

patterns of business change in late nineteenth-century America.

Fell's book is largely a business history, and as such stands as a very good case study based on extensive primary research. But he also contributes to the history of technology and economic development and to the history of Colorado and the Rocky Mountain Region. His book is well written; it keeps the reader attentive by significant focus on the businessmen in the industry, including Nathaniel P. Hill, Edward Nash, and the Rockefeller and Guggenheim families.

*Department of History*  
*Indiana University*  
*Bloomington, Indiana*

JAMES H. MADISON

*Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad.* By HAROLD H. McLEAN. (San Marino, California: Golden West Books, 1980. Pp. 236. Foreword, epilogue, maps, charts, bibliography, index. \$29.95.)

At the beginning of the railroad age, the Pennsylvania legislature contrived to give Philadelphia's Pennsylvania Railroad a monopoly on the traffic from the western part of the state. Pittsburgh chafed under the conspiracy, but by the time the Baltimore and Ohio was allowed to enter the city, most industries were already located on the PRR, and so the monopoly remained effectively intact. In the 1870s, Pittsburgh interests, led by William McCreery, built the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad north along the Ohio and Beaver rivers to Youngstown, Ohio, and connections with the Erie and New York Central lines. The Vanderbilts eventually outmaneuvered their rivals, and the fledgling P&LE became their New York Central's semi-independent entrance into Pittsburgh.

But the P&LE lay astride one of the nation's most intensely industrialized corridors. There, it came to do what railroads could do best in the twentieth century — haul heavy tonnages of bulk commodities, particularly coal and ore. The P&LE regularly earned more and outperformed its parent New York Central, and was, by any measure, one of America's great railroads in its own right. Its mainline was four tracks wide and laid with heavy rail. Its physical plant and motive power were built for heavy duty and high capacity. The P&LE always pushed at the frontiers of railroad technology. Until the end of the 1950s, high-speed luxury passenger trains, with sleepers and

diners, bound for such places as Chicago, Detroit, Toronto, and Boston, rumbled beside the long, heavy coal drags. There was perhaps no more thrilling train ride in America than a P&LE express as it sped past this panorama of heavy industry.

The late Harold McLean has written a fascinating history of the P&LE that ranks among the best of the large-format, illustrated railroad histories that have become popular in the last decade. In it, he captures the essence of this anomalous railroad with a mainline only sixty-four miles long but which ranked among the nation's very important lines, yet a railroad that was at the same time a microcosm of all that was typical in the development of American railroading. The laying of the first, tenuous single track was filled with competitive intrigue, with McCreery actually tramping the projected route on foot in disguise so as not to tip off the agents of the PRR. The intensive development of the road into an instrument of modern transportation came in the late nineteenth century. That was an era of technology and engineers and the railroads' full-throated optimism that the future belonged to them. It was also the age of heavy passenger traffic, when the P&LE built its own amusement park near Aliquippa to promote excursion travel and built its magnificent Pittsburgh terminal, which stands today as a classic example of those temples that symbolized railroading at its zenith. Then came the decline of the local passenger business in the 1920s and of the through traffic in the 1950s. There were the ravages of the Depression and the growing crisis of the parent New York Central that threatened to engulf the small subsidiary. Finally, there was the Central's ill-conceived merger with the PRR and the final calamity of Penn Central. Out of the wreckage, P&LE, still solvent amidst the bankruptcy all around it, managed to extricate itself. McLean ends his story with the little giant reconstituted as an independent railroad and a brave new future ahead of it.

Harold McLean was general counsel to the P&LE for many years. He loved the railroad, and writes easily about all aspects of it, from motive power to finances. Unlike many railroad histories, he gives extensive analysis to the period since 1950. He also gives extensive coverage to the P&LE's very able executives in the postwar era, particularly John Barriger, its president in the late 1950s, one of postwar railroading's true visionaries, and to whom the book is dedicated. McLean's selection of material for both text and photographs is judicious. The importance of this book goes beyond just the P&LE Railroad. It is a significant contribution to the history of rail-

roads, technology, management, American folkways, and the upper Ohio and Beaver River valleys.

*Department of History*  
*Clemson University*  
*Clemson, South Carolina*

RICHARD SAUNDERS

*The Shaping of the Point: Pittsburgh's Renaissance Park.* By ROBERT C. ALBERTS. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1980. Pp. xvi, 247. List of illustrations, preface, acknowledgments, notes, bibliographical essay, index. \$12.95.)

To the Point we have come so often. Its vast historical importance, its aesthetic eminence in the panorama of the confluence of the rivers seem bound to be apostrophized by pious Pittsburghers — "Gate of Destiny . . . Star of the West!" Yes, but even the devout may find their interest waning — familiarity breeds not so much contempt as ennui. There are times when I, who will yield to no one in my official admiration for the Point, feel that I would like to yap if asked for one more encomium in its praise.

If you, Pittsburgh reader, have felt, at moments, twitches of boredom — get this book! It is the latest and the best contribution to the glory and the mystique of the Point and it will surely revive the interest of the most jaded. There is no doubt that this volume has been, as they say in the trade, "long needed." Although the research and the groundwork are solid and thorough, this compact publication is written in a lively and bright journalistic style that should appeal to all Pittsburghers whatever their approach to history.

Although the author's main concern is the construction of the park, he is also profoundly concerned with the Point itself. Following his account of how he came to undertake the commission for the book, he discusses the significance of the Point in American history. From George Washington's first view of the confluence in November 1753 to the American Revolution, he gives a succinct account of the French and British military actions that assured the Point its glamorous reputation. After 1800, the Point settled down to being merely part of Pittsburgh, and a very ambiguous, commercial, and begrimed part — with various mutations — it remained until early in the twentieth century, when an aroused city consciousness began to demand change.

In 1836, Mayor Jonas McClintock had proposed a park at the Point and visitors had wondered audibly about the area's sorry