PITTSBURGH—CITY OF NEW PIONEERS

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Pittsburgh has always been a community of pioneers. From the days of the early village by Fort Pitt down to Pittsburgh today, this has been true. A pioneering spirit, with courage and desire for better opportunities in life, was required for the early settlers to cut their ties with the established settlements along the eastern seaboard and with the older established civilization in Europe.

During the years from 1758 to 1945, the village grew; in 1794 it became a borough, and then, in 1816, a city. These years saw many physical improvements in the growing community, and also, the coming of the first newspaper, the building of the first steamboat on western inland waters, the establishment of schools, and the first institution for higher learning. Hospitals and charitable institutions were established, and the city's cultural assets were increased in 1895, when the Carnegie Library Building, as part of Carnegie Institute, was dedicated. John A. Brashear became nationally known as an astronomer and scientist, and Professor Langley built his flying machine.

During this period of time, the community went through various stages of economic development and experienced progressive changes in transportation facilities. The economic base of the community changed gradually from one of a trading post and agriculture to one of agriculture and manufacturing. Very early, the community became known as "The Gateway to the West." As one writer so aptly phrased it, "Through this river-gate poured the tide of conquest, of trade, and of ideas which made America." Strategically located at "The Forks of the Ohio," Pittsburgh became the center of supply and the jumping-off place for the growing western territory.

About the time the Borough of Pittsburgh became the City of Pittsburgh, the community was emerging into one of diversified manufacturing. According to an industrial census of about 1818, it manufactured 66 kinds of goods and products in 148 plants or shops. At the outbreak of the Civil War, it was one of the great arsenals of the North and had achieved such national prominence as to be termed "The

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State of Allegheny” by President Lincoln. Through the years that followed, it became the steel center of the nation; a greater center for the production of metal products, of coal, glass, electrical equipment, and food processing.

Transportation has always played an important part in Pittsburgh’s growth. From the packhorse to the Conestoga Wagon, the keelboat, the steamboat, the canal boat, the railroad, the paved highway, and the motor age, Pittsburgh kept pace with the changing times. In fact, through the airbrake, the city contributed greatly to the speed and safety of rail travel.

Yet as Pittsburgh grew, as it developed as an industrial giant, it became increasingly less livable. As far back as the early part of the 19th Century, visitors cried out about its dirt and smoke. “Hell with the lid off” was one of the appellations attached to it. The great flotillas of river boats that tied up along the Monongahela wharf waiting for the spring rise to take their great tows of coal to the South, the belching steam engines panting through the river valleys, were picturesque but extremely dirty.

As Pittsburgh grew, its population exploded over the City’s boundaries into the suburban areas. New communities were formed with independent governments. So independent were they, that over the years these suburban communities developed such a self-sufficiency as to believe that if the central city expired, they could still survive. Today, with 129 separate municipal governments in Allegheny County, the Pittsburgh District finds itself ill-equipped to handle expeditiously certain over-all metropolitan problems. The explosive growth of the suburban areas has occurred with little or no planned control, resulting in many problems the correction of which is left to the present and future generations.

During these years of explosive growth, Pittsburgh became known as the “Melting Pot.” From an original population of Scotch-Irish, Irish, and English, the community experienced an influx of people of German origin during the early middle of the 19th Century, and from as early as the 1880’s, a great influx of people of Slavic and Italian origin. Brought or invited in to labor in the expanding steel industry, they have been welded along with the earlier immigrants into the population of the City and the County, so that today this great mass of human
beings makes up Pittsburgh and its environs. These later generations were pioneers in as true a sense as those who came here in the latter part of the 18th Century and the early part of the 19th Century.

As early as the beginning of the present century, Pittsburgh did not have a good reputation over the nation as a good place in which to live. Regarded as a mill and river town, subject to violent cyclical economic fluctuations because of its heavy industrial base, it was dirty and unattractive, and it was regarded by some as having passed its peak. As early as 1915, some economists and students of population movement were predicting its decline. Gary, Chicago, Detroit, and Birmingham were growing competitive centers in the production of steel. The elimination of the “Pittsburgh Plus” system for the basing of freight rates for steel removed the advantage Pittsburgh had held over these other cities as centers of steel production. The census for the decade between 1930 and 1940 showed an increase of only 2.7% in population for Allegheny County, where previously, from the time of the erection of Allegheny County in 1788, the County had shown a strong healthy growth in population. Pittsburgh and Allegheny County were becoming more and more synonymous.

Under the impact of World War II, Pittsburgh District industry was fully engaged and employment was high. To the careful observer, however, it was apparent that the war impact was of a temporary nature, and that the basic problems of Pittsburgh had not changed. The post-war era in Pittsburgh was not regarded as promising. Something had to be done about it. A few of the leaders in industry and commerce, together with leaders in the field of education and research, decided to take steps to insure the region’s future. To that end, an organization first called the Allegheny Conference on Post-War Planning was formed. Later the name was changed to the Allegheny Conference on Community Development. Now commonly called “The Allegheny Conference,” it was incorporated as a non-profit organization to do research and planning for the Allegheny Region, so that there might be developed a unified plan for the improvement of the region as a whole. The Conference also was concerned with seeing that something was done to bring about the accomplishment of the plans. Following the first meeting of citizens who were the original sponsoring group of the Conference in the spring of 1943, considerable time elapsed during which the
Conference was incorporated, officers chosen, and committee structure developed. It was not until the beginning of 1945 that the Conference really swung into action. Studies by committees and staff developed a comprehensive community program. Since such a program must have public support, one of the most important jobs the Conference undertook was that of public education about the proposed program. It has been an axiom of the Conference that it does not impose its will on the community, but rather it seeks by educational means and publicity to gain public support and acceptance for projects that are for the community benefit. Since many projects were of such a nature as to require acceptance, support, and accomplishment by the elected public officials, the Conference has worked with these officials.

Such a broadbased program as has been carried on here is one of community accomplishment. All the forces of the community have been marshalled to carry it out, and it is truly a community success story.

The results that have been obtained to date have not only been startling and amazing to Pittsburhgers, but they have resulted in wide acclaim throughout the nation and even attracted attention in foreign lands. Individuals and delegations from all over the United States have visited and continue to visit Pittsburgh to see what has happened and to learn how it has been accomplished. For the first time in years, Pittsburgh now has a favorable national press. It is truly a “Twentieth Century Pioneer in Community Improvement,” because it has pioneered certain solutions of community problems and methods of accomplishment.

Basic to the program, and without which it is believed the many other things that have been accomplished would not have been done, are flood control and smoke control. Here is the story of a community rising up against great odds to solve two great problems. Eight great storage dams have been built at the head waters of the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers. It is estimated that had they been in existence at the time of the great flood in 1936, the crest at the Point would have been reduced 10.4 feet. Just last month Western Pennsylvania experienced an excessively heavy rainfall in a 12-hour period. The run-off over the Allegheny and Monongahela watersheds was extremely fast and severe. The dams proved their worth. Excepting damage in several tributary streams, the district was spared any severe damage.
Civic and political cooperation was required to initiate and put over smoke control. To a district literally built over great beds of bituminous coal, to a district of heavy industry, to a district that had made and lived with smoke and smog for almost two centuries, smoke control represented a great change in public attitude and in domestic and industrial practices. For well over a century, Pittsburghers had complained about smoke and dirt but had done nothing about it. While St. Louis had been the first American city to attack the problem vigorously, it remained for Pittsburgh, the seat of heavy industry, bituminous coal production, and deep river valleys to dramatize this great community improvement. Pittsburgh has emerged from the Modern Industrial Dark Age to prove that dirt, smoke, and smog are not a necessary part of a Twentieth Century industrial city.

Pittsburgh's central business district has long been known as the Golden Triangle. Toward the close of World War II it certainly belied its name. Grimy, composed in part of many old buildings, strangled by traffic and a lack of parking facilities, it had all the appearance of an area in decline. Not one new building of any importance had been constructed in it during the preceding twenty years, and the lower Triangle area was particularly decadent. Here at the historical Point was the site of Forts Duquesne and Pitt, here the first settlers located close by Fort Pitt. Through the efforts of several of the Conference sponsors, Governor Edward Martin, in October of 1945, announced the intention of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to build here an historic park. For over 100 years this had been talked about, but it remained for this generation to bring it about.

Today, all of the land for the park, 36 acres in extent, has been acquired, much construction has been carried out, and the aim is to have it all completed for the bicentennial of the founding of Pittsburgh beginning in November 1958. Where once there stood old lofts and other commercial buildings, a railroad yard and freight house and elevated tracks, one now can see acres of green grass, awaiting consummation of the final plan.

History was made at the Point. Here in 1758 the destiny of the United States as an English-speaking nation was decided, and the course of empires changed. In 1946 a new kind of history was made in the area adjoining Point State Park. Pittsburgh men pioneered the
principle of redevelopment of blighted commercial areas in older cities. As a result, Gateway Center came into being. Refusing to be stopped by skepticism, by selfish opposition, and uncharted legal paths, these men brought into being the concept of office and commercial buildings set in a parklike surrounding. Gateway Center with three large office buildings completed and three more in design stands today as a monument to their efforts and as a challenge to other cities to reclaim blighted commercial areas.

The principles and policies pioneered and proven in Gateway Center led to the great redevelopment project by Jones & Laughlin Steel Corporation on the South Side of the city and have laid the pattern for the redevelopment of the Lower Hill. Here 105 acres of blighted slum area are being redeveloped for use in part as a County-City public auditorium and new housing, to be accomplished by the combining of public and private funds. The community has again pioneered the Pittsburgh concept that such a combination can be had under able and bold leadership in the public interest. New housing will also rise in the area, and those who now live in crowded, unsanitary buildings will be rehoused under healthy, livable, and better social conditions.

The traffic strangle-hold on the central city is being loosened through the construction of great modern highway arteries and parking facilities. With the United States “on wheels” some new principles of public responsibility have necessarily evolved. One of these is the responsibility on the part of a community to help solve the parking problem.

In Pittsburgh we have developed and accepted the theory that parking facilities are an extension of the street surface. From the days of the Roman military roads, down through the era of the English turnpikes and early colonial highways, the responsibility for laying out and constructing highways has been accepted as an unquestioned public responsibility. Early patents for land in Pennsylvania provided for so many acres of land plus 6 per cent allowance for roads.

At the request of the Allegheny Conference, the Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association studied the parking problem in the Golden Triangle. Its report, submitted in 1946, recommended “that a municipal parking authority be created,” and that “special State Legislation be secured.” The recommendations in the report, approved by the Confer-
ence, resulted in the passage of enabling legislation permitting municipalities to create parking authorities. No other such legislation existed at that time in the United States. Since then, a number of other states have passed similar legislation. Pittsburgh continued to be the Twentieth Century pioneer.

Appointed by the Mayor and City Council of Pittsburgh, the Public Parking Authority has constructed two open-deck garages, has one 6-story underground garage under Mellon Square in construction, and has awarded contracts for the construction of two additional open-deck garages. Two other garage facilities are now under study. All in the Triangle, they will provide an approximate total of 5400 car spaces, when completed. The Authority, as time permits, will turn its attention to other areas in the city such as the North Side, Oakland, and East Liberty.

An important segment of the comprehensive development program has been that of highway improvement. Such major river bridges as the Elizabeth, Dravosburg, Rankin, and Tarentum Bridges have been completed and the Fleming Park Bridge is in construction. Allegheny County has long been known for the number and beauty of its bridges, yet it remained for the new Penn-Lincoln Parkway to capture the imagination of the public. True, the Pennsylvania Turnpike blazed the trail for the construction of limited-access toll highways over the nation, but the Penn-Lincoln Parkway is the first non-toll limited-access highway to be constructed in Pennsylvania. Twenty-seven miles in length, four to six lanes in width, when finally completed it will cost about $125,000,000. A berm on this highway, not far from "Braddock's Field," is probably as wide as the original Braddock Road.

Yet, as the slender thread of Braddock's Road is paled by the great broad band of the Parkway, so air travel is blazing new trails of travel. As the automobile needs parking facilities in our cities, so air travel needs adequate terminal facilities. To meet the needs of this expanding mode of travel, the County has constructed at the new Greater Pittsburgh Airport an ultra modern terminal building and facilities. Open for public use on May 11, 1952, the field and terminal area represent a total cost of public funds of $30,000,000.

Another front along which the community has moved is that of stream pollution abatement. Through the mechanism of the County
Sanitary Authority, 66 communities have joined to participate in the construction of collector sewers and a sewage disposal plant. With construction plans completed this spring, it is anticipated that construction may start during 1955. When the project is completed the three rivers will cease to be open sewers and they will have been reclaimed as places for public recreation.

Mechanization has made living easier and lightened the work of those who toil with their hands. Such progress, however, is creating more leisure time and the problem of what people shall do with it. Recreation is one of the answers. Through the Recreation, Conservation and Park Council of the Conference and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, several large recreation and conservation areas have been acquired; a dozen new parklets have been built in the City; a Children’s Zoo is now part of Highland Park; the City has built new swimming pools, and a number of suburban communities have acquired park facilities.

Civic Light Opera under the stars has come to Pittsburgh, and the first community-owned educational television station went on the air last April. The community is still faced with the challenge of providing funds to maintain it. While culture can never be bought, this medium for presentation of selective educational and cultural subjects needs greater community support.

Great expansion in educational facilities in the colleges and universities in Pittsburgh has kept pace with the more mundane improvements. The University of Pittsburgh, Duquesne University, Carnegie Institute of Technology, Mt. Mercy College, and Pennsylvania College for Women have all acquired new facilities and brought outstanding educators to their faculties. The University of Pittsburgh’s new Graduate School of Public Health and the great expansions of the Medical Center stamp this city as one of the nation’s outstanding health centers. Recently the City of Pittsburgh has completely revamped and modernized its Public Health Department. Now in construction is the 2000 bed home for the indigent sick. It is being built by the County Institutional District and should be completed by the early part of 1956.

Research is important to industry and medicine. For years, Pittsburgh has been well known as the home of the Mellon Institute of Industrial Research. Here, other important research laboratories have
been located. The past few years have seen new important laboratories established here or in process. Such corporations as Westinghouse Electric Corporation, United States Steel Corporation, Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company, and Koppers Company are constructing new facilities; and Jones & Laughlin Steel Corporation is moving along similar lines. The Pittsburgh area will have over 44 important research laboratories in the next few years. Probably no area in the country can show such a wealth of research facilities. Recently, the City received national prominence in the field of medical research by the work at the University of Pittsburgh in research on polio.

Most visitors who have come to Pittsburgh to see and marvel at its great change, asked this question, "How are you doing it?" Here again, Pittsburgh's ingenuity stands forth. There is no set pattern. Each problem has been approached and solved by what appears to be the best method. Some projects have been the responsibility of public agencies, some have been carried out by private interests, and in some cases it has been a jointure of private and public initiative and funds.

Point Park is a State project financed with State funds; Gateway Center is a privately financed operation, working with the Pittsburgh Urban Redevelopment Authority; the Penn-Lincoln Parkway is a State project financed with State funds with Federal, City and County assistance. The Fort Pitt Tunnel, under Mt. Washington, will be built by the Pennsylvania Tunnel Commission and financed by tolls. The Jones & Laughlin Steel expansion has been accomplished by the company with their own funds with the aid of the Urban Redevelopment Authority. The Lower Hill Redevelopment, a project of the Redevelopment Authority is to be accomplished by a combination of public and private funds with Federal assistance. A joint City-County Public Auditorium Authority has been created to build the Civic Arena.

The program of the Parking Authority has been financed by the sale of revenue bonds. The only City money involved has been the loan of parking meter receipts by the City to the Authority. The underground garage at Mellon Square is made possible by the grant of funds by three Mellon Foundations to the City to purchase the land for a surface park. The City in turn has granted the below surface rights to the Authority for garage purposes. The same Mellon Foundations are paying for the cost of construction of the park.
The program of the County Sanitary Authority will be financed by
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Important to the success of a number of the projects has been the
use of the Authority mechanism. The Allegheny County Sanitary Au-
thority as the name implies was created by the County of Allegheny.
The City and County joined to create the Public Auditorium Author-
ty. The City created both the Parking Authority and the Urban Re-
development Authority. Since no municipal authority may pledge
the credit of the municipality, the County, or the State, the use of the
Authority mechanism financed by revenue bonds has made possible
the construction now of a number of projects that would have been
held back for years due to financing problems where the public credit
would have been involved.

Recreation facilities expansion has been carried out with private and
public funds. The great expansion at the institutions of higher learn-
ing is being accomplished through private funds.

When the comprehensive community program was proposed in
1945, probably no one could see all the beneficial results that would
accrue to the community. Such structures as the Mellon-Steel Build-
ing, the Alcoa Building, the Carlton House, Bigelow Apartments,
United Engineering and Foundry, Blaw-Knox, and Kaufmann’s Depart-
ment Store expansion were not anticipated; Gateway Center with the
three Equitable Life Assurance buildings and the proposed State Of-
face Building, the Peoples First National Bank & Trust Company
Building, and the Bell Telephone Company Building were beyond the
horizon. Mellon Square Park was not then on the drawing board.
Who could foresee as the result of smoke control that hundreds of
thousands of dollars would be spent in building cleaning and remod-
eled store fronts, and the $1,500,000,000 that has been spent on indus-
trial expansion in the four-county area.

But greater than all of these physical changes, who could have
foreseen the change of attitudes on the part of the people of Pitts-
burgh. The “Big Story” in Pittsburgh is not that of brick and mortar,
of dollars and things, but the changed attitude of people toward their
city. No longer do Pittsburghers, when away grudgingly admit they
are from Pittsburgh, and that they came “clean” from that city.

Here in the past ten years has evolved the philosophy that busi-
ness and politics can work together for the community's good. Here public officials have been in the vanguard of the leadership, along with top leaders in business who have accepted their responsibility for the City's future, with the same interest and zeal as for their own business. Here public and private money have been joined to bring into being projects for the public good. Here busy citizens holding important positions in industry and commerce give of their time and experience to serve on non-paid boards of public authorities as well as on Boards of hospitals and other civic agencies. Here the flame of civic zeal and responsibility burns as strongly today at it did ten years ago when from a smoldering ember it blazed forth into a flaming beacon seen over the nation. As Fortune Magazine said in 1947, "Pittsburgh is the test of industrialism everywhere to renew itself, to rebuild on the gritty ruins of the past, a society more equitable, more spacious, more in the human scale."

Yes, Twentieth Century Pittsburghers have pioneered that test, and history is being made here!

Lest the past successes lull the community into a state of self-satisfied complacency, it is well to consider the road ahead. Many of the projects that have been mentioned here are either well started or at the point of beginning. There still remains much to be done before Point Park is completed; final grading, completion of slope paving, construction of the fountain, building of the bastions of Fort Pitt, and demolition of the Point and Manchester Bridges.

These two bridges cannot be removed until the Fort Pitt and Fort Duquesne Bridges, and the traffic interchange between them have been completed. The timing for the completion of the Fort Pitt Tunnels is dependent upon the completion date for the Fort Pitt Bridge. Scheduled for completion by the fall of 1957, the date can only be achieved by constant attention to the construction schedule. Related to the use of the Fort Duquesne Bridge will be the extension of the Ohio River Boulevard into the Triangle.

November, 1958, should present one of Pittsburgh's greatest opportunities to tell its story to the nation. The celebration of Pittsburgh's Bi-centennial can either be a puny, run-of-the-mine celebration, or it can be made an event of profound dignified significance. If it is to be the latter, and who would question that it should be, broad basic
planning for the event should be seriously started in 1955.

Essential to the Bi-centennial date will be the completion of the Penn-Lincoln Parkway from Brady Street Interchange to the Fort Pitt Bridge. Completion of the Lower Hill project, at least the Public Auditorium, will add to the significance of the event. An integral part of the Lower Hill project is the Crosstown Thorofare, the completion of which will contribute greatly toward the solution of Pittsburgh's traffic problem.

A project relating to the traffic problem and connecting with the Crosstown Thorofare is the proposed Northside High Level Bridge. Long talked of, it has been regarded as something for construction a number of years in the future, because of the financial problem. In order that it may be made available for use in the more immediate future, it is suggested that serious consideration be given to the building of it as a facility to be financed by toll charges. At the same time, a limited access highway should be planned to connect it with the McKnight Road. This limited access highway might well take the form of a divided highway with the north bound movement along the hillside east of East Street and south bound movement along the hillside west of East Street.

Another major highway project which has been planned but not yet started is the Etna-Sharpsburg Highway. Of extreme importance, as planned it will avoid the present congested street pattern in these towns and also avoid a bad grade crossing situation.

There remains the construction of the great system of collector sewers and sewage disposal plant by the Sanitary Authority as well as several lesser sewage collector and disposal projects, planned but not yet started.

The parking problem has been dented but not solved. The Parking Authority still has much to be done on this problem.

Related to this matter, in fact an integral part, not fully realized in Pittsburgh, is a solution of the mass transportation problem. Traffic, parking, and mass transportation are all parts of an over-all problem consisting not so much of the moving of cars, as of moving people. The Pittsburgh community must face up to this fact and give the same serious consideration to the mass transit problem as it has to highways and parking.
Those concerned with housing and urban redevelopment now realize that to meet the problem of low cost housing, the community cannot wait on wholesale redevelopment. Much value remains in older housing in many areas, that can be salvaged and reclaimed by a program of housing conservation and renewal. The City of Pittsburgh recently enacted a modern housing code. Properly administered and enforced, the code should help materially in providing good, sanitary, and safe housing for lower income people.

A solution of the best way to handle a number of problems county-wide in nature, must be found. Since the whole is only equal to the sum of its parts, the problems common to all the parts must be solved by all the parts as a whole. The report of the Metropolitan Study Commission to be submitted to the next session of the Legislature should have some interesting suggestions on this problem. If the entire County community is to keep abreast with the Central City, such problems as health and libraries must be treated on an over-all basis, the same as sewage and smoke abatement. A problem that is probably best understood by those in immediate contact with it is that of financing the operation of our general hospitals. The way it is handled today is totally unfair to those patients who pay their bills. Because there is no sound plan for providing for the charity load, the paying patient is paying more than he should. This is not the fault of the individual hospital, but rather because there is no public policy for assuming this charge. This problem is crying for a sound solution.

The great metropolitan areas continue to grow. This growth creates or amplifies certain problems. The community must address itself toward their solution. Lest one should become disheartened by the problems that remain to be solved, let us take whatever satisfaction there is in the knowledge that other communities have similar problems. Pittsburgh is a great city, composed of great people, as Pittsburgh has solved its problems in the past, we may be confident it will solve those of the future.