BOOKREVIEWS

Those interested in reviewing books should contact Nicholas Ciotola at npciotola@hswp.org. Publishers and authors can send review copies to the Editor, Western Pennsylvania History, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, 1212 Smallman Street, Pittsburgh, PA, 15222.

A Century of Progress: A History of AAA East Central
By Doug O'Neil, Charles S. Zurhorst, Tom Fort, and Jodi Banyas. (Pittsburgh: AAA East Central, 2002). Illustrations, 72 pp., AAA member benefit (available for viewing at HSWP Library).
Illustrated history of the regional AAA branch from its founding in 1930 as the Automobile Club of Pittsburgh (63 attended the founding meeting) to today's 1.2 million members, with offices in Ohio, West Virginia, and western New York. Of particular interest is a brief history of the club's headquarters, Motor Square Garden in East Liberty, purchased and renovated in 1991.

Bone Wars: The Excavation and Celebrity of Andrew Carnegie's Dinosaur
Discusses the controversial history surrounding the 1899 excavation of Diplodocus carnegii, a dinosaur fossil skeleton named after industrialist Andrew Carnegie. Also explores the rise of early American paleontology and natural history museums. (See the related article in the Winter 2001-02 issue of this magazine.)

Classification Guide for Arrowheads and Spearpoints of Eastern Pennsylvania and the Central Middle Atlantic
Comprehensive guide to identifying the age and origin of arrowheads and spearpoints found in Pennsylvania and the Mid-Atlantic states.

Oral history compilation examining the history of women residing in the coal and coke region of southwestern Pennsylvania. Numerous sidebars and photographs.

Entering Germany, 1944 – 1949
By Tony Vaccaro. (New York: Taschen, 2002). Illustrations, 192 pp., $30 cloth.
Photographic history of war-ravaged Germany from the collection of Greensburg, Pa., photographer Tony Vaccaro.

The Road Taken: A Journey in Time Down Pennsylvania Route 45
By Joan Morse Gordon. (Pittsburgh: The Local History Company, 2002). Illustrations, maps, index, xix + 184 pp., $19.95 paper.
Insightful travel narrative exploring aspects of Pennsylvania history and culture along Route 45. Filled with interesting, and often quirky, people who recount past and current events.

Steel and Steelworkers: Race and Class Struggle in Twentieth Century Pittsburgh
Thoroughly researched account of Pittsburgh in the 20th century focusing on industrialization, deindustrialization, labor and racial issues, and the city's eventual Renaissance into America's most livable city.

Three Years in the Bloody Eleventh: The Campaigns of a Pennsylvania Reserves Regiment
By Joseph Gibbs. (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2002). Illustrations, maps, index, xxi + 378 pp., $35 cloth.
Regimental history of the Eleventh Pennsylvania Reserves, a Civil War regiment mustered in Western Pennsylvania that served with the Union Army of the Potomac.

FEATURE
Dream Street: W. Eugene Smith's Pittsburgh Project
Edited by Sam Stephenson

Since its early period as a commercial and manufacturing town, Pittsburgh has inspired countless attempts to capture it pictorially. Photographers, like the 19th-century painters and sculptors who preceded them, have turned their attention to Pittsburgh in order to explain its promise and failings to the rest of the nation. The idea of Pittsburgh, its meaning as a center of American industrial culture, has always been more elusive than the captured image itself. Accordingly, photographers have looked to the city's vistas as a
Dream Street
W. Eugene Smith’s Pittsburgh Project

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Life’s main talent in the postwar era. Both posts highlighted his ability to narrate extraordinary tales of everyday life across the nation and around the globe.

In addition to reproducing 162 of Smith’s photographs, Dream Street places them in the context of Smith’s attempt at a coherent Pittsburgh photo essay. Stephenson groups the photographs into 10 chapters, each loosely based on a theme that drove Smith’s work. In the book’s introductory shots, streets and steps plunge into ravines and up the sides of the city’s hills. Images in subsequent chapters reveal a different topography of Renaissance-era Pittsburgh, one in which boundaries of class and race divide residents into isolated pockets. Stephenson’s juxtaposition of shadowy diners at an exclusive theater restaurant and a group of men walking through an empty Hill District lot reveal both the breadth of Smith’s work and the power of documentary photography to allow people to see themselves in new ways. His shots of poor children playing on street corners and young socialites playing in country clubs mark the boundaries of two worlds that rarely interact in the book. Both photographs show leisurely scenes that become politically edged through Smith’s eye for social criticism and Stephenson’s fine editing. In his insightful concluding essay on the man and the city, Alan Trachtenberg notes that Smith’s images of Pittsburgh “caught glimpses of a world at odds with orthodox versions of American reality.” (167) The serenity of the 1950s depicted on fledgling television networks and recycled today through nostalgic histories becomes a grim parody of life in Pittsburgh when viewed through Smith’s lens.

Equally in contrast are photographs of the city’s downtown business district and peripheral industrial corridors. Sleek, shiny office buildings offer a crisp and clean image of Pittsburgh that is elsewhere obscured by billowing smoke and decades of grime. Though this central tension between the Smoky City and the “new” city seems trite by 2002, Stephenson also provides insightful arrangements that emphasize the fact that Pittsburgh has always been defined by its work cultures. Whether in steel mills, city council chambers, construction sites, or on city streets, Pittsburghers appear in Smith’s images as people at work, earning their living by contributing to the kaleidoscopic life of the city. Among the most haunting images in the book are those of workers enveloped in the steam and sparks of steel mills, bankers viewed through the iron bars of their vault, and construction workers dwarfed by the skeleton of the Hilton Hotel. Each photograph shows people in workplaces that surround and brand them. Pittsburgh emerges in these pages as a place for work and, for better or worse, for common identity through work.

Stephenson’s volume reminds the reader that mid-century Pittsburgh embraced the same mix of confidence and alienation that characterized all of industrial America in the early years of the Cold War. As a companion to a recent exhibition of Smith’s photographs at the Carnegie Museum of Art, Dream Street provides a set of lasting images that add nuance to the ever-elusive idea of Pittsburgh. Though Smith ultimately considered his published project a failure, Stephenson shows that his snapshots captured an encyclopedic vision of the city’s aspirations and shortcomings that many will still recognize today.