

Pittsburgh

The fiery scape goat for the country

By Perry K. Blatz, Ph.D.





*The Great Strike; Destruction of
the Union Depot and Hotel at Pittsburgh.*

HHC L&A General Print Collection, *Harpers Weekly*, August 11, 1877.

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Pittsburgh accomplished prodigious feats of production and innovation during the 19th century while establishing itself as the nation's foremost industrial city. But that rise to industrial prominence brought intense class conflict, and Pittsburgh led there too, through its central role in the railroad strikes of 1877. This largely spontaneous wave of strikes is the most destructively violent episode of labor-related violence in American history.

The unrest began in Martinsburg, West Virginia, on Monday, July 16, and continued to erupt with an erratic unpredictability for the next two weeks across the nation's industrial heartland. Major outbreaks occurred from Baltimore in the east to Chicago and St. Louis in the west, and numerous smaller cities in between. Yet no place in the nation witnessed the destruction, death, and violence that gripped Pittsburgh. As the city struggled to understand what had happened, how much it cost, and who would have to pay for the damages, Pittsburgh and Allegheny County became, as the *Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette* put it, "the fiery scape goat for the country."¹

The strike reached Pittsburgh on Thursday, July 19, when railroad workers refused to move the trains of the Pennsylvania Rail Road (PRR) after management imposed a wage cut and new work rules that increased workloads by lengthening trains. Crowds across the city gathered in sympathy to block the tracks and stop the trains of the PRR, the nation's largest corporation and the dominant railroad in Pittsburgh and across the state. That night local authorities, after failing to disperse the crowds, met with PRR officials and agreed to request that Governor John F. Hartranft call out state militia troops. But the men of the locally based Sixth Division of the Pennsylvania National Guard were slow to answer the call. General Alfred Pearson, the Sixth Division's commander, was reluctant to bring those soldiers who did respond into action against the angry crowds continuing to gather along the tracks. PRR officials had little trouble persuading Pearson to telegraph state officials on Friday evening to send more reliable troops from the Guard's First Division, based in Philadelphia.

On Saturday, July 21, those troops journeyed to Pittsburgh aboard PRR trains, arriving early in the afternoon. Several hundred Pittsburgh troops had been stationed where 28th Street crossed the tracks two blocks

from Liberty Avenue. Their mission was to hold the crowd back from the tracks, but they accomplished little, and some militiamen even mingled with the crowd. More Pittsburghers gathered once the 600 Philadelphia troops arrived, so that perhaps 5,000 people were milling around the 28th Street crossing and along the hill above it at 5 p.m.

The Philadelphia men, commanded by General Robert Brinton, marched out of the Union Depot at 11th Street, not far from today's much smaller Union (aka Pennsylvania) train station, and continued for a mile or so away from the city along Liberty Avenue to the 28th Street crossing. Allegheny County Sheriff Robert Fife moved at the head of the column with some 17 deputies, looking into the crowd to arrest several men he had previously noticed disturbing the peace. But he quickly gave up his search when he was met with "hoots, jeers, and rough language." The Philadelphians maneuvered to form a hollow square around the tracks. General Pearson directed Brinton to have his men push the crowd back, and the troops advanced into a hail of stones and dirt with fixed bayonets. As they did so, "many of their guns were seized and some of the bayonets nearly twisted off."²

As is so common in the history of labor violence, no one can be sure who fired the first shot. But pistol shots did come from the crowd, described as "noisy, defiant," and "determined."³ The militiamen, who had been given permission to fire if necessary to defend themselves, discharged their weapons. That initial fusillade killed at least 10 and perhaps as many as 20, touching off the most violently destructive 24 hours in Pittsburgh's history.

Although the crowd initially fled from the tracks after the militia fired, railroad officials could not persuade any crews to move trains through. Around sunset on Saturday, the Philadelphia troops retreated to the PRR roundhouse at 26th Street. The crowd re-gathered and moved toward them.

Some traded fire with the besieged troops while others broke into nearby businesses, taking firearms and alcohol. Still others went to work looting the hundreds of freight cars that had accumulated since the strike began in the massive PRR freight yards along Liberty Avenue, at the edge of today's Strip District toward the lower end of Lawrenceville. A few set fire to tanker cars from the oil regions of northwestern Pennsylvania and cars filled with coke from south of Pittsburgh, then rolled them downhill along the gentle grade toward the Philadelphia troops in the roundhouse.

The conflagration began at about 11 o'clock Saturday night, gradually spreading from lumber yards and piles of freight cars to railroad shops near the 26th Street roundhouse. By early Sunday morning, the roundhouse itself caught fire, and the

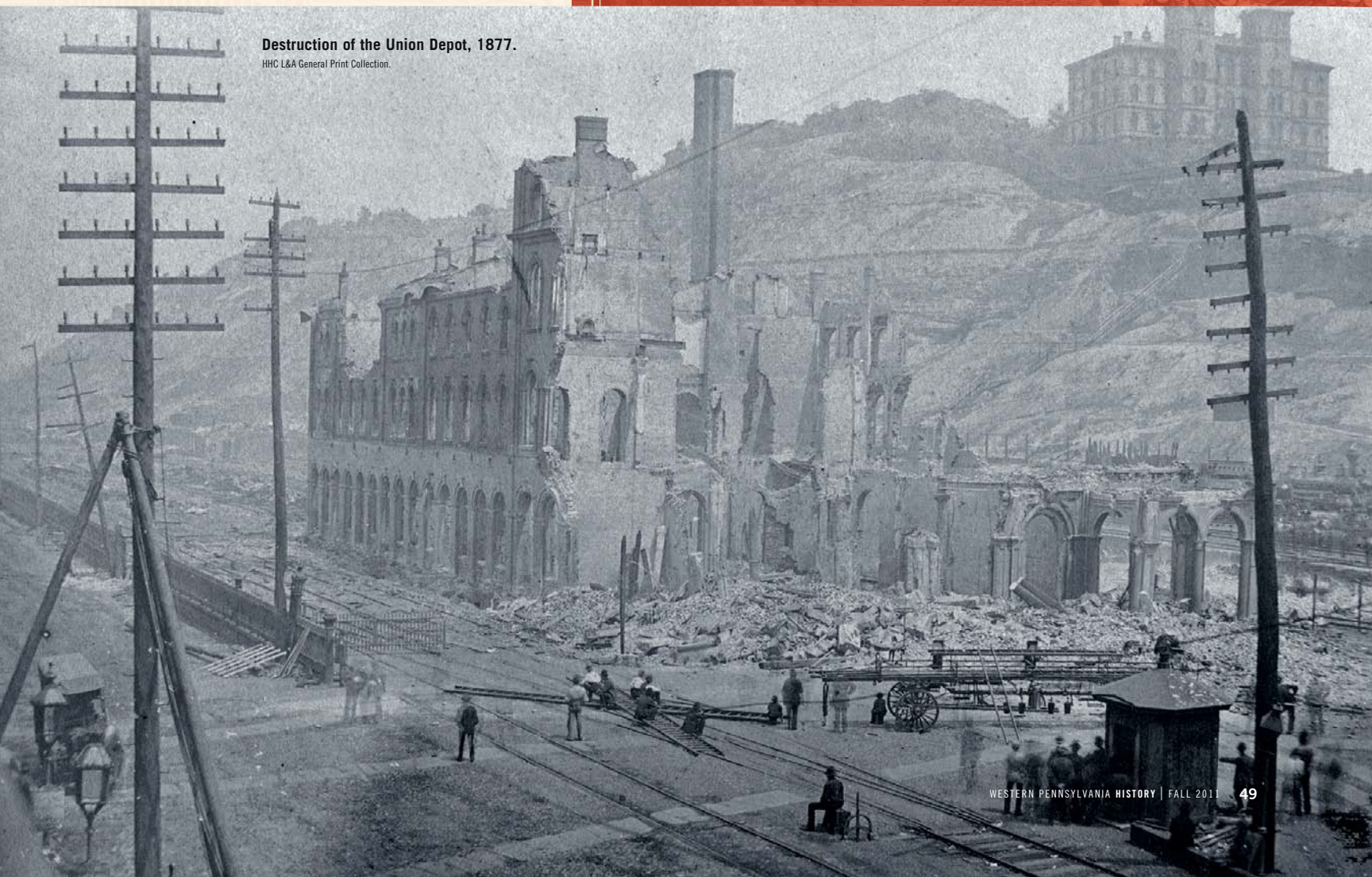
Philadelphia troops evacuated before they could be burned out. Facing gunfire from houses along Liberty and Penn avenues as they marched away, the Philadelphians thought they would be safe at the federal government's Allegheny Arsenal in Lawrenceville. But the commander refused to let in any but the wounded, fearing that the mob pursuing the troops might storm the arsenal for its huge cache of weapons. The soldiers escaped only by crossing the Sharpsburg Bridge over the Allegheny River, finally reaching shelter at the

Allegheny County Work House, some 10 miles from where they had started the day.

The departure of the Philadelphia troops removed the last barrier to efforts to burn as much PRR property as possible. Fires raged through the railyards, and by Sunday afternoon they reached the Union Depot at 11th Street. The last major structure to burn was the massive grain elevator nearby, located at what was then the intersection of Liberty Avenue, Grant Street, Washington Avenue, and 11th Street

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Destruction of the Union Depot, 1877.
HHC L&A General Print Collection.





by today's bus station. City firemen had struggled throughout the day to contain the fires, but some in the mob threatened them and even cut their hoses, especially if they were trying to save railroad property.

As quickly as it began, the disorder abated from Sunday evening into Monday. Governor Hartranft requested federal troops from President Rutherford B. Hayes on Sunday evening, and 50 arrived on Monday. By then local authorities were in control of a quiet, if still smoking, landscape. The fires didn't extend much further toward the

center of town than the grain elevator or much beyond PRR property, but that was still quite extensive. From a few spotty fires south and west of 11th and Washington, the strip of devastation proceeded almost two miles (or more than 20 blocks) up Liberty Avenue (about two blocks wide) to beyond the 28th Street crossing. More astounding than the destruction of buildings and freight yards was the more than 100 locomotives and 2,000 railroad cars looted and burned. The official two-day death toll was 25, including five Philadelphia militiamen.⁴



Almost immediately after the fires cooled, attention turned to assessing damage and responsibility. That especially concerned those whose property had been destroyed, in particular the PRR and the shippers whose goods had flowed into Pittsburgh. The state of Pennsylvania and Allegheny County would battle for more than two years, not just over who would pay, but over who was responsible for an unprecedented collapse in law and order.

Local newspapers realized that Allegheny County could be held legally responsible for the damages. Traditionally, a county sheriff's responsibility for maintaining the peace superseded that of city police. The destruction occurred entirely within the city of Pittsburgh and its police could do little to quell the violence, especially since budgetary problems had forced the city to lay off approximately half of its force a couple weeks earlier, at the end of June. Even though he had only a small force of deputies, Sheriff Fife had the theoretically far greater power of calling on a limitless number of citizens to help him maintain order as a sheriff's posse. As the county's top peace officer, he was legally independent, subordinate neither to the city police nor even state authorities.⁵

Two Pennsylvania laws further tightened the chains of responsibility around Allegheny County. In 1841, the state had passed a law explicitly giving property owners who incurred damages from riots in Philadelphia County the right to sue the county for damages. In 1849, that law was extended to Allegheny County.⁶ These laws recognized the heightened likelihood of such disorder in urban areas and may well have also stemmed from the clause, common in insurance policies, excluding claims for damages from "riot or civil commotion."⁷

Pittsburgh newspapers, ranging from the staunchly Democratic *Post* to the solidly Republican *Commercial Gazette*, offered an array of arguments to deflect legal responsibility from what they fully realized the 1841 and 1849 laws appeared to mandate. To the editors, those laws seemed fundamentally unfair, if not unconstitutional,

since other Pennsylvania counties where rioting occurred during the strike could not be held responsible for damages.⁸ The statutes did hold that an injured party could not recover damages if it had contributed to the riot through its own improper conduct. The papers would not say that the most damaged party, the PRR, got what it deserved, but as the *Post*, no friend of big business, put it, "a great corporation, possessed of boundless wealth and resources, . . . cannot . . . pursue systematic injustice and oppression without experiencing a day of reckoning."⁹

Pittsburgh's papers further noted that both PRR officials and state militia leaders prodded Sheriff Fife to request troops. Despite the disruption of railroad traffic, all had remained relatively peaceful until the Philadelphia troops fired. No one could maintain that the sheriff was in command

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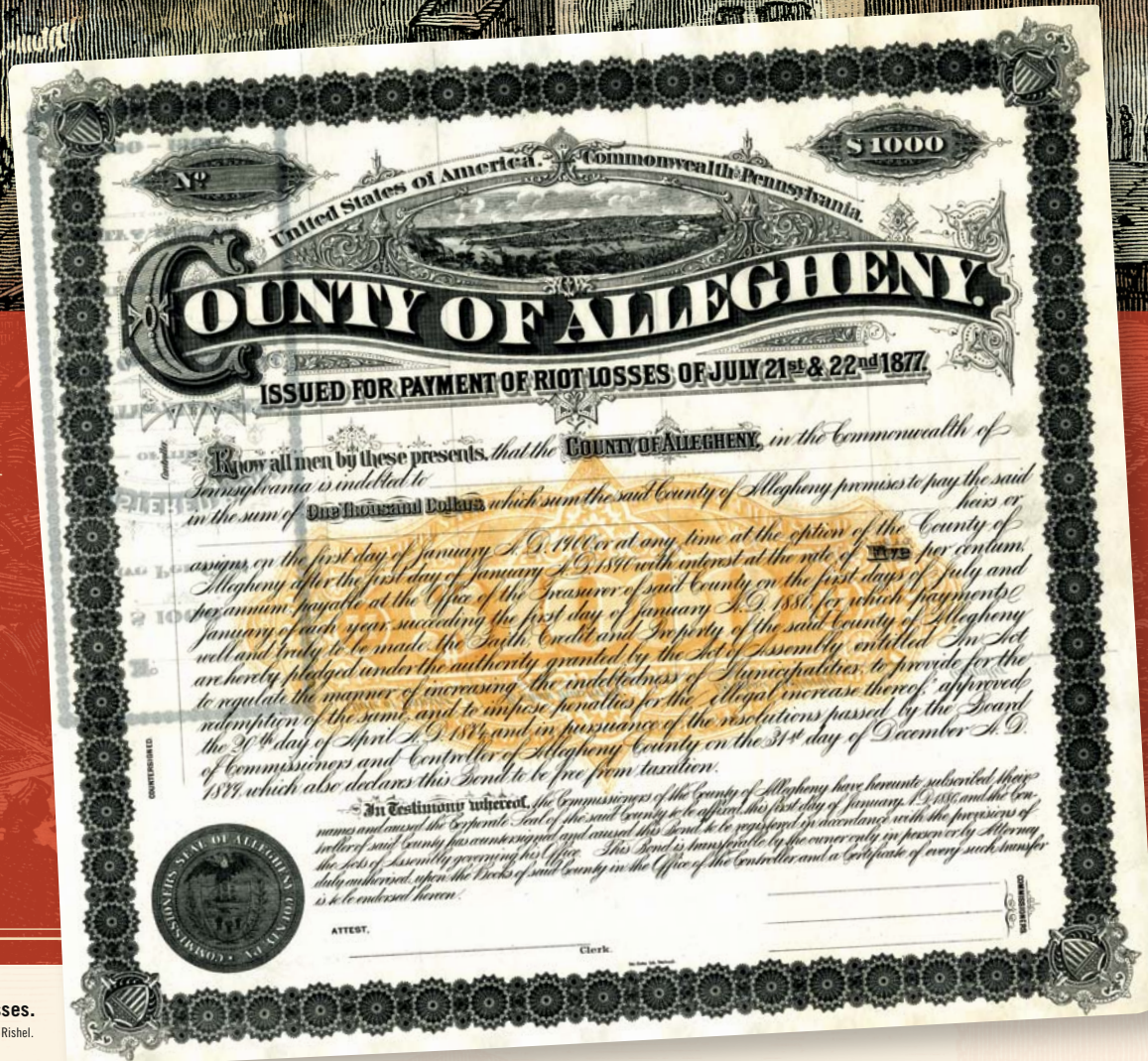
A sign calling for armed citizens to assemble to protect the city. The Big Bell is on display in the Great Hall of the Heinz History Center.

HHC L&A General Print Collection.

“If they had shown a firm determination to enforce the law... there can be no doubt that the mob would have been dispersed without bloodshed and riot.”

Bond issued for payment of riot losses.

Courtesy Joseph Rishel.



of state forces, which had been summoned by the governor. As the *Pittsburgh Chronicle* put it, “When the Commander-in-Chief has called the National Guard into the field, and the military has actually confronted the mob and been driven back or beaten back before it, is it not almost preposterous to claim the county *must pay*?”¹⁰ Pittsburgh’s editors also noted the unprecedented character of the violence unleashed by the militia’s action, labeling it as something far exceeding the “riot or civil commotion” for which Allegheny County could be held responsible under the law of 1849. Instead they termed it an “insurrection,” something that fell fully under the responsibility of the state.¹¹

In the months after the strike, the office of Allegheny County Fire Marshal James E. Stevenson examined claims for losses. General

Pearson, in overall command of militia forces on Saturday, July 21, was charged with murder on the complaint of Henry Stoppel, whose father Nicholas was mortally wounded in the exchange of fire on Saturday evening while sitting in his doorway. The county’s grand jury returned some 100 indictments against rioters, but chose not to indict the general, because witnesses could not link him directly to what they heard as an order to fire.¹² In its report the grand jury expressed its opinion of who was truly responsible: “a set of men controlling railways who have a difficulty with their employees, who were excited to violence by the unlawful acts of the military under the control of the State.”¹³

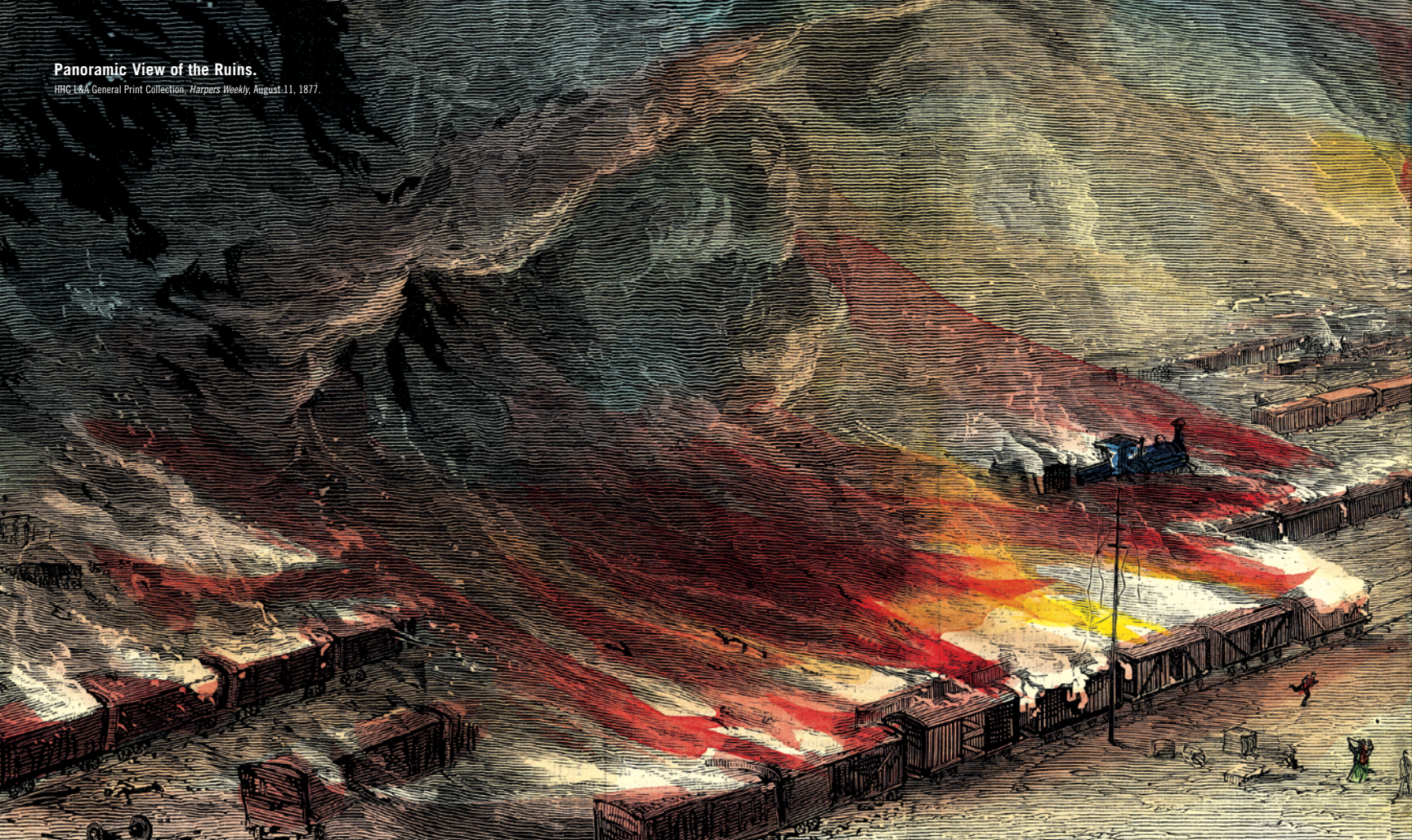
In January 1878, the state launched its investigation with eight legislators (none from Allegheny County) collecting testimony

for three weeks in Pittsburgh. Governor Hartranft testified, as did state militia officers and local officials. The committee’s report, issued May 23, censured city and county authorities, stating that if they had “shown a firm determination to enforce the law at the outset, as it was their sworn duty to do, there can be no doubt that the mob would have been dispersed without bloodshed and riot.”

The committee saw the militia’s role as assisting local authorities to keep the peace. At no point did militia commanders see themselves as having “superseded the civil power.” The committee’s report undermined the essence of Allegheny’s argument against being saddled with responsibility—that the action of the militia, the massive resistance, and horrific violence all surpassed both the sheriff’s capacity and responsibility

The aftermath of the fire.
HHC L&A, Stereoview.





for keeping the peace. The committee emphatically denied that the disorder could be labeled an insurrection, noting that the term presumed a “pre-concerted arrangement” among the forces of disorder, of which the committee could find no evidence.¹⁴

Pennsylvania’s courts showed no more support for Allegheny County’s effort to avoid liability. The day before the Riot Committee completed its work, Allegheny County was ruled liable for the damages incurred by a number of shippers whose goods had been destroyed in the riot, in a case moved to Beaver County Court from Allegheny. The case turned on whether or not the court would consider evidence of what Allegheny County’s lawyers claimed was “improper conduct” by the PRR under the laws of 1841 and 1849. The court ruled that evidence inadmissible, and the judge directed the jury to decide for the shippers, which they did. But that merely established grounds for appeal to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.¹⁵

The Riot Committee issued its report at the end of the legislative session for 1878. But in the new session in January 1879, work began on legislation in no way considered in the report, to have the state pay for riot damages, or what today we might call a bailout. According to initial rumors, the Allegheny County delegation insisted that the state pay for all damages and absolve the county of any responsibility. But as the bill took shape in February, the state would pay three-quarters of the damages and Allegheny County one-quarter. Four million dollars was generally seen as the amount needed to cover the state’s portion, but only after a full accounting of claims.¹⁶

Obviously Allegheny County favored the bill, and newly elected Speaker of the House Henry M. Long, Republican from Allegheny City, introduced the measure. Yet support from Allegheny County, which elected only 14 of the state’s 203 representatives, would not take the bill very far. More important was that the

PRR, the most damaged party and state’s most powerful corporate interest, backed it. The bill offered two advantages to the railroad: settling its claims more expeditiously than through the courts and dampening the enmity between the PRR and Pittsburgh. In an era when a great many citizens feared corporations, the PRR did not campaign openly for the bill. But both Pittsburgh and Philadelphia newspapers that favored and opposed the bill reported the PRR’s lobbying activity. Former State Treasurer William H. Kemble, reputed to be its leading lobbyist and “accredited mouth-piece,” focused his efforts on persuading the 38-member Philadelphia house delegation to back the bill.¹⁷

Debate and lobbying efforts intensified through March 1879 and into April. As voting on the measure loomed, the riot damages bill increasingly dominated the General Assembly’s work. According to the *Philadelphia North American*, the bill “overshadow[ed] everything else in

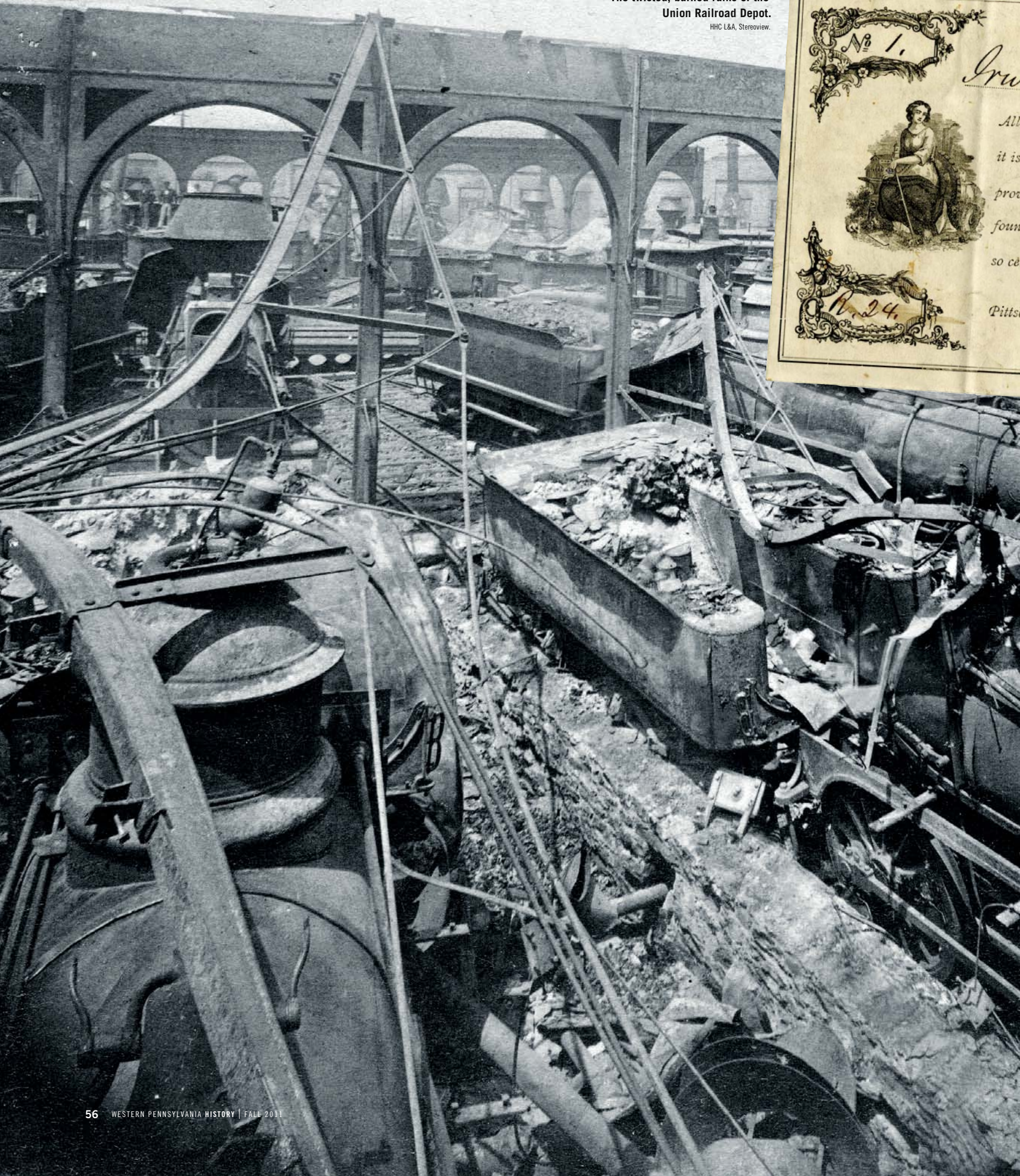


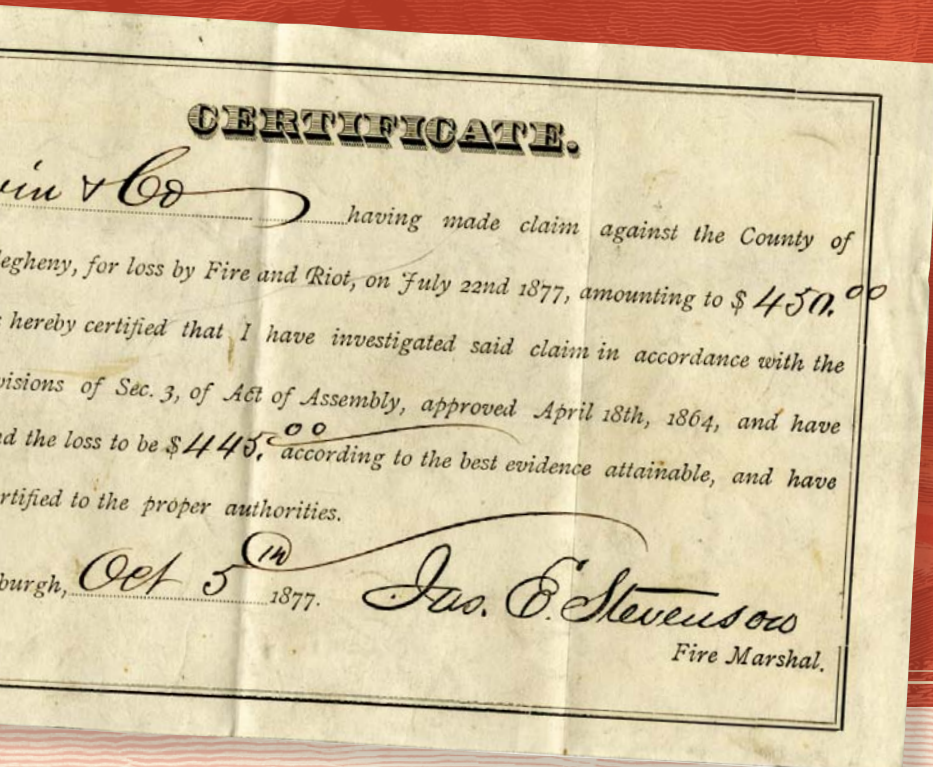
Republican Christopher Lyman Magee lobbied in favor of the Riot Damages Bill. He later became a multiple-term state senator.

HHC L&A, General Print Collection.

Amid rumors of less public efforts to influence votes, it became clear that Magee had been in charge of paying newspapers across the state to publish articles he supplied in favor of the bill.

The twisted, burned ruins of the
Union Railroad Depot.
HHC L&A, Stereoview.





“Whether the firing was judicious under the circumstances, we are not called upon to say. It is no part of this case.”

Riot Claims Certificate.
 Pennsylvania State Archives, Pittsburgh Riot Claims Collection.

Harrisburg” and resulted in “the complete blockade of legislative business.”¹⁸ Citizens statewide weighed in through petitions, with rural counties generally opposed.¹⁹

Through it all, lobbyists worked vigorously for the bill while opponents hinted darkly at corruption. Coming from Allegheny County to influence the vote in favor of the bill was Christopher Lyman Magee. The 31-year-old had already served two terms as Pittsburgh’s city treasurer and was acknowledged as one of the state’s most powerful Republican leaders or, as some preferred, “bosses.” While amassing a fortune in electric street railways, he would dominate Pittsburgh and Allegheny County politics for many years until his death in 1901.²⁰ Amid rumors of less public efforts to influence votes, it became clear that Magee had been in charge of paying newspapers across the state to publish articles he supplied in favor of the bill.²¹

The decisive vote came in the state House of Representatives on April 16, 1879, and the bill was narrowly defeated, 101 to 98.²² The vote showed no clear party or geographic division. Substantial numbers of Republicans and Democrats voted on each side, as did representatives from every part of the state. All 14 Allegheny County representatives and

32 of Philadelphia’s 38 who supported the bailout still combined for less than half of the votes in favor.²³ Nevertheless, state taxpayers clearly lacked sufficient sympathy for Allegheny County to fasten upon themselves a sizable state appropriation that they feared could well lead to increased taxes.

On October 6, 1879, in the case of *County of Allegheny vs. Gibson’s Son & Co.*, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court unanimously fastened responsibility for the damages on Allegheny County. Justice Edward M. Paxson gave the court’s opinion, from which no member dissented, though Justice James P. Sterrett of Pittsburgh did not participate. John Gibson’s Son & Co. of Philadelphia had shipped 60 barrels of whiskey from

Cincinnati on July 16, 1877, for Philadelphia by way of Pittsburgh along the PRR’s lines. As the strike began on Thursday, July 19, the barrels stopped in Pittsburgh. Over the weekend, “in the fire thus enkindled, the whiskey in suit was burned.” The case hinged on the legislation of 1841, extended to Allegheny County in 1849, which provided the only way for the Gibson firm to recover damages.²⁴

The court rejected Allegheny County’s contention that the PRR had engaged in “improper conduct,” which would free the county from responsibility under the statute. Paxson admitted that the crowd had been fired upon, not by the PRR, but by the militia sent by the governor in response to the sheriff’s request. Yet he added, “whether the firing was judicious under



Allegheny County Commissioner Henry Warner negotiated over damages with the PRR.

HHC L&A, Aspinwall: 1892-1967.

the circumstances, we are not called upon to say. It is no part of this case.” In doing what it could to get freight moving again, the PRR was “but asserting a legal right and performing a legal duty which they owed to shippers.”²⁵

The court categorically dismissed the county’s assertion that the riot’s circumstances and consequences were so unprecedented as to free the county from responsibility. It denied that the turmoil in Pittsburgh should be viewed as an insurrection, calling it “a mob, and nothing more.” The state had granted a portion of its sovereignty to Allegheny County. That sovereignty conferred responsibility for maintaining the peace. But while the county could call on the state for assistance, the 1841 and 1849 laws, in

full accord with centuries of Anglo-American jurisprudence, made Allegheny County responsible for the damage that ensued.²⁶

Pittsburgh’s newspapers reacted predictably. The *Post* sputtered, “Allegheny County, by a forced and rigid construction of the law, is made victim of the grossest injustice and wrong ever perpetrated under the forms of law in this country.” The *Dispatch* still held out hope that county taxpayers would be relieved of the burden, stating that payment would “only be made under compulsion, and we do not believe that when the people of the State come to calmly consider all the facts of the case they will insist upon it.”²⁷

Despite such bravado, Allegheny County’s thinking soon focused on one issue the court did not bother to rule upon: whether the county could afford to pay several million dollars in damages. Over the previous two years, commentators had opined that the costs could bankrupt the county.²⁸ Surely a bill for damages of several million dollars, if paid all at once, would overwhelm a county whose revenues for 1878 totaled nearly \$696,000 and expenditures a bit over \$628,000. Nevertheless, the county’s credit was reasonably good, with total indebtedness

a bit below \$1.9 million, requiring just under \$100,000 in interest payments or less than one-sixth of expenditures.²⁹ Shortly after the Supreme Court made its decision, the *Chronicle* estimated that, at the figure of \$2.6 to \$2.9 million for damages estimated by county authorities, financing payments by bonds would “not be a burden that will be unsupportable by any means; in fact it will scarcely be noticed.”³⁰

The Allegheny County Commissioners, led by Henry Warner, a former county treasurer, negotiated over damages with the PRR, looking to establish a pattern that the county could use to settle with the many smaller claimants. According to the *Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette*, county officials scrutinized the claims of the railroad with great care, requiring the PRR to submit descriptions of freight cars burned, floor plans of the buildings destroyed, and lists of the furniture that had been in offices, all of which “went into the minutest particulars, both in diagram and description.”³¹

Warner managed to get the railroad to accept a figure of \$1.6 million, if it could be paid within 60 days. That deal was announced before the end of 1879, and it received strong support

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Panoramic View of the Ruins.

HMC L&A General Print Collection, *Harpers Weekly*, August 11, 1877.

in a meeting of the county commissioners, county controller, and county treasurer with some 30 prominent attorneys, businessmen, and property owners. That amount was about 70 percent of the railroad's itemized listing of damages. The *Chronicle* praised the "tact and judgment" displayed by county officials and seemed pleased with the rigor of the process. It was believed that the hundreds of other claimants could settle for a total approaching \$1.4 million. The paper warned them that "everything that resembles extravagance or extortion will no[t] only be scrutinized, but resolutely fought. Claimants may as well make up their minds to run a gauntlet that will sift and expose every uncertain claim."³²

In the next week the commissioners received some \$1,741,000 in bond subscriptions, with more than 80 percent taken by local banks and the remainder going to individuals. Half were to be redeemed in 1890, and half in 1900, with both series paying five percent interest. The bonds proved to be quite popular with investors; some were purchased at premiums of one or two percent above par value.³³ The burden of those interest payments on taxpayers proved to be modest. Allegheny County increased its tax rate from 2½ mills in

1877 to 3 in 1880 and then to 4 in 1883. But the last increase occurred only after a fire on May 7, 1882, destroyed the county courthouse, necessitating a tax increase to accumulate the funds to build a new courthouse.³⁴ Eventually the riot bond issue would total \$2.65 million, with some short-term bonds paid off in the first years and a portion of the long-term issue refinanced in 1886 for redemption in 1906 at a lower interest rate of four percent.³⁵ Some \$1 million would be paid to claimants other than the PRR, with many following the railroad's example of accepting payment of 70 cents or so on the dollar.³⁶

Perhaps because the controversy loomed over Allegheny County and the state for some two and a half years, once it was settled most citizens probably thought the entire episode was better off forgotten. The ongoing cost of the riot bond issue continued to take a decreasing proportion of Allegheny County's budget until the final redemption of bonds in 1906. In 1881 and 1883, county legislators introduced bills in Harrisburg to repay the county for the damages, but these efforts gained little attention and less support.³⁷

A bit more than 122 years after the riot, protesters against the G-20 summit meeting

of September 2009 gathered along some of the same Pittsburgh streets as did their far less organized if more violent counterparts in 1877. They showed a remarkably similar fear and loathing of corporate power, directed toward multi-national corporations rather than the nation's biggest business in 1877, the PRR. But the G-20 summit was characterized by months of planning by both security officials and protest groups, struggling to find a balance between the right to protest and the need for order. Protesters had the choice of obtaining a permit to protest in the officially sanctioned way or confronting, as many chose to do, thousands of carefully prepared police.³⁸

Thus in our intensely communicative and highly organized society, both protest and the response to it have become routine and even ritualized, as the costs of maintaining public order have continued to grow. These outcomes can be seen as additional consequences of the unprecedented violence of 1877, beyond the deaths, destruction, and millions paid. Still, the greatest sacrifice from that time when Pittsburgh served as "the fiery scape goat for the country" may well be the loss of civic innocence exacted by the indelible memory of the mass violence witnessed here. ☼



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¹ *Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette*, July 30, 1877.

² Pennsylvania, General Assembly, *Report of the Committee to Investigate the Railroad Riots in July 1877* (Harrisburg: Lane S. Hart, State Printer, 1878), p. 11.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ The foregoing account of the violence is based on Robert Bruce, 1877: *Year of Violence* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1959), pp. 115-183; accounts in the *Pittsburgh Evening Chronicle*, *Pittsburgh Post*, and *Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette*, July 23-August 1, 1877; and the *Report of the Committee to Investigate the Railroad Riots*.

⁵ On the special responsibility of a county sheriff for maintaining the peace, see Kirk H. Porter, *County and Township Government in the United States* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1927), pp. 45, 55, 89, 93, 164, and 168. Pittsburgh's mayor, W.C. McCarthy, discussed police reductions in *Report of the Committee to Investigate the Railroad Riots*, pp. 388-389.

⁶ For the laws see John Purdon, comp., *A Digest of the Laws of Pennsylvania*, Tenth Edition, revised by Frederick C. Brightly, vol. II (Philadelphia: Kay & Brother, 1873), 1083-1084. Also see J.B. Ecclesine, comp., *A Compendium of the Laws and Decisions Relating to Mobs, Riots, Invasion, Civil Commotion, Insurrection, &c., as Affecting Fire Insurance Companies in the United States* (New York: Grierson & Ecclesine, 1863), 59-61. Ecclesine further notes six other states—New York, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Kansas, and Maine—also had laws that made municipalities liable for riot damages; see pp. 27, 42, 47-49, 50-51, 77, and 79-80.

⁷ Allegheny County Fire Marshal James E. Stevenson refers to such clauses in *Pittsburgh Weekly Chronicle*, September 1, 1877. On the development of such clauses, see Ecclesine, pp. 6-9.

⁸ *Pittsburgh Evening Chronicle*, July 27 and August 1, 1877; *Pittsburgh Telegraph*, August 1, 1877; *Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette*, July 31, August 1, 7, and 8, 1877.

⁹ Quotation from *Pittsburgh Post*, July 23, 1877. For other critiques of the PRR's role, see *Evening Chronicle*, July 27 and August 11, 1877; *Pittsburgh Weekly Chronicle*, September 1, 1877; *Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette*, July 30 and August 2, 1877.

¹⁰ Quotation from *Pittsburgh Weekly Chronicle*, October 27, 1877; also see *Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette*, August 3, 1877; *Pittsburgh Weekly Chronicle*, January 12, 1878.

¹¹ *Pittsburgh Evening Chronicle*, August 11, 1877; *Pittsburgh Weekly Chronicle*, September 1, 1877.

¹² On the charges against Pearson, see *Pittsburgh Weekly Chronicle*, October 6, 1877; *Philadelphia North American*, September 28, October 1, and November 9, 1877.

¹³ *Pittsburgh Weekly Chronicle*, November 24, 1877.

¹⁴ *Report of the Committee Appointed to Investigate the Railroad Riots*, pp. 31, 42-48; quotations from pp. 46, 43, and 47. For his assistance in making this document accessible, the author wishes to thank Thomas White, Duquesne University Archivist. The Pittsburgh newspapers did point out that no less a personage than PRR President Thomas A. Scott referred to the events of July as an "insurrection." In "The Recent Strikes," *North American Review* 125 (September 1877), 351-63, Scott stated that the governors of West Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania were "unable to suppress what rapidly grew from a riot to an insurrection" (p. 352). He also referred to "this insurrection, which extended through fourteen States" (p. 357). Also see *Pittsburgh Evening Chronicle*, June 1, 1878.

¹⁵ *Philadelphia North American*, May 24, 1878.

¹⁶ *Pittsburgh Weekly Chronicle*, February 8 and 15, March 8 and 15, 1879; *Philadelphia North American*, February 6, March 7, 1879

¹⁷ On the PRR's support, see *Pittsburgh Weekly Chronicle*, February 8, April 26, 1879; *Philadelphia North American*, February 6, 22, and 28, March 12 and 21, April 11, May 2, 1879. For quotation, see *Pittsburgh Weekly Chronicle*, February 8, 1879.

¹⁸ *Philadelphia North American*, March 26 and April 8, 1879.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, March 20 and 26, 1879; *Pittsburgh Weekly Chronicle*, March 29, 1879.

²⁰ On Magee's career, see George A. Swetnam, *Bicentennial History of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County* (Pittsburgh: Historical Record Association, 1956), 209-214 and Erasmus Wilson, ed. *Standard History of Pittsburgh, PA* (Chicago: H.R. Cornell, 1898), 1050-51. For his role in lobbying for the riot damages bill, see *Philadelphia North American*, March 7 and 20, 1879.

²¹ *Pittsburgh Weekly Chronicle*, May 17, 1879 and *Philadelphia North American*, May 8, 10 and 21, 1879. In testimony before a legislative committee, Magee produced some forty-four check stubs for payments of from \$30 to \$50 to "country papers." See *Philadelphia North American*, May 21, 1879.

²² *Pittsburgh Weekly Chronicle*, April 19 and 26, 1879; *Philadelphia North American*, April 17, 1879. The final vote on the bill was a vote to reconsider an earlier successful motion to postpone consideration of the bill. The earlier vote was 103 to 96 to postpone, the later vote was 101 to 98 against reconsideration.

²³ For house members' votes, see *Philadelphia North American*, April 17, 1879. For representatives' party affiliations and counties, see John A. Smull, *Smull's Legislative Handbook* (Harrisburg: Lane S. Hart, State Printer, 1879), 713-16.

²⁴ *Pennsylvania State Reports*, Vol. XC, *Comprising Cases Adjudged in the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania*, Vol. IX, pp. 397-405.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 415-417.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 417-420. The shippers were represented in the case by three prominent members of the Pittsburgh bar: David T. Watson, M.W. Acheson, and Thomas M. Marshall. Representing Allegheny County were former state Supreme Court's Chief

Justice Daniel H. Agnew of Beaver County; prominent Philadelphia attorney George W. Biddle; and Pittsburghers George W. Shiras, Jr., future U.S. Supreme Court justice; and Allegheny County Solicitor Stephen H. Geyer.

²⁷ *Pittsburgh Dispatch and Pittsburgh Post*, quoted in *Pittsburgh Evening Chronicle*, October 7, 1879.

²⁸ *Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette*, July 30, 1877; *Pittsburgh Weekly Chronicle*, March 29 and April 12, 1879; *Pittsburgh Telegraph*, August 1, 1877.

²⁹ See *Pittsburgh Weekly Chronicle*, January 11, 1879 for Allegheny County's 1878 financial report; also see Allegheny County Controller, *Controller's 25th Annual Report of the Fiscal Affairs of Allegheny County for Year Ending December 31, 1885*, (Pittsburgh: Shaw Brothers, 1886), 97.

³⁰ *Pittsburgh Evening Chronicle*, October 7, 1879.

³¹ *Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette*, December 30, 1879.

³² *Pittsburgh Evening Chronicle*, December 30, 1879; also see *Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette*, December 30, 1879.

³³ *Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette*, February 13, 1880.

³⁴ For the millage rates, see Minutes of the Allegheny County Commissioners, February 15, 1877; February 7, 1880, and February 13, 1883, Office of the County Executive, Allegheny County Courthouse. The minutes for February 14, 1885 record that the Commissioners had resolved in September 1884 to set aside 1 mill for the new courthouse. For the County's favorable financial outlook, see *Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette*, January 16, 1880; January 26, 1881; January 31, 1883; and February 9, 13, and 14, 1884.

³⁵ For total bond issue, see Minutes of the Allegheny County Commissioners, December 14, 1880 and *Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette*, January 26, 1881; for reference to short-term bonds, see *Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette*, January 31, 1883; for refinancing, see Allegheny County Controller, *Twenty-seventh Annual Report of the Fiscal Affairs of Allegheny County for the Year Ending December 31, 1887*, pp. 95-96.

³⁶ See Allegheny County Commissioners' list of major claimants and their settlements in *Philadelphia North American*, April 1, 1881. For ongoing settlements, see *Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette*, February 7, 1880; April 12 and 28, 1880. The rigor of the process for claimants other than the PRR can be seen in the more than 2000 claims submitted, all of which, as far as this researcher could determine, included itemized lists of losses, and some of which had items on their lists denied. See Pittsburgh Riot Claims, 1880-1882, in Allegheny County Controller Records, series 47.3, Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg.

³⁷ *Philadelphia North American*, February 5, 1881; April 1, 1881; January 12, 1883.

³⁸ Mike Wereschagin, Jeremy Boren, and Jill Greenwood, "Pittsburgh Emerges from G-20 with Hardly a Scratch," *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, September 27, 2009. For an example of advance planning for protests, see Jeremy Boren and Jill King Greenwood, "G-20 Protest Plans Raise Alarm in City," *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, July 11, 2009.

Remains of
burned boxcars.
HHC L&A, Stereoview.

