LITTLE SISTER CITY — OLD ALLEGHENY

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Not long ago a syndicated writer on the editorial page of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette remarked: "One of the basic definitions of a 'neurotic' is that he is a person who is living in the past. He is tied with unconscious chains to his childhood... By this definition ninety per cent of today's society is neurotic."

If that is a valid definition, I guess we're all neurotics here tonight.

I know that I've been deeply interested in the past ever since I was in the third grade of my elementary school in Monaca, Pennsylvania. I vividly remember discovering Professor Barnes's History of America — full of Columbus and Cortez and Pizarro, Sebastian Cabot and Henry Hudson. There were pictures galore — Daniel Boone and David Crockett, General Braddock and young Major Washington; General Israel Putnam riding his horse down the stone steps to foil the British; John Paul Jones just beginning to fight; the dying James Lawrence not giving up the ship; the Guerriere striking her colors to the Constitution; the capture of Chapultepec; the bearded generals Grant and Lee; Pickett's gallant charge at Gettysburg; the Rough Riders at San Juan Hill. This was heady stuff. I was hooked!

I hurried up the stairs to see the principal, where the "library" was kept. "Mr. Locke, I'd like to read the history books!"

"All right, young man. What history books do you want to read?"

"All of them!" I replied confidently and thought it very odd of him to laugh.

Well, I'm still working on that project. So, I suppose I've been a neurotic ever since that day; and I must say I've enjoyed it.

Discussing Old Allegheny with this audience, I can see that I'm going to have to be very cautious. Sir Walter Raleigh was wise when he observed that he that follows too close upon the heels of history is likely to be kicked in the teeth for his pains.

So many members of this Historical Society of Western Pennsyl-

Dr. Starrett, retired Executive Director of the Buhl Planetarium, spoke informally at a meeting of The Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania on November 17, 1966, not as an historian but as a lifelong antiquarian who enjoys reading and exploring history in the field as well as in the library.—Editor
vania are so closely linked to Old Allegheny that I can see perils ahead in using the names of people recently alive or only recently dead. As Stanton Belfour has remarked about the Shadyside Church congregation, everybody is somebody's nephew or niece. So I must walk softly. On the other hand, if I leave out anybody's distinguished forbears, I'm equally in trouble.

Since it is impossible to compress a complete history of a city into an hour's talk, I propose merely to take you on a browsing trip from author to author. I won't compare myself to a butterfly flitting from blossom to blossom, but rather to a highly middle-aged bumblebee buzzing from book to book. What I hope to do is evoke for you the atmosphere, the charm and the feeling of a neighborhood and a way of life that now have become part of our past. I even venture to hope that I can make you homesick.

At the outset, I must confess that I have a personal and sentimental affection for Old Allegheny. Three of my grandparents once lived there. My mother was born there, and my father spent his young manhood there. My own early memories include visits to family friends and kinsmen there, and in later years I spent more than two decades of my working life on the North Side, as we must now call it.

Old Allegheny was once a prosperous and independent little city, with broad tree-lined streets and a spacious park system in a day when few cities had any planning at all. It possessed many strong churches, good schools, and Andrew Carnegie's first major library. Also several early academies, a seminary and a university, a City Hall where the Buhl Planetarium now stands and a large farmers' market across the way. It had good stores, a fine hospital (where our own Dr. C. W. W. Elkin was a distinguished staff member for many years); and it had music and lectures, literary societies and books. Above all, it had its own people, its own charm, its own very special character, some shreds of which still linger for those who remember it.

Now, let's start buzzing through the bibliography as I did. Actually, quite a lot of reference material is available here at our Society, and in the two Carnegie Libraries — Oakland and North Side. Let me list some of the sources I enjoyed most:


Charles W. Dahlinger, *Old Allegheny*, 1918; and many of his other works.

Frederick P. Mayer, articles in The Pittsburgh Record, 1930.
Mary E. Bakewell, Of Long Ago — The Children and the City, 1949.
William M. Rimmel, series of Saturday morning columns, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette — still running every week.

In addition, there are bales and shelves of old magazines, old newspapers, old county histories and other old books in the libraries.

Then there are memories — not always completely reliable but our own.

I promised to use few dates. Here are the major ones — our points of reference: Allegheny was laid out in 1787, became a borough in 1828 and a city in 1840, was ravished and annexed against its will by Pittsburgh with the aid of the State Legislature and sundry local and state politicians including Governor Samuel Whitaker Penny-packer (1843-1916) in 1907. (What a nice, comfortable name for a governor! It suggests a thrifty Pennsylvania Dutchman, busily packing pennies into the state's treasury — in contrast with some of the dollar-slingers of our era!)

Any other mention of dates henceforth will be purely accidental or by the authors we shall now proceed to visit. For brevity's sake many of these quotations have been cut.

First on our list is Carl Wilhelm, probably a journalist, who managed to get out a "semicentennial" history of Allegheny in 1891 — only a year late, which was pretty good for that sort of project, as we know. His style resembles that of James Fenimore Cooper, although his hero lacked the charmed life of the Deerslayer. I quote:

Complete History of Allegheny — Chapter I

The sun was setting blood red behind the densely wooded hills one September evening in the year 1740, when around the last curve of the Allegheny river before it joins the Ohio, a small boat glided into view.

It is borne along by a pair of oars, sufficient evidence that the sole occupant, who is wielding them so dexterously, cannot be an Indian ... .

But our lonely traveler keeps on down the river. He is letting the boat drift now, only touching the water with the oars once in a while to keep her straight. In this way he reaches a point almost opposite an abruptly rising eminence not far from shore. This eminence is now called Monument Hill.

Again he holds water with his left oar, and then, propelled by two vigorous strokes, the boat shoots under the willows and disappears from view.

* This seems unjust to the poor red man. Actually, the canoeman sensibly looks ahead to where he is going. The white man in his rowboat looks back to where he has just been. How odd to think that our first settler arrived facing backward. No wonder we have developed our sense of history!
But willows, no matter of how dense a growth, are no obstruction to our sight, dear reader, which, if necessity requires, can penetrate a stone wall, or see beyond the horizon. Therefore, with that supernatural gift which belongs alike to the writer of fiction and the historian, we follow the boat and see how its owner makes it fast to the shore. In the bottom of it there had lain what at first sight and looked at from a little distance, might have passed for a buffalo robe rolled up in a bunch. But as soon as the landing is effected, a head and a tail emerge from it, and it assumes the shape of a large wolf-hound. The animal slowly-rises, shakes himself, and then, with one great bound, gains the shore, which is almost breast-high.

His master follows, but more deliberately, for he is burdened with a long-rifle — which he handles with as much tenderness as a mother her infant child — an ax and a large well-filled pouch of leather. These things he deposits on the ledge of the bank, and then swings himself up after them with the agility of a cat. The man evidently is in no hurry to penetrate the woods. He gives a sign to his dog, whose only answer is a glance of almost human intelligence at his master, and then he disappears in the forest.

"I don't believe there is an Iroquois savage within 50 miles," mutters the man to himself, "but foresight is better than hind sight." If there is one within 20 miles Nero will find it out in that many minutes."

He stretches himself on the grass and strikes a light for his pipe, the some what vigorous fragrance of which he seems to enjoy hugely . . .

Andrew Long, as we shall hereafter call our hero, because this is the name of the first settler handed down to us by tradition, had finished his pipe and was knocking out the ashes, when the rustling of some dry leaves behind the tree against which his back rested made him jump to his feet and grasp his rifle.

But it was only Nero, who had returned from his scout. With panting breath the dog stretched himself at his master's feet and looked up to him as if to say that he was ready to be interrogated as to the result of his exploration.

"The woods are clear of unfriendly red-skins, eh, Nero?" the trapper asked.

In answer the dog wagged his tail in the affirmative.

"Well, let's go and look for a lodging place, then," Long continued.

He fastened the ax to his belt, picked up his rifle and, followed by the dog, made his way to the foot of the already mentioned mountain, only a few hundred yards distant. Here, in a small open space, and protected by the far-reaching branches of a giant oak, he encamped for the night, leaving Nero to stand watch, with the comfortable knowledge that a more trustworthy sentinel it would have been impossible to find.

Alas, Andrew Long was not to be a permanent first settler. He brought his family and built a cabin and even lured in some other first families. Then, one day the Indians swooped down and massacred the whole lot of them — fifteen adults and sundry children. (One can't help wondering where that redoubtable dog, Nero, was on that sad day.)

* * *

Charles W. Dahlinger's Old Allegheny is the source of most of the later work on the subject. His history is not only a record; it is a kind of requiem for the city which this prominent lawyer and civic leader held in high regard. "On September 11, 1787," he explained, "the legislature enacted a law directing the Supreme Executive Council to lay out a town in the reserve tract." Sufficient land was to be reserved within the new community area for a court house and jail, a
market house, places of public worship and burial grounds, and a common pasture of 100 acres. But:

At that time the reserve tract was in Westmoreland County. Three days after the law was placed on the statute books an attempt was made in the legislature to create the county of Allegheny. The effort met with decided opposition and failed of passage, largely because of the provision placing the county seat in the reserve tract. One of the members of the House in opposing the bill asked, "Will five hundred people be able to support the expense . . . ?" The people will have to cross the river to attend the court, the county-town and goal being on the west side, and there is not a soul to commit . . . for there is not a soul living on that side of the river Ohio.

There were others besides the prejudiced members of the legislature and who had some knowledge of the site of the proposed town who spoke disparagingly of it. David Redick was a member of the Supreme Executive Council and represented Washington County in that body. The Council had given him a hundred pounds for defraying the expense of laying out the town and had delegated him to take charge of the work. Writing from Washington (Pennsylvania) on February 19, 1788, to Benjamin Franklin, the president of the Council, he remarked: "On Tuesday last I went with several gentlemen to fix on a spot for laying out the town opposite Pittsburgh, and at the same time took a general view of the tract, and find it far inferior to my expectation, although I thought I had been no stranger to it. There is some pretty low ground on the rivers Ohio and Alleghenie; but there is only a small proportion of dry land which appears in any way valuable, either for timber or soil, but especially for soil; it abounds with high hills and deep hollows, almost inaccessible to a surveyor. I cannot believe . . . that small lots on the sides of those hills can ever be of use."

One reason for Redick's adverse report may have been the extremely cold weather in which he made the inspection. Mr. Dahlinger discusses the allotted "common ground" as "a distinct departure in Pennsylvania legislation" and a cause of "an endless amount of controversy," noting that:

Piece by piece the common ground was diverted from the original uses and given or taken into the hands of private or semi-private institutions. The legislature assisted materially in this species of robbery. On March 3, 1818, it granted ten acres to the State, as the site for a penitentiary . . . On February 18, 1819, forty acres of the common ground was granted to the Western University of Pennsylvania . . . At a public meeting held in the village on November 11, 1825, residents, lot holders and landowners to the number of 31 granted their right in a portion of the West common to the Presbyterian Church of the United States for the establishment of a theological seminary . . . The action of the lot and land owners was on April 17, 1827, ratified by the legislature, and the buildings were completed in 1831 . . . Many individuals followed in the footsteps of the public institutions and dotted the public ground with their habitations.

Mr. Dahlinger subsequently reports that, having "attained a population in excess of 100,000, Allegheny City on April 6, 1891, became a city of the second class, and was equal in rank with Pittsburgh." This development, he regards in fine, was disastrous in effect:

During these years Pittsburgh had also grown tremendously, much more even than Allegheny City. But she desired to be larger still. She cast longing eyes across the river at her smaller sister. Several times she stretched out her arms yearningly to take her to her bosom. As far back as 1867 she opened wide her
door to admit Allegheny City along with other districts which she desired to annex, by procuring the passage of an act of consolidation. She accomplished her purpose with the other districts but failed to win Allegheny City... In 1895 a still more determined effort was made. The agitation began in 1894... Pittsburgh politicians, Christopher L. Magee, State Senator William Flinn and Edward M. Bigelow, led the movement... The bill as introduced in the Senate by Senator Flinn provided that upon the petition of two per centum of the qualified electors of the district desiring to be annexed, the Common Pleas Court of the county should order a joint election to be held in the city to which application for annexation was made, and in the petitioning district, the joint vote to decide the result.

Successful opposition delayed the merger, but a bill supported by Governor Samuel W. Pennypacker “was quickly rushed through the legislature, becoming a law on February 7, 1906.” Mr. Dahlinger writes: “The law provided for a joint election in Pittsburgh and Allegheny. The total number of votes in favor of consolidation was 37,864 and against it 17,713. The decree consolidating the two cities under the name of Pittsburgh was made by the Quarter Sessions Court of Allegheny County on June 16, 1906.” Exceptions were filed, but “on December 6, 1907, the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania ordered the record of the entire proceedings to be remitted to the Quarter Sessions Court... and the consolidation became effective.”

Here I quote from William M. Rimmel, who retired from the city desk of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette to become Allegheny’s “full-time historian.” Still a resident of the area, he contributes a lively column of reminiscences to the magazine page of his newspaper every Saturday morning, as for example:

Memories of Old Allegheny... of stately mansions, garden parties, its glittering social whirl... are brought back by mere mention of Ridge Avenue. For Ridge Avenue was the home of many of the city’s first families who made their fortunes in the young steel industry. But all the city’s first families didn’t build their mansions on Ridge Avenue. Many chose sites on Water Lane, now Western Avenue, Beech Avenue, along Second Bank, now Stockton Avenue, Sherman, North and Union Avenues. The Felix Brunot home and the residence of Robert Dalzell on Stockton Avenue, scenes of many gay social affairs and structures that later played an important part in the social service of the city, have long since been demolished to make way for the new Allegheny Center. The same is true of the home of George Miltenberger, the iron merchant, and the home and church of Dr. Joseph Stockton on the same street. The Benjamin Page mansion, where the owner wore his hair in a queue and received his guests in an olive-green coat and white cravat, is now the site of the future Sears, Roebuck store. And the mansion of Thomas Arbuckle the coffee king, on Sherman Avenue, has been replaced by a mountain of earth. The stately Henry W. Oliver house, the castle-like A. M. Byers residence, and the homes of Archibald M. Marshall, B. J. Jones and Harmar D. Denny, Sr., still stand on Ridge Avenue as reminders of the days when the street was known as Allegheny’s Park Avenue. The Kate McKnight home on Western Avenue, built in 1823, where a woman’s organization was formed called “The Monday Class” that was the nucleus of the Twentieth Century Club, is now an apartment house. And
the garden where historians say Kilbuck, the Indian chief, was buried under a
great stone slab near the lilac walk is now covered by a toy factory . . . The
William Munhall and T. C. Jenkins mansions on Union Avenue have . . . been
demolished, as have the Latimer, Shillito, Tate, Hazzard and McGrew homes
on Montgomery Avenue. The stone Bergman home on East North Avenue is a
part of the Allegheny General Hospital. And the Allegheny General Hospital
now stands on the site of the Hanna homestead built in 1827.

Mr. Rimmel also wrote a column headed "Out of the Past" which
reads in part as follows:

Alleghenians years ago worked at trades that are unknown today. Of course
thousands worked in the mills, glass houses and cotton factories. And a goodly
number worked in coal mines and as shoemakers. But thousands earned their
living in strange ways. These occupations are found in the pages of the 1861-62
City Directory: Bow string maker, blue dyer, cannon borer, hot nailer,
waggoner, tallow Chandler, porter bottler, plane maker, nail cutter, tobaccoconst,
spinner, hostler, brush maker, chair maker, water carter, breeches maker, coach
smith, sword manufacturer, hair cap maker, maltster, cordial distiller, bell ringer,
tent and sail maker, soap boiler, cupper and leecher, Sawyer and bonnet bleacher.
Over 300 Alleghenians worked as shoemakers. One of these shoemakers was
Henry Phipps, father of Henry Phipps, the colleague of Andrew Carnegie in
business and philanthropy. The Oliver boys, the iron manufacturers, the directory
showed, lived on Robinson Street near Corry Street. Henry W. Oliver, Jr., was
listed as a clerk and James B. Oliver as a salesman. Their father was a saddler
and harness maker with a shop at 167 Wood Street, in Downtown Pittsburgh.
The 105-year-old directory shows that Simon Drum was Allegheny's mayor and
lived on Locust Street . . . It also showed that Joseph Bender was a Pounder for
the court. Thomas Arbuckle, who put up the world's first packaged coffee and
became a millionaire . . . operated a cotton mill at Robinson Street and Bank
Lane . . . John Mendel, who furnished Allegheny schools with the rattans they
used to switch disobedient pupils . . . operated an umbrella shop at 165
East Ohio Street . . . The directory also lists the names of hundreds of
Alleghenians as cigar makers in the factories that were once scattered through
the old Dutchtown area.

*    *    *

Many writers have paid tribute to the gracious lives and handsome
homes of the families on Ridge and Stockton and Union Avenues. But
after reading this long and fascinating roll of the ordinary folk who
did the work, paid the taxes, and made the day-to-day life of Allegheny
City possible, it seems only just to acknowledge the importance of these
ordinary people. After all, they put up with a lot of hardships and still
managed to support their families, paint their houses, tend their
gardens, earn their wages, kill their own snakes, and stay out of the
poorhouse and the jail.

I was moved to pay a little tribute to the Average Man of that
day — perhaps one of the 300 shoemakers Mr. Rimmel mentions. Here is how he seems to me:

A WORD FOR THE AVERAGE ALLEGHENIAN

In good old Allegheny
The cobbler cobbled and stuck to his last
As good a man as any;
Endured his ills and paid his bills
And some days saved a penny.
He raised his sons as best he could
As any decent father would
In good old Allegheny.
He managed to buy a house and lot
And some life insurance, like as not,
And a tidy family burial plot
In Highwood Cemetery.
And when his generation passed
(His turn came neither first nor last)
He paid up all outstanding bills,
Then bade farewell to earthly ills
With scant obituary,
And joined his forbears on the hills
Above old Allegheny —
His dear Old Allegheny!

Some time after writing the above rhyme it suddenly occurred to me that I must have been subconsciously paying tribute to my own paternal grandfather, a country carpenter turned cabinetmaker, who spent his later years in Allegheny and who also was laid away in Highwood Cemetery after a reasonably saintly life as a Presbyterian elder. I venture no spiritual predictions for the anonymous cobbler I originally limned, but I feel sure that if Grampa didn’t go straight from Highwood to Heaven, then nobody is getting in these days.

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In 1930, Frederick P. Mayer, a young English instructor at the University of Pittsburgh, recreated Allegheny in an essay for *The Pittsburgh Record* from which I select the following quotations:

There was a flood of yellow light across the parks that spring morning in 1895, but to the 118,000 citizens of Allegheny it was just another Monday. Even then, the large red brick and stone residences of the wealthy raised elegant if somewhat ugly roofs above the tracery of old trees on Ridge Avenue and North and Sherman. Yet, in the warm light and beyond iron dogs and ornamental fences, the lawns were well trimmed, the door knobs and hinges shone like gold from the polishings of German maids, and chance views of front parlors, seen through opened windows as the lace curtains fluttered back (it was still too early to be “proper” time to take down the winter “drapes”), suggested that calm content and sublime faith in a beneficent universe that money in the bank and large dinners on Sunday tables developed in the well-to-do... Across Ober Park, the post office rose, new and gleaming, its gold leaf dome dazzling
in the sun, and its receipts for the year were about $100,000. There was, as well, the cheerful buzz of electric cars, four-wheeled, erratic, and exciting, especially when the trolley jumped its wire and left the riders dreaming of the depend-
ability of the rejected horse, or when the trolley ran ahead on Federal street, running down the hill from the University. Then the motorman swore ecstati-
cally, and the student riders cheered. Competition was the life of the trolley car
business, or, perhaps, in the light of modern theories of consolidation, its death.
But the Federal Street Company flourished, with 75 cars and 35,000 riders in one
day, and the Pittsburgh, Allegheny and Manchester line ran 76 cars, with 58,000
riders in 20 hours, and the Allegheny Traction Company, with 20 miles of shining
track, began its collection of nickels in October of '94.

But electricity lighted, as well as moved, old Allegheny. An ill-fated
experiment with high mast lighting proved wasteful, so that the city was soon
dotted with yellow clay holes for newer, shorter poles . . . Electricity helped
citizens climb the hills. The Nunnery Hill Inclined Plane, with 1,100 feet of
track, which began at upper Federal street; the Troy Hill Inclined Plane, 370
feet long; and the Clifton Inclined Plane, which rose from Irwin avenue and
Brighton road, scaled the sandy heights to the outlying districts.

Already the suburbs were developing. The twisted paths of Riverview Park,
with their glimpses of the distant blue Ohio, had been opened for the delights of
family picnics, at which, around piles of lieberwurst sandwiches and pickles
and bottles of lager beer, the young cousins could meet and quarrel in domestic
amity and the uncles and aunts could speculate on the capacities of the new
preacher and the future of the tanning business on the Allegheny river banks.
Perrysville avenue led to the Park, its first paving scarcely hard, and Marshall
avenue had been widened to 60 feet. Bellevue, that nearly mythical community,
which pulled its citizens up the river bank from the trains to its unharried,
peaceful lanes, was now the end of one branch of the Pleasant Valley Street
Railway Company, and began expanding, while it boasted of sewers, lights and
graded streets. Beyond it lay obscure Ben Avon, rustically asleep and glad of it,
promising no sewers, no factories, and wanting neither . . .

So passed the days of Allegheny's freedom, days that now resemble those of
Indian summer, since the sudden winter of consolidation lay so near and yet
so unexpected.

*   *   *

And so, we have visited Old Allegheny in its pioneering days, in
its heyday of prosperous middle age and in its golden age of refine-
ment and grace.

Then, as with all institutions, change took over, and the fading
years began. As Omar Khayyam wrote regretfully, "Yet Ah, that
Spring should vanish with the Rose! That Youth's sweet-scented
manuscript should close!"

The change was not sudden or dramatic. Some old families long
clung to their mansions; the parks were still cared for; Dutchtown
wielded its broom and paintbrush and paid its bills and put up with
its ills. Boggs & Buhl endured for a long time. And some new indus-
tries came to replace the old. The magnificent Allegheny General
Hospital arose. In 1939 the Carnegie Free Library of Allegheny, with
its Music Hall, was joined by the new Buhl Planetarium and Institute
of Popular Science which brought a whole generation of visitors to
the North Side. The Conservatory became the Aviary. Sears arose
nearby. There were some efforts at revival here and there.

But blight had set in, and many a street of respectable homes became sleazy tenements and what evangelists used to denounce as "dens of vice and iniquity." Proud Federal Street, "where the sun used to shine far brighter than it did on Pittsburgh's Sixth Avenue across the bridge," deteriorated until cheap restaurants and noisy taverns stood elbow to elbow. Cautious citizens began to glance over their shoulders as they walked the streets after dark.

Then, after a while, stately mansions were converted into business offices and rooming houses. The University was gone; Boggs & Buhl was gone; and the old-time citizens mournfully remembered Stephen Collins Foster's "Ah! May the Red Rose Live Alway" with its question: "Why must the beautiful die?"

Suddenly, in this age of city planning, the planners discovered the vast blighted area of Allegheny, so close to the central Golden Triangle. Their bulldozers came; the wreckers' ball began to swing, and the dust of a century floated across the landscape. Alleghenians in general entered into the hopes for a new Allegheny, feeling well-rid of much of their tarnished heritage.

The new day dawned, and new businesses and new industries came. Today the vacant squares of the demolished areas are filling up with new construction. Around the nucleus of the Library and the Planetarium a new civic center is being created. A new era for a new Allegheny is under way.

Of course, there are some people who still question the arrival of endless pie from the blue, blue Washington sky. But in spite of our misgivings the new era comes on apace and we somehow shall learn to live in it and with it. As someone — maybe Heraclitus — said: "Time, like a river, flows — and all things change." And we content ourselves with "Other times, other ways." Yet somehow one cannot help regretting the loss of the Old Allegheny that has gone with the wind. One can wonder why many of the well-built old homes facing the spacious parks could not have been renewed and remodeled to keep for us some of the old and the good on the outskirts of the new. One wonders why the Buhl (Ober) Park had to be bobtailed for the new scheme. And certainly one may regret that the Federal Street pedestrian mall was not cut right through the huge new Allegheny Center buildings, to connect with and so redeem lower Federal Street. Surely, the future must take care of this need in some new Allegheny project in some bright tomorrow.

* * *
Now, let us turn to Mary E. Bakewell for a final benediction. This delightfully young octogenarian, writing a book in her ninth decade, set down her childhood memories in a little volume entitled Of Long Ago — The Children and the City. Her “hail and farewell” stands by itself at the end of an era. It will not soon be surpassed. She tells us:

These are personal memories. They hover not around the Pittsburgh we know today, but more around the sister city known then in its own right as Allegheny Town and now as Pittsburgh’s North Side.

In that early time Allegheny was a town of something like innocence and charm. It was built like a city — houses set in alignment as city houses should be set not sprawling suburban fashion on irregular plots. It was circled by hills, of course, and its own special Monument Hill (known as Hog Back) was dominated by a Civil War statue, and vocal on the Fourth of July with thunderous cannon. Most notable, this Allegheny Town, for its transformation of the outmoded Commons, where patient cows had sparsely grazed, into a system of parks of which the citizens could be proud. Something akin to peace then brooded: Not a motor vehicle, not a radio, no telephones, movies, juke boxes or loud speakers; for that matter, no cocktails, lipstick, beauty parlors, or ciga- rettes; no glare of electric lights. That early time seems at this distance an era of calm, if not the Golden Age at least not one of chromium and plastic. Fifty years ago! Put it, in candor, at sixty or seventy for recollection and see, to begin with, a typical picture.

Three little girls sat on the top step of a porch fronting the park — eager, waiting, each one clapping a silver mug, watching for Mr. Winters the Milkman. A broad, quiet street that, bordering the park whose two divisions were distinguished in the children’s vocabulary as “Our Park” and the “Far Park.” The “Far Park,” across Western Avenue where horsecars were a threat, was to be entered only in hand of Sarah. Once entered, pleasures were to be had. A life-size Deer waited, cast-iron or something like, yet most natural: impressive antlers, head erect, nostrils wide even though the only scent was smell of smoke from the Pittsburgh, Ft. Wayne and Chicago R. R. The railroad swept through the Park in the long curve of the cut — its bridge, high arched, another attraction. Thus, to Pond and Swans. That all of these were quite black mattered not at all to young Pittsburghers early attuned to soot . . .

So stretched the Park to infinity — a thing for anticipation. This nearby section, Our Park, was all the little girls waiting at the gate for Mr. Winters really knew. Heralded by his bell, he comes; dignity surrounds his equipage. Horse halts at hitching-post and drops his nose in relaxation. Mr. Winters unnecessarily says “Whoa,” and, to the children, “Hello, girls.” The gate yields to our thrust; we run, eager, mugs upheld. On half the wagonseat looms a great brass-bound hogshead. Mr. Winters turns the spigot and, marvelously, out gushes the white stream, bubbling, splashing not only into mugs but almost into three open mouths. We drink and are fed. Undoubtedly germs abounded, but we did not know about them . . .

But the girls grow up: they become what they had not been, and they face a different city from that which they had known. A city whose value is too much of population, sky-scrapers, machinery, assets. Where, indeed, injunction is needed: “Never to allow gradually the traffic to smother with noise and fog the flowering of the spirit.” Yet a great gift has been given here — here is a city set on a hill, a very rampart of hills encircling round about. It is lifted up, in sight of all men. And still, for what it has to show, heads might bow in humility. For the wealth of the city, and the power of it, and the influence of it, are:

“The names of those who in their lives fought for life
Who wore at their hearts the fire’s centre . . .
And left the vivid air signed with their honour.”
So, we come to the end, to our own "Hail and Farewell," with the thought that when Mary Bakewell, past her ninetieth year, finally got to Heaven, as she surely must have done, she must have found it very much like the Old Allegheny of *The Children and the City*. In fact, if she found the Heavenly City even half as lovely as the city of her childhood, it must be a delightful place indeed!