to progress in his art, meeting with increased notice and encouragement.”¹⁸ Douglass Sr.’s published approbation of Garrison’s election to the helm of the newly founded American Anti-Slavery Society, the friendship between Douglass Jr. and Garrison, and Douglass Jr.’s shared abolitionist sentiments likely factored into Garrison’s decision to sit for the portrait.

Though the original painting has been lost, Douglass created a lithograph of Garrison and arranged for it to be sold at six New York City addresses and two Philadelphia offices. It is unclear who taught Robert Jr. how to create lithographs; becoming a lithographer often required years of training under the guidance of a master artisan. The purchasing power and respectable reputation of the Douglass family no doubt contributed to Robert’s acquisition of this skill. Through the circulation of lithographs, Douglass increased Garrison’s personal visibility while also promoting the

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ “People of Color,” *Liberator*, Apr. 18, 1835, 63.

¹⁸ Walter McIntosh Merrill, ed., *The Letters of William Lloyd Garrison*, vol. 1, *I Will Be Heard! 1822–1835* (Cambridge, MA, 1971), 145.



1833 Lithograph of William Lloyd Garrison by Robert Douglass Jr. Courtesy of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

abolitionist sentiments for which Garrison was increasingly becoming known.¹⁹ Douglass's portrait was highly sympathetic to Garrison; the antislavery activist is attired in respectable, middle-class clothing, his glasses and high forehead broadcasting intelligence. Published in 1833, the year of the founding of the American Anti-Slavery Society, Douglass's print encouraged the same abolitionist sentiments that characterized the founding of abolitionist societies and publications. Douglass used the image of Garrison, whom people knew to be involved in fighting for the rights of African Americans, as a strategy to support abolitionism and encourage its expansion. Whereas the medium of oil painting did not lend itself to circulation or mass visibility, Douglass's lithographs of Garrison reached a

¹⁹ It is possible that Garrison desired to counter an 1833 print depicting him and other abolitionists as fanatics whose abolitionist activities would engender black-on-white racial violence. See *Immediate Emancipation Illustrated* (n.p., 1833), Library Company of Philadelphia. Many thanks to Erika Piola for pointing me to this print.

larger audience, disseminating abolitionist ideas and earning revenue from multiple patrons.²⁰

Douglass made and sold these abolitionist images to support himself as well as the abolitionist cause.²¹ He worked out of the same building, located at 54 Arch Street, in which his father worked as a barber and his mother sold millinery. Printers commonly displayed lithographs in their shop windows to draw looks from passersby.²² Exhibiting the prints in this way was not merely a business strategy to attract customers, however; it also functioned as a tactic in the abolitionist strategy to win over the hearts and minds of the public.²³ The audience for the print, sold for fifty cents at the Arch Street address and in New York, including at the office of the American Anti-Slavery Society, included abolitionists.²⁴ Douglass revealed his desired audience when he began his advertisement for the lithograph in the *Emancipator* by addressing it “To the People of Color and Their Friends.” Later that month, he made no such appeal in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, a decidedly less antislavery newspaper than the *Emancipator*.²⁵ As the case of the Mississippi slaveowner who, curious about abolitionism, purchased several pictures—including a portrait of Garrison—demonstrates, the audience for abolitionist prints could be unexpected.²⁶ Increasing the acceptance of abolitionist ideologies depended on its heightened levels of visibility, circulation, and public discourse. Robert Douglass’s print of William Lloyd Garrison provoked all three.

An event in 1834 underscored both the recognition of Douglass’s artistic success and the racial discrimination that accompanied it. That year, Robert Douglass Jr. submitted a painting to be exhibited at the

²⁰ “Likeness of Wm. Lloyd Garrison,” *Emancipator*, Sept. 14, 1833, 3; “William Lloyd Garrison,” *Liberator*, Sept. 25, 1833, 3.

²¹ During the Civil War, Sojourner Truth raised money from her supporters by selling a series of *cartes des visite* that corrected misrepresentations of her. See Nell Irvin Painter, *Sojourner Truth: A Life, A Symbol* (New York, 1996), 185–99.

²² Ludmilla Jordanova, *The Look of the Past: Visual and Material Evidence in Historical Practice* (Cambridge, 2012), 164–66; Vic Gatrell, *City of Laughter: Sex and Satire in Eighteenth-Century London* (New York, 2007), 211–35.

²³ Henry Ossawa Tanner, a renowned African American painter, recounted that he “used to pass” Douglass’s studio as a youth “and always stopped to look at his pictures in the window.” Rae Alexander-Minter, “The Tanner Family: A Grandniece’s Chronicle,” in *Henry Ossawa Tanner*, ed. Dewey Mosby (Philadelphia, 1991), 26n13.

²⁴ Steven Jones, “A Keen Sense of the Artistic: African American Material Culture in Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia,” *International Review of African American Art* 12, no. 2 (1995): 11.

²⁵ “A Card: To the People of Color and Their Friends,” *Emancipator*, Sept. 14, 1833, 79; “William Lloyd Garrison,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Sept. 25, 1833, 3.

²⁶ “Calling for Light,” *Emancipator*, Sept. 13, 1838, 80.

famous Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA). As both a museum and school of fine arts, PAFA's large collection of artwork and renowned artist-professors cultivated a rich training ground for promising artists.²⁷ PAFA accepted the oil painting, entitled *Portrait of a Gentleman*, and exhibited it later that year. It was the first such painting completed by an African American displayed in those hallowed halls.²⁸ The subject of this portrait is unknown, though at least two scholars suggest that Douglass may have painted the wealthiest and most prominent black Philadelphian at the time, James Forten.²⁹ If Forten or any other black man's likeness graced the canvas, the representation of a black man as a gentleman would have represented a political statement challenging the racist ideas expressed through racial violence, minstrel performances, and prints such as Clay's *Life in Philadelphia* series. It is more likely, however, that the *Portrait of a Gentleman* depicted William Lloyd Garrison, since Douglass described Garrison as a "gentleman" and is known to have already painted his portrait by the exhibition of 1834.³⁰ When Douglass attempted to enter PAFA to view his painting on display at the Philadelphia Artists' Exhibition, he was barred from entering on account of his race.³¹ Given this racial discrimination, it is unlikely that PAFA would have accepted a painting of a black man described as a "Gentleman."³² Many years after this incident, Douglass cited his earlier experience of "having to struggle against [the] peculiar difficulties [of racial discrimination]" in advertisements to encourage patronage of his work.³³

Evidence of the connection between Douglass's work in visual culture and his political interests includes his signature on an 1836 petition supporting the establishment of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society.³⁴ The circulation of the printed petition and appeals for individuals to sign it were indicative of the increasing momentum and visibility of the aboli-

²⁷ Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, *Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts: 200 Years of Excellence* (Philadelphia, 2005).

²⁸ Anna Wells Rutledge, ed., *Cumulative Record and Exhibition Catalogue: The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1807–1870* (Philadelphia, 1855), 107.

²⁹ Julie Winch, *A Gentleman of Color: The Life of James Forten* (New York, 2002), ii; conversation with Phillip Lapsansky, Oct. 26, 2011, at the Library Company of Philadelphia.

³⁰ "William Lloyd Garrison," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Sept. 25, 1833, 3.

³¹ "An Appeal to American Women, on Prejudice against Color," in *Proceedings of the Third Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women, Held in Philadelphia, May 1st, 2d, and 3d, 1839* (Philadelphia 1839), 22–23.

³² Conversation with Steven Jones, Oct. 26, 2011.

³³ "R. Douglass, Jr.," *Pennsylvania Freeman*, Mar. 14, 1844, 2; "R. Douglass, Jr.," *Pennsylvania Freeman*, May 9, 1844, 4; "R. Douglass, Jr.," *Pennsylvania Freeman*, July 18, 1844, 4.

³⁴ "Circular," *Constitutional Advocate of Universal Liberty*, Oct. 29, 1836, 31.

tionist movement during the 1830s. In appealing to “the principles which actuated our fathers in 1780, [that] have still a dwelling place in the bosoms of their descendants,” the petition referenced the 1780 Pennsylvania Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery.³⁵ The petition reminded its free black readers to “remember those who are in bonds as bound with them,” and that as long as slavery existed, their own freedom remained tenuous. As the petition noted, “in this present crisis, our cause is identified with theirs.”³⁶ Douglass and other signers of the petition argued that as long as African Americans lived in slavery, free people of color could only be partially free; free from the yoke of slavery, they remained burdened by socially and legally sanctioned racist structures.³⁷

Douglass continued his abolitionist involvement by joining the Philadelphia Anti-Slavery Society (PASS), which counted among its members many prominent black Philadelphians: James McCrummill, William Dorsey, Robert Purvis, Joseph Cassey, and several Forten family members.³⁸ The wives, sisters, and mothers of many of these men—Amy Matilda Cassey, Sarah Mapps Douglass, and Grace Bustill Douglass, among others—had founded the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society four months prior.³⁹ The members of these organizations sponsored antislavery speeches, hosted antislavery fairs, organized fundraisers, and drafted petitions to the state legislature.⁴⁰

A long history of abolitionist imagery already existed by the time Douglass painted Garrison's portrait. In 1787, Englishman Josiah Wedgwood designed a seal for the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade that prominently featured a suppliant slave with uplifted, shackled hands grasped together in prayer below the inscription: “Am I not a Man and a Brother?” The next year, Wedgwood sent several reproductions of this work to Benjamin Franklin, then president of the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery.⁴¹ Henry Thomson's 1827

³⁵ Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery, ch. 1381, §4, 10 Stat. at Large of Pa., 67 (passed Mar. 1, 1780).

³⁶ “Circular,” *Constitutional Advocate of Universal Liberty*, Oct. 29, 1836.

³⁷ Dunbar, *Fragile Freedom*.

³⁸ Julie Winch, *Philadelphia's Black Elite: Activism, Accommodation, and the Struggle for Autonomy, 1787–1848* (Philadelphia, 1993), 83.

³⁹ Bruce Dorsey, *Reforming Men and Women: Gender in the Antebellum City* (Ithaca, NY, 2006), 167.

⁴⁰ “At a meeting of the Philadelphia Anti-Slavery Society,” *Liberator*, Feb. 7, 1835, 23; “Anti-Slavery Lectures,” *Liberator*, Feb. 7, 1835, 23; “Debate in the Senate,” *National Era*, Feb. 21, 1850, 30.

⁴¹ Cynthia S. Hamilton, “Hercules Subdued: The Visual Rhetoric of the Kneeling Slave,” *Slavery and Abolition* 34 (2012): 631–52, doi:10.1080/0144039X.2012.746580.

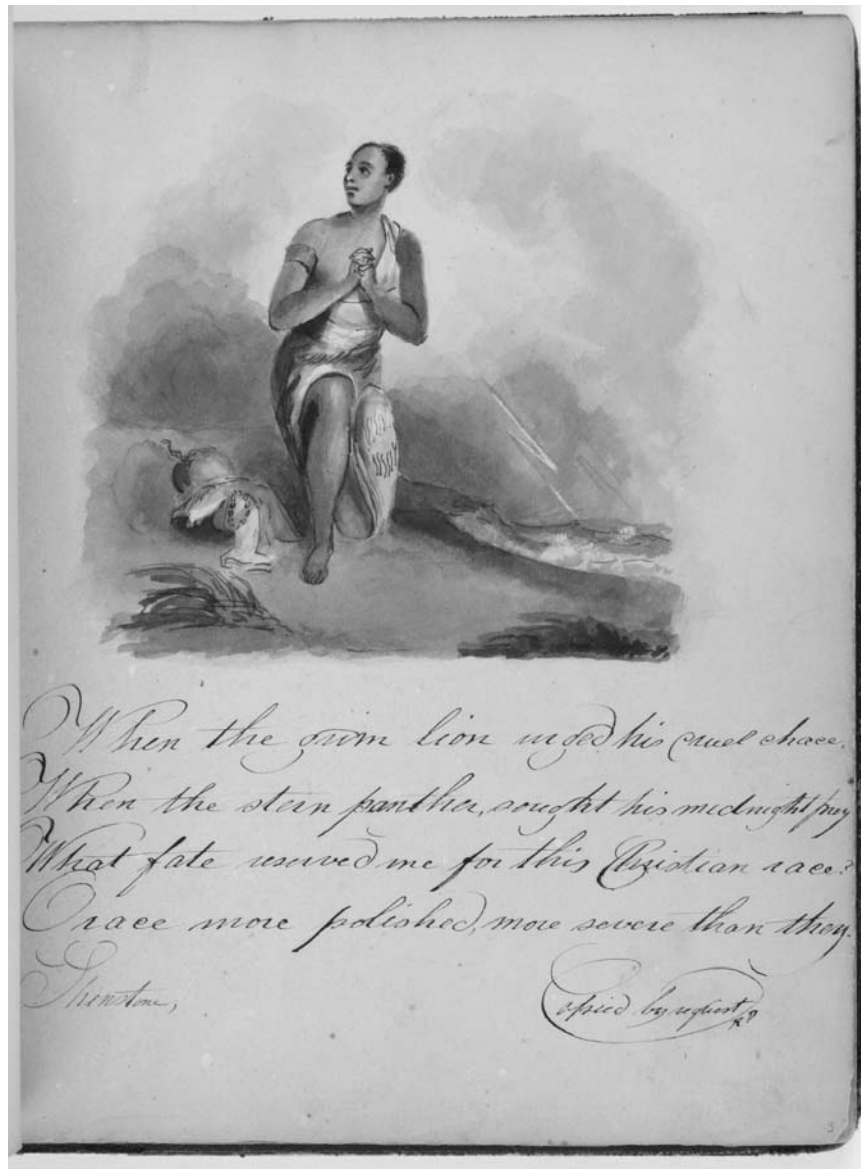
oil painting *The Booroom Slave*, which depicted a kneeling woman of African descent clasping her hands in prayer and looking skyward, bore a striking resemblance to Wedgwood's seal.⁴² Lithographs of *The Booroom Slave* circulated in the United States, and in 1833 Lydia Maria Child used it as the frontispiece of her book *An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans*. As visual documents were exchanged and disseminated throughout the Atlantic world, abolitionists in the United States adopted British abolitionist imagery to fit the context of US slavery. Robert Douglass Jr. was no exception.

Douglass appropriated imagery from other artists and publishers to increase the visibility of abolitionism and the sufferings of enslaved African Americans. In 1834, Douglass promoted antislavery sentiment when he created an image of a supplicant black woman in the friendship album of another black Philadelphian, Mary Anne Dickerson. Mary Anne, like her sister Martina, owned a friendship album—passed among her closest companions and colleagues living in cities along the East Coast—in which her friends (black and white men and women) wrote notes, painted flowers and figures, and embossed messages of sentimental friendship, religious fervor, and political activism. To be asked to write in a friendship album, especially on its first pages, was an honor that evidenced close ties and mutual respect. Though the threads of friendship have been obscured by time, someone in the Dickerson family believed Robert Douglass Jr. deserving of the honor of writing the introductory poem for Mary Anne Dickerson's album, which would be seen and respected by later contributors to the book.⁴³

Douglass evidently completed the pen-and-ink wash drawing with either the frontispiece of Child's book or another reproduction of Thomson's

⁴² Scholars have pointed to Thomson's painting as having been based on a story titled the "Booroom Slave," by Mrs. Bowdich. According to the date of the painting (1827) and the publication date of the story (1828) first printed in the London publication *Forget Me Not*, the opposite is true; the painting preceded the story, which ascribes various meanings perhaps originally unintended by Thomson. Bowdich's narrative assigns the African woman a name—Inna—and details her capture by and escape from slave traders in Africa. After her initial escape from the enslavers, God delivers Inna from her pursuers, and she seeks shelter along a rocky portion of the Atlantic Ocean "till the great ship was gone away." It is possible that the story reached Philadelphia in the original 1828 edition or in the May 1829 issue of the *African Repository and Colonial Journal*. See Hugh Honour, *Image of the Black in Western Art*, vol. 4, *From the American Revolution to World War I*, part 1, "Slaves and Liberators" (Cambridge, MA, 1989), 130; Frederic Shoberl, ed., *Forget Me Not; A Christmas and New Year's Present for MDCCCXXVIII* (London, 1828), 37–76; "The Booroom Slave," *African Repository and Colonial Journal* 5, no.3 (1829): 75.

⁴³ Dunbar, *Fragile Freedom*, 120–47.



The Booroom Slave in Mary Anne Dickerson's Friendship Album, page 3. Courtesy of the Library Company of Philadelphia.

painting close at hand, given the identical subject matter and position of the figure. Four lines of calligraphic text appear under the image:

When the grim lion urged his cruel chace,
When the stern panther sought his midnight prey,
What fate reserved me for this Christian race?
A race more polished, more severe than they!⁴⁴

These lines are taken from a longer poem, "Elegy XX," by Englishman William Shenstone, that directly referenced slavery in the original 1744 verses. The poem highlights the incongruity of Christianity with slavery. Douglass's pairing of the poem with the image of the supplicant slave chastised Christians who either owned slaves themselves or tacitly supported the institution of slavery by allowing its existence. Though Douglass wrote beneath the verses that he had reproduced the image and poem "by request," he also subscribed to their messages of abolition. His entry challenges slavery on moral and religious grounds by means of moral suasion. Men and women active in the abolitionist movement who viewed this page would readily understand the plight of enslaved African Americans. Douglass's image of the innocent and persecuted African woman paralleled the experience of free African American viewers who often fled violent white mobs, battled legal incursions on their rights, and resisted efforts to stifle black achievement.

On the previous page, Douglass also penned a poem introducing the album to its future viewers. The wording of Douglass's introduction, which expresses to the album his hopes that "no misfortune . . . Befall thy Lady" and that those who would subsequently write in the album would take up "the pen of Genius . . . to compliment" Mary Anne, reveals that Douglass knew well the process by which friendship albums operated to connect friends and colleagues.⁴⁵ Knowing that other contributors to the album would later see the messages of abolition that she requested, Douglass crafted an image that acted as a vehicle to spread abolitionist sentiments to her friends and colleagues, not all of whom were ardent abolitionists.

Mary Anne's album reveals Douglass's position among the various networks linking elite free black men and women in populous East Coast

⁴⁴ Robert Douglass Jr., "When the grim lion urged his cruel chace . . .," Mary Anne Dickerson Friendship Album, 1834, p. 3, Library Company of Philadelphia.

⁴⁵ Robert Douglass Jr., Mary Anne Dickerson Friendship Album, 2.

cities. Douglass communicated the racial and religious politics in *The Booroom Slave* to individuals—Amy Matilda Cassey, William Cooper Nell, Ada Hinton, and Sarah Mapps Douglass, among others—who later received Dickerson’s album for perusal and inscription. Through his abolitionist art, Douglass aligned himself with other prominent Philadelphians who believed deeply in the cause of abolition and the rights of free black people. Amy Matilda Cassey and Sarah Mapps Douglass, for example, were active in the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society. Amy Matilda’s husband, wealthy black businessman Joseph Cassey, sat on the provisional board for a black college with Robert Douglass Sr. Ada Hinton, another of the inscribers of Mary Anne Dickerson’s friendship album, had ties to the Douglass family. Her father, Frederick Augustus Hinton, had also served with Joseph Cassey and Douglass Sr. on the college’s provisional board. And Hinton and Douglass Jr. were founders of the Philadelphia Library Company of Colored Persons.

The evocative power of Robert Douglass’s abolitionist portraits inspired a poem titled “On Seeing the Portraits of Abolitionists painted by R. Douglass Jr.,” published in two newspapers in 1837. The author, “L. A.,” detailed the moving experience of viewing Douglass’s portraits of Elizabeth Margaret Chandler, a Quaker abolitionist author active in Philadelphia before she moved to Michigan and founded the Logan Anti-Slavery Society. It is probable that Douglass painted Chandler’s portrait from another likeness, since she had moved to Michigan in 1830 and died three years before the publication of the poem’s emotional lines:

Who can believe the limner’s art
Can catch such motion of the heart?
But see, where Genius’ power confess’d,
Portrays the feelings of the breast;
Gives thrilling language to the eye;
And to the parted lip—a sigh!⁴⁶

The poem applauds the portrait and the emotions elicited by its stunning execution. Though only the portrait of Chandler is specifically referenced (an asterisk identifies her as the “pure sainted spirit” celebrated in verse), the poem’s title makes clear that Douglass had painted several images of

⁴⁶ L. A., “On Seeing the Portraits of Abolitionists painted by R. Douglass Jr.,” *Genius of Universal Emancipation and Quarterly Anti-Slavery Review*, Oct. 1837, 63, and *Constitutional Advocate for Universal Liberty*, Nov. 9, 1837, 36.

abolitionists. "On Seeing the Portraits of Abolitionists painted by R. Douglass Jr." appeared in the *Genius of Universal Emancipation* and the *Constitutional Advocate of Universal Liberty*. These newspapers spread the news of Douglass's abolitionist work within and beyond his hometown. The reception of Chandler's portrait testified to the emotive power of images in the service of abolitionism and to the artistic skill wielded by Douglass to achieve such ends.

Late in 1837, Robert Douglass Jr. communicated his plans to travel to Haiti, where he hoped he might advance his career as a painter. Sarah Grimké, upon receiving the news "Robt is going to Hayti to reside," expressed her hopes to Robert's sister Sarah Mapps Douglass that "his parents can cordially approve it."⁴⁷ While Grimké believed Douglass intended to "reside" in Haiti, his plan was for an extended visit. The colonization movement had attracted scores of followers and detractors, both black and white, since before the founding of the American Colonization Society in 1816, and briefly, in the mid-1820s, Haiti was a favored destination.⁴⁸ Extant documentation, however, does not place Robert Douglass Jr. among colonizationists; the people with whom he collaborated, the figures he depicted in his known artwork, and the organizations in which he participated either said nothing of the notion of colonization or adamantly rejected it.

Departing the port of Philadelphia at 2 p.m. on November 27, 1837, Douglass set out for Haiti with two fellow abolitionists, Lewis Gunn and Charles Burleigh.⁴⁹ According to the black newspaper the *Colored American*, the three traveled to Haiti for the purpose of "collecting and imparting such information as may be alike, useful to the natives, and to the friends of humanity in this country."⁵⁰ Perhaps not surprisingly, given Douglass's relationship with William Lloyd Garrison, the *Liberator* published the first letter that Douglass sent back to the United States after arriving in Port au

⁴⁷ Sarah Grimké to Sarah Mapps Douglass, Nov. 23, 1837, in *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld, and Sarah Grimké, 1822–1844*, ed. Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight W. Dumond, 2 vols. (New York, 1970), 1:483 (hereafter *Weld-Grimké Letters*).

⁴⁸ Much has been written about the colonization movement and the responses of free black people to it. See Leslie Alexander, "The Black Republic: The Influence of the Haitian Revolution on Black Political Consciousness, 1817–1861," in *African Americans and the Haitian Revolution: Selected Essays and Historical Documents*, ed. Maurice Jackson and Jacqueline Bacon (New York, 2009); Eric Burin, *Slavery and the Peculiar Solution: A History of the American Colonization Society* (Gainesville, FL, 2005); Claude Andrew Clegg, *The Price of Liberty: African Americans and the Making of Liberia* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2004).

⁴⁹ "Letter from Lewis C. Gunn," *Pennsylvania Freeman*, Feb. 8, 1838, 86.

⁵⁰ "Our Friends in Hayti," *Colored American*, Mar. 3, 1838, 27.

Prince. An editorial note accompanying the published letter gave greater insight into Douglass's purpose. The newspaper described Douglass as "a colored artist of great promise . . . hoping to find that patronage which was denied to him in this land of Christian prejudice, republican slavery, and democratic lynch law."⁵¹

Haiti provided Douglass with a rich variety of subjects for painting. In the *Liberator* letter, Douglass recounted attending the extraordinary celebration of Haitian independence on January 1, 1838. His prose vividly communicated the joyous scene in which "people applauded," "trumpets flourished," and "artillery thundered" in an impressive display of black leadership and church spectacle in front of the Haitian Government House. Fortunate enough to secure a prime viewing position in the orchestra, Douglass closely documented the activities of the military personnel and paid careful attention to the clothing, decorations, and symbols featured in the ceremony. Douglass conveyed his deep impressions of the achievements of black people in Haiti. To his eye, "every thing was conducted in the most perfect order—no drunkenness or fighting, as with us on the 4th of July. I had never seen so many soldiers, and the perfect regularity of their movements amazed me. They were well armed, and, with few exceptions, well equipped, and the appearance of the 'Garde National' or military horse and foot, was truly splendid."⁵²

Douglass's praise of the conduct and appearance of the Haitians subverted negative conceptions of Haitians in popular culture. Especially after the slave revolt that led to Haitian independence from France, stories and images of primitive and barbarous black Haitians circulated in Europe and the United States. For example, upon learning that Douglass, Gunn, and Burleigh had traveled to Haiti, one Charleston, South Carolina, newspaper reported of their trip that it was a "silly errand," since "that fine Island is a sorry commentary on abolitionism—a *complete waste and desert*, as all the world knows, since it has fallen into the hands of the free negroes."⁵³ Many white Americans imagined the country to be violently overrun with people of African descent. The celebration, however, made an enduring, positive impression on Douglass. As he conveyed to his abolitionist readers in the *Liberator*: "What I have seen to-day, I shall not soon forget; for although too much of a peace man to approve of a military government,

⁵¹ "Commemoration of Haytien Independence," *Liberator*, Feb. 9, 1838, 23.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ "Items," *Charleston Courier*, Feb. 27, 1838, 2.

yet the height of what these people have arisen to, from the most abject servitude, caused in my bosom a feeling of exultation, which I could not repress.”⁵⁴ Douglass assumed that many of those gathered with him at the event were formerly enslaved people who had “arisen” to a more respectable station in life. The “feeling of exultation” stemmed from his pride in the accomplishments of these black people who were no longer under the yoke of slavery.

Within two weeks of arriving home in Philadelphia in July 1839, after spending a year and a half in Haiti, Robert Douglass Jr. embarked upon another international trip, this time to England.⁵⁵ The story of his passage to Europe survives due to Sarah Mapps Douglass’s friendship with the abolitionist Angelina Grimké Weld. In a letter to the English abolitionist Elizabeth Pease, Weld explained that Douglass traveled to England “to obtain further instruction and the means of improvement in his profession as a portrait painter.”⁵⁶ According to Weld, he was carrying letters of recommendation from Thomas Sully, one of the preeminent painters in the United States at the time, which confirmed the authenticity of his skill.

Several of England’s cultural institutions proved to be fertile ground for Robert Douglass Jr.’s artistry. In April 1840, he mailed a letter to his family in Philadelphia, later published in the *Philadelphia Freeman*, relating the good news that he had been admitted to the National Gallery and the British Museum, unlike at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. He relished the opportunity to study paintings by Raphael, Titian, Correggio, Claude, Carracci, da Vinci, Vandyke, Rubens, Reynolds, and Benjamin West unmolested. He found comfort in the fact that the British “do not consider it a miracle that I should wish for an acquaintance with the ‘great masters,’ but do all in their power to assist me, and condemn the ridiculous prejudices of my own countrymen.” When he spoke to other artists studying there, he felt a “proud consciousness that I am received on terms of equality.” Douglass acquired more formal training by attending lectures on painting and sculpture given by members of the Royal Academy.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ “Commemoration of Haytien Independence,” *Liberator*, Feb. 9, 1838.

⁵⁵ Ancestry.com, *Philadelphia Passenger Lists, 1800–1945* [database online] (Provo, UT, 2006), micropublication T840, RG085, rolls # 1–181, National Archives, Washington, DC. See also: “The Passport Question,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Aug. 28, 1849, 2. The article quotes a letter dated July 13, 1839, in which Richard Vaux requests a passport for Robert Douglass Jr. Douglass had arrived on a ship from Port au Prince on July 1, 1839.

⁵⁶ Angelina Grimké Weld to Elizabeth Pease, Aug. 25, 1839, in Barnes and Dumond, *Weld–Grimké Letters*, 2:792.

⁵⁷ “The subjoined letter...,” *Philadelphia Freeman*, June 11, 1840, 2. The article notes that the letter was sent on April 29, 1840.

The World's Anti-Slavery Convention in June 1840 provided opportunities for Douglass both to improve his skills as a portrait painter and surround himself with prominent abolitionists. Held in London, the convention attracted over five hundred abolitionists from the Caribbean, North America, and Europe.⁵⁸ Among them were some of the most prominent and outspoken advocates of the abolition of slavery, including Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Wendell Phillips, William Lloyd Garrison, George Thompson, and Thomas Clarkson. Douglass met with some of these individuals during his time in London; Lucretia Mott took breakfast with him and George Thompson, the fiery British abolitionist, on June 9 and later visited the artist on June 16. Though Mott did not detail her conversations with Douglass or Thompson, we can be confident that they discussed black rights—and perhaps women's rights as well, given the turmoil over women's participation at the convention.⁵⁹ Douglass also joined Mott when she visited Benjamin Robert Hayden, a well-respected British painter of the era, to have her likeness taken for his famous painting of the convention. Douglass accompanied Mott for her sitting and took instruction from Hayden.⁶⁰

Soon after returning home to Philadelphia from London, where he had enhanced his artistic skills and strengthened his abolitionist connections, Douglass made preparations to discuss and display the paintings he had completed in Haiti and England at two exhibitions, one of his Haitian paintings and a second that paired his Haitian works with those he painted in England. He delivered an address at a fundraiser for the Philadelphia Library Company in St. Thomas African Episcopal Church in March 1841 that provided insight into his thoughts on black emigration.⁶¹ Douglass explicitly rejected the idea that African Americans should

⁵⁸ Ira Brown, "Cradle of Feminism: The Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, 1833–1840," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 102 (1978): 162; Kathryn Kish Sklar, "Women Who Speak for an Entire Nation": American and British Women Compared at the World Anti-Slavery Convention, London, 1840," *Pacific Historical Review* 59 (1990): 453–99.

⁵⁹ Initially, the meeting organizers invited women to the convention, but they later restricted invitations to "gentlemen" only. They barred women from being delegates in the convention and limited their presence to the gallery, where they watched the convention without debating or voting on the resolutions being discussed by the male delegates below. For more information, see Brown "Cradle of Feminism" and Sklar, "Women Who Speak for an Entire Nation," 453–99. See also Frederick B. Tolles, ed., *Slavery and "The Woman Question": Lucretia Mott's Diary of Her Visit to Great Britain to Attend the World's Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840* (Haverford, PA, 1952), 26, 34.

⁶⁰ Tolles, *Slavery and "The Woman Question,"* 34, 49.

⁶¹ Advertisement, "Unprecedented Attraction. Grand Concert" [1841], box 1G, folder 1, Leon Gardiner Collection of American Negro Historical Society Records (Collection 0008), Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

emigrate to areas of Africa, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. After speaking at length about the merits of educating black children, Douglass, continuing in rhyming verse, opined that those youth

... may thus successfully disprove
 Assertions foul, of those who would remove
 The native hence, to some far distant spot,
 Where death from climate soon would be [their] lot.
 But this is vain, no other spot on earth
 Is half so sweet as that which gave us birth:
 For *this our* Fathers also fought and bled;
 Here lie their bones, here shall be our last bed.⁶²

Conversations about black emigration from the United States had circulated in Philadelphia and other parts of the United States for decades. While several black leaders in Philadelphia initially supported emigration to Liberia and Haiti, the majority of black Philadelphians fiercely opposed the idea in the first three decades of the nineteenth century.⁶³ Nevertheless, approximately 160 black Philadelphians boarded a ship bound for Port of Spain, Trinidad, in January 1840, and in the winter of 1841, more black emigrants who had received free passage from the Trinidad Agency Office departed from Philadelphia.⁶⁴ In his speech, Douglass made clear his belief that emigration was useless; though his artwork celebrated Haitian leadership and achievements, he did not intend for it to advocate emigration. His cautionary words echoed the stories of black emigrants who had returned to the United States after dissatisfying emigration experiences. They also acted as a warning to those contemplating relocation.⁶⁵

In his speech, Douglass claimed the rights associated with the nation's revolutionary heritage for black people. African Americans should continue to reside in the United States because "For *this our* Fathers also fought and bled." The connection between the blood and bones of the "Fathers" and their African American descendants in Douglass's audience entitled them

⁶² Robert Douglass Jr., "Address," *Pennsylvania Freeman*, Apr. 14, 1841, 4. Douglass's reference to "death from climate" echoes the problems regarding heat and disease anticipated by individuals thinking about emigration to colonies in the Caribbean and Africa.

⁶³ For a better understanding of the waves of support and condemnation of black emigration to Haiti, Liberia, and other locations, see Nash, *Forging Freedom*, 233–45.

⁶⁴ "Emigration," *African Repository and Colonial Journal*, Jan. 15, 1840, 28; "Trinidad Emigration," *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, Nov. 18, 1841, 3.

⁶⁵ "Trinidad Emigration," *Liberator*, Oct. 9, 1840, 163.

to make US soil their “last bed.”⁶⁶ While Douglass’s language immediately invoked the rhetoric of democracy during the revolutionary era, it possessed a double meaning. Generations of African Americans had fought and bled for freedom: freedom from slavery as well as the same freedoms enjoyed by many white Americans.⁶⁷

In March and April of 1841, Robert Douglass advertised an exhibition and lecture cataloguing the social and governmental history of the Haitian people. “Having returned to his Native City after a residence of 18 months in the Republic of Haiti,” the piece read, Douglass “purpose[d] [*sic*] delivering a Lecture on that interesting country, and some of its most distinguished personages . . . illustrated with accurate Portraits principally executed by R. D. Jr. while in the Republic.”⁶⁸ For the price of twenty-five cents, members of the audience at St. Thomas were treated to a visual display rich with information about the people of Haiti. The venues in which Douglass presented and promoted his lecture offer clues about his desired audience. Because Douglass advertised his exhibition in the abolitionist newspaper the *Pennsylvania Freeman*, many of those who came to view his paintings likely held abolitionist sentiments. It is also likely that the black congregants of St. Thomas, a hub of black Philadelphian life, learned of Douglass’s exhibition in church announcements or conversation. The choice to display his paintings at St. Thomas, as opposed to another black church, also hints at the artist’s agenda. Per capita, the congregants at St. Thomas were more than twice as wealthy as members of any other African American denomination in Philadelphia.⁶⁹ Perhaps there Douglass could secure the patronage and commissions that he sought.

Douglass selected paintings that showcased both black Haitian achievements in culture and politics and Douglass’s own artistic versatility.

⁶⁶ For more discussion of African American criticism of revolutionary era ideals, see Manisha Sinha, “To ‘Cast Just Obliquely’ on Oppressors: Black Radicalism in the Age of Revolution,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 64 (2007): 149–60.

⁶⁷ For more discussion of black founding figures, see Richard Newman, *Freedom’s Prophet: Bishop Richard Allen, the AME Church, and the Black Founding Fathers* (New York, 2008). For black citizenship claims arising from military service in the American Revolution, see Rita Roberts, “Patriotism and Political Criticism: The Evolution of Political Consciousness in the Mind of a Black Revolutionary Soldier,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 27 (1994): 587; Thomas Davis, “Emancipation Rhetoric, Natural Rights, and Revolutionary New England: A Note on Four Black Petitions in Massachusetts, 1773–1777,” *New England Quarterly* 62 (1989): 253; Charles Akers, “‘Our Modern Egyptians’: Phillis Wheatley and the Whig Campaign against Slavery in Revolutionary Boston,” *Journal of Negro History* 60 (1975): 397–410.

⁶⁸ “Haitian Collection,” *Pennsylvania Freeman*, Mar. 31, 1841, 3, and Apr. 7, 1841, 4.

⁶⁹ Nash, *Forging Freedom*, 265.

On view to the lecture attendees were eleven paintings on varied subjects: portraits of President Alexander Pétion, President Jean Pierre Boyer, and General Joseph Balthazar Inginac; three portraits of “Haytien Ladies”; scenes documenting the funeral of Pétion and Haitian Independence Day of 1839; a still life entitled *Sketches of Haytien Fruits—Gazettes, Proclamations, &c.*; and a portrait of Douglass executed by his friend, the Haitian painter M. Colbert Lochard. Douglass’s painting of Haitian Independence Day likely resembled the festive scene he had described in his letter to his family. His advertisement described this large historical painting as containing “accurate views” of several governmental buildings and boasting “more than 200 figures” taking part in the festivities.⁷⁰

Douglass included a still life, *Sketches of Haytien Fruits*, that may be read as reflecting his investment in black cultural institutions. Readers of the advertisement for the lecture and exhibition may have initially assumed that this painting depicted agricultural products of the country, such as coffee. Because the painting is not extant, the meaning of the work must be deduced from the title. The description following the main title—*Gazettes, Proclamations, &c.*—clarifies the meaning and content of the painting. Douglass’s classification of Haitian newspapers and proclamations as the fruits of Haiti reveals his vision of the nation as a place of black success and empowerment. The fruits of black self-government and intellectual production were government documents, journalism, and culture. At the very least, Douglass’s title for this work suggests his belief that black leadership enabled the growth of culture and black cultural institutions. He had expressed the same ideas just a few weeks prior to the exhibition in his speech before the Philadelphia Library Company in which he extolled “a soil where knowledge warms the ground / [wherein] the glowing fruits of Genius will be found.”⁷¹

During a second exhibition in May 1841, Douglass displayed his paintings of black Haitian leaders alongside his copies of the masterworks he had studied in Britain. His radical pairing of these subjects made bold statements about black civilization and subverted notions of Haitians as uncivilized and brutish. Douglass again displayed his paintings of Haitian presidents Pétion and Boyer as well as another Haitian dignitary, General Inginac, whom he had seen at the Haitian Independence celebration.⁷² His

⁷⁰ “Haitian Collection,” *Pennsylvania Freeman*, Mar. 31, 1841, and Apr. 7, 1841.

⁷¹ “Address,” *Pennsylvania Freeman*, Apr. 14, 1841.

⁷² “Commemoration of Haytien Independence,” *Liberator*, Feb. 9, 1838, 23.

description of these individuals as “some of the great men of the Republic of Haiti” hinted at the reverence with which Douglass held these individuals.⁷³ Such images stood in stark contrast to the 1839 print “Johnny Q, Introducing the Haytien Ambassador to the Ladies of Lynn, Mass.” created by Edward Williams Clay, who was well-known for his *Life in Philadelphia* prints. Though the print mocked white women abolitionists, Clay used broken English, animalistic facial features, and references to the ambassador’s lips and body odor to ridicule him.⁷⁴ Robert Douglass Jr., however, painted these Haitian leaders in oil—a medium that represented culture, refinement, and wealth—and further elevated their status by pairing these paintings with Douglass’s copies of Italian and British works. Using visual culture, Douglass undermined the widely assumed racial and cultural hierarchy between black Haitians and white Europeans.

By the 1830s and 1840s, the belief that images held persuasive power that could affect their viewers in positive and substantial ways was widespread.⁷⁵ *Parley’s Magazine*, with a self-reported subscription base of twenty thousand customers, proposed that its pages would feature a plethora of images “selected not only with a view to adorn the work, but to improve the taste, cultivate the mind, and raise the affections of the young to appropriate and worthy objects.”⁷⁶ Commenting on a series of panoramas depicting Thebes and Jerusalem, the *Christian Observer* recommended “these beautiful pictures” for its readers “who are seeking for useful and intellectual recreation.” “If such intellectual and moral exhibitions were appreciated,” the article elaborated, “their influence on society, and especially on the young, would be felt extensively, and we might hope that to see the day when our citizens would have a disrelish for the demoralizing representations of the stage and other similar amusements.”⁷⁷ Looking at images was an activity whereby individuals could glean virtuous teachings, messages, and ideas. Images could, however, also be used for malicious purposes.

⁷³ “Benjamin West, P.R.A. John Kemble, Esq.,” *Pennsylvania Freeman*, May 5, 1841, 3.

⁷⁴ For more about this print, see Lemire, “Miscegenation,” 62–63, 73.

⁷⁵ Brian Maidment, *Reading Political Prints, 1790–1870* (Manchester, UK, 2001); J. R. Oldfield, “Anti-Slavery Sentiment in Children’s Literature, 1750–1850,” *Slavery and Abolition* 10 (1989): 44–59, doi:10.1080/01440398908574974; Cynthia S. Hamilton, “Am I Not a Man and a Brother? Phrenology and Anti-Slavery,” *Slavery and Abolition* 29 (2008): 173–87, doi:10.1080/01440390802027780; David Turley, *The Culture of English Anti-Slavery, 1780–1860* (New York, 2004), 47–50; Claire Midgley, *Feminism and Empire: Women Activists in Imperial Britain, 1790–1865* (New York, 2007), 50. *Fourth Annual Report of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, with Some Account of the Annual Meeting, January 20, 1836* (Boston, 1836), 20.

⁷⁶ “Children’s Department Parley’s Magazine,” *Emancipator, and Journal of Public Morals*, Feb. 18, 1834, 4.

⁷⁷ “Jerusalem and Thebes,” *Pennsylvania Freeman*, Apr. 14, 1841, 3.

Douglass, like his contemporaries, knew the combined power of print and visual culture. In 1841, he created lithographic images of several prominent black Philadelphian men that resulted in a lawsuit being brought against him. The depicted men included Frederick Augustus Hinton, Thomas Crouch, Benjamin Stanley, and Joseph Willson. All were editors and contributors to the *Demosthenian Shield*, a black Philadelphian periodical published by the Demosthenian Institute, an organization created by black men for the literary and general educational development of African Americans. Though scarce, the documents pertaining to this case reveal the contested nature of cultural representations of African Americans in the early 1840s. More importantly, they reveal the ways in which some African Americans keenly understood the detrimental influence of derogatory images and the lengths to which they would go to limit their damaging effects.

On September 1, 1841, Robert Douglass Jr. appeared before Alderman Griscom in Philadelphia and was held on \$1,000 bail. While the court docket does not specify the alleged crime, newspapers reported that Douglass had committed libel by caricature.⁷⁸ As one newspaper reported:

It appears that Douglass prepared a caricature, representing the members and editors [of the *Demosthenian Shield*] aforesaid, in ludicrous figures and characters, which he had lithographed. He procured a large edition [to be] struck off, which he proposed to sell to the aggrieved party, or otherwise he would offer them for sale. They not agreeing to what they considered a gross imposition, he did expose them to sale, and hence the suit against him for libel.⁷⁹

This is the first known instance of a derisive racial caricature depicting African American men created by a black visual artist.

A war of words between Willson and Douglass exchanged in the weeks before the lawsuit—in which each side published ad hominem attacks on the other's character—hints at Douglass's motivations in creating the lithograph. The surviving record captures Douglass's side of the exchange only. Judging from an article Douglass published in the *Public Ledger* in August 1841, however, Willson's writings about Douglass were very provocative. Evidently, Douglass felt that the *Demosthenian Shield*, with Willson at its

⁷⁸ "Local Affairs," *Philadelphia North American*, Sept. 2, 1841, 2; "The Gatherer," *New York Sun*, Sept. 9, 1841, 3; "City Gleanings," *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, Sept. 2, 1841, 2.

⁷⁹ "Local Affairs," *Philadelphia North American*, Sept. 2, 1841.

helm, printed malicious information about Douglass and, perhaps, his family. According to Douglass, in the fifth edition of Willson's periodical, Willson "impertinently" invited a conversation with Douglass and then "refused to insert [Douglass's response] in his columns [thereby] proving that if he possesses not a vestige of the eloquence of the ancient orator, yet he inherits all *his courage*." This abuse of editorial power and effective silencing of Douglass in the designated sphere of communication prompted Douglass's accusation: "But from the *shadow* of the shelt'ring 'Shield' / Dealest out thy blows at those who love the light." Douglass began his article with a quotation—"You'll find the thing will not be done / With ignorance and face alone"—that set the derisive tone for the remainder of his column. Sardonicly deeming the *Shield* "as invulnerable as 'Achilles,'" Douglass commenced a thirty-four-line stanza that hinted at the imagery he may have used to depict Willson in the libelous lithograph:

But for a caricature, oh hidden elf,
Sketch for the world a likeness of thyself.
Some say thou art a "Lion" but I know,
Now thou has *spoken*, it is but in show,
Oh' *such* a one, of old disguised did pass
He spoke, the world recognised but—an ass.
Erect now, I beseech thy lengthy ears
Patient take counsel, banish all thy fears.⁸⁰

If the caricature for which Douglass later found himself in court used the imagery contained in this poem, Willson may have been depicted as a cowardly donkey. Several lithographs of politicians depicted as donkeys circulated in the decade before Douglass's disparaging lithograph.⁸¹ The animal evoked ideas of feckless leadership and foolish interests. Douglass employed both ideas throughout his published poem, wherein he insulted Willson's intelligence, harshly judged Willson's writing ability, and mocked Willson's editorial competency.

⁸⁰ Robert Douglass Jr., "The Demosthenian Shield," *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, Aug. 3, 1841, 3. Italics in original. At least the first few issues of the *Demosthenian Shield* included "sketches" of prominent African Americans in Philadelphia. The second issue included a sketch of Robert Douglass Jr.'s father.

⁸¹ President Andrew Jackson was one politician depicted as or with a donkey in numerous prints during this era. See the following prints at the American Antiquarian Society: David Claypoole Johnson, *Great Locofoco Juggernaut* [Boston, ca. 1837]; James Akin, *The Man! The Jack Ass* [Philadelphia, ca. 1831–33]; *The Modern Balaam and His Ass* (New York, [ca. 1837]); *The Illustrious Footsteps* (New York, 1840); and Esop Jr., *Let Every One Take Care of Himself!* [New York, ca. 1833].

A negative representation of an individual, regardless of his or her race, could be severely detrimental to one's reputation, business, or livelihood when made public. Defamation of character, via newspaper, lithograph, or other medium, could quickly circulate among groups of people and damage the social status of the person represented.⁸² Lithographs allowed for particularly rapid transmission and dissemination. Hinton had previously been publically mocked in two prints—the first circulated in 1830 and the second in 1837—by Edward W. Clay.⁸³ His lawsuit against Douglass over the libelous caricature revealed that the main matter underlying the 1841 case was the assumption that the derogatory image would negatively influence viewers' perceptions of the depicted men.

Filing the charge was probably not the first measure the *Shield's* editors took to prevent the image's dissemination. Given the close business and personal relationships Douglass had with both Frederick Augustus Hinton and his daughter, Ada, it seems likely that Hinton and Douglass would have attempted to mediate the ire arising from the problematic image before filing suit. Nevertheless, any attempts to settle the matter out of court failed, and the objects of the artist's ridicule sought legal recourse to prevent Douglass from circulating the print and to award appropriate damages. Douglass found himself in court before a jury, which found him not guilty of libel by caricature. The judge dropped the charges but ordered Douglass to pay the costs associated with the trial.⁸⁴

Sometime before 1844, the successful free black musician and band-leader Francis Johnson sat before Robert Douglass Jr. to have a daguerreotype made.⁸⁵ Daguerreotypes were unique and expensive creations whose fragility discouraged their circulation from person to person. They could not be cheaply, quickly, safely, or efficiently replicated. By hand-copying daguerreotypes into lithographs, however, mass circulation of these images could be effected. Douglass's daguerreotype of Johnson became the model from which an artist named Alfred Hoffs created a lithograph that

⁸² One of the more famous examples of this in US history is the newspaper coverage that factored into the duel between Aaron Burr and Alexander Hamilton. See Joanne Freeman, "Dueling as Politics: Reinterpreting the Burr-Hamilton Duel," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 53 (1996): 289–318.

⁸³ Edward Williams Clay, *Life in Philadelphia* series, "What you tink of my new poke bonnet Frederick Augustus," ca. 1830, and "Philadelphia Fashions, 1837."

⁸⁴ "Cour 148 vs Robert Douglass Jr." (Sept. 28, 1841), General Sessions Court Docket, Sept. 1841–Jan. 1842, 74, Philadelphia City Archives; "Court of General Sessions," *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, Oct. 28, 1841, 1.

⁸⁵ The first advertisement for Douglass's daguerreotypes in the *Pennsylvania Freeman* appears in the March 14, 1844, issue.



Lithograph of Frank Johnson after a daguerreotype by Robert Douglass Jr., 1846. Courtesy of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Douglass then published and sold at his Arch Street storefront. Though Douglass's original daguerreotype has been lost, the lithograph copy provides clues about the image from which it was modeled.⁸⁶ The print shows a seated Frank Johnson squarely facing the viewer, grasping a bugle in one hand and resting his other arm on a table. Sheet music, a quill, and an inkwell arranged on the table beside Johnson inform the viewer of his skilled profession. The composer's slightly tilted head and the expression of ease and warmth on his face lend him an air of friendliness. The lithograph draws attention to Johnson's aptitude as well as to his professional success, further evidenced by his middle-class attire. This is an image of black success, respectability, and intelligence.

The timing of Douglass's commission of Johnson's lithograph lends insight into the possible reasons for its creation. Douglass published the portrait of Johnson in 1846, two years after the bandleader's death in Philadelphia.⁸⁷ Prior to publication of the lithograph, three days after Johnson's

⁸⁶ A number of daguerreotypes taken by Douglass of Cassius M. Clay have also been lost, though their existence has been confirmed from a short but glowing review in a Philadelphia newspaper. See "Daguerreotype Likenesses," *Pennsylvania Freeman*, Jan. 29, 1846, 2.

⁸⁷ "Died," *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, Apr. 8, 1844, 2.

death, a group of men met to mourn the loss of the great composer. They elected a committee, on which Robert Douglass Jr. served, to draft and publish a “testimonial to [Johnson’s] worth” in the *Elevator*, the *Philadelphia Ledger*, and the *Philadelphia Sun*. In their printed tribute, they testified that Johnson “eminently and successfully proved that genius is sufficiently powerful to overcome *even prejudice*.”⁸⁸ A month later, on May 24, 1844, Douglass delivered a monody before a crowd at St. Thomas, the place of Johnson’s funeral and burial. Douglass lamented the loss of his friend to those gathered and twice referred to the “genius” of Johnson’s musical and mental prowess. The image’s reproduction in 1846, then, served as an act of remembrance. The mass reproducibility of Johnson’s lithographic image made it possible to remind a larger audience of Johnson’s accomplishments than Douglass’s single daguerreotype could. In this sense, the 1846 lithograph of Johnson served not merely as Douglass’s memorial of Johnson’s life but as a testimony to his accomplishments.⁸⁹

In that same year, the famed abolitionist Abby Kelley Foster visited Douglass’s Daguerrian Gallery to sit for several portraits. A note Douglass enclosed with one of these many daguerreotypes records that he had captured the images “for the purpose of being lithographed.” The “motive which [had] impelled [him]” to circulate these easily replicable, affordable, and durable portraits of Foster derived from his abolitionist principles: “If in regarding your portrait a single spirit is encouraged to enter upon the same glorious, although arduous labors, or excited to action for the advancement of the great and Holy cause in which you are so indefatigably engaged I shall be amply rewarded.” Persuading the viewers of the lithograph to empathize with the cause of abolitionism was one of Douglass’s prime motivations. He made clear his desire that viewers of his abolitionist images become “excited to action” for the cause of enslaved people’s rights.⁹⁰

In the widely circulated image, Foster’s modest clothing and thoughtful gaze lend her appearance an air of respectability that mirrored the

⁸⁸ “At a Special Meeting of the Young Men . . .,” *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, Apr. 10, 1844, 2.

⁸⁹ Charles K. Jones, *Francis Johnson (1792–1844): Chronicle of a Black Musician in Early Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia* (Bethlehem, PA, 2006), 243, 247–48. Additional clues about Douglass’s respect for Johnson and his fashioning of Johnson into an exemplar of black virtuosity can be found in an address that Douglass delivered at a concert held on March 29, 1841, at St. Thomas. See “Address,” *Pennsylvania Freeman*, Apr. 14, 1841.

⁹⁰ Robert Douglass Jr. to Abby Kelley Foster, May 12, 1846, Abby Kelley Foster Collection, American Antiquarian Society.



1846 Lithograph of Abby Kelley Foster after a daguerreotype by Robert Douglass Jr. Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society.

cause of abolition she championed. The lithograph may have reminded its viewers of Foster's appearance and lectures in Philadelphia as part of her speaking tour earlier that year. Praise of the likeness in the *Pennsylvania Freeman* further increased the visibility of abolition, Foster's principles, and Douglass's artistic skill. Describing the portrait as a "handsome lithograph," the writer enthused that the work "[is] a likeness that will be recognised [*sic*] as far as it can be seen, by any one who has ever seen the original."⁹¹ Whether "the original [likeness]" referred to the daguerreotype created by Douglass or to Foster herself, the review encouraged readers to envision the veracity of Foster's appearance and, by extension, the accuracy of her abolitionist message. Douglass also advertised this "admirable Lithographic Portrait" in the *Public Ledger*, a newspaper that then did not brand itself as antislavery but which boasted a readership of close to forty thousand. For the readers of the *Public Ledger*, who held a diversity of

⁹¹ "Portrait of Abby Kelley Foster," *Pennsylvania Freeman*, June 25, 1846, 3.

beliefs regarding slavery, this advertisement marked yet another opportunity for Douglass to “[encourage others] to enter upon the same glorious, although arduous labors” as the abolitionist Abby Kelley Foster.⁹²

Douglass continued his dedication to the abolitionist movement by supporting the eleventh annual fair of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, which spanned three days in the middle of December 1846. The committee of arrangements, composed of such leading African American women as Amy Matilda Cassey, Margaretta Forten, Harriet Purvis, and Sarah Purvis, envisioned the annual fair to benefit enslaved African Americans. The event grossed the very large sum of \$1,432.68 and was deemed a great success.⁹³

As people from all over eastern Pennsylvania and several other states streamed in during the three days of the fair, Douglass’s artwork greeted them. As a reporter described it:

On entering the Salon the eye first rested on a large and beautiful picture of a Liberty Bell painted by Robert Douglass, an artist of this city, and generously presented to the Fair. Its station was at the head of the room, over the orchestra. It bore the inscription, PROCLAIM LIBERTY THROUGHOUT THE LAND. Underneath this picture, and in front of the orchestra, were inscribed in large characters the following sentences, “DUTY IS OURS; CONSEQUENCES ARE GOD’S. ARE WE NOT VERILY GUILTY CONCERNING OUR BROTHER?”⁹⁴

Hung at the front—the most visible and prominent position in the space—of the Grand Salon, the painting attracted visitors’ attention and invoked messages of religiosity, national pride, and abolition. After all, “proclaim liberty throughout the land” referred to the inscription on the iconic Liberty Bell residing only blocks away. That Douglass “generously presented” his painting implies that Douglass donated the visual centerpiece of the abolitionist fair, underscoring his dedication to the cause of emancipation and his involvement in disseminating its message to the public. During the fair, Douglass joined the other invited speakers—

⁹² “Abby Kelley Foster,” *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, June 2, 1846, 2; for circulation figures of the *Public Ledger*, see Dan Rottenberg, *The Man Who Made Wall Street: Anthony J. Drexel and the Rise of Modern Finance* (Philadelphia, 2006), 73.

⁹³ “Fair in the Assembly Building,” *Pennsylvania Freeman*, Dec. 10, 1846, 3; “Report of the Treasurer of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society,” in *Fourteenth Annual Report of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society* (Philadelphia, 1848), 12; “The Fair,” *Pennsylvania Freeman*, Dec. 24, 1846, 2.

⁹⁴ “The Fair,” *Pennsylvania Freeman*, Dec. 24, 1846.

Lucretia Mott, Charles Burleigh, Edmund Quincy, and James Buffum—in orating about freedom from slavery before the gathered crowd.⁹⁵

Abolitionist periodicals encouraged people to speak in public, pray in private, and “if you use the press[,] use it to convince the community of the sin of slave-holding.” “Wherever you have influence, no matter how little,” one article cheered, “use it to excite sympathy for the bondsman’s woes, and to win converts to the right.” After all, “slavery lives in public sentiment, and public sentiment must annihilate it.”⁹⁶ Creating and displaying antislavery banners in public not only publicized the fair but also appealed to those who harbored abolitionist sentiments, bringing them closer to full conversion to the cause.

Robert Douglass Jr.’s dedication to art continued long after 1846, although few of his works are known to survive. He continued his involvement in the Philadelphia Library Company of Colored People and lectured about painting at that organization’s hall at the corner of Walnut and Sixth Streets.⁹⁷ In July 1847, Douglass finished a banner for the Blackwoodtown Division Sons of Temperance, No. 37, which was one of five commissioned banners on which he concurrently worked.⁹⁸ By December 1847, Douglass found himself in Jamaica, where he complemented the money he earned from commissions—chiefly watercolor paintings of local churches—by selling daguerreotypes and daguerreotype equipment.⁹⁹ Back in Philadelphia, he continued to create daguerreotypes in what he advertised as “the first sky-light Daguerreotype Gallery” in Philadelphia, wherein patrons could view and inspect daguerreotypes that he had made six years prior in order to judge their enduring “perfect[ion].”¹⁰⁰ Other Philadelphians viewed Douglass’s artwork at fundraisers, such as the one organized to raise funds for the abolitionist

⁹⁵ “It is highly gratifying to receive . . .,” *Liberator*, Jan. 29, 1847, 95; “The Fair,” *Pennsylvania Freeman*, Dec. 24, 1846.

⁹⁶ “What Can I Do Toward the Abolition of Slavery,” *Pennsylvania Freeman*, Dec. 18, 1845, 2.

⁹⁷ “Philadelphia Library Company of Colored Persons,” *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, Mar. 23, 1847, 2.

⁹⁸ “The Banners! The Banners!!” *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, July 1, 1847, 2. Douglass also painted the fire engine of the Globe Engine fire company in Philadelphia. See “Globe Engine Company,” *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, Feb. 13, 1843, 2. The variety of Douglass’s artistic endeavors demonstrates both the subjects about which he was most passionate and those that helped provide him a living. The projects also reveal Douglass’s evolving business strategies and the difficulties of being a black artist in the United States before the Civil War.

⁹⁹ “Daguerreotype pictures,” *Kingston (Jamaica) Morning Journal*, Dec. 20, 1847; “No. 63 King Street,” *Kingston (Jamaica) Morning Journal*, Oct. 28, 1848; “Letter from Robert Douglass,” *North Star*, June 2, 1848.

¹⁰⁰ “The Arch Street Gallery of the Daguerreotype,” *Pennsylvania Freeman*, Sept. 20, 1849, 3. This dates his engagement with daguerreotyping to 1843 at the latest.

periodical the *North Star*. Two of Douglass's paintings—*Liberty pronouncing judgement* [sic] *against Slavery* and *The Slave Market in Constantinople*—drew the attention of those present and, in keeping with the subject and purpose of the event, hopefully encouraged more financial generosity on the part of attendees.¹⁰¹

Douglass continued to frequent antislavery gatherings, black conventions, and events hosted by the Philadelphia Library Company of Colored People throughout the 1850s.¹⁰² His artistic skill caught the eye of Martin Delany, who in 1852 extolled Douglass in his book concerning the current and proposed future of African Americans.¹⁰³ Douglass also continued to advertise his banner- and sign-painting skills in the 1860s and completed at least one banner for the African Methodist Episcopal Sunday schools.¹⁰⁴ He reviewed artwork at the 1876 Centennial Exhibition held in Philadelphia and published his assessments in the *Christian Recorder*.¹⁰⁵ That year, he completed an oil painting of Frederick Douglass, the location of which is currently unknown to scholars.¹⁰⁶ When not painting and designing banners, Douglass published numerous translations of Spanish and French language newspapers, and just four years before his death in 1887, he promised to submit to the *Christian Recorder* articles concerning “the heroes of our race who figured in the deliverance of San Domingo from [the] French.”¹⁰⁷ Such an endeavor recalled the artistic inspiration he drew from his 1837 trip to Haiti.

¹⁰¹ “North Star Fair,” *Pennsylvania Freeman*, Jan. 3, 1850, 2.

¹⁰² *Proceedings of the Colored National Colored Convention* (Salem, NJ, 1855), 7. Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society, *Fifteenth Annual Report Presented to the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society by Its Executive Committee, October 25, 1852, with the Proceedings of the Annual Meeting* (Philadelphia, 1852), 53. Advertisement for November 2, 1858, meeting of Philadelphia Library Company of Colored People, box 1G, Leon Gardiner Collection of American Negro Historical Society Records.

¹⁰³ Martin Robison Delany, *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States* (Philadelphia, 1852), 117–18. This published praise preceded the invitation that Delany extended to and then regretfully rescinded from Douglass to explore the Niger River valley before the expedition launched in 1859. Due to financial constraints and criticism from white Philadelphians, Delany reduced the size of the party. See Martin Robison Delany, *Official Report of the Niger River Valley Exploring Party* (New York, 1861), 13.

¹⁰⁴ “Douglass’ Studio,” *Christian Recorder*, Oct. 23, 1869, 4; “Sunday-School Anniversary,” *Christian Recorder*, Nov. 6, 1869, 3.

¹⁰⁵ R. Douglass, “The Centennial Exhibition,” *Christian Recorder*, Oct. 26, 1876, 8.

¹⁰⁶ R. M. Adger, *A Portion of a Catalogue of Rare Books and Pamphlets, Collected by R. M. Adger, Phila., Upon Subjects Relating to the Past Condition of the Colored Race and the Slavery Agitation in this Country* (Philadelphia, 1894), box 16, folder 6, Leon Gardiner Collection of American Negro Historical Society Records. The final item, No. 65, lists: “Large Painting of Frederick Douglass; by Robert Douglass. Philadelphia, 1876 . . . \$20.00.”

¹⁰⁷ “Our Christmas Supplement,” *Christian Recorder*, Dec. 30, 1880, 2; “Our Exchanges,” *Christian Recorder*, Sept. 14, 1882; “Prof. Douglass,” *Christian Recorder*, May 31, 1883, 2.

Robert Douglass Jr.'s paintings, lithographs, daguerreotypes, and banners were his contribution to the visual culture of the abolitionist movement. His antislavery activities and his commitment to the cultivation of the arts and education among African Americans in Philadelphia allow scholars to study how one black Philadelphian expressed his opinions concerning black emigration, black achievement, and the persuasive role of visual culture in the abolitionist movement. The images he created testified to his interconnected relationships with some of the most prominent men and women, black and white, of the abolitionist movement. While he deployed his artistic talents mostly for the cause of black advancement, he also wielded the power of print and visual culture against other black Philadelphians. Both uses of his artistic talents demonstrated the degree to which nineteenth-century Americans recognized the influence of images in their daily lives. Images could be a platform from which to argue for black rights, commemorate and honor black achievement, subvert racist ideologies, and slander colleagues. Just as Robert Douglass Jr. turned to visual culture to shape the powerful ideologies of race in antebellum America, so, too, may scholars look to images in their search to illuminate the histories of African Americans.

University of Michigan

ASTON GONZALEZ

Coordination or Competition: State Regulation of Motor Buses under Private Ownership and the Decline of Mass Transit in Pittsburgh

IN 1973, ALLEGHENY COUNTY'S PUBLIC transit agency, the Port Authority, declared bus driver Leonard Bruno "Driver of the Year." A decade earlier, Bruno was not a government employee, but an entrepreneur who drove and maintained his own bus in a one-man operation, Carnegie Coach Lines. However, like all transit firms in Pennsylvania, his company was not free from government oversight. The route he drove, the fares he charged, and other aspects of Bruno's business were regulated by the state Public Utility Commission. The commission relinquished regulatory control when the Port Authority bought Carnegie Coach Lines and thirty-two other privately owned transit companies in Allegheny County in 1964 and 1965.¹

In 2012 and 2013, Pennsylvania legislators re-empowered state regulators to grant private firms rights to operate transit routes in Allegheny County and called for study of further privatization options. With chronic budgetary woes, service cutbacks, and political battles over state subsidies, the Port Authority is already compelled to share responsibility for transit service with other nonprofit associations (suffering their own problems accessing public funding) and a private bus operator.²

This paper is drawn from several chapters of the author's dissertation, "The Business and Politics of Mass Transit in Pittsburgh, 1902–1938" (PhD diss., Lehigh University, 2010). The author would like to thank his dissertation advisors—John Kenly Smith Jr., Stephen A. Cutcliffe, Roger D. Simon, and Joel A. Tarr—and Edward Lybarger of the Pennsylvania Trolley Museum for their help.

¹"PAT Riders Go Out of Way to Praise Retiring Driver," *Pittsburgh Press*, Dec. 21, 1983.

²"Oversight of County Transit to Shift from Port Authority to Public Utility Commission," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, June 11, 2012; "Braddock Nonprofit Says Commuter Shuttle Has Enough Cash for One More Week," *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, June 25, 2013; "Urgency Sought for Funding Pennsylvania Roads and Transit," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Aug. 22, 2013; An Act Amending the Act of April 6, 1956, Known as the Second Class County Port Authority Act, Further Providing for Membership of the Authority; and Providing for Department of Transportation Regionalization and Privatization Study, 2013, Pa. Legis. Serv. Act 2013-72.

Ironically, decades earlier the Port Authority was charged with saving mass transit, which had suffered chronic ridership and revenue loss under fragmented private ownership, by bringing order and financial stability through consolidation. This was part of a national trend of public buyouts of ailing privately owned urban transit companies, but combining so many separate transit lines into a single system was a unique challenge. The Port Authority consolidated over thirty separate companies—which included Pittsburgh Railways, a large trolley company with a subsidiary motor bus fleet centered in the county's urban core, as well as numerous smaller independent bus firms from the county's periphery—into a single, integrated transit system.³

Far from encouraging such consolidation efforts, earlier public policy had energetically promoted transit fragmentation in Pittsburgh. Since the 1910s, privately owned mass transit was regulated by a state government commission. Between the world wars, regulatory policy shifted with dramatic change in state political leadership. Whereas in the past regulations had protected and promoted the territorial monopoly of Pittsburgh Railways, new policies encouraged independent bus lines to expand into trolley territory at the expense of the older corporate firm. By midcentury, Allegheny County transit was a motley collection of bus and streetcar routes—a tangible reflection of the inconsistent regulatory policies fostered by transformation in Pennsylvania politics.

This essay is, in part, a case study in mass transit and urban history. As was the case in many American cities, Pittsburgh's public transit did not simply fall victim to automobile superiority or conspiracy. Financial and regulatory problems hurt trolleys' and buses' ability to compete with the supposed convenience and freedom of automobiles. Various scholarly and popular accounts condemn a corporate cabal led by General Motors that, beginning in the 1930s, purchased trolley systems through subsidiary holding companies and converted them to bus lines in spite of alleged popular preference for streetcar service. The basic story is most often attributed to Bradford Snell, a congressional researcher who wrote an exposé of GM's

³The Port Authority was created by 1956 legislation to build and manage a freight terminal for river and rail commerce. In 1959 it was repurposed to take over the county's mass transit. Sherie Mershon, "Corporate Social Responsibility and Urban Revitalization: The Allegheny Conference on Community Development, 1943–1968" (PhD diss., Carnegie Mellon University, 2000), 592. "As far as can be learned," a 1953 study commissioned by county government concluded, "there are a greater number of mass transportation companies supplying local service to the immediate Pittsburgh District than is the case in any other American city of comparable size and importance." *Report of the Allegheny County Mass Transit Study Committee* ([Pittsburgh], 1953), 53.

business practices in the mid-1970s. Several historians have pointed out that this popular theory is problematic; by the 1930s, most streetcar firms had already lost ridership, revenue, and public credibility. Buses were a practical means of replacing aging streetcars, and in the comparatively few places the GM group acquired trolley firms, they supplied a line of credit otherwise unavailable.⁴ The story of Pittsburgh's mass transit suggests an alternative bus history altogether. GM's minions never troubled—nor did they rescue—Pittsburgh transportation. It was mom-and-pop firms, not powerful corporate interests, that made buses their business in the Steel City. Local politicians charged that the big trolley company (owned by holding company interests outside the region), rather than a motor bus Moloch, was unresponsive to Pittsburghers' needs.

The story of Pittsburgh's motor buses is also a local history that illustrates links between national- and state-level politics, public regulation, and the local services available to people and neighborhoods. Focusing primarily on national-level or large-scale regulation and enterprises, Thomas McCraw and Richard Vietor argue that the models devised by historians, economists, and political scientists in the effort to build simple generalizations about regulatory behavior break down under historical scrutiny. Regulation and industries shape each other in myriad ways, each influenced by internal or external social, political, ideological, or economic factors. Did state regulators protect the public interest from powerful corporations, or did they hurt business creativity, efficiency, and provision of goods and services to the public? At various times in Pennsylvania, regulation both helped and hindered different types of private transit operators. Was Pennsylvania regulation "captured," and, as historian Gabriel Kolko and economist George Stigler suggest was common, did it serve the interests of powerful businesses ostensibly regulated in the public interest? Yes, but not permanently. And when critics of big utilities subsequently won state government, regulation did not necessarily serve the public interest, either—if serving the public interest meant delivering efficient transit service.⁵ Reg-

⁴ Bradford C. Snell, *American Ground Transport: A Proposal for Restructuring the Automobile, Truck, Bus, and Rail Industries* (Washington, DC, 1974), 26–38; David W. Jones, *Motorization and Mass Transit: An American History and Policy Analysis* (Bloomington, IN, 2008), 66–68; Robert C. Post, *Urban Mass Transit: The Life Story of a Technology* (Westport, CT, 2007), 149–55; Zachary M. Schrag, "The Bus Is Young and Honest: Transportation Politics, Technical Choice, and the Motorization of Manhattan Surface Transit, 1919–1936," *Technology and Culture* 41 (2000): 53–54.

⁵ Thomas K. McCraw, *Prophets of Regulation: Charles Francis Adams, Louis D. Brandeis, James M. Landis, Alfred E. Kahn* (Cambridge, MA, 1984), 300–302; Richard H. K. Vietor, *Contrived Competition: Regulation and Deregulation in America* (Cambridge, MA, 1994), 310–13.

ulation consisted of shifting preferences for different businesses, technologies, or arrangements of private enterprise instead of either a simple brake or boon to a monolithic industry. Pittsburgh's early bus story links state politics to local streets, showing how political contingency shaped both regulatory policy and people's rides to work, school, or marketplace.

In this respect, this motor bus story is inspired by another: Zachary Schrag's account of bus triumph in Manhattan. As in Pennsylvania, New York City politicians hostile to streetcar company domination of Gotham's streets encouraged small-time bus operators to competitively needle the trolley firms. Under such relentless political pressure, which also included burdensome taxes on streetcar franchises, New York's trolley interests converted to buses by the mid-twentieth century. The Big Apple bus story, Schrag concludes, illustrates a case of utilities regulation where "rival technologies became, in large part, proxies for questions about who would provide the service in question and under what regulatory regime." This was equally true in Pittsburgh between the world wars.

But in Pittsburgh, different regulatory development resulted from a dissimilar political context, and both in turn created a different mass transit situation. There, early mass transit regulation was entwined with politics surrounding the electric power industry. In the 1920s, while New York trolleys suffered (municipally backed) bus competition, Pennsylvania regulation banished small-time buses to the farm-and-town country outside Pittsburgh's urban core. While most of Manhattan's bus lines were subsequently consolidated under a single company, Pittsburgh's transit became a hodgepodge of trolley and bus routes, under various owners, until government takeover in 1964. In Pittsburgh, inconsistency in state regulation made for inconsistency in transit operation.⁶

Before Buses: Pittsburgh Railways Company

Pittsburgh had electric streetcars since the 1890s, and, as in other cities, the Steel City's trolleys had serious financial and political problems before automobile competition appeared.⁷ Prior to the twentieth century, numerous firms operated streetcars in different parts of Pittsburgh, sometimes competing with each other along a few routes. Local businessmen gradu-

⁶ Schrag, "The Bus Is Young and Honest," 51–79.

⁷ For the problems of early trolleys, see: Jones, *Motorization and Mass Transit*, 31–56; Martha J. Bianco, "Technological Innovation and the Rise of and Fall of Urban Mass Transit," *Journal of Urban History* 25 (1999): 348–78.

ally combined these lines into fewer, bigger firms. In 1902, consolidation culminated in the Pittsburgh Railways Company (PRCo), which ran the region's trolley service as a monopoly operation.

PRCo's routes mostly formed a radial system centered on downtown Pittsburgh, splaying out through urban neighborhoods to industrial towns and emerging suburbs. Trolleys struggled through narrow, congested streets in the central city. Beyond the urban neighborhoods, the streetcars meandered between towns crammed into valleys or perched on hillsides and ridgelines, with intervening stretches of sparse settlement.⁸

Due to its Gilded Age construction, Pittsburgh Railways was burdened with enormous fixed costs for most of its corporate life. Prior to 1902, businessmen combining trolley lines into bigger systems bought or rented the various routes at high prices. Between 1902 and 1951, PRCo was obliged to pay the resulting rents and debts. In fact, PRCo chronically failed to pay much of this and was in bankruptcy from 1918 to 1924 and from 1938 through 1950.

Pittsburgh Railways' first bankruptcy occurred despite aggregate ridership increases in its first two decades. Through 1917, Pittsburghers paid a nickel to ride in the city and some of the surrounding boroughs and additional fare to reach towns further out. The nickel fare was an institution by the 1910s, while PRCo managers struggled with ways to limit or cut costs. General economic downturns, especially after 1907, resulted in short-term, costly ridership dips. Horrendous inflation during World War I erased profits with soaring costs.⁹

Further complicating matters, Pittsburgh Railways was itself owned by Philadelphia Company, a utilities holding firm that by World War I owned most of the city's electric power and gas utilities as well. Philadelphia Company in turn was controlled by a holding company outside of Pittsburgh. Ownership above that level was, until after World War II, a series of shifting holding company layers typical of American utilities between the world wars. Top-to-bottom, PRCo's byzantine orga-

⁸ James D. Callery, H. S. A. Stewart, and C. A. Fagan, memo, "To Trainmen," June 5, 1918, photocopy, Pittsburgh Railways Company Collection, Miller Memorial Library, Pennsylvania Trolley Museum, Washington, PA (hereafter PRCC); E. K. Morse, *Report of the Transit Commissioner to the Honorable Mayor and the City Council of Pittsburgh* (Pittsburgh, 1917), 15–17.

⁹ Bion J. Arnold, *Report on the Pittsburgh Transportation Problem, Submitted to Honorable William A. Magee, Mayor of the City of Pittsburgh* (Pittsburgh, 1910); *Report of the Engineers Valuation Board in re Pittsburgh Railways Company, Submitted to the Public Service Commission of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, August 1919* (Harrisburg, PA, 1919); *City of Pittsburgh v. Pittsburgh Railways Company et al.*, docket 1571, Mar. 22, 1920, *Public Utilities Reports* (1920C): 486–87.

nization and the confusing organization of its ownership were a political liability. Progressive and New Deal reformers decried pyramided utility company organization as bad business. These complicated corporations, critics charged, enabled greedy investors to siphon profits from operating utilities that should instead offer consumers lower rates or better service.¹⁰

By World War I, PRCo was infamous among its ridership. Pittsburghers rode trolleys in increasing numbers but resented company policies that seemed greedy—such as stingy transfer privileges and unsanitary cars. The biggest cause for complaint was overcrowding, especially at rush hours. Public officials alternated between negotiating with, criticizing, and threatening the company, all while commissioning a series of engineering experts to study the situation.¹¹ But local governments in Allegheny County acquired little regulatory power over mass transit.

Instead, a state Public Service Commission, created in 1913, became the regulatory agency for public utilities—including streetcars and, later, motor buses—statewide. State regulators could uphold or veto trolley management decisions such as route changes and fare increases. By creating the Public Service Commission, Pennsylvania's political leaders reconciled with monopoly operation of utilities.¹²

In the United States, state regulation of public utility companies began in 1907. Public officials generally hoped that regulatory commissions would balance “natural monopoly” economics in urban streetcars and other public utilities with righteous public expectations toward utility companies. In contrast to the widespread American faith in competition, the concept of a “natural monopoly” suggested that consumers were better off when certain heavy capital industries were overseen by regulators rather than subject to competition. The mission of state regulators was not just to

¹⁰ The name “Philadelphia Company” was a historical anomaly and did not reflect any particular relationship to the city of Philadelphia. Philadelphia Company, *Helpful Information for Employees* (Pittsburgh, 1931), 7–8. For the politics surrounding public utilities and holding companies in this era, see Thomas K. McCraw, *TVA and the Power Fight, 1933–1939* (Philadelphia, 1971), 7–25, 82–85; Philip J. Funigiello, *Toward a National Power Policy: The New Deal and the Electric Utility Industry, 1933–1941* (Pittsburgh, 1973), xiii–xvi.

¹¹ Memo, “Pittsburgh Railways Company, Rail Operation: Total Revenue Passengers,” n.d., photocopy, PRCC. For examples of complaints against PRCo, see: “Wants Good Order on Trolley Cars,” *Pittsburgh Gazette Times*, June 10, 1906; “To Stop Packing the Trolley Cars,” and “Packing the Streetcars,” *Pittsburgh Gazette Times*, Sept. 8, 1906; “Injustice of Transfer System Arousing Many,” *Pittsburgh Gazette Times*, Dec. 7, 1907; “Street Widening before Trolley Ills are Cured,” *Pittsburgh Press*, Dec. 19, 1909. For experts’ reports to city officials, see, for example: Emil Swensson, *Report to the State Railroad Commission [on Pittsburgh Railways]* (Harrisburg, 1910); Arnold, *Report*; Morse, *Report*.

¹² Public Service Company Law, 1913 Pa. Laws 1374.

protect the public against excessive utility profiteering but also to ensure that monopolistic utilities earned a fair return on investment. In practice, state regulation was fraught with controversy and only partially effective. Legal and political struggles ensued before regulatory commissions, appellate courts, and, occasionally, the reading public, over what a “fair return” on a utility’s investment meant. Utility holding companies, sprawling over regions or even the nation, were not subject to state regulation.¹³

Like their sibling railroads and electric power firms, trolley systems were capital-intensive enterprises; tracks, electric power systems, streetcars, support facilities, and franchised operating rights exacted heavy interest payments, rentals, and taxes. A trolley company, therefore, could be maximally efficient as a monopoly operator, not when sharing a local population with a more or less duplicate, competing system. Bigger systems could achieve greater economies of scale and better balance profitable and unprofitable areas. Transit expert Bion Arnold, hired in 1910 by the City of Pittsburgh to help in its ongoing disputes with Pittsburgh Railways, was no particular friend of PRCo. However, he advised Pittsburgh’s Mayor William Magee that although Pittsburgh Railways was overcapitalized and mismanaged, it was appropriately the sole operator of the city’s trolley system. “*Transportation in a city is a natural monopoly*,” Arnold insisted; “*therefore no district should be served with two competing transit systems when one can furnish better service than with the business divided*.” It was up to public regulation, not competition, the engineer-expert counseled, to ensure that private management was honest and diligent.¹⁴

Moderately honest or diligent streetcar management had little to fear from the Pennsylvania Public Service Commission, which by the 1920s was an example of regulatory capture. Just after World War I, *Electric Railway Journal*, a trade publication supportive of streetcar companies, especially liked the Pennsylvania regulators. Between 1915 and 1932, the commission chairman was attorney William D. B. Ainey. In 1919 Ainey assured Pennsylvania trolley men that his commission was not a tribunal but, rather, a helpful, problem-solving authority that regarded corporate utilities as essential to the public. Ainey dismissed the “great majority of complaints” the commission received against utilities as “inconsequential.” The chief regulator “wanted to get away from the idea that the public utilities

¹³ McCraw, *TVA and the Power Fight*, 4–15; McCraw, *Prophets of Regulation*, 7–15; Morton Keller, *Regulating the New Economy: Public Policy and Economic Change in America, 1900–1933* (Cambridge, MA, 1990), 58–65.

¹⁴ Arnold, *Report*, 18. Italics in original.

commission should occupy a position of antagonism toward the railways.” In 1921, the journal reiterated that the Pennsylvania commission was a model of ideal regulation.¹⁵ At some point Ainey began taking bribes from utilities, but fundamentally, Pennsylvania’s state government in this era was famously pro-business Republican. Pennsylvania industrialists did not object to active government friendly to large corporations and welcomed such interventions as navy armor plate contracts, tariffs on imported products, or state regulation protecting established utility corporations.¹⁶

Before any serious competitive threat, the Public Service Commission upheld Pittsburgh Railways’ monopoly on transit in the Steel City by keeping PRCo glued together. After declaring bankruptcy in 1918, the trolley system faced possible fragmentation through foreclosure of underlying, rented streetcar lines, which could have created several smaller trolley companies operating in the region. In 1920, the Public Service Commissioners headed off that possibility by authorizing PRCo to raise trolley fares. After 1920, the trolleys charged a dime for a single ride, or three rides for a quarter (with additional fare to travel to the most distant locations). However, the resulting arrangements did not reduce PRCo’s fixed costs and only temporarily suppressed PRCo’s long-term financial and political woes.¹⁷

In the 1920s, new management at Pittsburgh Railways tried to defuse public rancor over the higher fare by providing better trolley service. State regulation preserved PRCo’s mass transit monopoly, but the trolleys increasingly competed with cheap automobiles. Within its budgetary limits, PRCo invested in some new equipment, better salesmanship, and more efficient operation and maintenance. Trolley leaders compromised with city officials and downtown merchants on route changes. PRCo tempered the fare increase by adding transfer options, offering some low-cost fare zones on certain lines, and instituting a \$1.50 ride-all-week pass.¹⁸

¹⁵“Optimism Prevails at Pennsylvania Association Meeting,” *Electric Railway Journal*, July 5, 1919, 13–14; “Commission Popular in Keystone State,” *Electric Railway Journal*, July 30, 1921, 162.

¹⁶David Cannidine, *Mellon: An American Life* (New York, 2006), 110–11, 266–67.

¹⁷City of Pittsburgh v. Pittsburgh Railways Company et al., Mar. 22, 1920; “Receivers File Final Report on Management of Traction Lines,” *Pittsburgh Gazette Times*, Apr. 2, 1924; “Pittsburgh Railways Company,” in *Pittsburgh Railways Company System: Historical Cost* (Pittsburgh, 1919), Pittsburgh Railways Company Records, 1872–1974 (AIS.1974.29), box 1, vol. 10, p. 59, Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh; Exhibit C in W. D. George and Thomas Benner, “Plan of Reorganization for Pittsburgh Railways Company and Pittsburgh Motor Coach Company, Comprehending the Reorganization of the Pittsburgh Railways Company System,” July 1, 1940, PRCC.

¹⁸Charles K. Robinson, “The Fate of the Five-Cent Fare. I. Pittsburgh: A New Contract Brings Mutual Understanding,” *National Municipal Review* 15 (1926): 459–65.

Despite these improvements, PRCo struggled to overcome a legacy of public disappointment and a surge of mass-market automobility. Even before the Great Depression, Pittsburgh Railways Company began losing riders.¹⁹

Bus Beginnings in Allegheny County

The earliest motor buses in the Steel City appeared just before World War I. For the next half-century, buses were peripheral transit providers, supporting or competing with the core electric streetcar system. Like the trolleys, all were privately owned through 1963. Some were operated by Pittsburgh Railways. Others were owned by a variety of smaller companies—often families or partnerships—that ran various types of buses, routes, and services.

Determining the size, type, and number of these “independent” bus companies (so termed by contemporaries) depended on somewhat arbitrary distinctions. In 1951, one observer counted sixty bus firms in total, but twenty-one ran long distance routes to faraway cities, providing only minor local service. Thirty-nine bus companies provided local transit service somewhere in the county. By the 1950s, some had several dozen buses, but none approached the size of a big city transit system, and many remained smaller operations with only a few coaches. Most of these were based in the county, but many supplied service that crossed county lines. Smaller enterprises appeared or disappeared frequently and were inconsistent record keepers, complicating efforts to assess them all. In 1964 and 1965, Port Authority acquired thirty bus lines in addition to Pittsburgh Railways.²⁰

Many an early bus owner started out by operating a jitney, an entrepreneurial fad that had first appeared in California in 1914. Automobile owners earned nickels by running cheap transit service that was as scheduled, consistent, and extensive as they pleased. Many jitney men sold rides only occasionally: on evenings, on weekends, around sporting events, or whenever they had time to kill. A favorite tactic was wheeling up to a crowded streetcar stop and offering waiting patrons a more exciting ride than the

¹⁹“Pittsburgh Railways Company, Rail Operation: Total Revenue Passengers.”

²⁰Milton Cooke, *Mass Transportation Study of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County, Part 2* (Pittsburgh, 1951), 79; The Port Authority Act of 1959 required Port Authority to take over any company running 80 percent of its routes in Allegheny County. Port Authority of Allegheny County, *First Annual Report* (Pittsburgh, 1964), 2.

dowdy old trolley. Predictably, streetcar management roundly condemned jitneys and called on local or state government to stop them.²¹

An early Pittsburgh jitneyman was A. F. Hardy, a former machinist at the Homestead Steel Works, who in March 1915 drove his touring car around downtown Pittsburgh. His ambition, he told the *Pittsburgh Gazette Times*, was to ferry passengers between Liberty Avenue and the North Side on a regular schedule, charging a consistent five cents, rather than to accept varying payments for rides in any direction a passenger wanted to go. The newspaper photographed Hardy in his Ford, holding his sign reading “Jitney Bus”—a combination of words that, together with his plans for regular service, suggested the connection between the wildcat jitney and the later bus company. What became of Hardy is unclear, but other jitney-men, operating in outlying areas of the county, became bus operators.²²

Around World War I, Pennsylvania’s state regulators prohibited the casual jitney and made resulting bus carriers support the big trolley companies. In 1915, the Public Service Commission assumed authority over jitneys and buses and compelled jitney-men to either invest more time, effort, and money into operating under regulatory guidelines or quit the business. Jitney or bus entrepreneurs had to submit to the legal process (and costs) involved in obtaining and maintaining proper licenses to operate and demonstrate, in the commissioners’ opinion, financial ability or responsibility. Operators had to run appropriate vehicles over stipulated (road-by-road, turn-by-turn) routes, at scheduled times, frequencies, and fares. By requiring greater investment, regulators stamped out most (but never all) wildcat, casual, holiday, evening, and weekend jitneyism. With all of that trouble and expense, many drivers sought a bigger vehicle and a route with patronage enough to make it pay; jitney-men became bus drivers.²³ And with control over each route, state regulators prevented buses from swarming over the most profitable trolley routes and competitively “skimming the cream” from trolley system lines.

²¹ Post, *Urban Mass Transit*, 66–67.

²² “Hardy Machinist Starts City’s First ‘Jitney’ Bus,” *Pittsburgh Gazette Times*, Mar. 6, 1915. For other examples of jitney-men who became bus owners, see Oliver Miller and Raymond Foley, “The Pittsburgh Independents 8: Braddock and East Pittsburgh Local Lines,” *Motor Coach Age*, June 1977. Miller and Foley wrote a series of articles on the Pittsburgh independents for *Motor Coach Age*, a popular enthusiast magazine, in the 1970s. These are valuable secondary sources on the topic.

²³ “How the Motor Bus Serves Pennsylvania,” *Bus Transportation*, Apr. 1922, 228–35; Irwin Rosenbaum and David Lilienthal, “The Regulation of Motor Carriers in Pennsylvania,” *University of Pennsylvania Law Review and American Law Register* 75 (1927): 696–722. Jitneyism did not end with regulatory prohibition. Jitneys continued, illegally, particularly in low-income, inner-city areas. “Pittsburgh Jitney Service Illegal, but Thriving,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Sept. 7, 2013.

By protecting existing streetcar service and profits, the Public Service Commission claimed to protect the efficiencies of natural trolley monopolies. As early as 1916, the commission declared that “auto-buses . . . would be useful where there is no trolley operated or where it can be made an auxiliary of a trolley system.”²⁴ They conceded the possibility that at some point, buses might become able to haul more people than streetcars, and more cheaply. But until then, regulators insisted, more efficient trolley systems were best for Pennsylvanians, collectively. During the 1920s, bus owners needed to serve areas as yet without transit, preferably linking these areas with existing trolley routes. State regulators saw motor buses as auxiliaries, not competitors, to the immense private investment in electric railway mass transit that already existed.²⁵

With one significant exception, regulation prevented the growth of independent bus lines in Pittsburgh Railways’ territory. The exception, John Gerlach, was an early motor-taxi operator who began his bus line in 1912, running touring routes with double-decker buses to and from city parks. Gerlach morphed this into an expensive commuter operation with routes between Pittsburgh and East Liberty as well as the elite Squirrel Hill neighborhood. The Public Service Commission probably permitted Gerlach’s service additions because he was not competing much with trolleys. His buses charged a twenty-five-cent fare and used the trolley-free Bigelow Boulevard. In 1925, Pittsburgh Railways Company bought Gerlach’s outfit and renamed this fleet “Pittsburgh Motor Coach Company” (PMCo), but they continued to operate it as Gerlach had: as a premium auxiliary transit service. Until the 1930s, PRCO and its bus arm had exclusive control of its operating territory in and around the city of Pittsburgh, the industrial towns along the rivers, and some trolley-era suburbs up-country from the urban riverbanks.

During the 1920s and 1930s, Pittsburgh Motor Coach specifically targeted automobile-owning suburbanites who increasingly abandoned trolleys. With this “de luxe” service, residents of “high-class residence district[s]” could ride upholstered, advertisement-free coaches, avoiding the hassle of driving or parking their own cars and of mixing with the common lot aboard streetcars. PMCo gradually expanded this system of bus routes connecting upscale neighborhoods to the downtown district, taking advantage of the city’s growing boulevard access to the Golden Triangle.

²⁴ Quoted in Rosenbaum and Lilienthal, “Regulation of Motor Carriers in Pennsylvania,” 710n.

²⁵ “How the Motor Bus Serves Pennsylvania,” 228.

During the 1930s, PRCo used buses to create a handful of “feeder routes” connecting new territory to existing streetcar lines and converted a few trolley lines to buses. However, after 1924 Pittsburgh Railways had only minor geographic expansions via trolley or bus.²⁶

Beyond the Trolleys: The Independent Buses

Because of state regulation, in the 1910s and 1920s Allegheny County’s entrepreneurial bus operations grew outside Pittsburgh Railways territory. In 1922, the journal *Bus Transportation* complained that the Pennsylvania Public Service Commission “has consistently refused to acknowledge the necessity of highway transportation in direct and parallel competition with rail lines.” Instead, most independent bus proprietors ran small routes between crossroad hamlets, mill towns, and mining villages, beyond the reach of PRCo’s trolley tracks and bus lines.²⁷ These areas featured sparser settlement but were poised to grow with later suburban development. Because the independents frequently reached PRCo’s outer trolley stops, state regulation essentially encouraged formation of a de facto multienterprise, regional system of trolleys and buses.

Ambitious drivers, often brothers, saw opportunities to be their own bosses by scraping together the means to buy a bus, navigate the regulatory maze, secure routes, and attract ridership. In this, the Oriole Motor Coach Company was typical. In 1918 coal miner Joe Supan began running a jitney bus for fellow miners in the Bridgeville area, southwest of PRCo territory. For several years Supan and his brothers ran the Supan Auto Bus & Taxi Company, but in 1928, they combined forces with another set of bus-driving brothers, the Collavos, to form “Oriole Motor Coach,” a commuter line for the emerging suburb of Green Tree. Through to 1964, the Supans remained primary owners of Oriole, but in 1934, most employees were part owners of the firm, too. Then, William Supan was president of the company, but also a driver and mechanic.²⁸ Through the 1920s, other local men ventured into busing, such as John and George Sauers, who ran buses to the west of Pittsburgh from 1922, or August Bamford, Gustav Popper, James Dawson, Leonardo Burelli, Gust Saihos, and Byrum McCoy,

²⁶ [Miller and Foley], “Pittsburgh Motor Coach Co.,” *Motor Coach Age*, Mar.–Apr. 1925, 4–8; W. T. Noonan, “Congestion Relief with De Luxe Coaches,” *Electric Railway Journal*, Feb. 12, 1927, 298–99.

²⁷ “How the Motor Bus Serves Pennsylvania,” 228–35.

²⁸ “15-Cent Fare Bus Company to Pay 2 Percent Dividend,” *Pittsburgh Press*, Aug. 14, 1934.

who drove among the smoky mill-and-tenement towns along the Monongahela River (locally called the “Mon Valley”).²⁹ In the following decades, other people and families moved in and out of the business as their fortunes or inclinations permitted.

Throughout the private era, many independent bus firms developed from and were involved in other related businesses. The Sauers brothers, A. J. Poskin, and William and Sara Shafer were trucking businesspeople who got into buses. (Sara, a former schoolteacher, ran the bus company, while William continued to run his trucking firm). A few bus companies were spin-offs from interurban electric trolley companies, such as Penn Bus Lines and Harmony Short Line. In 1929, two automobile dealers purchased the remains of a little local trolley company to form a bus line, Duquesne Motor Coach; at the same time, they remained in automotive sales and service.³⁰

Independent bus companies grew in tandem with the suburbs. Bus owners supplied day-trip and commuter transit for residents in outlying areas of Allegheny County to reach the core areas of Pittsburgh. While not as great as in the post-World War II period, suburbanization in the region was vigorous in the 1920s and persisted in some parts even during the Depression. The growth of “mom-and-pop” bus outfits demonstrated that, despite the availability of cheap automobiles in the 1920s, there was demand for transit service at or beyond the fringes of Pittsburgh Railways’ trolley system.³¹ The early independent buses served sparser ridership but did not have as burdensome capital or labor costs as Pittsburgh Railways, and they effectively extended the trolley system’s reach when the streetcar company could not afford to expand.

²⁹ Miller and Foley, “The Pittsburgh Independents 4: Western Allegheny County and the Ohio River Valley,” *Motor Coach Age*, July 1976, 7; Miller and Foley, “Braddock and East Pittsburgh Local Lines,” 4–17; Miller and Foley, “The Pittsburgh Independents 7: Boulevard Lines,” *Motor Coach Age*, Feb. 1977, 11; “Obituary: August Bamford, Former Owner of Bus Company,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Apr. 5, 1991.

³⁰ Miller and Foley, “Western Allegheny County and the Ohio River Valley,” 7, 16–17, 20; Miller and Foley, “The Pittsburgh Independents 1: McKeesport Local Lines,” *Motor Coach Age*, Feb. 1976, 5; Miller and Foley, “The Pittsburgh Independents 6: Allegheny Valley Lines,” *Motor Coach Age*, Dec. 1976, 4; Miller and Foley, “The Pittsburgh Independents 9: Homestead and Duquesne Lines,” *Motor Coach Age*, July 1977, 7–9.

³¹ “How the Motor Bus Serves Pennsylvania,” 228–35; Steven J. Hoffman, “‘A Plan of Quality’: The Development of Mt. Lebanon, a 1920s Automobile Suburb,” *Journal of Urban History* 18 (1992): 144, 154, 174; “City Population Spread” and “Homeseekers Here Gradually Moving to Suburban Areas,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Oct. 1, 1930. Miller and Foley, “The Pittsburgh Independents 2: The Monongahela Valley and South Hills Lines,” *Motor Coach Age*, Apr. 1976, 8, 14–15; “South Hills Plan Opens,” *Pittsburgh Press*, Aug. 15, 1937.

From the Public Service Commission, bus entrepreneurs received many rights to run service between outlying areas and PRCo's urban trolley network. Ezio Bigi's bus rumbled along the leafy creek valleys between Bridgeville and Dormont, where passengers could transfer to trolley cars for the trip downtown. August Bamford started a line feeding PRCo streetcars in the Homestead area. In 1922, four buses ran between the streetcar terminus at Brentwood and points south; two years later, PRCo constructed a new track loop there, adding a paved driveway for the buses. Across the city to the north, Culmerville Auto Transit carried passengers from areas north down to Etna and the PRCo trolleys there. After 1925 the Deere Brothers' buses connected PRCo trolleys in Wilkinsburg to points to the northeast. In and around Braddock and East Pittsburgh, motor buses served the industrial plants and hilly terrain between the northwest-southeast trolley lines. In 1922 a swarm of motor carriers converged on McKeesport, at the southeastern corner of PRCo territory. Oriole Motor Coach ran to downtown Pittsburgh from Green Tree, but through PRCo territory; it did not stop for passengers, so regulators (and PRCo) did not object to the route.³² As they had done by approving PRCo's steep fare raise, state regulators protected Pittsburgh Railways Company's territorial monopoly and obliged the bus entrepreneurs to cooperate, rather than compete, with the trolleys.

Subsequently, after (different) state regulators allowed the independent buses to reach downtown Pittsburgh and in places compete with the PRCo, Pittsburgh Railways felt the loss of this regulatory support. By the mid-1940s, PRCo officer M. L. Merlo wistfully recalled that in 1922, the Public Service Commission forbade Ezio Bigi from competing with the streetcars and compelled him "to cooperate with Pittsburgh Railways by transporting persons to points of connections with Railway lines." Similarly, Merlo recalled, "all of the Brentwood [bus] operations radiated from the Carrick-Brentwood district and all acted as feeders to our lines

³² In the 1940s, PRCo employee M. L. Merlo studied the local independent bus scene by consulting regulatory records and riding the bus lines. He subsequently compiled reports for PRCo's internal use. M. L. Merlo, "Bigi Bus Lines: History of Development," Oct. 15, 1946, 3; Merlo, "Bamford Brothers Motor Coach Lines: Route No. 1—Whitaker-Homestead," Apr. 17, 1946, 4, all in Independent Motor Bus Collection, Miller Memorial Library, Pennsylvania Trolley Museum (hereafter IMBC); Miller and Foley, "Monongahela Valley and South Hills Lines," 16; Miller and Foley, "Allegheny Valley Lines," 16; Merlo, "Deere Brothers Bus Lines: History of Development," June 9, 1947, 1, IMBC; Miller and Foley, "Braddock and East Pittsburgh," 4; "How the Motor Bus Serves Pennsylvania," 235; "Bus Analysis to be Made by Trade Body," *Pittsburgh Press*, Oct. 24, 1929.

rather than competitors.”³³ But during the 1920s, Pittsburgh Railways Company did little to *actively* cultivate cooperative relationships with the bus start-ups through any incentives or even transfer schemes. Nor does it appear that state regulators prodded trolley leadership to do so.

The Un-coordination of Allegheny County Mass Transit

In the 1930s, Pennsylvania state regulation, following bigger political trends, shifted from protecting PRCo to promoting independent bus operators. Nationally, the decade began with damaging congressional and Federal Trade Commission investigations of electric utilities and their holding companies. Beginning in 1933, President Franklin Roosevelt and his New Deal coalition targeted utility corporations for reform. This reform entailed outlawing complicated utilities holding company structures as well as federal development of hydroelectric power as a “yardstick” with which political leaders and citizens could judge the performance of privately owned electric companies.³⁴ Pennsylvania reformers joined this attack on the power of big utilities. Pittsburgh Railways and Pittsburgh’s electric company, Duquesne Light, were owned by holding firm Philadelphia Company, itself at the bottom of a stack of utilities holding companies. The independent bus operators had no such political liabilities.

In Pennsylvania, political animosity toward corporate utilities predated triumph of the state’s Democrats and their “Little New Deal.” Gifford Pinchot, the old Progressive and (Teddy) Roosevelt Republican, was re-elected governor in 1930. Pinchot had been critical of the state’s utility corporations in an earlier gubernatorial term, and he made regulatory reform a central part of his electoral campaign. Amid the deepening Depression, he railed against a utility “conspiracy” allegedly dominating politics in the Keystone State. Pinchot and his political faction believed that corporate power was fostered by a complicit Public Service Commission.³⁵

By 1934, Pinchot’s allies overhauled the regulatory agency. Pinchot’s administration exposed where utilities’ management (including Philadelphia Company’s) had bribed members of the commission, notably

³³ Merlo, “Big Bus Lines,” 3; Merlo, “Brentwood Motor Coach Company: Route No. 1—Brentwood-Pittsburgh,” Feb. 18, 1946, 5; and Merlo, “Brentwood Motor Coach Company: Route No. 3—Curry-Pittsburgh,” Mar. 22, 1946, 6, both in IMBC.

³⁴ Funigiello, *Toward a National Power Policy*, 113–19; McCraw, *TVA and the Power Fight*.

³⁵ Irwin F. Greenberg, “Pinchot, Prohibition, and Public Utilities: The Pennsylvania Election of 1930,” *Pennsylvania History* 40 (1973): 21–35.

its longtime chairman, William Ainey. With Ainey and other commissioners ousted, the *Pittsburgh Press* reported, Pinchot's four replacement commissioners represented a quorum that could implement "the theories of utility regulation [Pinchot] has been preaching up and down the state for more than a decade." The *Press* anticipated that locally, the Pittsburgh Railways-Motor Coach monopoly might be in trouble and that "small bus operators" throughout the state would get more sympathy from state regulators. The Public Service Commission thereafter failed to live up to Pinchot's militancy, and changes in Pittsburgh's transit situation were not abrupt. But in the long run, the *Press* was prescient.³⁶

After Pinchot, the Democratic Party won state government and further purged the state's regulators. In spring 1937, the Democrats replaced the seven-man Public Service Commission with a five-man Public Utility Commission (PUC) that was itself unabashedly Democrat. In October 1937, supporting the Democratic Party in upcoming elections, the PUC chairman promised a wide-ranging investigation of Pittsburgh Railways Company and its practices. Compared to its predecessors, the PUC was even more distrustful of Pittsburgh's trolley firm and friendlier to the independent bus companies' ambitions.³⁷

The Public Service Commission felt pressure to shift its policies even before Pinchot's faction seized control of state government. Since 1928, the Pittsburgh-area Allied Boards of Trade, a confederation of local trade organizations, complained to the commission about Pittsburgh Railways' monopoly and policies. The Allied Boards protested Pittsburgh Motor Coach's "exorbitant" twenty-five-cent bus fare and rejected the anti-competitive logic of regulation, arguing that the independent buses should be allowed to compete with PRCo buses and trolleys within the core communities of Allegheny County.³⁸

³⁶ "Pinchot Surges to Power over Public Service Commission as Ainey Quits, Ending Feud," *Pittsburgh Press*, Aug. 3, 1932; "Ainey Resigns P.S.C. Post on Eve of Senate Inquiry," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Aug. 3, 1932; "Pinchot Will Fight for Quiz," *Pittsburgh Press*, Aug. 3, 1932. Pinchot subsequently had a falling out with one of his chosen commissioners. "Two Chairmen Will Take PSC Fight to Court," *Pittsburgh Press*, May 7, 1933; Orren C. Hormell, "State Legislation on Public Utilities in 1934-35," *American Political Science Review* 30 (1936): 85-86.

³⁷ Orren C. Hormell, "State Legislation on Public Utilities, 1936-38," *American Political Science Review* 32 (1938): 1,134; "Earle Signs PSC 'Ripper,'" *Pittsburgh Press*, Apr. 1, 1937; "PUC Orders Trolley, Bus Rate Inquiry," *Pittsburgh Press*, Oct. 27, 1937; "Democrats Veto 'Sulk' Tactics," *Pittsburgh Press*, Nov. 14, 1938.

³⁸ "Fight to Cut Bus Fares Is Launched Here," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Oct. 24, 1929; "Trade Boards Continue War on Bus Fares," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Sept. 25, 1930; "Trolley, Bus, Taxicab Fares Facing Attack," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Jan. 8, 1934.

Beginning in 1931, the Public Service Commission permitted bus companies in the Pittsburgh area to carry passengers through streetcar territory. Brentwood Motor Coach chief Daniel Feick applied for the first of these extensions, offering to carry passengers of his existing routes, which then terminated at the trolley terminus in Brentwood, to downtown for an additional fifteen cents. Feick claimed his passengers wanted this service and insisted he would not much compete with PRCo along their tracks, although residents around the Brentwood trolley terminus could obviously use his buses instead of trolleys. Over Pittsburgh Railways' protest, state regulators granted Feick his request.³⁹ As PRCo officials feared, other bus companies surrounding Pittsburgh Railways requested and received similar rights to run downtown and then ceased being feeders for the trolleys.

Through the mid-1930s, the Public Service Commission granted these downtown extensions with the stipulation that the independent buses could not pick up or drop off passengers along PRCo's trolley and bus routes. To that extent, the commission ostensibly upheld PRCo's exclusive territorial control. In practice, the regulators did not entirely insulate PRCo trolleys or buses from all possible competition. As in the initial Brentwood case, a few local residents here and there could, from their porch, walk in one direction to take a trolley downtown or another to take an independent bus.⁴⁰ Probably the most notable example of this phenomenon was in spring 1933, after Bamford Brothers asked and received permission to carry passengers from Mon Valley steel towns—Munhall, Homestead, and Duquesne—to Pittsburgh's central business district. Restrictions prevented the Bamfords from servicing some areas along the route, but the steel town residents could choose between Bamford buses or PRCo trolleys to reach the department stores, theaters, or other venues in the city. Subsequently the Bamfords made their service especially attractive by keeping their bus fares close to trolley fares.⁴¹

³⁹ "Bus Fare Cut to Brentwood Hit in Protest," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Oct. 1, 1930; "New Bus Line to Brentwood," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Apr. 21, 1931.

⁴⁰ Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, "In the Matter of the Application of Oriole Motor Coach Lines, Inc.: Certificate of Public Conveyance" (Report and Order of the Commission, docket nos. 12430 and 19680, June 15, 1937), and "In re: Applications of Brentwood Motor Coach Company . . ." (Report and Order of the Commission, docket no. 21418, Apr. 19, 1937), photocopies in IMBC. PRCo's Merlo regarded the downtown extension grants of the Public Service Commission as opening the door to serious competition, "in the sense that much of the traffic which formerly transferred to our service is now carried directly" by the bus companies. Merlo, "Deere Brothers Bus Lines: History of Development," June 9, 1947, 1, IMBC.

⁴¹ "New Bus Line Permit Issued," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Mar. 8, 1933; August Bamford, 17 Pa. P.U.C. 354 (1937), photocopy in IMBC.

Finally, in August 1936, the Public Service Commission gave Brentwood Motor Coach permission to compete with Pittsburgh Railways along a two-mile stretch of highway in the South Hills. Here, PRCo's trolley lines ran along a hillside somewhat secluded from residential areas, and PRCo's Motor Coach affiliate ran very infrequent service. While it did not represent an area for heavy competition, the Pittsburgh newspapers recognized the decision as a precedent. "A little competition might result in lower fares and improved service," the pro-New Deal *Pittsburgh Press* editorialized. "Both seem to be out of the question so long as the existing monopoly is permitted to continue."⁴²

Subsequently, the Democratic Public Utility Commission was more aggressive than its predecessor in granting intrusive and competitive rights to independent buses. Most competition took place in the fast-growing South Hills suburbs. After 1936, state regulators lifted restrictions on several Brentwood, Bigi, and Oriole routes. By mid-1938, Bigi's buses elbowed Pittsburgh Railways vehicles for passengers along densely settled West Liberty Avenue. Outside the South Hills, the PUC removed nearly all restrictions on Bamford Brothers' Mon Valley routes, allowing them to compete with the trolleys between the mill towns, Pittsburgh's South Side neighborhoods, and downtown. In 1938, the PUC permitted the Shafers to compete with trolleys in the "residential and industrial district in and around Coraopolis, Neville Island, and McKees Rocks."⁴³

Transit competition in Allegheny County was always inconsistent and incomplete. The PUC left in place many restrictions against independent bus competition with PRCo vehicles and with each other. The commissioners probably did not grant competitive rights to a bus operator until he made at least a plausible case for it. Regulators claimed to prohibit competitive bus service if it only paralleled trolley tracks and did not also reach beyond the PRCo system into suburban areas not served by streetcars.⁴⁴ But Pittsburgh

⁴² "New Bus Firm Gets Permit," *Pittsburgh Press*, Aug. 5, 1936; "Rival Bus Line Authorized in Fight on Fare," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Aug. 6, 1936; "A Proper Decision," *Pittsburgh Press*, Aug. 6, 1936; Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, "In re: Applications of Brentwood Motor Coach Company."

⁴³ Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, "In the Matter of the Application of Oriole Motor Coach Lines"; M. L. Merlo, "Bigi Bus Lines: Route No. 1, Bridgeville," Sept. 4, 1946, 5, IMBC; August Bamford, 17 Pa. P.U.C. 354 (1937); quote is from Merlo, "Shafer Coach Lines: Aliquippa-Pittsburgh Route," Jan. 16, 1947, 1-5, IMBC.

⁴⁴ Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, "In the Matter of the Application of Oriole Motor Coach Lines"; Phillip Robinson et al., *Mass Transportation Study of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County*, vol. 1 ([Pittsburgh], 1949), 24.

Railways no longer enjoyed unconditional regulatory protection of its monopoly on mass transit in Pittsburgh and its surrounding communities.

Railways management consistently opposed the new independent bus grants before the state regulators. In vain, PRCO leaders maintained that the best transit service was a monopoly streetcar operation with buses as an elite auxiliary, because trolleys were the most efficient crowd haulers. Forcing the trolleys to compete with either PRCO's own buses or independently owned coaches, PRCO leaders said, was bad policy because it eroded the revenues and efficiency of a single transit system.⁴⁵

As state regulators allowed the independents to drive into PRCO territory, they offered several reasons for the policy change. One was public demand for buses or for shorter, more frequent, nontransfer rides to center city. It was no longer reasonable, the PUC argued in 1937, to expect suburbanites to watch independent buses roll by while waiting for a PRCO trolley or bus. Indeed, the bus companies often garnered support among the riding public. In November 1940, PRCO management complained to its employees on West End routes that nearby Shafer Coach Lines had marshaled "over a hundred witnesses" to support Shafer's application for competitive service; these same witnesses testified to the Public Utility Commission about "inadequate and irregular" PRCO service.⁴⁶ In 1932, the Public Service Commission had denied Oriole Motor Coach the right to compete with PRCO in Ingram, but in 1937 the PUC reversed this, denying PRCO the chance to start a feeder bus line in the same territory. Here, the PUC declared that members of the local population, which had grown in the interim, were uninterested in transferring from a feeder bus to a trolley. By 1940, the PUC expressed doubts about trolleys altogether, noting that buses seemed to be replacing streetcars everywhere else in the United States.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ "Ruling Is Due on Five-Cent Bus Fare Plea," *Pittsburgh Press*, June 12, 1932; "Plea for Bus Line Opposed," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Feb. 10, 1933; "Trolley Firm Facing Crisis, Says Manager," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Feb. 16, 1933; "Munhall Bus Line Asks Route Change," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, June 29, 1934; "Bus Line Wins Fight for Baldwin Route," *Pittsburgh Press*, May 18, 1935; "Brentwood Bus Victory Fought in High Court," *Pittsburgh Press*, Aug. 18, 1936.

⁴⁶ Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, "In re: Applications of Brentwood Motor Coach Company"; J. S. Buzzard, memo, "Operation on Route 26—West Park," Nov. 4, 1940, PRCC.

⁴⁷ Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, "In the Matter of the Application of Oriole Motor Coach Lines; Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, "Order, In re: Application of W. D. George and Thomas Benner, Trustees of Pittsburgh Railways Company, Debtor, and of Pittsburgh Motor Coach Company, Subsidiary—For Approval of the Plan of Reorganization of the Pittsburgh Railways Company System as Filed in the District Court of the United States for the Western District of Pennsylvania" (docket 59706, Nov. 27, 1940), 4, PRCC.

Moreover, the Democratic PUC was getting tough toward Pennsylvania's large corporate utilities and explicitly favored small, family-run bus lines in Allegheny County.⁴⁸ In 1937, the PUC pointed out that Pittsburgh Railways and its subsidiary bus line had only promised better service along Saw Mill Run Boulevard when Brentwood Motor Coach applied to compete there. "Utility regulation must protect the public against arrogant disregard of its convenience," the commission declared, "and also must protect the vigilant and progressive utility from public oppression." By implication, the trolley company and its limited bus adjunct were the "arrogant" problem, and so Brentwood, the "progressive utility," should not have been hampered by public policy. In several subsequent rulings, the PUC referred to this decision as a precedent.⁴⁹

The independents became an additional liability to Pittsburgh Railways in local politics. Beginning in 1933, New Deal Democrats entering city and county government attacked Pittsburgh Railways as an ungovernable, unfair monopoly committed to outmoded streetcars. These new leaders rejected PRCo's policy of using buses primarily as a separate, elite transit system, with a twenty-five-cent fare. Pittsburgh city officials, who increasingly favored motor buses, derided PRCo management's insistence that trolleys were the best mass transit vehicle for Pittsburghers. The city council hired an independent expert who in 1935 declared that buses were the future of mass transit and that PRCo was misguided to cling to trolleys. By World War II, the city's Democratic leadership called for PRCo to begin converting trolley lines to bus lines.⁵⁰ Pittsburgh Railways' leadership, however, continued to invest in electric streetcars, and they remained the core of PRCo's system.

The independent suburban buses became rhetorical weapons in the city's fight against PRCo. Most of the independents charged higher fares than streetcars but, until 1937, lower fares than PRCo's bus subsidiary,

⁴⁸ See for example: "Light Rates Cut \$1,250,000," *Pittsburgh Press*, July 27, 1937.

⁴⁹ Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, "In re: Applications of Brentwood Motor Coach Company"; Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, "In the Matter of the Application of Oriole Motor Coach Lines."

⁵⁰ "City Traction Pact Hinges on Joint Meeting," *Pittsburgh Press*, Mar. 21, 1934. The city's hired expert was John Bauer, who had been a champion expert for city administrations elsewhere battling utility corporations. John Bauer and Alfred Shaw, *Report on the Conditions and Requirements of Modern Mass Transportation in the Pittsburgh District* (Pittsburgh, 1935). The City of Pittsburgh continued to have a generally antitrolley attitude into the 1950s. See Anne Alpern, "Brief on Behalf of the City of Pittsburgh, Complainant before the Pennsylvania Public Utilities Commission," [1952], box 1, folder 2, Anne X. Alpern Papers, 1918–1974 (AIS.2002.01), Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh.

Pittsburgh Motor Coach. Even in the well-to-do South Hills, the independents typically charged twenty cents cash, with possibly lower fares (fifteen cents) via tickets or tokens. A few bus lines in the Mon Valley ran at or around streetcar fares. In early 1937, PRCo caved to political pressure and dropped bus fares to ten cents via tickets. This prompted price drops among the more expensive suburban lines, making all bus fares closer to streetcar tokens and heating up competition still further.⁵¹ But by then, PRCo policies had helped make heroes of the independents among many Pittsburghers. In 1934, the *Pittsburgh Press* commended the Supans' Oriole Motor Coach for offering a fifteen-cent fare, suburban commuter service to downtown Pittsburgh, and a 2 percent dividend to its employee-investors. In 1936, city council pointedly endorsed Brentwood Motor Coach's request to state regulators to compete with the trolleys. This was despite the advice of the city's pro-bus expert consultant, who believed monopoly operation of mass transit was required for efficiency.⁵² Although they ran a few carefully chosen routes and often charged higher fares than streetcars, the independent bus companies represented to public officials (and riders) beneficial competition with the corporate transit utility.

Many of the independents thrived during the 1930s. In 1931, five buses belonging to the Bamfords provided 114,500 rides. A decade later, the Bamfords' twenty-five buses carried over 2 million riders in a single year. In 1935, Ezio Bigi's seven buses hauled 64,609 passengers. Bigi died in

⁵¹ Memo, "James J. Dawson. A. 20528. Folder No. 5," Oct. 29, 1937, PRCC; Miller and Foley, "Homestead and Duquesne," 17–20; Miller and Foley, "Braddock and East Pittsburgh," 4; "Stay Granted Bus Company on Fare Slash," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Nov. 24, 1934; "Bus Firm Offers 15-Cent Fare," *Pittsburgh Press*, Nov. 9, 1936. IMBC contains early schedules and fare information for some companies: Brentwood Motor Coach, "Route between Curry—Pittsburgh and Brentwood—Pittsburgh," Jan. 18, 1937, and "Library—South Park and Baptist Rd. to Pittsburgh," Sept. 26, 1938; Oriole Motor Coach, "Ingram, Ingram Ave, W. Prospect Ave, West End and Pittsburgh," Mar. 6, 1938. This can be compared to PMCo's rates in "Pittsburgh by Trolley and Bus," PRCo Timetable, June 1937, PRCC; "Fares Reduced, Firms Report Business Gains," *Pittsburgh Press*, Feb. 7, 1937; "Two Bus Lines Offer Slashes," *Pittsburgh Press*, Feb. 9, 1937; "Bamford Line Cuts Fares 25 Per Cent," *Pittsburgh Press*, Feb. 12, 1937.

PRCo's decision to reduce fares on its own buses made them competitive with PRCo's streetcars. Thereafter, PRCo management likely maintained these duplicate routes out of fear that state regulators would grant more competition to the independents by allowing them to replace PRCo buses if PRCo ceased serving those routes. Robinson et al., *Mass Transportation Study*, 1:24.

⁵² "15-Cent Fare Bus Company to Pay 2 Percent Dividend," *Pittsburgh Press*, Aug. 14, 1934; "Intolerable Bus Service," *Pittsburgh Press*, July 6, 1936; Anne Alpern to Pittsburgh City Council, Aug. 28, 1936, *Municipal Record* 70 (1936): 495–96; Resolution No. 153, Index, 408–9, and Resolution 168, Index, 414, *Municipal Record* 70 (1936); "City Advised to Make New Railway Pact," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Jan. 16, 1936; Bauer and Shaw, *Conditions and Requirements of Modern Mass Transportation*, 104–5.

1937, leaving his business to his wife, and in 1939 her thirteen buses carried 198,696 passengers. Brentwood Motor Coach's ridership more than doubled during 1937, to over 1.6 million fares collected that year. Begun in 1937, the Shafers' bus operations to the west of Pittsburgh hauled 895,525 passengers on fourteen buses in 1939.⁵³

This growth did not come simply at the expense of Pittsburgh Railways Company. The families running these buses worked hard to build their businesses, whether through suburban boom or Great Depression, and they often drove the buses they owned. They capitalized not only on changes in state regulation but also on road building by taxpayers. In the 1930s, for example, Brentwood, Bigi, and other prosperous independents reached downtown via the new Liberty Bridge and Tunnels, completed in 1928.⁵⁴

However, the independent bus firms clearly benefitted under the new regulatory mood, and Pittsburgh Railways felt the competition. Between 1929 and 1941, PRCo service cuts and some bus replacements took 186 streetcars out of the downtown evening rush hour. During the same period, 142 independent motor buses joined the rush-hour jam, twice the number of buses operated by PRCo's bus subsidiary. By 1939, the independents together hauled an estimated 13 million riders in and out of downtown Pittsburgh—a small sum compared to the trolleys' 145 million. But for PRCo, in desperate financial condition and measuring ridership growth in single-digit percentages, small losses mattered.⁵⁵ Official PRCo orders to “trainmen” in January and July 1938 read like military communiqués of a losing army; Carson street trolleys were “now flanked on each side by competing bus lines,” which threatened revenues, trolley service, and jobs. Motormen must “do everything in their power to make the street car service more attractive than that of our competitors.”⁵⁶ In 1948, a ridership

⁵³ M. L. Merlo, “Bamford Brothers Motor Coach Lines: Operation Data,” Apr. 17, 1946, 4; Merlo, “Bigi Bus Lines: Operation Data,” Oct. 15, 1946, 2; Merlo, “Brentwood Motor Coach Company: Operation Data,” Apr. 12, 1946, 5; and Merlo, “Shafer Coach Lines: Operation Data,” Dec. 30, 1946, 3, all in IMBC.

⁵⁴ “How Allegheny County Spent \$40,114,800 on Public Improvements in Four Years,” *Pittsburgh Press*, Apr. 3, 1928; “Brown Tells of Progress on Projects,” *Pittsburgh Press*, Jan. 4, 1929; John Baumann and Edward Muller, *Before Renaissance: Planning in Pittsburgh, 1889–1943* (Pittsburgh, 2006), 213–15, 233–35.

⁵⁵ W. S. Menden, *Report on Pittsburgh Mass Transportation* ([Pittsburgh], 1941), 15–16, 30–31, photocopy in PRCC.

⁵⁶ J. S. Buzzard, memos, “Removal of Restrictions on Bamford Brothers, Pittsburgh-Munhall Bus Route,” Jan. 8, 1938, and “New Bus Route to Operate between Aliquippa and Downtown Pittsburgh via Neville Island and McKees Rocks in Direct Competition with Street Car Service Now Furnished in this Area,” July 28, 1938, PRCC.

survey revealed that the buses did brisk business in parts of PRCo territory. Where they could, 28 percent of riders chose Brentwood's buses, nearly 49 percent chose Oriole's buses, over 46 percent boarded Shafer's, and over 62 percent rode Bamford's buses instead of boarding PRCo trolleys or buses offering the same respective trips.⁵⁷

During World War II, the trolley and bus companies together profited by restrictions on individual automobile driving as well as wage and price controls. Between 1939 and 1944, when both PRCo and the bus companies enjoyed tremendous ridership, the buses gained a greater percentage of the county's total transit riders, from 12 to 19 percent. In 1944, 142 independent bus routes carried 74 million riders, about half of whom rode routes to and from downtown Pittsburgh.⁵⁸

However, the new opportunities did not mean runaway success for all bus operators. While some independents expanded their routes and competed with Pittsburgh Railways, others remained small lines that did not extend to downtown Pittsburgh. Those with competitive routes were not necessarily so profitable, either. In 1937, James Dawson received rights to compete with PRCo trolleys on a route in the Braddock-Wilmerding area. But Dawson could not make the route pay, and in early 1946, he ran only a single, hourly bus, which did not capture much trolley ridership.⁵⁹ Dawson's mixed fortunes foreshadowed the plight of many of the operators in the postwar era.

With the return of Republican domination in Pennsylvania state government in the 1940s, regulatory attitudes shifted back toward protecting what remained of Pittsburgh Railways' exclusive territorial rights, although the independents kept their newly won regulatory gains. In April 1940, Pittsburgh Railways was joined by their operator's union, Division 85 of the Amalgamated Association of Street Electric Railways and Motor Coach Employees, in protesting yet another grant of competitive rights to Bamford Brothers. The Bamfords won again, but since PRCo had entered bankruptcy in May 1938, one PUC commissioner expressed misgivings about granting further competitive bus rights that further undermined the

⁵⁷ Robinson et al., *Mass Transportation Study*, 1:102.

⁵⁸ *Report of the Allegheny County Mass Transit Study Committee*, 54; Subcommittee on Mass Transit of the Committee on Public Improvements, Allegheny Conference on Community Development, *Mass Transit Report No. 1* ([Pittsburgh], 1947), 10, 25–26, in PRCC.

⁵⁹ "James J. Dawson. A. 20528. Folder No. 5," Oct. 29, 1937; M. L. Merlo, "James J. Dawson: Braddock-East Pittsburgh Route," Oct. 22, 1946, IMBC.

financial future of the core transit supplier. By 1941, the PUC declared that it would rather see a restoration of PRCo's monopoly.⁶⁰

Postwar Problem: Disintegrated Mass Transit

In the late 1940s and 1950s, Allegheny County mass transit's decline was an ongoing problem for Pittsburgh's urban renewal program. The area's transit companies experienced rising costs and declining ridership. Local public officials interested in urban renewal—revitalizing and preserving the values of the core areas of Pittsburgh—came to see uncoordinated, competitive mass transit as inefficient and unattractive. So when Port Authority was given the task of salvaging the area's transit service in the early 1960s, its first big job was to unite the trolley and bus companies into a single system. Monopoly mass transportation returned to Pittsburgh as a local public agency, not regulated by the state.

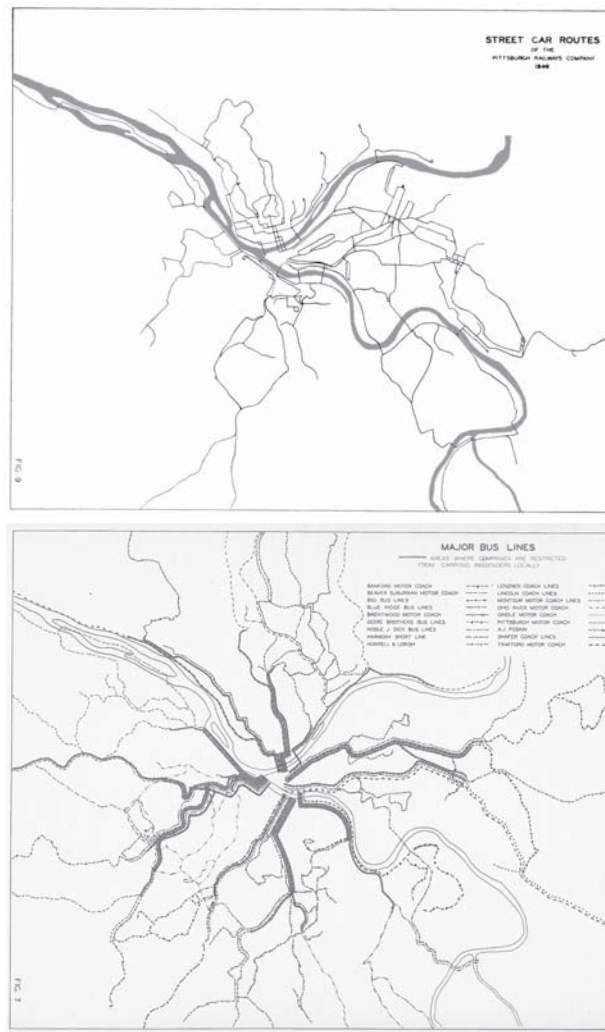
As with transit lines elsewhere in the United States, Allegheny County's transit companies suffered in competition with private automobiles that were supported by public investment in roads and widespread suburbanization. Construction of highways—such as the Parkways East and West, completed in 1960—gave motorists (somewhat misplaced) confidence in greater automobile access around the region. The city of Pittsburgh and the older industrial towns lost residents after 1950, but population grew within the rest of the county, in rapidly developing suburbs.⁶¹ Overall, the transit lines lost patronage. On its trolleys and buses, Pittsburgh Railways sold 290 million rides in 1947, but only about 76 million rides in 1960, an astonishing 73.8 percent loss. The bus companies carried around 32 million passengers in 1960, down from over 39 million in 1955. Meanwhile, between 1947 and 1960, passenger automobile registrations more than doubled.⁶² Transit ridership predictably remained strongest on routes in the older, more densely settled sections of the county. In 1949, for example,

⁶⁰ August Bamford, 21 Pa. P.U.C. 75 (1940), photocopy in IMBC; "The Plight of Mr. Driscoll," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Mar. 5, 1940; "Mr. Driscoll's Choice," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Mar. 7, 1940; W. D. George and Thomas Benner, 23 Pa. P.U.C. 69 (1941), photocopy in State Regulation Collection, Miller Memorial Library, Pennsylvania Trolley Museum.

⁶¹ Mershon, "Corporate Social Responsibility and Urban Revitalization," 553–55. For an overview of the parkways (and other highways), see Jeffrey J. Kitsko, "Pittsburgh Expressway System," Pennsylvania Highways, last updated Dec. 20, 2012, <http://pittsburgh.pahighways.com/expressways/>.

⁶² Coverdale and Colpitts, *Report to the Port Authority of Allegheny County on an Integrated System of Mass Transportation for Allegheny County* (New York, 1961), 1:27.

These 1949 maps illustrate the dis-integration of Pittsburgh transit by mid-twentieth century. The first shows Pittsburgh Railways' extensive street-car network. The second shows motor bus routes in the area, divided by company, and including PRCo subsidiary Pittsburgh Motor Coach. Shaded areas show where state regulation still prevented some bus routes from competing, either with PRCo or with each other. But even where they did not compete, these transit routes ran uncoordinated, disconnected, and duplicate service. Adapted from Phillip Robinson et al., *Mass Transportation Study of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County* (1949). Used with the permission of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development and Affiliates.



two-thirds of people entering the downtown triangle arrived via streetcar or bus.⁶³ But fare increases and service cuts, survival measures by transit companies, also probably hurt ridership.

After the war, the area developed one of the nation's pioneering urban renewal efforts. Local business elites and elected officials formed the Allegheny Conference on Community Development (ACCD), a networking association, research organization, public policy consultancy, and clearinghouse for information on the state of the region. The ACCD informed, oversaw, and guided a series of public infrastructure initiatives since known as the "Pittsburgh Renaissance." This included downtown developments such as Point State Park, the Civic Arena, and new parking facilities. Although preserving the value of the urban core was a major Renaissance priority, through the ACCD local leaders worked with state officials to build much new highway infrastructure, which encouraged suburbanization and automobile use. Renaissance leaders fretted over mass transit's declining ridership, particularly because transit was so vital to the continued value of older, core areas of the city, including the central business district.⁶⁴ But building a political coalition around transit revival was much more difficult.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Pittsburgh Renaissance leaders commissioned several expert studies that criticized fragmented transit management. Pittsburgh Railways' declining ridership in the older regions of Pittsburgh was obviously cause for concern. While the bus companies carried fewer riders than PRCo, they were based in the suburbs, the fastest-growing neighborhoods of the Pittsburgh area. The various expert consultants, and eventually Renaissance leadership, concluded that the county's transit needed to be combined under a single management, reviving the public policy view that competitive and uncoordinated mass transit was bad for the community.⁶⁵ In 1947, an ACCD transit subcommittee (that included a PRCo officer) proposed a new planning agency in county government that could perhaps "supplement the work of the PUC" and better coordinate the local transit routes.⁶⁶

⁶³ Robinson et al., *Mass Transportation Study*, 1:17.

⁶⁴ Mershon, "Corporate Social Responsibility and Urban Revitalization," 552–53; Robinson et al., *Mass Transportation Study*, 1:18; *Report of the Allegheny County Mass Transit Study Committee*, 59.

⁶⁵ Mershon, "Corporate Social Responsibility and Urban Revitalization," 572–80. In addition to the studies specifically cited below, see Robinson et al., *Mass Transportation Study*, 1:23–25.

⁶⁶ Subcommittee on Mass Transit, *Mass Transit Report No. 1*, 26.



The Brentwood Motor Coach garage during the 1940s. Used with the permission of the Miller Memorial Library, Pennsylvania Trolley Museum.

In 1953, a Mass Transit Study Committee convened by Allegheny County's government summed up the prospects for unifying the county's transit routes. Unification would mean higher costs, bringing all employee wage and benefit scales to the level of the highest (those of Pittsburgh Railways). But a single management, the committee urged, would allow standardization of equipment (buses), and associated economies in procurement, maintenance, and administration. Routes, schedules, and fare incentives could be coordinated into a single set, which separate private operators never attempted. Rerouting would also eliminate "uneconomic competition" and duplication between trolleys and buses. A publicly owned authority could bring particular benefits (such as tax relief). A *coordinated* transit system under a public authority, the 1953 report concluded, would be easier and more attractive to ride and could potentially restore ridership. By implication, the powers granted to a transit authority would release most aspects of Allegheny County transit from state regulation.⁶⁷

The prospect of transit unification under a single company or a public agency seemed politically remote in the early 1950s. Historian Sherie

⁶⁷ *Report of the Allegheny County Mass Transit Study Committee*, v–viii, 55–58.

Mershon points out that some suburbanites opposed having their local independent bus line combined with a countywide system, fearing transit consolidation was somehow a step toward municipal consolidation. Moreover, many residents—including some ACCD and political leaders—were reticent to consider public ownership of mass transit, viewing the possibility as “a manifestly socialistic step that would discomfort many business people.” In 1937, county voters had defeated an initiative for a transit authority. The local bus leaders themselves formed the “Independent Bus Operators Association,” a lobby credited by newspapers with stalling authority-takeover legislation in the state assembly in 1955. The ACCD publicly endorsed unification of the area’s mass transit lines, but both the ACCD and local public officials shied away from strongly promoting a public transit agency until the late 1950s. Without sufficient political drive, the issue stalled until a two-month-long Pittsburgh Railways labor strike highlighted years of transit service deterioration, ridership decline, and public neglect.⁶⁸

In October 1959, local leaders secured from the state General Assembly the ability to acquire, consolidate, and operate transit through the Port Authority of Allegheny County. The independent bus owners’ effort to obstruct this move ostensibly suggests that they simply resisted a government takeover of their property and businesses. Some owners opposed the 1959 Port Authority Act. “I am grieved to no end by having to lay down a life’s work, which I and my family have enjoyed so much,” William Shafer wrote to the Port Authority in late 1963. The Shafers’ enterprise was reasonably profitable and had, relative to other companies, a young bus fleet. They lobbied against the 1959 legislation.⁶⁹

Profitable or not, it must have been difficult for other owners and managers to part with the product of their hard work. Among those who sold to Port Authority were owners who had been present in the earliest days of their firms. In 1963, Mary Bigi, wife of Ezio, was listed both as office secretary and “Founder.” Byrum McCoy, August Bamford, and Leonardo Burelli sold their bus lines to Port Authority; Gust Saihos passed away only weeks before. By midcentury, women held positions of responsibility

⁶⁸ Mershon, “Corporate Social Responsibility and Urban Revitalization,” 576–93. “Transit ‘Takeover’ Bill Set Up,” *Pittsburgh Press*, Apr. 6, 1959; “Transit Bill Meets Stiff Opposition,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Apr. 7, 1959.

⁶⁹ William Shafer to Harley Swift, Dec. 17, 1963, IMBC; Coverdale and Colpitts, *Report to the Port Authority*, 1:43; “Private Bus Company Owner, Housing Developer in Moon” (obituary), *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Oct. 12, 2003.

at several bus companies, handling the firms' finances and (as in the case of Sara Shafer) sometimes more. In the process of acquiring their lines, Port Authority leaders dealt with Sara DeBolt, general manager of the DeBolt family's bus line, and Minnie Markitell, president of Trafford Coach Lines.⁷⁰

The absence of persistent, ideologically charged protest from the bus companies, however, belied strong, common resolve to continue entrepreneurial transit. As early as 1953 the Mass Transit Study Committee reported that "the owners of three of the independent operations having routes into the downtown district have indicated that they are willing to sell their properties, if they can get out whole." Others probably wanted to sell, the committee speculated, "but will attempt to drive a harder bargain."⁷¹ In 1959 the Harrisburg representative of the Independent Bus Operators Association insisted that the bus owners were not desperate for a buyout and were "making money." On the other hand, he added that they opposed the latest transit-takeover bill "in its present form" and merely sought more favorable terms for negotiating the purchase of their lines.⁷² After negotiating with each, in 1964 and 1965 Port Authority rapidly acquired the bus companies from their owners. As predicted, the public agency brought all driver compensation to the level of Pittsburgh Railways' unionized operators, which often meant substantial pay raises for bus drivers.⁷³

Many owners might have been resigned to the takeover because the business had lately been difficult. In the 1950s, bus firms appeared and disappeared as before, with many new bus lines also remaining small-time operations. Some companies, particularly the bigger South Hills commuter lines, prospered or at least held their own, often with relatively higher fares. Many other bus operators struggled, and overall the trade was marginal at best. Independent companies running buses into downtown Pittsburgh aggregated a net deficit between 1949 and 1951. Many of the bus lines

⁷⁰ Mary Bigi, Byrum McCoy, and Sara DeBolt were identified on an untitled handwritten chart showing office and management staff of the bus companies that was part of the documentation for Port Authority's takeover. DeBolt and Markitell signed correspondence with Port Authority leadership in 1963 and 1964. In several firms, women (such as Jane Lampe at Oriole) handled bookkeeping. All in IMBC. Miller and Foley, "Braddock and East Pittsburgh Local Lines," 14; see below for Burelli and Bamford.

⁷¹ *Report of the Allegheny County Mass Transit Study Committee*, 55.

⁷² "Transit 'Takeover' Bill Set Up"; "Transit Bill Meets Stiff Opposition"; "Bus Operators Throw Sand in Gears Again," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Apr. 8, 1959.

⁷³ Port Authority, *First Annual Report*, 2-3; *Report of the Allegheny County Mass Transit Study Committee*, 56.

had always relied on secondhand or older buses, and in the 1950s many remained in the black by deferring bus replacements. At the end of 1951, around 30 percent of the independent buses running in and out of downtown were over eight years old, “an age generally accepted as representing the useful life of a bus.”⁷⁴ By 1959, around half of the county’s independent buses were over eight years old. Just before Port Authority took over the bus companies, one of the larger regional firms, Harmony Short Line, went out of business, abandoning its multicounty route system.⁷⁵ Consultants in 1961 suggested that acquiring Pittsburgh Railways and the various bus companies was urgent because their collective performance over the previous half decade “show[ed] many instances of deficit operation or of very meager earnings.”⁷⁶ That a few lines might have been able to turn a profit, attract riders, and maintain fleets of adequate buses did not offset Renaissance leaders’ concern that collectively, Allegheny County’s mass transit system was deteriorating.

After the war, bus companies acquired problems long familiar to Pittsburgh Railways. City councilmen forgot about their previous endorsement of the independents and carped that the buses congested traffic as they dropped off and took on passengers at downtown curbs.⁷⁷ Bus companies that had grown on family and other low-cost labor during the Depression now faced labor unrest as their larger workforces demanded wages commensurate with postwar standards of living.⁷⁸ Reacting to higher operating costs, the bus companies periodically raised fares or trimmed

⁷⁴ *Report of the Allegheny County Mass Transit Study Committee*, 11, 21–26; Miller and Foley, “McKeesport Local Lines,” 4, 28. Transit consultant and former PRCo executive Milton Cooke pointed out in 1951 that among the bus companies running downtown service, two very lucrative firms earned most of the recorded combined profit. Robinson et al., *Mass Transportation Study*, ed. Cooke, 2:82.

⁷⁵ Coverdale and Colpitts, *Report to the Port Authority*, 1:50–51, 61; “Harmony Short Line,” Antique Motor Coach Association of Pennsylvania, updated Nov. 8, 2006, <http://www.amcap.org/history/alleghenycounty/harmony.shtml>.

⁷⁶ Coverdale and Colpitts, *Report to the Port Authority*, 1:50.

⁷⁷ “New Bus Line Terminal Building Urged at Wabash Site,” *Pittsburgh Press*, Jan. 4, 1948; “Bus Firms Facing Fines after Week,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Feb. 24, 1948; “Only Way to Get Action,” *Pittsburgh Press*, Feb. 26, 1948; “Bus Line Agrees to Rent Space in Wabash Terminal,” *Pittsburgh Press*, Feb. 29, 1948; “Traffic-Jamming Buses Get Another Reprieve in Dispute with City,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Mar. 2, 1948; “Bus Terminal Plan Dropped in Downtown,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, May 18, 1948; “Oriole Told to Stop Wild Dash for Buses,” *Pittsburgh Press*, Jan. 21, 1951.

⁷⁸ “Oriole Accuses Bus Union of Trying to Ruin Firm,” *Pittsburgh Press*, July 3, 1950; “Bus Strikers Plugging for \$1.50 Wage,” *Pittsburgh Press*, May 20, 1950; “Oriole Bus Grants 9-Cent Package,” *Pittsburgh Press*, May 9, 1954; “Bus Union to Vote on Ending Strike,” *Pittsburgh Press*, Aug. 22, 1956; “Oriole Buses Halted by Walkout,” *Pittsburgh Press*, May 1, 1956; “Bus Strikers Fired by McCoy,” *Pittsburgh Press*, May 29, 1957; “Debolt Strike Ends with 34-Cent Pact,” *Pittsburgh Press*, May 22, 1958; “The Buses Must Run,” *Pittsburgh Press*, Aug. 12, 1960.



Burelli Transit Service Inc.'s office and garage in March 1964. Used with the permission of the Miller Memorial Library, Pennsylvania Trolley Museum.

their service.⁷⁹ If ridership and revenues were not steadily increasing, perhaps it was time to get out.

Bus firms in the river valley industrial communities—often lean outfits, with fares close to those of trolleys—found it particularly tough going after World War II. “They have been raised with this business,” old Leonardo Burelli said of his sons, who drove his buses, “and it has been a hard one under severe conditions due to the available finances of this company.” In late 1963, he promised that his boys “would do an excellent job for the Port Authority of Allegheny County in whatever they are required to do.”⁸⁰ A Port Authority agent visited McCoy’s garage in April 1962 and described

⁷⁹ “Bamford Wins on Whitaker Fares,” *Pittsburgh Press*, Mar. 6, 1948; “Bamford Bus Line Inquiry Ordered,” *Pittsburgh Press*, Aug. 12, 1948; “Oriole Bus Asks Fare Increase,” *Pittsburgh Press*, Nov. 26, 1951; “Harmony Bus Fare Increased,” *Pittsburgh Press*, Jan. 27, 1953; “New Bus Fare in Brentwood,” *Pittsburgh Press*, Aug. 8, 1954; “Bus Firm Seeks to Raise Fares,” *Pittsburgh Press*, Mar. 21, 1954; “Duquesne Bus Fare to Rise,” *Pittsburgh Press*, Dec. 14, 1954; “Two Firms Win Bus Fare Increase,” *Pittsburgh Press*, Aug. 7, 1956; “Two Bus Firms to Raise Fares,” *Pittsburgh Press*, Jan. 6, 1958; “Bus Firm Asks Fare Raise,” *Pittsburgh Press*, Oct. 1, 1960; “Mt. Lebanon Protests Bus Service Cuts,” *Pittsburgh Press*, Sept. 9, 1947.

⁸⁰ Leonardo Burelli to Harley L. Swift, Dec. 20, 1963, IMBC.

the firm as “old-time rough, ready, round-the-clock, sleep on a cot on premises operators.” Operating out of old and “rickety” buildings, with few on-hand spare parts, the agent reported, the McCoy men realized “that the take-over by the Port Authority is almost inevitable and are reconciled.” Between 1955 and 1960, the McCoys had lost over half their ridership. Even the seemingly prosperous Shafer line, running up the Ohio Valley, had begun suffering slow but steady patronage loss in the final years.⁸¹

The postwar plight of the Bamford line dramatically illustrated the situation. Since the 1930s August Bamford and his family competed with PRCo’s trolleys between the Mon Valley and downtown Pittsburgh, but after World War II, their firm fell on hard times. It had been a stalwart of cheap, frequent bus service, with fares that hovered around or just above streetcar rate. Many of the working people of the valley rode Bamfords’ buses, but expenses caught up with the company after the war. Pittsburgh and state officials decried the unreliability of the Bamford lines, and state police condemned the Bamford fleet, largely bought used, as unsafe. Service was stopped by repeated disputes between management and drivers, including a two-month-long walkout in early 1949. In that year, August Bamford sold his downtown bus routes, as well as some buses, in order to keep the remainder. Thereafter, while he maintained high ridership on his remaining lines, Bamford did so only through minimal maintenance of his equipment.⁸² When in 1963 Port Authority inquired about any Bamford office staff who might join Port Authority’s ranks, old August Bamford explained: “We don’t have any supervisory employees. Edwin and I do everything are selfs [*sic*] and I am going to retire, so that just leaves Ed.”⁸³ The Bamford story highlights many of the problems that, to varying degrees, afflicted the independent bus firms and likely encouraged their acquiescence in Port Authority’s takeover.

⁸¹ Memo, “McCoy Bros. Bus Lines; Wm. Penn Motor Coach,” Apr. 5, 1962, IMBC; Coverdale and Colpitts, *Report to the Port Authority*, 1:43.

⁸² “Bamford Motor Coach Lines,” Antique Motor Coach Association of Pennsylvania, updated June 13, 2008, <http://www.amcap.org/history/pgghistory/bamford.shtml>; Miller and Foley, “Homestead and Duquesne Lines,” 17–20; “Bamford Bus Line Inquiry Ordered,” *Pittsburgh Press*, Aug. 12, 1948; “Bamford Bus Strike End Not in Sight,” *Pittsburgh Press*, Sept. 27, 1948; “Bamford Buses Called Unsafe,” *Pittsburgh Press*, Dec. 2, 1948; “Buses Not New, Official Admits,” *Pittsburgh Press*, Dec. 28, 1948; “Bamford Buses Start Tomorrow,” *Pittsburgh Press*, Mar. 10, 1949; “Bamford Bus Feud Settled Out of Court,” *Pittsburgh Press*, Apr. 28, 1949.

⁸³ August Bamford to Harley Swift, Dec. 23, 1963, IMBC.

One System, Local Authority

Public ownership of mass transit by Port Authority in 1964 was in large part an effort to salvage transit service by creating a regional system instead of the hodgepodge of routes fostered by unstable state regulation. Earlier, diverse regulatory policy represented not only different responses to the Pittsburgh Railways' chronic financial misery but also bigger political disputes over the economy of utility services. Because of state (and national) politics, Pennsylvania regulation of mass transit was not simply a constriction or benefit of privately owned transit firms but instead a shifting, inconsistent, and somewhat haphazard set of policies that variously favored one form of private enterprise over another. The county's mass transit could ill afford such additional complications while facing formidable competition from automobiles. Indeed, integrating all the bus and trolley lines did not radically transform transit's fortunes in Pittsburgh after 1964. Port Authority has suffered its own business woes since. But the pre-Port Authority bus business highlights the regulatory dilemma between centralizing efficiency under elite management versus promoting the rights and opportunities of entrepreneurs.

Canisius College

MARK GALLIMORE

Idealizing an Organic Landscape: J. I. Rodale, the Rodale Press, and the Pennsylvania Countryside

THE COVER OF THE *NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE* on June 6, 1971, featured a photo of a seventy-two-year-old man in a dark suit and tie walking along the edge of the rich red-brown soils of a freshly plowed Pennsylvania farm field. Chronicling the growing popularity of organic food, the article's author described this gray-haired man with a bushy beard and dark glasses as the "guru" of a movement to transform the production and consumption of food in the United States. However, this organic "prophet" cut a peculiar figure against the pastoral Pennsylvania landscape. Neither a farmer nor a scientist, he was a layman who had operated a manufacturing firm while also devoting his energy to convincing Americans that their health was bound to the soil and the quality of the food it produced. A publisher who had made millions on his contentious health claims, he had rarely worked with his own hands in the fertile soils that surrounded him.¹

The man on the cover was Jerome Irving (J. I.) Rodale, a writer and publisher who by the early 1970s had been promoting natural health and organic farming for close to thirty years. In turn, his publishing company, the Rodale Press—publishers of *Organic Gardening and Farming* and *Prevention* magazines and a slew of books and pamphlets devoted to gardening and health—helped make "organic food" and "natural health" household terms in the postwar United States. Also synonymous with the Rodale name would be Emmaus, the small town in southeastern Pennsylvania

This article draws from research for the author's dissertation, "Looking for Organic America: J. I. Rodale, the Rodale Press, and the Popular Culture of Environmentalism." The author would like to thank the Rodale family and Mark Kintzel for their assistance with this research, as well as Doug Kiel, Libby Tronnes, Jennifer Holland, Megan Raby, Charles Hughes, and Crystal Moten for their helpful feedback on an early draft of this article. Thank you also to the two anonymous reviewers and the editorial staff of *PMHB*.

¹Wade Greene, "Guru of the Organic Food Cult," *New York Times Magazine*, June 6, 1971.

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that the company called home. Surrounded by fields and farms, Emmaus was part of the rural fringe of Allentown when it became Rodale's adopted home in the 1930s. The area's agricultural landscape provided Rodale with more than just a place for attractive photo opportunities, however; it also lent the company a piece of Pennsylvania's well-known agricultural history. By attaching his organic ideas to Emmaus and the Pennsylvania countryside, Rodale was able to make his controversial claims in a most uncontroversial place.

That J. I. Rodale attached his ideas about organic farming to a small town in southeastern Pennsylvania should come as no surprise. The area's fields, farms, and small towns form the commonwealth's, if not the nation's, most iconic agricultural landscapes. Settled by German immigrants just beyond the outer reaches of Philadelphia in the late seventeenth century, the region inscribes a rough arc from Allentown to the north and Lancaster to the south and west, with the lower lip of the Appalachian ridge creating a border to the north. This area, often colloquially referred to as "Pennsylvania Dutch Country," claimed some of the most fertile and productive farmlands in the early United States.² In contrast to New England, where farmers started abandoning rocky, thin soils and harsh winters in the nineteenth century, farmers of southeastern Pennsylvania kept their land productive well into the twentieth century, even as mining and manufacturing transformed nearby towns and cities. With its old stone farmhouses, winding roads, covered bridges, and big barns decorated with hex signs, scholars and the public alike have celebrated and worked to preserve the region's pastoral quality for the better part of a century.

Indeed, few regions of America have so neatly defined the ideal of an agrarian "middle" landscape as southeastern Pennsylvania. The vision of a productive ground lying between the city and wilderness has deep cultural antecedents and was bound up in democratic agrarian ideals in the United States.³ Like a sturdily built barn on a hillside, the image of a landscape composed of small farms often provided an anchor in a rapidly changing

² Michael P. Conzen, "Ethnicity on the Land," in *The Making of the American Landscape*, ed. Michael P. Conzen (New York, 1990), 224–26. For an introduction to the historical geography of the region, see James Lemon, *The Best Poor Man's Country: A Geographical Study of Early Southeastern Pennsylvania* (Baltimore, 1972); see also Joseph W. Glass, *The Pennsylvania Culture Region: A View from the Barn* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1986).

³ On the history of the pastoral and "middle landscape," see Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture* (Cambridge, MA, 1995), 31–53; and Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*, 35th anniversary ed. (New York, 2000).



Jerome Irving (J. I.) Rodale (1898–1971), photo courtesy of the Rodale Press.

world. For J. I. Rodale, southeastern Pennsylvania was a site to reclaim what was being lost and stake out ground for something new. The Pennsylvania countryside provided soils, fields, and farms to test and prove the merits of organic practices. In a less material sense, the scene provided a familiar frame of a romantic middle landscape where Rodale could locate his unfamiliar claims about modern farming and human health. Contrasting the region's renowned agricultural past with the farming trends of the mid-twentieth century, Rodale, like many reformers before and after him, found a "usable past" in the remnants in the region's bucolic and historic landscape that helped him critique changes in his own times.⁴

⁴On the concept of the "usable past," see "On Creating a Usable Past," in *Van Wyck Brooks, the Early Years: A Selection from His Works, 1908–1925*, ed. Claire Sprague, rev. ed. (Boston, 1993), 219–26; Henry Steele Commager, *The Search for a Usable Past and Other Essays in Historiography* (New York, 1967); see also Casey Nelson Blake, "The Usable Past, the Comfortable Past, and the Civic Past: Memory in Contemporary America," *Cultural Anthropology* 14 (1999): 423–35.

Placing the story of J. I. Rodale and the Rodale Press in the context of southeastern Pennsylvania's twentieth-century agricultural history adds a new layer to both our understanding of Rodale and the history of rural life in Pennsylvania. Historians of alternative agriculture and natural health movements are well aware of the role that J. I. Rodale played in popularizing organic agriculture in postwar America.⁵ Less well known is the role that *place*—as both a physical and symbolic category—played in the efforts of Rodale and many others to reform alternative agricultural practices.⁶ Amid the myriad changes affecting how Americans produced and consumed their food in the twentieth century, places like southeastern Pennsylvania in many ways came to stand for an alternative to the industrial ideal. Likewise, focusing on Rodale and the organic movement also offers a new perspective on Pennsylvania's agricultural landscapes in the twentieth century. Historians and landscape architects have thoroughly examined the vernacular landscape of southeastern Pennsylvania as well as the folk agricultural practices of German, Mennonite, and Amish farmers that defined Pennsylvania Dutch Country.⁷ What has been missing is the story of this region as part of twentieth-century agricultural history. Southeastern Pennsylvania's farms and fields were not simply vanishing or being preserved for study and scenic drives; they were also home to new visions for agriculture. Placing the story of Rodale and the organic farming movement in the context of the region's twentieth-century history thus adds a new chapter to the history of Pennsylvania's storied landscape.⁸

⁵ Works that discuss Rodale's contribution to sustainable agriculture include Philip Conford, *The Origins of the Organic Movement* (Edinburgh, 2001); Randal S. Beeman and James A. Pritchard, *A Green and Permanent Land: Ecology and Agriculture in the Twentieth Century* (Lawrence, KS, 2001); G. Vogt, "Origins of Organic Farming," in *Organic Farming: An International History*, ed. William Lockertetz (Cambridge, MA, 2007), 9–29; Warren James Belasco, *Appetite for Change: How the Counterculture Took on the Food Industry, 1966–1988* (New York, 1989), 71–73; Samuel Fromartz, *Organic, Inc.: Natural Foods and How They Grew* (Orlando, FL, 2007), 19–27; Michael Pollan, *Second Nature: A Gardener's Education* (New York, 1991), 68–70; Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals* (New York, 2006), 142–45.

⁶ The literature on the "geographic turn" in the humanities in recent years is immense. Excellent examples of historians exploring place as a both a symbolic and material category are William Turkel, *The Archive of Place: Unearthing the Pasts of the Chilcotin Plateau* (Vancouver, 2011); and Coll Thrush, *Native Seattle: Histories from the Crossing-Over Place* (Seattle, 2007).

⁷ Robert F. Ensminger, *The Pennsylvania Barn: Its Origin, Evolution, and Distribution in North America*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore, 2003); Glass, *Pennsylvania Culture Region*; Amos Long, *The Pennsylvania German Family Farm* (Breinigsville, PA, 1972); Charles H. Dornbusch, *Pennsylvania German Barns* (Allentown, PA, 1958); Alfred L. Shoemaker, ed., *The Pennsylvania Barn* (Kutztown, PA, 1955).

⁸ A great deal of work has explored the history of agriculture in Pennsylvania, although much less has centered on the twentieth century and even less on the post-1945 era. See George Fiske Johnson, *Agriculture in Pennsylvania: A Study of Trends, County and State, since 1840* (Harrisburg, PA, 1929);

From New York Accountant to Pennsylvania Publisher

Before considering the relationship that the Rodale Press forged with the Pennsylvania landscape, it is worth outlining some broader strokes of Rodale's story. What originally brought J. I. Rodale to the Pennsylvania countryside in the 1930s was neither its fertile fields nor its agricultural legacy, but the opportunity to grow a different type of business. Rodale and his older brother ran a small firm in New York City that manufactured electrical parts. In the wake of the stock market crash of 1929, the brothers sought a new location to run their business. The town of Emmaus, which had fallen on its own hard times with the closure of a silk mill, promised the Rodale firm cheap rent on a vacant manufacturing space in return for creating jobs.⁹ Although new to Emmaus, Rodale had passing familiarity with Pennsylvania by the time his firm and his family settled there in the 1930s. Rodale was born in 1898 on New York's Lower East Side, and in the 1920s he had worked as an accountant in the Pittsburgh area, making frequent trips across the state for work as well as to return to New York.¹⁰ In 1927, Rodale married Anna Andrews, who had grown up not far from Allentown in Mahanoy City, and the couple took frequent excursions away from New York to explore the countryside. Nonetheless, the small town of Emmaus in the 1930s was certainly a peculiar fit for the city-born Rodale.

Regardless of his company's fortunes, Rodale found the electrical business to be enjoyable but rather boring. He would later write that although his heart was in the business for the first three or four years, he had never felt 100 percent committed. But being in business, he reasoned, allowed him to keep his feet "firmly planted on the ground."¹¹ Indeed, Rodale constantly searched for ways to be more than just successful in business and hoped to make a name for himself in the world beyond electrical manufacturing. Despite a lack of education beyond high school, Rodale soon aspired to become a writer and publisher. He approached publishing the

Stevenson Whitcomb Fletcher, *Pennsylvania Agriculture and Country Life, 1640–1840* (Harrisburg, PA, 1950); John G. Gagliardo, "Germans and Agriculture in Colonial Pennsylvania," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 83 (1959): 192–218; Anne E. Krulikowski, "Farms Don't Pay': The Transformation of the Philadelphia Metropolitan Landscape, 1880–1930," *Pennsylvania History* 72 (2005): 193–227; H. Winslow Fegley and Schwenkfelder Library, *Farming, Always Farming: A Photographic Essay of Rural Pennsylvania German Land and Life* (Birdsboro, PA, 1987).

⁹ Carlton Jackson, *J. I. Rodale: Apostle of Nonconformity* (New York, 1974), 26–27; Daniel Gross, *Our Roots Grow Deep: The Story of Rodale* (Emmaus, PA, 2009), 34–35.

¹⁰ Gross, *Our Roots Grow Deep*, 28–30.

¹¹ J. I. Rodale, *Autobiography* (Emmaus, PA, 1965), 37.

way he learned most everything else in his life: by studying an existing method, making a few changes, and then creating an approach of his own. One of Rodale's first ventures was a system he created to help writers (and himself) improve verbal dexterity through the use of different words. The first book of his "word-finder" system, published in 1937, collected thousands of verbs and grouped them with particular nouns. Rodale's first magazine, the *Humorous Scrapbook*, appeared in 1931 and collected previously published stories in an easy-to-read digest format. The digest magazine was an extremely popular genre in the publishing world in the 1930s as the mass-market success of *Reader's Digest* spawned countless imitators. Moreover, a digest magazine was not burdened with paying writers to create original content, limiting the overhead for a novice publisher like Rodale.¹² Over the course of the 1930s, he started and stopped several short, digest-style magazines centered on various themes such as news, health, and stories of the weird.¹³

Rodale's publishing and writing would likely have had little attachment to the Pennsylvania landscape had he not stumbled into debates about agriculture and soil fertility in the 1940s. Reading a British health journal in 1940, Rodale came across a story about Sir Albert Howard, an agricultural reformer in England whose research investigated a link between soil management and the health of foods. Rodale was intrigued by Howard's claim that fertilizers—in particular industrially produced artificial varieties—were reducing the amounts of nutrients in plants and animals and affecting human health in turn. By contrast, Howard argued that *biologic* methods of fertilizing, which restored nutrients to soils through the application of plant and animal wastes, maintained health and prevented disease in both soils and people.¹⁴

Rather than a problem of lost nutrients, the challenge that most Americans were concerned about in the early twentieth century was simply keeping soils in place. Southeastern Pennsylvania had not experienced the severe

¹² On the popularity of digest magazines, see John William Tebbel and Mary Ellen Zuckerman, *The Magazine in America, 1741–1990* (New York, 1991), 182–85.

¹³ Jackson, *J. I. Rodale*, 62.

¹⁴ Albert Howard, *An Agricultural Testament* (London, 1940); Albert Howard, *The Soil and Health: A Study of Organic Agriculture* (New York, 1947); Albert Howard, *Farming and Gardening for Health or Disease* (London, 1945); Albert Howard, *The War in the Soil* (Emmaus, PA, 1946). For a larger discussion of Howard and the history of the organic movement, see Lockeretz, *Organic Farming*; and Gregory Barton, "Sir Albert Howard and the Forestry Roots of the Organic Farming Movement," *Agricultural History* 75 (2001): 168–87.

erosion that plagued farms of the Midwest and the American South in the early twentieth century, but Rodale could not help but view the national crisis of soils through the lens of his local landscape.¹⁵ In his first book on agriculture, *Pay Dirt* (1945), Rodale argued that restoring organic matter in topsoil would be key to maintaining soils that resisted erosion. Suggesting that the use of chemical fertilizers contributed to erosion, Rodale claimed: “Anyone can see that soil erosion is retarded by the many organic practices described in this book. On the other hand, rain rolls off the slopes of hard-surfaced fields where chemicals have been used, gathering momentum as it goes, very little of it seeping into the ground.” Applying agricultural wastes through composting, he argued, created “tiny sponges” of decaying matter in soil that could hold both water and the earth in place.¹⁶

Describing Howard’s ideas in his 1965 *Autobiography*, Rodale reminisced: “The impact on me was terrific! It changed my whole way of life. I decided that we must get a farm at once and raise as much as of our family’s food by the organic method as possible.”¹⁷ In addition to shaping his decision to purchase a farm—a sixty-acre piece of land between Allentown and Emmaus—Rodale’s newfound infatuation with soils and health led him to found a magazine devoted to the subject. First published in May 1942 as *Organic Farming and Gardening*, the periodical consisted of sixteen pages of newsprint that hewed closely to the digest model he used in his previous publications. The magazine, later rechristened *Organic Gardening*, became the flagship of the Rodale Press, which published books, magazines, and pamphlets devoted to gardening, agriculture, and health.¹⁸ While there were many adherents of Sir Albert Howard and several schools of thought that promoted “biologic” methods to fertilize soils, Rodale became the first

¹⁵ While not as dramatic as the dust storms of Great Plains in the 1930s, Pennsylvania’s farms had their share of soil issues that needed to be addressed. On the history of soil conservation in Pennsylvania, see P. Alston Waring, *The Story of Honey Hollow and the Origins of the Conservation Movement in Pennsylvania* (Honey Hollow, PA, 1973); and Joseph M. Speakman, *At Work in Penn’s Woods: The Civilian Conservation Corps in Pennsylvania* (University Park, PA, 2006).

¹⁶ J. I. Rodale, *Pay Dirt: Farming and Gardening with Composts* (New York, 1945), 206.

¹⁷ Rodale, *Autobiography*, 41. While Rodale certainly purchased a farm with the intention of testing the organic method, he had also owned a small Connecticut farm before moving to Pennsylvania. Rodale was acutely interested in the investment value of land, and he and his wife spent much of the 1930s looking for land as investment properties.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 42. In 1949, Rodale created the *Organic Farmer*, which existed for five years before being folded into *Organic Gardening* to form *Organic Gardening and Farming*. In 1979 the magazine dropped “Farming” for a second time to again become *Organic Gardening*.

in the United States to adopt the word “organic” to describe an agricultural method.¹⁹

In creating his magazine, Rodale felt he also created a movement based on the ideas he inherited from Sir Albert Howard and others. Describing the start of his involvement with the organic movement, Rodale claimed, “Little did I realize what I was touching off—that I would be the one to introduce this great movement into the United States.”²⁰ By 1949, Rodale viewed what he called “organiculture” as

a vigorous and growing movement, one that is destined to alter our conceptions of the farm and the garden and to revolutionize our methods of operating them in order to secure for ourselves and others more abundant and more perfect food. . . . Composters by the hundreds are telling their neighboring countrymen of the wonders of this “new,” yet age-old method, and the latter are listening by the thousands.²¹

Although Rodale was certainly hyperbolic about the extent of the impact of his magazine in a few short years, his publication bound together a diffuse movement of organic gardeners in the decades after 1945. Rodale Press publications such as *Organic Gardening* and its many books devoted to the organic method provided a common cultural currency for those seeking to produce food without the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides.²² As garden writer Eleanor Perényi recalled, under the guidance of Rodale’s magazine, gardeners like her in the 1940s “threw out our poisons we had been using in our Victory gardens, sent for earthworms, praying mantises and ladybugs to kill our aphids, all to choruses of laughter, and some irritation from our families and assistants.”²³

In 1950 the Rodale Press launched *Prevention*, a magazine that espoused the virtues of natural foods and health methods. With the creation of *Prevention*, the press set about building a popular group of magazines and books devoted to topics of natural health and organic practices. The modest numbers that sustained the press through the 1940s and 1950s expanded exponentially in the 1960s, particularly after the 1962 publica-

¹⁹ Suzanne Peters, *The Land in Trust: A Social History of the Organic Farming Movement* (Ottawa, 1982), 104–36.

²⁰ Rodale, *Autobiography*, 42.

²¹ J. I. Rodale, *The Organic Front* (Emmaus, PA, 1948), 63.

²² David M. Tucker, *Kitchen Gardening in America: A History* (Ames, IA, 1993), 140–54.

²³ Eleanor Perényi, “Apostle of the Compost Heap,” *Saturday Evening Post*, July 30, 1966, 33.

tion of Rachel Carson's landmark book, *Silent Spring*.²⁴ By the 1970s, the company's books and magazines were prominent guides for the emerging environmental movement, as young people discovered gardening, farming, and organic food as a means of responding to the environmental crisis. In decades to come, the little firm that Rodale started in the backroom of his manufacturing facility in Emmaus, Pennsylvania, established itself as a heavyweight in health and wellness titles in the mainstream of the publishing world.²⁵ No longer just a publisher of quaint health pamphlets and digests, by the end of the century Rodale Press publications had a global audience that numbered in the tens of millions.

The Organic Ideal

Given the popularity of natural health and organic food in the early twenty-first century, it can be easy to forget that J. I. Rodale's ideas reflected his own time and not our own. In the 1940s and 1950s, Rodale faced an uphill climb in popularizing the "new, yet age-old" farming and gardening practices he supported. Although he had a surfeit of enthusiasm for growing food without chemicals, Rodale lacked the evidence to prove his claims. Seeking proof in many places, Rodale relied on the agricultural landscape of southeastern Pennsylvania as an example of what a sustained relationship with the soil looked like. On his own farm and in his magazines, Pennsylvania's agrarian countryside came to provide a literal and figurative ideal for the organic movement.²⁶

In April 1940, Rodale and his wife, Anna, set out in search of a farm in the countryside just outside of Emmaus. After finding a sixty-three-acre lot on the edge of town, the Rodales purchased it for \$7,000 and moved

²⁴ On the public impact of *Silent Spring*, see Priscilla Coit Murphy, *What a Book Can Do: The Publication and Reception of "Silent Spring"* (Amherst, MA, 2005); and Samuel P. Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States, 1955–1985* (New York, 1989), 174–77.

²⁵ The Rodale Press expanded its magazine offerings considerably beginning in the late 1970s and 1980s. Titles such as *Men's Health*, *Women's Health*, *Bicycling*, and *Runner's World* formed the core of these new offerings that built on themes of diet, fitness, and wellness. In book publishing, the Rodale Press had a number of successes in the 1970s with its cookbooks and encyclopedias, but it was the *Doctor's Book of Home Remedies* in the 1980s that changed the degree of Rodale's book business. In 2005 the firm published the popular *South Beach Diet* series. The press currently conducts around \$600 million in sales yearly.

²⁶ Rodale idealized both health and the preindustrial agricultural practices of a remote tribe in South Asia in J. I. Rodale, *The Healthy Hunzas* (Emmaus, PA, 1948).

into the old farmhouse on the property. However, the land they acquired was far from a vision of pastoral beauty. Indeed, the farm was cheap due to the dilapidated state of its soil and its outbuildings. In his 1965 autobiography, Rodale called the farm “a most miserable piece of land,” chosen primarily for its location rather than its quality. Rodale explained the condition of the farm as the result of the poverty of the tenant farmer who had been working the land and the bad farming practices he followed.²⁷ Farm tenancy, Rodale would argue in *Pay Dirt*, was “responsible for many evils in agriculture.” As tenant farmers worked land they did not own, Rodale felt they had no reason to invest the time, energy, or capital in farm practices that improved soil fertility: “The average tenant is here today and gone tomorrow. He doesn’t build up his land. Many tenants actually sell their manure. They violate all the rules of good farming.”²⁸ The poor quality of the soil extended to the quality of the buildings and animal life on the farm as well. In a number of his writings, Rodale refers to the dead chickens, which the tenant farmer had no energy to bury, that had been thrown under the dilapidated corncrib. As for the corn left stored inside the crib, the kernels were “small, gnarled, disease-ridden specimens.”²⁹ The cows on the farm were sallow and sickly; even the barn rats were “the mangiest lot of barn rats that ever had the ill-fortune to infest a barn.”³⁰

In contrast to the sorry state of his own farm, Rodale viewed the countryside of the surrounding region as evidence of what an ideal long-term relationship produced. Farmers in the area, Rodale believed, had developed practices that built the soils up over time rather than wore them down. Describing Lancaster County’s “famous farmers,” Rodale claimed that Pennsylvania Dutch manuring practices had kept many fields fertile even after more than two centuries of constant plowing. Pennsylvania Dutch farmers, Rodale claimed, “are old-fashioned farmers. They do not believe in a one-sided monoculture, single type crops without rotations, which eventually destroy the fertility of the land. . . . That is why their land is about the most fertile in the nation.”³¹ The labor-intensive practice of applying manures, in particular, struck Rodale as emblematic of the wisdom of the methods of the region’s farmers. Responding to the call of agricultural

²⁷ Rodale, *Autobiography*, 41.

²⁸ Rodale, *Pay Dirt*, 204.

²⁹ Rodale, *Autobiography*, 41.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 57.

³¹ J. I. Rodale, “The Church and the Farmer—A Plan!,” *Organic Gardening*, Oct. 1948, 14.

reformer Edward Faulkner to reduce the amount of plowing in agriculture, Rodale wrote in *Pay Dirt*:

Try to tell the Pennsylvania Dutch farmer of the Lancaster area not to plow. These famous farmers have plowed for two hundred and fifty years and not on the contour either. Their farms today are in such wonderful condition of fertility that they command fabulous prices, even though the principal crop is tobacco which “pulls” hard on the soil. What is the magic they employ? Nothing more than that they have always engaged in mixed farming with a strong accent on livestock and its by-product manure. . . . I have noticed also that they get all the manure at the Lancaster stock-yards and put thousands of tons of it on their farms each year.³²

Pennsylvania’s landscape provided visible proof of how farming practices could sustain a relationship with the land.

Rodale’s admiration for the soil management of Pennsylvania Germans echoed a long history of praise for the southeastern region’s farmers and their landscape. European settlement of the region had been led by farmers from the Upper Rhine Valley of Germany known for their frugality as well as their efficient farming methods. As regional historian Amos Long argues, “In addition to constructing sturdy and convenient buildings to house the family and the livestock, the farmers tilled the soil intensively, rotated crops, manured, and strove continually to maintain and increase the fertility of the soil.”³³ These farming methods certainly helped, but the soil itself bolstered the region’s agricultural development. Settling in the rich bottomland of the limestone valleys that define much of the area, settlers cleared and developed farms with soils that could stand up to repeated and intensive agricultural production. After being settled in the early 1700s, the region’s productive agricultural economy became the envy of many states in the early republic. Well before the age of automobile tourism, claims historian Steven Stoll, travelers came from near and far “just to look at” the Pennsylvania countryside and its agricultural abundance.³⁴

Rodale’s praise for the work ethic of the region’s farmers and their landscape also echoed an idealized vision that focused on the “character” of the groups that farmed the area as much as on their specific farming practices.

³² Rodale, *Pay Dirt*, 212.

³³ Long, *Pennsylvania German Family Farm*, 1.

³⁴ Steven Stoll, *Larding the Lean Earth: Soil and Society in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York, 2002), 78.

In his extensive 1950 work, *Pennsylvania Agriculture and Country Life, 1640–1840*, historian Stevenson Whitcomb Fletcher argued that it was not only a predilection for limestone soils that led Germans to intensively farm the area but a natural affinity for their land as well. This bond with the land, in his estimation, led the region's farmers to build larger and sturdier barns and to husband their resources, including the soils they farmed. Even as industrialization and modernization changed farming in the twentieth century, Fletcher claimed: "As a whole, Pennsylvania Germans have remained more devoted to the land than any other group in America."³⁵ Furthermore, what Fletcher described as a "marked conservatism" toward markets, education, and politics led these frugal farmers to maintain farms that were small enough to be managed by a single family. Unlike farmers driven to endlessly increase profits, Fletcher described the region's farmers as scrambling to accrue as much capital as they needed to pass a farm on to their heirs, and little more.

The notion that both the landscape and the region were insulated from change was reinforced by the distinct presence of Mennonite and Amish communities in southeastern Pennsylvania. In his landmark study of Amish society, John Hostetler notes that although close communion with the soil was not one of the animating issues that gave rise to the Anabaptist movement, as a persecuted group in Europe that had survived in the "hinterlands," the Amish developed "unique skills for crop production and livestock raising."³⁶ Once settled in areas such as Berks and Lancaster Counties, those skills and close-knit agrarian communities flourished. Farm buildings, tools, and methods remained largely unchanged through the early twentieth century in many Amish and Mennonite communities in Pennsylvania, a fact that would have been hard to miss for even a Sunday driver like J. I. Rodale as he passed by farms in the southeastern region in the 1930s and 1940s.

Rodale and many other supporters of alternative agriculture in the twentieth century would come to view the Amish and Mennonites as exemplars of how traditional farming practices could compete with the chemicals and technology of modern agriculture. Indeed, the organic ideal often bore an uncanny resemblance to the Pennsylvania landscape that filled Amish country tourist brochures. In an influential 1935 book on the problems of

³⁵ Fletcher, *Pennsylvania Agriculture and Country Life*, 50.

³⁶ John A. Hostetler, *Amish Society* (Baltimore, 1993), 88.

modern agriculture, ecologist Paul Sears identified Amish and Mennonite communities as places that “have done reasonably well in establishing a permanent relationship with the land” as a result of their combination of “ancient peasant traditions of stewardship with common religious bonds.”³⁷ Such praise was echoed by author and agricultural reformer Louis Bromfield in his 1940 book *Pleasant Valley*, which described the Amish as lifelong stewards of the land.³⁸ As Amish communities spread beyond the “hearth” of southeastern Pennsylvania, their age-old farming practices provided a model for those seeking ecological alternatives to the scale and methods of industrial farming.³⁹ Of course, organic enthusiasts routinely overessentialized both the Amish and the Pennsylvania countryside as a premodern “folk society” and often failed to see both the struggles and the changes in life and work that Amish and Mennonite communities encountered.⁴⁰

For J. I. Rodale, the proximity to Amish communities meant that he and his team of editors at *Organic Gardening and Farming* had near-at-hand examples of how to farm without chemicals. In 1959, the magazine’s editor M. C. Goldman and photographer Don Heintzelman traveled to Lancaster County and profiled the farmers there who had made the county “the Garden Spot of America.” Describing the rolling farmlands on the trip from Emmaus as “almost unbelievably rich and picturesque,” Goldman discussed how Amish farmers relied on sheep manure and ladybugs rather than chemical fertilizers or pesticides. Goldman similarly highlighted the Amish devotion to the soil as the key to how the area maintained its agricultural wealth.⁴¹ Such stories were common in the pages of *Organic Gardening and Farming*, as were pastoral cover photos and paintings from local artists that drew from the surrounding landscape of southeastern Pennsylvania.

³⁷ Paul B. Sears, *Deserts on the March* (Norman, OK, 1937), 169.

³⁸ David Kline, “God’s Spirit and a Theology for Living,” in *Creation and the Environment: An Anabaptist Perspective on a Sustainable World*, ed. Calvin Redekop (Baltimore, 2000), 63.

³⁹ For a valuable discussion of Amish resettlement in the 1960s and 1970s in Wisconsin and its influence on the landscape, see Lynne Heasley, *A Thousand Pieces of Paradise: Landscape and Property in the Kickapoo Valley* (Madison, WI, 2012), 104–29. For another example of elevating Amish farming practices, see Wendell Berry, “Seven Amish Farms,” in *Bringing It to the Table: On Farming and Food* (Berkeley, CA, 2009), 105–18.

⁴⁰ Marc Olshan, “Modernity, the Folk Society, and the Old Order Amish,” in *The Amish Struggle with Modernity*, ed. Donald B. Kraybill and Marc A. Olshan (Hanover, NH, 1994), 185–98.

⁴¹ M. C. Goldman, “Inside Lancaster County,” *Organic Gardening and Farming*, Dec. 1959, 29–32.

The reluctance of farmers in the region to change their methods could also be a mixed blessing for Rodale. Rodale sent the initial version of his magazine primarily to nearby farmers, and the response was tepid at best. Sending out fourteen thousand trial issues, Rodale received twelve subscriptions.⁴² After several issues with few subscribers, Rodale dropped “farming” from the title and renamed the magazine *Organic Gardening* in 1943 to draw gardeners and small-scale producers to organic methods. The local response to his magazine and his ideas about agriculture reflected what Rodale characterized as the ambivalence of the area’s farmers to new ideas. It was not just any farmers, he claimed, but the Pennsylvania Dutch in particular who were slow to change their practices. Testifying before a congressional committee investigating chemicals in food products in 1950, Rodale opined that the Pennsylvania Dutch “follow the methods of their predecessors and fight off the new methods, as well as the organic idea.” Rodale testified that many farmers held him in contempt and considered him a “carpetbagger” because he came from outside the area and had no experience as a farmer.⁴³

At the same time, Rodale praised the industry and hard work of Pennsylvania Dutch farmers. Such a work ethic was required to make his organic idea viable. On his own farm in Emmaus, Rodale began making the large piles of hay, manure, and other farm wastes that Howard’s composting method required. Rodale himself did little of the work of farming and gardening with composts. Manuring, weeding, and applying composts to fields were time- and labor-intensive practices, and after initially struggling to find a farm laborer to help during the war years, Rodale found an experienced local farm hand in the early 1940s to run the farm without the use of chemicals. Describing his farm to the congressional committee in 1950, Rodale mentioned that his farmer was a “very good one, an old Pennsylvania Dutch,” who was “not afraid to work” and “knows when to come out into the field and to cultivate to get the weeds back down.”⁴⁴ With the venerable knowledge of this farmer and application of the organic method, Rodale felt that his land had been transformed.

⁴² J. I. Rodale, “Looking Back,” *Organic Gardening*, May 1952, 13.

⁴³ House Select Committee to Investigate the Use of Chemicals in Food Products, *Chemicals in Food Products: Hearings before the House Select Committee to Investigate the Use of Chemicals in Food Products*, 81st. Cong., 2nd sess., 1951, 855.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 859.

In the 1940s and 1950s, Rodale pulled together every scrap of evidence he could find from scientific literature and news stories from around the globe as proof that organic methods were a viable competitor with chemicals. But his most reliable evidence often came from his own farm in Pennsylvania. The results of growing without chemicals on the farm in Emmaus, according to Rodale, were immediate. Without using any commercial fertilizers or insecticides, he found both the land and its crops returned to health. After a single season of fertilizing with organic methods: "At harvest time wagonload upon wagonload of long, golden, healthy corn came into our cribs." With each season the land's productivity increased, as organically produced nutrients softened and restored the farm's tough clay soils. Describing the process, Rodale wrote: "We fertilized our soil with compost. We raised its organic matter and humus content appreciably. We treated the good earth with reverence and kindness. We did not apply poisonous insecticides of any kind. We used no chemical fertilizers. The land became healed. . . . In these three years the regeneration of the soil showed itself in our wonderfully healthy crops."⁴⁵ The health that the organic method returned to soils, Rodale believed, extended to his own body and those of his family. "After about a year on the farm, eating the food raised organically, we could see a definite improvement in the general health of the family," he declared.⁴⁶ Headaches, colds, and other common ailments became more infrequent; even the barn rats that had once subsisted on the shriveled spoils of the old farm appeared to Rodale to be fat, healthy, and happy creatures after a few years of eating organically grown grain. The farm and the bodies of the creatures it sustained were literal proof to Rodale of the organic method's effectiveness at reforming the health of the land and the body.⁴⁷

Seeking to turn his own experience into scientific evidence that fertilization methods shaped the health of soils and people, Rodale endeavored to also make his Pennsylvania farm into a laboratory that definitely proved what the organic ideal intuited. In small test plots and experimental bins, Rodale and his staff tested different composting methods and recorded the results. In 1943, he renamed the site the "Organic Gardening Experimental

⁴⁵ Rodale, *Autobiography*, 59.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁴⁷ Rodale made this claim countless times in his writings. Indeed, the improved health of both his body and his farm was a key part of Rodale's "conversion narrative." See Jerome Irving Rodale, *The Organic Method on the Farm* (Emmaus, PA, 1950).

Farm,” and the magazine frequently profiled the work that Rodale’s staff conducted there. In 1947, Rodale launched the nonprofit Soil and Health Foundation, which sought to raise money to build a lab on the farm and support research in organic methods. In order to demonstrate what could be accomplished with organic methods, the magazine encouraged visitors to stop by Emmaus and see for themselves. He frequently told readers about the various visitors—particularly celebrities—who came calling. In 1952, *Organic Gardening* invited readers to visit the farm, as well as its Organic Country Store. On their visit, readers could see the stone-mulched garden, the Howard experimental plots, the odorless chicken house, and the earthworm pits; they could also purchase compost activators, soil testing kits, seedlings, and other gardening equipment.⁴⁸ By 1957, the magazine claimed that two to three thousand travelers stopped at Rodale’s farm in Emmaus each summer, a number that only increased as *Organic Gardening and Farming*’s circulation expanded in the decades to come.⁴⁹

An Organic Alternative in a Changing Landscape

The efforts of J. I. Rodale and the Rodale Press to reform farming and gardening practices came at a time when the agricultural landscapes of Pennsylvania—and, indeed, those across the country—were changing rapidly. The type of small, diversified, and family-run farms that shaped southeastern Pennsylvania’s landscape would face two important challenges in the decades after 1945: the economies of scale achieved through industrial agricultural methods and the steadily rising pressures of suburban land development.⁵⁰ While the Rodale Press promoted organic agriculture anywhere it could, its efforts took on a distinct valence in the region it called home. Pennsylvania’s historic landscape, and the threats it faced, became central to both the company’s identity and advocacy in the 1970s and 1980s. Under the leadership of J. I. Rodale’s son Robert Rodale,

⁴⁸ “Soil and Health Foundation,” *Organic Gardening*, Nov. 1947, 5; “Soil and Health Foundation,” *Organic Gardening*, Nov. 1947, 14; “Soil and Health Foundation,” *Organic Gardening*, Mar. 1949, 17; “Proof!” *Organic Gardening*, Jan. 1948, 32; “Organic Country Store,” *Organic Gardening*, Apr. 1952, 5.

⁴⁹ “Organic World,” *Organic Gardening and Farming*, Dec. 1957, 3.

⁵⁰ Beeman and Pritchard, *Green and Permanent Land*, 78–79; For an overview of technological changes in agriculture, see R. Douglas Hurt, *Agricultural Technology in the Twentieth Century* (Manhattan, KS, 1991); Judith Fabry, “Agricultural Science and Technology in the West,” in *The Rural West since World War II*, ed. R. Douglas Hurt (Lawrence, KS, 1998), 169–89; On the role of policy, see Thomas R. Wessel, “Agricultural Policy since 1945,” in *ibid.*, 76–98.

the company fought to make southeastern Pennsylvania a place where the ideals of the organic movement could be realized.

Agriculture, like many aspects of American life, changed dramatically in the years after 1945. New substances, new methods, and new pressures rapidly transformed how farmers went about growing food and how they made a living doing so. Of course, farming in Pennsylvania had been undergoing longer-term transformations as well. Agriculture started to languish in the commonwealth in the mid-nineteenth century as mining and manufacturing became more prominent portions of the economy. The state, which had led the country in wheat production in 1840, had dropped to thirteenth a century later.⁵¹ The number of farms peaked in Pennsylvania in 1900, although the average acreage of farms continued to grow. Smaller farms consolidated into larger units, and new farm equipment did the work that had once been done by human and animal labor. Even as the number of farms and farmers decreased in Pennsylvania between 1900 and 1945, the value of farm implements and machinery grew three times over, a trend that would only increase in decades to come.⁵²

Pennsylvania's farmers became increasingly specialized and capitalized as they sought to take advantage of the economies of scale afforded by new technologies and demanded by market realities. Where farms once produced a mix of meat, commodity crops, dairy, fresh produce, and other products, many now invested in equipment and facilities for producing just one type of product—and to cover the costs of those machines, farmers needed to grow more and more.⁵³ Chronicling the story of a family farm in York County that was emblematic of the changes happening in American agriculture in the postwar era, historian Paul Conkin describes how the farm grew from a mixed farming operation in the 1940s into a large dairy operation in the borough of Seven Valleys. As the farm grew from 260 to 400 acres between the 1940s and the 1970s, the Hunt family relied more on machines and less on manual labor. The farm grew to include “a large truck, three or four tractors, a chopper for silage, elevators, manure spreaders, several wagons, special mowing machines . . . special balers, various plows and disks, a special corn planter for no-till corn, and, most expensive,

⁵¹ Wayland F. Dunaway, *A History of Pennsylvania* (New York, 1948), 546.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 544.

⁵³ Rising land and equipment costs made farmers ever more reliant on both private and public sources of capital to sustain their operations. This “debt spiral” exacerbated tenuous ecological and economic relationships in many agricultural communities.

a combine with heads for both corn and small grains.”⁵⁴ Even on farms that paled in size compared to those in the middle of the country, Pennsylvania’s farmers grew more reliant on machines than ever before.

Aiding the growth and specialization of farming in Pennsylvania were not only artificial fertilizers but also new substances that reduced the labor of cultivation. Synthetic fertilizers became increasingly inexpensive after 1945, and their use skyrocketed on American farms. From 1945 to 1980, fertilizer use grew at a rate of 4.5 percent each year. In 1960, 2.7 million tons of nitrogen was applied to American farm fields each year, and twenty years later, nearly 11.5 million tons went onto soils annually.⁵⁵ Farmers also embraced synthetic chemicals that had been formulated for wartime uses and then repurposed for agricultural and domestic use.⁵⁶

New technologies and the pressure to specialize certainly changed the agricultural landscape of southeastern Pennsylvania in important ways, but changing patterns of land use were most visible. Although cities like Allentown, Reading, and Lancaster had expanded into the surrounding countryside in the early twentieth century, it was in the decades after 1945 that many agricultural towns in the southeastern region began to feel the pressure of population growth and suburban development.⁵⁷ Tracts of farm fields gave way to tracts of matching homes, and southeastern Pennsylvania—like its counterparts in Long Island, northern New Jersey, and any number of places across the country—increasingly watched farming landscapes vanish behind the paths of bulldozers.⁵⁸

As farm fields sprouted houses, residents of new suburbs often came closer to farming than ever before. The fertilizers, pesticides, and other substances that farmers used on their fields would once have been of little concern to many Americans, but after nearly two decades of rapid subur-

⁵⁴ Paul K. Conkin, *A Revolution Down on the Farm: The Transformation of American Agriculture since 1929* (Lexington, KY, 2008), 91–94.

⁵⁵ Bruce L. Gardner, *American Agriculture in the Twentieth Century: How It Flourished and What It Cost* (Cambridge, MA, 2002), 22.

⁵⁶ For a discussion of agricultural and domestic adoption of chemicals produced for wartime uses, see Edmund Russell, *War and Nature: Fighting Humans and Insects with Chemicals from World War I to “Silent Spring”* (New York, 2001), 165–83.

⁵⁷ Although not centered on land-use patterns, a work that highlights shifting racial and economic dynamics between city and countryside in the southern region in the post-1945 era is David Schuyler, *A City Transformed: Redevelopment, Race, and Suburbanization in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1940–1980* (University Park, PA, 2002), 1–8.

⁵⁸ Adam Rome, *The Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of American Environmentalism* (New York, 2001), 119–27.

ban expansion, that story had changed. In the fall of 1962, Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring*, opening the eyes of many Americans about risks from the unrestrained applications of chemicals to control insects. Historian Christopher Sellers has charted how suburban development gave rise to environmental concerns, particularly about aerial spraying, in the suburban landscapes in the 1950s and 1960s. Residents protested not only the sprays of farmers that drifted onto their lawns and homes but also the actions of state and county agencies spraying for gypsy moths and fire ants. Organic gardeners were especially vocal in protesting sprays that violated the chemical-free environments they had created in their backyards.⁵⁹

In southeastern Pennsylvania, such concerns were amplified by the presence of the Rodale Press, which had been drawing attention to the unknown hazards of new chemicals for nearly twenty years. The Rodale Press's modest readership began to steadily expand in the 1960s, due in no small part to popularity of *Silent Spring*, as more gardeners and an increasing number of farmers sought out information about how to grow foods and flowers without relying on synthetic chemicals. After hearing from numerous readers and organic gardening clubs about their local battles against aerial spraying, the press declared as early as 1959 its intention to become a national "clearing house" to help battle aerial spraying. In 1959, when a state bill was introduced in Pennsylvania that would have authorized spraying on public as well as private lands, the press directly contacted both *Prevention* and *Organic Gardening and Farming* subscribers across the state asking them to contact their representatives. At the same time, the press contacted organic food growers and asked them to tell their customers. From this experience with its own "spray emergency," the press advised readers to create a community plan for when the spray issue might arise in their own area. Offering the services of its editorial staff to anyone in the country "wanting to prevent passage of spray legislation or mass spray campaigns," editor Jerome Goldstein announced: "Whenever such a situation arises, write us at once and we'll do what we can to be of some help."⁶⁰ Just as it collected and distributed gardening advice, the press could use its information gathering skills to aid local residents in their fights against aerial spraying. A number of popular magazines, such

⁵⁹ Christopher C. Sellers, *Crabgrass Crucible: Suburban Nature and the Rise of Environmentalism in Twentieth-Century America* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2012), 1–68.

⁶⁰ Jerome Olds, "What to Do in a Spray Emergency," *Organic Gardening and Farming*, Nov. 1959, 44.

as *Harper's*, the *New York Times Magazine*, and *Life*, profiled the organic movement, as well as J. I. Rodale and his press, in the late 1960s and early 1970s. These profiles invariably depicted Rodale as a quirky outsider who succeeded despite opposition to his ideas. At the same time, no profile of Rodale could neglect the company's unconventional location in a rural town in Pennsylvania Dutch Country. If J. I. Rodale was the prophet of a new movement back to the soil, then Emmaus was its unlikely Mecca.⁶¹

While some residents cheered the Rodale Press's presence, others were wary of its growing influence both locally and nationally. Allentown psychologist Dr. Stephen Barrett made battling with the Rodale Press over its health claims and business practices both a personal and professional priority. Barrett formed the Lehigh Valley Committee Against Health Fraud (LVCAHF) in response to the Rodale Press's efforts to halt the fluoridation of Allentown's water, a fight that Barrett extended to numerous investigations into Rodale and many other popular health figures he deemed "quacks." The American Medical Association's (AMA) Historical Health Fraud Collection is filled with letters from Barrett to the AMA's Investigative Bureau regarding the Rodale Press and its founder in the 1970s. In a report to the Pennsylvania Medical Society in 1974, the LVCAHF described J. I. Rodale as sincere in his convictions, but pointed out that his company both promoted and profited from a variety of controversial health ideas.⁶²

Increased public attention to pollution in the 1960s and 1970s also came at a time when many were beginning to recognize that the threat to Pennsylvania's agricultural landscape came from more than just chemicals. The rolling, patchworked landscape of farm, field, and forest—the pastoral landscape for which the southeastern region was famous—was rapidly disappearing in the middle of the twentieth century. This transformation was caused not only by the decrease in family farms and new cultivation methods but by changing land-use patterns in the decades after 1945. The suburban transformation of the Pennsylvania countryside in the postwar years incited appeals for the study and preservation of the southeastern region's agricultural landscapes. In 1972, the Pennsylvania German Society of Breinigsville published Amos Long Jr.'s decade-long study of

⁶¹ See Gay Bryant, "J. I. Rodale: Pollution Prophet," *Penthouse*, June 1971.

⁶² See Pennsylvania Medical Society, "Committee on Quackery Report," July 18, 1974, box 673, folder 0673-14 "Prevention Magazine Correspondence 1970-74," Historical Health Fraud Collection, American Medical Association, Chicago, IL.

farming and folk culture of the commonwealth's southeastern region, *The Pennsylvania German Family Farm*. Pastor Frederick S. Weiser, in his introduction to Long's book, called it "an eleventh hour study," as the family farm had "all but disappeared" as a result of "urbanization and industrialization of farming and the farmer." Weiser hoped that such a detailed study of the Pennsylvania farm would inspire Americans to make a "sober estimation of the world around them and . . . the care needed to preserve those resources."⁶³

Beginning in the early 1970s, the Rodale Press used its national prominence to advocate for practices that sustained Pennsylvania's agricultural economy and its landscape of family farms. The company's profits allowed it to expand into new areas such as films and product development and to put resources toward efforts to preserve farmland and open space in the surrounding Lehigh Valley. In particular, Robert Rodale, who took over the press following J. I. Rodale's sudden death in 1971, became a leading advocate of land conservation in the region.⁶⁴ Born in 1930, Robert Rodale grew up in Allentown and Emmaus and spent much of his time as a young man helping around the Organic Gardening Experimental Farm. After attending Lehigh University for journalism, he joined his father at the press in 1949 and in 1956 built a home for his own family on the Emmaus farm.

In 1972, just a year after his father passed away, Robert Rodale purchased a three-hundred-acre farm in the agricultural village of Maxatawny, about ten miles away from Emmaus in Berks County. Originally called the "New Farm," the site became home to the Rodale Research Center, a nonprofit organization devoted to researching and developing organic agricultural practices. Later rechristened the Rodale Institute, the farm represented Robert Rodale's attempt to prove that organic farming could be a viable alternative to industrial agriculture in both Pennsylvania and

⁶³ Long, *Pennsylvania German Family Farm*, viii. Long's research was part of a broader revival of interest in Pennsylvania Dutch and Amish folk culture in the years after 1945. Scholarly research, folk festivals, a Broadway play, and no small amount of tourism celebrated the region's folk culture and agricultural past. See John A. Hostetler, "Why Is Everybody Interested in the Pennsylvania Dutch? (1955)," in *Writing the Amish: The Worlds of John A. Hostetler*, ed. David L. Weaver-Zercher (University Park, PA, 2005).

⁶⁴ For his philanthropic and environmental efforts, the local paper of the Allentown region would name Robert Rodale its "Person of the Century" in 2000. See Bob Whitman, "The Person of the Century: Robert Rodale," *Allentown Morning Call*, Jan. 1, 2000. J. I. Rodale famously died during a taping of the Dick Cavett show in June 1971, just a few days after he appeared on the cover of the *New York Times Magazine*.

across the nation. Pennsylvania's agricultural past was inseparable from Robert Rodale's vision for organic agriculture's future, even more so than it had been to his father. Rodale described to his readers how "the new farm is in the heart of Pennsylvania Dutch country, and has three homes, two large barns and other buildings that will be ideal for development of an organic learning center."⁶⁵ Similarly, "from the tops of its hills you can see some of the finest of all Eastern farm country, still being husbanded by Pennsylvania Dutch families whose lives revolve entirely around the land and its blessings."⁶⁶ Whereas the original farm operated as a project of the magazine, Robert Rodale planned for the new farm to be staffed by experienced agricultural scientists. In the next decade, the farm began the first controlled experiments of conversion to organic methods and the first long-term trials to compare organic practices side-by-side with conventional methods.

Rodale's new research site was a historic Pennsylvania farmstead that had been operated as a family farm for nine generations. However, Robert Rodale's ambitions for the new farm extended well beyond southeastern Pennsylvania. Influenced by critiques of postwar technology and the modern economy popularized by the works of philosopher Jacques Ellul and economist E. F. Schumacher, Robert Rodale and his staff used the farm as a place to experiment with a range of both old and new food production technologies.⁶⁷ To accompany articles and books on home food production, the firm's research group tested products such as electric food dryers and ice cream makers for the home and experimented with designs for homemade smokehouses, aquaculture ponds, and root cellars.⁶⁸ Although the press had long tested gardening methods on the original Organic Gardening Experimental Farm, the research group, according to Robert Rodale, was created "to speed the development of better techniques that you can use" to grow food and to "live organically."⁶⁹ Describing the New Farm, Robert

⁶⁵ Robert Rodale, "An Organic Science: A Goal for the Future," *Organic Gardening and Farming*, May 1972, 42.

⁶⁶ Robert Rodale, "The New Organic Gardening Experimental Farm," *Organic Gardening and Farming*, June 1972, 28.

⁶⁷ Rodale mentions Ellul with great frequency in his editorials in *Organic Gardening and Farming* in the late 1960s and early 1970s. These editorials are collected in Robert Rodale, *Sane Living in a Mad World: A Guide to the Organic Way of Life* (Emmaus, PA, 1972), 43–44; see also Robert Rodale, "Small Is Necessary," *Organic Gardening and Farming*, Feb. 1976, 58–62.

⁶⁸ Carol Hupping Stoner, ed., *Stocking Up: How to Preserve the Foods You Grow, Naturally* (Emmaus, PA, 1973), 101, 146, 321.

⁶⁹ Robert Rodale, "Seeking a Better Way," *Organic Gardening and Farming*, Apr. 1975, 47.

Rodale claimed: “Our goal was to create a more complete demonstration of organic techniques in use—not just attractive vegetable gardens and ornamentals, but also other features in organic living and homesteading. We intended to show visitors alternate energy systems, fish-farming by organic methods, homestead-size poultry and animal husbandry methods, beekeeping, tree farming, and similar activities.” To complement these educational efforts, the company restored a one-room schoolhouse that existed on the property for a folk-inspired “Primitive Man Center,” which Rodale described as a “constantly changing museum showing how the life of primitive peoples can offer useful ideas and techniques relevant to our life today.”⁷⁰

The New Farm was also a place to bring together the diverse groups who were trying to find alternative paths to the slow decline of family farming in Pennsylvania. In September 1972, the farm served as the site for the first East Coast Organic Farmers meeting, which brought together Rodale’s staff with a group of five hundred organic farmers, distributors, and consumers from the region. Signaling the growing acceptance of organic practices, Pennsylvania’s secretary of agriculture, Jim McHale, was on hand to discuss the commonwealth’s expanding efforts to assist organic growers. Explicitly pointing to the declining number of small family farms, McHale thought organic production might provide the “shot-in-the-arm” Pennsylvania’s agricultural economy needed. A key goal of the meeting was to organize organic certification standards for the expanding market in the commonwealth. Working with state officials, Rodale’s staff hoped to use *Organic Gardening and Farming* as a tool for setting and evaluating growing practices across the state and country as a whole.⁷¹

The New Farm’s lineage to southeastern Pennsylvania’s storied agricultural past was a clear part of its appeal for Robert Rodale. Rodale used a cemetery on the west side of the property, which held the remains of the Siegfrieds, some of the earliest white settlers of the Kutztown area, to highlight the deep history of the place. Restoring the farm’s soils through organic methods, he claimed, was a process of uncovering its history: “Now that the chemicals are taken away, the soil reveals its heritage quickly.” The act of uncovering that history, moreover, was an argument for the superiority of organic methods: “With the chemicals gone, ours is now a living

⁷⁰ Ibid., 46–49.

⁷¹ “East Coast Meeting: Pennsylvania Develops Program to Aid Organic Farming,” *Organic Gardening and Farming*, Dec. 1972, 43–45.

historical farm in the sense we are discovering the heritage, the history, of our soil. . . . The science of farming takes you only so far. Then you have to become a historian, to try to figure out what happened to your land in the past and why, and how you can rebuild it to its original—or better—condition.”⁷² The New Farm continued to anchor the organic method in southeastern Pennsylvania’s soils and their history.

Further rooting the research of the New Farm was its association with Mennonites in the nearby vicinity. As Pennsylvania prepared for millions of visitors in the bicentennial summer of 1976, Robert Rodale encouraged organic enthusiasts to make Emmaus and the region’s landscape part of their journey. In an article describing local tourist attractions—including the Rodale-built bicycle velodrome in Trexlertown—Robert suggested making a visit to the New Farm to explore the research center and its various projects. At the end of a visit, Rodale encouraged would-be visitors to take a walk up the big hill on the north side of the farm for a view of the valley that stretched between Allentown and Reading. Commenting on the pastoral quality of the area, Rodale could not help but invoke its agrarian past: “There’s no prettier, more peaceful spot anywhere, in my opinion. From the hill, you can see a landscape that looks pretty much as it did 200 years ago. . . . If you watch the road for a while, you’ll see the Mennonites driving their black buggies, perhaps going into Kutztown to market or visiting relatives on nearby farms.”⁷³ The research center also turned to its Mennonite neighbors to generate evidence of the effectiveness of organic methods. Beginning in 1973, the center rented 170 acres to a neighboring farm family to operate as a mixed-crop and livestock operation, without the use of agricultural chemicals. By the 1980s, the “Kutztown farm” had grown to become more than a home for Rodale’s research teams; it was also a site for agricultural scientists to explore the economics and ecological impacts of alternative farming methods. A 1989 National Research Council report called the Kutztown Farm “probably the most thoroughly studied alternative farming operation in the country.”⁷⁴

To address land use changes and the decline of small farms, the Rodale Research Center also housed an extensive study of the growing insecurity of farms and food systems in Pennsylvania in the 1980s. Known as the

⁷² “More about the New Organic Gardening Farm,” *Organic Gardening and Farming*, Dec. 1972, 41–42.

⁷³ Robert Rodale, “Bicentennial Visit Suggestions,” *Organic Gardening and Farming*, Apr. 1976, 96–101.

⁷⁴ National Research Council (US), *Alternative Agriculture* (Washington, DC, 1989), 286.

“Cornucopia Project,” Rodale’s researchers worked with the state Department of Agriculture, the Department of Environmental Resources, county extension agents, and farming groups to highlight the challenges facing agriculture in Pennsylvania. The study catalogued the growing debt crisis and loss of family farms the commonwealth experienced in the 1970s and early 1980s and argued for strengthening farmland preservation laws.⁷⁵ Likewise, the Rodale Press and its allies used evidence from the extensive trials at the New Farm to press for legislation that supported low-impact and small-scale agricultural practices and national organic production standards. Robert Rodale became a prominent defender of Pennsylvania’s agricultural landscape and similar landscapes across the globe in the 1980s. When he died in 1990 in a tragic automobile accident in Russia, he was working to spread the organic philosophy that he and his father and many others had honed in the fields of eastern Pennsylvania.⁷⁶

J. I. Rodale came to eastern Pennsylvania in the 1930s in search of a place to locate his business, but it was there that he also discovered a place to root the ideals of the organic movement in the United States. In the fields and farms of Pennsylvania Dutch Country, Rodale saw a landscape created by long-term relationships with the soil, and in the Amish, Mennonite, and Pennsylvania German farmers of the area he found farming practices to idealize. Rodale’s claims about organic methods of farming and gardening were well outside of the mainstream of agricultural science and horticulture in the decades after 1945, and yet eastern Pennsylvania’s landscape gave him a place thick with agrarian history to make his unorthodox claims. The association that his company, the Rodale Press, built with Pennsylvania’s landscape could be as simple as describing a recipe for Pennsylvania Dutch corn pone or using a nearby example to promote national farmland preservation. While places such as the San Francisco Bay Area and the co-ops and communes scattered across the country in the late 1960s and early 1970s certainly have their place in the history of the organic movement, the story of J. I. Rodale and the Rodale Press reminds us that we also need to include a place better known for horses and buggies, hex signs, and shoofly pies. Indeed, this reminds

⁷⁵ Cornucopia Project of the Rodale Press, *The Pennsylvania Food System: Planning for Regeneration* (Emmaus, PA, 1972); A national survey of these studies was published as Cornucopia Project, *Empty Breadbasket? The Coming Challenge to America's Food Supply and What We Can Do about It: A Study of the U.S. Food System* (Emmaus, PA, 1981).

⁷⁶ See Robert Rodale, *Save Three Lives: A Plan for Famine Prevention* (San Francisco, 1991), 1–19.

us that although southeastern Pennsylvania's agricultural landscape is frequently remembered as a vanishing object in the twentieth century, it was also a landscape that could take on new meanings for new groups of people. The Pennsylvania countryside could at once be both a thing of the past and a natural place to create a new story for the future.

Michigan State University

ANDREW N. CASE

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

Newly Available and Processed Collections at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania

What follows are descriptions of some of the collections at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania that have either been acquired within the past year or more fully processed and therefore are more available and accessible to researchers. Full finding aids or catalog records for these processed collections, and many others, can be found online at <http://hsp.org/collections/catalogs-research-tools/finding-aids> and <http://discover.hsp.org/>.

William Redwood Account Books, 1749–1814 (bulk 1775–90)

10 volumes

Collection Amb.7256

William Redwood, son of Abraham Redwood and his second wife Patience Phillips, was born in 1726 in Newport, Rhode Island. There he worked for a number of years as a merchant in partnership with Elias Bland. In 1772, Redwood moved to Philadelphia, where he continued business. From 1782 to 1787, he lived at and helped maintain the family's plantation on the island of Antigua in the West Indies. The William Redwood records are comprised of ten financial volumes, journals, daybooks, and ledgers. They span Redwood's career from Newport to Philadelphia to Antigua and date from the mid-1700s to the early 1800s. Most of them document his work in Philadelphia; however two volumes contain information on his Newport business and partnership, and two contain detailed financial records concerning the family's Antigua plantation.

Marriott C. Morris Collection on Cycling, 1839–1937

3 boxes

Collection 3712

Marriott Canby Morris (1863–1948) was a resident of the Germantown section of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, who attended Haverford College. He was an avid cyclist and accomplished photographer. The collection consists of materials that Mr. Morris collected regarding cycling and cycling organizations, including books, booklets, catalogs, serials, newspapers, photographs, ephemera, and newspaper clippings. Other items include road books, a local publication on lawn tennis from the 1880s, and photographs. Additionally, there are two large photo albums of a cycling tour of Europe Morris took in 1890.

**National Grange Mutual Insurance Company Records,
circa 1850–circa 1988**

49 boxes, 69 volumes

Collection 3718

In 1963, the Valley Mutual Insurance Company was incorporated in Shippensburg, Pennsylvania. It was the result of a merger of five small farm mutuals operating in Cumberland and Franklin Counties: Franklin County Mutual Insurance Company, Friendship Mutual Fire Insurance Company of Franklin County, Lurgan Mutual Fire Insurance Company of Franklin County, Centennial Mutual Fire Insurance Company, and Cumberland Valley Farmers' Mutual Fire Insurance Company. In 1988, the Mutual Assurance Company of Philadelphia purchased Valley (then named Valley Insurance Company). Mutual Assurance merged with the National Grange Mutual Insurance Company in 1996. These records of the National Grange Mutual Insurance Company consist of material from the Valley Insurance Company and the smaller firms that merged to form it. Papers, in both boxes and volumes, include financial records, meeting minutes, and administrative correspondence. Most of the volumes are financial in nature—daybooks, ledgers, cashbooks—but there are also annual reports, policy statements, and minute books.

Junior League of Philadelphia Records, 1912–2009

17 boxes

Collection 3717

The Junior League of Philadelphia Inc., founded 1912, is an organization of women devoted to volunteerism and community improvement. It was initially established to help create settlement houses in Philadelphia. Over time, the group became involved with a large number of causes, from war relief to children's care, and today continues its legacy of citywide community involvement. The Junior League celebrated its one hundredth anniversary in 2012. This collection of the records of the Junior League of Philadelphia Inc. consists of board and committee minutes, 1912–2009; annual reports, 1927–2004; and newsletters and member communiqués, circa 1940–2005.

Stiefel Family Papers, circa 1920–2007

6 boxes

Collection 3516

Samuel H. Stiefel (1897–1958) was born in the New Jersey farming community of Norma, where his parents had settled from Poketilov, Russia (now part of the Ukraine), some ten years prior. The Stiefel family moved to Philadelphia when Samuel was ten years old. His brother Abraham built one of the city's first movie houses, the Popular Theater, in a Jewish community in North Philadelphia. In 1903, members of the Stiefel family set up another movie theater in Philadelphia, the Fairyland on Market Street. In the following years, they opened the Pearl Theater in the Strawberry Mansion neighborhood of Philadelphia and other theaters in Pennsylvania, Baltimore, New York, Washington, DC, and California. Theaters run by the Stiefels, notably the Uptown Theatre in Philadelphia and the Howard Theatre in Washington, were part of the so-called "Chitlin Circuit" and gave starts to many black entertainers whose music later appealed to a wider audience. The Stiefels were also in the film distribution business and produced live shows and at least one film. Samuel befriended a number of movie stars, managed actors Mickey Rooney and Peter Lorre, and produced two Mickey Rooney movies. Although it touches on various members of the Stiefel family, the collection primarily

documents the life and work of Samuel H. Stiefel and his son Bernard M. (“Sonny” Stiefel”). In addition to materials pertaining to the Stiefels’ various theaters and other work in the entertainment business—including involvement with firms that managed B. B. King—there are also materials related to the Queen Village Neighbors Association, of which Bernard Stiefel was executive director in the early 1990s. This collection is likely to be of particular interest to ethnic historians as well as to historians of music, theater, and popular culture.

Print Club Archives, 1915–93

154 boxes, 84 volumes, 5 flat files

Collection 2065

Since its founding in 1915, the Print Club has achieved a national and international reputation and membership. Originally, its purpose was to establish in Philadelphia a medium for the dissemination, study, production and collection of works by printmakers. In 1926 the club mounted a Joseph Pennell retrospective. It displayed the drawings of Brancusi, Modigliani, and Picasso in 1930 and the works of a group of modern American printmakers in 1936. In the 1940s, the club conducted master classes under Stanley William Hayter and others. It has published editions of prints by such artists as Frascioni, Kaplan, Paone, Spruance, Andrade, Osborne, Cummings, Spiegelman, and others, and has sold on consignment the works of many of its artist members. In 1942, the Print Club donated its collection of prints to the Philadelphia Museum of Art, forming the core of the institution’s fledgling print department; the club has continued to add to this collection each year through a purchase award from its annual international competition. Renamed the Print Center in 1996, its mission has expanded to include appreciation and encouragement of the printed image in all forms, including photography. The Print Club archives consist of a variety of files covering its administrative, financial, exhibition, and general history, from the club’s founding in 1915 to 1993. While the majority of the records are loose paper in format, the collection also contains several bound volumes, photographs, prints, proof sheets, negatives, and an audio tape. Currently the collection is arranged by the various accessions the Historical Society has received from the Print Club. Files containing minutes, annual reports, and exhibition and artist information

provide an overview of the Print Club's history, but researchers should also look at the correspondence files, some of which contain thoughtful insight into decisions and adjustments made regarding Print Club administration and events. Membership and artist lists may also attract genealogists to the collection.

Frank L. and Edith Cadwallader Howley Papers, circa 1870–circa 1970

4 boxes, 1 volume

Collection 3720

Frank L. Howley, born in Hampton, New Jersey, in 1903, formed his own Philadelphia-based advertising company in 1930s, completed a distinguished military career during and after World War II, worked at New York University, and wrote several books. Howley actively served in the US Army from 1940 to 1949 and eventually worked his way up to the rank of brigadier general. Overseas, he fought in the Battle of Normandy and helped reestablish the governments in the French cities of Cherbourg and Paris. He served as deputy commandant (1945–47) and then commandant (1947–49) of the US-occupied sector in Berlin, Germany. He played an instrumental role reinstituting that city's government while dealing with delegations from France, the USSR, and Britain. Howley was discharged from the army in 1949. He, along with his wife, Edith (née Cadwallader), and family moved to West Grove, Pennsylvania. He took the position of vice chancellor of New York University and went on to author several books. He died in Virginia in 1993. This collection documents the history of the Howley and Cadwallader families, dating back to the 1800s, through correspondence, photographs, photo albums, scrapbooks, and a smattering of other genealogical records. There are significant groups of letters from Edith to Frank during the war, as well as between members of the Cadwallader family. The collection also contains a few published items relating to Frank Howley's war work, including one of his books, *Berlin Command* (1950), and a series he produced for *Collier's* magazine. Additionally, there are yearbooks, certificates, plaques, and a few miscellaneous artifacts.

**Philadelphia Fellowship Commission Phonograph Recordings
Collection, circa 1945–53**

27 boxes, 600 audio files

Collection 3572

The Philadelphia Fellowship Commission was formed in 1941 as a community service organization aimed at promoting better relations between diverse ethnic and religious groups. The organization sponsored educational and job assistance programs and was active in the establishment of Philadelphia branches of the American Civil Liberties Union and the National Conference of Christians and Jews. The Philadelphia Fellowship Commission was a pioneering, well-connected, and extremely active early civil rights organization. The collection includes broadcast recordings of programs sponsored by the commission for Philadelphia-area radio stations WFIL and WIP. Programs include *Within Our Gates*, *Philadelphia Award*, *Valor Knows No Creed*, *Lest We Forget These Great Americans*, and others. Also included are commercial music recordings from RCA Victor, Columbia, Capitol, and other record companies and several recordings of auditions and tests of potential announcers.

Joseph Lockard Papers, 1928–88

30 boxes

Collection 3673

Joseph F. Lockard worked in Philadelphia for the Democratic City Committee during the 1950s and 1960s. By signing up nonregistered voters as Democrats, Lockard was instrumental in building the Democratic “machine” that assisted party leaders get elected during the 1960s. Lockard worked as administrative assistant to US representative William J. Green Jr. and maintained ties to many political players, such as Joseph S. Clark, Richardson Dilworth, Natalie Saxe Randall, Judge Charles Weiner, and Congressman Joshua Eilberg. Lockard later obtained a political science degree from Temple University and formed his own political consulting firm, Lockard Associates. The Joseph F. Lockard papers are devoted to his work with the Democratic City Committee of Philadelphia. The bulk of these papers were produced while Lockard worked as administrative assistant to William J. Greene Jr. Intriguing groups of correspondence,

memos, reports, and clippings shed light on the city's Democratic Party's political processes, policy creation, and election efforts. Although many documents describe political matters at the national and state levels, most of the papers in the collection highlight the local reform movement, its development, main figures, proponents, and opponents. There are also papers on city ward realignment and files on Lockard's participation in Democratic national conventions from 1956 to 1964, in addition to a significant grouping of voting records arranged by ward. There are numerous subject and name files that contain a wealth of information on city issues, politicians, and businessmen during the 1960s. To a lesser extent, the papers also document Lockard's political consulting firm's work in the 1970s and 1980s, as well as his personal life.

Tony Reese Papers, circa 1953–2013

5 boxes

Collection 3719

Tony Reese, born Attilio Resci in Foggia, Italy, in 1919, was a popular performer both in Philadelphia and nationally. He was raised in South Philadelphia, attended South Philadelphia High School, and served with the US Army during World War II. He developed a partnership and comedy act with Pepper Davis, whose real name was David Asner, and the duo performed across the United States and Canada. Together they appeared on the *Ed Sullivan Show* and other televised variety shows of the mid-twentieth century. They also performed overseas and gave a command performance for Prince Ranier and Princess Grace of Monaco. Reese died in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, in 2013. This collection of Reese's papers mostly covers his career as a performer and includes numerous transcripts of comedy routines, clippings and programs, and musical arrangements. There are also a few personal papers including his obituary, biographical material, photographs, a CD, and a DVD.

Folklife Center of International House Records, circa 1970s–circa 2000

34 boxes

Collection 3716

The Folklife Center of the International House, located in Philadelphia, hosted workshops and programs on folklore and traditional music from around the world. This collection of its records consists of a variety of administrative and programming files that include correspondence, pamphlets, reference materials, questionnaires, memos, financial papers, lectures, and catalogs. Additionally there are audio and video cassettes, reel-to-reel audio tapes, floppy disks, and photographs.

*Historical Society of Pennsylvania*RACHEL MOLOSHOK
HSP ARCHIVES STAFF

BOOK REVIEWS

The Chesapeake House: Architectural Investigations by Colonial Williamsburg. Edited by CARY CARSON and CARL R. LOUNSBURY. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press/Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 2013. 488 pp, Illustrations, notes, index. \$60.)

In *The Chesapeake House*, editors Cary Carson and Carl R. Lounsbury have gathered decades of research on the early buildings, landscapes, and social history of the Chesapeake region into a smart and beautiful package. Focused on the period from initial settlement (1607) to the early nineteenth century (ca. 1830), when factory production and improvements in transportation forever altered the craft of hand building, the book's contributors provide a well-contextualized and amazingly detailed account of the evolution of building craft around the Chesapeake. The story begins with the most rudimentary post-in-ground houses of early settlement and ends with the refined and elegant townhouses and public buildings of the federal period. The four main sections and seventeen chapters that make up this encyclopedic volume organize and synthesize over three decades of research by architectural historians at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation (CWF) and several other organizations.

Beginning with the architects, archaeologists, and historians who arrived in Williamsburg in 1926, the research department at CWF has scoured the region for houses and landscapes that offer up critical evidence about the design, construction, use, and social meaning of the region's buildings. Traveling from Southside Virginia to Annapolis, Maryland, and from the Eastern Shore to the mountains of western Virginia, these scholars examined, measured, drew, and photographed thousands of houses, public buildings, agricultural structures, and landscapes in their quest to understand the built environment of the region. Emboldened by the new social history, Williamsburg researchers broadened their approach in the 1970s and 1980s to encompass the homes of not just wealthy and politically connected Virginians, but those at all social levels, including enslaved Africans, white laborers, mechanics, and middle-class craftsmen. Simultaneously, they sought to address questions of building use and social meaning in a society that was economically structured around tobacco and slave labor—an agricultural society with few urban places. Cary Carson reminds readers that the work was carried out in the context of an outdoor history museum renowned for its restored buildings and decorative arts; thus, the book is a product of a research and interpretive program

“that has explored one region, its buildings, and its records, relentlessly, for almost ninety years” (2).

In the first section, “Ends and Means,” the authors deftly lay out the setting and context for the story that follows. Cary Carson explores the importance of architecture as social history; Edward Chappell lays out the central place of fieldwork—the careful forensic study of building structure, material, and design—to the work of architectural historians in the Chesapeake; and Lorena Walsh provides the historical framework on migration, society, economy, and settlement. Both Carson and Chappell remind us of the importance of multidisciplinary approaches—history, archaeology, anthropology, and geography, to name a few—to this scholarly undertaking.

The second section, “Design and Use,” offers up excellent essays on the design process (Lounsbury), plantation housing in the seventeenth century (Carson), town houses and country houses in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Mark Wenger), the housing of slavery (Chappell), and the many agricultural buildings that gave plantation landscapes the look of little villages (Orlando Ridout V). These chapters are the intellectual core of the book in terms of understanding the ways in which buildings were designed and used in the colonial and early national Chesapeake. Drawing on their own extensive research and the work of colleagues across the region, the authors clearly demonstrate the power of physical evidence of space and place for unraveling complex social conventions and behaviors.

In the sections “Materials” and “Finishes,” which comprise fully half the book, the authors closely examine and lay bare the abundant physical evidence left behind by skilled and semiskilled craftsman of the building trades. These chapters distill virtually all that is known about timber framing (Graham), brickwork (Lounsbury), hardware (Chappell), exterior finishes (Graham), interior finishes (Graham), paint (Susan Buck and Graham), and wallpaper (Margaret Pritchard and Graham) for the Chesapeake region. These essays provide “a richly illustrated guide to the regional forms, variations, and chronologies of building elements” (9). Every student of the built environment, from the dedicated historic-site visitor to the architectural scholar, will find value in this guide.

The Chesapeake House is a tour de force of fieldwork, analysis, and synthesis, providing the most thorough and nuanced understanding of Chesapeake buildings available. To some extent, the title masks the principal contribution of the book in helping the reader understand and appreciate the people who inhabited these spaces. As Carson notes, the “intrinsic connection between dwellings and dwellers guides our research and . . . provides the underlying rationale for this book” (2). “The objective,” notes Chappell, “is to read the physical evidence as a means of understanding past intentions and patterns of behavior” (32). In this regard, the book succeeds at every level and is in every way an instant classic.

This thick and richly illustrated volume is a must for researchers working on all aspects of Chesapeake history and culture and serves as a model for scholars in

other regions. The book is quite simply beautiful; from the stunning photography to the detailed drawings and illustrations, it exceeds production values associated with award-winning coffee-table volumes. The hundreds of color and black-and-white photographs and line drawings bring the subject matter to life. The editors have done a masterful job of creating consistency and readability without extinguishing the individual authors' voices. A minor critique is that the second half of the book, which focuses on the physical evidence, gets quite technical; a glossary would have been helpful for nonprofessional readers.

The editors and authors are to be congratulated on an exemplary piece of scholarship. They have crafted a significant volume on the Chesapeake's built environment that will serve scholars for years to come.

University of Maryland

DONALD W. LINEBAUGH

Crossroads of Empire: The Middle Colonies in British North America. By NED C. LANDSMAN. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010. 254 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliographic essay, index. Cloth, \$45; paper, \$25.)

This concise overview of the middle colonies as a unified region of major importance to colonial British North America will be extremely useful to specialists and can also be effectively assigned in undergraduate courses. Ned Landsman, wielding a graceful pen, draws on a thorough understanding of the region's scholarship to offer balanced judgments throughout this persuasive work of synthesis. The three opening chapters explore the native and non-English origins of the middle colonies and the proprietary circumstances of the Duke of York and Penn's regimes; the four remaining chapters present the region at the crossroads of commerce, religious and ethnic diversity, philosophy and faith, and politics. The author repeatedly employs comparisons and contrasts between individuals, groups, and movements—e.g., James Stuart and William Penn, Dutch and Scots settlers, evangelicalism and the Enlightenment, Benjamin Franklin and George Whitefield—to adroitly balance specific details and broad generalizations.

Although the book is a short work on a subject that demands substantial geographic and chronological breadth, it gives serious attention to varied native nations, women, struggles over colonial colleges, and European influences. Landsman does not just address important seventeenth-century English political developments for the middle colonies but also provides rich insights about the Netherlands, Scotland, and Ulster. His careful writing, which eschews hyperbole, helps him to argue effectively for the significance of the region at the center of British North America and as a precursor for later major social developments. The book further makes an argument about the importance of chronology: "It was the emergence of the Middle Colonies as a commercial

crossroads at the center of the imperial contest, more than the specific activities of mid-Atlantic residents during the Revolutionary era, that gave Philadelphia the national importance for which it is celebrated" (2).

Landsman convincingly presents New York and Pennsylvania, each with its dominant city, as interconnected components of a single region that shared a common history. His core focus is on the territories that would become "English" New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. In exploring this terrain, we learn a fair bit about the region's northern boundary and its conflict and overlap with New England (especially in East Jersey and Long Island) but little about its southern boundary, Delaware, or about how the middle colonies blended into—or confronted—regional norms in the Chesapeake. Pennsylvania Germans may also have merited more sustained attention. The chapters average just over eleven footnotes each, which is somewhat compensated for by a thoughtful ten-page historiographic essay.

While largely a work of synthesis, *Crossroads of Empire* makes a number of original contributions, especially regarding cultural diversity (chapter 5) and the Great Awakening and Enlightenment (chapter 6). A nuanced exploration of the varied meanings of pluralism and the related development of toleration as a matter of policy—which did not necessarily include tolerance—is especially valuable. While opening and closing with Crèvecoeur's classic "What is the American?" assertion of pluralism, Landsman's attention to "continual struggles over identities and power" excavates the region's charged encounter with diversity (143). While Crèvecoeur described a "settler pluralism" (emphasizing improved land and silently excluding Africans and Indians) that would come to dominance after the American Revolution, Landsman argues that in the colonial era, this was paralleled by "proprietary pluralism" that sought to enhance civil authority, "Protestant pluralism" that sought to avoid schisms and counter Catholicism, and "spiritual pluralism" that opposed legal religious establishments (113). Local circumstances yielded varied outcomes, with aggressive English authority in New York championing limited Protestant toleration; Pennsylvania advancing its famed spiritual liberty that stimulated dynamic growth; and in New Jersey, the most diverse and contested colony of all, "an aggressive coalition of dissenters" creating a sharp counterestablishment movement (140).

This stimulating book ends with a brief epilogue that explains how the middle colonies were no longer at the crossroads "of a contest for empire among diverse European powers and Indian nations" at the end of the Seven Years' War and outlining how the "conditions of toleration, peace, and prosperity" fostered in the region, with its "aggressive commercial enterprise," soon "spurred colonial expansion and westward movement" that would take the region and the nation out of the mid-Atlantic and into the American interior (214). Students new to the field and senior scholars alike can benefit from, and should enjoy, this excellent short volume.

University of Maine, Orono

LIAM RIORDAN

Speculators in Empire: Iroquoia and the 1768 Treaty of Fort Stanwix. By WILLIAM J. CAMPBELL. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012. 288 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95.)

The past two decades have seen a tremendous interest among historians of the eighteenth-century northeastern American backcountry in defining the terms, both local and imperial, of British–Native American land transfers, diplomacy, and conflict. In this milieu, a concentrated study of the principal diplomatic initiative of the period—the territory-sundering 1768 Treaty of Fort Stanwix—is long overdue. William J. Campbell shows, through skillful elaboration of context and impressively deep research, that this treaty was as much about individual personalities and regional Iroquois and provincial apprehensions as it was about any overarching plan of empire. The specious treaty that ceded large portions of the Ohio Country for colonial settlement was the result of a tragic mixture of authoritarian anxiety and speculative acquisitiveness, orchestrated by groups of people who could detect clearly the changing winds of the 1760s and sought to bend them to their advantage.

Campbell presents his study of the Stanwix treaty as a story of both time and place. The time is the unsettled period following the Seven Years' War, when growing British provinces sent thousand of settlers into a trans-Appalachian backcountry occupied by displaced, resentful, and often belligerent Native Americans. The place is the upper Mohawk Valley in New York, a major locus of provincial-native trade, travel, and diplomacy, and the location of Fort Stanwix. One reason for the region's importance was the presence of the Oneida Carry, a land portage that connected the Great Lakes system with the Mohawk and Hudson River corridors. Another was the proximity of Sir William Johnson, the British northern superintendent of Indian affairs. Finally, the portage was located in Iroquoia, eastern home of a once-dominant, British-allied Indian confederacy that had been weakened in regional authority through decades of Euro-American conflict and pressure from land-hungry colonial settlers. But a larger problem for British provinces and their many speculators in western lands was the violent and contentious Ohio Country, populated by western Senecas, Shawnees, Miamis, and many other groups that the Iroquois viewed as subordinates but who were in fact powerful, autonomous peoples determined to defend their homes against encroaching settlers. The initial imperial solution to Ohio Country unrest, the 1763 Proclamation Line along the Appalachians, pleased the Ohio native groups but angered expansionist colonists and land speculators. Campbell shows that in the proclamation's aftermath, "converging interests" of both the Iroquois and northern colonial people and institutions made a new boundary line an attractive proposition (chapter 5).

Under the proposed plan, the Iroquois Confederacy would attain the security of their eastern homelands at the cost of large cessions of "Iroquois" territory in

western Pennsylvania, New York, and the Ohio Country. These negotiations were founded and led by British diplomats William Johnson, George Croghan, and other agents heavily invested in either land speculation or imperial responsibility (or, in Johnson's case, both). The new boundary line, suggested in treaty talks in 1764–65 and established at Stanwix in 1768, would establish a firm southern border of Iroquoia and protect additional Mohawk holdings south of the line but would open millions of acres for settlement in the West, where Iroquois authority was figurative at best. The agreement so angered Virginia and Connecticut colonists (with their own speculative ambitions), western Indian groups, and some British imperial officials that its outcome was dysfunctional. The results were decades of intercultural conflict in the Ohio Country, the rise and fall of various speculative land schemes, and ultimately, a second Treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1784 that helped begin a long process of Indian dispossession and relocation in the new republic.

Campbell's study is deeply researched and rich in nuance. Some may find the amount of detail concerning the doings of Johnson, Croghan, and others cumbersome, but part of Campbell's point seems to be that these converging regional—even personal—interests created imperial policy as much—or more—than the king, the Board of Trade, or the military commander-in-chief in America. It is hard to imagine a more thorough study of this important treaty, which has paled in popular understanding of the era compared to the 1763 proclamation that it supplanted. My only serious gripe is the near absence of good maps, which are absolutely necessary to help sort out the numerous (and often bewildering) geographic descriptions of treaty locations. That aside, the book will reward anyone interested in the dynamic and often tragic regional and local workings of empire, intercultural diplomacy, and colonial American expansion.

Ball State University

DANIEL INGRAM

The Heart of the Taufschein: Fraktur and the Pivotal Role of Berks County, Pennsylvania. By CORINNE EARNEST and RUSSELL EARNEST. (Kutztown, PA: Pennsylvania German Society, 2012. 304 pp. Illustrations, notes, appendices, index. \$69.95.)

Corinne and Russell Earnest's volume on fraktur in Berks County, Pennsylvania, is a fascinating look at the art form that not only served as decoration but also documentation of the lives of German settlers in Pennsylvania from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries. Each fraktur—from *taufscheine* (baptismal certificates), to *trauscheine* (marriage certificates), to watercolors—is unique.

The volume begins with a brief survey of Berks County's history, focusing on the county as the center for *taufscheine* production. Artists and recorders continued

to use German lettering on these certificates through the nineteenth century, even after most other counties switched to English. Furthermore, even printed *taufscheine* (in both English and German) included decorations, either hand drawn or colored.

Earnest and Earnest proceed to examine the work of prominent *taufscheine* artists. Common themes for *taufscheine* included birds (particularly distelfinks), tulips, eight-pointed stars, hearts, and beehives. The fraktur of Lutheran pastor Daniel Schumacher provided an illuminated record of the births and baptisms, confirmations, and marriages he performed. Henrich Otto and Johann Valentin Schuller focused on printed forms for their artwork. Friederich Krebs, a schoolmaster, recorded genealogical information in a heart surrounded by flowers and birds. During the eighteenth century, artists such as Schumacher drew *taufscheine* freehand and handwrote all information recorded on the document. By the nineteenth century, printed certificates appeared, often published by newspaper publishers. The production of original artwork did not stop with the advent of printed texts, as artists such as Krebs continued to illuminate their manuscripts in addition to painting and decorating freehand *taufscheine*. Printers such as Johann Ritter, publisher of *Der Readinger Adler*, used *taufscheine* to enhance their businesses and generate revenue. Angels, birds on branches, cornucopia, and Bibles appeared on Ritter's *taufscheine*, and scribes often painted the print art with watercolors. Over time, as German settlers in Berks County became more anglicized, *taufscheine* gradually began to include English text, yet they continued to incorporate traditional German religious images.

Earnest and Earnest have done a commendable job in compiling this exploration of the importance of Berks County to the development of the *taufscheine*. Lavishly illustrated with images from private collections, the Reading Public Museum, and museums in Lancaster County, the volume demonstrates the variety of designs used to decorate both printed and handwritten baptismal certificates. Four appendices that identify fraktur artists who made *taufscheine*, scribes who filled them in, printers who published *taufscheine*, and translations of the *taufscheine* enhance the value of this book. The main weakness of the volume is that it neglects to include any of the 583 examples of *taufscheine* found in the collections of the Historical Society of Berks County's Henry Janssen Library—which include the contributions of Berks County artists such as the I. T. W. Artist. Overall, *The Heart of the Taufschein* is a fine volume, but by not including a single example from perhaps the largest collection of *taufscheine* in Berks County, it fails to be comprehensive in its coverage of the topic.

Mansfield University

KAREN GUENTHER

Memories of War: Visiting Battlegrounds and Bonefields in the Early American Republic. By THOMAS A. CHAMBERS. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012. 232 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$29.95.)

The February 13, 2013, *New York Times* Arts section (C26) featured a family's account of their trip to Fort Ticonderoga, New York. In addition to experiencing lantern tours, fife and drum concerts, and spectacular vistas, they learned about the history of the fort as the site of a bloody battle between the French and English in 1758 (when it was known as Fort Carillon) and its place in America's Revolution. For the modern tourist, convenient travel, comfortable accommodations, and pristinely restored battle sites interpreted through informative education programs, often replete with reenactors, are the norm.

Thomas Chambers's engaging and illuminating book describes an era when Americans had little interest in either preserving or touring sites, such as Ticonderoga and Yorktown, that have become gems of America's heritage. In the early republic, few Americans even attempted to visit battlefields, in part because of difficult travel and poor accommodations, but primarily because most of them had nearly vanished. The Saratoga battle sites had reverted to farms. Ticonderoga was in ruins, and efforts to make it a tourist destination failed. Visitors to Braddock's field might view a few bones, but there was little else to see. Admirers of Washington who visited it celebrated the providential hand that had spared the general's life but did not see the site as sacred ground.

Chambers's thesis is that "while published memory reminded Americans of the Revolution's causes and ideals, enacted memory remained focused on landscape and melancholy. . . . In visiting and responding to battlefields, Americans constructed memory through personal, performative nationalism" (56). The research on which Chambers draws includes diaries, guidebooks, speeches, art, and his own visits to every battlefield from the Seven Years' War through the War of 1812 cited in his book. He argues that up to the antebellum period, people visited battle sites only if they boasted spectacular views or elicited romantic feelings. The Niagara region was an especially popular destination because tourists could view the falls from the ruins of the forts. Occasionally, tourists would encounter an old veteran as a guide to help them interpret what they were viewing. Otherwise, the average visitor's experience revolved around sightseeing, not education.

Chambers tantalizes by suggesting that this early nineteenth-century battlefield tourism "created a new form of memory dependent on interaction with place, romantic scenery, and sentiment" (35). It is possible that the sources he scoured are silent on this matter, but the account would have been richer had he been able to provide insights into what constituted that new form of memory and how it compared to the constructed memory found in histories and orators' speeches. Knowing more about why Americans neglected the battle sites and boneyards

that are now considered national treasures would also deepen our understanding of national identity in the early republic.

Chambers states that in the antebellum period, political utility led to increased efforts to preserve the relics of war. As fractures over issues of slavery deepened, and with no more living heroes to celebrate, sectional leaders turned to neglected sites such as the Waxhaws, Fort Moultrie, Yorktown, and Lexington as symbols to inspire devotion to their causes. Only in the wake of the trauma of the Civil War and the growth of tourism in the twentieth century would these sites become sacred and central to national history and identity. As the *Times* article suggests, they have evolved into businesses that blend public history, preservation, commerce, and entertainment—phenomena that the tourists found in Chambers's book could hardly have imagined.

University of New Hampshire–Manchester

JOHN RESCH

“Prigg v. Pennsylvania”: Slavery, the Supreme Court, and the Ambivalent Constitution. By H. ROBERT BAKER. (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2012. 216 pp. Chronology, bibliographic essay, index. Cloth, \$34.95; paper, \$16.95.)

Professor Baker's contribution to the University Press of Kansas's series on landmark American legal cases is the first book-length treatment of *Prigg v. Pennsylvania*, an 1842 slavery case argued before the United States Supreme Court. The extent to which *Prigg* fanned the flames of secession, helped to provoke the Civil War, or doomed Dred Scott's later claims of freedom are hard questions that Baker, wisely, does not claim to resolve. Instead, he does a superb job of describing the factual underpinnings of the *Prigg* ruling and placing the court's decision in its correct historical context: a confusing and dangerous time when concurrent state and federal jurisdiction over shared territory collided with the plain language of the Constitution.

The facts of the case are simple. In 1832, Margaret and Jerry Johnson moved from Maryland to York County, Pennsylvania. Jerry was a free black man from Pennsylvania, and Margaret was the daughter of two married slaves who had been claimed as property by John Ashmore of Maryland. Ashmore had allowed Margaret's parents to live freely on his estate, although he had never complied with Maryland's complicated manumission laws. He never claimed Margaret as his property, and upon his death, the inventory of his estate made no mention of her.

Nonetheless, John's heir Margaret Ashmore claimed that Margaret Johnson and her children—including one child who had been born in the free state of Pennsylvania—were her slaves, and she hired Edward Prigg to recover them. In 1837, Prigg and three associates traveled to Pennsylvania and began to comply

with the commonwealth's recapture laws, which required slave claimants first to obtain a judicial warrant for the arrest of the fugitive, then to prove their ownership in court. Prigg got the initial warrant but was denied a removal certificate by a York County justice of the peace. Nonetheless, Prigg proceeded to (in the language of the Supreme Court) "take, remove and carry away" Margaret and her children "into the state of Maryland." Under Pennsylvania's law, this made Prigg a felon subject to commonwealth prosecution.

Prigg's actions engaged Pennsylvania and Maryland in a conflict over the meaning of the Constitution's fugitive slave clause, which appeared to grant slave owners the unfettered right to recapture slaves wherever they might be found. If that clause meant what it said, then free states were powerless to protect fugitives within their borders, and Pennsylvania's procedure unconstitutionally burdened the right of recapture. The Supreme Court's ultimate ruling—that "the right to seize and retake fugitive slaves . . . is, under the constitution . . . uncontrollable by state sovereignty"—freed Edward Prigg and doomed Margaret Johnson and her children. Like all constitutional rulings, *Prigg* had repercussions affecting many more people than the litigants alone, and Baker's book nicely frames those consequences.

Prigg v. Pennsylvania recalibrated the relationship between slave and free states by giving the former a mixed victory. Free states could not protect fugitive slaves, but neither were they required to cooperate with slave catchers. The court's decision, which offended abolitionists and slaveholders alike, was a failed ruling by 1850. No Supreme Court ruling could, as Baker's careful analysis confirms, "staunch the flow of refugees northward" (173). After *Prigg*, the northern states were emboldened to pass new and stricter personal liberty laws that took advantage of the Supreme Court's invitation to abstain from any involvement in slave catching. Before long, Pennsylvania passed a new personal liberty law. Massachusetts, Vermont, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, New York, and Indiana likewise legislated their noncooperation with slave catching.

Baker's book, in keeping with the requirements of the Landmark Law Cases series, omits formal citations in order to make it more "readable, inexpensive, and appealing to students and general readers" (181). Any difficulty caused by this omission is mitigated by a thorough and lucid bibliographic essay accompanying the text. Sadly, in spite of the extensive scholarship catalogued in Baker's essay, *Prigg* remains a little-known case. My own informal survey of lawyers and judges revealed that few had ever heard of it, even though its enforcement of federal supremacy remains good law.

Baker offers the legal and historical communities the most thorough treatment of *Prigg v. Pennsylvania* so far. His excellent book should provoke further discussion and an enhanced understanding of this important ruling.

Pennsylvania State University, Harrisburg

SPERO T. LAPPAS

Lincoln and McClellan at War. By CHESTER G. HEARN. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2012. 272 pp. Maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$45.)

Following in a tradition reaching back to T. H. Williams's *Lincoln and His Generals* (1952), prolific writer and historian Chester G. Hearn has produced a solid and insightful analysis of the flawed working relationship between Abraham Lincoln and his commanding general, Pennsylvania native George B. McClellan. The strength of this study lies in its superbly organized and well-crafted narrative, which should earn it a place on any Civil War historian's bookshelf. Its weakness lies in the fact that this work surveys a well-churned landscape and, in the end, does not add much by way of revelation to the growing corporate body of literature on command relationships during the Civil War.

Given that both Lincoln and McClellan came to their respective command positions as novices to mass warfare, most would have expected the latter to possess the requisite experience to transcend the prodigious challenges presented in 1861. A son of a prominent Philadelphia physician, McClellan had all the advantages of a superior education, concluding with a four-year appointment to West Point. As a junior officer, he participated in General Winfield Scott's triumphal campaign on Mexico City in 1847, earning a brevet promotion for gallantry. Thereafter, he secured challenging assignments in what otherwise was a stupendously dull peacetime army. Wooed by a railroad firm, the engineer McClellan left the army in 1857. However, when the Civil War broke out in 1861, his services were eagerly sought by the governors of Pennsylvania and Ohio. McClellan, who was living in Cincinnati at the time, accepted the position of major general of the Ohio Volunteers. After organizing a successful campaign liberating the western counties of Virginia from rebel forces, he was summoned to Washington to command the principal army in the eastern theater—the forces that had just been trounced at Manassas. By contrast, the president and commander-in-chief had virtually no military training or experience. Together, Lincoln and McClellan would both be compelled to learn the ropes and bring the rebellion to its knees.

Throughout this work, Hearn focuses on the nature of this relationship as it developed in the first year of the war. Appropriately, he eschews any detailed examination of the campaigns themselves except to assess how Lincoln or McClellan acted either collaboratively or confrontationally. He does so in a dispassionate manner, and particularly laudatory is his reticence to submit either of his subjects to intense and speculative psychological profiling.

In the end, Hearn finds that McClellan's hubris never permitted him to engage seriously with Lincoln's insights and concerns, despite the president's sincere overtures. Moreover, in the course of his tenure as commander, McClellan failed to evolve in his awareness of the political nature of the conflict and never developed the appropriate aggressiveness required to prevail over the rebels. By contrast, Lincoln, who clearly exhibited signs of stumbling—even making outright mis-

takes at the outset of the war—grew considerably in military acumen during this same period.

Whereas *Lincoln and McClellan at War* may not be hailed as an especially original story, it is worthy of being added to the corporate body of literature on the peculiar relationship between the president and the general. Both scholars and popular audiences can appreciate a well-told story and will be rewarded with this one.

University of Wisconsin–Oshkosh

THOMAS J. ROWLAND

S. Weir Mitchell, 1829–1914: Philadelphia's Literary Physician. By NANCY CERVETTI. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012. 312 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$79.95.)

When Silas Weir Mitchell reflected on his accomplished life, which ended shortly before the First World War, he probably took pride in seeing himself a controversial figure in American medicine and literature. As a pioneer in the new field of neurology, Mitchell advocated scientific experimentation when most of his colleagues were content being traditional practitioners. As a writer of fiction and poetry, Mitchell proudly clung to sentimental romanticism while the soul of the literary world moved toward modern realism. Nancy Cervetti of Avila University finds controversy in yet another aspect of Mitchell's life and career: his relationship with women.

Cervetti's book is the first comprehensive, postfeminist biography of Mitchell. Earlier biographies focused on Mitchell's reputation as a neurologist and a writer, and Cervetti incorporates much of this approach by discussing his seminal works of medicine and literature. She covers familiar territory as she maps out Mitchell's impressive network of family, friends, colleagues, and patrons. Where this work significantly breaks from previous biographies is its acknowledgment of how Mitchell's reputation has drastically changed since the 1970s, when American academia began recasting the physician as an emblematic figure of the late-nineteenth-century antifeminist movement. Indeed, as Cervetti documents through archival research and a close reading of published sources, Mitchell's opinions about women failed to transcend his time period; his stated views reflect a profoundly conservative man who befriended many intelligent, ambitious women and yet remained adamantly opposed to women's widespread participation in political and professional life.

It is when Cervetti teases out Mitchell's identity as an antifeminist that her study becomes most intriguing. In a chapter entitled "The Apple or the Rose," Cervetti uses Mitchell's private correspondence, his medical writings, and examples from his fiction to illustrate a man who exhibited "impatience and at times

hostility toward independent and assertive women" (137). She places the otherwise well-worn story of Mitchell's (mis)treatment of feminist writer and economist Charlotte Perkins Gilman in the larger context of his career, concluding, overall, that Mitchell's antifeminist beliefs undermined his "effectiveness as a physician" and "cast a shadow over his contributions in experimental medicine" (2).

If there is a central weakness in Cervetti's otherwise effective work, it is that present-day sensibilities sometimes seep in to influence her descriptions of Mitchell. The introduction, for instance, argues that Mitchell waged a "war against women" (2)—a phrase more reflective of the politically charged year 2012, when the book was published, than of Mitchell's late-nineteenth-century antifeminist behavior. Such instances of presentism are uncommon, however, and Cervetti's book is sure to become the biography of record for Dr. Mitchell.

Indiana University–Purdue University Fort Wayne DAVID G. SCHUSTER

Anthracite Labor Wars: Tenancy, Italians, and Organized Crime in the Northern Coalfield of Northeastern Pennsylvania, 1897–1959. By ROBERT P. WOLENSKY and WILLIAM A. HASTIE SR. (Easton, PA: Canal History and Technology Press, 2013. 447 pp. Illustrations, notes, references, glossary, short biographies, index. \$24.95.)

Anthracite Labor Wars makes a helpful contribution to the history of labor relations and corporate development in the anthracite industry. This extensively illustrated volume focuses on the impact of coal companies contracting out much of the operation of their mines, with particular attention paid to the companies that owned most of the mines in and around Pittston, between Wilkes-Barre and Scranton. That area had the industry's largest concentration of Italian mine workers, and the Italian community included numerous contractors, many of whom had ties to organized crime, as well as some of the most vigorous opponents of contracting. Strikes against contracting proliferated during the 1920s, breeding labor insurgency and violence amid worsening underemployment and unemployment, both well underway before the Great Depression. Labor militancy dissipated through the 1930s, but corruption had become institutionalized, as reflected in the Knox Coal Company disaster of January 1959. That firm illegally mined so close to the Susquehanna that the river inundated the mines, killing twelve workers and effectively ending mining in the area. Investigations exposed the company's violations of federal law through its officers' connections both to the United Mine Workers (UMW) and organized crime.

Anthracite Labor Wars is at its best in offering a detailed local history of how contracting developed and how workers struggled against the contractors' power.

Contractors seemed to be able to get more production from their men than the coal companies could, and in a declining market, some companies eagerly leased ever-larger sections of mines to them. Freedom of contract held a hallowed status in capitalist America, and the UMW was responsible for its own labor agreements. Thus, the union could not do much to satisfy workers' demands to end contracting without moving toward the Galleanist anarcho-syndicalism that the authors find at the root of Italian immigrant militancy. In 1928, UMW president John L. Lewis responded to widespread worker insurgency by imposing control from above, sacrificing the union's democratic tradition to that year's unprecedented violence. The dual union movement that resulted would sputter on until the murderous Good Friday bombing of 1936, as organized crime's power in the industry continued to grow. *Anthracite Labor Wars* does not tell us much about how organized crime changed over these years, nor how workers went in and out of contracting as the industry's decline proceeded. The book's most prominent villains are corporate leaders who saw leasing their mines as a way to squeeze the last bit of profit from an industry that, despite the authors' protestations, looked more and more like a losing bet.

The last chapter of *Anthracite Labor Wars* asks, "Why have Italians been neglected in telling the story of anthracite labor?" It groups "Greene, Aurand, Blatz, Miller and Sharpless, and Dublin and Licht" into an "established canon" apparently responsible for such neglect (212). Even at the risk of losing my only chance to be part of any canon, I reject such a characterization of my work. It surely had limitations, but *Democratic Miners* (1994) did not neglect Italian mine workers and their militant resistance to contracting. I cannot speak for the other historians, one of whom, Professor Harold Aurand, is deceased. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that across the anthracite industry in 1914, mine workers of eastern European ethnicity outnumbered those of Italian ethnicity by a factor of more than five to one. This fact neither calls for nor precludes focus on any group, and Wolensky and Hastie deserve praise for careful research on a little-studied topic that raises many important issues. But study of the anthracite industry should sufficiently reveal the damage done by ethnic rivalry to discourage pursuing it through scholarship.

Pittsburgh

PERRY K. BLATZ

200 Years of Latino History in Philadelphia: A Photographic Record of the Community.

By THE STAFF OF *AL DÍA*. (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2012. 200 pp. Photographs. \$39.95.)

200 Years of Latino History is both a pictorial account of the development of the Latino presence in Philadelphia and a commemoration of the twentieth anni-

versary of *Al Día*, a newspaper founded and operated by Colombian-born Hernán Guaracao. While the introductory section correctly informs readers that Latin Americans have long lived in Philadelphia, the book does not provide a full history of this two-hundred-year presence in the city, making the title a bit of a misnomer. That limitation aside, the book is full of wonderful photos documenting the Latino community from as early as the 1940s. Many of these images were captured by award-winning Puerto Rican–Philadelphian photographer David Cruz; other photos, especially the ones from 1940–80, were gathered from personal collections. Taken together, these pictures provide a nice glimpse into what was then primarily a Puerto Rican community.

The book is divided into four sections that attempt to span two hundred years of history, from 1812–2012. While the first section, which covers the first 140 years, is short, it nonetheless represents a noble attempt to establish an early and rich history of Latinos in Philadelphia that is not yet well documented. The strongest contribution of the book is the photographic collection amassed by Cruz and other staff members of *Al Día* over the past twenty years: a treasure trove for anyone who hopes to become more familiar with Latino Philadelphia. A range of community events are captured in these snapshots, from cultural fiestas to political developments—including many of the community’s protest marches for recognition of their issues by the government and the city at large. The last two sections of the book, which comprise the bulk of its pages, contain a terrific panorama of the many Latinos who make up this important and growing sector of the City of Brotherly Love.

200 Years of Latino History in Philadelphia is more than a good coffee-table book; it is an excellent entryway into what one Latina resident once termed “an invisible community.” As this book’s astonishing photographs reveal, this community is invisible no more.

Miami Dade College

VÍCTOR VÁZQUEZ-HERNÁNDEZ

Nature’s Entrepôt: Philadelphia’s Urban Sphere and Its Environmental Thresholds.

Edited by BRIAN C. BLACK and MICHAEL J. CHIARAPPA. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012. 376 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$38.)

Anyone interested in environmental history, urban history and planning, or Philadelphia will want to read this book. According to editor Brian Black, “the indisputable fact that human culture is connected to and affected by the natural environment” provided the reason to gather this collection of essays, all of which explore the never-ceasing relationship of people (in this case, Philadelphians) with their natural environment, with particular attention paid to the utilitarian ways in which Philadelphians have altered their surroundings (11).

The “indisputable fact” of the close connection between the American city and environmental history is underscored by the variety of disciplines represented in this collection. Two contributors are primarily environmental historians, but twelve are from the fields of art history and museum work, sociology, geography and landscape studies, urban history, and the history of medicine. Each researches and addresses some aspect of the impact of Philadelphians on the physical landscape and Philadelphians’ perceptions of these environmental changes.

The variety of disciplines showcased in this volume provides a noteworthy lesson for academics. The use of visual images (maps, photographs, engravings, etc.) is surprisingly restrained in a book devoted to Philadelphia’s evolving topography. Informative images that effectively underscore the authors’ points are found in the essays by art museum curator Elizabeth Milroy; Adam Levine, an independent consultant who demonstrates a remarkably concrete sense of place in his website, *Philly H₂O* (www.phillyh2o.org); and Michael J. Chiarappa, an academic who has worked extensively with museums and public history institutions. Domenic Vitiello, a city consultant and urban studies professor, also includes a few well-chosen images. It is simply ineffective (and perhaps even wrong) to discuss the Wissahickon, deer, or “landscape literacy” programs without a few images. It’s too academic.

The thirteen articles are grouped into four sections, the titles of which imply a broad chronological progression. The first essay, by Craig Zabel, examines Philadelphia’s evolution during the Penn era, and all four essays in the final section focus on the last few decades. But within several sections the arrangement is confusing. In the first section, Zabel’s discussion of Penn’s Philadelphia is followed by Elizabeth Milroy’s article on the evolution of the Fairmount Park System from the early nineteenth century to the present, then by Thomas Apel’s explanation of the yellow fever epidemics from 1793 to 1805. Although editor Brian Black announces that section 2 covers the city before 1900, Carolyn T. Adams’s article on industrial suburbs focuses on contemporary urban planning challenges that result from pre-1900 industrial suburbs.

Inevitably, some essays will capture individual readers’ attention more than others, which is why this collection will be so useful to so many historians. Donna J. Rilling and Michal McMahon use court cases and legal statutes as evidence of the changing physical landscape of the city and contemporary perceptions of that change. Several authors, notably Apel, Levine, and Chiarappa, remind us that water has been the defining topographical feature of Philadelphia, a port city and a city of creeks. Several essays frame current programs as forward-thinking, green initiatives, but also powerfully (and perhaps unintentionally) describe the changing role of the postindustrial urban landscape and begin a new cycle of redefining “city.”

Overall, this collection of essays is more unified than many such volumes. Overlapping time periods and details that appear in several essays effectively link

topics together, so discussions of discrete topics combine to provide a bigger picture while remaining informative in their own right.

West Chester University

ANNE E. KRULIKOWSKI

As American as Shoofly Pie: The Foodlore and Fakelore of Pennsylvania Dutch Cuisine.

By WILLIAM WOYS WEAVER. (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013. 318 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95.)

During a lull in a September 13, 2013, major league baseball game, MLB Network announcers chatted about the lengthy beards the Red Sox players had grown as good luck charms for the season. Catcher Jarrod Saltalamacchia, one commentator joked, “looks like he belongs in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, churning butter.” “Yeah, and eating shoofly pie,” his coanchor concurred. These off-hand observations highlight both the immediacy of Amish stereotypes in American popular culture and the varied ways in which Amish culture and Pennsylvania Dutch food traditions intertwine in the popular imagination.

However, as noted Pennsylvania food historian William Woys Weaver reveals in this book, “shoofly pie” neither represents a genuine expression of Amish culture nor an authentic Pennsylvania Dutch recipe. The Pennsylvania Dutch cuisine experienced by Lancaster County tourists—boasting traditions such as the “seven sweets and seven sours,” which ensures that Amish tables are always laden with pickles and preserves—is a “fictional cuisine” that did not originate in the home kitchens of real Amish cooks and Pennsylvania Dutch families (3, 74–75). Instead, these recipes and traditions sprang to life from the imaginations of writers and journalists interested in capturing the quaint traditions of a charming community; from the machinations of restaurant owners and hotels who lured tourists with promises of delicious, “genuine” dishes and served them instead bland flavors (so as not to offend picky eaters) and large portions (to inspire open wallets); and from the practices of misguided cultural revivalists who promoted recipes based on the number of mouths they could feed rather than on their authenticity. These disparate, but often interwoven, factors have led to Pennsylvania Dutch food “fakelore,” and not the daily foods consumed across the region, becoming cemented as perceived reality.

In an effort to dispel the mistaken aura of legitimacy surrounding the foods branded as “Pennsylvania Dutch,” Weaver launched his own culinary expedition. Following a trail of restaurant menus, tourist merchandise, cookbooks, and even popular novels that purport to depict real Amish and Pennsylvania Dutch families, Weaver uncovers the tangled web of misconceptions, misrepresentations, and misplaced motivations contributing to the modern phenomenon of millions of visitors to Lancaster County leaving satisfied with their “real” Pennsylvania Dutch

eating experience, having consumed a cuisine consisting of nothing but a few recipes invented to suit the tourist palate, coupled with dozens of dishes indistinguishable from fare found across the United States—including, as Weaver discovered first-hand, canned green bean and mushroom soup casserole topped with crushed potato chips (142). By infiltrating national perceptions, these recipes have concealed the true food traditions that have been a part of Pennsylvania Dutch cooking for generations beneath layers of bland gravy and sugary shoofly pie.

Weaver's most important contribution in this work is not his powerful debunking of the food "fakelore" but his research that brings authentic Pennsylvania Dutch food traditions to light. From pit cabbage (*Grundrezept fer Gruwegraut*) to groundhog, from potato potpie with saffron to sauerkraut, and from funnel cake to chicken and waffles, Weaver uncovers the recipes that have sustained the community for generations. By providing the origins and lineages of these recipes and revealing the key roles they played in the day-to-day lives of community members, Weaver affirms the vibrancy and diversity of Pennsylvania Dutch foodways, which resist efforts to define or confine them within the limitations of the tourist industry.

For the curious reader anxious to experience the authentic dishes mentioned throughout the book, Weaver provides an added treat: a collection of genuine recipes assembled through his extensive fieldwork and tested on his own table. These recipes serve as a faithful tribute to the Pennsylvania Dutch.

York College, York, NE

JENNIFER RACHEL DUTCH