PITTSBURGH AS VIEWED FROM DOWN RIVER

Some Nineteenth Century Glimpses of the Growing City
Including a New Account of the 1884 Flood

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PART II

Pittsburgh as a Center of Boat Construction and Navigation Aids in Relation to Cargo Shipments

In the early nineteenth century years the bateaus, keel boats and flatboats built in Pittsburgh and at points on the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers carried to the downriver areas the many products offered for sale, as well as the many migrants who were seeking new homes.

Chalfant quotes the will of Joseph B. Ormsby, who in New Orleans on May 30, 1803, conveyed to his father, wealthy tavern-keeper and land-developer John Ormsby of Pittsburgh, "all the advantage I might derive from the sale of this cargo." She explains that "Pittsburgh storekeepers found the New Orleans market very important as an outlet for their excess produce . . . it was comparatively easy to float the produce down river, where it found a ready market under French prices. At the time of young Ormsby's last trip the Louisiana Purchase had just been signed, largely because of the demands of the upriver merchants for a permanent market in New Orleans. These same merchants had forced the French governor of New Orleans to reopen the market after a short closing in 1802 by threatening to take forcible possession of the city." 85

Hulbert quotes a record of Thaddeus Harris, written at Marietta on May 5, 1803: "There passed down the schooner 'Amity' of 193 tons, from Pittsburgh, and the ship 'Pittsburgh' of 275 tons burden, from the same place, laden with seventeen hundred barrels of flour, with the rest of her cargo in flat bottomed boats. In the evening the brig 'Mary Avery' of 130 tons, built at Marietta, set sail. These afforded an interesting spectacle to the inhabitants of this place, who

85 Ella Chalfant, A Goodly Heritage (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1955), 75, 76, 77.
saluted the vessels as they passed with three cheers, and by firing a small piece of ordnance from the bank.”

As the center of so much manufacture and commerce, situated on water which flowed on to the Gulf, it was inevitable that Pittsburgh should become a builder of boats and ships. Often the vessels and their cargoes were sold together. Kehl writes that in the earlier days of the century “The practice of selling vessels abroad or in our own Atlantic or Gulf ports... was commonplace among Pittsburgh merchants... because of the hazards of upstream navigation... Even after the New Orleans, the first steamboat built on western waters, was constructed in Pittsburgh in 1811 [by Nicholas J. Roosevelt], ships that left Western Pennsylvania for the Mississippi Valley did not return because of the navigation dangers involved... In 1817 the navigation obstacles were overcome... and the steamboat Enterprise completed the first upstream journey from the Gulf to Pittsburgh...”

Botanist John Bradbury records in his Travels that on January 5, 1812, he boarded at Natchez a steamboat from Pittsburgh which was a very handsome vessel of four hundred and ten tons burden, “impelled by a very powerful steam engine made in Pittsburgh, whence she had come in less than twenty days, although nineteen hundred miles distant.”

Invaluable contributions were made to this river commerce by Zadok Cramer, Pittsburgh publisher, in compiling his Navigator, first printed in 1801, which with many revisions was reissued to aid the boatmen and traders moving up and down the rivers. The 1811 edition observed that “many... are family boats, seeking places of settlement in these new countries, where their posterity may rest in safety, having all the necessaries, and many of the luxuries of life, where their children’s children may enjoy the rich and prolific productions of the land, without an over degree of toil or labour, where

87 Kehl,* 7-8. Joseph B. Doyle, 20th Century History of Steubenville and Jefferson County, Ohio (Chicago, 1910), 219, reports that the New Orleans’ maiden voyage downriver “left Pittsburgh on Sunday, October 20, arriving at Steubenville the same evening.”
88 Quoted by William F. Keller, The Nation’s Advocate (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1956), 134.
89 Copies of various editions are preserved in The Darlington Memorial Library and the Library of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania.

*Full citation for footnotes given in Part I is not repeated in Part II.
the climate is mild and the air salubrious, where each man is a prince in his own kingdom, and may without molestation enjoy the frugal fare of his humble cot . . . ."

Cramer's instructions for navigating the Ohio, commenting on channels, landmarks, shallows, other hazards, described these in the sequence of travel downstream, since that was the most frequent direction taken in the early part of the century. A typical entry: "Brown's Island. Channel close to Virginia shore for about 50 yards, thence directly toward the island." In addition to such guides, observations were made about towns, villages, and other objects of interest, as in the following selected items, taken mostly from the 1802 edition:

Georgetown . . . on the left bank just above the mouth of Little Beaver . . .
A few yards from the opposite shore . . . a spring rises from the bottom of the river, producing an oil similar to Seneca oil.
Willis's Creek [below Brown's Island, now called Will's Creek]. Just above the mouth of the creek on a rock under the hill, may be scraped up a fine white salt.
Steubenville. A land office is kept here for the sale of Congress lands in that district. The public mail passes through this town.
Mingo-town. In low water the navigation of the Ohio is difficult to the old Mingo-town.90
Charlestown [Wellsburg] . . . on the Virginia side at the junction of Buffaloe Creek . . . commanding the trade of a rich settlement around it . . .
Boats may be procured here at Pittsburgh prices.
Wheeling . . . a post town . . . boats can frequently go from here when they cannot from higher up the river. Boats are also made here.

Cumings' Western Pilot, which took over the function of the Navigator in later years, summarized that "Between Pittsburgh and the mouth of the Ohio there are one hundred considerable islands, besides a great number of towheads and sand bars . . . . Tributary rivers and creeks, to the number of seventy-five, empty into the Ohio between Pittsburgh and its mouth." 91 This handbook, which was published periodically, was printed in Cincinnati.

Baldwin writes that James O'Hara "built at Pittsburgh an unknown number of ships and sent them to sea laden with western products." He adds that "From 1811 steamboat building was one of

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90 That condition continued into the present century. The senior author's uncle, F. A. Chapman of Wellsburg, West Virginia, drove a Rambler automobile across the Ohio River at Cox's Riffle, near Mingo, on August 6, 1908, at the low-water stage of that summer. The government dams, which now provide a navigable river depth at all seasons, had not yet been built on that stretch of river. The high-wheeled car of that vintage, laden with three of Mr. Chapman's fellow townsmen, had little difficulty in negotiating the gravelly river bottom at that point. The event was reported in local newspapers, and photographs were preserved.
91 Cumings, 1845 edition, 7.
Pittsburgh's most important industries, and it is probable that about half the western boats were constructed in Pittsburgh yards." In 1820, the Steubenville-built Besaleel Wells, a sidewheeler with a brick chimney, required five days to reach Pittsburgh on her second effort to do so. Other Steubenville-built craft soon made Pittsburgh calls more successfully.

The Pittsburgh Gazette of October 22, 1824, observed that "Boat building has never been prosecuted with more industry and success here than during the present season. The new Steam Boats Gen. LaFayette and Herald will, in the course of eight or ten days, be finished in a very superior style, and the enterprising Messrs. Harts will launch, in a short time, a Steam Boat of about 170 tons. The Pittsburgh and Pennsylvania . . . are now in port, ready for the fall trade." On June 17, 1825, that paper noted: "The DeWitt Clinton. This is the name judiciously selected by Messrs. Allen & Grant & Co., of this city, for their elegant new Steam Boat, of about 200 tons burthen, nearly ready to be launched."

The editor of the Gazette, on January 14, 1836, wrote: "we this morning counted at our shores thirty-six steam boats, many of them of a large size, and five or six of them completely new and unfinished. This is a larger number than we have ever before seen here."

Pittsburgh in 1840 alone constructed about one hundred boats built of iron, most of them for use on canals. Ocean vessels of iron were soon being constructed. Way notes that the Valley Forge, launched at Pittsburgh in 1839, for the St. Louis run, "was the first metal hull boat, built of native iron, to be constructed in the United States. She was a lonesome pioneer on the Western Waters."

Davis found that "By 1856 Pittsburgh was far ahead of its boat-building competitor towns on the Ohio River [Cincinnati, New Albany, Louisville, Jeffersonville] . . . From 1852 to 1857 there were built 446 vessels of various kinds . . . and 49 barges."

George wrote of the period circa 1857 that "The Monongahela River front was more than a mile in length. The wharf was paved with cobble stones . . . . Boats departing were laden with a great variety of merchandise . . . . Most of the boats also carried passengers; on the trip gambling was the pastime; the river was infested by a class

92 Baldwin, 148, 161, 190.
93 Doyle, 220-222.
94 Baldwin, 191.
95 Frederick Way, Jr., "The Iron-Hull Steamboat Valley Forge," WPHM, XLIV, 137.
96 Davis, "Greater Pittsburgh," 34.
of men known as blacklegs (gamblers); robbery and murder were not uncommon . . . . I was curious enough to count the number of steamboats moored along the wharf and found the number to be one hundred and twenty four . . . .” 97

Continuing, Davis reports that there were “constructed between 1858 and 1875 some 649 steamboats with an aggregate tonnage of 155,253 . . . . Pittsburgh was the builder of the largest number of steamboats of any city in the world . . . . Standard rigging, wood, iron, copper, and every article was of local fashioning. The vessels were beautifully modelled, finished in the best style of 1850, staunch and seaworthy in all respects . . . . Pittsburgh enrolled on the custom house books more steamboats than any other of the . . . . districts on the Ohio River [Wheeling, Cincinnati, Louisville].” 98 The downriver dwellers must have watched with great interest when all of the new boats and ships passed downstream on their maiden voyages.

The usual method of carrying coal, a major export then as now, to the lower markets, was to load it into square-cornered, flat-bottomed boats, a little over one hundred feet long, by 16 to 20 feet wide, and about six feet deep. Later, these were pushed by steam “towboats,” of new types which appeared about 1851.

Of the Civil War interlude, Snelsire records that “By the end of 1862, over 5000 men were employed directly in the production of iron-clad war vessels in the Pittsburgh area. Within the year ten foundries in the city were converted from normal civil production to the production of naval machinery and turrets for the war vessels in Pittsburgh and for the use of the other cities in the Union producing warships. The nine warships produced in the Pittsburgh area did not constitute a large per cent of the total Union fleet, but most of the iron cladding for the entire Union Navy was produced in the area, as was much of the engine machinery and the guns on those vessels.” 99

Civilian interests were served along with the military demands. On January 11, 1864, while visiting Pittsburgh, George McCandless Porter wrote as follows in his diary from which other extracts have been quoted previously:

See Mr. Logan today, one of the owners of the Coal Bluff . . . . John Porter and John Liggett call in and we talk on the project of buying one of the new barges built down the river and about conclude to buy one . . . . Pay off the S. B. Larimer for towing the “Eagle” to Wheeling on her last trip.

98 Davis, “Greater Pittsburgh,” 12, 33, 36, 37.
99 Snelsire, 24, 28, 29.
The hazards which awaited the coal traffic emanating from Pittsburgh, as well as its volume, are reflected in a news item printed in the Hancock Courier (of New Cumberland, West Virginia) on July 3, 1896:

“The coal fleet met with disaster Saturday night at Brown's Island. [Low water was a contributing cause.] The Acorn sunk a coal boat in the channel and the Volunteer a barge on the bar. The Joseph B. Williams a coal boat. Sunday morning the Frank Gilmore sunk three barges and one coal boat and grounded another boat. The John W. Ailes to prevent wrecking her fleet grounded it at the head of the island. The Tornado tore out the boat in the channel sunk by the Acorn . . . . the coal lost amounted to 150,000 bushels.”

The extent to which river commerce, with the attendant need for construction of new boats and barges, continued throughout the century has received comment in earlier sections of this article.

**Pittsburgh's River Stages and Weather**

Since the eighteenth century the residents of the Ohio Valley had looked to the tributaries which joined at Pittsburgh as the sources of the good river stages on which they depended for transportation, as well as for the floods or periods of low water which plagued them at times each year. Pittsburgh thus appeared at the point of origin, however innocent, of things both bad and good. Pittsburgh clearly could not be blamed for the weather, but the city was the place where records were kept, and it was the source of reports about the extremes of rainfall or drought, heat or cold, from which they were suffering, and the effects thereof on the whole region.

Cramer's 1802 Navigator commented that “The best seasons for navigating the Ohio are in spring and autumn. The spring season commences at the breaking up of the ice, which generally happens about the middle of February, and continues good for about three months. The fall season generally commences in October, and continues until about the 1st of December, when the ice begins to form.” A vivid account appears in Nolan's quotation from Andrew Shelbourne's report of his trip down the Allegheny and Ohio rivers in 1818: “Our pilot had the misfortune to run our raft on to Deadman's

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100 Appreciation is expressed to Charles Shetler, Curator of the Regional History Collection of the West Virginia University Library, for preserving and making available the files of old West Virginia Panhandle newspapers and other records on which many quoted facts are based.
ripple, fifteen miles below Pittsburgh, about an hour before daylight . . . . after some hours labor we proceeded on . . . . By the time we got to Steubenville . . . . the river was almost covered with ice.”

The Gazette often carried such items as these: (November 14, 1823) “The river rose several feet the night before last and is now in fine order for navigation . . . . Two Steam Boats have already departed . . . . The bustle of business, in the neighborhood of the wharfs and commission houses, is quite cheering.” (August 27, 1824) “During the interruption of Steam Boat navigation for a few weeks past, we have discontinued our usual notice of boat news . . . . it may be supposed by some of our readers abroad that the commerce of the place is suspended. That, however, is far from the fact. A very brisk river trade is kept up, in keel and flat boats.” (November 23, 1830) “From the quantity of rain which has fallen within the last thirty-six hours, we confidently predict a very handsome rise of water, within four or five days. Western merchants, now in Philadelphia, may, we think, rely upon steam boat navigation from this place during the first two weeks of the next month — we venture to give this assurance, because we are aware of the anxiety which is generally felt upon this subject, by gentlemen who have a long journey westward before them.”

There were great floods in 1810, 1816 and 1832. The Gazette of February 14, 1832, under the heading of “The Inundation,” said that “On the 5th of February, it commenced raining, and continued to rain, with slight interruptions, until the night of the 9th instant . . . . our rivers commenced rising and continued to rise regularly and rapidly until about 9 o’clock P.M. on . . . . the 10th instant, when they were higher than had been known by any living resident of this city or neighborhood . . . . The freshet of November, 1810, commonly called ‘pumpkin flood,’ has been, heretofore, known as the highest which has occurred within the memory of any of our citizens . . . . the recent flood exceeded it about twenty-six inches . . . . During the whole of Friday last, great anxiety was felt for the safety of the aqueduct over the Allegheny . . . . The whole of the low ground of the boroughs of the North Liberties, and Allegheny, and the greater portion of that part of the City of Pittsburgh, north of Liberty Street, were inundated.” On the 17th the editor added, “So far as we know, the injury done by the recent rise of water has been unprecedented. Big Beaver, we are informed, was six feet higher than it has ever been, within the recollections of the oldest residents. At Wheeling, the Ohio was six feet

higher than in November, 1810. The damage sustained there was very great.”

A glimpse of the effects of winter weather on river travel and river traffic is seen from 1864 entries made by George McCandless Porter of New Cumberland, West Virginia, in his diary from which other quotations have been made above:

January 1,

Mr. Smith arrives by the noon train from Wheeling — with one ear frozen while crossing the river. The river fills with floating ice all formed in the last six hours. Mr. Campbell and Mr. Thayer call in during the afternoon. The former has an ear frozen returning home. Fix up my cellar windows to save my vegetables. It promises to be the coldest night for twenty years.

January 2 —

Our thermometer is out of repair, but our next door neighbors report only 6 degrees below this morning. The buckwheat batter froze on the fender last night before a large fire.

The River is full of ice this morning with every prospect of a freeze up. There is a large Number of Coal and other boats — tow boats — &c. caught by this sudden raid from the North Pole, and the amount of property at the mercy of the ice is very great.

Both summers and winters brought their hazards. In 1854 the weather was dry for most of the spring and summer, and no boats could leave the wharfs because of low water. Great stocks of coal were in stockpiles waiting for transport, along with other products which should have moved. In 1855, another hot dry summer, goods remained on the wharfs while people complained that river improvement to prevent such conditions was a necessity and spoke of turning to the United States government for help.

In 1856 the winter months were very cold, so that the rivers were frozen solid and boats could not move for that reason. In 1857 the cotton mills of Allegheny were closed because they could not obtain cotton from the South. It was reported, too, that the poor of Cincinnati and Louisville had suffered during the winter because the closing of the river by ice had raised the price of coal beyond their means. In 1860 there was a “Great Flood” in September, and in 1865 the famous “Barrel Flood” resulted in thousands of oil barrels being swept away.

The barrels, lumber, and other things washed away from their upstream owners year by year were found, and sometimes returned, by the residents who lived down the Ohio. Lyman Stedman, residing on Brown’s Island, noted such problems in his 1881 diary:

July 16 — Cunningham of Allegheny here, claiming to represent A. Cook & Sons of P’t Mill, Allegheny, owners of raft of round pine logs on the head [of the island].
July 19 — Thayer and Mr. Omsler\textsuperscript{102} of Allegheny here — the latter claims the large float on the "head" & has engaged Thayer to take it off.

The Stedman diary makes many references to the dependence of steamboat traffic on favorable river stages, and to the hazards of ice and weather. Thus in 1880:

Dec. 1. Ice blockade gave way and reopened navigation to Pitt.  
Dec. 2. Steamboats passing down this morning.

Again in 1881:

Jan. 25. Ice Partially run out & Some 40 Tow Boats with their fleets passed down yest. & today.  
Feb. 11. River rose 10 ft. last night . . . Allegheny ice came down about midnight.

There was a similar story in 1882:

Dec. 12. River rising. Ice Bridge on Ohio Side left about 4 PM.  
Dec. 13. River full of Tow Boats and coal barges. Some 2,000,000 Bu Coal passed down.

And in 1883:

Jan. 20. River rising — warm and raining. Ice started out at 7½ AM but not far — finally ran out at 11 AM.  
Jan. 21. River full of floating ice. The "W J. Begley" passed down with her tow of coal Boats — She left Pitts. last August — "Monitor" passed up.  
Feb. 5. River rose 10 ft last night & rising all day & full of Allegheny ice interspersed with wrecks of Coal Barges — Bridges — Ferry Boats — Log & Board rafts — we caught 13 logs, a doz. boards — 2 Bbls Benzine & 1 empty Bbl.  
Dec. 25. Christmas. River rose Suddenly some 10 ft last night. & 6 or 8 more today.  
Dec. 29. The "Towboats" are taking down another large run of coal.

The most remembered flood of the latter part of the century, however, especially downriver, was that of 1884. \textit{The Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette} of Tuesday, February 5, carried a warning from the Washington office of the U. S. Signal Corps: "Look out for the Big Flood That's Coming . . . Heavy rains have fallen in all the States of the Ohio Valley which will cause a dangerous flood . . . ." On the 6th the paper reported that "yesterday the waters began to rise."

On Thursday the 7th the first page of the \textit{Gazette} and several other pages were mainly devoted to flood news. "The water was rushing in from every creek . . . . all signs had failed . . . . the water

\textsuperscript{102} Diffenbacher's 1884 Directory, 687, lists James Omslear, lumberman, 641 Ohio Street. The pertinent directories do not identify Cunningham, Thayer, nor A. Cook & Sons, although there was a J. W. Cook, who was a lumber dealer.
was . . . in the lower streets of both cities [Pittsburgh and Allegheny] and kept advancing steadily . . . . the street car tracks were covered . . . . The water began to flow over the floors of the cars as the horses were urged through . . . . cakes of ice began to bump against the cars . . . . The water swept across Penn Avenue at every street from Sixth Street to the Point." Both editorially and in a news story the paper reported the Mayor's appointment of a representative committee to devise means and methods of relief. Commercial and industrial losses were heavy. News stories of the preceding day's experience in downriver towns brought from East Liverpool the headline "potteries submerged," from Steubenville the report of "sixty acres submerged, C. and P. tracks six feet under water," and from Wheeling the forecast that "a flood as great as the famous one of 1832 is expected."

On Friday the 8th the Gazette printed from Pittsburgh the information that "the flood reached its highest point at 10 o'clock Wednesday night," and Thursday reports from Steubenville that "The river reached 49 feet, being several inches above the mark of the 1832 rise . . . . Thirteen thousand kegs of nails of the Jefferson Iron Works were submerged," and from Wheeling the summation, "river 51 feet and 6 inches and rising slowly."

The Stedman diary reflects in detail how this giant flood appeared to a farmer who with his family was marooned on the home island in midstream, with no way of learning in advance how much more water was coming down the river. It was survived, but the consequences of this February flood kept him busy throughout March and April and on into May. At the same time the regular routines of farm management had to be carried on. Selected extracts from the daily diary make an interesting story:

Feb. 6. River rose some 10 ft last night & rising all day at the rate of 10 inches an hour. At the top of the Bank in front of the house at 4 P.M. & inside the dooryard fence at 5 o'clock. Removed everything out of the cellar except 8 or 10 Bu. potatoes & Some apples in bulk. Tore up one carpet in parlor bedroom & commenced carrying some things up stairs. 6 o'clock night closed around us anxious & filled with gloomy forebodings with the angry waters creeping up 8 inches an hour. All sat up watching — Audie [son] reporting every hour — at midnight 6 in, an hour but raining throughout the night.

Feb. 7. At daylight 4 in. & Slowly Slacking until 1 P.M. when it culminated at 3 ft. above the flood of 1832, reaching 47 ft. — 5 P.M. the water began to recede when within 2 ft. of our 1st floor.

Feb. 8. The water fell some 20 inches during the night — this can be fitly denominated

The Great Flood of 1884 and O the destruction of property and suffering in the whole Ohio
Valley is wholly unprecedented in the history of the country.

Feb. 9. Can begin to see what damage the water has done to us — it has put an immense pile of debris of every description against the upper side of orchard & along the O. bank against the trees — Logs, boards, houses, &c. — has swept away a great deal of fencing — our magnificent pile of coal at the head & commenced cutting a hole in the upper point of the Island — & the banks are caving badly.

Feb. 10. The C. & P. Road have their forces at work repairing their track — The water was 4 ft deep on the track at Brown's & we have had no mail except by skiff from Steub. since last Wed.

Feb. 12. Repairing fences. From down river reports the flood has increased in volume as it rushes to the sea, attaining the enormous height of 72 ft. at Cincinnati — Towns & farms have been completely devastated & great destruction & suffering is apparent. Congress has appropriated 300,000 $ Ohio 200,000 $ other municipal corporations and private individuals are pouring in contributions by the thousands for the flood sufferers — No parallel to this flood has ever occurred since the Ohio Valley was a howling wilderness.

Feb. 15. Froze hard last night — gathering up Oil Bbls & c. hanging meat in smokehouse.

Feb. 22. Cleaning up drift above pig-lot. Kimberland103 landed a barge from Pitt hunting poplar boards.

Feb. 27. Overhauling drift on corn-field. Found another Iron Oil Tank on Ohio Bank.

March 1. 8 above 0. Wintry. A letter from Jno. Edie “Batchelor” says Mellon, Shelton & Co. of Freedom, Pa. claims the iron oil tank in corn field.


March 5. A letter from Mellon, Shelton & Co. claiming to have lost 8 Tanks &c.

March 8. A letter from Mellon, Shelton & Co. asking us to ship Tank &c. to them.


April 7. W. T. Jewett of Witchita, Kan. came this ev. — after coming through to Cin. with the corn of 31 cars from Sedgwick Co. Kan. to O. Valley flood Sufferers.

Apr. 9. S. B. “Willie Austen” chartered by J. Work104 here with Power of Atty. from different Lumber Men in & above Pitt to gather drift timber. Claimed from us 14 logs for which pd us 10 $ & we sold them 8 logs for 25 $.


May 17. Assorted & piled some lumber in AM. Sold & delivered to Alxn Cole—


104 Possibly W. H. Work, carpenter, Homewood (Diffenbacher's 1884 Directory, 953).

105 Probably Stephen Rogers, carpenter, 32 Water Street. Perhaps of Armstrong & Co. Coal & Coke, 29th and Liberty. Several Armstrongs were listed as carpenters (Diffenbacher's 1884 Directory, 760, 105).
man, Agent, 1 white pine gunwale 320 ft boards measure 6.40 & 3 oak Stringers 2.25 — 8.65 p’d

In 1885 Stedman was still recording his daily observations —

April 2. Allegheny Ice passing
April 4. "Youhigheny" [sic] ice passing down.

Pittsburgh as a Center of Enlightenment

As the metropolis of the Upper Ohio Valley, Pittsburgh inevitably became the center of literary, professional, educational, scientific, cultural and religious interests for the region.

The Pittsburgh Gazette had been issued by John Scull since 1786.106 The Pittsburger whose writings first attained national recognition was Hugh Henry Brackenridge, whose Modern Chivalry appeared in four volumes between 1792 and 1813. His son Henry Marie Brackenridge, who opened his Pittsburgh law office in 1815, was already well known down the Ohio and Mississippi. Keller notes that “in 1811, Henry Marie had a rare adventure . . . . with the fur-trading expedition of Manuel Lisa . . . . in New Orleans . . . . Henry Marie met Zadok Cramer of Pittsburgh . . . . The result was the volume entitled Views of Louisiana; Together with a Journal of a Voyage up the Missouri River, in 1811, published by the firm of Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum in Pittsburgh in 1814.”107 In 1834 Recollections of Persons and Places in the West was published in Pittsburgh by John I. Kay.

Keller notes the many contributions of Cramer, who “began the printing of schoolbooks, including the primer and the catechism. No longer were the arithmetics and the grammars and the readers carted laboriously over the mountains . . . . to Pittsburgh and neighboring settlements. Cramer soon was in a position to supply schoolbooks to retailers throughout the west.”108 Baldwin describes him as a “New Jersey Quaker, born in 1773, who settled in Pittsburgh in 1800. He began as a bookbinder, soon acquired a bookstore and circulating library . . . . he carried music instruction books, dictionaries and law books . . . . playing cards and patent medicines.”109 It is interesting to note that printing presses were built locally. Cramer’s 1817 Navigator

106 Margaret Pearson Bothwell notes that his long-lived daughter-in-law, Anna Spencer Scull, moved to Steubenville in 1882, WPHM, XLVI, 72.
108 Keller, Nation’s Advocate, 137.
109 Baldwin, 161, 162.
said that "among the ingenious mechanics of Steubenville is a Mr. Ross, who makes printing presses of an excellent kind."

Hoping for business from upstream, John M. Goodenow, attorney and counselor-at-law of Steubenville, ran a card in several *Pittsburgh Gazette* issues of 1824, calling attention to his availability for handling legal matters in eastern Ohio counties. Similarly, in the fall of 1829 John C. Wright and David E. Harbaugh of New Lisbon, Ohio, were announcing through the *Gazette* that they were available as attorneys and counselors-at-law for practice in that state.

By 1810 Pittsburgh, with its First, Second, Bethel, Chartiers, Montour and other nearby Presbyterian congregations, and its far-flung Synod of Pittsburgh, was the center of Presbyterianism in America. There were also strong Methodist, German Evangelical, Protestant Episcopal, and Roman Catholic churches. The next twenty-five years added the Third Presbyterian, Unitarian, Baptist, "Christian" and African Methodist Episcopal congregations. The Western Missionary Society was formed in 1802 and the Pittsburgh Bible Society in 1815. Rodef Shalom Temple grew out of a society founded in 1846. The First United Presbyterian Church was organized in 1858. Downriver dwellers of these same faiths and interests read and heard about the establishment of these leadership groups in the growing center at the forks of the river. They made individual and group visits to the city to worship and to confer with religious leaders.

Pittsburgh already was recognized as enough of a center of education that the Transylvania University Medical Faculty of Lexington, Kentucky, inserted an advertisement in *Gazette* issues of August 1823: "The lectures in this institution will commence on the first Monday in November . . . as hitherto the Professors will take the currency of this state in payment." In similar advertisements beginning in September of that year, the University of the State of New York, College of Physicians and Surgeons, announced lectures beginning on November 3. By 1829 the Medical College of Ohio in Cincinnati was making through the *Gazette* a bid for students from the Pittsburgh area. In 1831 Jefferson Medical College of Philadelphia also began to advertise in Pittsburgh that its classes had "hospital connections." This newspaper regularly carried the cards of several dentists and doctors, including a "surgeon and accoucheur."

In 1813 the Pittsburgh Theater opened, and in 1817 the Thespian Society was formed by students of the Academy.110 A Chemical and

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Physiological Society was established in 1813, the Pittsburgh Philosophical Society in 1817, and the Pittsburgh Mechanics Institute in 1830. Lewis, in writing about artist Russell Smith, notes that “The Pittsburgh Theatre, known as Old Drury, for which . . . . Smith did his first really professional scenery painting, held its first performance in September 1833. [Earlier, Russell’s] mother thought he should work with Mr. James R. Lambdin, a portrait painter who had just returned from Philadelphia.” 111

The Gazette in mid-1824 was carrying an advertisement: “James R. Lambdin (Pupil of T. Sully) Portrait Painter. Opposite the Theater, Third Street.” On January 28, 1825, in the Gazette he “respectfully informs the Ladies and Gentlemen of Pittsburgh that he has returned, and intends remaining only a few weeks.” Apparently these weeks became years. In 1830 Lambdin’s Museum advertised a large number of stuffed animals “in the highest state of preservation . . . . two living White Crows, &c . . . . a large Collection of Marine Shells . . . . &c, Indian Dresses, Decorations, &c, Implements of War and Husbandry from the South Sea Islands . . . . The Gallery of Paintings contains nearly one hundred specimens of the Works of Old and Modern Masters: with a Collection of nearly 1000 Coins and Medals.” These advertisements were discontinued in 1831. However, the Gazette issues of 1832 and 1833 carried the card of “James R. Lambdin, Portrait and Miniature Painter, corner of Market and Fourth Street.”

Keller adds that in 1828 Lambdin’s museum and art gallery was “Illuminated by gas every evening. Not until 1837 were a few streets and buildings lighted in this way.” 112

Baldwin in a rapid review 113 observes that “Pittsburgh’s best artist . . . . was David G. Blythe. He was born near East Liverpool, Ohio, in 1815 and at the age of sixteen he came to Pittsburgh to learn the woodcarving business. After some years . . . . he returned to East Liverpool, where he took up portrait painting.” He later moved back to Pittsburgh. The Gazettes of 1832 and 1833 were carrying also the card of “J. Chislett, Professor of Music and Painting.”

Chalfant, from her extensive review of 18th and early 19th century wills filed in Allegheny County, makes the following observations concerning the views on education then held by citizens of the community: “Certainly, the one thing which people who made their

112 Keller, Nation’s Advocate, 364.
113 Baldwin, 254, 260.
early wills cared about was education for children and dependents . . . . The early will makers wanted their children trained to make their own way in life, but even more, they wanted them to know how to live in a truer sort of nobility . . . . Private schools taught Latin, surveying, geography, languages, and grammar to both boys and girls if they could pay for it. Needlework, music and painting were emphasized for girls . . . . there were the Pittsburgh Academy in Pittsburgh, and the Canonsburg Academy in Washington County . . . . [and] Western Theological Seminary . . . . As early as 1819, the Academy at Pittsburgh became the Western University of Pittsburgh — with training in the liberal arts, in the law, and in the beginnings of the sciences and humanities which have made Pittsburgh a great industrial and cultural capital for the world.” 114 In 1828 six baccalaureate degrees were awarded by the University. In the fall of that year N. R. Smith announced in the Gazette that he would open a “night school” at his academy. On January 2, 1835, the Gazette carried advertisements for W. G. Wells’ Dancing and Fencing School. The Gazette of February 11, 1836, reported that an Association of Teachers of the city and vicinity had been formed “for purposes of mutual improvement and the promotion of general education.”

The Gazette carried on January 3, 1834, a card of Florence Academy, Florence, Pa., “on the road to Steubenville” and on November 10, 1835, the card of Beaver Academy, Beaver, Pa. Harris’s General Business Directory of 1841 carried an advertisement for the Steubenville Female Seminary, which described it as being “for the education of Females alone . . . . the most extensive one of the kind in the western country.” There was obvious interest in attracting patronage from upriver, and in fact this did happen. Harris’s 1844 Directory listed thirty-seven “Select Schools and Academies.”

Young men came up the river in the early days to attend the Western University as well as the privately conducted academies. The Gazette of July 1, 1825, in reporting the recent University commencement, noted that “The degree of Bachelor of Arts was conferred on Oliver Cunningham of Jefferson County, State of Ohio,” among others. On October 30, 1829, the Western University reported in the Gazette the graduation of John Wallace of Muskingum County, Ohio, among others.

The Gazette of July 1, 1825, had observed that “The Rev. J. H. Hopkins has been chosen by the Board of Trustees, Professor of

114 Chalfant, 115, 118.
Belles Lettres, Criticism and Composition, in the University. Every man of taste must be thankful to the Board for this enlightened and promising choice.” There was another interesting announcement by Robert Bruce, Principal of the University, in the *Gazette* of September 2 that same year. “Since the independence of South America and Mexico opens vast commercial prospects to the United States, it is supposed that there might be a great advantage in having access to the Spanish language. If a class could be formed for this and the French, the Rev. Mr. McGuire will commence immediately to teach these languages.”

The progress of students in the local university was a matter of some public interest. Principal Robert Bruce announced in the *Gazette* of July 27, 1830, that “An examination of the Graduates . . . . will take place on Friday next, commencing at 8 o’clock A.M. The Trustees and literary gentlemen of the city are invited to attend.” The announcements of such public examinations were regularly made in succeeding years. The university buildings were available for appropriate community gatherings. The Pittsburgh Philosophical Society was holding regular meetings there in 1832 to discuss such topics as the origin of coal and the causes of the bursting of steam boilers.

The *Gazette* editor, on June 26, 1832, in reporting the appointment to the university faculty of the Rev. William B. Lacey, added that the institution “offers decided advantages to students residing in this city and vicinity . . . . it unquestionably deserves the liberal patronage and support of our citizens.” In the *Gazette* issue of the following August 3 the university announced “The terms for the first collegiate session of 5 months, $14, for the second collegiate session of 6 months, $18, payable in advance.” The terms for grammar school attendance were somewhat lower. In a number of issues beginning in November 1835 the *Gazette* carried advertisements for Western University courses in French, and in “Writing and Fine Arts,” and a few weeks later, in “Natural History and Experimental Philosophy.” The *Gazette* of January 1, 1836, carried separate advertisements for University Public Lectures in Chemistry (30 to 40 lectures, $8) and in English (Invitation). The issue of February 11 mentioned a lecture on “The Constitution of the Atmosphere.” On March 15, 1836, the *Gazette* reported editorially that “The Rev. G. Morgan, [new] President of the Western University, will deliver, by request, an address on Education in Public and Private Schools, this evening . . . . in the First Presbyterian Church.”
The weekly newspapers of small downriver towns, in addition to quoting news and market items from the Pittsburgh newspapers, carried advertisements for the commercial schools located in Pittsburgh. Thus the Wellsburg Weekly Herald issues of the 1850's and 1860's printed extensive statements for the Iron City Commercial College and Duff's Mercantile College. On January 11, 1861, it was claimed of Duff's "founded in 1840," that "nearly 6000 students from nearly every state in the Union have been educated for business, it being the only college of the kind in the United States conducted by an experienced merchant." A double-entry bookkeeping text published by President P. Duff in 1864 and earlier (a copy contributed by Mr. A. M. Crawford of Pittsburgh) was appropriately named the "Steamboat Accountant: Practically Adapted to American Steam Navigation." The sections of that text were entitled Hands' Register, Hands' Ledger, Freight Book, Passenger Book, Deck Passage Book, Fuel Book, Cash Book, Journal, Ledger, and Manifest.

Some interesting entries are found in the mid-century minutes of the Board of Trustees of the Western University:

March 2, 1847. The President reported a communication from the Medical Faculty of the University of Pa. making a donation of $100 to aid in procuring a library. [The Western University building had been destroyed in the Great Fire of April 10, 1845.]

April 13, 1847. A communication was submitted by Mr. Baker of Economy offering to sell the Mineral Collection of the Society to this Board.

Oct 1, 1848. A communication from the Secretary of the Commonwealth was seen stating that the Geological specimens owned by the Legislature would be forwarded to this Board at as early a day as possible.

Feb 8, 1867. Resolved — that . . . a committee [be appointed] to do whatever may be necessary to secure the transfer of the property of the Allegheny Observatory to this University.

Aug 8, 1867. Resolved — that Professor S. P. Langley [of the Observatory] be and he is hereby elected to the Chair of Astronomy and Physics in the Western University of Pennsylvania. [He was made Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution in 1877 and resigned his Pittsburgh position in 1891.]

Circulating libraries had been established by the third decade of the century. On December 31, 1830, John I. Kay & Co., Booksellers, advertised in the Gazette to "The Ladies and Gentlemen of Pittsburgh, that they will, in the course of a short time, open a Circulating Library, to consist of two thousand volumes! Subscribers to pay five dollars for a year." [It opened in April, 1831.] Almost immediately J. L. Glenn, Librarian of "The Pittsburgh Circulating Library . . . opposite the Pittsburgh Brewery," advertised his terms as "25 cts. per month, payable in advance." In April 1831 Linton Rogers, Prop., advertised the Franklin Circulating Library . . . "upwards of 1500 volumes. Terms of subscription made known at the Library." The
competition must have been keen. Among others, there were the collections of the Pittsburgh Permanent Library and the Mercantile Library Association, along with the rather unique Apprentice Library. Lorant recalls how Col. James Anderson made his private library available in 1850 to young men, including Andrew Carnegie, who was thus inspired to make his later donation of a free library to the City of Allegheny.115

The first public high school, Central, was opened in 1855, public grade schools having functioned since 1835, one in each of the first four wards of the city. The Pittsburgh YMCA was established in 1854, the YWCA in 1875, the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania in 1879, the Junta in 1882, the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania in 1886, and the Academy of Science and Art in 1890. This is not a complete list of the new societies.

Young writes that “Towards the middle of the nineteenth century the confluence of waves of new labor, new machinery, new markets, and new methods of transportation was about to lift the country to the crest of a great new ground swell of progress. This progress had the sensitivity of a steam roller. The people could not stand in its way, for it was the people.”116

The Pittsburgh Medical Society had been founded in 1821 by Dr. Joel Lewis who became its first president. A number of other able medical practitioners made important contributions to the life of the early community. An able Pittsburgh surgeon of mid-century was Dr. Albert G. Walter. Malone records the pioneer work of this native German who arrived in Pittsburgh from London via New York and Philadelphia about 1839, took a boat down the Ohio in search of opportunity, spent two years in Nashville, and returned to Pittsburgh by steamboat in 1842. He continued until his death in 1876 to do notable work in the field of industrial surgery.117

Dating from 1846 Pittsburgh had been in telegraphic communication with the east. With the western extension of the railroads there was need for a uniform system of clock time. The railway managers worked out a plan with the Allegheny Observatory in 1869. By 1872 “Observatory time” was being transmitted daily to the Pennsylvania

115 Stefan Lorant, Pittsburgh, the Story of an American City (Garden City, 1964), 118, 135, 203.
Central Railroad, and to rail headquarters in Philadelphia and Chicago, as well as to the City Hall clock in Pittsburgh.

Soon the extensive telegraphic system, including the printing telegraph, began to give way to voice transmitting devices. A useful telephone circuit was installed in a Pittsburgh office in 1877. In 1878 the Central District and Printing Telegraph Company brought a telephone system to Pittsburgh to supplement its other services. The first published telephone directory printed only sixty listings on one sheet of paper, but by mid-1879 there were two hundred miles of telephone wire in Pittsburgh. In 1880 George Westinghouse patented a telephone switch and related devices which greatly improved the service.

The Allegheny Observatory, already mentioned, had been formed on March 2, 1859, when 25 public spirited subscribers agreed to pay $100 each toward the purchase of a telescope for the use of themselves, their families, and the community at large. The Observatory was incorporated by the Pennsylvania Legislature on March 22, 1860, and construction began that same year.

The business of supplying time signals, as described above, was only a sideline for the Observatory, where extensive scientific investigations were being carried on under Professor Samuel Pierpont Langley. Astronomical events were predicted and described in almanacs and in the newspapers. Enlightened citizens were often guided by these announcements. Lyman Stedman, downriver farmer, made notes in his diary as follows:

Oct. 8, 1882. A comet visible at 4 AM.
Nov. 5, 1882. Comet still visible at 5 AM in Southern sky at angle of 40 degrees.
Nov. 18, 1883. New time for the regulation of R. Roads goes into effect — for which purpose the U. S. is divided into four Sections, with one hour's difference between each — placing us in the Central sect. on 90th meridian making RR time 37 min Slower than our Sun time.

Science and invention found many applications in the Pittsburgh area. In 1869 the manufacturing of airbrakes was begun by George

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118 As early as the 1830's the *Gazette* had printed at the beginning of each year a "Pittsburgh Gazette Almanac" which tabulated eclipses along with other items. Cramer's 1825 *Pittsburgh Almanack*, calculated by the Rev. John Taylor and printed by Cramer and Spear, was sold by other Pittsburgh booksellers and by "James Turnbull, Steubenville, Ohio, and Edward Cox, Maysville, Kentucky." Miner's *Pittsburgh Almanac*, published by Henry Miner between 1867 and 1872, was "calculated and edited by Sanford C. Hill, Esq., East Liverpool, Ohio . . . . for the horizon and meridian of Pittsburgh."
Westinghouse. In 1888 the progress of science led to new prospects for Pittsburgh industry as the success of experiments with aluminum was assured. Members of the Hunt, Clapp, Davis and Mellon families and other investors joined through the Pittsburgh Reduction Company in producing commercial quantities of the metal under the processes developed by Charles Martin Hall. Robert Brown Carnahan, Jr., who was graduated from the Western University of Pennsylvania in 1891, was a metallurgist largely responsible for developing the Armco Iron process of producing rust resisting metals. This contributed much to the development of Middletown, Ohio, where that company became centered. By 1880 the Allegheny County Light Company was installing arc lights in the streets where kerosene lamps had been the best lighting available since 1858. These wonders, as they developed, commanded the interests and attracted the visits of neighbors in the tri-state area lying to the west and south.

An interesting glimpse of the Pittsburgh of 1883 is seen from the diary of Samuel Adam Rankin of Mulberry, Missouri, who came to the city in May of that year as a delegate to the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church:

Thursday, May 24. We sang the 100th Psalm, L.M., but we did not sing in good unison in regard to time, as we were not used to each others' ways of singing. Yet I hope there was unison of spirit in the exercise.

Friday night, May 25. Rev. W. H. McMillan, D.D., was elected Moderator. This vote was understood to be a test of the strength of the two parties on the instrumental music question, McMillan being in favor of the repeal of the clause prohibiting the use of instrumental music in the worship of God. I voted for McMillan. He had about two thirds of the votes cast.

Monday evening, May 28. Smoky and cloudy almost all day. Last night ... I went ... to the 3d church to attend a prayer meeting and conference. It seemed to me a little like a desecration of the Sabbath to ride so far in the cars ... but it seems to be the best that the people here can do for a means of getting to church.

Tuesday evening, May 29. This has been a pretty clear day for a place as smoky as this city generally is. I took a stroll through some extensive glass works this morning on my way back to the assembly. It was to me a very interesting sight.

Wednesday night, May 30. This being Decoration Day, there was plenty of music and nice marching in the streets notwithstanding the rainy appearance.

Toward the end of the century Ethelbert Nevin of Edgeworth, a Western University student from 1876 to 1880, was composing the tuneful songs which have been sung ever since. His compositions, as

120 The grandfather of Vice Chancellor Alan C. Rankin, of the University of Pittsburgh, who has kindly made the diary available.
well as Stephen Foster's refrains, were heard in local concerts. The privately owned circulating libraries continued in use, and the Carnegie Free Library of Allegheny was given in 1886. Neighbors in the region's towns and countryside shared the city's pride in all these evidences of cultural growth.

**Pittsburgh and Public Health**

Cities have always been unwilling centers for the breeding and dissemination of contagious and infectious diseases. The population nucleus provides opportunities for exchanging causative agents, while many travellers come and go. This hazard was of course greater in the days before modern sanitary and control measures became available. Sometimes a city was fairly blamed, sometimes it was wrongly accused. These things often happened to Pittsburgh, when downriver dwellers suffered misfortunes of personal and public health which seemed to them to emanate from the population center lying up the valley.

Cramer's 1808 *Navigator* had enthused that Pittsburgh's "climate, though irregular, and subject to many changes in the different seasons, is healthy; anything like epidemical diseases, fever, &c, being unknown among us; except those that range without bounds, such as the *Influenza* in the summer and fall of 1807."

Baldwin records that "By 1820 the water problem in Pittsburgh had become acute. Lines of people formed in the morning between public and private wells and every morning and evening women and children could be seen wending their way to the rivers... . No attempt was made to purify the water before it was piped into the houses of Pittsburgh, and doubtless many continued to use well water for drinking and cooking; even that, in a city where there were as yet no sanitary services, was bound to be impure." 121 Outdoor toilets were of course in common use until the later years of the century.

Pertinent comments appear in the journal of the 1805 Pittsburgh visitor Thaddeus M. Harris, as quoted by Harpster: "The inhabitants use the water of the river here and down the Ohio for drink and cookery, even in preference to the spring water from the hills... . though the river water receives a great deal of decayed wood, leaves, &c. from the creeks and runs... . they are soon deposited on the shallows, and the deeper places are very clear and fine... . But the spring water, issuing through fissures in the hills, which are only mass-

121 Baldwin, 206, 207.
es of coal, is so impregnated with bituminous and sulphureous particles as to be frequently nauseous to the taste and prejudicial to the health."  

Duffy has provided most interesting reports of Ohio Valley experience with cholera in the summers of 1832, 1833 and 1834. River boat crews and passengers were a prime factor in spreading the infection. Pittsburgh, Wheeling and Charleston (then, Virginia) were the towns most seriously involved, in this region.  

The doubts expressed by some present day physicians as to whether this illness was always the Asiatic Cholera have some support from the following Gazette items of 1833: (June 21) "Two deaths by cholera . . . Mr. Losey had been suffering under the premonitory symptoms for several days: and on the morning of his death, had ate (sic) a large quantity of cherries." (June 25) "Several cases of Cholera Morbus occurred during the day, but no deaths. The Hospital report . . . . stated that no case of Cholera Asphixia had been presented there during the last 24 hours." (June 28) The Board of Consulting Physicians reported to the Sanitary Board that "The first case of cholera, which appeared in this city, was on the 26th of May — a person from below. From that date until the 25th of June, seventeen cases of Cholera Asphixia had occurred. Of these 17 cases, five were persons who brought the disease from below, and twelve indigenous. Of the twelve originating here, we believe every one can be traced directly to some imprudence of the sufferer, or to dissipate habits." (July 2) "From Thursday until Monday, eight deaths of cholera occurred . . . . Several of the cases were marked by gross negligence and inattention to the premonitory state of the disease." (August 5) "The cholera has taken its departure from among us . . . . The entire number of deaths which have been attributed to cholera, since the 11th of June, when that disease first appeared here, is fifty-two, and in several of these cases the actual existence of cholera is denied."

Frey writes that "Typhoid fever probably felled more [Pittsburgh] citizens over a period of time than any other cause, but enforcement of sanitary laws did not come until 1832 [The Grant's Hill Reservoir built in 1828 contained unfiltered water pumped from the Allegheny River] . . . . In 1848 Mercy Hospital had its own building. In 1849 an outbreak of smallpox was largely treated at Mercy Hospital."  

122 Harpster, 244.  
124 Frey, 96-99.
“Cholera Day” each August in keeping with a vow made in 1848. The people pledged that if the strange malady ceased, a holy day would thenceforth be observed with thanksgiving.

The typhoid, particularly, was a menace to persons living down-stream. Sister Meerwald writes that “the city water piped to the [Mercy] hospital in 1849 [from the Elm Street Reservoir] was un-filtered river water . . . . Filtered water was not served to central Pittsburgh until 1907.” 125 The minute book of the Trustees of the Western University of Pennsylvania records as of June 2, 1846, that “On motion the building committee was authorized to have a hydrant placed in the yard of the University buildings.”

The Wellsvsburg Weekly Herald in October of 1850 was reporting daily cholera deaths at Wellsburg and Steubenville, and in 1851, cholera deaths at Louisville and other downriver ports, as well as on steamboats plying the rivers downstream.

Demorest notes that in 1854 “Asiatic cholera . . . . reached Pittsburgh probably by way of New Orleans and swept the city during September and October, and the death record was very high. This was the most severe attack that ever visited the city and the people were so frightened that many of them left home until the epidemic was over. Persons who became ill seldom lived more than twenty-four hours. Coal was burned in the streets at night to purify the air.” 126

The schoolgirl correspondence of Mary Porter, as previously printed in this magazine, 127 includes some relevant passages. On August 8, 1850, her brother George wrote from Wellsburg Academy, in the Ohio River town of Wellsburg (now West Virginia, then Virginia): “We have had no cholera yet, and are not very particular as far as diet is concerned — roasting ears, Cucumbers, &c.” On February 26, 1852, her friend Sue Crawford wrote from the Steubenville Female Seminary, on the banks of the Ohio River: “Within three weeks two of our number have been called away by the messenger of death. They . . . . were both boarding in town . . . . Miss P. died of typhoid fever, Miss W. with consumption.” Tuberculosis took heavy toll in the downriver valleys in those days, as well as in the city.

Of the 1854 cholera visitation, Meerwald writes that “the local press for commercial reasons suppressed all news items of conditions here at home as much as possible, but focused the citizens’ attention

126 Demorest, 24, 25.
on how it was raging in Texas, New York and elsewhere . . . . after the crisis passed, however, the City Board of Trade lamented: 'We know of no city in the Union which has suffered more severely during the past year than ours. The long continued drought rendered the Rivers unnavigable for five or six months . . . . Then in the midst of the best season the pestilence came . . . . In a few weeks it carried off thousands of our population and put a complete quarantine upon us for nearly a month; business of all kinds was almost entirely suspended.' " 128

Baldwin reports that "the cholera panic about banished river travel, and in other places people even refused to accept Pittsburgh scrip lest they take the disease . . . . The epidemic of 1854 was combated by the Howard Association, which was specially organized to meet the emergency . . . . Passavant Hospital was begun in 1849 under the name of the Pittsburgh Infirmary by the Reverend William Passavant . . . . In 1851 the federal government opened at Woods Run a marine hospital for the care of rivermen . . . . The humanitarian institution projected upon the most ambitious scale during those years was the Western Pennsylvania Hospital, built in 1853 on a tract of land in Bloomfield donated by the Harmar Denny's and the Schenleys." 129 Both St. Francis Hospital and Homeopathic (now Shadyside) Hospital opened in 1865, and Allegheny General in 1882.

Meerwald continues: "After the scourge of 1854, the country was practically free of cholera until after the Civil War . . . . Diphtheria was pandemic in the country from 1856-60; the local press mentioned that 'it was bad' in Allegheny and Pittsburgh in 1857 and 1858, but that it was more fatal in 1859. There were at least two other major epidemics of diphtheria before the days of antitoxin, one in 1875-79 and the other in 1880-86. The vital statistics of the city in 1886 show there were 249 deaths from diphtheria, 182 from scarlet fever, 117 from measles, 109 from whooping cough." 130

That these matters were also of concern to residents downstream is evidenced by Stedman's diary entries written at his Ohio River island farm:

Dec. 18, 1881. Small Pox is spreading over the country from Pitt, where it has been all Summer — cases now in E. Liverpool, Burgettstown, & some in Steub.

Jan. 25, 1882. Rogers died of Smallpox at Alikanna [near Steubenville]. The U.S. Board of Health has pronounced the disease epidemic in the U.S.

128 Meerwald, 88.
129 Baldwin, 212.
130 Meerwald, 92, 93.

The rural folk suffered along with the urban dwellers from the serious epidemics, but blame for these troubles which were being experienced throughout the region could not all be fairly attributed to Pittsburgh.

The City as a Center of Public Affairs

Because political activities of the earlier years, especially before the Civil War, were state-centered, the political influence of Pittsburgh was felt in the portions of Pennsylvania lying to the east more than in the Ohio, West Virginia, Indiana and Kentucky areas lying downstream. As an exception, Beaver County, immediately to the west, was involved with Allegheny County politically as well as in agriculture and commerce.\(^{131}\) This was especially true in the later years of the century because of the activities of the Beaver editor-legislator Matthew Quay, who in 1887 was elected United States Senator and who from 1895 well into the present century was head of the Republican Party organization in Pennsylvania.

In the first two decades of the 19th century numerous events and causes received public attention, but relatively few of these held significance for later developments. Harper reports that "The city's first recorded strike was a strike of its small force of journeyman shoemakers in 1804; result, not known."\(^{132}\) President James Monroe made an extensive visit to Pittsburgh in the fall of 1817, visiting among other things the government arsenal.

Chalfant notes that "Up until 1820, when the Missouri Compromise made slavery illegal in Pennsylvania and in certain other states, anyone who could afford to buy slaves could own them . . . . a heated debate between the editors of the Steubenville Gazette and the Pittsburgh Mercury kept the evils of slave-holding before this section of the country. James Wilson,\(^{133}\) the Steubenville editor, contended that no man had a moral right to enslave another. John M. Snowden of the Mercury combated that statement. Citizens of Allegheny County,

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131 Pittsburgh itself was incorporated as a city in 1816, having outgrown the provisions of the borough charter of 1794. Allegheny County had been established by the Legislature in 1788. Beaver County was given separate recognition in the year 1800.


133 The grandfather of President Woodrow Wilson.
however, favored Pennsylvania's course of steadily getting rid of slavery." 134

An advertisement in the *Gazette* of November 19, 1830, said that "The Working Men of the City of Pittsburgh and vicinity are respectfully invited to attend a public meeting, to be held in the court-house, on . . . . November 20 . . . . there will be an address delivered . . . . on the rights and interests of the Working Men . . . . Journeymen, Mechanics and Day Laborers are particularly requested to attend."

An advertisement in the *Gazette* of August 10, 1832, stated the "Proposals" of editor James Wilson, of Steubenville, "to establish in Pittsburgh a tri-weekly and a weekly newspaper, under the title of *The Pennsylvania Advocate*," in order to further suggested national policies which he listed in detail.

The violent riot of cotton mill workers in 1848, as reported by Calvert, "launched the legal career of Edwin M. Stanton, and early crystallized public sentiment on the labor issue." 135 Stanton, a native of Steubenville, had come to Pittsburgh in 1847 to establish a career in the upriver metropolis. Becoming a member of a Pittsburgh law firm he later was Lincoln's Secretary of War.

Linabarger writes that "The Pittsburgh iron strike of 1850 was the first great labor demonstration in the entire iron industry. Although the strikers failed, it may be assumed that they were already learning the necessity of organization." He reports that during the course of that strike "a sympathy meeting . . . . was held . . . . in Wheeling, West Virginia . . . . after the meeting the Wheeling iron workers, who were not striking, decided to give financial aid . . . . a sum of $100 . . . . Later . . . . $350 from Portsmouth, Ohio . . . . again . . . . $400 from Portsmouth and Zanesville, Ohio." 136 Frank T. Stockton has reported a preliminary move in 1849, "the establishment . . . . by striking Pittsburgh moulders, of three cooperative foundries located respectively at Wheeling, West Virginia, Steubenville, Ohio, and Sharon, Pennsylvania." 137

The chronologies of Killikelly, Demorest and Lorant list political events of special interest: 138

1849. A two hour speech by Salmon P. Chase at Allegheny Market House set the trend of abolitionist thinking in Pittsburgh.

134 Chalfant, 92.
137 *WPHM*, XV, February 1932, News and Comment, 86.
138 Demorest, 26, 27; Killikelly, x; Lorant, 464.
1856. National news centered here as a convention was held in Lafayette Hall when the Republican Party was founded February 22. This meant the end of the Whig Party.

1861. A splendid reception had been given by a large crowd to Abraham Lincoln as he passed through here on his way to Washington in February.

On February 16, 1861, Fannie Porter had written to her sister Mary in New Cumberland, Virginia, recording this event of the 14th:

You ought to have seen the fuss they made over the President here . . . . the People were flocking in from the country to see him in every direction . . . . he spoke so much longer at the Monongahela house than he intended to that he did not have time to go through the city at all . . . . It was so late that he had to go straight to the depot (he got off and on the cars in Allegheny). Everybody was so much pleased [with] him.139

During the Civil War the Pittsburgh committee of public safety was active in the seizure of contraband goods. In April 1861, it was instrumental in stopping shipment of “all army equipments destined for Charleston, S. C., and other points in the South.” Led by a Dr. McCook, a parade of citizens walked to the railroad yards and “seized army blankets, shirts and materials for uniforms.” These articles were carried to the Mayor’s office with the Stars and Stripes “proudly waving over them.”140

A new factor in public life was introduced through mass immigration. Lissfelt notes that “British, Irish and Welsh came to work in [Pittsburgh’s] mines, and its furnaces and ovens; French and Belgians came to blow its glass; Germans to man its printing houses, blacksmith shops, shoe stores, groceries, bakeries and breweries.”141

In the heavy industries, union organizations were being developed. Baldwin writes that “the city witnessed some of the bitterest of the labor wars that enliven the history of American industry between 1840 and 1860.”142 Some of these have been mentioned above. Fisher reports for the panic year 1873 that “In early November the first large-scale layoffs occurred in the iron furnaces . . . . Later, at the threat of a ten percent pay cut, roughly fifteen percent of the workers in four rolling mills went on strike . . . . Five thousand glass workers walked out . . . . The newspaper compositors struck on Nov. 20.”143

Government agencies were giving increasing amounts of attention to the growing strength of organized labor. Fisher continues: “Labor

139 Crawford, 49. Quoted from a four-page handwritten letter preserved in the files of the senior author.
140 Pittsburgh Gazette, April 22, 1861.
141 Lissfelt, foreword.
142 Baldwin, 222.
143 Fisher, 31.
incidents, which featured numerous strikes, were significant, and the state governments were forced to act in a number of cases to quell the uprisings which had become too large and too violent for the owners. This decade featured labor unrest; the numerous strikes included those of the railroad workers in 1877 and the coal mines from 1874 to 1876. It is evident that these were, in fact, almost all of the size of small revolts against the system, because of the wanton destruction in each case blindly injuring all parties. It is also apparent that there was a change in public policy — economics was rising as a social science, separated from politics.” 144

Harper writes that “The railroad strikes which broke out in 1877 at various points in the United States were attended by more violence in Pittsburgh than elsewhere, with the Pennsylvania Railroad being largely concerned. . . . after the railroad riots of 1877, the Homestead steel strike and riot of 1892 was the most serious labor conflict in Pittsburgh’s history.” 145

The downriver scribe, Stedman, had some observations on such matters:

November 6, 1883. State elections in several states. Penna. Republ. by 15,000 Maj.

Many kinds of things were happening, some of them of lasting public benefit. In 1888, Director of Public Works Edward M. Bigelow had arranged for Robert B. Carnahan, Sr.,146 attorney for the Schenley estate, to go to London and arrange with Mrs. Schenley to give 300 acres of land to the city of Pittsburgh for use as Schenley Park, and to sell 134 additional acres for this purpose.

At the close of this memorable nineteenth century, the census showed a city population of 321,616.

The Rivalry of Downriver Communities with Pittsburgh

It was inevitable that the rapid development of Pittsburgh should arouse feelings of rivalry, jealousy, and even antagonism among the citizens of other communities lying west of the mountains.

Kehl makes some interesting observations about the beginnings of such feelings in the early portion of the nineteenth century: “In the

144 Ibid., 3.
146 Mr. Carnahan had been graduated from the Western University of Pennsylvania in 1845.
first stages of their development western communities . . . were economically dependent on Western Pennsylvania. Manufacturers, shipbuilders and merchants, especially those of Pittsburgh, profited handsomely from the settlement of the Northwest Territory, Tennessee and Kentucky. By 1815, these businessmen were beset by the fear that their wealth, business and glory were fast passing away, being transferred to Cincinnati, Louisville, and other ports along the Ohio. As these new areas grew, they supplied more and more of their own needs and became the hubs for the next waves of settlement.” 147

Cramer, in his 1808 Navigator (page 15), observes that “The United States Road from Cumberland on the Potomack to Wheeling on the Ohio, when completed will naturally draw a great deal of the trade of the Northern States, to the States of Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, and to Louisiana, through that channel, thereby abridging very much the trade from those states through Pennsylvania. Therefore, if Pennsylvania looks closely to her interests, she will find that completing the turnpike road from Harrisburgh to Pittsburgh, and opening to navigation of the Ohio [by channel improvement] are the two principal objects which will restore to her, her usual commercial, foreign and domestic, advantages.”

Kehl explains that part of the proceeds from the sale of federal lands in the western territory were to be allocated by the federal government to the establishment of the turnpike between Wheeling and the Atlantic Coast, this action having been undertaken with little consideration for Western Pennsylvania. He also notes that the more conservative among the farmers often resented the growing influence of town culture, and that, in addition, the western settlers frequently recalled that they had been exposed to transportation and financial difficulties at Pittsburgh before they continued toward their destinations: “They purchased boats, laid in the provisions necessary for their passage down the Ohio and for their new homes, and waited for the river to rise . . . At this busy depot the traveler had to pay dearly for every service performed for him . . . Lodging at a Pittsburgh hotel, for example, was a hundred per cent higher than the same accommodations in Boston. Many an immigrant went west with a little money thinking that it was sufficient, but too often the little was spent before he began living as a settler.” 148 Such things were bound to happen, and it is difficult to see how they could have been avoided in the new community which was so busily engaged in carving out its own destiny.

147 Kehl, 42.
148 Ibid., 29, 30, 39, 40, 43.
Nevertheless it was a fact that some of those who traveled west by this route, and their children, acquired an unfavorable impression of the high costs of the Pittsburgh which they had found it necessary to visit for much longer periods of time than they had intended.

Houtz observes that "In 1829 . . . a contention arose between Allegheny and Beaver counties with respect to which was the better route from Pittsburgh to Lake Erie, one by way of the Allegheny River, French Creek, and Conneaut Lake, or another by way of the Ohio, Big Beaver, and Shenango rivers and Conneaut Lake." Pittsburgh was in the midst, geographically, of this controversy.149

In the 1830's Neville B. Craig, publisher of the Gazette, devoted much attention to the progress of Pittsburgh and particularly in its rivalry with Wheeling. He urged the improvement of navigation on the Ohio River, and the development of canals to bring freight and passengers over the mountains to Pittsburgh from Philadelphia and intermediate points. On March 26, 1830, Craig wrote that "Time was when our neighbors near the mouth of Wheeling Creek, tho't that steamboat navigation rested its head just at their doors; but times have changed, and navigation is slowly and surely advancing upwards . . . . our faith grows . . . . The navigation will be extended up the Allegheny to Warren or perhaps into the state of New York. In that event, the controversy which once existed between Pittsburgh and Wheeling about the 'Head of Navigation,' may revive between Virginia and New York."

Baldwin records that in 1831 Craig "exhibited a map showing Pittsburgh with a great system of already built or proposed roads, canals, and railways radiating from it . . . . As time went on Craig's dream, or something very much like it, was realized. A canal was constructed from Beaver to Erie, and with its completion in 1844 half a dozen steamers daily plied the river between Pittsburgh and Beaver, as contrasted to the one boat only a few years before. The Cross Cut Canal connected the Beaver and Lake Erie Canal with the canal system of Ohio and drove more commerce to Pittsburgh. The railroad era continued the movement of diverting trade to Pittsburgh." 150

Baldwin adds that in the rivalry with Wheeling, "Pennsylvania's answer . . . . was an act to provide for the incorporation of turnpike companies that with funds provided by private subscription and by the state legislature would undertake to pave the Pennsylvania Road

149 Harry Houtz, "Abner Lacock, Beaver County's Exponent of the American System," WPHM, XXII, 186.
150 Baldwin, 193.
from Harrisburg to Pittsburgh . . . a second road, the Huntingdon Turnpike, was constructed between Harrisburg and Pittsburgh by way of the Juniata and Conemaugh Valleys . . . . About the same time feeder roads were constructed from the main pike to Washington, Steubenville and Beaver . . . ." 151

Crall mentions another factor in this rivalry: "Virginia lagged behind her neighbors in internal improvements. Her interests were those of the plantation south rather than the industrial north. Her political leaders were cautious and conservative. It was in cautious, conservative, agricultural Virginia that Wheeling found herself — visions of commercial greatness, but no legislative aid toward their realization, for her interests were not those of her State. It was in venturesome, progressive, commercial Pennsylvania that Pittsburgh found herself." 152

In the spring of 1830 the *Gazette's* editor was complaining about the tactics of other journalists. On May 14 he observed that "The citizens of Pittsburgh consider that they have much to complain of the editors of the newspaper in Baltimore . . . . The papers of this city and Wheeling regularly announce the height of the water: the Baltimore papers regularly copy the statements from the Wheeling paper, but entirely and perseveringly avoid noticing the Pittsburgh account . . . . a western merchant in Baltimore . . . . might suppose that the Ohio was dry, or that it springs from a subterraneous channel just above Wheeling."

On May 18 of that year, under the heading "The Steam Boat Tally Ho," the *Gazette* objected that "the editor of the *Cincinnati American*, in noticing the explosion of a boiler on board this boat, adds that she was 'Pittsburgh built' . . . . An explosion on board of a Pittsburgh Boat would be something new and extraordinary. The Tally Ho was not built at Pittsburgh . . . . we hope that those papers which have copied the article from the *American* will also copy this correction." The sequel came in the issue of June 1, in a quotation from the *Steubenville Gazette*, wherein Elijah Murray addressed a letter to the "Public," saying that the Tally Ho boiler had been built at Steubenville, and adequately planned and tested, but that the boat's inexperienced assistant engineer had misused this equipment.

Walters writes that "Pittsburgh and Cincinnati were rivals in industry and trade in the 'forties, with the latter — before the era of steel — somewhat more populous and prosperous. Their rivalry is re-

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flected in the acerbities and pleasantries of their newspaper editorials . . . . There is a happy reciprocal relation between Pittsburgh and Cincinnati, a tale of two cities, in respect to the early compositions of Stephen Foster. Two of his youthful Pittsburgh songs, 'Old Uncle Ned' and 'There's a Good Time Coming,' were published by a Cincinnati music firm. Three songs which Stephen wrote while in Cincinnati were sung for the first time before Pittsburgh audiences." 153

In a more defensive mood, Cist wrote of the Cincinnati of 1846: "abstract the rolling mills, glass and cotton yarn factories of Pittsburgh from the comparison, and in every other description of mechanical industry and product, Cincinnati is far in advance of that place." 154

Harper writes concerning the advent of the railroads in the 1830's and 1840's that "the 20,000 to 40,000 people of Pittsburgh in those decades exhibited no little anxiety lest they should be behindhand in securing the advantages of the new mode of transportation. The rivalry of the cities, the dickerings of the railroad promoters and speculators, the caprices of legislators, and the prevalent inadequacies of capital resources, gave most communities good reason for anxiety, and explained the strange adventure of Pittsburgh into non-municipal finance and the loan of city and county credits to railroad companies . . . . The resultant commitments of Allegheny County to railroad building eventually represented $5,500,000 of the County's total debt of $8,000,000." 155

The mood of the downriver neighbors was not always acrimonious. The Gazette of February 28, 1832, quotes the editor of the Steubenville Herald on the prospect of a "Railroad from Pittsburgh to Massillon" [where it would connect with the Ohio Canal]: "Although our town is out of the way of such improvements, it gives us great pleasure to note the bright prospects of other places. We have the Ohio River on our borders, and a beautiful and productive section of country around us. With these we ought to be contented. No improvement can be made, pointing toward the river, that we shall not feel the benefit of."

President Swann of the B. & O. railroad explained in a Baltimore address of 1852 why he favored Wheeling as the western terminus of his rail line: "at Wheeling, you have the control of an immense agricultural district. It is true, that at this point you have active and serious

rivalries to contend with. At Pittsburgh, these rivalries would have been still more formidable and overwhelming . . . . at Wheeling, you will hold out inducements which your northern rivals cannot be expected to command in equal proportion.” 156 Those rails came to Wheeling in 1853, and the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks reached Pittsburgh from Philadelphia in 1854, but Crall observes that “this triumph over Pittsburgh came too late to be of importance to the Virginia City.” 157

The senior author has commented elsewhere158 on the active antagonism of certain Virginia legislators in the 1850's toward the plan of the Pittsburgh and Steubenville Railroad Company of extending its track to the Ohio River and bridging that stream at Steubenville. The development of this forerunner of the Panhandle Division of the Pennsylvania Railroad was opposed by the downriver delegates for the apparent reason that they were more interested in having commerce flow through the Wheeling and Wellsburg areas.

These rivalries of the past century have their parallels today. The regional struggles take different forms at different times. Into the hearing rooms of government commissions now come hotly contested proposals for railroad mergers, for the construction of interstate pipelines and power lines, for the adjustment of freight and passenger rates, for the allocation of routes to airlines. Legislators hear much about regional claims for government aid, for the improvement of roads and waterways, for the construction and continuing operation of defense plants and military installations. Counties and cities offer free factory sites, local tax forgiveness, and other benefits in their efforts to attract new industries or to move established ones.

Beyond these industrial rivalries, the public spokesmen, journalists, and other residents of our cities derogate each other's architecture, throughways, and parking facilities, cast aspersions at city and county governments and political figures other than their own, say unkind things about other cities' symphony orchestras, the acoustics of their music halls, the quality of the exhibits in their art museums, and other objects of civic pride. Sports promoters backed by local governments and public enthusiasms compete for the franchises of professional athletic teams. The football fans of entire states feel allegiance to the teams of their respective state universities, and sometimes to those of

156 Ele Bowen, Rambles in the Path of the Steam Horse (Philadelphia, 1855), 85.
157 Crall, 246.
other favored colleges and universities within their borders, disdaining others which happen to be situated beyond the state lines.

Pittsburgh manages to hold its own in all such regional rivalries, and to receive its fair share of support and loyalty in the tri-state area which it continues to serve and to lead in so many valuable and necessary ways, as well as in the more remote areas to which its commerce and culture flow in always increasing measure.