tions about the details of chores. They wanted to know how heavy the water bucket was and how much coal the children in the story needed to collect.

Summer time in Company Row for children was filled with carefree adventures. When it was hot they spent the day under Bernice Falls, where the water flows from a natural spring. On payday the girl’s father buys her an Eskimo Pie at the company store, where they stocked anything miners’ families might need. Thomas Allen’s illustration shows the front porch of the store with a gasoline pump in the foreground. The third graders wanted to know why there was only one store and why the town didn’t have a gas station.

The autumn leaves made the hills glow fiery colors and the children gathered nutmeats that would be used in holiday cookies. Wintertime sleds were made from tin, left over from roofing, and ice skates were shared as children took turns skating on the creek. Christmas was the best time of year because the house smelled of a Christmas tree, roast goose, and other baked goods; most importantly, no “whistle called Papa to the mine.”

Henderson’s text is very matter of fact, ideally suited to her 9- or 10-year-old narrator. A balanced number of men’s and women’s tasks are illustrated, and readers have the impression that life in Willow Grove or any coal mining camp depended on whole families working together. The joy and the fun of being a child is related in the warm way the children’s activities are described. Thomas Allen’s pastel and charcoal illustrations capture the freshness of the spring wildflowers, the deep orange color of the autumn hills, and the many shades of gray and black as the trains move throughout the night. In Coal Country provides an easy-to-follow and clear illustration of a way of life that is nearly gone from the Ohio Valley.

All three of these books are the authors’ first for children. Each author brings a freshness to her story-telling and a willingness to share the tremendous affection they have for their childhood experiences. In all three books the settings and roles of characters are what is important in conveying the narrator’s sense of pride in telling you about her world. But equally important to the third graders was the girls’ names; they all wanted to know, “what was her name?” In all three stories none of the characters has a name; they are all known by their roles as mother, father, grandfather, grandmother, brother, sister, and teacher. We talked a little about how the narrators were writing about their childhood memories, so each of their names is the name of the girl telling the story. Throughout each book one sees that the young girl who is narrating received her enthusiasm and capability for enjoying her surroundings from her family. And as the women who have written them down, each was encouraged to use her fine powers of observation about her subject matter and her audience.

For readers who grew up in the Ohio River Valley, these books present an outstanding aid in helping them to share their childhood memories with children. By foresting the region outside the region or people who have recently made the valley their home, this trio of books can help them discover the history of the place through a child’s eyes, which is often the least encumbered way of learning anything. For teachers, these books provide wonderful introductions to family, local, and oral history projects. I imagine that children, their teachers, parents, and grandparents in the Pittsburgh region will someday write down their stories, ones that are as engaging and honest as the three reviewed here.

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‘Genius Loci’: A Southwesterner, Once of Pittsburgh, Comes Back into Print

Book review essay by John Schulman

Pittsburgh Memoranda

By Haniel Long


Haniel Long (1888-1956) has for many years enjoyed a cult following among readers of regional literature. His major works mainly fall into that genre, and the concept of regional literature, as well as its promotion, was a central concern of his. The term “regional literature” has always been a bit puzzling to me, primarily because it can be used so dynamically, applied sometimes to a body of literature about a particular...
place and at other times to the corpus of a particular author who has resided in one place long enough to be associated with it. Then there is the nagging feeling that such literature can only be written about regions with peculiarly distinct cultural or topological traits; in this sense, the literature of urban centers cannot be said to be regional. And finally, if regional literature happens to be about urban life, there is often a gap of some decades between its publication and its later appraisal as regional, the interim serving to temper and historicize the work. In many cases, appending the term to a work represents the appropriation of that work by a special interest group eager to create a canon of local literature. These are questions I kept in mind as I began, this time, to read Long.

Long himself may be said to be the child of many regions: born in Rangoon, Burma to missionary parents, removed to Pittsburgh in time to have his first memories be of the Homestead Strike of 1892, schooled in Duluth, Minnesota and later Philips Exeter and Harvard, and employed at Carnegie Institute of Technology as an English professor throughout the 1920s. Eye problems and failing health forced him to leave in 1929 for Sante Fe, New Mexico, where he lived for many years. It is from this vantage point that he began writing *Pittsburgh Memoranda*.

The book was first published in 1935 in an edition limited to 1,090 signed copies. It was a handsome production, printed by the Rydal Press of Sante Fe with typography in red and black, hand bound in black cloth that was stamped in silver. *Pittsburgh Memoranda* was just one of a number of books under the Writers' Editions imprint, the name of a cooperative Long founded in 1933 with several other writers, including Witter Bynner, Frieda Lawrence, Spud Johnson and Arthur Davison Fick; this group was the nation's first cooperative devoted to the publication and distribution of their own works. In a prospectus for the Rydal Press issued in 1935, most likely written by Haniel Long, the emphasis is placed on what regional literature is, why it is necessary, and why a writers' cooperative may be the best way to distribute it. Such an emphasis admits a belief "in the genius loci, or spirit of place," but the group, Long admits regional literature to become more than that: "Regionalism per se can't make an author; but one real author can make a region — through the accident of genius." In light of this, it is interesting to note that Haniel Long (whose first name rhymes with "de-"nial") thought of himself primarily as a southwestern writer. The prospectus for the Rydal Press refers to him as such, and the prospectus for *Pittsburgh Memoranda* cites it as "probably as important a piece of literature as has come out of the southwest." This initially confused me, because the book has nothing to do with the southwest. The only thing southwestern about the book is that it was published in Sante Fe, the product of Long's cooperative.

Long must have seen regional literature as signifying a special set of relationships between writer, land, and the land's culture. The unique complexity of these alliances and rapports (the writer describing and thus creating the land, the land affecting the writer and thus the writing) makes for the variety and types of regional literature. This was the way, after all, that the social realists had more to do with the publishing and distribution of literature in a small press format, using the resources of the region. Long's attempt to get *Pittsburgh Memoranda* accepted by a trade publisher is a key to understanding this: the Writers' Cooperative published it not because it was regional in orientation, but because no one else would publish it. Long had actually published a book of love poems (*Antlantides*) in 1933 that was lacking in any regional impulse.

The distribution of this kind of literature presented some problems, as the prospectus to the Rydal Press notes, especially because a general publisher has to consider the demands of the marketplace and therefore cannot often print works that would seem to appeal to readers in a small area. "Publishers have to hit a wide public, as if with buckshot. It is economically necessary." But a "special public exists for certain books. Verse falls largely into this category, but many other kinds of writing as well." A cooperative is useful in this regard, because financial losses and gains are borne by the total group, and because "each agrees to surrender a share of his profits (if his book nets him anything) for an endowment fund, to print books which otherwise could not be printed." Long actually tried to get *Pittsburgh Memoranda* published commercially before turning to Writers' Editions. According to a letter of his printed in the *Bulletin Index* on July 11, 1935, written in thanks for a good review, he admits that the book "is selling well enough, and a commercial publisher has offered to take it over. This is balm to my spirit, wounded by nine successive rejections of the book by such publishers. But I am sticking to our experiment in cooperative publishing, as I am sure it is the coming thing."

In the case of *Pittsburgh Memoranda* the "special public" was wider and more enduring than Long first guessed. Of the 1,090 copies printed, 90 were sent out for review purposes and received nearly uni-
versal praise from those who chose to write about it. According to the book prospectus, it was the first of the Writers' Editions volumes sent out widely to reviewers, a successful experiment in the buckshot methods of trade publishers. The book may, indeed, be the first small press volume to receive national attention in such journals as The New Republic. Pittsburgh Memoranda was reprinted three times. Writers' Editions issued a smaller, trade reprint of it in the late 1930s; Ron Caplan issued both a cloth and paper-bound reprint in 1977 under the Breton Books imprint, and finally, the University of Pittsburgh has now produced a facsimile of the first edition.

There is no doubt the facsimile is as handsome as the original edition. Margot Barbour, the designer at the University of Pittsburgh Press, made sure that the book was given a similar black cloth binding, with lettering stamped in copper and silver, and that the two-color printing of the contents was retained. According to Barbour, the bulk of the text is printed in Caslon, "an ancient hot lead face." The text of the title page, copyright page, initial letters of each of the 11 sections, and the stamping upon the binding are done in Memphis Medium. This font, in approximating that of a typewriter, unifies the appearance of the book and the various meanings of memoranda to an uncommon effect. The dust jacket has been jazzed up a bit by the press, yet it, like the original Rydal Press edition, uses Memphis.

The original use of Memphis to recall typewriting must surely have been a conscious decision. One of Long's uses of Memoranda is in its corporate sense of professionals communicating essential information to each other through concisely written memos. Memphis intimates just that kind of memorandum. Long quotes liberally from corporate communiques, notably Frick's and Carnegie's, orchestrating them with his own commentaries, which may in themselves be considered another kind of memoranda, the kind one makes to oneself when engaged in serious reading.

Long's idea that a creative story is only a response to other views is novel for his time.

Most of these quotations are two or three lines long and are culled from 25 books that Long read. Long blends these quotations and commentaries with poetry, a mode we know he is entering sometimes only because of the brevity of each line. At other times, we know he is writing poetry because his tone becomes more noble and warm, less hard-edged.

The book's sections mostly are portraits of the individuals who, for Long, in their totality suggest to him what Pittsburgh is. The book begins with the Homestead Strike, continues with Stephen Foster, Brashear, Mrs. Soffel (the ward's wife who assisted the Biddle brothers in their doomed escape from Western Penitentiary), Westinghouse, two of his friends including the painter, Fred Demmler (whose portrait of Long hangs in Hunt Library at Carnegie Mellon University), and Eleanor Duse. It ends with an elegiac poem in the manner of Masters, in which Long ties the themes of the book together. Not all the characters come from Pittsburgh, however. There is a strange chapter on Henry George (author of Progress and Poverty), whose concept of "the STATE" revolved around his shock at "the contrast between monstrous wealth and degrading want." The section on George is included, apparently, because his politics finally hit home with Long while he was walking through "a small park hard to reach, used for botanical experiment, a long climb up to it/ and you over look a bluff and see mills and the Ohio river/ between the hills below you." The characters are intended, then, to reflect Long's developing consciousness. The city makes the man, who, once removed from it, resembles, remembers, and recreates the city in his own image. Long is looking just as much at himself as he is at Pittsburgh. The elegy at the end begins to sum this up:

My Pittsburgh is all these people, and others too;
my Pittsburgh is more than I can ever say —
the people, and the buildings, and the streets
in which I live my life; the loneliness
of heart and body here; the mind's confusion...

It is not clear whether the versified part of the book can be considered memoranda until the section entitled "Two Memoranda, 1914," in which the first memorandum is a poem for Long's newborn son. The reason for this broad use of Memoranda is made clear in the 1935 prospectus for the Rydal Press, in which Pittsburgh Memoranda is said to "take the machine for granted but pictures the attempts people have made in a certain city to use it selfishly or generously, and the result in re-establishing human values."

Unlike many of his contemporaries, who saw The Machine as a threat (a good example of this is Thomas Bell's Out of This Furnace, 1941, in which the Pittsburgh steel mills consume the hapless and alienated workers who try unsuccessfully to love The Machine), Long believed that The Machine could be humanized, because it was fought with the same blend of selfishness and generosity that characterized people. In a comment quoted in the Bulletin Index of May 30, 1935, Long says, "The machine has come to stay, and it's a lucky thing it has. The machine will save us when we learn to use it." In this spirit, Long tries to humanize the bitter disputes
of the Homestead Strike, which many of his contemporaries saw as the inhuman crushing of union activity in Pittsburgh by corporate moguls. Long reconstructs the strike from his own memories and from the writings of Frick, Carnegie, and Berkman, among others. Long sees all of the players in the drama of the strike as complex personalities, especially Frick and Carnegie. He draws constant parallels between Carnegie's personality and that of Berkman, the Russian anarchist who took a train from New York City to Pittsburgh in July 1892 with the explicit purpose of killing Frick. Long even compares Frick's position to that of the strikers:

Had Berkman killed Frick, we should not have seen Frick in action against Carnegie (what we needed to see also), only in action against strikers, against anarchists. We should not have seen Frick the striker, striking because he thought Carnegie had treated him unjustly, the same virile resentment in Frick as in the Homestead men. (p. 12)

This attempt to draw connections between corporate figures and the people who work for them, or who are opposed to them, is an essential part of Long's project. In a verse section near the end of this first chapter, he recalls a childhood fascination with McKinley:

the beautiful calm face of McKinley, the all-powerful all-beneficent beautiful calm face of government and business united, promising us food. Never again was a face to sink so deep into my life as his face, uniting and solving the duality of the world. (p. 11)

He tries to echo this in his mixture of corporate memoranda with personal and verse memoranda, which gives the book a linguistically weird quality, for the book, too, is an attempt at "uniting and solving the duality" of prose and poetry. This kind of writing left his early reviewers mystified as to what to call it, or even how to describe the book. Was it poetry or prose? Was it fiction or essay?

In the Musical Forecast of June 1935, an anonymous reviewer writes: "The book and its contents are difficult of description; best called brief reactions, remembered events and accounts of their happening." Fred W. Perkins, the Pittsburgh Press Washington correspondent, was reminded by the book that his own distance from Pittsburgh made it tempting to regard the city "statistically," but that "the truth — that Pittsburgh is a city of flesh and blood as well as steel and stone — is strongly stressed" by Long. Perkins describes the book as set "in prose cadences that frequently impress themselves as poetry upon the most obtuse literary critic." Elizabeth Shapley Sergeant, who later published a book with the Writers' Cooperative, wrote in the New York Times on June 16, 1935 that the book was "an original experiment in literary technique... which in order to use documents honestly, blends prose and poetry and — in the words of one reader — 'makes statistics sing'...." Kenneth Burke wrote in The New Republic on August 28, 1935 that the book was written in "verse and fragmentary prose." Perkins's term, "prose cadences," is an echo of Long's own footnote in the book that he had already arranged "the cadences of my page" before he noticed a discrepancy in the varied accounts of the Berkman-Frick affair. Otherwise, the reviewers came up with their own ways of describing what Long had done.

Kenneth Burke's review was negative. "The book lacks tension, through being pinned together rather than formed." Burke seemed particularly distressed by Long's account of the Homestead Strike, with its "non proletarian" glimpses at the human material involved that make you wince." He sees the book as a "songful survey, combining the statistical and the impressionistic," whose only virtue is that it "unequally suggests the magnitude and the quality of the psychological issues arising from the confused ways in which late capitalism both stimulates and frustrates ambition." The pinning-together of Pittsburgh Memoranda may be regarded as one of the book's strengths in this present age of very late capitalism. In these post-modern times, it is important to discuss how a text is "produced," and how one might begin to perceive the artist at work behind the product, putting things together and leaving things out. It is only unfortunate that the facsimile of Pittsburgh Memoranda is not hand-set or hand-bound, that it is no longer the product of a writers' coopera-

Long's sense of history may be of particular interest to readers of a historical journal.
thus exposes his own mode of production at a number of levels. His selection of texts inevitably prompts a reader to suggest additions to the list, especially since so much has happened to the region in terms of industrial relations since the book’s first publication 517 years ago. Long’s idea that a creative text is only a response to other texts, other views, is a novel idea for his time. That his real creativity lies both in his own verse and his selective arrangement of others’ writings reveals that he anticipated what is today a more popular notion — that acts of the imagination are really creative ways of reading, whether from books or events.

Long is engaged in acts of reading on a number of levels. One must keep in mind that he wrote the book after he left Pittsburgh, and was, in some sense, recreating the city from memory. Indeed that is still another layer of the word memoranda: the people he chooses to write about are those who have imbedded themselves in his consciousness. As Stanley Mayer writes in his review, which appeared in his Fantasy magazine in 1937, Long is “enough removed in body that he can see his city in sensible perspective, near enough in spirit that he can feel the influences that governed its members.” Or as Elizabeth Shipley Sargent writes in her review, “The book may be read as a chronicle that brings to life again the crucial social atmosphere of this age. Or it may strike home as a spiritual autobiography: the reaction to his times of a lonely artist born in Burma...” The section on Homestead begins with an act of memory:

Homestead is almost my first memory.

A July morning of early childhood. I bring in the milk bottles and the morning papers, and across the paper is big black type.

My father starts when he sees the headlines and says to my mother,

“Some anachrist has stabbed Clay Frick.”

“Men in action are the poet’s proper theme.” (p. 5)

These few lines establish the kinds of reading styles Long will braid together: personal memory (memories of his early childhood), historical reading (the newspaper establishes the idea of text as important to Long’s project), and poetical reading, which allows Long to put himself at a distance from his subject. It is in the verse sections, after all, that Long stresses the slightly humanist, slightly spiritual underpinnings of his work.

Long’s sense of history may be of particular interest to readers of a historical journal. “Our history is in three stages,” he writes in the middle of a long analysis of Carnegie. The first stage is a democracy’s obsession with property. Long phrases this in the words of de’Tocqueville, who was “staying overnight in 1838 at the home of a planter in western Pennsylvania.” Long defines the second stage through the words of Lincoln, whose quotation discusses how war has “enthroned” corporations, “until all wealth is aggregated in a few hands.” Long then says, “The third stage still continues.” This third stage — Long describes it partly through the words of Judge Grosscup — is the general rediscovery of an individual’s personal dominion and independence. In the second stage, corporations tried to ignore or suppress the humanity of its workers, according to Long, but in the words of Grosscup, this next step is toward “re-people-ising industry.” Oddly enough, Long’s next memorandum is “1901 United States Steel Corporation Capital $1,403,450,000.” This juxtaposition of contradictory material is a common feature of Long’s book; indeed, it is the ways that his multiple texts confront each other that gives the book its weight. In terms of the book’s historical veracity, Ralph Watkins, reviewing it for the Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine (predecessor to this magazine, Pittsburgh History) in 1935, writes: “Many students of western Pennsylvania’s history will find no new history here, but he will find an artist’s interpretation of some familiar phases of that history... In a sense, one may think of Pittsburgh Memoranda as a poetic and somewhat mystical interpretation of the contending forces present in Pittsburgh's economic history during the period from 1892 to 1925.” (WPHM 18 (1935), 226-227).

Long uses this device of contending texts repeatedly with Carnegie. He quotes an early Carnegie saying that the accumulation of wealth is detestable, and depicts a later Carnegie as neurotically building libraries every time he feels too guilty about his wealth. Long sums up Carnegie’s book, The Gospel of Wealth, by saying, “That is, you take money from people and then give it back to them, and call it a life.” Long uses the text to interrogate Carnegie, asking him the “arch question of the age,” which is: “with what end in view is a man’s heart to be won?” (p. 15). If Long cannot find texts that confront each other, he often supplies the appropriate commentary himself. In the case of Carnegie, he writes, “And if a man sneer at these gifts, what has he given back?”

Long sees these contradictions everywhere. In Stephen Foster’s case, for example, Long made clear how “out of harmony” Foster was with his time, a kind of a holy innocent with a strange gift for song writing. Long sees him as “wistful, out of step, needing support in a nature that amounted to rebellion/finding support in no one near him where it might count.” Long stresses that Foster was born naked and “Died and went naked into the next world, as all men must,” suggesting that some part of Foster was untouched by this world; yet Long is equally quick to quote a reference to “Sewanee River” as being “probably the most widely known song ever written.” Long sees Brashear, the lens maker and astronomer, as
another example of this, and continually points out the confrontation of Brashear’s worldly life near the Pittsburgh mills and his intellectual, perhaps even spiritual, passion for astronomy.

I have chosen to discuss what I think of as the underlying themes of *Pittsburgh Memoranda* rather than dwell lengthily on any one section. One of the complexities of reviewing this book is that it itself is an act of reading, not only of documents, but of his own memories. One of the joys of the book is to read it without having a reviewer hover too loudly over one’s shoulder, for Long’s intent is to finally urge us each to come up with our own *memoranda*. Each of us can well think of the cast of characters that forms our historical and personal consciousness. Perhaps our relationship to the landscape is a bit harder to articulate, and may only be accomplished when we are able to step back, or move away, as Long did, in order to gain a perspective. And, I suppose, the dilemma of having to step back is a central problem for any writer. Long stresses the idea that it is the arrangement of inner voices that makes an individual life, and the symphony of these individual lives that conjures up the *genius loci* of any region.

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