Pittsburgh Anatomized
by John Rowett

City at the Point: Essays on the Social History of Pittsburgh
Edited by Samuel P. Hays
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In 1883 William Glazier advised his readers to approach Pittsburgh by night to “behold a spectacle which has not a parallel on this continent... It is as though one had reached the outer edge of the infernal regions.” Lincoln Steffens recalled that he had never lost his first picture of Pittsburgh: “It looked like hell, literally.” Half a century later Pittsburgh had, somewhat improbably, gained a Rand McNally Atlas rating as the nation’s “most livable city.” Ironically, it had gained that status as economic restructuring transformed it from an internationally oriented industrial city to a regionally oriented service center. The social costs of that economic restructuring raised the question: livable for whom?

The widespread and dramatic erosion of the economic and fiscal base of many of the great cities of the industrial era has been a characteristic of the past two decades on both sides of the Atlantic. The most recommended response has been for urban governments to become more innovative and entrepreneurial in pursuit of capital investment and renewed economic development. In Britain and the United States a new urban entrepreneurialism has become the dominant mode of municipal governance. At the heart of this strategy is the concept of the public-private partnership between city government and private business. No city gained more publicity for its partnerships than Pittsburgh: “the city that quick changed from unbelievable ugliness to shining beauty in less than half a generation.” The city’s subsequent economic decline was to reveal the rot beneath the glitter.

In 1938 the sociologist Philip Klein saw Pittsburgh as a symbol of American economic, industrial and social history. A more recent commentator has seen it as encapsulating in a particularly graphic form the uneven development of the urban process under capitalism. A central concern of the contributors to City at the Point is to test just such judgments.

In the past decade many of the most interesting and innovative studies of the urban process in general and of the recent history of individual cities in particular have come from geographers and social scientists working within what has been called the “political economy” paradigm. Such scholars have been concerned to identify the interconnections between the development of individual cities, class relations, the state, and production and investment flows within both the national economy and the global capitalist economy. Analysis of the differing patterns of urban development within and between capitalist societies is seen as essential to an understanding of capitalism as a social system. By contrast, urban historians have appeared to lose confidence and even doubt the value of the study of cities. The repeatedly debated issue of the field’s identity has been in part no more than an illustration of the ethnography of academic tribes. More significantly, it has represented an uncertain intellectual response to the challenge some social scientists posed to the very utility of the term “urban.” Only recently have historians again shown the intellectual self-confidence to respond effectively. City at the Point is to be welcomed not least because of the concern of its contributors to “help to define the way in which thought about urban history in the future might well proceed.”

A concern to develop the conceptual categories necessary “to organize work around meaningful problems” has been one of the hallmarks of the work of the editor, Samuel P. Hays, distinguished service history professor at the University of Pittsburgh. While eschewing the formal designation of an urban historian, he has, over three decades, produced a series of seminal articles on urban processes and structures and provided in studies of the American industrial city much of the conceptual framework against which others have reacted. The interaction of social structures and political power, and the analysis of long-term social change, has been at the heart of his work. It has been criticised by some for reifying social processes and for neglecting the role of human actors. Concern with the processes of long-term change and the way they transform a society, rather than with individual biography and particular events, has primarily inspired Hays’s historical imagination. Yet concern for the ways in which individuals experienced social change and the choices they made within certain bounded situations also has informed his work.
Indeed, Hays regards human values and choices, and their patterns, as the major counterpart to that centralization of institutions which he sees as a defining feature of modern American society. Hays sees the city as both process and site. Cities allow the identification in a relatively limited context of the fundamental processes of social change occurring in the wider society. At the same time there exists a distinctively urban dimension to those processes. The task of the historian is to identify both processes and the ways in which they are altered by different geographical contexts.

Under the chairmanship of Professor Hays, Pittsburgh's history department developed a reputation as a significant home of the new social history. A major theme in the work of its graduate students became the history of Pittsburgh "not just in terms of major events and leading figures, but of its people." One of the necessary conditions for this research was the creation in 1962 of the Archives of Industrial Society at Pitt's Hillman Library as a repository for materials relating to the city and its surrounding region. It is this source material, and the mostly unpublished research derived from it — running to several hundred papers — which provides this volume’s building blocks. However, it should be noted that not all of the bricks were baked at the University of Pittsburgh. Where Hays has pioneered the analysis of urban political and social processes, Joel Tarr has played a central role in developing a study of the urban past centered on the creation and development of the city's built form. Under his guidance, students at Carnegie Mellon University have produced over 100 papers since 1967, some published in the learned journals, on the city-building process in Pittsburgh. It is this combined work which, with one exception, provides the basis for City at the Point.

One major aim of the book is to publicise research in a form accessible to both scholars and general readers, especially those who live in Pittsburgh. At the same time, the distinguished cast of authors seeks to relate Pittsburgh's development to that of other cities and to identify its typical and distinctive features. Broadly, the chapters fall into two types: those dealing with social structures, and those dealing with institutions and the organisation and direction of the city. Framing them are two chapters by Hays situating the research and assessing its implications. The volume concludes with a comparison between Pittsburgh and several European cities.

In his introduction Hays argues that a satisfactory history of Pittsburgh and its region requires the organisation of inquiry around "the basic problem of history — the processes of long run change and the ways in which they transform a social order." Research should aim to reveal the ways in which Pittsburgh was transformed over two centuries. Unfortunately, he argues, the essays do not adopt this perspective. Instead, they concentrate on relatively narrowly defined problems between 1850 and 1920, when of course Pittsburgh experienced rapid transformations. The explanation for the volume's restricted focus is to what is essentially a series of essays on Pittsburgh in the high industrialization period is complex. It reflects in part the decision that the main task of the contributors would be to synthesize the seminar papers and dissertations in their respective areas, not to engage in original research. Secondly, Hays emphasises the extent to which the restricted focus of the original research arose as much from the organisation of graduate studies, bounded by completion timetables, and heavily influenced by faculty interests, as from either design or the time-bound character of the evidence used, notably census data. Here Hays draws attention to an increasingly significant problem on both sides of the Atlantic. Many of the most important historical questions do not fit easily into bureaucratically defined
timetables for the completion of historical research. Completion rates and productivity indices are invariably the enemy of significant scholarship.

City at the Point does not, therefore, purport to offer a comprehensive history of Pittsburgh. The contributors repeatedly stress the dearth of research on the history of the city before 1850 and, for the most part, after 1920. Equally important is the absence of research on fundamental aspects of the city's history even between 1850 and 1920. The editor draws attention to a long list of neglected subjects: suburbs and suburbanisation; the middle class; the family; the elderly; education; health and medicine; leisure and recreation; art and culture. In some cases the neglect reflects more general tendencies in historical research, though in others — suburbanisation for example — it is surprising. Without studies of these themes a comprehensive history of Pittsburgh cannot be written. Perhaps most surprising is the almost total neglect of the economic history of Pittsburgh. Even good business history is conspicuous by its absence. As Hays puts it: “Few studies are available to chart the evolution of the iron and steel industry from the vantage point of economic history rather than its social and political content.” In a similar vein Edward Muller rues the absence of studies of Western Pennsylvania's industrial development, and the capital, corporate, and elite connections between Pittsburgh and its hinterland counties which marked the region's economic integration. For the twentieth century there is an almost equal neglect of what many historians would now see as the dominant feature of American society — the growth of an economy and culture of mass consumption. The history of consumption in Pittsburgh must now be high on the agenda of future research.

An equally important task is the development of a cultural and intellectual history of Pittsburgh. As historian Sam Bass Warner has noted, the reconstruction of the changing metaphors, symbols, and values through which individuals have interpreted their urban experiences is a central topic for the history of any city. However, many of the contributors here are more attracted to an apparently "harder," more social scientific, history. Indeed, there is a creative tension in City at the Point between those attaching weight to the choices and values of particular individuals and those who believe that such choices are relatively unimportant compared to, for example, the shaping forces of class and gender.

One way in which historians have come to "read" the multiple urban images of any city is through its iconography. Although City at the Point contains a number of photographs intended to depict aspects of the city's social history, there is no discussion of how such photography can be interpreted to uncover the social construction of the imagery of Pittsburgh. However, Laurence Glasco, author of the volume's chapter on the black
galler experience, does note the existence of a photographic collection of between 50,000 and 100,000 items on black urban life. Here surely is material for an imaginative visual history of black life in Pittsburgh.

If the city in the mind does not loom large, what of the shapes on the ground? Here again the volume disappoints. At times one wonders whether some of the authors believe that there was anything distinctively urban, let alone particular to Pittsburgh, in the social processes discussed. Only Tarr, for example, organises his chapter on infrastructure around Hays's suggestion that the overriding context for the history of the city is from the perspective of people undertaking its physical development. Such a focus necessarily leads to a definition of Pittsburgh which goes beyond its corporate form to a consideration of the city as a centre of regional interaction.

In his examination of Pittsburgh as a specialized and spatially extended urban region stretching to Cleveland, Edward Muller, City at the Point's only geographer, adopts another spatial approach recommended by Hays. However, as Muller points out, the term "region" is itself elusive and confusing and subject to considerable debate. He draws attention to the extent to which the definition and measurement of a particular city region varies with both the issue and the period under discussion. His own provisional definition limits the Pittsburgh region to Western Pennsylvania. In a masterly fashion Muller shows how locational advantages led Pittsburgh to assume the role as the region's urban center and to serve as a functional focus for flows of capital, commodities, and information, and through this concentration of activity, to further its physical boundaries. Detailed assessment of the extent, intensity, and diversity of the city's economic relationships with the communities of Western Pennsylvania, whether in the antebellum period, the era of high industrialization, or in the twentieth century, is bedevilled by the paucity of scholarship which, Muller con-
cludes, "leaves an inadequate understanding of the region as a whole, the diversity of its many component parts, and the important relations between Pittsburgh and the parts." Nevertheless, his own chapter significantly advances understanding of all of these issues and provides a range of suggestions for future research, including the extent of the city's dependence on its region-serving functions or the impact of urban demands on the expanding forest and park service of rural communitics from the 1920s. Muller's chapter will serve as an essential reference point for future study of Pittsburgh and its region.

Equally important is Tarr's chapter on infrastructure and city building in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The urban form and structure of Pittsburgh, like that of other cities, has been shaped by its technological sinews: the physical systems, energy systems, and communications systems without which no city could function. Tarr is a master of this form of urban history and here he provides a characteristically illuminating account of the manner in which the infrastructure for protection and infrastructure for consumption were created. He identifies four distinct periods when the intersection of technology and politics gave a particular unity to the city-building process: 1794-1867, the era of the pedestrian, commercial city; 1868-1899, when the networked, piped, and tracked city was created; 1900-1944, when the automobile accelerated processes of centralization and decentralization; and the last half-century, when Renaissance I and II changed the face of the city. Tarr has written in detail elsewhere about the final period, so here he devotes only a postscript to it.

It is not possible within the confines of this review to detail all the treasures offered in this chapter. The richness of the published and unpublished literature, when added to his own research, has enabled Tarr to establish the main outlines of the creation of Pittsburgh's physical infrastructure and, in places, to provide comprehensive analysis. From this literature he draws the challenging conclusion that no single group has determined the city's form and shape and hence, in large part, the environment within which Pittsburghers have lived. Pluralist competition is seen as best describing the outcomes of conflicts over spatial investments, the form of city institutions and the very structure of city government itself. However, Tarr's conclusion is better regarded as a plausible hypothesis, albeit one in line with research on other cities. Confirmation will require several further investigations: of voting patterns concerning city building; of the differential consequences of infrastructural decisions; of the relationship between political structures and fiscal policies; of the effects of fragmented government in the metropolitan region; of the emergence of trained professionals and the growth of their role in city government; and analysis of decisions on questions other than ones about infrastructure. Also required is examination of how private sector organisations shaped urban decisions and of the part played by the public corporations created after 1945.

The political scientist Harold Laswell once famously defined politics as the study of who gets what, when and how. In his chapter "Government, Parties and Voters in Pittsburgh," Paul Kleppner points out that knowledge of how the allocation process operated in detail and across time, and the extent to which it was shaped by alterations in the forms of government and administration or shifts in party control, remains to be established. The transformation of the regulatory city into the service city — one of the fundamental changes in American urban history — also remains to be charted for Pittsburgh. Other than for relatively brief periods, data is lacking on the nature of city government and the political parties and, more surprisingly, on the patterns of voting behaviour, with the exception of the 1840s, 1850s and 1930s. Overall, Kleppner concludes that with the material available his chapter can offer little more than a fragmentary account of government and politics organised around Hays's twin dichotomies: i.e., between centralizing and decentralizing forces, and between tradition and modernity. The structure of municipal rule in Pittsburgh still awaits its historian.

Roy Lubove's brief description
of the organisation of charity and welfare provides further support for Hays's centralisation theory. For the most part, however, Lubove's chapter, "Pittsburgh and the Uses of Social Welfare History," sits rather uneasily within the book since it is primarily a polemical account of social welfare historiography, with occasional references to Pittsburgh. Lubove effectively criticises the social control thesis as applied to social policy, and suggests reasons why historians might take a more positive view of the social welfare policies of business and a less positive view of those of the state. He concludes by suggesting that a focus on social welfare might inform central themes in American history, not least the role of voluntary associations and their shifting relationship with the public sector; and the nature of the self-help strategies pursued by black, immigrant, and working-class communities.

Throughout City at the Point there is an emphasis on the need for the intensive study of communities, whether in terms of the relationships between community life and political behaviour or of the consequences of the construction and decay of community networks. For Michael Weber, in his chapter on community building and occupational mobility, distinctive city neighbourhoods are "the most enduring aspect of the Pittsburgh landscape during the twentieth century." 22 However, he offers no systematic discussion of the cultural and emotional ties which bound together these social networks. Nor does he compare the patterns of community and neighbourhood organisation in Pittsburgh with those in other cities, despite the body of work which now exists on this subject. 23 It is indeed unfortunate that what might have been the central chapter in the book, linking the section on the organisation and direction of the city with that on its social composition, should be one of the briefest, and yet repetitive; Weber devotes too much space to summarising familiar published material, and his work also overlaps significantly with Glasco's chapter on the black experience. Weber might well have drawn from dissertations such as that by James Holmberg to probe the changing structure, organisation and balance of power between communities in the evolving city. Alternatively, he might have considered what his studies reveal of the existence of social networks both within the city and within the wider region. Did such networks, for example, link leading figures in city politics with those in the state legislature, as was the case in Philadelphia?

Weber does, however, draw attention to studies which reveal the considerable variations in the ways
in which different ethnic communities were constructed and maintained. Neighbourhoods were organised initially not by nationality; national identities were frequently constructed in America. Neighbourhood identities were shaped by the European village or region of origin. This phenomenon of migrants from a particular urban or rural locality or region clustering together in the city is not peculiar either to Pittsburgh or to American cities more generally. It has been identified by historians of the cities of early modern Europe and by urban anthropologists working in the third world.24 Here, then, was an opportunity to use the Pittsburgh material to develop the many interesting ideas threaded through her narrative.

Four themes of particular interest may be identified in Pritchard’s chapter. First, the congregations of all the major religious groups experienced a common pattern of doctrinal conflict and division. Such divisions led increasingly to the creation of more homogeneous bodies shaped primarily by ethnic group, neighbourhood and occupation. At the same time, these individual congregations remained a part of expanding city-wide and regional denominational structures. Decentralization and centralization once more provide powerful categories for ordering social processes. Secondly, the various religious groups reveal a common pattern of clashes between tradition and modernity. Traditional beliefs and patterns of behaviour were repeatedly eroded in a complex urban environment in which alternative beliefs and values directly confronted established views of the world. Why some groups and individuals proved more receptive to modernizing values remains to be explained. Thirdly, within this changing religious world it is possible to identify islands of stability, none more important to the history of the city than the enduring wealth, political power, and religious authority of the primary Protestant denominations. In arguing for the centrality of religion in any account of the social life of the city, Linda Pritchard makes a powerful case. However, like many current social historians she feels it essential to insist on the need to utilise the concepts of class, race and gender in any study of religion. It is not at all clear from her own chapter that these categories are, in practice, particularly helpful in analysing the social significance of religion.

Debate among social historians over how best to utilise the concepts of class, race, and gender has been a prominent feature of the past decade. While there has been agreement in criticising the work of other historians for their neglect — apparent or real — of these categories, their proponents have often been fiercely divided among themselves; witness the polemic between Joan Scott and Bryan Palmer over the place of gender in “a major reconceptualisation of history... and...of historical practice.”27 The quest for a synthesis around these categories has at times seemed rather like that for the grail.28 A concern with conceptualisation and synthesis is a hallmark of Richard Oestreicher’s work and it is very much to the fore in his chapter “Working-Class Formation, Development, and Consciousness in Pitts-
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Documentary accompanying this photo says “Story Hour for all Nationalities,” Washington Park in the Hill District, 1927. For nearly a century, the Hill has been Pittsburgh’s “immigrant island.” By the ’20s, the neighborhood was home to people from two dozen major ethnic groups.

He is careful to attend to the need “to consider the impact of gender and race on the working class,” not the least as a piece of “historiographical affirmative action.” His chapter is “a test case for the interpretive framework... for a larger social history of American workers.” The influence of the dominant figures in labour historiography — David Montgomery and the late Herbert Gutman — is evident in the emphasis on class formation, class reconstruction, and on what Oestreicher calls class development, but might equally be called class consciousness. In many ways these distinctions might be said to be no more than Marx’s own distinction, between class in itself and class for itself, in modern social history dress. Class conflict is generously defined to include collective action, industrial and political, covert individual forms of resistance, such as purposefully inefficient work, and conflicts over social and political issues such as education, the use of parks, the provision of urban services, and public morality. The chronology adopted is now well established in the new labour history: 1790–1890, a period of class formation and reconstruction and the creation of a working-class culture; whose dominant ideology was an artisanal republicanism which fractured in the class conflicts of the 1870s and 1880s; 1890–1920, a period which saw the second industrial revolution and the reconstruction of the working class; and 1930–1960, the era of the New Deal compromise.

Judgement has to be suspended on the success of this framework since, as Oestreicher is careful to point out, so much of the material necessary to evaluate it is not available, especially for the twentieth century. We await studies of the role of native rural migrants in working-class formation; of the extent to which an economic class became a social class in the Antebellum years; of the extent to which opportunities for social mobility created internal stratification within the working class; and of the relationship between ethnic community culture and working-class culture. The list could...
be extended but the essential point is clear. Oestreicher's judgement on the twentieth century could be generalised: "We have virtually no analysis of how each of these pieces happened, how they fit together, or the cause and effect relationship between them." Nevertheless, he does offer some provisional conclusions. Not only does Pittsburgh stand as a symbol of blue-collar America, but it has also seen the formation of a remarkably tenacious working-class self-identity and solidarity. For most of the twentieth century a "steady state" industrial economy facilitated the formation of group loyalties and neighbourhood stability. If he is correct about working-class self-identity, it becomes all the more necessary to explain the political ineffectiveness of the working class in the politics of the city. However, while Oestreicher offers many challenging ideas about the development of working-class life in Pittsburgh, he is much less successful in offering a new synthesis of the experience of American workers. Here he remains firmly within the shadow of Gutman and Montgomery.

For Maurine Weiner Greenwald, tearing the veil from women's "invisibility" in the history and folklore of Pittsburgh also requires an emphasis on the class inequality which supplemented by the Pittsburgh Survey (the famous early twentieth century study of social conditions in Pittsburgh), by scattered references to black women, and by Ethel Spencer's memoir, what emerges is a "vivid picture of social and economic inequalities in the industrial city." Like historian S. J. Kleinberg, Greenwald sees the form taken by industrialization in Pittsburgh increasing both class and gender inequality. There is a similar emphasis on the deleterious consequences for working-class women, especially married ones, of the city's limited female labour market. Compared to their counterparts in other midwestern industrial cities, working-class women in Pittsburgh were more likely to accompanied gender and racial inequalities. She is handicapped in this aim by the restriction of the material not only to the 1850-1920 period but also by its almost exclusive focus on white working-class women. Nevertheless, she argues that when
work in domestic service than in manufacturing. Even in 1980 married women's participation rate in the labour force lagged behind the national average. However, the changing occupational structure and women's increasing levels of education produced a significant increase in women's white collar employment. Here, Greenwald feels, is an opportunity for the kind of meticulous social investigation which the Pittsburgh Survey devoted to female factory operatives and housewives.

Greenwald's stress on class inequality as a shaping force of women's experience does not always fit easily with her evidence. When she comments that "educated working-class women had more in common with middle-class women than the lower segments of their own class," it is not unreasonable to wonder in what sense, other than an a priori one, they could be said to belong to the same class.\textsuperscript{24} Equally, the suggestion that white-collar work and marriage to white collar workers may have signified the adoption of "middle-class values" begs a host of contentious questions, not least about the very phrase "middle-class values." Moreover, since inequality is a feature of all complex societies, it is hardly surprising to learn that "a number of studies of Pittsburgh conclude that the standard of living varied markedly within and between social classes."\textsuperscript{35} A contrast between the family life of Ethel Spencer and that of the family's servants hardly counts as significant evidence about the form and incidence of inequality in Pittsburgh. Nowhere does Greenwald consider changing forms and patterns of inequality; her definition of inequality is too crude to offer significant help in understanding the distinctive features of American inequality. Nor does she consider the argument that in a comparative perspective a striking feature of inequality in America has frequently been its narrow limits. If persistent inequality is to be a fundamental context for understanding American history, its dimensions and their implications can only be fully grasped when placed in comparative perspective.

No issue has been more central to American social history than immigration and ethnicity. For proponents of class theory in general, and for those who have sought to apply it to the American experience, no issue has been more problematic.\textsuperscript{26} As a consequence, it has generated some of the most intellectually powerful and exciting work in American history. For the most part, Nora Faires does not engage with that work in her chapter on immigration. She presents a familiar chronological and descriptive account of the successive waves of immigrants which broke over Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania. Much of this material could have been presented more effectively and economically in tables. The scale of the impact of mass immigration is tellingly illustrated by two statistics: in 1890, 65.9 percent of Pittsburgh's population were immigrants or the children of immigrants; in 1980 the foreign-born made up 1.3 percent of the region's population. Despite its refurbished image, Pittsburgh has conspicuously failed to attract the new immigrants of the last two decades. For Faires these statistics help to define the great task for future research: the transformation of ethnicity after the decline of immigration. Did ethnicity, for example, become another consumable commodity or did it retain its power to shape attitudes and behaviour? In dealing with culture and consumption, she sets an innovative agenda for the study of the interior life of immigrant families and their communities, recalling Victor Branford's appeal for a cultural sociology that would "decipher and record people's ideals, their characteristic ideas and culture, and the images and symbols which habitually occupy their minds."\textsuperscript{37} In particular, Faires urges the study of the material culture of immigrant homes and the intimate side of family life, from aspects of child rearing to sexual attitudes and sexual practices. In her call to link an essentially ethnographic approach to the study of social processes, she is at one with others seeking to redefine the history of immigration.\textsuperscript{38}

The need for a more intensive study of the interior life of neighbourhoods and communities is also featured on the agenda set by Laurence Glasco for the study of blacks in Pittsburgh. His finely crafted chapter is built around a remarkable body of research produced by the University of Pittsburgh's social science departments during the interwar years as well as more recent scholarship. In contrast to the other contributors, Glasco has a wealth of material on the twentieth century
and an almost complete absence of studies of the nineteenth century: one article, one dissertation and one undergraduate thesis!

For Glasco, black experience in twentieth century Pittsburgh differed significantly from that in other industrial cities. In addition to the normal burden of racism, blacks were faced with other significant economic and geographical hurdles. Black migrants entered the Pittsburgh labour market at the very time in the early twentieth century when the steel industry was eliminating common laborers; between 1900 and 1930, unskilled workers declined from 32 percent to 22 percent of the industry’s labour force. One consequence was that blacks were unable to acquire the resources to enter the home ownership market, thus increasing residential instabilities and hindering the formation of a stable black working-class community. The geographical dispersal of blacks across seven neighbourhoods further inhibited the development of community-wide institutions and significantly reduced the opportunity for black leverage in city politics. After 1945, Glasco argues, the black experience became bifurcated: deindustrialization further reduced opportunities for the black working class while the destruction of Jim Crow, and new occupational opportunities in both the public and private sectors, brought significant gains to middle-class blacks. For Glasco, future research should be directed at explaining why blacks in Pittsburgh have been so much less effective politically than blacks in other cities.

Although the middle class is largely absent from the pages of City at the Point, the city’s most influential social group is not. In what is in many ways the outstanding chapter of the collection, John Ingham offers a commentary on elite studies generally, and a powerful and provocative analysis of Pittsburgh’s elite especially, focusing on the period from 1850 to 1920. In seeking to explain the relatively underdeveloped state of elite studies, compared to labour history, he suggests that it arises from the reliance on one of the theoretical insights of Max Weber and the other on those of Marx. This proposition seems doubtful in view of the richness of Weberian-inspired studies in many areas of historical research. I suspect that the “richness” and “very real fascination” with their subject that Ingham sees in the work of labour historians is more a reflection of the sociology of intellectuals. As in Europe, where labour and socialist parties attract a disproportionate amount of research, so in the United States what might be called an oppositional intelligentsia has been drawn to what are taken to be anti-capitalist themes and subjects. As Alice Kessler-Harris has written: “[W]orking-class experience mattered because it offered alternative visions and challenges to a dominant bourgeois ethos... and suggested the possibilities for alternative directions to capitalism.” There has, therefore, been an elec
tive affinity between author and subject which often generates historical work of quality and power.

But for those concerned with the phenomenon of class consciousness there is, in practice, no better object of study than the upper class. As historians of Europe have often insisted, the upper class has long been the most class conscious of all social groups. By analysing economic ties, patterns of neighbourhood and residence, leisure activities, but, above all, patterns of inter-marriage, Ingham vividly demonstrates how an upper class was created in Pittsburgh. At the same time he offers a powerful corrective to the view that the Pittsburgh elite was in the 1890s merging into what E. Digby Baltzell, generalising from Philadelphia, saw as an emerging national upper class. The economic behaviour and marriage patterns of the Pittsburgh elite demonstrate that it remained in crucial ways local rather than cosmopolitan. It was precisely those families with the greatest status who showed the lowest rate of marriage to elite families outside Pittsburgh. Moreover, Ingham suggests, even the forms of cosmopolitanism demonstrated by the elite may be something of a veneer for an underlying provinciality and Calvinism. Although similar evidence is not available either for the formative period in the emergence of the Presbyterian Scots-Irish culture or for the twentieth century, Ingham is rich with hypotheses for future research. He calls particularly for historians of the elite to be more sensitive to issues of class power and political power, especially as they relate to changes in the economic structure of the city. Ingham’s description of Pittsburgh’s upper class cohesion and longevity makes all the more tantalizing Joel Tarr’s argument that a plurality of urban actors rather than a single class shaped the city-building process. Again, one returns to the absence of a thorough history of Pittsburgh politics and of decision-making within the city’s institutions. Indeed, for both Hays and Tarr, this is the single most significant gap in the historiography of Pittsburgh.

Ingham’s emphasis on the atypicality of the Pittsburgh upper class, compared to their peers in other cities, leads naturally to the final chapters by Hays and Herrick Chapman. Each seeks to draw together the implications of the previous chapters in order to measure Pittsburgh against urban experience in both the United States and Europe and answer the question put by Hays: Pittsburgh: How typical?

Chapman lacks the seminar papers and dissertations that support the generalisations of other contrib-
Perhaps as a result, what he offers is a series of fragmentary, impressionistic, and often inaccurate comparative remarks on a number of themes — elites, workers' culture, ethnicity and post-World War II redevelopment. A basic requirement of comparative history, as George Frederickson has pointed out, is to master the historiography for each instance. Unfortunately, Chapman's chapter does not pass that test. It is surprising that a historian of France should devote so much of his chapter to comparisons with Britain and Germany where, frankly, his knowledge is inadequate. In the British case, Chapman makes elementary errors whether dealing with national legislation or city politics. His comments on British housing policy suggest a lack of familiarity with its main features. The American reader would not appreciate that the key pieces of legislation for the large-scale building of public housing and for slum clearance were the housing acts of 1924, 1930, and 1933, and the Rent Restriction Act of 1915. The Act of 1890 was purely permissive while the Addison Act of 1919 quickly fell victim to post-war demands for reductions in public expenditure. So far as the comparison between Pittsburgh and Sheffield is concerned, Chapman is led completely astray in his comments on the recent past by his uncritical reliance on a single insubstantial essay. There is no sign of any awareness of the dramatic collapse of the Sheffield economy in the mid-1980s as unemployment reached 17 percent, 29,000 manufacturing jobs were lost in three years, and the percentage of the workforce engaged in industry fell by half, to 24 percent in 1984. The strategy of the public sector acting as "the pivotal force in cushioning the impact of industrial decline" was never anything more than rhetoric. Like "new urban left" authorities across Great Britain, Sheffield's Labour council capitulated to the imperatives of Mrs. Thatcher's government and capitalist restructuring. Socialism in one city proved as ever a chimera.

If Chapman's grasp of British history is limited, what of his comments on Germany? Again, his comparisons rest on slender foundations. Far too much weight is attached to a single work which is itself little more than an encyclopaedia of quotations from literary sources, social observers and theorists, and urban administrators. There is substantial literature on German city government which might have been deployed, though the comparison would need to be a good deal more precise than references to "the towns and cities of the Ruhr." It would be otiose to extend this list of criticisms. Chapman would have been better advised to limit his comparisons, for example, to a discussion of immigration and ethnicity where
France and the United States can be fruitfully compared. Overall, Chapman's chapter provides an object lesson in the pitfalls of comparative history.

In his overview chapter, Hays opts not to summarise the preceding chapters but to place them in the larger contexts of urban and American history. He has elsewhere outlined what he has called a "set of workable abstractions" to provide a framework for American history over the past two centuries. Here he draws upon them to emphasise the evolution of organisation, the enhancement of human choice, persistence and change in patterns of inequality, and class consciousness as categories which both organise the Pittsburgh material and identify a future agenda for urban history. When applied to Pittsburgh they reveal a city marked by contradictory characteristics. With regards to cultural values, whether concerning the role of women, the style of religion, or the desirability of education, Pittsburgh has been a stronghold of conservatism. By contrast, "the entire city has displayed a similarly persistent tendency toward centralization in government and institutions." In part, at least, Hays offers a class explanation for this tendency, suggesting that the preference of the upper class for centralized governing institutions was powerfully shaped in the late nineteenth century by a fear of a threat from below. Here Hays deploys the notion of social fear which has been utilised by British historians of the late nineteenth century. He goes on to speculate that the new middle class which emerged accepted those centralized institutions in an implicit bargain in which material and cultural goods were traded for political power. Similarly, a mass consumption economy, rather than "more abstract notions of class consciousness," guided the aspirations and values of workers; Hays cites the fact that workers did not use their power to implement a programme based on class theory when they won control of steel towns around Pittsburgh during the 1930s. Here it seems to slip into assuming some idealized notion of class consciousness and class behaviour. No European or American example with which I am familiar would suggest that workers ever acted on the basis of "abstract notions of class consciousness." In practice, when workers won control of local authorities in Western Europe, as in the United States, a central part of their agenda...
was improvement in the quality of daily life. Much of the development of social rights in both Britain and the United States occurred at the municipal level.

To assess many of Hays’s arguments requires a focus on power in the city. Yet the study of power and of those exercising it is likely to emphasise individual agency and particular events which will fit uneasily on Hays’s agenda for urban history. Historical writing over the past 30 years has been profoundly shaped by an almost instinctive assumption among historians that society and economy should provide the organising principles. It is an assumption as apparent among the practitioners of a systematic social history, influenced by the behavioural revolution in the social sciences, as among the Annalist school. The gains to historical understanding which have resulted from the two approaches are uncontestable. However, historians increasingly recognise that they have been purchased at the price of neglecting studies of decision-making and the politics of power. Hence, the increasing discussion of how a new kind of “total history” might be fashioned. Gordon Wood caught this mood well when he wrote that the historian must write a history which moves between two worlds — the small world of individual intention and moral purpose and the large world of deterministic aggregate culture — and which satisfies both humanistic instincts and the demands of social science. To this reviewer the implications of *City at the Point* for urban history point in the same direction.

One measure of the success of any historical work is the extent to which it generates creative debate. On that test, as on many others, *City at the Point* is a signal contribution not only to urban history but to historical work more generally. For the historian of Pittsburgh it is, and will remain, fundamental as a summing up of a generation of research which redirected the study of the city towards the era of industrialization and as a pointer to new research directions. It is therefore an auspicious start to the series of publications planned by the Pittsburgh Center for Social History as well as an illustration of the quality of historical research carried out at the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon University. It should be added that the publishers are to be congratulated on the quality of the production, though not for the striking absence of maps.

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10. See, for example, Derek Fraser and Anthony Sutcliffe, eds., *The Pursuit of Urban History* (London, 1983).
14. See, for example, the series of polemical historiographical commentaries by Terence MacDonald, most recently in *Studies in American Political Development*, vol. 3 (New Haven, 1989).
15. CAP, xii.
16. CAP, xv.
17. CAP, xiv.
18. Fraser and Sutcliffe, op. cit., 393.
21. CAP, 206.
22. CAP, 361.
25. Fraser and Sutcliffe, op. cit., 424-5.
26. CAP, 349.
29. CAP, 138.
30. CAP, 112.
31. CAP, 141.
32. CAP, 34.
34. CAP, 49.
35. CAP, 53.
39. CAP, 265.
40. See, for example, Geroge M. Frederickson, *The Arrogance of Race* (Middletown, 1989).
42. Moody and Kessler-Harris, op. cit., 219.
history at once dramatic and turbulent has resulted. In a country that experienced more labor violence than any industrialized nation, the American coal mining industry stands out for its sheer bloodiness.

A significant part of this history is ably chronicled in this new book by Priscilla Long. Broad in the sweep of its subject, sympathetic in its understanding of the miners' struggles, Where the Sun Never Shines is a welcome addition to our growing knowledge of the industry that freed America of energy dependency and provided the fuel for the industrial revolution. As the author correctly points out, "The industrial revolution emerged from the early coal industry rather than the other way round." And that revolution, which began in Great Britain two centuries ago, continues to transform the world.

Despite its scope, the book is not, as the subtitle suggests, a history of the entire coal industry in the United States. Such a work probably is beyond the capacity of a single volume. Largely absent, for example, is the story of the bituminous, or soft, coal fields of Western Pennsylvania, the upper South, and the Middle West. Rather, the author concentrates first on the development of the anthracite, or hard coal, industry in northeastern Pennsylvania; then, in the second part of the book — and for this reviewer, the most informative — Long focuses on the rise of the industry in the West, notably in Colorado.

Following a summary review of the early uses of coal in England, with attendant technological innovations such as the pump and steam engine that quickly established the basis for other industries, the author quickly shifts to North America. There, beginning in the 1820s in the wild frontier region of northeastern Pennsylvania, the American coal industry got its true start. Much of the story told in the chapters on anthracite already is familiar because of the work of earlier historians, but the author does provide a good synthesis of the subject. She describes the craft nature of the early industry, the efforts of the coal operators to gain control of the workplace, and the subsequent rise, and

In a country that experienced more labor violence than any industrialized nation, the American coal mining industry stands out for its sheer bloodiness.

struggles, of mine workers’ organizations from the Workingmen’s Benevolent Association to the United Mine Workers of America. There also are solid chapters on the ambivalent reactions of workers to the Civil War, and the crucial role that immigrants played in the industry during the second half of the 19th century.

Notable in this part of the book is the description of the erosion of individual skills that occurred as the industry became increasingly mechanized. In the early years the miner generally worked without close supervision, assisted by one or two laborers whom he employed. This system gave the skilled miner a wide latitude of work practices and a certain independence in relation to the mine operator. The skilled miner was, in a sense, "his own man." As coal-cutting machines and other technologies were introduced, the mine work place increasingly came to resemble a factory, with the resulting loss of both craft skills and worker independence. After the 1860s unskilled immigrant laborers gradually displaced skilled workers. Mine operator-managed and -directed mechanization not only led to greater exploitation of labor; it also resulted in growing militancy among workers.

The one fault in this discussion is that the author does not clearly distinguish the differences between anthracite and bituminous mining. Mechanization and the "factory" system of mining were more easily

Where the Sun Never Shines: A History of America’s Bloody Coal Industry
By Priscilla Long

UNDERGROUND mining was, and is, one of the most dangerous occupations. Before the age of capitalism it was done almost entirely by slaves or other coerced labor. For a century, it frequently provided the introduction to industrial work for generations of immigrants. Always, it extracted a terrible toll. In the anthracite fields of Pennsylvania, for example, three mine workers were killed every two days throughout most of the 19th century. Injuries numbered in the tens of thousands. Even in our own time many miners who spend their working lives digging coal, and who escape death or serious injury, live out their final years with the agony of the dreaded "black lung" disease.

Yet perhaps because of the nature of the work, the dangers involved, and the skills required, miners historically have demonstrated an inordinate pride. This has been translated into a strong sense of independence on the one hand, and intense militancy on the other.