

THE WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL MAGAZINE

VOLUME 63

OCTOBER 1980

NUMBER 4

THE SHAPING OF THE POINT: PITTSBURGH'S RENAISSANCE PARK

ROBERT C. ALBERTS

I knew, when I began to research this history, that Point State Park was a landmark of city planning in the United States. I knew that it was the spearhead of the country's earliest large downtown renewal program after World War II, and that it was the first (and the last) such program conceived, directed, and largely paid for with private capital by corporate business. I knew, too, that the park was a testing ground for a radical new legal concept in city planning, and that a towering commercial development came to the city simply because the park was being built. And I knew that during its building, the park and the development drew national, even international, attention from city planners and the press, with some seventy-eight delegations traveling to Pittsburgh — one from Australia — to study what was being done there, and how.

What I had forgotten, or had never known, was the extent to which this was also a story of human interest, with elements of controversy, conflict, suspense, and, in two instances, of comedy. After a smooth beginning, Point State Park became a battleground where civic leaders, politicians, city planners, architects, artists, landscape architects, traffic engineers, academic historians, and several motivated

This article is reprinted with permission of the University of Pittsburgh Press and was taken from chapters 4 and 6 of its forthcoming book, *The Shaping of the Point: Pittsburgh's Renaissance Park*, by Robert C. Alberts (© 1980). Mr. Alberts is secretary of the Society and has written several biographies, the most recent of which was *Benjamin West: A Biography*, published in 1978.—Editor

interest groups fought for their theories, their aesthetic principles, and their claimed rights. Which concepts of city planning would prevail? Would Pittsburgh end up with a real park or with a landscaped traffic interchange? Would the two old bridges be used or dismantled? Would the 1764 Blockhouse be retained, or moved, or torn down? Would there be red, white, and blue park benches in the park? A complex of public buildings? A lighthouse at the Point? An immense stainless steel statue of Joe Magarac? A carillon bell tower?

The Seeds of the Renaissance

Near the close of the First World War, in October 1918, Pittsburgh turned again to municipal rehabilitation. Fifteen leading businessmen met in the boardroom of the Mellon National Bank and voted to form a Citizens' Committee on a City Plan for Pittsburgh, the main purpose of which was "to prepare and secure adoption of a comprehensive city plan." As executive secretary they named the man who had persuaded them to act, Frederick Bigger, thirty-seven, a graduate architect (University of Pennsylvania, 1903), a native Pittsburgher who had practiced in Seattle and Philadelphia and had returned to Pittsburgh in 1913 to work on the Municipal Art Commission's fruitless study for improving the Point.

The committee changed its name to Municipal Planning Association, opened an office, hired a staff of three assistants, retained Ketchum, MacLeod and Grove to handle publicity and raise money, and printed a newsletter called *Progress*. The association expended \$250,000 between 1920 and 1923 on six studies of the city's playgrounds, transit, parks, rails, waterways, and streets.¹ Major improvements were completed or begun in Pittsburgh in the 1920s — among them the Liberty Tubes and Bridge, the Armstrong Tunnels, the Boulevard of the Allies, and the Gulf, Koppers, and Grant buildings — but there was no apparent progress toward anything that could charitably be called a comprehensive city plan. Some critics charged that on the basis of results achieved, the association's planning money was wasted. Others saw it as a necessary preliminary step to educate the public and to mobilize its support, without which public officials are always reluctant to act, even in the worthiest causes.

Another program to rescue the Point was launched in 1930. Senator David Aiken Reed introduced a resolution in Congress to erect a national memorial at the Point to honor George Rogers Clark

¹ Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association, *Prelude to the Future* (Pittsburgh, 1968), 6-11.

and his company of heroes, conquerors of the Old Northwest Territory.² The memorial, for reasons that are not clear, was to be an illuminated lighthouse at the apex of the Point, occupying the small tongue of land projecting beyond the junction of the two bridges. Concurrently, a group of Pittsburghers attempted to enlarge the memorial by eliminating the freight yards and rebuilding all the lower Point. Their plan, based on a design drawn up by A. Marshall Bell, onetime director of public safety, and Edward B. Lee, architect, contained in addition to the lighthouse a national memorial park with freshwater aquarium, botanical gardens, and a pioneer museum; space for a town hall or commercial museum for the products of the world; a site for historic monuments and a park; a recreational park or site for future memorial buildings; a water park and boat landing; and parking space along both shores for 4,000 cars.³

Senator Reed's lighthouse and the Bell-Lee complex of memorial buildings and parks died aborning. Vincennes, Indiana, with a stronger claim on General Clark than Pittsburgh's, raised \$900,000 with which to buy the twenty-two-acre site of old Fort Sackville, and Congress appropriated \$2 million for a George Rogers Clark memorial on the site in the form of a massive Doric temple. It was dedicated by President Franklin Roosevelt in 1936.

In the depths of the Great Depression, in the spring of 1933, the Municipal Planning Association closed its office and furloughed its staff. The Dow Industrial Average was forty-one, United States Steel was selling at \$22 (down from \$262 in 1929), mills were closed for lack of orders or were working at a small fraction of their capacity, and the association had no money for rent, payroll, planning, or building.

In May 1936, a few weeks after the worst flood in the city's history, the planning association was revived, with Frederick Bigger as technical consultant and Howard Heinz (head of the food-processing company his father had founded) as president.⁴ The following year Bigger persuaded Wallace Richards, thirty-three, serving as builder and manager of the government's huge housing development at Greenbelt, Maryland, to become the association's executive director. In 1938 the association changed its name to the Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association.

In April 1937 Frank C. Harper, a sixth-generation Pittsburgher,

² John W. Oliver, "The Point Memorial," *Pittsburgh Record* 5 (Oct. 1930): 35.

³ *Ibid.*, 32, 35; *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, July 30, 1945.

⁴ *Prelude to the Future*, 16.

former newspaper editor and columnist, now executive director of the Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce, delivered a lecture and offered a resolution at a meeting of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania. He proposed to launch a movement to build a national shrine, a memorial park named for George Washington, at the Point. His resolution was adopted and pushed by the Society's president, John S. Fisher, former governor of Pennsylvania. On September 28, 1937, Harper, Fisher, and other representatives from the Society appeared before the City Planning Commission and requested "cooperation in a plan to set aside that part of Pittsburgh known as 'the Point' for a National Park site." City Council thereupon passed a resolution creating a Point Park Commission. Mayor Cornelius D. Scully named the members, with Harper as chairman. Allegheny County and the state announced their support.

The Historical Society and the Point Park Commission held a black-tie "Community Dinner" at the William Penn Hotel on Saturday evening, March 26, 1938, "to promote the Point Park Project and meet officials of the National Park Service." The proposal was to create a thirty-six-acre park and in it to erect a flood-wall, re-create Fort Duquesne and Fort Pitt, build a museum and an exposition hall, and set aside parking space for 7,000 automobiles. There were eight speeches at the dinner, plus an invocation and a benediction.⁵

The following month the chairman of the City Planning Commission, Frederick Bigger, issued a ten-page document of major importance in the history of what had come to be known as "the problem of the Point." Bigger addressed it to the City Planning Commission and called it "Analysis and Recommendations re Proposals for Triangle Improvement." He reported on an extraordinary suggestion that the two bridges at the Point be moved back from the apex of the Point. The Manchester Bridge, he said, might be moved up the Allegheny at a cost of \$1,250,000; but the Point Bridge (over the Monongahela), being an inverted cantilever structure, could not be moved. In any case, placing the two bridges farther up the Triangle was impractical because of construction costs, loss of tax revenues from requisitioned properties, difficult problems of planning, and delay in building a Point Park while the bridges were being relocated. On Point Park he said:

⁵ Personal interview with Charles Morse Stotz, architect; Frederick W. Weir, "Report of the Point Park Commission, Pittsburgh" (December 31, 1943), 1-4; *Bulletin-Index*, Mar. 24, 1938; program pamphlet for the dinner.

There is not time to develop even a sketch plan to reveal the possibility of treatment of the Point Park flanked by the ramped bridge approaches, which is the relationship involved by the plan recommended. However, it is already clear that a raising of the elevation of the ground of the Park, either as an entirety or in several terraces would make it entirely possible for anyone in the Park to have an absolutely clear and unobstructed view of the Allegheny River for a distance of at least 600 feet . . . and of the Monongahela River for a distance of at least 800 feet.

Moreover, the treatment of the western apex of the Triangle Park could be that of massed plantings, including trees to block out in part the view of the rather ugly bridges; or that apex could be developed with an attractive and not too large museum building, housing historical exhibits, of such height as to partially block out the rising ramps close to the bridges, and with its roof make an attractive terrace and observation point.

It is still further suggested that there are two ways of emphasizing the historical status of the Point without erecting a replica of a huge fort. One way would be to have, as a unit of the landscape design, a scale model on the ground of the entire original Point with fort, moat, and abutting rivers. The other way would be to have a still smaller model of the same thing within the museum building; and to have it mechanically adjusted to show little scale figures of soldiers, citizens, and Indians.

On July 1, the City Planning Commission approved Chairman Bigger's recommendation on Point Park, calling for: "the immediate development of sketch plans under the guidance of or with consultation by competent designers and landscape architects, to be submitted to Federal Authorities showing a desirable adjustment of the Triangle plans to an historic memorial park at the Point; and define how said park area might be designed to benefit the entire community and be worthy of its historical significance."

Representatives of the City Planning Commission, the Point Park Commission, and the Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association met in Washington on December 9, 1938, with officials of the National Park Service "in order to officially clarify the relationship and the point of view of the National Park Service to a proposed historic park at the Point." The Pittsburghers were sobered by the problems of dealing with federal authorities:

1. The Park Service would delegate an archeologist to come to Pittsburgh to make a survey and determine elevations and limits of Fort Pitt. (No problem.)

2. The Park Service could not enter into official negotiations with the city of Pittsburgh about a Point Park until all the area to be included in the site of the historic shrine had been acquired by the city and deeded to the Park Service. (Problem: the city could not possibly finance the acquisition of all the property within the site.)

3. The Congress of the United States might then, after conveyance of the area to the Park Service, make a special appropriation to the Park Service for development of the area. (Problem: *Might* make an appropriation?)

4. The Park Service, in the event this congressional action was taken, would reproduce the topographic conditions as to elevations of land existing at the time to be memorialized. (Problem: Reproduction of topographic conditions existing in the 1760s would result in a lowering of the elevation to or near pool level of the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers.)

5. The Park Service would reproduce wholly or in part the forts or buildings existing at the time to be commemorated. (Problem: Reproduction of all or part of Fort Pitt with a clearing of all land occupied by the fort would result in, first, a park within the walls and battlements of a primitive fortification; and, second, serious interference with traffic facilities to the Point and Manchester bridges.)

6. The Park Service would protect the area from river inundation or other encroachment with flood walls and fences. (Problem: Construction of flood walls around Point Park would greatly reduce the size of the Point and, as lowered to the elevation of 1763, would create a well or pit having no outlook to the rivers and no point of observation except the top of Mount Washington across the Monongahela.)⁶

The representatives thereupon decided "to explore the possible sources of funds for the park, including congressional action, Public Works Administration, Works Progress Administration, National Park Service, State, County, City, and private contributions." Up to this hour, the only consideration had been to build a national memorial

6 "The Point Problem," *Progress* (Jan. 1939): 10-12 (published by the Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association); personal interview with Ralph E. Griswold, landscape architect. John P. Robin points out that National Park Service views and methods had not then been "urbanized," as they were to be a decade or so later.

park. Now for the first time thoughts turned to the possibility of building a state park.

In 1939 the Regional Planning Association raised \$50,000 to retain Robert Moses, commissioner of parks and parkways of New York City, to "investigate the arterial problems of Pittsburgh, with particular reference to improvement of conditions in the Triangle." A large staff worked three months and produced for Moses a neat, gray volume containing twenty-six pages, twenty-three handsome maps and photographs, and nine recommendations. His total program would cost an estimated \$38 million. "It was fortunate," he said, "that there was a wealth of existing information and that almost every phase of the problem had been conscientiously explored before. . . . The trouble is that in major municipal improvements we are generally more distinguished for plans than we are for action, and that often we get so tangled up in conflicting programs, each with substantial merit and each with its strong adherents, that accomplishment is forgotten in the fog of controversy."

Moses set forth certain philosophical principles with which he approached his assignment:

At the risk of being charged with lack of historical perspective and enthusiasm, we must say that the relics and historical association [of the Point] should be regarded as comparatively unimportant in the solution of present and future city planning problems. Construction of the Point and Manchester bridges at the site of old Fort Pitt has determined that traffic rather than history must be the decisive factor in the reconstruction of the apex of the Pittsburgh Triangle and in the establishment of Point Park.

It is useless to bemoan the bad planning which brought these bridges together at this point, or to adopt the fantastic suggestion that they be torn down and reconstructed elsewhere. They are there to stay. . . . The suggestion that these bridges be removed is apparently based on the assumption that this would facilitate federal reconstruction of the entire tip of the Triangle as an incident in the restoration of historical Fort Pitt. It is hard to believe that anyone would take this idea seriously, even though the National Park Service has shown a polite interest in it. The game of dressing up modern public improvements as historical monuments is played out. This was a quaint and ingenious device calculated to solve local problems at federal expense. The fact is that the era of easy money and federal

largesse of this kind is over and that the planners of the future Pittsburgh may as well be realistic about it.

As to traffic congestion in the Golden Triangle, Moses felt it was necessary to emphasize an important fact that had been overlooked or minimized by those who had previously studied Pittsburgh:

This fact is that no American municipality which has its roots in the period of rapid, unregulated growth, and which is still active and growing, can completely solve its peak load traffic problem. The peak exists only in the early morning and late afternoon for less than an hour on each occasion. This constitutes no reason for enduring intolerable conditions. These conditions can be modified and the discomforts can be greatly mitigated, but they cannot be entirely eliminated except at exorbitant cost and on a basis which would appear fantastically extravagant at all but the peak periods.

Moses deplored the preempting of an immense amount of space in the Triangle by railroad facilities, active and obsolete. All visitors, he said, were struck by the waste and blight represented by the dead and abandoned Wabash railroad bridge and station in the very center of the Triangle. The Pennsylvania Railroad, while an active and going concern, occupied a grossly disproportionate amount of land in the Triangle and was a major cause of traffic difficulties, uneven and haphazard development, and civic ugliness. The railroad properties which were dead or dying obviously should be removed and converted to active public use.

One of Moses's nine proposals concerned a waterfront highway running from the Manchester Bridge at the Point along the Allegheny to Eleventh Street. Its design should be different from the one being built along the Monongahela (Fort Pitt Boulevard); it would include a river wall topped by a landscaped esplanade and would not be a combined elevated and depressed roadway system "set back from the river and without protection from floods, such as is being completed on Water Street."

The Water Street plan seems to us to have various defects, and we believe that it should not be applied to Duquesne Way. The depressed roadway on Water Street will be flooded several times each year, and at such times parking will be impossible and the lower level will be a mud bank. We question whether the parking plan will accommodate any large number of cars without

great confusion. . . . We do not believe that this is the best treatment of a potentially attractive river edge.

He recommended creation of a municipal authority that would charge tolls for use of the bridges leading into the Triangle. He suggested that a license tag might be sold at a low annual rate to all automobile owners in lieu of a toll charge, perhaps ten dollars a year for passenger cars and fifteen dollars for trucks. Vehicles not having the tag would be charged a toll of five cents. "Motorists," he said, "must be practical about these matters."

On Point Park, Moses recommended:

The traffic at the apex of the Triangle should be unsnarled by a complete reconstruction of the Point so as to eliminate obtrusive, unnecessary and obsolete structures, including the disgraceful old Exposition buildings. . . . Establish a landscape area to be known as Point Park featuring a shaft or monument of Pennsylvania black granite, steel, glass and aluminum, and keeping the Block-house in its present location but raised to the new elevation of the proposed park.

Moses closed with a tribute to the city:

Pittsburgh is a fascinating city — busy, alert, self-reliant, the symbol of a uniquely American industry. It has been so engrossed in business that it has only recently got around to a consideration of the incidental problems which business creates — problems of comfort, convenience and beauty. If a tithe of the energy which drives the city is directed toward these problems, the results will be quick and certain.⁷

A by-product of the Moses plan was a furious controversy among various planners and institutions over who had been the first to recommend what Moses recommended. Park H. Martin, county planning engineer, declared that the County Planning Commission had been urging those same projects for some time and had formally recommended seven of Moses's nine points in its 1936 improvement program. The present writer, after interviewing Wallace Richards, wrote two articles reviewing the Moses plan in the *Pittsburgh Bulletin-Index* magazine (November 23, 1939, and July 11, 1940). The arti-

7 Robert Moses, *Arterial Plan for Pittsburgh* (Pittsburgh, 1939); *Prelude to the Future*, 17-19; Roy Lubove, *Twentieth-Century Pittsburgh: Government, Business, and Environmental Change* (New York, 1969), 103-5; *Bulletin-Index*, Nov. 23, 1939, July 11, 1940.

cles referred to "bickering, back-stabbing, and behind-the-scenes fighting such as confronts no other U. S. city"; suggested that "perhaps this lack of harmony exists because the problem is so difficult it often seems hopeless"; and offered a characterization of Frederick Bigger that has since been widely quoted: "Nationally famed as a topflight city planner, slight, dyspeptic Frederick Bigger has personally laid practically all of the groundwork for Pittsburgh's long-range planning. . . . He has been ahead of his time for so long that he is slightly bitter over waiting for the world to catch up with him. He has been privately critical of the much-touted Moses Report as a mere rewrite of what he has been saying for twenty years or more." And of the report itself: "Since many conflicting interests are fighting over as many conflicting plans for Pittsburgh, a chief virtue of the Moses Report lies in what it does *not* recommend. The investigators have offered variations on familiar themes, but admittedly have found almost nothing that had not already been considered, and readily recognize that much has already been started or is definitely planned. But in recommending certain projects, in tying together its program into one organic, dramatic entity, it tends to eliminate other strongly-supported proposals. . . . Actually, the idea of the Moses Report was to coalesce all previous study and spur action."

Action, indeed, was spurred, by whatever cause. The fast-moving events of succeeding months indicated that Pittsburghers now really recognized and intended to do something to remedy their problems.

- The Regional Planning Association formed a new committee to study and promote a "Pitt Parkway" to run east from the Monongahela shore at the Triangle toward the new "Dream Highway" (Pennsylvania Turnpike) then being constructed. Chairman: Richard King Mellon, forty, banker.⁸

- The Regional Planning Association formed a new committee to study and promote capital improvements in the Golden Triangle. Chairman: Edgar Jonas Kaufmann, department store magnate.

- The Chamber of Commerce formed a Golden Triangle Division to "crystallize citizen effort behind a movement to stop depreciation of real estate values within the Golden Triangle by making it a better place in which to work and transact business." Chairman:

⁸ Lubove, *Twentieth-Century Pittsburgh*, 105; *Bulletin-Index*, July 11, 1940.

Richard King Mellon.⁹ (Mellon was publicly criticized for holding an organizational meeting in the Duquesne Club to which only a narrow cross-section of interested persons and institutions had been invited. It was a mistake he did not forget and did not repeat.)

- All planning groups agreed to give priority to two of the Moses proposals: the Duquesne waterfront boulevard along the Allegheny, and a crosstown boulevard, free of crossings at grade, to run from river to river at the wide base of the Triangle.¹⁰

- Mayor Cornelius D. Scully appointed a new six-man Point Park Commission in October 1940 to reopen negotiations with the National Park Service for a park that would "take the form of a National Historic Site." Chairman: City Councilman Frederick W. Weir.¹¹

- The Point Park Commission employed a registered surveyor and obtained a WPA grant to begin excavation work necessary for the reports required by the National Park Service for a National Park site. Digging began on January 21, 1941. Wesley L. Bliss, a professional archeologist, was retained the following year.

- City Council in July 1941 passed a strong antismoke ordinance that was planned to bring all users of fuel under the program by October 1, 1943.¹² The ordinance was based on regulations imposed successfully in St. Louis (whose officials confessed to a visiting Pittsburgh research team that they had learned all they knew about smoke control from Pittsburgh's Mellon Institute for Industrial Research).¹³

The seeds of the city's community renewal program were beginning to sprout and flower when the United States entered World War II. The program halted in December 1941, pushed aside for a more urgent community effort.

⁹ Lubove, *Twentieth-Century Pittsburgh*, 105; *Bulletin-Index*, Nov. 2, 1939.

¹⁰ Lubove, *Twentieth-Century Pittsburgh*, 104-5.

¹¹ Weir, "Report of the Point Park Commission"; Lubove, *Twentieth-Century Pittsburgh*, 112; *Bulletin-Index*, Mar. 24, 1938.

¹² Lubove, *Twentieth-Century Pittsburgh*, 114-16; *Bulletin-Index*, Feb. 13, June 26, 1941.

¹³ I heard this in 1942 from David H. Kurtzman, who was with the group that visited St. Louis. The Mellon Institute for Industrial Research did indeed conduct a smoke control research program for St. Louis.

The League of Yes-and-No People

A persistent legend has grown up around the beginnings of the Pittsburgh Renaissance. Journalists on assignment to describe what was happening in Pittsburgh told over and over a story of Richard King Mellon's return from the war in 1945. As it appeared in *Time* magazine on October 3, 1949:

Home again as a brigadier general [colonel] in the Army Reserve,¹⁴ Mellon took off his uniform. . . . On the night he and Mrs. Mellon returned to Pittsburgh the city was engulfed in black smog so thick that from the William Penn Hotel they could not see the lights of the Mellon National Bank half a block away.

"I had almost forgotten how bad it is," said Constance Mellon. "Now I understand why a lot of people leave it and why a lot of people will never come back to it."

"We *must* come back to it," he said.

"Well, you have a lot of ideas about it. Will they ever get done?"

"They *must* get done."

Having discovered that there was a problem and having decided that there should be a Renaissance in Pittsburgh, Mellon "took up his ideas with his colleagues around the Duquesne Club: such men as Pickleman H. J. ('Jack') Heinz, Edgar Kaufmann of Kaufmann Department Store, U. S. Steel's Ben Fairless, Alcoa's Roy Hunt. . . . All of them were conscious of the city's needs."

As *Reader's Digest* told the story, "The start came in 1945 when General Richard K. Mellon . . . returned to the 'Smoky City' from overseas. On his first day home his wife, Constance, laid down the law: 'You've got to do something about Pittsburgh — or we'll move away.' 'I couldn't afford to lose such a wonderful wife,' says Mellon. 'I decided to do something.'"¹⁵

The story is a pretty one, but it ignores some pertinent facts. Richard Mellon, stationed in Harrisburg and Washington throughout the war, had been back in Pittsburgh a number of times in the years 1942-1945, and he and Constance Mellon were not unaware of the

¹⁴ Mellon had been a student pilot in World War I. He reentered service on April 2, 1942, as a major, handled Emergency Relief in Washington, became director of Selective Service for Pennsylvania in July 1943, and in March 1945 became assistant chief of staff of the International Division of the War Department. He was discharged as a colonel. He became a reserve brigadier general in June 1948 and retired as a lieutenant general in 1961.

¹⁵ Alfred Steinberg, "The New City Called Pittsburgh," *Reader's Digest* (May 1955): 84-85, condensed from *National Municipal Review*.

city's smoke problem. He had had a great deal of firsthand experience in the city's renewal programs before the war. He was one of five individual supporters who in 1939 brought Robert Moses to make a plan for improving Pittsburgh. He had been a member of the Regional Planning Association since 1938 and the active chairman of one of its most important committees; on the death of Howard Heinz in 1941 he became, at the urging of Arthur E. Braun and Wallace Richards, the association's president. He and his colleagues had already drawn up plans for postwar Pittsburgh; in 1943 he had formed the key organization that was to be named the Allegheny Conference on Community Development.

There are varying accounts of who first conceived the idea of creating the Allegheny Conference, but there is general agreement that it was one or the other of three principal figures — or perhaps all three at once. They were Dr. Robert E. Doherty, soon to retire as president of Carnegie Institute of Technology; Dr. Edward R. Weidlein, president and director of the Mellon Institute for Industrial Research; and Wallace Richards, executive director of the Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association, called Richard Mellon's "civic advisor," sometimes his "public conscience."

According to James McClain, planning officer of the Planning Association, later planning director of the Allegheny Conference, "In the early 1940s a person from the state government came to the city to urge some post-war planning efforts. He talked with Wallace Richards and Park Martin. This is when Wallace got the idea to start the ACCD."¹⁶ According to J. Steele Gow, for many years executive head of the Falk Foundation, Arthur Braun (an elderly banker who was treasurer of Pittsburgh Regional Planning and had great behind-the-scenes influence in Pittsburgh) asked Gow to accept a visit from Richards.

Mr. Richards came out and spent two hours or more with me that first afternoon, telling me his ideas about Pittsburgh, how he had always thought of Pittsburgh as a vibrant place, with great potential, and that when he got here he found that it was an old city that was living pretty much on its past. . . . He said he would like to have some of the leaders of Pittsburgh get together

¹⁶ Interview with James McClain, Pittsburgh Renaissance Oral History Project (hereafter cited as POHP). Transcriptions of this and other interviews in the project may be found in the Pennsylvania Division of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh and at the Archives of Industrial Society at the University of Pittsburgh.

and consider how a hopefully successful attack could be made on some of these problems that seemed to be deterring Pittsburgh from the progress which was its right and which he thought it had in it to accomplish. I listened with great attention because what he was saying to me almost directly paralleled what Bob Doherty . . . had said to me just a couple of weeks earlier. Bob had also come to Pittsburgh just recently from Yale's School of Engineering, where he was dean, and he was greatly disappointed by Pittsburgh's resting on its laurels instead of looking to the future and planning ahead. . . . He had talked to me just about the way Wallace Richards talked that afternoon.

So when Richards left I called Mr. Braun and told him . . . that I thought the first step was to bring these two men together and have them cross-fertilize the other's thinking. That was done, and Bob Doherty and Wallace Richards held several talks before anything else was done. When they found themselves thinking sufficiently alike or knew where their contrasts and differences were, it was decided that a group should be organized and raise some money to get a program to revitalize Pittsburgh under way.¹⁷

A commonly accepted story is that Richards won support for his ideas in the winter of 1942-1943 at a breakfast meeting in Washington, D. C. Three people were present: Wallace Richards, Dr. Weidlein, and Richard Mellon. Weidlein recalled the event some years later. "We talked about the future of Pittsburgh in the postwar years and came to the conclusion that unless something was done Pittsburgh would become a dying city. Our discussions led to the thought of creating an organization which could do a job of research and study and evolve a community plan for improvements."¹⁸

Weidlein gave a slightly different version when interviewed in September 1972:

Mr. Mellon and I were down in Washington. I was associated

¹⁷ Interview with J. Steele Gow, POHP.

¹⁸ David L. Lawrence, as told to John P. Robin and Stefan Lorant, "Rebirth," in Stefan Lorant, *Pittsburgh: The Story of an American City* (Garden City, N.Y., 1964), 381-82. The reader should be apprized, however, that Robin protested in a lecture delivered on November 13, 1972, "There is no true account, to my knowledge, of what Pittsburgh did and how and why it did it. The published materials were oversimplified, platitudinous and very often inaccurate. I would especially warn you against Lorant's *Pittsburgh: The Story of a City*. There's a chapter in it which carries my name as co-author, to which I would have made very violent objections had I been in this country when it was being prepared for final publication."

with the War Industries Board and he with the Army. We would have many talks about what we were going to do to Pittsburgh and we often felt that we were either going to do something with it or give it back to the Indians. So that was the beginning. . . .

So Mr. Mellon said, "When you go back to Pittsburgh, you get ahold of Wallace Richards and he will arrange a luncheon and you and Dr. Doherty see if you can't get together all of the various divisions in one organization to see if we can't be a united front to attack all the problems related to the redevelopment of the city."¹⁹

Park Martin once asked Wallace Richards point-blank who had conceived the idea of the conference, and "Richards did not claim the idea nor disclaim it, but rather attributed it to Dr. Robert E. Doherty. . . . Richards said that Dr. Doherty and Dr. Edward Weidlein, in the early part of 1943, met for breakfast in the Carlton Hotel in Washington, at which time Doherty presented his concern for the region and the idea of a super planning group that would be concerned with what was called the Allegheny Region, to Richard K. Mellon and his brother-in-law, Alan M. Scaife. As a result of this meeting Mr. Mellon evidenced his interest and support of the idea. Dr. Doherty and Dr. Weidlein were to return to Pittsburgh and invite a selected group of business and political leaders to a luncheon to consider the formation of such an organization."

Among these mildly conflicting stories and conjectures about how many people were at the famous breakfast in Washington, one thing is certain: Wallace Richards's intentions ran considerably deeper than the call by Doherty and Weidlein for research, study, and a community plan. There were already competent research organizations in Pittsburgh, and there were six master plans covered with dust on the shelves. The need was for a nonpartisan, nonprofit, privately financed, action-oriented civic organization that would have the resources not only to develop a postwar plan, but also the influence to obtain support for it from other civic organizations and the power to convert it to steel, stone, and mortar. The leadership, Richards felt, should come primarily from the city's top industrialists — those he called "the yes and no people."

The Washington conversations were carried back to Pittsburgh and discussed. A second informal meeting was held there in the early

¹⁹ Interview with Edward R. Weidlein, POHP.

spring of 1943, when Mellon sat down with Richards, Weidlein, and Alan Magee Scaife, his brother-in-law, head of the Scaife Company (industrial steel tanks), now an army major. A formal organization luncheon meeting, titled "Citizens Conference on the Post-War Situation for Allegheny County," was then held at the William Penn Hotel on May 24. Dr. Doherty officiated; many of the others present were the heads of the city's leading corporations. Doherty spoke of the need for "resuscitation of a devitalized and deteriorating metropolitan area." He and Dr. Weidlein, he said, and a few others with whom they had talked, felt that "a citizens committee or conference, such as this group, might sponsor that general coordination of study and planning that appears so essential."²⁰ Dr. Weidlein recalled, "We just talked aimlessly at the first meeting in May"; but the group did vote to constitute itself as the Citizens Sponsoring Committee on Post War Planning for the Metropolitan Area of Allegheny County.

According to Steele Gow,

Doherty picked some twenty-five or thirty leading people in Pittsburgh and invited them to a luncheon to hear a presentation of these ideas, and he asked them to pledge initially \$25,000 to explore the possibilities for a year or so and see what could be done. The audience sat on its hands, it didn't applaud the idea, it made no comment, raised no questions, and gave no money. The meeting fell completely flat.

Doherty . . . said he was not going to let it go at that. He was going to call that group together with some others very soon, but was going to go around to see some of them personally in advance and try to make them realize how important this subject was so that they could help to sell the others. So he paid visits to some key individuals we helped him select and . . . within a very few weeks that second meeting was held and I think the \$25,000 was raised without much trouble.²¹

At this second meeting, held on June 29, 1943, the

²⁰ Minutes, Allegheny Conference on Community Development, May 24, June 29, 1943, Archives, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania; Lubove, *Twentieth-Century Pittsburgh*, 108-9.

²¹ Gow interview, POHP. Dr. David H. Kurtzman said in 1971, "As a matter of fact, the one thing that contributed more to the Renaissance than anything else was a story in the *Chicago Tribune* which said that Pittsburgh is passé, it's gone. For years that story was quoted. It wrote Pittsburgh off as a major city. . . . This . . . put Pittsburgh in a position where everybody wanted to get on the bandwagon." Interview with David H. Kurtzman, *ibid*.

CSCPWPMAAC renamed itself the Allegheny Conference on Post War Community Planning. (One senses that a public relations man was struggling for a usable, pronounceable title.) It named Dr. Doherty as temporary chairman, Dr. Weidlein as vice-chairman, and Wallace Richards as secretary. It limited its membership to 100 directors, to be known as sponsors, with twenty-five of these to serve on an executive committee. This, the basic study and planning body, appointed nine groups to draw up postwar plans in as many fields.

And the conference made a momentous policy decision. In the normal pattern of civic service, a top industrialist represented his company at an organizational meeting but thereafter was seen no more; he sent a deputy, sometimes a vice-president employed for such service, to represent him at the subsequent working sessions and to serve on committees. Now an unwritten, self-imposed, strict rule was made known: members should participate in the work of the conference and its committees as individual citizens, not as corporate officers. The member, not a surrogate, not a second-string executive, was expected to be present at meetings and to work personally on his committees. The conference did not want a mere luncheon club of deputies; it wanted a decision at the time of the meeting from a man who was empowered to say yes or no — not from an absent member to whom the question would be referred by his stand-in. Robert B. Pease, who joined the Urban Redevelopment Authority as a young Carnegie Tech graduate in 1953 and fifteen years later became executive director of the Allegheny Conference, recalls a saying: "If the chairman of Alcoa wanted to send the president of Alcoa to represent him at a Conference meeting, he would not dare to do it." It was said that no one ever asked to become a member of the executive committee — he was invited; and that no one ever turned down an invitation to join.²²

For the next two years the Pittsburgh program lay in abeyance. Conference leaders knew, however, that they had started a movement that was a counteraction to those who were thinking of leaving Pittsburgh and their companies with them. If Mellon and his conference colleagues really meant to stay, there might be hope for rescuing the city.²³

²² Interview with Adolph W. Schmidt, *ibid.*; Gow interview, *ibid.*; Robert B. Pease to author in conversation, Oct. 11, 1978.

²³ George I. Bloom, active for decades in Pennsylvania politics, has told me that there was a time when Richard Mellon himself was thinking of leaving

Early in July 1945, Wallace Richards made a telephone call to Ralph E. Griswold, head of a firm of landscape architects based in Pittsburgh. He said that the state, intending to build its own office building in the Point area in Pittsburgh, had asked the Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association to recommend a site. Would Griswold be interested in working on a location for the building? Griswold replied that he would be interested. Richards said, "I'd like you to work with another architect, Charles M. Stotz." Griswold said he would be happy to work with Stotz. Then he added, "You know, I'm already consultant on a study of the whole Point in connection with the proposed national historical park, for the Point Park Commission, and for the City Planning Commission. Would it be possible for us to coordinate the two studies?" Richards said, "Well, I have no authority to go beyond the location of the office building, but it sounds like a sensible idea. I'll call Dick Mellon right away." He called back within an hour and said, "Go ahead, broaden your study. I'll call Charlie Stotz and tell him."²⁴

"It was that chance remark and that decision," Griswold says today,

that started people thinking about the Point as a whole. I was dealing with Willard N. Buente, chief engineer of the City Planning Department, and he was so provoked with me for agreeing to work with the Regional Planning Association that he immediately dropped the city's work on a park at the Point. Fred Bigger had quarreled with Richards and had left the Planning Association to spend full time on the City Planning Commission, and he too was not pleased with me for taking an assignment from Richards.

I had been working for City Planning only a few weeks, but I could see there was a complete stalemate there. The city people were determined to have a national park at the Point. It was an unalterable rule of the National Park Service that the restoration of a historic structure *must* be a total restoration and one placed on its original site. So the Park Service people

Pittsburgh and establishing his residence in New York City. Bloom recalls distinctly a meeting in which Governor Edward Martin worked hard to persuade him to stay in Pittsburgh. Bloom in note to author transmitted via Thomas W. Corbett and T. L. Hazlett.

²⁴ I have based this account of the early design work on the park on the minutes of the Allegheny Conference and the Point Park Commission, and the Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association's *Point Park Development Study* (Oct. 1, 1945). I also relied heavily on personal interviews with Ralph E. Griswold, Charles Morse Stotz, George S. Richardson, and Donald M. McNeil.

said, "We'll have nothing to do with it unless you give us the whole Point and let us rebuild Fort Pitt on it." That would have run to Stanwix Street, almost to the edge of Horne's store, with no room left for a real park and no provision for the traffic at the Point. There we were. It would never work. The city would never buy all that land and turn it over to the Park Service.

Griswold and Stotz prowled the Point area and retired to home or office to set down their findings and their ideas. They made their exploratory studies in a manner common to architects, laying large sheets of transparent tracing paper (known in the profession as "bum-wad") one atop the other, the design progressing as each was finished. They had worked well together on a number of other projects, including the restoration of Old Economy in Ambridge; but in two weeks of hard work on Point Park they produced nothing that satisfied them. The location of a site for the state office building depended on the design of the park, and in designing the park they were caught in a three-way deadlock of the traffic planners, whose sole or main concern was the flow of vehicular traffic over the two Point bridges; the historians, who wanted at least one reconstructed fort; and those who thought of the Point mainly in terms of public buildings set down in a park. Their own designs, and the designs of all who had preceded them, contained what was really nothing more than a landscaped interchange.

Ralph Esty Griswold, born in Warren, Ohio, in 1894, graduated from Cornell in landscape design. He had served as a lieutenant in camouflage in the AEF in World War I, continued his professional studies after the war in Paris and Rome, and started out as a landscape architect in Cleveland in 1923, moving to Pittsburgh in 1927. His commissions over the next twenty years included landscape design for country clubs, municipalities, and colleges throughout the country, industrial parks, the Warm Springs Foundation in Georgia, and the Richard Beatty Mellon estate at Ligonier. He was a Fellow of Landscape Architecture at the American Academy at Rome. In years to come he would design the American Military Cemetery at Anzio, Italy, and the restoration of the Agora (marketplace) in Athens. He was best known in Pittsburgh in 1945 as superintendent of Pittsburgh's Bureau of Parks (1934-1945) and as landscape architect for the initial stage of Chatham Village, a medium-density housing development in Pittsburgh which Professor Patrick Horsbrugh calls "an outstanding example of community planning that is renowned

the world over among sociologists, architects, and physical planners, not less than among real-estate economists and philanthropists."

Charles Morse Stotz, born in Pittsburgh in 1898, a Cornell graduate in architecture, the son of architect Edward Stotz, had begun to practice with his father and his brother Edward, Jr., an engineer, in 1923 in the city's oldest architectural firm. After years of designing industrial research centers, churches, college buildings, and some one hundred fifty private residences, he developed an architectural avocation in the study of eighteenth-century military architecture and in the restoration of historic buildings, in which highly specialized fields he became a national authority. Among his many projects were the restoration of Old Economy Village in Ambridge, Drake's oil well at Titusville, the Bradford House in Washington, Pennsylvania, and in the 1960s, Ligonier Square, Compass Inn, and the Fort Ligonier reconstruction. In 1932 he organized the Western Pennsylvania Architectural Survey, which covered twenty-seven counties and recorded twenty-five hundred buildings; and in 1936 he wrote *The Early Architecture of Western Pennsylvania*, a classic in its field. He had served as president of the Pittsburgh chapter of the American Institute of Architects and had worked in civic planning in various capacities since 1936. As president of the Pittsburgh Art Commission for twenty-five years, he was involved in plans proposed for developing a park or memorial at the Point.

"We made one study after the other," Griswold says, "and it was just like marking time. We always came up against the fact that we had those two bridge ends looming thirty feet up in the air. There simply was no park area to design — only a tiny peak of land and waterfront beyond the bridges. How were people to get down to that? Who would want to, and why? Everyone had agreed that the bridges had to stay there — Olmsted, Moses, Bigger, the Regional Planning Association, the City Planning Commission.

"One day Charlie threw down his pencil in disgust and burst out, 'We'll never get anywhere with those damn bridges where they are!'

"We looked at each other," Griswold says, "and talked about it for awhile. Then we went to see Wally Richards. By this time it was understood that we were making a proposed preliminary design for a state park at the Point. We asked, 'Would it be possible to present a design with the bridges moved back from the Point?' We explained what that would mean, what it would do. Richards listened and said he would talk to Mr. Mellon.

"Richards called us a few days later. He told us to make *two* studies for the Regional Planning Association — one with the bridges in place where they were and with the 'landscaped interchange'; the other with two new bridges moved back to where we thought best, with the design of a real Point Park."

Since bridges and traffic flow were now involved in the study, two other professionals were added to make a four-man design team: George S. Richardson, of the engineering firm of Gordon, Richardson, and Associates, and Donald M. McNeil, a traffic engineer from the Pittsburgh Bureau of Traffic Planning.

George Richardson, born in Colorado, held degrees in civil engineering from the University of Colorado. After experience with the Pennsylvania Department of Highways, Bethlehem Steel, American Bridge Company, and the Allegheny County Works Department, he entered private business in 1937, specializing in bridge and highway design and construction. He designed the George Westinghouse Bridge (1931) with its record 470-foot concrete center span, and the Homestead High Level Bridge, among many others. In 1967 he and his firm would plan the erection of the 630-foot-high Gateway Arch at St. Louis for the Pittsburgh-Des Moines Steel Company. Of him Charles Stotz says, "He was a giant in his profession."

Don McNeil, a registered professional engineer, joined Pittsburgh's Bureau of Traffic Planning on graduating from the University of Pittsburgh. He became a traffic engineer in 1932, one of the first in the country to hold that title and position. He was one of the organizers of the Institute of Traffic Engineers in 1930, serving as its national president in 1953-1954. He would leave his miserably paid position as head of the city bureau in 1952 to found a successful and profitable private consulting engineering firm, specializing in traffic engineering and transportation, and parking problems.

Richardson said at once that the Manchester Bridge on the Allegheny River was old and destined for early replacement, and that the Point Bridge across the Monongahela was cantilevered and could not be moved. ("If you cut the ends, it will fall into the river.") He then expressed the "preliminary opinion" that new bridges of proper design in the most advantageous positions would not only be more efficient and aesthetically pleasing, but would be less expensive than remodeling or retaining the old bridges with addition of the necessary approaches.

Charles Stotz recalls the next episode.

My memory is clear that we were instructed by Richards that the Point Bridge could be removed, but that the Manchester Bridge must be retained. The struggle to make a workable scheme by leaving either bridge in place was a stumbling block of large proportions. By this time Richardson was asked to join us. I do not remember his attitude about this but believe he agreed both must go. However, we did not receive an OK to eliminate the Manchester Bridge. I was on vacation with the family at Van Buren Bay near Dunkirk and after worrying about it and making a phone call to Pittsburgh I came back to town for a meeting. I was personally adamant that no scheme could be satisfactory unless we were free to deal with the bridges, their replacements, and traffic interchanges as required for an adequate park solution. We had a meeting in the Regional Planning office that lasted until midnight. Wally Richards finally conceded not to insist further in the matter and agreed to recommend that both new bridges should be moved upstream some distance needed to accomplish a workable traffic interchange.

The four men presented their *Point Park Development Study* to Wallace Richards at his office on October 1, 1945. It was written as from the Regional Planning Association to the state. A document of some importance in the history of Pittsburgh and southwestern Pennsylvania, its introduction reads:

The redevelopment of the Point Park area still remains unresolved in spite of the fact that it has had more plans offered for its solution than any other planning problem in the Pittsburgh region.

A glance at the list of Point Park plans will show the persistent interest in this complex problem over a period of years.

Why this problem remains unresolved can best be explained by an analysis of these plans. None of them has successfully combined the three major plan factors, the rivers, the fort sites, and the highways, to the satisfaction of the aesthetic, historic, and traffic viewpoints.

The plans with good traffic solutions have poor park designs, ignoring the riverfronts and fort sites. Yet no plan which ignores these important factors can be permanently acceptable. If such a plan were carried out it would be successfully challenged sooner or later. From then on there would be a demand

for a change, a situation which should be avoided if at all possible.

In the hope that such a situation may be avoided, the Regional Planning Association has sponsored the preparation of collaborative studies by planners representing several viewpoints, including bridge construction, traffic planning, park design, and historical architecture. These technicians have worked with the Regional Planning Association staff in preparing this report and the following plans, which are offered to any agency interested in the redevelopment of the Point Park area.

The planners presented two alternative proposals, accompanying each with maps, drawings, traffic diagrams, aerial perspectives, and cost estimates. The advantages and disadvantages of each were set forth in some detail.

The first proposal, Type A Study, demolished the Point and Manchester bridges and relocated their replacements nearer the base of the Triangle.

If the highways and bridges had not already usurped the waterfronts and Point, every planner would agree that the ideal plan would be based on a Park Development of the Monongahela and Allegheny waterfronts culminating in a monumental terrace commanding a sweeping view of the Ohio River. That is the basic geographical, historical, and aesthetic significance of this site. There is none other like it in the world. It means Pittsburgh to everyone.

Any other conception of this problem is a compromise and will forever appear as such.

Up until now, most of the study has been given to what kind of compromise would be most acceptable or least objectionable. Little effort has been made to try and find a solution of this problem which avoids the necessity of one-way compromise.

Type "A" study offers a solution which reclaims the actual Point area with its riverfronts, panoramic view of the Ohio, and a major part of the historic fort sites for *Park Development*. In this sense it is truly a *Point Park Plan* incorporating all the significant natural and historical features.

This type of plan requires some compromise on the part of traffic and the reclamation of the Fort Pitt site and it involves a heavy penalty in cost. But this cost penalty is attributable to the

original mistake of placing the Manchester and Point Bridges in their present locations.

In considering cost, the decision which will eventually have to be made is, "Can we afford not to remove the bridges from the Point?" If they are not removed in connection with the redevelopment of the Point area, the resulting compromise will be subject to change in the future, which will make the ultimate cost far greater.

Four of the eleven advantages listed for the Type A Study were: (1) the Monongahela and Allegheny waterfronts and the Ohio River view were an integral part of the park area; (2) the Blockhouse of Fort Pitt was retained in its exact original location and given a prominent place in the park plan; (3) it concentrated the traffic separation between the park and the business district where it was least conspicuous and interfered least with park functions; (4) the park area would be permanently free of traffic confusion. The disadvantages were higher cost, reconstruction of some of the work completed on the Water Street and Duquesne Way boulevards, more difficult bridge approaches, and the need to acquire more property.

The second proposal, the Type B Study, left both bridges in place. Among its meager advantages, other than lower cost, was, "It satisfies those who are primarily interested in the traffic problem and indifferent to the Point Park Development." The disadvantages were expressed eloquently: (1) the highways and bridges usurped both waterfronts and the Point, forcing an interior park development with no relationship to the geographic, historic, or aesthetic character of the site — it was a downtown park but in no sense a Point Park; (2) it was an unsatisfactory answer to the visitor who wanted to see the historic Point he had heard so much about — all he could be shown of the Point was a colossal traffic intersection, with an apology; (3) it was primarily a traffic solution with a park attached.

Wallace Richards obtained the approval of the executive committee of the Planning Association for showing this double-barreled "preliminary proposal" to the state. Early in October he departed for Harrisburg with Park H. Martin, executive director of the Allegheny Conference. Their appointment was with Governor Edward Martin. Says Ralph Griswold, "I think they were a little scared." The thought is not unlikely, considering that Richards had been asked to pick a site for an office building and was presenting a radical and costly proposal for a state park.

Governor Martin, a lawyer from Waynesburg, had managed two successful careers concurrently in his sixty-six years. As a soldier he had been in the Philippines during the Spanish-American War, then served in the Mexican border campaign and in France in World War I. He had been relieved of division command in 1942 as over-age in grade, retiring as a major general. In politics he had risen through state Republican offices to become governor in 1943. He was the author of a history of the Twenty-Eighth (Pennsylvania) Division, which he had trained in World War I, and he had received honorary degrees from thirteen Pennsylvania colleges. He would be elected to the United States Senate in 1947.

Wallace Richards and Park Martin spread out their proposals before the governor. They prefaced their presentation with an explanation of what they had done and the statement that they would ask him to consider two different proposals for a park at the Point in Pittsburgh.

There was a pause, and for a moment the fate of Point Park hung in the balance. Indeed, since the park was later to become the springboard for and the symbol of the whole renewal program, it is probable that the success of the Pittsburgh Renaissance, at least in degree, was at stake at that trembling moment.

By all the rules of precedents and the nature of Republican governors, Edward Martin's response should have been automatic. He should have asked, "Which proposal costs the least?" On the other hand, the state's coffers were overflowing with funds accumulated during four years of war, when capital projects were few and a long time apart. Money, moreover, was cheap; it could be borrowed for 2½ to 3 percent.

The governor broke the silence with the questions: "Which one is the better proposal? Which do you prefer?"

He was told. He then said, "Put the other one away. I don't want to see it."²⁵

25 Interview with Arthur Braun, POHP. It has been said (Jeanne R. Lowe, *Cities in a Race with Time* [New York, 1967], 130) that Arthur Van Buskirk went to Pennsylvania's Republican governor and told him that when Allegheny County received its fair share of state funds for highways and the park, the community's business leaders would have more money for the party.

One may assume that Richard Mellon had telephoned the governor before Richards and Martin made their trip, and that he advised him on the merits of the two proposals. It is known that Mellon had discussed the park proposals with Governor Martin. As Arthur Braun told it, "Mr. Mellon and Governor Martin were good friends and spent much of their free time discussing matters of mutual interest. One evening Governor Martin told Mr. Mellon of plans being considered to develop the Independence Hall area in Philadelphia in

Says George Richardson, "Park and Wally didn't need an airplane that evening to fly back to Pittsburgh."

Governor Martin lost no time making the headline announcement that his administration would finance major improvements in Pittsburgh, including the clearing of thirty-six acres at the lower Point, removal of the two unsightly bridges, construction of two new bridges upstream, and creation of a state park at the Point. The news broke on October 25, 1945. There was to be a mayoralty election in Pittsburgh on November 6, and some people saw this timely revelation of Republican largesse as a move to help the Republican candidate defeat the Democratic candidate.

The Democrat was David Leo Lawrence, the undisputed boss of the party in Pennsylvania, a machine politician not known for civic-mindedness, now for the first time seeking election to public office. Lawrence had a hard decision to make. "The announcement," he said flatly, "was to embarrass me and make me lose the election."²⁶ His colleagues told him that if he approved Martin's program, he would be accused of sacrificing party interests, selling out to big business, and "sleeping with the Mellons." Some advisors said he should charge that the publicized improvements were nothing but a Republican trick, a campaign promise that would never be kept.

Lawrence was not surprised by the Martin-Allegheny Conference program; he had, in fact, already considered it with some care. This had come about because of action taken by John J. Kane, chairman of the Board of Allegheny County Commissioners, another Democratic machine politician, a former labor leader, now directing Lawrence's campaign. Kane had conceived the extraordinary notion that the Republican businessmen were serious about their municipal rehabilitation program and that furthermore it might be a good thing for Pittsburgh. Park Martin affirmed in November 1971 that Kane, during the mayoralty campaign in the summer of 1945, sent an agent to his office to get a copy of the conference recommendations, with word that he intended to show it to Lawrence.²⁷

accord with its historic interest. Mr. Mellon agreed that this was a worthy purpose, and further mentioned that Pittsburgh had a highly important area that should be developed as part of the State's project. This was the Point, at the confluence of the Monongahela and Allegheny rivers. . . . Governor Martin agreed to Mr. Mellon's suggestion. That is when the Point Park was established."

²⁶ Lawrence, "Rebirth," in Lorant, *Pittsburgh*, 419; personal interview with John P. Robin; interview with John P. Robin, POHP. Several dozen Republicans deny this.

²⁷ Interview with Park H. Martin, POHP; Robin interview. Robin attested: "I never liked Kane, and he never liked me, but you must give him

Lawrence held a strategy meeting. Present was his former secretary and political advisor, John P. Robin, just back from army service. Robin agreed with Kane's estimate of the situation. The Republicans, he added, were counting on Lawrence to attack the program. Instead, Lawrence should hail the governor's announcement as good news, the best thing that could happen to Pittsburgh. This was exactly what the Democrats had been hoping and planning for, and they were delighted that the administration in Harrisburg had finally come around to their way of thinking. As the new mayor of Pittsburgh, Dave Lawrence would welcome and cooperate fully with the governor's program.²⁸

Lawrence shortly thereafter announced a platform of seven planks, one of which was that he would support the program of the Allegheny Conference for improvement of the city of Pittsburgh and the county of Allegheny. Lawrence was elected on November 6 by the slim margin of 14,000 votes.

credit. Kane was the first one really to perceive that there was some affinity of interest between the Democratic office-holders and the Republican business community."

28 Robin interview; Robin interview, POHP. Lawrence's Republican opponent was Robert Waddell, insurance broker.