

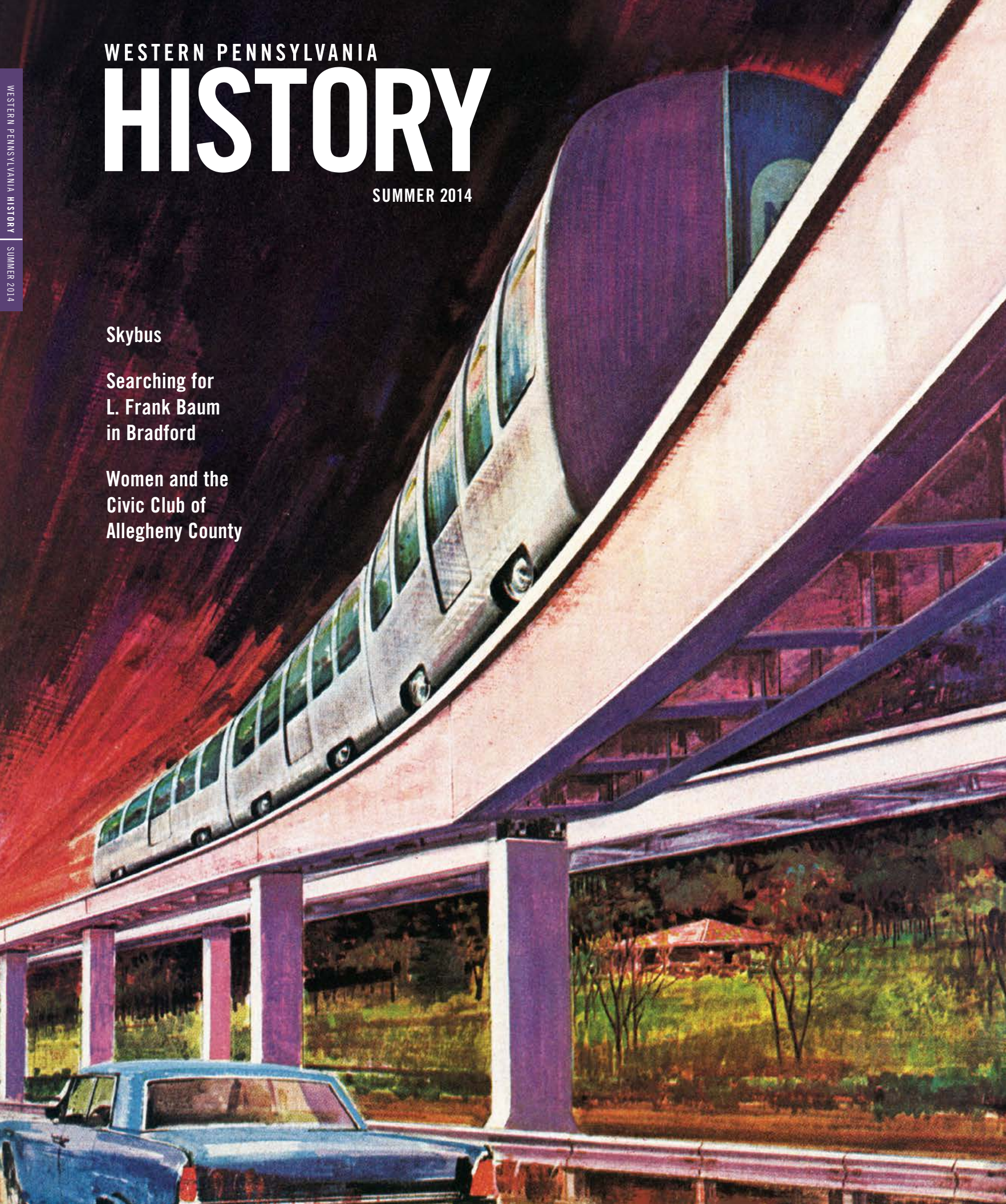
# WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA HISTORY

SUMMER 2014

Skybus

Searching for  
L. Frank Baum  
in Bradford

Women and the  
Civic Club of  
Allegheny County







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# EXHIBITS

## Heinz

Opens August 2014

In 1869, 25-year-old entrepreneur Henry John Heinz began selling prepared horseradish to grocery stores in and around Pittsburgh. Bottled in clear glass to showcase its purity and quality, grated horseradish became the first product of Heinz & Noble, the forerunner of today's global company. In 1876, Heinz introduced tomato ketchup, and the more than 650 million bottles now produced annually make it the cornerstone of a global portfolio of products. The Heinz recipe for success has always included the following ingredients: efficiently servicing a growing market for prepared foods, providing a wide variety of quality products, embracing new technologies, and developing abundant and creative sales techniques. This new exhibit traces the journey from one man's ideas to a global corporation and features objects and images from the History Center's vast Heinz collection.



H.J. Heinz Co. advertising card, c. 1900. The use of rosy cheeked children in Heinz advertising reinforced the company's focus on quality and purity in its products. HHC Detre L&A.

## Summer 2014 — Ongoing Exhibits



The Concord Coach, typical of stagecoaches used in 19th-century Western Pennsylvania, is featured in Meadowcroft's new *From Trails to Trains*. The exhibit explores people on the move in Western Pennsylvania from the prehistoric travel to the 18th-century Conestoga wagon that brought European settlers to this region, to the expansion of the railroad in the 19th century.

Photo by Mark Kelly.

### *Pittsburgh's Lost Steamboat: Treasures of the Arabia*

Through January 4, 2015

### *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette Photographers: Best of 2013*

Through January 2015

### *From Slavery to Freedom*

Explore 250 years of African American history in Pennsylvania

### *Western Pennsylvania Sports Museum*

### *Pittsburgh: A Tradition of Innovation*

### *Heinz*

Opens August 2014

### *Special Collections Gallery*

Treasures that celebrate our ethnicity, industry, innovation, and lifestyle.

### *Glass: Shattering Notions*

### *Rediscovering Lewis & Clark:*

A Journey with the Rooney Family

### *Prine Collection*

of Woodworking Planes

### *Wrought Metal Treasures*

from the Blum Collection

### *Clash of Empires:*

The British, French & Indian War, 1754-1763

### *At Fort Pitt Museum:*

### *Unconquered: History Meets Hollywood at Fort Pitt*

Through August 3, 2014

### *At Meadowcroft Rockshelter and Historic Village:*

*From Trails to Trains*



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Andrew E. Masich  
President & CEO

## Preserving Our History

This summer, the Senator John Heinz History Center will welcome the newest addition to our museum system with the opening of the Museum Conservation Center, which includes state-of-the-art collections storage and more.

Located behind the History Center in the Dietrich Building at 1221 Penn Ave., the new nine-story, 55,000-square-foot LEED Certified Green Building will allow all of the museum's artifacts to be stored under one roof for the first time with Smithsonian-quality security, temperature, and humidity controls throughout.

Earlier this year, the History Center moved its off-site collections into the new building and completed the construction of the bridge across Mulberry Way that will provide easy access to the Sigo Falk Collections Center visible storage area on the fourth floor. This artifact-rich installation is slated to open in November 2014.

The first floor Museum Conservation Center will provide visitors with expert

advice on how to preserve their artwork, family photographs, archival materials, antique furniture, and much more. Museum conservators with a variety of specialties—including textiles, paper, art, and objects—will educate visitors on how to best care for and preserve their antiques and family heirlooms. The Museum Conservation Center is an innovative enterprise that will enable the public to receive the same quality treatment for their treasures as museums provide for their artifacts and archives.

The end result of similar conservation efforts can be seen on display at the History Center's newest exhibition, *Pittsburgh's Lost Steamboat: Treasures of the Arabia*. After the boat spent nearly 150 years underground and below the water table, caring for artifacts from the sunken *Arabia* proved to be a challenge. However, the team at the Arabia Steamboat Museum worked hard to ensure that objects, from doorknobs to fragile wool clothing, were



The History Center's Conservation Lab provides state-of-the-art facilities and Smithsonian-quality care for artifacts.

HHC. Photo by Paula Andras.



**TOP:** While leather survived being buried underwater, cotton thread did not. The Hawley family and their dedicated volunteers carefully reassembled nearly every pair of boots and shoes found on the *Arabia*, re-stitching thread back through existing holes.

Arabia Steamboat Museum. Photo by David Hawley.

**MIDDLE:** Shoes from the *Arabia* being prepped to go on display in the museum.

HHC.

**BOTTOM:** Textiles required careful maintenance and treatment. Here, Arabia Steamboat Museum lab technician Dr. Judy Wright examines the sleeves of a red wool shirt. The wool pieces were first stored in a box and frozen until the staff was ready to undertake the delicate steps needed to reassemble the shirt.

Arabia Steamboat Museum. Photo by David Hawley.



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

conserved in a way that allows them to be seen and enjoyed by museum visitors today and in the future. The same kind of work can now be done on your own treasures with help from the History Center.

With the opening of the Museum Conservation Center, the History Center will provide professional conservation services directly to the public. Stay tuned to [www.heinzhistorycenter.org](http://www.heinzhistorycenter.org) for information on upcoming conservation workshops throughout the year.

Museums alone cannot care for all the significant heritage and material culture of our region. Working together, we can preserve our history for future generations. ☀

## Learn More Online



Readers can view three Arabia Steamboat Museum videos documenting the reassembly process of a wool coat (similar to one that will be in the exhibit) on the museum's Facebook page.

## The following donors generously supported the Museum Conservation Center:

State RACP  
Falk Foundation  
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Allegheny County CITF  
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Hillman Foundation  
Jack Mascaro  
David Barendsfeld  
Chuck Hammel  
Bob Peirce  
Urban Redevelopment Authority  
Anonymous

## Learn More Online



Steamboat Arabia exhibit info.



Andy Masich discusses a family heirloom at last year's popular *Pittsburgh's Hidden Treasures* event with KDKA-TV. This year's appraisal event is August 17.

Photo by Rachel Lynn Schoen.



Excavating the *Arabia* was truly a family affair, and everyone helped with the early task of gently washing off the worst of the mud and debris.

Arabia Steamboat Museum.



Visitors can meet with a variety of professional conservators to discuss the best ways to preserve their antiques and heirlooms at the new Museum Conservation Center.

Photo by Rachel Lynn Schoen.



# Somerset Historical Center



- The Somerset Historical Center (SHC) is a 150-acre rural history museum that preserves the history of life in rural southwestern Pennsylvania from the region's first farmers to the present day through exhibits, workshops, and educational programs.
- The SHC is administered by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) in partnership with the Historical and Genealogical Society of Somerset County, Inc.
- The Visitors Center, constructed in 1997, houses permanent orientation exhibits and videos, changing exhibits, and is home to the Historical Society's Genealogical Research Library.
- The SHC also features a re-created c. 1771 settler's cabin, the Adam Miller Farmstead, the 1859 Walters Mill Covered Bridge, the c. 1890 Jacob Emerick Cider Press, and a reproduction c. 1860 Maple Sugar Camp.
- From April 1 through October 31, the SHC is open Tuesday through Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and Sundays from noon to 5:00 p.m. From November 1 through March 30, the SHC is open Tuesday through Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- Guided tours of the outdoor exhibits are available from April 1 through October 31 with the Visitors Center, Genealogical Library, and Museum Shop remaining open throughout the year.
- The SHC sponsors Mountain Craft Days the first weekend after Labor Day. The festival features demonstrating artisans, traditional foods, interpreters, and entertainment.
- The SHC will host the Heinz History Center's traveling Civil War exhibit, *The Civil War in Pennsylvania*, June 7–August 5, 2014.

**The Somerset Historical Center**  
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The History Center Affiliates Program, HCAP, is a membership-based network that allows local and regional historical societies and museums access to museum professionals and best practice standards through the Senator John Heinz History Center. To find out more about HCAP or to apply for membership for your organization, please contact Robert O. Stakeley, Educator, at [rostakeley@heinzhistorycenter.org](mailto:rostakeley@heinzhistorycenter.org) or (412) 454-6359.





# UP FRONT



## FORT PITT

By Alan Gutchess, Director

### Pittsburgh, Virginia?

The year 1774 brought important changes to Fort Pitt, Pittsburgh, and southwestern Pennsylvania. Throughout the region, American Indians and Euro-Americans were coming closer to open warfare as natives sought to hold the encroaching colonists at bay. Against that tense background, another conflict was about to bubble over, not between the races, but between the British colonies of Pennsylvania and Virginia over exactly who owned what land.

Major oversights by the British government laid the foundations for future tension between these colonies. The documents that established Pennsylvania and Virginia were vague enough to be interpreted as placing what is now a large part of Western Pennsylvania in both colonies. Frustrations over the unresolved claims were compounded by the fact that much of the disputed territory had never even been officially surveyed, making true boundaries even more difficult to determine.

The year 1773 brought Virginia's Royal Governor, Lord Dunmore, for a visit to Pittsburgh to view the land and its potential. He then began planning a move that his colony had contemplated for decades: the physical annexing of a large part of these western lands into the legal boundaries of Virginia. The following January he authorized



Portrait of Pittsburgh, Virginia's Royal Governor John Murray, the 4th Earl of Dunmore, painted by Joshua Reynolds in 1765.  
Scottish National Portrait Gallery.

Dr. John Connolly to organize a local militia and establish Virginia courts by replacing those of Pennsylvania. Over the course of the next few months, loyal representatives of Pennsylvanians and Virginians arrested and rearrested each other as the pendulum of power swung back and forth.

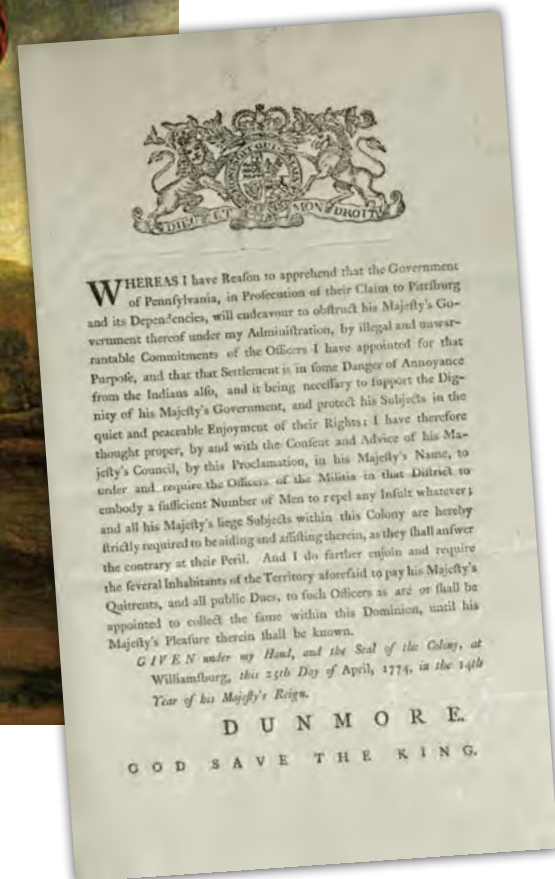
When the dust settled in 1774, it was Virginia that prevailed. The entire region was now the West Augusta District. Virginia officials controlled the militia, and in honor of their governor, the aging Fort Pitt was occupied and renamed "Fort Dunmore." Pittsburgh was now officially and wholly within the Old Dominion. The region was divided into three new counties, with Monongalia County making up most of the south and east, Ohio County along most of the west, and Yohogania County, which

**1774 proclamation by Lord Dunmore calling on the militia in the district of West Augusta to defend "Pittsburg and its Dependencies" from incursions by both Pennsylvanians and hostile Indians.**

Library of Congress.

included Pittsburgh, capping the others to the north.

Pennsylvania did not abandon its claim to the region, but attempts at retaking the area by force were given up for a possible diplomatic answer to the conflict. Other events, however, delayed any hope of a quick resolution. In May of 1774, frontier ruffians massacred a band of Mingo Indians near where Yellow Creek enters the Ohio River. This act finally brought open warfare to the entire region as both whites





and Indians made reprisals along the frontier. Lord Dunmore returned, this time with an army of backwoodsmen and plans to suppress the Shawnee and Mingo tribes. On October 10, a battle was fought at what is now Point Pleasant, West Virginia, where the Kanawha River joins the Ohio River. There was not a decisive victory on the battlefield, but with no hopes to resupply with gunpowder and lead, the Indians were forced to retreat. Peace negotiations began with the Shawnee, who shortly after signed a treaty with Lord Dunmore.

Before Pennsylvania and Virginia could expect a final ruling from Great Britain for their land issues, the first shots of the American Revolution were fired at Lexington and Concord in the spring of 1775. The inter-colonial dispute was set aside for their mutual conflict with the Crown. Fort Pitt reclaimed her original name, as Lord Dunmore was now despised by the rebelling Americans. Pittsburgh and the rest of the West Augusta District, however, became part of the new state of Virginia. Some settlers in the region were unhappy with the prospect of being the western edge of either state in the conflict. In 1776, a group from the disputed region petitioned the Continental Congress for the creation of a 14th state to be named “Westsylvania.” Its proposal was ignored.

Pennsylvania continued to press for the return of the western lands even as it remained bound with Virginia as part the new United States. As the Revolution wore on, and with the urging of the Continental Congress, the states reached a mutually acceptable solution in 1779. An agreement was ratified a year later that returned most of the disputed lands to Pennsylvania, though it would be several more years until the exact legal boundaries were completely surveyed and agreed upon. After several years of absence, Pittsburgh was safely back in Penn’s woods. 🌟

## Recommended Reading:

Boyd Crumrine, *The Boundary Controversy Between Pennsylvania and Virginia: 1748–1785*, Annals of the Carnegie Museum, Vol. 1 (Pittsburgh: Carnegie Museum, 1902).

James David Corbett, *Dunmore’s New World* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2013).

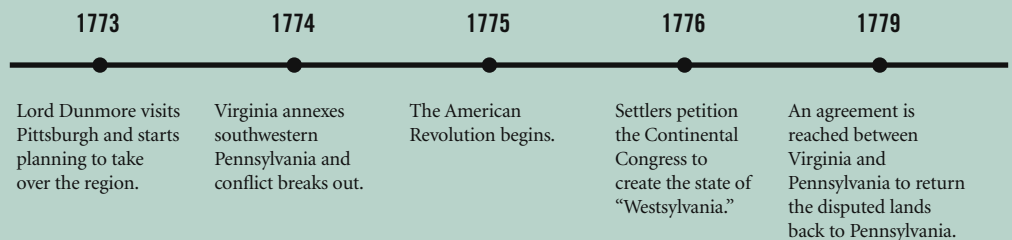
Harold Frederic and William C. Frederick, III, *The Westsylvania Pioneers, 1774–1776* (Chicora, Pa.: Mechling Bookbindery, 1991).

### Learn More Online



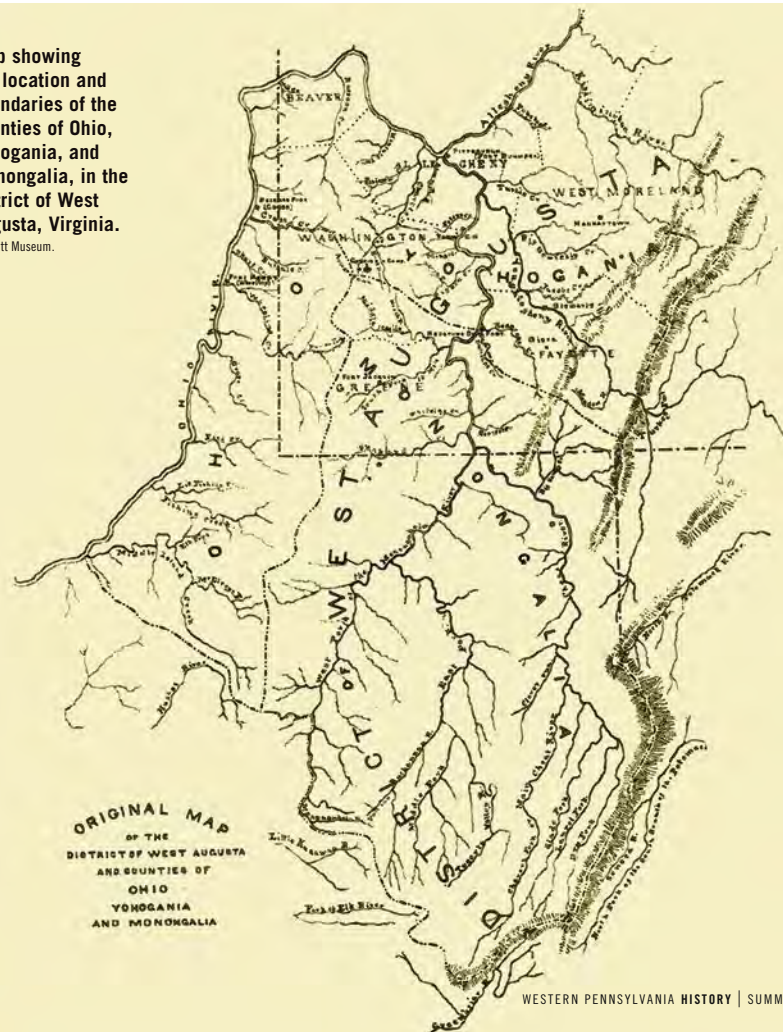
Read Lord Dunmore’s proclamation and other primary source documents.

## TIMELINE



Map showing the location and boundaries of the counties of Ohio, Yohogania, and Monongalia, in the district of West Augusta, Virginia.

Fort Pitt Museum.







## WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA SPORTS MUSEUM

By Anne Madarasz

### The Girls of Summer

Just as World War II impacted the political, social, and cultural life of the nation, so too did it impact sport in America. With huge numbers of young men called to action in the 1940s, many minor league baseball teams disbanded, depleting the ranks of the professional leagues. Fearing a collapse of the fan base as talented pro players went off to serve, Chicago Cubs owner Phillip Wrigley put together a committee charged with generating ideas to save baseball. Ultimately the committee recommended the development of a girls' softball league ready to play in Major League ballparks should attendance for big league games plummet.

This idea became the nucleus from which the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League emerged. Beginning in 1943 and lasting until 1954, the League changed the face of America's pastime. Ultimately more than 600 women competed in this professional

league that, at its peak in 1948, attracted almost a million paid fans to ballparks across the Midwest and the nation. From four initial teams, the League grew to 10, then contracted to five as fan attention returned to Major League Baseball and revenues diminished in the early to mid-1950s. But for a time, the women of the AAGPBL became, as the major motion picture reminded us, *A League of Their Own*.

Most of the teens and women who played in the League had trained as softball players. A few, however, had been exposed to baseball, playing in neighborhood or community leagues. Dorothy Kovalchick, who hailed from the Western Pennsylvania coal town of Sagamore, had an unusual exposure to the sport of baseball. For eight years she barnstormed with her father's team, the Kovalchicks, the only girl on this all-male

squad that took on semi-pro teams from across the region. Anchoring the team at first base, she stood only 5'2" but became known for her willingness to bunt any pitch hurled at her and for her headfirst slide. In 1945, Dottie accompanied her father on what she thought was a business trip to Chicago. There her father signed her up for a tryout with the AAGPBL. She spent a season in right field and on third base as a member of the Fort Wayne Daisies. Playing for \$75 a week, the team toured with the Grand Rapids Chicks playing exhibition games, then got into regular season play. Dorothy competed against women from across the United States and Canada before returning home to once again play for the Kovalchicks.

Other local girls, such as Betty Jane Cornett, or "Curly," played mostly competitive

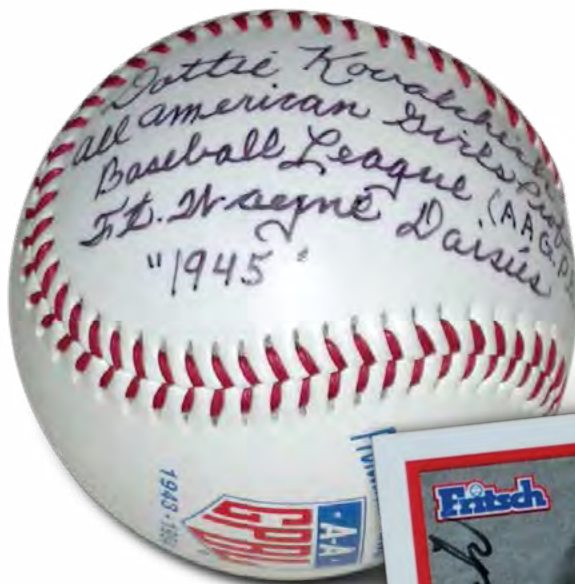
**Betty Jane Cornett poses in her uniform, c. 1950. The League insisted that the women athletes retain their femininity, even on the ball field. A League etiquette book reminded players that, "The uniforms adopted by the league have been designed for style and appeal and there is a tremendous advantage to the girl and to the team which makes the best of its equipment."**  
HHC Collections, gift of Betty Jane Cornett.



**Kalamazoo Lassies baseball cap worn by Betty Jane Cornett, 1951.**  
L2004.120.1. Photo by Museum.



softball before trying out for the AAGPBL. After attending rookie camp in 1949, Betty Jane played first for the Rockford Peaches, and then toured with the Springfield Sallies (1950), Kalamazoo Lassies (1951), and Battle Creek Belles (also 1951). Her most vivid memory of her playing days remained an exhibition game held at Yankee Stadium. Two McKeesport natives, Norma “Hitch” Dearfield and Lenora “Smokey” Mandella both spent time in the big leagues before returning home. Like Betty Jane they came home to a life without many opportunities for women to play organized sport at a high level, but these “girls of summer” changed the face of wartime baseball and blazed a trail for the female athletes that followed. \*



Dottie Kovalchick signed baseball and trading card. Baseball cards for the AAGPBL were not produced until decades after the league ceased operations. The cards are produced for a new generation of fans, many whom have learned about these pioneers through the movie *A League of Their Own*.

HHC Collections, 2005.40.1 and 2005.40.4.



Dorothy Kovalchick, c. 1945. The daughter of a Czech immigrant, Kovalchick grew up in coal country in Armstrong County. Pictured here in her “Kovalchick” team uniform, she played for her father for eight years, drawing fans wherever she went. Dot relished her playing time. “Everybody wants to know they’ve accomplished something, and baseball did this for me.”

HHC Collections, gift of Dorothy Kovalchick Roark.







## THOMAS & KATHERINE DETRE LIBRARY & ARCHIVES TREASURES

By Sierra Green, Archivist

### Steamboats in the Archives: The Tale of Olive Winebiddle Brown

Beginning in April 2014, visitors to the Heinz History Center will be captivated by stories of the steamboat industry found in the museum's newest exhibit: *Pittsburgh's Lost Steamboat: Treasures of the Arabia*. Just as the *Arabia* traveled hundreds of miles from this region, so too did numerous Western Pennsylvanians venture from their childhood homes to the American frontier. Of the archival collections in the Detre Library & Archives that speak to the far reaches of Pittsburgh's steamboat industry, one voice in particular presents a fascinating glimpse into the lives of local residents swept up by the river economy.

The daughter of Philip and Susanna Roup Winebiddle, Olive Newton Winebiddle Brown was born on June 13, 1826. The youngest of seven children, Olive was raised on the family's estate and passed her youth with her elder siblings in Pittsburgh's East Liberty neighborhood. Drawing from her correspondence, we know that Olive and her sisters actively contributed to the family farm by making apple butter, harvesting crops, and tending cattle.

At the age of 28, Olive made a decision that would forever alter her life. Willfully choosing to map the course of her future outside the confines of Allegheny County, Olive married

William Y. Brown, a steamboat pilot, on April 12, 1855. It is exactly one week later that we first hear Olive's voice in a letter she penned from St. Louis, Missouri. Earmarked for the family estate in Pittsburgh, Olive's primary correspondent was her sister, Rebecca, who she affectionately referred to as "Beck."

Among Olive's opening thoughts is a clear realization of her new, foreign surroundings: "Dearest Beck it seems so odd to be writing to you that I scarcely know how to commence my letter ... the weather is as warm now as it is in summer at home[.] the ladys and Gentlemen are dresst in summer clouse[.] it looks so odd to see them with thare lite pants and white vests and the ladys in thare white dresses."<sup>1</sup> As her husband William traveled about town to attend to business and prepare for embarkation, Olive wrote of her experiences as a young wife of a steamboat pilot.

For the first five months of her residency in St. Louis, Olive and William established a makeshift home in a local boarding house. Living amongst 20-25 other boarders, Olive filled the time during her husband's extended absences by forging new friendships. Her activities in St. Louis often carried her to church services and to the homes of other transplanted Pittsburgh families. Peppered amidst these descriptions of daily life are petitions for Rebecca to visit. In one such piece of correspondence, Olive

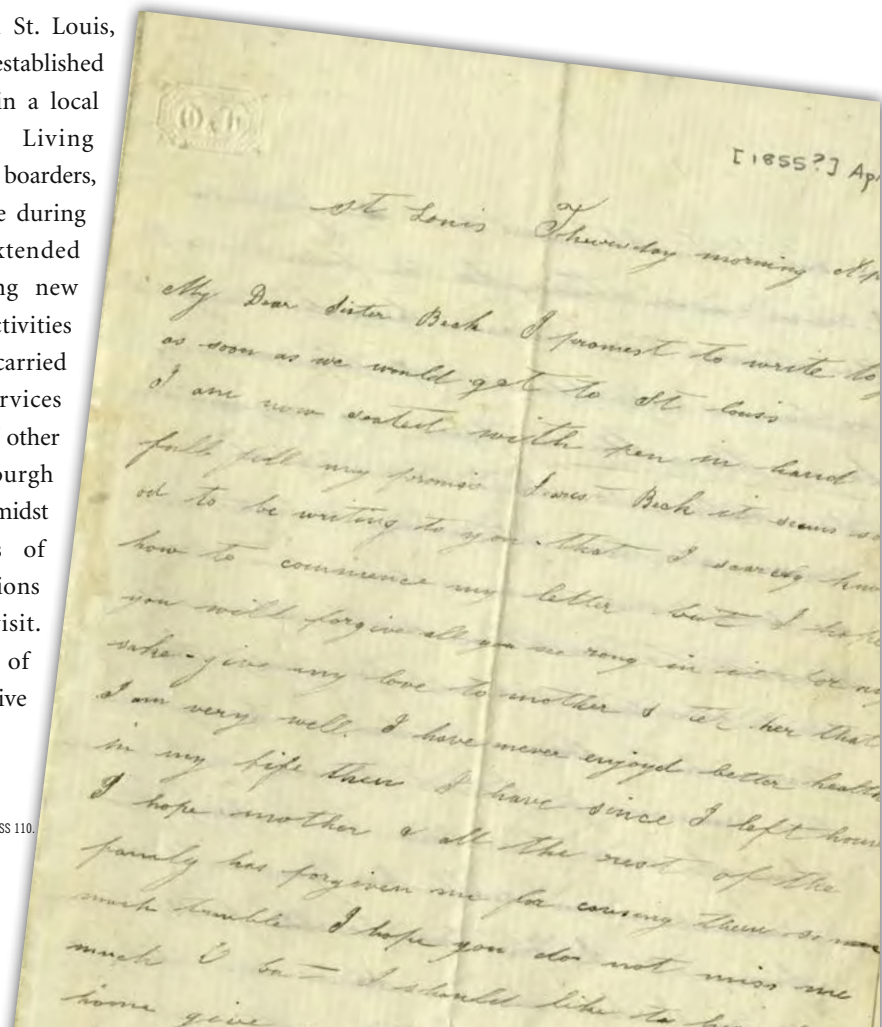
disclosed the following, "I would like to have you and all my Brothers and sisters to come[.] I cannot enjoy myself with any sattes faction thinking a bout home[.] O how happy we all might be if we could only live as we might[.]"<sup>2</sup>

When not reminiscing about her childhood home, Olive set about establishing a new homestead in St. Louis. In late September 1855, Olive wrote to inform her sister that she and her husband had settled into their first home. "Will had rented a house before he went and left mony for me to furnish it. O how I wish you ware here to help me to choose my furniture[.] I am so sorry I did not get a stove like the one at home and bring it with me but it is to lait now to think about it."<sup>3</sup>

William and Olive filled the rooms of their home with the birth of their only daughter, Susanna, in 1857. In her own captivating manner, Olive conjured clear imagery of her infant daughter for Rebecca.

Olive's first letter to her sister  
Rebecca, April 19, 1855.

All HHC Detre L&A, Baum Family Papers, 1769-1976, MSS 110.





Steamboat pilot's  
license of William  
Y. Brown, 1857.



have not arrived yet[.] the river is so high that I am very anxious about them.”<sup>6</sup> In passages such as these, the river presents itself as a clear protagonist in the saga of the Brown family.

One other intriguing protagonist in the Browns’ family story is none other than famed American novelist, Mark Twain. Before introducing the world to Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, Mark Twain labored alongside Olive’s husband as a steamboat pilot’s apprentice on the steamboat *Pennsylvania*. In fact, Twain immortalized his time aboard the *Pennsylvania* in *Life on the Mississippi*.

Twain aside, the letters between Olive and Rebecca offer compelling snapshots of the timeless bond between two sisters. In her endeavors to share her new world with her “Dearest Beck,” Olive constructs a genuine and captivating glance into the quotidian experiences of the wives of river-faring men.

Those interested in discovering the dramatic conclusion of Olive and William’s story and the impact of the steamboat industry on Western Pennsylvanians throughout the 19th century are invited to the Detre Library & Archives for a workshop on this topic on Saturday, November 15, 2014.



“Susie is setting on the floor eating [an] apple[.] I had no horse collar so I stuffed a pare of old pants with straw to set her in & you would laugh to see her setting claping her hands.”<sup>4</sup> In correspondence dating to late May 1858, Olive once again regaled her sister with anecdotes of Susie’s early childhood. Bubbling over the praise of visitors,

Olive informed Rebecca that a recent caller christened Susie the “greatest girl this side of Pittsburgh.”<sup>5</sup>

Almost in the same breath, Olive’s thoughts transitioned from her daughter to her river-faring husband. “I am looking for Will every moment[.] thay ought to have been here this morning but thay

<sup>1</sup> Olive Newton Winebiddle Brown to Rebecca Roup Winebiddle, April 19, 1855. All HHC Detre L&A, Baum Family Papers, 1769-1976, MSS 110.

<sup>2</sup> Olive Newton Winebiddle Brown to Rebecca Roup Winebiddle, September 30, 1855.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Olive Newton Winebiddle Brown to Rebecca Roup Winebiddle, May 16, 1858.

<sup>5</sup> Olive Newton Winebiddle Brown to Rebecca Roup Winebiddle, May 29, 1858.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.





## ARCHITECTURE AROUND US

By Lu Donnelly

### Abel Colley Tavern and Museum

Driving at highway speed past the Abel Colley Tavern and Museum, one might dismiss it as just another red brick, gable-roofed, five bay, two-story house; the kind seen all over Western Pennsylvania. But this Fayette County house bears closer inspection, not for its age, but for its location, associations, and the dedication of its volunteers. There are older inns along the National Road. In fact, the original owner of this tavern grew up three miles to the west with his 10 siblings in his Irish father's stone inn/house dating from 1796.<sup>1</sup> There was no shortage of inns along this, the main highway to the west from 1818 to 1852. Since most stagecoaches averaged 12 to 14 miles per day, there were more than 70 taverns or inns along the 90 miles of the road in Pennsylvania.<sup>2</sup> So what sets this inn apart?



**South and east elevations of Abel Colley Tavern and Museum.**

All Photos by Edward J. Donnelly, III.



First, as Thomas Searight's 1894 history of the National Road states, "Abel Colley accumulated a considerable fortune at this old tavern (an 1825 tavern on the south side of the road called 'Green Tree'), and when trade and travel ceased built a fine brick residence on the roadside opposite, where he retired with his family to private life and in a few years thereafter died."<sup>3</sup> If this is Abel Colley's retirement house, why have a separate door to a room with the scars of a corner bar on the floor, and folding doors on the second floor that opened two rooms into a large meeting space? The inn

is also unique because one family donated the house to the Fayette County Historical Society, which now cares for the home.<sup>4</sup>

The tavern also fascinates because of the skilled volunteers who spent most of 2010 restoring the house to its full potential. They even enlisted the aid of non-violent prisoners in orange prison suits, who came with their guard from the State Correctional Institution in Greene County, and the group just happened to include a skilled drywaller, a union carpenter, and a plumber. During renovations, it was discovered (after years of

paint were cleaned off the hinges) that the inn's doors were manufactured in Cincinnati by the A. Gardner Company, which was only in business between 1849 and 1851, thus helping determine the age of the house.

The volunteers found and saved the signature of Bess Colley, Abel's granddaughter, etched in the glass of one of the original windows, along with her sketch of a bird. They built a new kitchen floor when the old one turned out to be linoleum and indoor/outdoor carpeting floating above rotted joists. They even built corner cabinets, fireplace



Abel Colley, from a drawing in Thomas Searight's *Old Pike*, p. 250.



Hinge labeled "A. Gardner."



Bess Colley's window etching of a bird.



# UP FRONT

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mantels, and a ceiling medallion appropriate to the 1850s, and installed donated crown molding and wooden blinds throughout the house. Joe Hardy, founder and CEO of 84 Lumber, donated the climate control system so the historical society could properly store artifacts that capture the history of Fayette County, including the story of Abel Colley and his grand house.

The Abel Colley Tavern and Museum is at 7083 National Pike/US 40, Smock, Pa. Find it on Facebook. 

**Lu Donnelly** is one of the authors of *Buildings of Pennsylvania: Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania* (University of Virginia Press, 2010), a book in the 60-volume series on American architecture sponsored by the Society of Architectural Historians titled *Buildings of the*

*United States*. She has authored several books and National Register nominations on Allegheny County topics and organized an exhibition on the barns of Western Pennsylvania for the Heinz Architectural Center at the Carnegie Museum of Art.

<sup>1</sup> The stone Peter Colley tavern of 1796 located less than three miles west along the National Road is in disrepair, but is a very important artifact as it pre-dates the building of the National Road.



West elevation.



Ceiling medallion crafted by Tom Buckelew, c. 2010, from scars on ceiling.

## Learn More Online



Visit the Abel Colley Tavern Museum's Facebook page.

Check out the Fayette County Historical Society's homepage.





**15-inch Rodman Columbiad, Fort Monroe, Virginia, c. 1864.**  
Library of Congress B817- 7419.



## 15-inch Artillery Shell, 330 pounds

The Fort Pitt Foundry in Pittsburgh manufactured the first gun built using Thomas Rodman's innovative hollow casting process in the 1850s. In 1860, the War Department commissioned Rodman to build the world's first 15-inch cannon. Used primarily for seacoast defenses, the 15-inch Rodman Columbiads combined two important artillery

features: the mobility of a field gun with a howitzer or mortar's ability to shoot a shell at a high angle with a steep descent. This combination allowed the Columbiad to send a large shell out to sea and do significant damage to an enemy ship. During the Civil War, the Fort Pitt Foundry produced hundreds of 8-inch, 10-inch, and 15-inch Rodman cannons for the Union war effort. By 1864, Rodman had also supervised the fabrication of a massive 20-inch gun—its shell dwarfs this one, on loan from the Smithsonian Institution and on display at the History Center. A full-scale replica of the famous 20-inch Rodman will soon be installed in the History Center's Great Hall to commemorate the cannon's 150th anniversary.

Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of American History, Behring Center. Photo by HHC.

<sup>2</sup> The National Road extends for 600 miles from Maryland to Illinois, but only 90 miles of it cross the southwest corner of Pennsylvania. Deborah S. Burns and Richard J. Webster, *Pennsylvania Architecture* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 2000), 445.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas B. Searight, *Old Pike: a history of the national road, with incidents, accidents, and anecdotes thereon* (Uniontown, Pa.: 1894), 250. The historical society puts Abel Colley's death in 1858.

<sup>4</sup> The house was donated by Virginia and Warren Dick in memory of Susan and Frank Dulik, the last private residents, in July 2009.

<sup>5</sup> All crafted by Tom Buckelew of Uniontown.



**Corner cabinet crafted by Tom Buckelew, c. 2010.**



# UP FRONT



## NEIGHBORHOOD STORIES

By Bette McDevitt

### Lilly, Cambria County

When Jim Salony, former dean of Mount Aloysius College in Cresson, retired in 2001, his hometown of Lilly was coming up on its 200th anniversary. Salony thought he would gather a few photos together for the bicentennial, and one thing led to another. “At that moment, not realizing the full consequences of it, I had made a life-altering decision.” He would go on to organize a historical society, establish a museum, research the 200-year history of the community and memorialize it in a series of monuments and a history book titled *The Spirit of a Community, 1806–2006*, and plan for a year-long celebration in 2006 as the community’s Bicentennial Year.

Salony had some time, as the bicentennial was four years down the road, but he moved quickly to form an advisory committee. By March 2002, the Lilly Washington Historical Society (named for the township as well) had 800 members within a community of 950 people. “At our highest point, we have had 1,100 members,” said Salony. “The most rewarding part of implementing the challenging agenda was to witness the epiphany of the two youngest generations of the community as they moved from the agnosticism of believing that Lilly had no history to the discovery that they not only had ancestors—but that those ancestors had accomplished much that was interesting and important.”

Charlie McColester, labor historian and founder of the Battle of Homestead Foundation



Jim Salony poses in front of monument commemorating resistance to “the unpatriotic and un-American Ku Klux Klan.”

All photos by Bette McDevitt.

brought the achievements of Salony and the Historical Society to my attention with a short film he and Jim Hohman, another member of the Homestead group, created after visiting Lilly. “To walk down the streets of the village of Lilly and see murals reflective of their mining heritage along with dramatic memorials to the ‘Nobility of Women,’ the ‘Nobility of Labor,’ with a ‘Volunteerism’ monument picturing young and old, male and female striving upward together for the common good, makes you aware that you are in someplace special,” said McColester.

The most dramatic and heart-stopping memorial, according to McColester, is that of Lilly and the United Mineworkers of America’s heroic resistance to “the unpatriotic and un-American Ku Klux Klan.” In a three-foot-by-five-foot bronze cast depiction, a crowd of hooded figures is blocked by two joined hands, commemorating the town’s opposition to the invasion of 450 armed Klansmen in 1924. The invasion of the town, cross burnings, and the resulting confrontation led to three killed and many wounded.



Salony brought the story alive with some background:

Early in 1924, eight members of the United Mineworkers were expelled from the Lilly local union after the national UMW passed a resolution forbidding KKK members from UMW membership. These workers were replaced with immigrants from Eastern Europe, labeled by the KKK as “Catholic foreigners.” These were the groups that the KKK most detested. This great affront to the KKK prompted them to charter the “KKK Special,” a train that started in Pittsburgh and picked up Klansmen at each stop through Johnstown to arrive 400 strong in Lilly at 7:10 p.m., Saturday, April 5, 1924.

The story of the confrontation with the Klan is told in the text on the monument, shown in the photo included here. Salony recounted:

There were many wounded on both sides

of the battle, but some of the locals who were wounded did not come forward [in order] to avoid prosecution, since both the townfolk and the Klansmen were charged with being rioters. On June 9, 1924, 29 Klansmen and 15 Catholics from Lilly were tried in Ebensburg at the Cambria County Common Pleas Court for rioting. The jury found all parties not guilty of rioting, but convicted 18 KKK members and 13 townspeople of unlawful assembly, and they were sentenced to two years in prison.

Salony continued:

Animosity toward Catholics was nationwide. In Lilly, most of the Catholics were miners, and the store owners were Protestants. Indeed, afterwards, several merchants were boycotted for being Klan sympathizers. In the end, Lilly was given the distinction of starting the beginning of the end of the expansion of the Klan into the Northeast. Larger demonstrations followed in New York and Boston and the rallying cry was

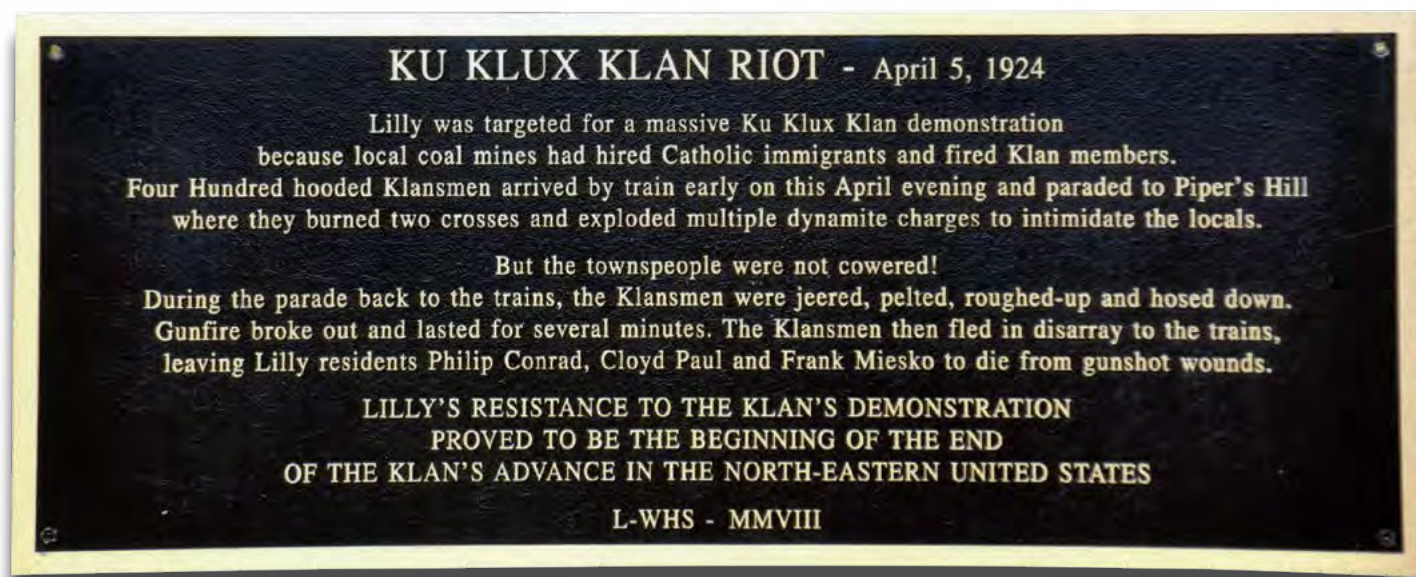
“Remember Lilly!”

It’s quite a story for a small town, and Salony, having brought the past into the present, mostly through one-on-one conversation, laments the present scene when people sit with earplugs, and text each other across the table. McColleston, who also spends time in the past, said, “Affirmation of the experience and struggle of common people are very important in times of social crisis and change. If people in this place confronted danger, overcame adversity, and built community, then so can we. Attention needs to be paid to our roots.”

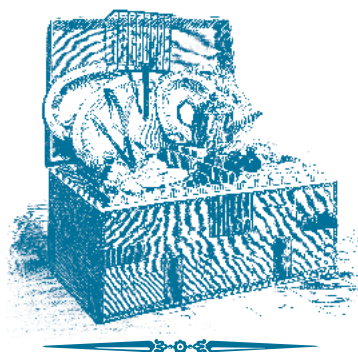
**Bette McDevitt** is a longtime contributor to *Western Pennsylvania History*.

In the Spring 2014 “Neighborhoods” column, the name of trombonist Al Dowe was misspelled in a photo caption on page 15.

The Lilly monument text.







## CURATOR'S CORNER

By Emily Ruby, Curator

### Pittsburgh Water Babies

Lula “Lou” Stilley won the Allegheny Mountain Association’s high and low board diving championships in the 1930s and competed in the 1932 Olympic trials before her dreams of Olympic glory were ended by an auto accident. Afterwards, she channeled her love of swimming into the children in her community, including her niece Helen Lou Stilley, who was featured in a 1935 *Pittsburgh Press* article titled, “This Little Lady is A Baby Mermaid.” That same year Lula started the Pittsburgh Water Babies, an unsponsored synchronized swimming team that performed at Pittsburgh area pools and country clubs for 30 years. As many of the original members aged, and eventually some of their children joined, Lou changed the name to the “Pittsburgh Water Babies and Their Big Sisters and Brothers.”

Passionate about the education of children, Lou became convinced that early instruction kept children safe and gave them a lifelong love of the water. Her Water Babies practiced at the Mount Oliver pool in the summer and Knoxville Junior High

School in the winter. Their performances featured themes ranging from patriotism to circus acts and even celebrated holidays such as Halloween, with the children’s parents making all of the props and costumes for the shows. By the 1960s, *The Toyland Wedding* seems to have become their most popular show.

The wedding consisted of two young swimmers playing the bride and groom accompanied by the bridal party, while children ranging from age three to 18 performed different parts of the celebration. Some of the youngest children played the wedding party and the “contingent from Candyland,” while older children slayed the dragon and performed the more difficult synchronized routines. The performance lasted for more than an hour and ended with a dragon-slaying competition for the hand of King Neptune’s daughter, Laughing Water.

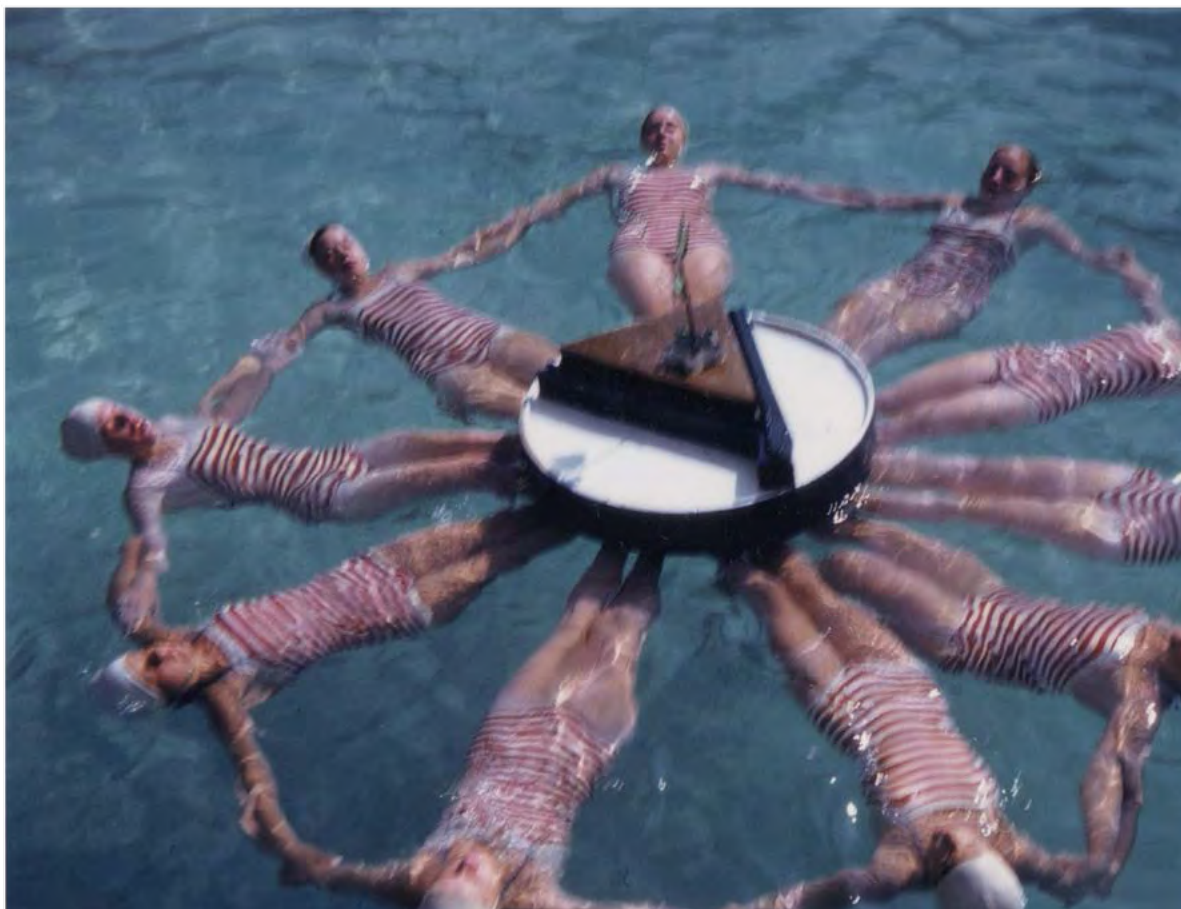


**Above:** Pittsburgh Water Babies and their Big Sisters patch.

HHC Collections, gift of Dorothy Miller, 2013.57.1.

**Below:** Group of Water Babies performing in *The Toyland Wedding*.

HHC Detre L&A. 2013.0114.







Water Babies practice at Mount Oliver pool. Coach Lou Stilley stands in the back, third from the right.

HHC Detre L&A, 2013.0114.

One of the early Water Babies, Laurine Schuler eventually competed in the Senior Olympics. She recalled her time with Coach Lou when she was eight years old in 1938: "She threw us to a big dragon from a stage at a water pageant at North Park County Pool that was over 100 meters long and 50 meters wide. Being swallowed by a dragon was the beginning of my swimming career." But she also had an appreciation for Coach Lou, who taught them that the enjoyment of swimming mattered more than winning.

Lou passed away in 1978, four years after being inducted into the Pennsylvania Swimming Hall of Fame. Many remembered her years of dedication to children both through her career as a swim teacher and as a religious educator at several area churches. Shortly before Lou's death she published *The Fun Way To Learn To Swim*, so generations of children could continue to be inspired by her love of swimming.

The History Center recently accepted a donation of props and signs from the Water Babies and two photographs, but we would love to learn more from locals who grew up watching or performing with the Water Babies. Contact us at [ELRuby@heinzhistorycenter.org](mailto:ELRuby@heinzhistorycenter.org) to share your story. 🌟

Pittsburgh Water Babies and their Big Sisters and Brothers sign.

HHC Collections, gift of Dorothy Miller, 2013.57.2.



King Neptune prop from the Pittsburgh Water Babies performance of *The Toyland Wedding*.

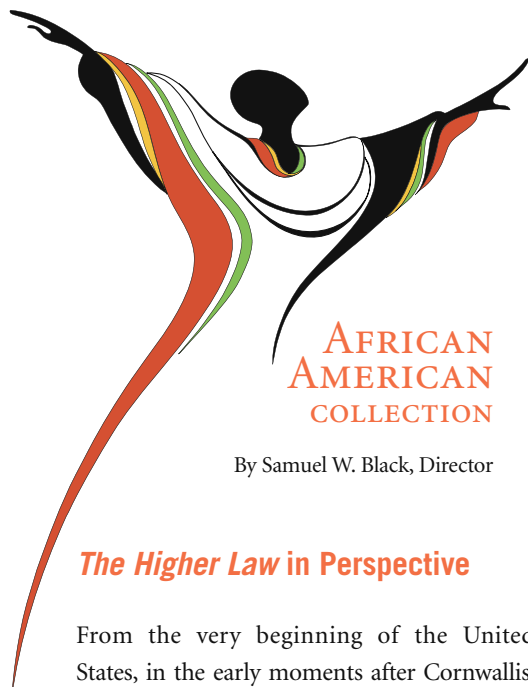
HHC Collections, gift of Dorothy Miller, 2013.57.3.

#### Learn More Online



An article from *The Pittsburgh Press*, September 4, 1960, covering Lou Stilley's famous Pittsburgh Water Babies and their *Toyland Wedding* routine.





## AFRICAN AMERICAN COLLECTION

By Samuel W. Black, Director

### *The Higher Law in Perspective*

From the very beginning of the United States, in the early moments after Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown, slavery was seen as the economic enterprise to start the new nation in 1781. Eighty years later, South Carolina seceded from the Union followed by Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Virginia, Florida, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina over control of slavery and its prosperity. As the clash of national ideology began the Civil War, underneath the cannons, rifle shots, and battles was the issue of slavery and its impact on the national consciousness.

The decades leading up to the Civil War witnessed much debate around the issue of slavery. The debate is ever-present in the History Center's *From Slavery to Freedom* exhibit and is artistically depicted in David Gilmour Blythe's 1861 painting *The Higher Law*. Blythe's painting portrays both sides of the debate: the abolitionists and the slaveholder, with the creed of the United States, Liberty, getting the worse of the matter.

Every law, act, and legislative decision concerning slavery from 1781 to the eve of the

Civil War was seen politically as supporting one view or the other. Caught in the middle were the four million African Americans and the democratic freedom expressed in the Declaration of Independence and supported by the Constitution. But even those bodies are not so clear.

Blythe was born in East Liverpool, Ohio, in 1815 and moved to Pittsburgh in 1831 (the same year as abolitionist Martin R. Delany) to work as a carpenter's apprentice before joining the navy and serving for three years. After his service he travelled back to East Liverpool, where he began his portrait work before traveling again along the mountain ridges of Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Maryland. From this work he produced a large panoramic painting of the Allegheny Mountains—a sort of antebellum cinema. Due to financial issues, Blythe lost this work and returned to Pittsburgh in the late 1850s.

In his later years, Blythe concentrated almost exclusively on painting. His subject matter ventured on politics, social issues, corruption, and classism. He abhorred slavery and foreign immigration. The tone of his work tempered cynicism and sarcastic commentary. As a Western Pennsylvanian he must have seen or known a great deal about the active abolitionist community. He spent much time in Uniontown, Fayette County, a hotbed and frontline of the slavery-abolitionist confrontation. In Pittsburgh he would have known about the militant abolitionists in this community as well. Exposure to the world and seeing slavery in both the Caribbean during his naval years and in the U.S. from his many travels may have impacted his depiction of the debate in *Higher Law*.

Between 1861 and his death in 1865, Blythe produced numerous paintings that offered commentary on the war and the issues surrounding it. *Higher Law* is the first of those paintings and opens his artistic satire with the debate over slavery. There is much debate still today about the causes of the Civil War. Recent actions by Southern states to discount that slavery was in the debate only need to see both the literary and artistic work produced on the eve of the conflict to know and understand what the war was about. In the *From Slavery to Freedom* exhibit, *Higher Law* more than any other work of art provides the evidence that slavery was the central cause of the conflict.



Logo: *Spirit Form Freedom Corner Monument*, Pittsburgh, Pa., © artist Carlos F. Peterson.

#### Sources:

Mary Sayre Haverstock, Jeannette Mahoney Vance, Brian L. Meggitt, eds. *Artists in Ohio, 1787-1900: A Biographical Dictionary* (Kent, Oh.: Kent State University Press, 2000).

Dorothy Miller. *The Life and Work of David G. Blythe* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1950).

Bruce W. Chambers. *The World of David Gilmour Blythe (1815-1865)* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press for the National Museum of Fine Arts, 1980).

#### Learn More Online



Visit the History Center's exhibition *From Slavery to Freedom* to hear stories from the region's African American community.

See more paintings by David Gilmour Blythe.

Read the Smithsonian's biography on Blythe.



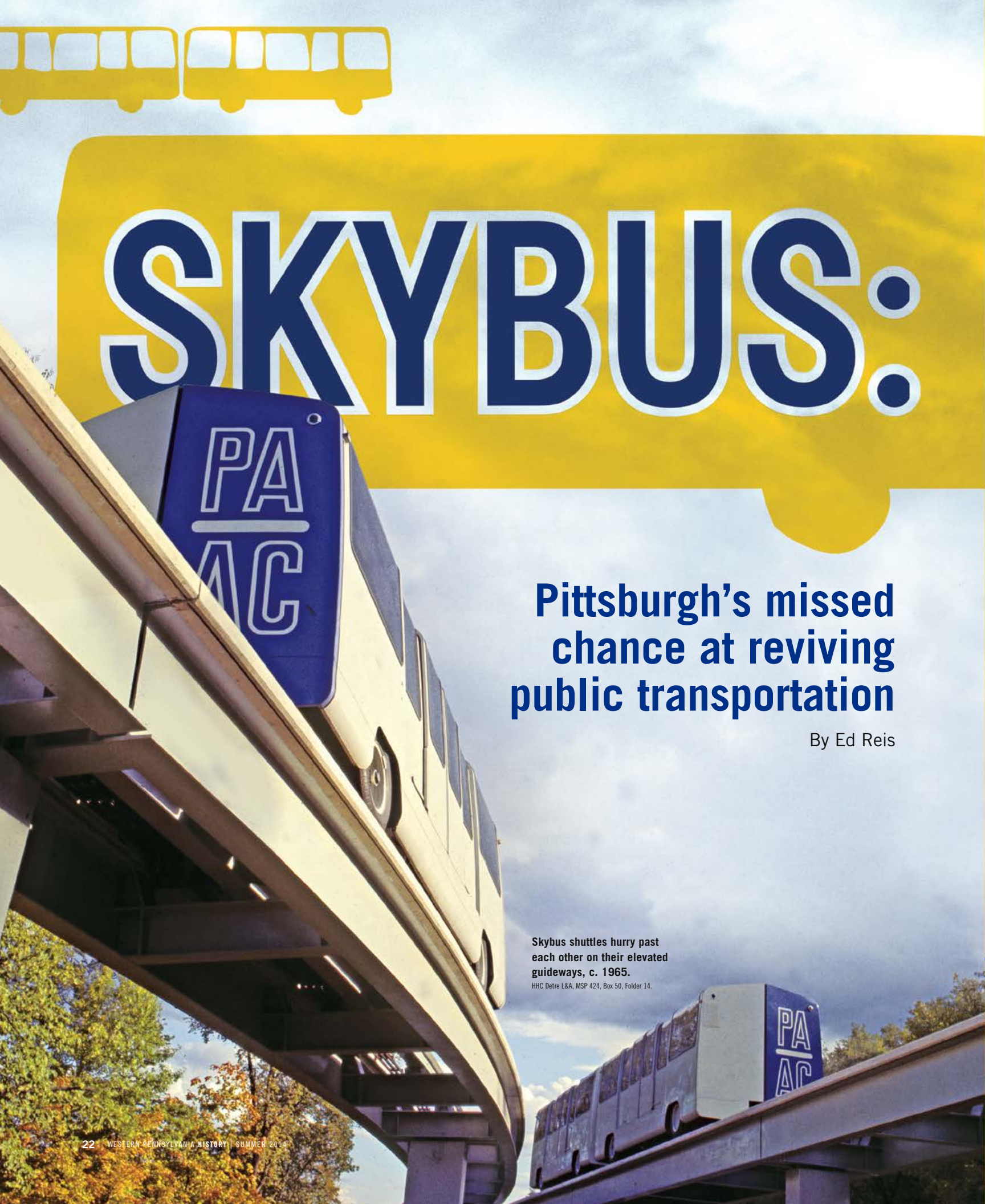


*The Higher Law*, by David Gilmour Blythe, 1861.

This painting by artist David Blythe views slavery as the primary cause of the Civil War. At the center of the painting, Liberty is mortally wounded on her shield. Behind her is the grave of Common Sense, dated 1861. To the left is a Northern abolitionist and on the right a Southern slaveholder. The abolitionist holds aloft a volume labeled "Higher Law." The Southerner clings to a paper inscribed "Our Rights" and a shackle. In the center above Liberty, a flaming dragon's cave identifies "The Final Location of the Southern Capitol" as Hell.

Carnegie Museum of Art.





# SKYBUS:

## Pittsburgh's missed chance at reviving public transportation

By Ed Reis

Skybus shuttles hurry past each other on their elevated guideways, c. 1965.

HHC Detre L&A, MSP 424, Box 50, Folder 14.



# “ALL ABOARD! ALL ABOARD!”

It was autumn 1965 and the crowds arriving at the annual Allegheny County Fair in South Park were boarding a shiny prototype Westinghouse transit vehicle for a short ride to the fairgrounds. Long lines waited to board the air-conditioned, rubber-tired transit car, enjoying a bird's-eye view of the fair as they looped around the racetrack.

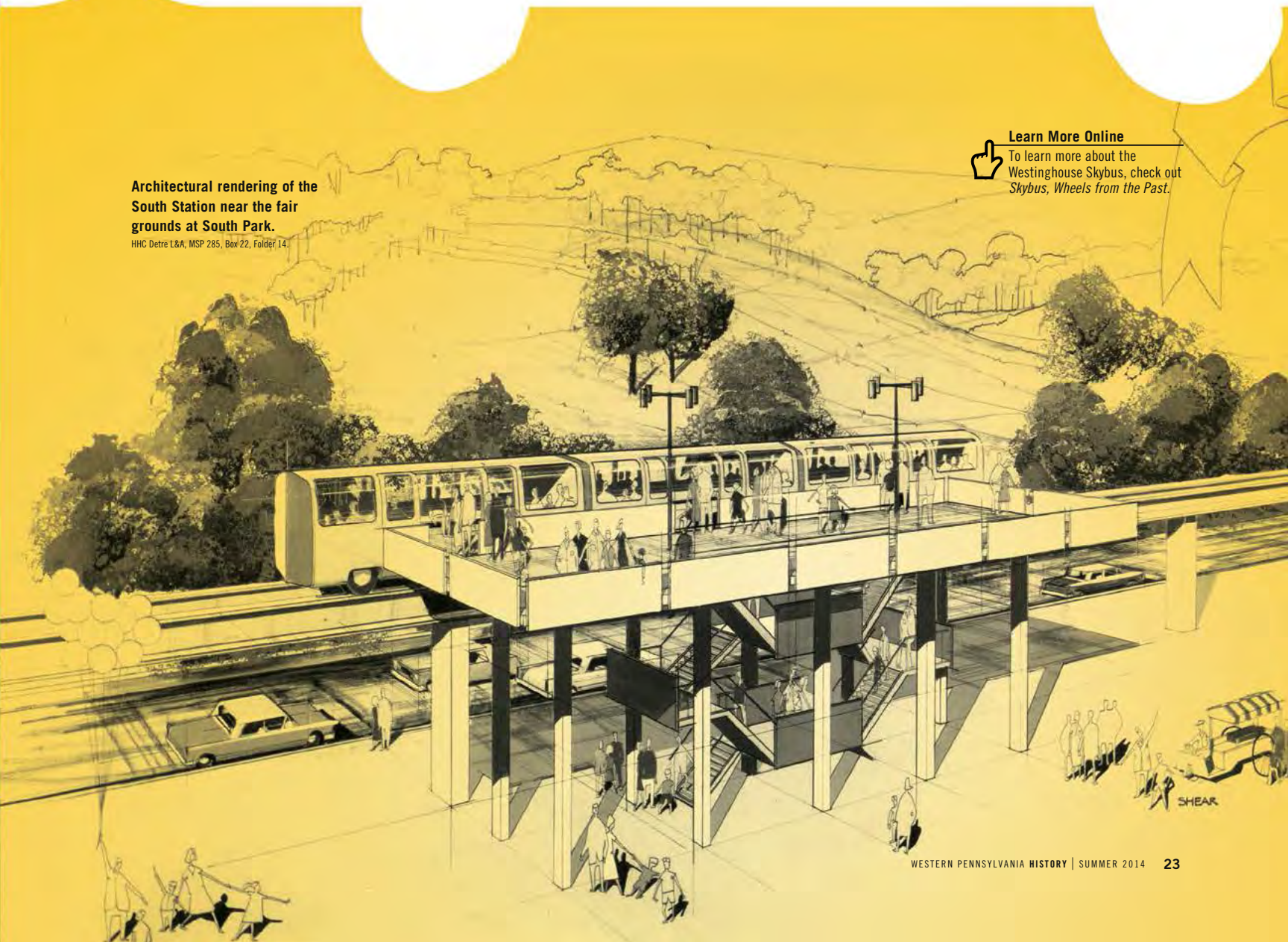
The gleaming machine was called “Skybus.”<sup>1</sup> Its two-mile-long elevated concrete guide-way, made for the cars to ride on their tires, was the first of its kind. The forward-thinking project, from new vehicles to innovative locomotion, was seen as crucial to Pittsburgh's efforts to clean up the city and streamline its public transit. A half-century after its rise and fall, little remains except for an intriguing effort to track down any of the revered vehicles.

Architectural rendering of the South Station near the fair grounds at South Park.

HHC Detre L&A, MSP 285, Box 22, Folder 14.

#### Learn More Online

To learn more about the Westinghouse Skybus, check out *Skybus, Wheels from the Past*.





Artist's conception of the  
North Station at South Park.  
HHC Detre L&A, MSP 424, Box 100, Folder 7.



With Westinghouse Electric and other corporate headquarters in the city, civic and business leaders saw an opportunity to make the region a forerunner of design and manufacturing of rapid transit systems.





The inspiration for Skybus found its spark in the cultural and political movements of 1950s Pittsburgh. The “Renaissance” was an effort by civic and business leaders to clean up Pittsburgh’s grim “Smoky City” image. Large-scale urban renewal had helped clear the rail yards to make way for Point State Park and the adjacent Gateway Center office complex. Also targeted was air pollution from industry and homes heated by coal. In just a matter of years, slums were cleared, buildings scrubbed, and the smoky air improved.

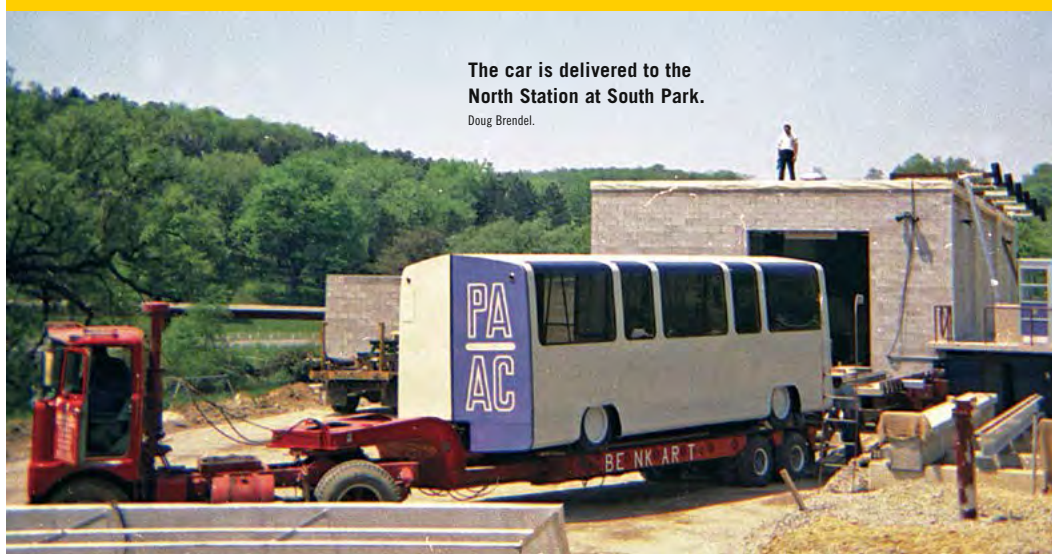
Infrastructure was also to be upgraded through a well-planned, comprehensive public transit system. Since the end of World War II, commuters had been abandoning the mishmash of competing bus and trolley companies in favor of the ease and comfort of driving their own cars, leading to congested roads and parking lots. With Westinghouse Electric and other corporate headquarters in the city, civic and business leaders saw an opportunity to make the region a forerunner of design and manufacturing of rapid transit systems.

The Port Authority of Allegheny County was created in 1956, and three years later, its purpose was amended to acquire Pittsburgh Railways Company and 32 other local transit companies through eminent domain. This included buses, inclines, and even a few specially designed railroad passenger cars that rode on existing railroad tracks between Pittsburgh and McKeesport. This comprehensive plan was envisioned as the best way to address the local transportation needs of the future while offering the potential for business growth to produce such a system.

The effort was headed by local financier Richard King Mellon and the Allegheny Conference on Community Development.<sup>2</sup> Mellon took the efforts so seriously that the lifelong Republican partnered with the city’s Democratic mayor to achieve their goals. There was a lot of optimism; after all, most of the same people had championed the Pittsburgh Renaissance, which was a tremendous success

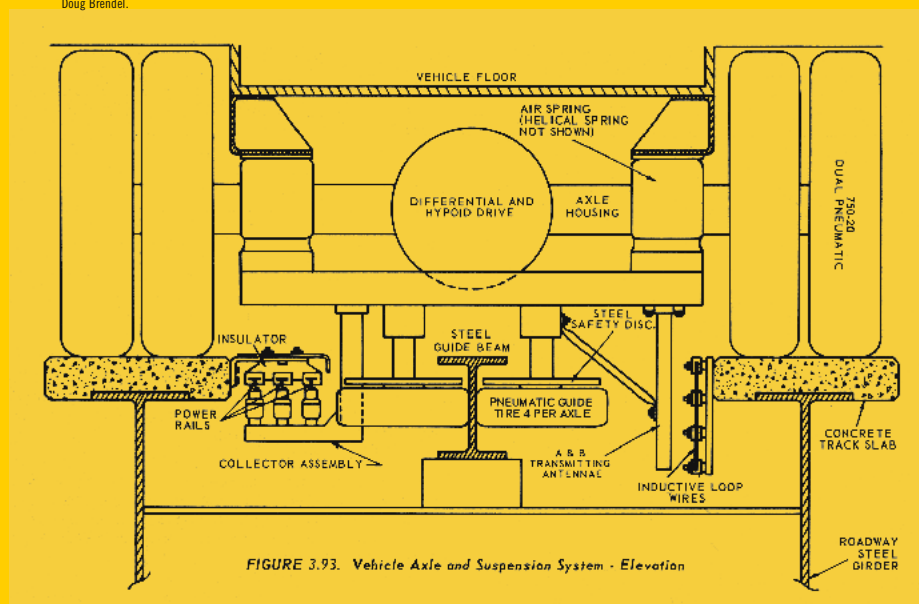


**A new car leaves the Westinghouse plant in East Pittsburgh.**  
Doug Brendel.



**The car is delivered to the North Station at South Park.**  
Doug Brendel.

**The construction of the wheels and track system was detailed in a 1967 report, *Testing and Evaluation of the Transit Expressway*.**  
Doug Brendel.



**FIGURE 3.93. Vehicle Axle and Suspension System - Elevation**





**Eager crowds lined up (often for hours) for a ride on Skybus, both views here at the South Station.**

HHC Detre L&A, MSP 424, Box 50, Folder 13.



and positioned the city at the forefront of urban renewal. Mellon and the ACCD thought they could do the same for rapid transit. An “Early Action Plan” of the Port Authority detailed replacing the existing light rail trolley routes with a 92-mile, 460-car transit system linking suburban communities with downtown Pittsburgh at a cost of approximately \$740 million.<sup>3</sup> An 11-line Skybus transportation system—formally, the “Westinghouse Transit Expressway”—was the centerpiece of the comprehensive plan, with 11 stations downtown and 47 more in the suburbs.<sup>4</sup>

With the plan approved, three prototype vehicles were made, each seating 26 people with standing room for an additional 28. Each car had a top speed of a respectable 50 miles per hour. The vehicles were designed with side doors so they could be run independently or connected in sets of two or three. Interestingly, Westinghouse found out it took 40 seconds to load the vehicle, but only 18 seconds for the people to leave.<sup>5</sup> At the fair, long lines with waits up to three hours discouraged some riders, but many more waited: 13,921 men, women, and children paid the 10 cent fare to take the fascinating ride during the 1965 fair—and they were thrilled!<sup>6</sup> This scene was repeated for the Allegheny County Fairs of 1966 through 1971. Skybus remained popular while in service and ever since in memory.

Word of the success of the Skybus system traveled quickly. Walt Disney, who had a good relationship with Westinghouse dating back to the late 1930s (when he contracted the company to make plastic toys), was experiencing breakthrough success with Disneyland in California. In 1966, Disney visited the Westinghouse Tele-Computer Center in Pittsburgh, known for its innovative advances; he was interested in how computers could be applied to monorails at Disneyland and new parks he was planning in Florida. Although Skybus was operated manually at first, it was intended to be fully automated, thus eliminating the need for someone to



At the fair, long lines with waits up to three hours discouraged some riders, but many more waited:

**13,921 men, women, and children paid the 10 cent fare to take the fascinating ride during the 1965 fair—and they were thrilled!**

operate the vehicles. The futuristic design caught Disney's attention, along with the very quiet ride of the rubber-tired vehicles.<sup>7</sup>

A Rapid Transit Study was commissioned in 1965 and released two years later that advocated for extending the new concept into the entire system.<sup>8</sup> However, Skybus' initial triumph was soon embroiled in political machinations. Richard King Mellon passed away in 1970, and David L. Lawrence was no longer mayor. Besides, no longer could two

powerful men have informal meetings and move their agenda forward, with any opposition being easily neutralized. As an alternative to Skybus was proposed (and apparently decided against behind closed doors), opposition arose. The resulting criticism and funding questions mired city, county, and state leaders in legal battles and stymied any possible potential transportation renaissance.

There were concerns too about the ability of Skybus to operate in the snow or on

anything other than a flat track. The winter weather issue was successfully tested and resolved, and a spur guide-way sloping 10 degrees was constructed at South Park that likewise resolved that concern. Fully automated Skybus vehicles were also successfully tested. Still, newspapers, radio, and television stations often highlighted the perceived shortcomings of the proposed new rapid transit system. Stories carried headlines such as, "Controversy Clogs Path of Skybus," and "PAT Sued To Bar Skybus Aid."<sup>9</sup> Later articles blared, "What They Said At Stop-Skybus Hearing," "Legal Ruts Along Skybus Way," "Shouting Match Held at Skybus Hearing," and "Skybusters Rapped By Westinghouse."<sup>10</sup> The injunction lawsuit filed by Pittsburgh Mayor Flaherty, Allegheny County Commissioner Hunt, and 13 suburban mayors went on for months. When the case moved up to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, it was thrown back into the lap of the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas.<sup>11</sup>

Meanwhile, in 1971, the Skybus demonstration rides at the Allegheny County Fair ended. For those supporting the idea of a futuristic rapid transit system in Pittsburgh, its loss seemed a sure sign that the larger Skybus plan itself would end.

**A car glides silently towards the North Station.**

HHC Detre L&A, MSP 424, Box 50, Folder 13.







Passengers on Skybus got a bird's-eye view of the Allegheny County Fair starting in 1965.  
HHC Detre L&A, MSP 424, Box 50, Folder 13.

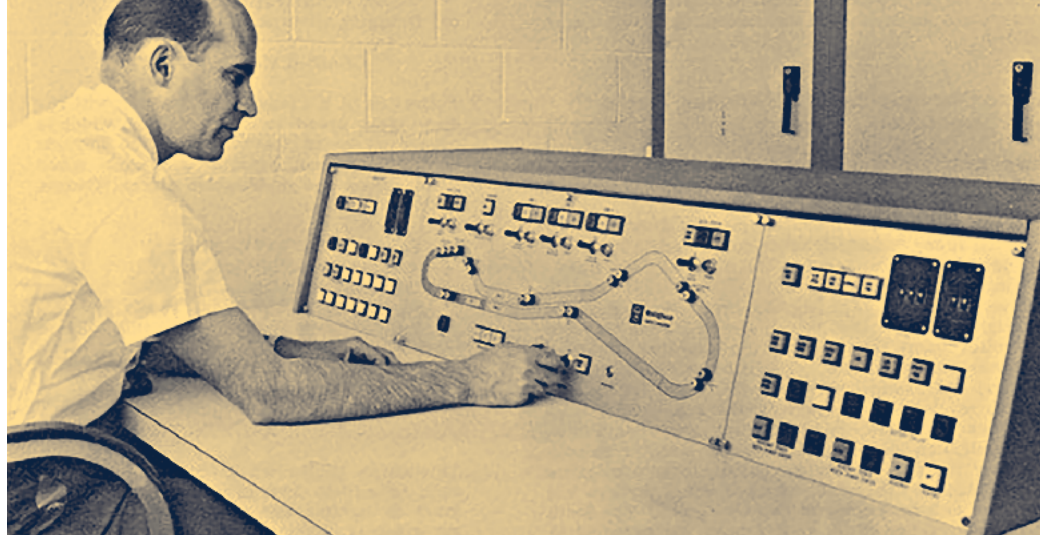


In 1975, this once rather heady, revolutionary transportation proposal came to a halt when the governor of Pennsylvania stopped the funding for the experimental project. Besides, yet another study now advised that a lower-cost Light Rail Transit line (essentially, a modern trolley) be adapted, despite Skybus being better and safer (let alone eliminating all grade crossings of conventional trolleys). It was a missed opportunity for the city of Pittsburgh to be on the cutting edge of public transportation. As the *Pittsburgh Post Gazette* editorialized, "Pittsburgh would have been in the vanguard of cities ... which have recognized that automation is the future of urban rapid transit.... Allegheny County is to sacrifice innovation for a conventional trolley operation in the interest of economy."<sup>12</sup>

More than 40 years after the last ride, the once-cutting edge Westinghouse Skybus vehicles were nowhere to be found. Two were known to have been scrapped when the experiment ended in 1975. But what of the third car? For at least three of those decades, no one knew.

Enter Doug Brendel, a graphics designer and local historian. After reading of the Skybus story, Doug began to search for surviving vehicles. Doug pursued a faint trail for the better part of two years until it led him to Ellwood City, 40 miles northwest of Pittsburgh, to Hall Industries and its owner Harold Hall. Back in the early 1980s, Harold had been involved with a transportation museum at Station Square on the South Side of Pittsburgh, which held one of the original Skybus vehicles. After seven years, the museum went under and, since no one else was interested, Harold moved the vehicle to Ellwood City. He covered it with a tarp and there it sat, lost in the shadows of time, until Doug Brendel came looking. Against overwhelming odds, the only remaining original Westinghouse 1965 Skybus vehicle was found.

Doug contacted Dave Crawley, a popular features reporter from KDKA-TV, who brought a production crew to Ellwood City



**ABOVE: Control panel for Skybus at South Park.**

Doug Brendel.



**LEFT: Skybus was little different from today's airport people movers.**

HHC Detre L&A, MSP 424, Box 50, Folder 13.

**BELOW: Walt Disney visited Westinghouse on January 16, 1966. A monorail had been running at Disneyland in California since 1959, but Disney was fascinated by the driver-less Skybus. Disney World would open in Florida five years later but its monorail remained similar to the one in Disney's California park.**

Photos by John Merahaut. HHC Detre L&A, MSP424, Box 8, Folder 260.





An official's commemorative medal from the 1965 fair features a portrayal of a Skybus station.

Curt M. McCormick.



and filmed a segment on Skybus that was aired on his news-time *KD Country*. Doug was also in touch with myself during his research on Skybus, and envisioned this Western Pennsylvania transportation artifact might be displayed in the first floor Great Hall at the Heinz History Center. He hoped it could be displayed there alongside such items as a 1784 Conestoga Wagon, a stainless steel 1936 Ford DeLuxe sedan, the oldest surviving Jeep (built nearby in Butler), and a restored 1949 Pittsburgh Railways Company streetcar.

Instead, as the Heinz History Center's Westinghouse historian, I suggested that Doug contact Bombardier Transportation (formerly Adtranz ) in West Mifflin, as it owns what was at one time the transportation division of the Westinghouse Electric Corporation. Although Skybus had been stopped in its tracks, the Skybus concept lived on, even before Bombardier acquired its people-

moving business. Westinghouse developed Bay Area Rapid Transit System (BART) in San Francisco, evolved from the work that had been done on Skybus. Following that, the Skybus concept grew even further, resulting in the successful Westinghouse Airport People Mover transportation systems that were installed at airports around the world, beginning with Florida's Tampa Bay International Airport in 1971. Another early Westinghouse people mover system became operational at Busch Gardens amusement park, also in Tampa. A Westinghouse-designed and -manufactured people mover transportation system is in use today at the Pittsburgh International Airport. After Canadian-based Bombardier acquired the business, it continued to be successful with its worldwide "Airport People Mover" business. To this day, such systems are fully automated, rubber-tired people movers—traits inherited from Skybus.



**ABOVE:** Map of the Skybus track at South Park.

HHC Detre L&A, MSP 424, Box 100, Folder 7.

**RIGHT:** One of two models of the Westinghouse Skybus, likely built by the company as a miniature prototype.

HHC Collections, 2007.167.346a, b.





Doug Brendel contacted Bombardier and its vice president, Mike Festko, who was amazed that a 1965 Skybus vehicle from the original three had been located after four decades. As Festko said, "It was an opportunity that I just could not pass up!"<sup>13</sup> When Doug and Mike visited Hall Industries it was obvious that the vehicle was in less-than-perfect condition, but individuals at Bombardier had a vision for a fully restored, original Skybus vehicle proudly displayed in front of their West Mifflin complex.

Bombardier negotiated with Harold Hall and acquired the only remaining original Skybus vehicle. The vehicle was then transported to Nowak Commercial Refinishing Company in Amity, Washington County, for a complete restoration. Many hands made light the work. The oldest living member of the original Westinghouse Skybus project, Ed Appleby, was located for his expertise as the former director of Skybus development. Another gentleman, Bill Segar, the Skybus project manager back in the 1960s, was also contacted. Bombardier's Arthur Bistig became the project engineer on the restoration project. Ed Nowak from Nowak Commercial Refinishing was personally involved. And, of course, Doug Brendel continued to provide assistance on the restoration. Even Doug Brendel's father and brother helped with the visual design restoration.

The Skybus vehicle was taken apart with all the mechanical and electrical components reconditioned. New glass was ordered using the original specifications, a rather expensive undertaking. The interior, which was in fairly good condition, was cleaned and remade where needed. The vehicle was repainted in the original off-white color and accented in what over the years became known as "Westinghouse Blue." On the one end of the vehicle was the lettering "PA AC" for Port Authority of Allegheny County, repainted to the original specification. Even though the original Skybus vehicles belonged to



**ABOVE:** Decaying remnants of the Skybus system remain at the North Station, now used for county park storage.

**BELOW:** The control "phone" booth that directed cars into the station for maintenance is rusting away nearly five decades after being installed.

Both Doug Brendel.





Westinghouse, they were identified as though they belonged to the Port Authority, for that was the goal at the time. When it was done, it looked exactly like it did back in 1965.<sup>14</sup>

The Skybus vehicle had a complete makeover, not only in appearance, but it was once again in full working order. If the elevated roadway still existed in South Park, along with the supporting apparatus, Skybus could again make the loop around the South Park Fair Grounds. But that was not the intent of Bombardier; instead, the restored Skybus was moved from Amity to the Bombardier complex in West Mifflin, where an unveiling and Skybus dedication ceremony was held. Harold Hall, who saved this old vehicle for many years, was impressed: "I think it's going to have a great opportunity for the world to see it."<sup>15</sup>

Many folks thought that the Allegheny County Fair was just not quite the same once the Skybus vehicles could no longer be seen making the loop around the South Park Fair Ground's racetrack. Many were also saddened to see the South Park's North and South Stations and the elevated guide-way deteriorate. The South Station was finally dismantled in the mid-1980s, with only the North Station remaining, now used as an Allegheny County storage building.

The original Skybus project failed, for both political and financial reasons, but Westinghouse continued to innovate, building similar people-mover systems, mostly for airports, around the world. And now an original Skybus vehicle also lives on, proudly displayed in front of the Bombardier Transportation complex.<sup>16</sup> And, with a little imagination, one can visualize the ghost of Skybus gliding smoothly and silently along the elevated guide-way during a misty morning at South Park. If you have a strong imagination, you may even hear someone shout, "All aboard, all aboard!"

**Ed Reis** is the Westinghouse Historian at the Heinz History Center. He is retired from the Westinghouse Electric Corporation. Ed was also the executive director of the George Westinghouse Museum in Wilmerding, Pennsylvania, from 1998 until 2007, at which time the George Westinghouse Museum merged with the Heinz History Center.

<sup>1</sup> At one point in time it was discovered, to the chagrin of Westinghouse executives, that a small airline had the rights to the name "Skybus," so Westinghouse changed its product's name to the Westinghouse Transit Expressway. But even today, for those who remember it, it still is referred to by the catchy name, "Skybus."

<sup>2</sup> Morton Coleman, School of Social Work; David Houston, Department of Economics; Edward K. Muller, Department of History, *Skybus – Pittsburgh's Failed Industry Targeting Strategy of the 1960s* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 2000).

<sup>3</sup> Clint Burton and Doug Brendel, *Westinghouse Transit Expressway – Skybus in South Park*, www.BrooklineConnection.com.

<sup>4</sup> "The extensive rapid transit system which evolved from the preliminary patronage and route location analysis ... would contain 92.0 miles of double track lines and 56 stations. The Urban System would account for 9.1 miles of the system and serve 11 stations, two of which would be common to the Suburban System (Market Square and Dahlem). The average station spacing on the Urban Line is 0.8 mile. The Suburban System would account for the remaining 83 miles, serving 47 stations with an average station spacing of 1.8 miles. The total system would consist of 11 lines," from Chapter III "Formulating a Mass Transit System" in *Port Authority of Allegheny County, Allegheny County*

*Rapid Transit Study, 1967*, III-14, online at www.briem.com/files/skybus.pdf.

<sup>5</sup> "Westinghouse Transit Expressway Proves Big Hit," *Westinghouse News* 20, no. 10 (October 1965), Senator John Heinz History Center Detre Library & Archives collections.

<sup>6</sup> "Skybus at the Fair," *Westinghouse News* 20, no. 10 (October 1965), Senator John Heinz History Center Detre Library & Archives collections.

<sup>7</sup> Interviews and oral reports by Westinghouse employees by author, 1980s.

<sup>8</sup> *Allegheny County Rapid Transit Study, 1967*.

<sup>9</sup> *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, August 22, 1969; *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, July 15, 1969; *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, August 18, 1969; *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, August 23, 1969; and *Pittsburgh Press*, July 14, 1969.

<sup>10</sup> *Pittsburgh Press*, July 21, 1969; *Pittsburgh Press*, February 25, 1972; *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, February 25, 1972; *Pittsburgh Press*, March 4, 1972; *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, March 16, 1972; and *Pittsburgh Press*, April 6, 1972.

<sup>11</sup> "Skybus — From the Beginning," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, October 16, 1974.

<sup>12</sup> *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, March 8, 1976, 6.

<sup>13</sup> Interview with Mike Festko, Vice President of Bombardier's Automated People Mover Division, with author, West Mifflin, Pa.

<sup>14</sup> Ed Appleby had donated some original 1960s Skybus models to the George Westinghouse Museum in Wilmerding. With the merger of the museum into the Senator John Heinz History Center in 2007, these Skybus models now reside in the Heinz History Center's Westinghouse collection.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Ed Appleby, the original director of Skybus Development for Westinghouse, with author.

<sup>16</sup> Bombardier is at 1501 Lebanon Church Road, West Mifflin.



**Skybus fan Doug Brendel located a surviving car in Ellwood City.**  
Doug Brendel.





**ABOVE:** Perhaps the best publicity for Skybus was simply having the cars glide above Corrigan Drive in South Park.

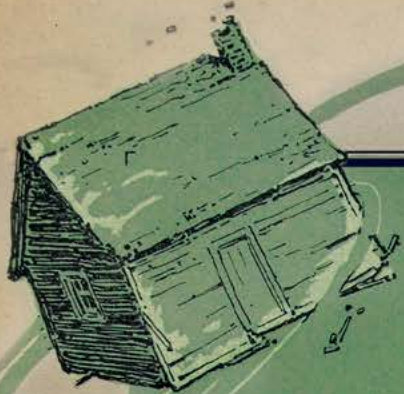
HHC Detre L&A, MSP424, Box 6, Folder 136.

**LEFT:** In 2010, the restored car was unveiled at Bombardier in West Mifflin. The company, which absorbed the Westinghouse transportation division that pioneered Skybus, has built thousands of light transit cars in the U.S. since 1976.

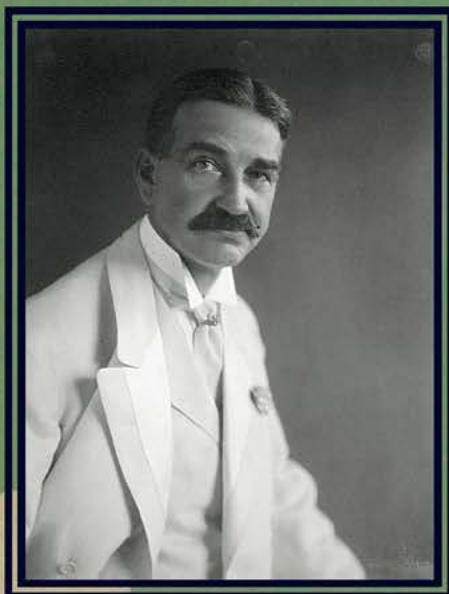
Doug Brendel.

**Learn More Online**  
 Watch Skybus' dedication at Bombardier.





# OZ in the Oilfields?



## Searching for L. Frank Baum in Bradford

By Tim Ziaukas

L. Frank Baum, c. 1908.

Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Collection,  
LC-USZ62-103205.

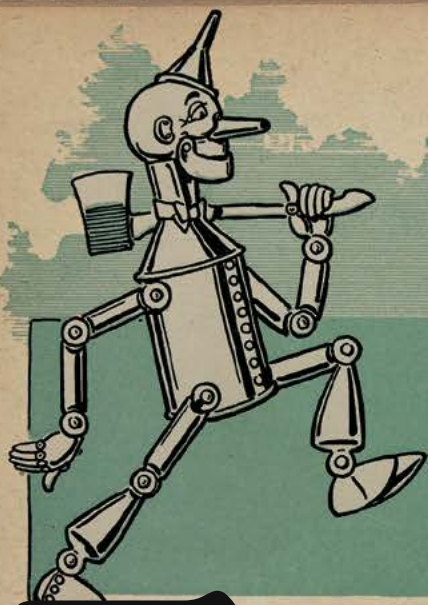




*Triumph Hill Near Tidioute, circa 1871, by John Mather. This photo suggests the living and working conditions endured in the region during the oil boom.*

Drake Well Museum Photograph Collection, DW 894.





The Tin Man and Toto, as illustrated in the original *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* manuscript.

Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collection Division, P28.B327 Wo., <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc/rbc/gen.32405>.

**F**or decades, the folks of Bradford, McKean County, have debated whether the author of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, L. Frank Baum, lived and worked in their northwestern Pennsylvania town before he published his iconic work. Some speculate that he wrote for—even founded—*The Bradford Era*, the newspaper that publishes in what the paper’s gothic nameplate dubs “the high grade oil metropolis of the world.” Baum-in-Bradford items are still a regular topic in the paper’s front-page “Round-the-Square” column, a compilation of local updates and curiosities. For at least 40 years, Baum has been among the column’s consistent topics, according to *The Bradford Era*’s former managing editor, Marty Robacker Wilder. “People want to believe that Baum was here in Bradford,” she says. “We want to believe it.”<sup>1</sup>

But was Baum really in Bradford circa 1879, starting or writing for a newspaper, before he went on to produce America’s greatest fairy tale? Did Bradford’s oil boom inspire Baum’s vivid imagination? Wilder is still hopeful, and she’s not alone. In addition to scores of “Round-the-Square” contributors, many Baum biographers and scholars refer to the writer’s Pennsylvania sojourn. Nearly all place him in Bradford, and though only a few say he founded *The Bradford Era*, almost

all say he wrote for the paper, and one claims he opened a print shop in the oil boomtown.<sup>2</sup> But is there any proof of Baum’s Bradford residence? Very little remains in the way of first-hand accounts, and it is this lack of sources that allows the Baum-in-Bradford legends to thrive.

The scant evidence suggests that L. Frank Baum was never a resident of Bradford, never ran a print shop, never wrote for, much less founded, *The Bradford Era*. But the Baum-in-

Bradford hopefuls may just have been skipping down the wrong brick road looking for the region’s Oz connection: while the fantasy of Frank’s alleged Bradford ties still looms, the reality is that L. Frank’s father, Benjamin, *does* have a connection. Among other things, the family’s riches derived from the oil fields of northwestern Pennsylvania afforded L. Frank the leisure to later conjure the world of Oz.





Illustration of the Pennsylvania Oil Field, by C. Hornung, 1950.

The Bradford Club collection. Photographed and reproduced by Ed Bernik for Paul Adomites, Pennsylvania Crude: Boomtowns and Oil Barons (Forest Press, 2010).

The family's riches derived  
from the oil fields of  
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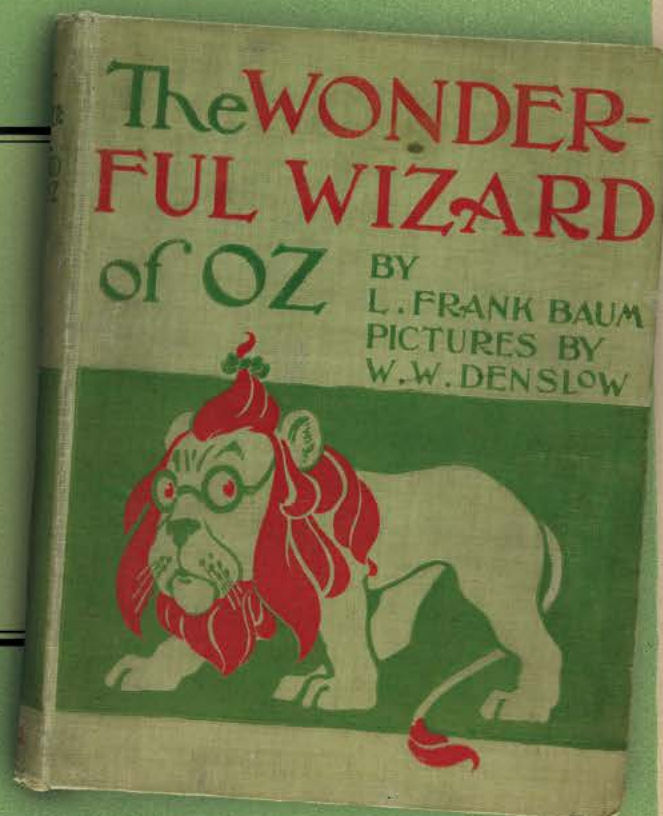
Cover page, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*.

Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collection Division, P28.B327  
Wo., <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc/rbc/gen.32405>.



Learn More Online

Read *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* with its original illustrations from 1900.







*The Wizard of Oz* movie re-release, c. 1949.

Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZC4-11775.



Dorothy and Toto find themselves far from Kansas.

Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collection Division, PZ8.B327 Wo., <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc/rbc/gen.32405>.

Lyman Frank Baum (he hated his first name and went by “Frank” all his life) was born on May 15, 1856, in Chittenango, New York, to Benjamin and Cynthia Stanton Baum.<sup>3</sup> Only five of their nine children survived to adulthood. Benjamin, who dabbled in a number of professions, managed a struggling barrel-making company during Frank’s early years.

Frank’s life is punctuated by the great and powerful effect of his novel, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, published in 1900, its many sequels, as well as the book’s incarnations on stage and screen. The publication not only changed Frank’s life but also was instrumental in his posthumous and ongoing fame.

Even if Frank never lived or worked in Pennsylvania, his road to Oz went through the Keystone State. Cultural historian William Leach alluded to Baum’s Pennsylvanian trajectory in his study of Gilded Age American culture: “Just south of the Baum home [where Frank was born] were the oil fields of Pennsylvania, whose dark green oil—almost as green as the emeralds of Oz—first gushed their riches in the 1850s. Baum spent his childhood and youth in the shadow of oil.”<sup>4</sup> When Baum emerged from that shadow, the emerald-tinted Pennsylvania crude fueled not only a global economic

transformation, but, perhaps, the imagination of a boy whose fairy tale, written to please a child, went on to amuse—and instruct—the world.

*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* proved to be the American equivalent of England’s *Alice in Wonderland*, Italy’s *The Adventures of Pinocchio*, and Denmark’s tales of the Little Mermaid. Throughout the 20th century Baum’s novel and its characters—Dorothy, the Cowardly Lion, the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, and the Wicked Witch of the West—were absorbed into American popular culture, eventually emerging as a kind of Rosetta Stone for the national psyche. The story of the little orphan girl, living on a bleak Kansas farm, who gets whirled to a strange land and then begins a quest to get home, meeting an array of wonderful creatures along the way, has been read as a parable of American economics, a proto-feminist tract, and a Freudian search for the self, among other critical interpretations.<sup>5</sup> The 1939 film starring Judy Garland cemented many Ozian elements into the culture, adding phrases that, while not in the book, have ensured its immortality: “I have a feeling we’re not in Kansas anymore,” “Ignore that man behind the curtain,” and “Follow the Yellow Brick Road,” among many others. Sequels and prequels and spinoffs continue to proliferate, fallout from Oz’s initial impact.

The Oz effect on Frank’s life was enormous. It brought him success after a string of professional disappointments, and then became the commodity he mined for the rest of his life. As a result, Oz, in all of its

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To learn more about all things Oz, visit the Library of Congress’ online Baum exhibition.



incarnations, metaphorically installed a fun-house mirror before the details of the author's life, obscuring some elements and creating others out of whole cloth, according to Michael Patrick Hearn, the world's leading Baum and Oz expert who is currently writing a biography of Baum, in part to clear up the many errors that have crept onto the record. He notes that after Frank's death, his friends and family members added or deleted elements to his biography to elevate or obscure certain aspects of his and his family's past. This obfuscation begins with Frank's childhood.<sup>6</sup>

Many of the Baum biographies, for example, report that Frank developed rheumatic fever, leaving him with a delicate heart all his life, and his parents undoubtedly frantic and overly protective. "As a consequence," biographer Evan I. Schwartz writes, "the boy spent long hours racing through books but rarely doing anything too

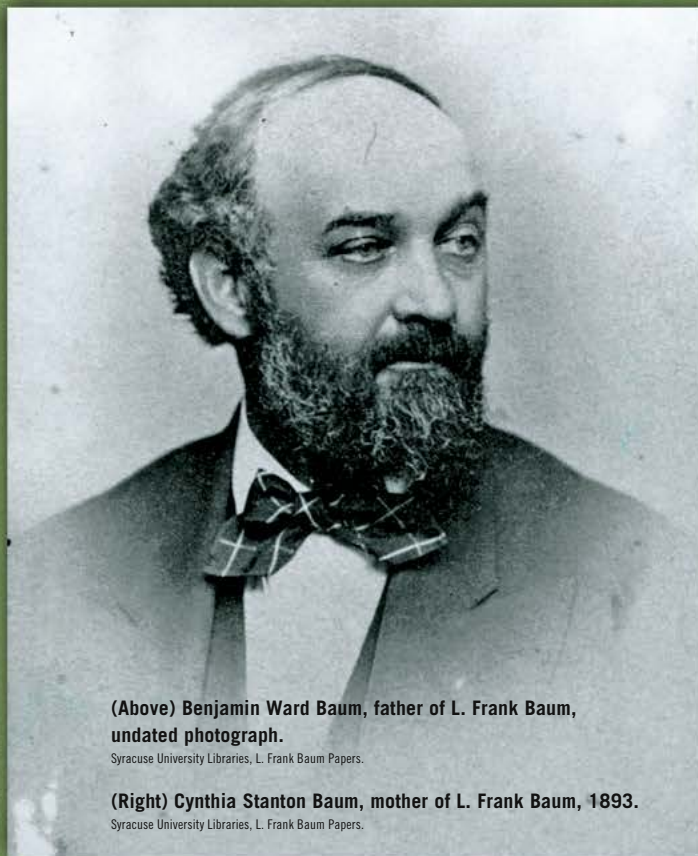
physical, given the state of his heart."<sup>7</sup>

Not so, apparently. "There's no proof that Frank suffered heart problems," Hearn says. "That [diagnosis] was the invention of his son, Frank, Jr. No one I spoke with who knew Baum was ever aware of his suffering from heart trouble. There are no contemporary references in letters, diaries, or interviews to

his ever having a bad heart or suffering from rheumatic fever."<sup>8</sup>

The heart-trouble tale is just the beginning of a number of fantasies that pepper L. Frank Baum's biographies and have skewed Baum scholarship for decades. Despite these reports, Hearn says, Frank's childhood seems to have been a happy—and healthy—one.

**Just south of the Baum home were the oil fields of Pennsylvania, whose dark green oil—almost as green as the emeralds of Oz—first gushed their riches in the 1850s.**



**(Above) Benjamin Ward Baum, father of L. Frank Baum, undated photograph.**

Syracuse University Libraries, L. Frank Baum Papers.



**(Right) Cynthia Stanton Baum, mother of L. Frank Baum, 1893.**

Syracuse University Libraries, L. Frank Baum Papers.





**Shooting a well in the Bradford oil field.**

Bradford Landmark Society collection. Photographed and reproduced by Ed Bernik for Paul Adomites, *Pennsylvania Crude: Boomtowns and Oil Barons* (Forest Press, 2010).



Baum and his dog, far left, at Ozcot, the house and rose garden in the writer's later, Hollywood years. His sister-in-law, Julia, stands center, and his wife, Maud, is pictured far right.

Syracuse University Libraries,  
L. Frank Baum Papers.



Frank was born into a world on the cusp of cyclonic change. After the Civil War, America grew from a farming nation to an industrial power.<sup>9</sup> The transformation was fueled by Pennsylvania oil, which shaped the fate of the “Royal Historian of Oz,” as L. Frank Baum came to be known.

Frank was three years old when Edwin L. Drake famously struck oil in Titusville, inaugurating the modern petroleum age.<sup>10</sup> Petroleum in northwestern Pennsylvania in the early 1860s engendered a rush not unlike the gold fever in California in late 1840s. Production and profits soared. One Titusville oil well generated \$15,000 for every dollar invested.<sup>11</sup> Suddenly, “wildcats” (speculators who prospected amid the cries of feral felines in unsettled places like Bradford) prowled the sprouting derricks.<sup>12</sup> Enter Benjamin Baum.

Benjamin and his brothers were running the Baum Barrel Factory in Chittenango, New York, when news of the big strike in Pennsylvania hit. Leaving behind his wife and young Frank, “Baum has gone to PA” to sell barrels, which were in great demand, to the wildcats, his associate wrote. “Has the oil fever. Hope he

makes a fortune.”<sup>13</sup> He did. But once Baum was there in the fields, he saw the potential in production and realized he could earn enough money to invest in other businesses.<sup>14</sup>

Benjamin prospected at Cherry Tree Run near Titusville and made a quick profit.<sup>15</sup> He also helped to develop nearby Plumer, Venango County, and he and his brother founded a bank there. Always looking ahead, he diversified. He sold the barrel company in 1860 and was then off to New York City to work in stock-market speculation, then back to Syracuse in 1863 to run the Syracuse Bank. In 1866, he helped organize Neal, Baum & Company Wholesale Dry Goods, a white goods and notions wholesaling business, primarily to give his family members employment.<sup>16</sup>

Also in 1866, flush with success, Benjamin purchased the 3.75-acre estate named Rose Lawn and the 80-acre Spring Farm just outside Syracuse, New York, along with another 160-acre farm for livestock and horses.<sup>17</sup> The farm was a place where Frank and his imagination could run wild, room after room, garden after garden, cat after chicken, planting the seeds that would bloom in the wonderful world of Oz years later.<sup>18</sup> That imagination-inducing opulence

was largely financed with Pennsylvania crude.

Just like his father, Frank, then lolling about the bowers of Rose Lawn’s gardens, demonstrated a diversity of interests including writing, amateur publishing, stamp collecting, and thoroughbred poultry. In 1870, Benjamin bought his son a small printing press, as amateur journalism was the rage. Thus, Baum’s writing career began, and the road that led to Oz was taken.<sup>19</sup> With little brother Henry Clay, Frank published *The Rose Lawn Home Journal* in 1870, filled with Frank’s stories, poems, and even installments of Benjamin’s “The History of the Oil Company,” a portrait of work in Pennsylvania oil fields.<sup>20</sup>

While Frank continued his dabbling at Rose Lawn, Benjamin returned to the oil fields. Schwartz reports that by the mid-1870s, Benjamin shrewdly shifted his prospecting far from the chaos in Titusville. He set up shop 100 miles northeast of the boom’s new epicenter in burgeoning Bradford.<sup>21</sup> The town was a well of speculation.<sup>22</sup> In 1875, Bradford had about 550 inhabitants. Then the wildcats began the prowl. Three years later, there were 4,000 residents. The Bradford oil field was revealing its extent, overshadowing even its Titusville neighbor.





Younger brother Henry ("Harry") Baum, top left, with L. Frank, Maud (middle), and Harry's young bride, Elizabeth Dattan Baum (she was 22 years his junior), c. 1908.

Syracuse University Libraries, L. Frank Baum Papers.

**He married Maud Gage in 1882, the daughter of Matilda Joslyn Gage, the brilliant feminist, suffragist, and abolitionist, who, with Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, wrote the first three volumes of the *History of Woman Suffrage***

Benjamin Baum's Bradford was a wildcat's outpost, as the town had been transformed nearly overnight into a Wild West moonscape, filthy and dangerous, pocked with seeping derricks and devious characters. It was a tough town with all-night bars, brothels, gambling dens, and dance halls: great places to spend the fast and easy money that was pumped from the gooey earth. Some called it Sodom.<sup>23</sup> But to Benjamin Baum, Bradford was the new economic Jerusalem. The town was on fire with oil fever and fortunes were pulled out of the ground. Benjamin bought property in McKean County, snatching up more than 100 acres in at least four plots he purchased for oil speculation in the late 1870s.<sup>24</sup>

At its peak in 1881, Bradford oil supplied more than 83 percent of America's oil and nearly 77 percent of the world's.<sup>25</sup> The Bradford oil field eventually covered about 84,000 acres, mostly in Pennsylvania, but it inched into New York State to Richburg and Allegany, and between 1871 and the 1930s, the field gave up more than 350 million barrels of oil, making Bradford one of the world's top producing sites. Benjamin was in the thick of it, and, by dint of his presence, planted the seed for the Bradford rumors that emerged a century later.

While his father and brother were occupied with oil in Pennsylvania, Frank remained at Rose Lawn and began looking beyond poetry and stamp collecting. He took a job at his brother-in-law's dry goods store, Neal, Baum and Co., for a short while, but soon returned to the family farm and established his business raising exotic fowl. It was a triumph.<sup>26</sup>

Frank specialized in Hamburgs, small, rare, beautiful fowl, which he raised, bred, and sold with considerable success. He eventually wrote a monthly trade journal on the birds, *The Poultry Record*, and his first published book was *The Book of the Hamburgs* (1886). In 1881, though, Frank abandoned the chickens and began a career as an actor and playwright.<sup>27</sup>

By then, the window when Frank could have been in Bradford had closed. He married





(Above) L. Frank Baum's magical world of Oz came to life with help from the illustrations of William Wallace Denslow. In this woodcut from the book's 1900 edition, the Tin Woodman, the Scarecrow, and Dorothy scold the Cowardly Lion.

Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZC4-5343.

(Below) *Benninghoff Run, 1865*, by John Mather. Northwestern Pennsylvania's hills became home to forests of derricks during the oil boom years.

Drake Well Museum Photograph Collection, DW 498.

## In 1891, Frank and family traveled to Chicago, where the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition very likely inspired the Emerald City of Oz.

Maud Gage in 1882, the daughter of Matilda Joslyn Gage, the brilliant feminist, suffragist, and abolitionist, who, with Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, wrote the first three volumes of the *History of Woman Suffrage* (1881-1886).<sup>28</sup>

Frank continued his theatrical career, but when Maud became pregnant, he began work at the family-owned Baum's Castorine Company, makers of axle grease.<sup>29</sup> Frank's steady job was a welcome relief, as Frank Joslyn, the first of Frank and Maud's four sons, was

born on December 4, 1883. By the end of the 1880s, Frank and Maud were off to the Dakota Territory to be near Maud's family, where Frank opened a novelty shop and later edited a newspaper, the *Aberdeen Saturday Pioneer*.<sup>30</sup> Maud gave birth to their second son, Robert, on February 1, 1886, and nearly died in the process, leaving her bed-ridden for long periods and weak for years.<sup>31</sup>

Back East, tragedy struck.<sup>32</sup> Frank's brother Benjamin contracted pneumonia and died on February 18, 1886. He was 36. Just eight months

### Learn More Online



If you're interested in Western Pennsylvania's oil boom, visit the birthplace of the petroleum industry at Drake Well Museum.



Benninghoff Run  
1865





(Left) Maud Gage Baum, wife of L. Frank Baum, and her sons (left to right), Robert, Harry, Kenneth, and Frank, Jr., 1900.

Syracuse University Libraries, L. Frank Baum Papers.

(Opposite Page) A message from "the Heart of the Oil Country," 1870s. These postcards were used to promote a number of boomtowns.

Bradford Landmark Society.

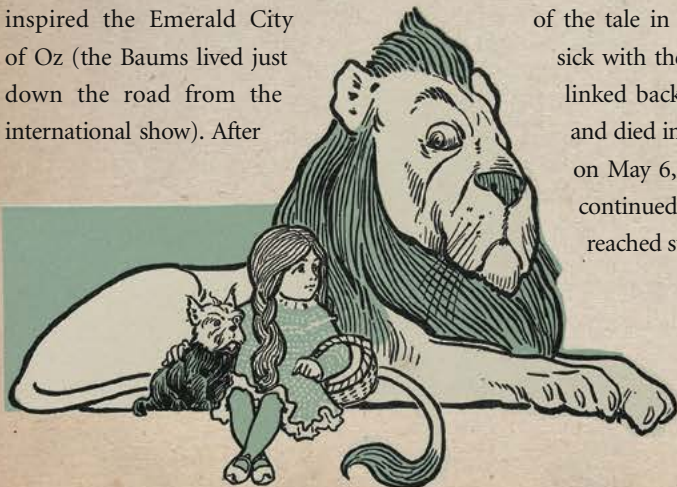
later, Benjamin Sr. was thrown from a carriage and severely injured. He sold Rose Lawn and with his wife Cynthia moved into a house in Syracuse. He traveled to Germany for therapy and then visited Frank in the Dakotas, but he died of Bright's disease, a condition of the kidneys, on February 14, 1887.<sup>33</sup> He was 66.

Frank, in a sense, then turned this page on the family's business. He wrote: "I see no future in [the oil business] to warrant my wasting any more years of my life in trying to boom it.... In this struggling mass of humanity [in the industrial East], a man like myself is lost."<sup>34</sup>

In 1891, Frank and family traveled to Chicago, where the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition very likely inspired the Emerald City of Oz (the Baums lived just down the road from the international show). After

his mother-in-law encouraged him to write down the stories that he made up to great acclaim from his children, Frank published several children's books beginning in 1897. Several years later, he started his most famous novel with the help of illustrator William Wallace Denslow, and *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* appeared in 1900. Its first printing was an enormous success. Frank wrote 13 more Oz books and continued to work in the theater, staging *Oz* as a Broadway extravaganza in 1902. The stage version was a hit and gave Frank the confidence and the resources to go on.<sup>35</sup>

Frank and the family moved to Los Angeles in 1910, and he worked in the early years of Hollywood, producing the first film version of the tale in 1914. L. Frank Baum took sick with the heart condition that some linked back to his days at Rose Lawn, and died in Los Angeles of heart failure on May 6, 1919. He was 62. His fame continued after his death as his stories reached successive generations.<sup>36</sup>



But what of Bradford? How does it fit in? It doesn't. "The Bradford story is just wrong," says Hearn.<sup>37</sup>

A line in the *Syracuse Standard* on November 19, 1899, in a story about the book Frank published just before *Oz*, titled *Father Goose*, planted the error: "Mr. Baum ... founded the *Era* at Bradford, Pennsylvania, which has become a flourishing daily."<sup>38</sup>

There it is. And it's not true by a long shot, nor is it known if Baum himself fabricated the data or the journalist made a mistake. *The Bradford New Era*, as the paper was called when it was established by founder Colonel J.K. Haffey, had been published as a weekly since August 28, 1875 (replacing *The Bradford Miner*), before daily publication of the renamed *The Bradford Era* began on October 29, 1877. (There is no extant connection between Haffey and the Baums.)<sup>39</sup> Examining the *Era* for those years provides no evidence for locating Baum: stories then carried no bylines, and the paper published no masthead.

"Baum was not in Bradford then ... he was in Syracuse building up his poultry business, but for some reason, the Bradford rumor exploded," Hearn says. "Perhaps

#### Learn More Online



Learn more about Bradford's history with the Bradford Landmark Society.



**What Benjamin  
achieved was  
obscured and, fueled  
by the fame of Oz  
and its subsequent  
incarnations, what  
Frank did was  
distorted or invented.**



because Bradford, after Titusville, is the most recognizable name, the most significant place, from that period ... and Bradford was the center of the oil boom during the time that Benjamin Baum owned property there during the early years of the oil industry.”<sup>40</sup>

By the early 1880s, Frank was working in theater. He ran the Baum Opera House, which his father built for him in Richburg, New York, on the edge of the Bradford Oil Field, from December 1881 until it burned down three months later in March 1882. He then toured the field with his play *The Maid of Aaran*. “I think he played Bradford in 1883.”<sup>41</sup> (All of this information Hearn has documented through contemporary accounts.) To make matters worse, there were other, unrelated Baums in the area, clouding the picture over time. One was W.T. Baum, who worked an oil well in Bradford but was no relation to the Oz-maker.

The concretizing of the confusion came with a biography of L. Frank Baum, published in 1961 by his son Frank Joslyn Baum and Russell P. MacFall, *To Please a Child: A Biography of L. Frank Baum, Royal Historian of Oz*, the title based off the reason L. Frank gave for writing fairy tales. In it, Baum and MacFall

write: “According to family tradition ... [t]hrough the influence of his father, [Frank] found a job on a weekly newspaper the *Era* in Bradford, Pennsylvania, where the elder Baum had considerable oil interests. Since that time the *Era* has become a daily, but back in the eighteen seventies Frank Baum’s *Era* was a typical small town, four-page weekly.... After about a year with the *Era*, Frank returned to the stage.”<sup>42</sup>

“Family tradition was wrong,” Hearn says. *To Please a Child* inked the error into the permanent record. The circumstances around the production of this hagiographic portrait of his father lent themselves to whoppers. Acrimony prevailed in the Baum family since the sale of the movie rights to the book, now with the shorter title *The Wizard of Oz*, in the 1930s. Family members weren’t speaking to each other, let alone confirming facts and incidents for a potentially moneymaking biography, Hearn says.<sup>43</sup> Hard feelings endured for years. Frank’s son, however, didn’t live to finish the book: Frank Joslyn died in 1958, and Russell MacFall completed the manuscript.

“I think Frank Joslyn was trying to elevate his father, dignify his origins,” Hearn

says, so the devoted son bought into the *Era* story, making his father a journalist and even a publisher.<sup>44</sup> After all, the Syracuse paper had reported Baum’s Bradford credential.

And then the error—or debate about the alleged error—really took off in the 1960s, in both the “Round-the-Square” column of *The Bradford Era* and in the considerable academic industry and fandom that surrounds all things Oz that began then. By the early 1960s, the 1939 film *The Wizard of Oz* was a few years into its annual telecast, a ritual for baby boomers that turned an initially commercially unsuccessful movie (it did not make a profit in its initial release) into the most-watched and -beloved film of all time, and all things Oz into valuable commodities.<sup>45</sup> That, coupled with a small northwestern Pennsylvania town’s desire to be attached to something so famous, cemented the legend.

Father Benjamin’s story and son Frank’s narrative seem to have gotten mixed up, elevated, and exaggerated. Suddenly and erroneously, in many published sources, Benjamin founded the second Bank of Syracuse (not true) and Frank founded *The Bradford Era* (also not true). Frank’s little-



Before the iconic Judy Garland film, Oz was recreated in many formats, such as "Fred R. Hamlin's musical extravaganza," in 1903.


Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZC4-1600.





boy printing press was transformed into a professional one printing a Bradford daily and even, to some, anchoring a print shop, among other stretchers. What Benjamin achieved was obscured and, fueled by the fame of Oz and its subsequent incarnations, what Frank did was distorted or invented.

But the Baum-in-Bradford believers are not likely to go away, says the *Era's* former managing editor Wilder. Despite what Benjamin actually accomplished in Bradford, it's what his son, the Oz-maker, Frank, *might* have done that interests people, however flimsy the facts may be. Though the instances of Baum-in-Bradford stories have lessened in the past few years, Wilder says, "It's not going to go away. People want to believe it," she said, "and also, how do you prove that something didn't happen?"<sup>46</sup>

What did happen, however, was that L. Frank Baum took many brick roads to the Emerald City, and he picked up something on each one that he deposited in Oz: his love of animals acquired at Rose Lawn; his feminist sensibilities, absorbed from his wife and mother-in-law; his dazzlement by the World's Fair, acquired in Chicago; and—long overlooked—the biographical and imaginative impact that Pennsylvania oil had on L. Frank Baum's life and in his fiction. 

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He would like to thank Marietta Frank, Jeff Guterman, Judy Hopkins, Don Lewicki, Chris McCarrick, Gary Tessmer, the staffs at Bradford Area Public Library and Bradford Landmarks (especially Sally Ryan Costik), the quartet of Pitt-Bradford students in "the Baum seminar" in 2011 — Alex Davis, Kevin Erdelack, Danielle Little, and Alyssa Villano — and a special thanks to the Oz-pert himself, Michael Patrick Hearn.

<sup>1</sup> Interview with the author, June 6, 2012. Wilder worked at the *Era* from 1974 to 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Rebecca Loncraine's *The Real Wizard of Oz: The Life and Times of L. Frank Baum* (New York: Gotham, 2009), 61, notes, "Baum ... [relocated in] Bradford, Pennsylvania, a small oil town, where he worked on a weekly journal for a while." Katharine M. Rogers' *L. Frank Baum: Creator of Oz, A Biography* (New York: St. Martin's, 2002, 8), adds even more: "[T]hrough his father's influence, [Baum] got a job on a weekly paper, the *Bradford Era*." Angelica Shirley Carpenter and Jean Shirley's *L. Frank Baum: Royal Historian of Oz* (Minneapolis: Lerner, 20), reports that Baum "opened up a print shop in Bradford, Pennsylvania. There he founded the *New Era* newspaper." Even editor Jack Zipes in his introduction to the Penguin edition of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (New York: Penguin, 1998, x), the standard academic edition of Baum's work, writes that Baum "established his own print shop in Bradford, Pennsylvania, and wrote for the newspaper *The New Era* for several years."

<sup>3</sup> In addition to Loncraine, Rogers, and Carpenter and Shirley, the best biographical treatments of Baum are Evan I. Schwartz, *Finding Oz: How L. Frank Baum Discovered the Great American Story* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009), and Michael Patrick Hearn's extensive introduction to *The Annotated Wizard of Oz, Centennial Edition* (New York: Norton, 2000), xxiii-cii.

<sup>4</sup> William Leach, *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture* (New York: Random House, 1993), 56.

<sup>5</sup> Baum's novel has generated voluminous exegesis in a variety of critical perspectives, among them consumerist, feminist, economic, mythic, utopian, and queer theory. Most prevalent, though, has been the reading of the novel as a parable for the metals controversy of the 1890s, and, according to one proponent of this perspective, the novel "reflects to an astonishing degree the world of political reality which surrounded Baum in 1900" (48). Henry M. Littlefield, "The Wizard of Oz: Parable on Populism," *American Quarterly* 16 (1964): 47-58; also see Hugh Rockoff, *Journal of Political Economy*, "The 'Wizard of Oz' as a Monetary Allegory," 98 (1990): 739-60.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with the author, May 9, 2011. Hearn has published *The Annotated Wizard of Oz*, edited *The Critical Heritage Edition of The Wizard of Oz*, and wrote the introduction to the first published edition of *The Wizard of Oz* screenplay, among other scholarly works.

<sup>7</sup> Schwartz, *Finding Oz*, 6.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., Hearn interview.

<sup>9</sup> Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money and Power* (New York: Touchstone, 1991), 37.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 26-34.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>12</sup> Leonardo Maugeri, *The Age of Oil: The Mythology, History, and Future of the World's Most Controversial Resource* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2006), 5.

<sup>13</sup> Schwartz, *Finding Oz*, 18.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., Hearn interview.

<sup>15</sup> Rogers, *L. Frank Baum*, 2.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 2-3.

<sup>18</sup> Hearn, *Annotated*, xvi.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., xvi-xvii.

<sup>20</sup> Rogers, *L. Frank Baum*, 4.

<sup>21</sup> Schwartz, *Finding Oz*, 18.

<sup>22</sup> Paul H. Gibbens, *Early Days of Oil: A Pictorial History of the Beginnings of the Industry in Pennsylvania* (Glouster, Mass: Peter Smith, 1964), 112-113.

<sup>23</sup> Samuel W. Tait, Jr., *The Wildcatters: An Informal History of Oil-Hunting in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946), 57.

<sup>24</sup> The records at the McKean County Recorder of Deeds office show that between August 1877 and April 1880 Benjamin Baum purchased nearly 150 acres of land presumably for oil speculation.

<sup>25</sup> For the Bradford oil boom, see Linda K. Delaney, *The Gamble for Glory in the World's First Billion Dollar Oilfield* (Bradford, Pa.: Forest Press, 2007); E. Willard Miller, "The Industrial Structure of the Bradford Oil Field," *Western Pennsylvania History Magazine* 26, no. 1-2 (June 1943): 59-78. "The Bradford Oil Field," in Charles E. Williams, *Western Pennsylvania's Oil Heritage* (Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia, 2008), 39-55.

<sup>26</sup> Hearn, *Annotated*, xvii-xviii.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., xx.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Schwartz, *Finding Oz*, 152-153.

<sup>31</sup> Rogers, *L. Frank Baum*, 18.

<sup>32</sup> Schwartz, *Finding Oz*, 113.

<sup>33</sup> For the death of Benjamin, Sr., see Rogers, *L. Frank Baum*, 18; Schwartz, *Finding Oz*, 119-120; for confirmation of the diagnosis of Bright's disease, *ibid.* Hearn, interview.

<sup>34</sup> Schwartz, *Finding Oz*, 113.

<sup>35</sup> Ethan Mordden, *Anything Goes: A History of American Musical Theatre* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 41-47.

<sup>36</sup> Rogers, 238-239; Schwartz, *Finding Oz*, 297-298.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., Hearn interview.

<sup>38</sup> *Syracuse Standard*, Nov. 19, 1899, "Quaint Verse Brings Fame," in the L. Frank Baum Papers at Syracuse University, Box #2, "Biographical Information."

<sup>39</sup> Bob Simbeck, "Civil War Vet Founded Daily Era's Weekly Forerunner," *The Bradford Era*, Bradford, Pa., Oct. 31 1977. Special Centennial edition, A-1 +.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., Hearn interview.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Frank Joslyn Baum and Russell P. MacFall, *To Please a Child: A Biography of L. Frank Baum, Royal Historian of Oz* (Chicago: Reilly and Lee, 1961), 33.

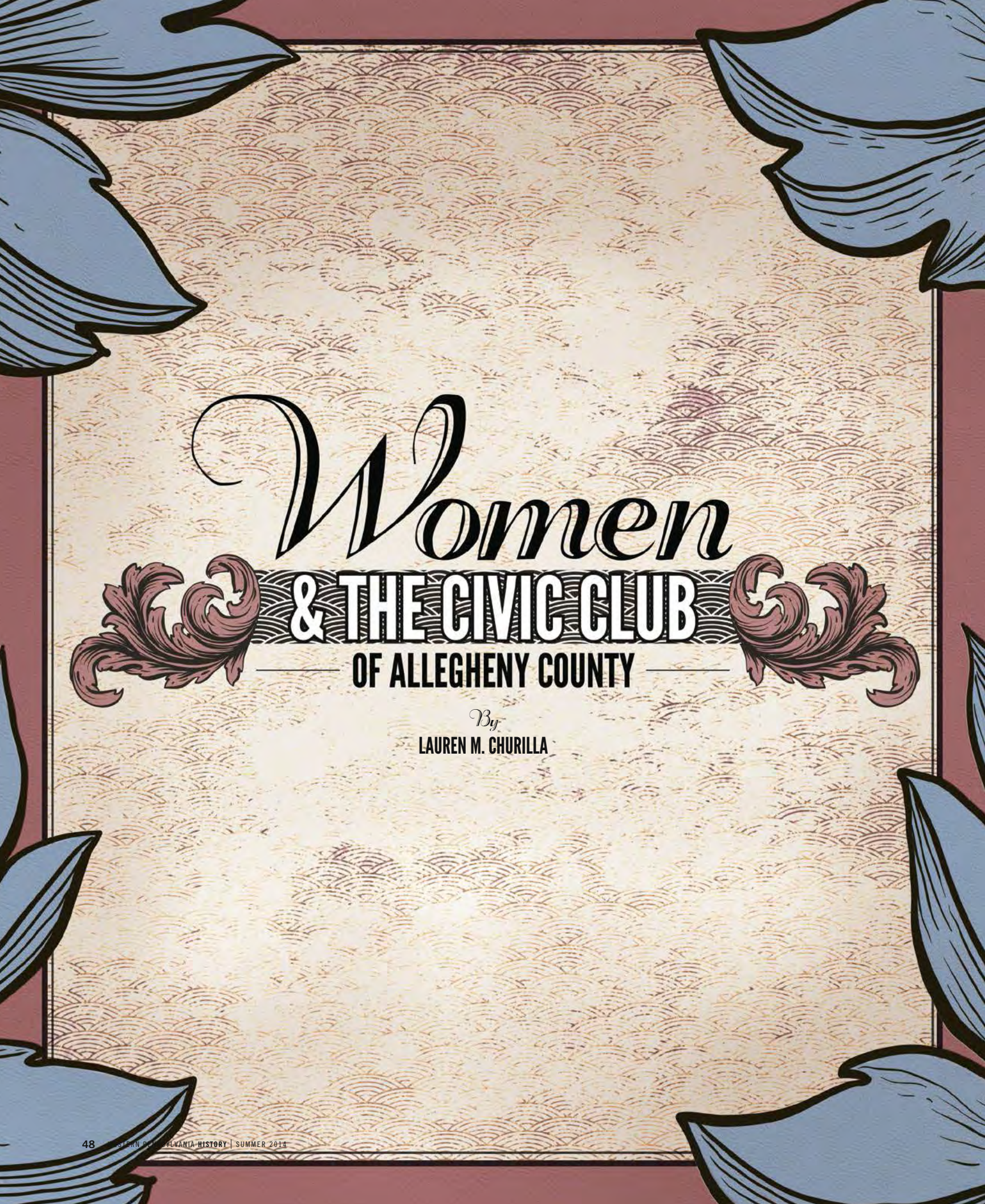
<sup>43</sup> Ibid., Hearn interview.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Schwartz, *Finding Oz*, 309.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., Wilder.





# *Women* **& THE CIVIC CLUB** **OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY**

*By*  
LAUREN M. CHURILLA



THE MEMBERS OF CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS WERE FACED WITH PROBLEMS SUCH AS INDUSTRIAL POLLUTION, INADEQUATE HOUSING, AND TERRIBLE LIVING CONDITIONS.



A young boy in a Pittsburgh alley, c. 1920.

University of Pittsburgh Archives Service Center, Kingsley Association Records,  
705.3.83.KA



**T**hroughout the Progressive Era, women challenged the boundaries of domestic ideals through participation in benevolent and civic organizations. Such associations allowed women to work for reform issues ignored by most politicians, and gave women initial experience in the field of political and social influence. In addition to coordinating legislative campaigns and publicizing their clubs, women dominated the organizations' hierarchy and determined their reform agenda, while male members took a supporting role. For many women, suffrage was not the only way to achieve political power. Civic organizations gave them the opportunity to participate in legislative activities and have an active political voice without enfranchisement. Pittsburgh's Civic Club of Allegheny County became one of the most successful mixed gender reform groups in the city's history.

Pittsburgh's elite and middle class citizens were the driving force behind an organization that had overwhelming feminine political and legislative influence during the Progressive Era. Women played critical roles in the Civic Club of Allegheny County, and, with their influence and assistance, the organization effectively supported the social transformation of an entire city.

Organized in 1895, the Civic Club of Allegheny County in many ways resembled the profile of all-women's organizations in the Progressive Era. These reform organizations "constructed their ... activities in the city along the lines of 'municipal housekeeping,' relying either on the historical conception of women as inherently more moral or on their socially valued experience as mothers to legitimate their noticeably different reform perspectives."<sup>1</sup> Women were widely seen as the agents of morality in society, and their influence in the domestic arts gave them a

critical role to play in benevolent organizations. While a woman's designated social assignment was managing the home, women reformers justified their roles by claiming that the "home [was] not contained within the four walls of an individual house. Home [was] the community. The city full of people is the family. The public school is the real nursery."<sup>2</sup> Familial action outside the home was not the primary motivation for many women to become involved in politics, but it became an accepted reason for feminine public action. Prior to enfranchisement, women's "moral nature gave them reason for public action, and since they did not have the vote, such action was considered 'above' politics."<sup>3</sup>

Mixed gender reform organizations, such as the Civic Club, were particularly effective because they combined tactics from both men and women's groups, able to exert the political influence of the male gender, while utilizing the moral motivations of women. Men, such

**WOMEN PLAYED CRITICAL ROLES IN THE CIVIC CLUB OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY, AND, WITH THEIR INFLUENCE AND ASSISTANCE, THE ORGANIZATION EFFECTIVELY SUPPORTED THE SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION OF AN ENTIRE CITY.**

*Iron Works, Pittsburgh*, by Hew Charles Torrance  
(American, 1859–1931), gelatin silver print,  
11 3/16 in. x 9 in., 1918.  
Carnegie Museum of Art (Pittsburgh), gift of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, 83.21.5.





This poignant image, taken by Lewis Hine in Pittsburgh, was originally captioned, "Going to their work at 5 P.M. 'Sheeny Joe's' Glass House, January, 1913. Boy to left is 15 years old, can't speak English." The Civic Club fought for fair child labor laws to combat sights like this.

Library of Congress, Lewis Wickes Hine collection, LC-DIG-nclc-01303.

as prominent member Henry Clay Frick, brought the experience of business, law, and "their notions of a model city government," while women dominated the leadership and agenda, running the organization in a way similar to distinctly feminine associations.<sup>4</sup> For example, at the 1903 annual meeting, the Civic Club decided that *women alone* would be responsible for the upcoming year's agenda. This indicates a substantial willingness of men in the organization to take a background role.

The Civic Club of Allegheny County organized "to promote higher and better social order" and to improve "the social condition of the community, especially the establishment

of institutions for the relief and comfort of the destitute, needy and dependent."<sup>5</sup> At the time of the club's founding, Pittsburgh was plagued with "polluted water, inadequate sewerage, unpaved streets, and unsanitary housing."<sup>6</sup> The Civic Club vowed to remedy the situation by promoting "education and organized effort, a higher public spirit, and a better social order."<sup>7</sup> The members of civic organizations were faced with problems such as industrial pollution, inadequate housing, and terrible living conditions. During the Progressive Era, the Civic Club sought to improve living conditions in the industrial city of Pittsburgh. Through members' efforts, "they demonstrated the

importance of citizen participation in civic affairs ... and awakened the general public" to the ways and issues in city management.<sup>8</sup> Elite men and women in the Civic Club worked to improve their city and enhance the lives of the middle and working classes of Pittsburgh. Some historians theorize that civic involvement was motivated by the upper classes' desire to retain their property value by increasing worth of the surrounding community rather than a yearning to enrich the lives of others. Indeed, Pittsburgh's reforming women were well aware of the connection between social reform and property value. In a book that told of the social accomplishments of Pittsburgh's elite, *The Social Mirror*, the author reminisces that, "in the early days Water Street, which is now given up to manufacturing establishments and ugly dens, was the section where all the most wealthy and cultivated people lived."<sup>9</sup>

Social motivation has been one of the most hotly debated issues among historians of Progressive civic reform. The Civic Club was, in the first decades of existence, an elite club that "wanted the city to appear cleaner and more beautiful, city government to function efficiently, residents of the city to live healthier, and they wanted the poor and immigrants [to have] the ability to live a middle class life, provided they lived by established middle-class standards."<sup>10</sup> Some historians have seen this as a way for the upper class to reaffirm its own standing, as



this approach was by no means a radical attack on class hierarchy; rather it supported the existing social system. For example, members of the Civic Club advocated for an adherence to middle class values in terms of the home structure, cleanliness, and nationalism. While the reforms proposed did benefit the working class and make for a more comfortable

the Civic Club members had observed severe health and environment problems in a city once described by writer James Parton as “Hell with the Lid Off.” Conditions were deplorable and there was genuine concern to make a better city, reform corrupt governments, and improve social conditions through municipal housekeeping. Just because the members

to the suffering people about them. As the job got too big for these good women to carry on their home obligations and to keep up with the needy ones about them, they organized. First little committees, later incorporated agencies and societies.... Shoes, clothing and food were received from those who had to spare and given to those who lacked those things.... It is still the women’s job and it is your job as well as mine. If you have not given and done your part it is only because you are ignorant of the need and do not come in contact with the suffering.... Women and children bear the brunt of [society’s] woes.<sup>11</sup>

Several notable women helped shape the Progressive Era Civic Club and were highly influential in both the organization and their surrounding communities.

In the Civic Club of Allegheny County, “the wives, daughters, and widows of Pittsburgh’s business

and professional elite performed most of the club’s daily reform work, advancing moral issues about the environment, as well as other reforms.”<sup>12</sup> The background and personal experiences of several of these ladies fueled their substantial involvement in the Civic Club and other reform movements in Pittsburgh.

Kate Cassatt McKnight of Western Avenue (President) and Elizabeth Dohrman Thaw of North Lincoln Avenue and Sewickley Heights (Treasurer) were instrumental in the founding of the Civic Club and remained active in the association for many years following its creation. During Elizabeth Thaw’s life, “every appointment in her engagement book had civic significance.”<sup>13</sup> When her husband died in Europe and left her widowed at 31, Thaw decided to give freely of her time and money. She dedicated her life to civic reform. She was

## WOMEN HELD POSITIONS OF POWER AND ATTAINED SUBSTANTIAL POLITICAL PULL AND INFLUENCE IN THE CIVIC CLUB, DESPITE THE FACT THAT THEY WERE UNABLE TO VOTE.



Learn More Online

For more information about Lucy Dorsey Iams.

**Carte-de-visite photograph of Lucy Virginia (Dorsey) Iams, from Rogers Brothers, Opposite Public Square, Waynesburg, Pa. Iams was the first vice-president of the Civic Club, and chaired its social science department.**

Greene County Historical Society archival collection, Album 12, Series Greene County Historical Society Collection, GCHS-AN013-0016, www.GreeneConnections.com.



environment, they acted as peacekeeping devices rather than avenues of radical change. They advocated for change in ways that would upgrade the social system as a whole through legislation and benevolent philanthropy but maintained the middle-elite stronghold on government. Samuel Hays suggests that the business professionals of the Civic Club held a deep disdain for the ward system, which placed a great deal of political influence in the hands of the working class who could be manipulated and controlled by ward bosses of the political machine. He infers that civic reform was a way for educated members of the elite to regain political power.

What these arguments fail to acknowledge is that it cannot be assumed that all elites shared the same political agenda. Many of

were elite does not mean they lacked a sense of moral concern.

However, not all citizens of social status adhered to the philosophy of civic involvement for political and social gain. In a radio speech, Mrs. Mary Flinn Lawrence, daughter of one of Pittsburgh’s political machine bosses, William Flinn, addressed the importance of participation in civic and welfare associations:

The whole field of Welfare, the care of orphans, neglected children, sick and suffering parents, the destitute, has been women’s sphere from the beginning, indeed modern social work is largely woman’s contribution to modern civilization.

While women were civilizing their husbands and training their children they found time to be good neighbors



A vintage, sepia-toned photograph showing a group of children standing on a wooden boardwalk or bridge. In the foreground, a young boy in a light-colored shirt and dark shorts stands barefoot. To his left, two other boys stand together; one wears a hat and suspenders. In the background, a girl is visible, and to the right, another girl in a dark dress stands with her hand on her hip. The setting appears to be a dirt area next to railroad tracks, with a steep, wooded embankment in the background. The text is overlaid on the upper portion of the image, framed by decorative wavy lines.

AT ITS HEART, THE CIVIC CLUB SOUGHT TO IMPROVE THE LIVES  
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PROTECTIVE OF THE FUTURE OF PITTSBURGH'S CHILDREN.

Children on Jancey Street in Pittsburgh's Morningside  
neighborhood, July 1908.

University of Pittsburgh Archives Service Center, Pittsburgh City Photographer Collection,  
715.08879.CP



Alice Montgomery.  
Kathy Leahy Collection.



**JUST BECAUSE THE MEMBERS WERE ELITE DOES NOT MEAN THEY LACKED A SENSE OF MORAL CONCERN. HOWEVER, NOT ALL CITIZENS OF SOCIAL STATUS ADHERED TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF CIVIC INVOLVEMENT FOR POLITICAL AND SOCIAL GAIN.**

active in almost every aspect of the Civic Club and her reform interests stretched from school reform and public health to the development of a juvenile court system.

Lucy Dorsey Iams became the Civic Club's first vice-president and chairperson of its Social Science Department, developed in 1902, a position she held for the duration of her life. She was also placed in charge of the club's Legislative Committee until the 1920s. Iams held a bachelor's degree from Waynesburg College. As the wife of a lawyer, she became "proficient in legal matters herself; she served as his secretary, read extensively in the law, and launched a successful career as a court stenographer, one that she continued during her active years in social reform."<sup>14</sup> Iams' legal expertise made her an invaluable addition to the Civic Club and a vital resource for the execution of legislative reform. Women such as Iams "circulated between them [public and private spheres], or promoted legislation which expanded the responsibilities of the

public sector."<sup>15</sup>

At its heart, the Civic Club sought to improve the lives of its city's youth. Society accepted motherhood as a natural role for women, which in turn led women to be protective of the future of Pittsburgh's children. A major playground operation was put into motion in 1886, fronted by Beulah Kennard and Mrs. David Kirk. After observing young citizens "dodging wagons and automobiles; throwing stones, tossing balls, fighting and shooting craps; stealing apples ... getting arrested and being dragged through the fare of a trial at law for the crime of playing," Kennard commented that "children have got to have a decent place to play this summer."<sup>16</sup> The Civic Club, considering Kennard's proposition, allotted funding for schoolyards and playgrounds. By 1899, there were nine public playgrounds in Pittsburgh; all were attributed to the women in the Civic Club. They were located at O'Hara, Ralston, Grant, Lincoln, Central High School, Birmingham,

Monongahela, Morse, and Humboldt, with one vacation school in the Franklin building, and three schoolyard playgrounds in Allegheny — the 3d, 5th, and 9th Wards.

In the association's *Fifteen Years of Civic History*, Kennard is described as a woman whose "keen sympathy for the social needs of the city, personal service and untiring efforts, contributed most generously to the wonderful success of the playground movement in Pittsburgh."<sup>17</sup> The playground movement "contributes to an understanding of the transference effect of social reform—the tendency to shift functions from family to state and professional caretakers."<sup>18</sup>

Education reform was also important to the Civic Club's agenda. The Education Department focused much of its energy on teaching good citizenship to schoolchildren. In 1897, the female-directed team introduced the "salute to the flag," or "pledge of allegiance" into many public schools through a cooperative program with the Daughters of the American



Revolution. Citizenship education was deemed necessary for all children, as the future of the nation would be in the hands of both native-born citizens and immigrants. Immigrant and working class children would be taught what nationalism and Americanism meant, as it was assumed that they were not learning such concepts in their own homes.

Under the direction of Elizabeth Thaw, the Education Department also “amply justified its existence by its well-considered endeavors to introduce into the public schools the means of awakening the children to a sense of the beautiful in nature and art.”<sup>19</sup> After an art collection was donated to the Civic Club, Thaw had the pieces divided up into exhibitions of 12 pictures and five plaster casts that were sent on loan to local school districts. After a period of five years, the traveling exhibits were broken up and redistributed so all the schools would be able to keep and display art permanently. In 1927, the press commented on the lasting impact of Thaw’s dedication to art in educational facilities by noting that, “within the schools of Pittsburgh today, the well selected pictures and casts that adorn the corridors recall to mind the traveling exhibit which the Art Department of the Civic Club ... maintained for five years.”<sup>20</sup> While art in schools may not be considered essential to welfare, it does show the consideration of the women in the Civic Club to advance the lives of students through social culture. If children were surrounded by culture, they would become proper citizens and be influenced by their environment to look for meaningful experiences in their personal and professional lives.

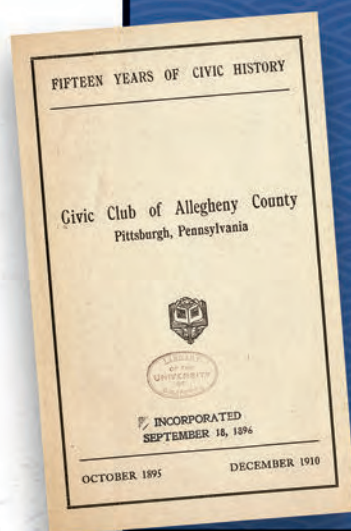
Many of the attempts at children’s reforms challenged Pittsburgh’s young citizens to see their potential and become a productive and respected future society. Several years prior to McKnight’s death, a committee headed by Mrs. Kleber and her assistant Beulah

Kennard established the Young Men’s Civic Club of Lawrenceville. Donations for the building of a civic center for the young men were gifted by several prominent members of the club, including Henry Clay Frick, Eleanor Gillespie Magee, and Elizabeth Thaw. Smaller donations for individual rooms were given primarily by women as well. A branch of the Carnegie Library was also installed and run by Louise Taylor. In many ways, the young men’s “clubhouse” seemed to be an imitation of a home atmosphere, complete with maternal influences. The club remained a success until its leader, Mrs. Kleber, left due to emotional and physical strain. The loss of their matriarchal leader and confidante “seemed to undermine the organization, and gradually the membership of the Club diminished and the organization declined.”<sup>21</sup>

While the Lawrenceville club was thriving, the Civic Club formed another branch organization for young men in Allegheny. An advisory board of women was established to oversee the new young men’s club. The participants of this board were all women, including the prominent Kate C. McKnight. Like its Lawrenceville counterpart, the club started to lose popularity after the death of its maternal leader. In the case of the Allegheny

club, however, a business-savvy Emily McCreery played a huge role in revitalizing the club’s membership and replenishing its treasury. Her involvement saved the Allegheny club from demise and brought it back to its former influence. Although both clubs reached out to young men, they were, for the most part, created and managed by women.

In addition to promoting the welfare of children and encouraging good citizenship, the Civic Club tried to clean up the city of Pittsburgh from the side effects of industrialization. While government officials generally ignored the health issues generated by industrialization, the Civic Club focused on the improvement of hazardous conditions. Women were responsible for the health and well being of their home and family. By spearheading municipal reform, these women extended the reach of their perceived domestic role and strove to care for the “family” of society and the “home” of the city. In 1895, during the first year of Civic Club activity, “in fact the first meeting of the Civic Club ... the necessity of a pure water supply for Pittsburgh” was presented to the public.<sup>22</sup> After an outbreak of contaminated water supplies in Butler, the club began to petition the mayor. It also began to appeal to the medical community



## WOMEN WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE HEALTH AND WELL BEING OF THEIR HOME AND FAMILY. BY SPEARHEADING MUNICIPAL REFORM, THESE WOMEN EXTENDED THE REACH OF THEIR PERCEIVED DOMESTIC ROLE AND STROVE TO CARE FOR THE “FAMILY” OF SOCIETY AND THE “HOME” OF THE CITY.

The Civic Club’s beginnings are recounted in *Fifteen Years of Civic History*.

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Read the full text of *Fifteen Years of Civic History*



to post signs that recommended people boil their water before use to kill bacteria. The club fronted a garbage disposal campaign in its first year of existence. The first act of the committee responsible for this drive was to purchase public waste baskets “so the public and the school children could assist in keeping the streets clean.” The next step was the successful passage of ordinances that granted waste removal contracts to private sanitation companies.<sup>23</sup>

The next major undertaking of the Civic Club was the establishment of public bath houses. Many of Pittsburgh’s industrial facilities were not equipped with adequate bathing facilities. Paul Underwood Kellogg stated in 1914, that “for over fifty years, the proprietors of these mills had seldom made the slightest effort to furnish men who wanted to wash any facility for doing so and by their neglect were actually educating them to go dirty.”<sup>24</sup> Workers were left no other choice than to use their own drinking water and bring towels and soap from their homes. In addition, insufficient housing facilities did not offer adequate bathing amenities. Proprietors, by refusing to facilitate bathing, were recklessly contributing the spread of disease, “and caused preventable suffering.”<sup>25</sup>

The Civic Club felt strongly that a public bath was needed and attempted to fund the project, although it was well beyond the limits of its treasury. Elizabeth Thaw, seeing the need for financial support, made a generous offer “to erect and equip a People’s Bath as a memorial to her husband.... Early in June 1897 the work started and the following Thanksgiving Day the first public bath in Pittsburgh was presented to the Civic Club for operation.”<sup>26</sup> The building itself was located on the corner of Sixteenth and Penn Avenue. It housed 32 showers and two tubs. For five cents, bathers would be supplied with a towel and a bar

**WHILE THE CIVIC CLUB  
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BE ABLE TO DO MORE  
FOR THE CITY THAN  
SINGLE ORGANIZATIONS  
ACTING ALONE.**



**Elizabeth Dohrman Thaw.**  
*Bulletin Index, HHO Detre L&A-*

of soap. The club later decided that even if a client was unable to afford the five cent fee, it would not turn that person away. From 1897 to 1910, the Civic Club supplied 61,267 free baths to those who otherwise could not have afforded one. A new bathhouse was constructed in 1907. The contemporary building was larger than its original, as there was “a separate floor ... devoted to women and children, making a total provision for forty-three showers and four tubs.”<sup>27</sup> The People’s Bath was the first of its kind in Pittsburgh and allowed people the decency of a clean hot shower. In addition, the Civic Club completed work on its second bathing facility, the Soho Bath, in 1909. The bathhouse projects were a prime example of the Civic Club’s dedication to sanitation and social justice.

While the Civic Club was excelling in its efforts towards social improvement, it believed that an organized system of charities would be able to do more for the city than single organizations acting alone. Initial opposition was shown to the project and the first attempts ultimately were failures. In 1905, Kate McKnight, Mrs. C.D. Clancey, and Edna Meeker began a fresh campaign to reintroduce the idea and overcome opposition to the project. The alliance of aid organizations that the Civic Club wished to create would serve not as a charitable trust, but rather as a social work agency. The middle man organization would create an efficient system “by giving prompt attention to all cases of need referred by them to this central bureau or clearing house and placing each family or individual under the care of the organization already established to assist them.”<sup>28</sup> Churches and schools, if noticing a family in need, would report the case to the organization, which would then advise the persons in need. At the meeting of the Chamber of Commerce on June 20, 1907, approximately 100 charities and churches joined together and the resolution to create an associated charity alliance was adopted. The Civic Club was



**RIGHT:** The People's Bath was funded by Elizabeth Thaw as a memorial to her husband in 1897.

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh.



**BOTTOM:** From 1897 to 1910, approximately 61,267 free baths were given to those who could not afford to pay.

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh.






in the middle of planning the execution of the soon to be organization when President Kate McKnight's untimely death temporarily halted preparations.

Finally, in February 1908, the work of the Civic Association was supplemented by the foundation of a new affiliated program, the Associated Charities of Pittsburgh. The Pittsburgh school bulletin explained that the association's purpose "is what is known as 'Family Case Work.' This means a study of each individual family through a sympathetic, painstaking, intelligent inquiry into the causes of its distress and a careful evaluation of its background." The technique of

domestic social work allowed the associates of the charity to denote an "effective plan of treatment which involves helping the family work out its own problems."<sup>29</sup> The Associated Charities maintained a daily record of referrals and records that helped to diagnose an appropriate recommendation of help. The organization also employed men and women "to work as friends each with one or two families who need encouragement, counsel, and good influences which cannot otherwise be obtained."<sup>30</sup> In many cases, they assisted their clients in finding employment, recruiting professional services, helped families locate material relief, and established personal relations with the

people they were helping in order to provide sound advice.<sup>31</sup>

After the turn of the century, the Civic Club saw a desperate need for a juvenile court and began agitating for such a system in 1901. A committee was organized "to formulate plans for the organization of a Juvenile Court in Allegheny County." The following year, this committee began to interview judges and district attorneys to raise money and awareness for the cause. The legislation for juvenile arraignment passed in March 1903. After the act was approved, the Civic Club formed the "Juvenile Court Committee," presided over by four women. Their first order of business was to recruit capable probation officers for the court. Alice Montgomery of Philadelphia was the first officer sworn into the court with a salary paid for by the Civic Club.<sup>32</sup>



**A MAJOR PLAYGROUND OPERATION WAS PUT INTO MOTION IN 1886, FRONTED BY BEULAH KENNARD AND MRS. DAVID KIRK. AFTER OBSERVING YOUNG CITIZENS "DODGING WAGONS AND AUTOMOBILES; THROWING STONES, TOSSING BALLS, FIGHTING AND SHOOTING CRAPS; STEALING APPLES ... GETTING ARRESTED AND BEING DRAGGED THROUGH THE FARE OF A TRIAL AT LAW FOR THE CRIME OF PLAYING," KENNARD COMMENTED THAT "CHILDREN HAVE GOT TO HAVE A DECENT PLACE TO PLAY THIS SUMMER."**



After the act was put into effect, the Civic Club members strove to raise awareness for the new organization. Alice Montgomery traveled around Western Pennsylvania giving speeches on the juvenile system and its laws. Club members simultaneously distributed pamphlets explaining much of the same information to over 1,000 households. The Civic Club Juvenile Court Committee requested to be recognized as an independent organization in 1905 and was granted severance. However, Kate McKnight retained the chairperson position of the newly autonomous association despite her position of president in the Civic Club.<sup>33</sup>

In 1909, the courts took over payments of juvenile probation officers, relieving private charities of their financial obligations. Although the Civic Club did not control the hiring of probation officers, the courts themselves employed many women in the position. In 1912, eight out of eleven officers were female, once again re-emphasizing the maternal role that women in the public had to play. The Civic Club and the court officers insisted on domesticating the politics of court by instating a system that focused on reform, not punishment. The women in charge


became surrogate mothers to these wayward children, making such public positions socially acceptable for other women.

In addition to the rehabilitation of wayward youth, the Civic Club took an active stance against child labor. By 1900, it was commonplace to find young children laboring in mills, factories, coal mines, etc. Although some regulations were already in place, not every company that employed children complied with these regulations. Committees from the Allegheny Civic Club and the Philadelphia Civic Club were resolute in their decision to amend the state laws in order to protect Pennsylvania's children. Lucy Dorsey Iams directed the Legislative Committee and carried out the main legal work for the campaign. In addition she hosted many politicians, factory inspectors, and representatives from numerous other organizations to lobby for a change in children's regulations.<sup>34</sup>

Although the bill passed in 1905, sections of the proposal were declared unconstitutional. The legislation was successful at raising the minimum age for labor from 12 to 14. The law was amended to require employers receive an affidavit of a child's age before hiring him

or her, but despite this new regulation, "there were no fewer than 9,000 and up to 12,800 boys under age 14 illegally in the mines and breakers of the region."<sup>35</sup>

In 1907, the Civic Club decided that the serious issue of child labor regulations required a permanent association, and assembled the Allegheny County Child Labor Association. The result of continuous lobbying by the association, in addition to many cooperative efforts, led to the passage of a more substantial law. "Pennsylvania became one of the few pioneering states to address the issue by restricting children to ten hours of work per day and sixty per week."<sup>36</sup> In addition, no boy under 16 or girl under the age of 18 was permitted to work before six in the morning and past nine in the evening in most industries. Although the movement was fronted by both men and women, like many of the tasks taken up by the Civic Club, the child legislation association reflected a projection of the domestic family into the public world.

Through these very public acts of social reform that were not "fully part of either male electoral politics and formal government institutions or the female world of home and family," women in the Civic Club advocated improved conditions in Pittsburgh.<sup>37</sup> Women held positions of power and attained substantial political pull and influence in the Civic Club, despite the fact that they were unable to vote. The Progressive Era Civic Club of Allegheny County proved successful in its fusion of male persuasion and female agendas, furthering the causes of education, sanitation, charities, and child labor reform. 

**Lauren M. Churilla** is the curator of the McCarl Coverlet Gallery at Saint Vincent College in Latrobe. She is a previous contributor to *Western Pennsylvania History*, most recently in 2011 with "Mary Flinn Lawrence: A Machine in Petticoats."



Pittsburgh's Soho Playground, July 1920.  
University of Pittsburgh Archives Service Center, Pittsburgh City Photographer  
Collection: Z15.208934.GP



**THE CIVIC CLUB AND THE COURT OFFICERS INSISTED ON DOMESTICATING THE POLITICS OF COURT BY INSTATING A SYSTEM THAT FOCUSED ON REFORM, NOT PUNISHMENT. THE WOMEN IN CHARGE BECAME SURROGATE MOTHERS TO THESE WAYWARD CHILDREN, MAKING SUCH PUBLIC POSITIONS SOCIALLY ACCEPTABLE FOR OTHER WOMEN.**

- <sup>1</sup> Keith A. Zahniser, *Steel City Gospel: Protestant Laity and Reform in Progressive Era Pittsburgh* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 89-90.
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- <sup>3</sup> Paula Baker, "The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1780-1920," *American Historical Review* (1984): 631.
- <sup>4</sup> Zahniser, 90-91.
- <sup>5</sup> *Manual of the civic and charitable organizations of greater Pittsburgh: and of the higher educational institutions, with a brief review of Mayor Guthrie's administration* (Pittsburgh: A.W. McCloy, 1908), 42.
- <sup>6</sup> Joel A. Tarr, "Infrastructure and City-Building," in *City at the Point: Essays on the Social History of Pittsburgh*, ed. Samuel P. Hays (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1989), 239.
- <sup>7</sup> Article II, Constitution of The Civic Club of Allegheny County, Civic Club of Allegheny County, *Fifteen Years of Civic History* (Pittsburgh: Nicholson Printing Co., 1910), 107.
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- <sup>9</sup> Adelaide Mellier Nevin, *The Social Mirror: A Character Sketch of the Women of Pittsburgh and Vicinity* (Pittsburgh: T.W. Nevin, 1888), 121.
- <sup>10</sup> Aaron M. Gallogly, "A Higher Public Spirit and a Better Social Order: the Civic Club of Allegheny County, 1895-1930," Masters Thesis, Duquesne University, 2010.
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- <sup>13</sup> "Remembrance of Things Past," December 18, 1948, *Pittsburgh Biography: Elizabeth Dohrman Thaw*, in Pennsylvania Room, Carnegie Library, Pittsburgh.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>15</sup> Roy Lubrove, "Pittsburgh and Social Welfare History," in *City at the Point: Essays on the Social History of Pittsburgh*, ed. Samuel P. Hays (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1989), 304.
- <sup>16</sup> Dorr, 28-29.
- <sup>17</sup> *Fifteen Years of Civic History*, 16.
- <sup>18</sup> Lubrove, 305.
- <sup>19</sup> *Fifteen Years of Civic History*, 26-27.
- <sup>20</sup> Unknown newspaper clipping, June 29, 1927, *Pittsburgh Biography: Elizabeth Dohrman Thaw*, in Pennsylvania Room, Carnegie Library, Pittsburgh, Pa.
- <sup>21</sup> *Fifteen Years of Civic History*, 31.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid., 12.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid., 14.
- <sup>24</sup> Paul Underwood Kellogg, *Wage Earning Pittsburgh: The Pittsburgh Survey, Findings in Six Volumes* (New York: Survey Associates, Inc., 1914), 233.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid., 234.
- <sup>26</sup> Unknown newspaper clipping, June 29, 1927, *Pittsburgh Biography: Elizabeth Dohrman Thaw*, in Pennsylvania Room, Carnegie Library, Pittsburgh, Pa.
- <sup>27</sup> *Fifteen Years of Civic History*, 20.
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- <sup>29</sup> Eleanor Hanson, "The Associated Charities of Pittsburgh," *Pittsburgh School Bulletin*, May 1926, 35.
- <sup>30</sup> *Manual of the civic and charitable organizations of greater Pittsburgh*, 68.
- <sup>31</sup> Kingsley House Association, *Directory of Philanthropic, Charitable, and Civic Agencies of the City of Pittsburgh* (Pittsburgh: Kingsley House Association, 1913), 14.
- <sup>32</sup> *Fifteen Years of Civic History*, 39.
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid., 39-42.
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- <sup>35</sup> Hugh D. Hindman, *Child Labor: An American History* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2002), 93.
- <sup>36</sup> Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, "Child Labor in Pennsylvania," [http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/things/4280/child\\_labor/478193](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/things/4280/child_labor/478193) (accessed March 4, 2009).
- <sup>37</sup> Baker, 625.

**Children playing in Washington.**

HHC Detre L&A, MSP 455.





By Natalie Taylor and Shirley Gaudette

## Bob Butella and Sue Weigold



Bob Butella and Sue Weigold.

The Heinz History Center's membership program is one of the cornerstones of its success. Members provide vital support to the History Center's exciting exhibition and programs schedule, its award-winning publications, and field trips for more than 35,000 school children each year.

Bob Butella and Sue Weigold joined the History Center as members in 2010 and are now members at the Benefactor level. Bob says, "We became members when we learned how many significant historical presentations had already been done and the other presentations, exhibits, and events that occur at the History Center and we didn't want to miss any more of them."

Sue says that the special events are their favorite aspect: "We love receiving the


invitations to the members-only events to see the new exhibits, and we respond immediately and change our schedules so we attend almost every one of them." Some of the events they have attended included a beer tasting for a Benjamin Franklin exhibition and a barbeque for the opening of *The Story of Negro League Baseball: We Are the Ship*.

Bob adds, "*The Story of the Negro League Baseball* was magnificent. We learned how important the Negro league was to this area and the many outstanding players that were in the league. This presentation coincided with a members' field trip to PNC Park, where we saw the special area and theater dedicated to the Negro teams and players. We were in awe and developed a respect for the life and sport of baseball that existed in the African American community at that time in history. Every time we

drive across the Homestead Gray's Bridge and see the names of the players on the banners, we think of this member event."

Bob and Sue—both lifelong Pittsburghers—also enjoy visiting the other sites in the History Center's museum system. Sue says, "The Fort Pitt Museum was something we never experienced until we had our History Center membership. It's a community treasure and we still recall the members-only event where we learned about and saw the skills of the craftsman who make the clothes and the historical figures for the displays. It was great to see, to learn, and to begin to appreciate all of the wonderful people across the History Center who make history come alive for the members."

Because membership includes unlimited admission to the History Center, the Fort Pitt Museum, and Meadowcroft Rockshelter and Historic Village, Bob and Sue are able to visit often, especially Meadowcroft, where they can experience their favorite part of history. Bob says, "We really appreciate seeing how diligent and careful the very early settlers and native inhabitants were in having communities and organization to make sure they had food, shelter, and protection from the hazards of living in the wild. We have it so easy compared to their way of life and it helps us appreciate everything we have today."

The History Center is very fortunate to have members like Bob, Sue, and people like you. Membership makes a great gift, as well. To give the gift of history or upgrade your membership, visit [www.heinzhistorycenter.org](http://www.heinzhistorycenter.org) or contact Shirley Gaudette, Membership Manager, at [sagaudette@heinzhistorycenter.org](mailto:sagaudette@heinzhistorycenter.org) or (412) 454-6436. 



# BOOK REVIEWS



## **Pittsburgh Pizzazz — A Life in Showbiz**

By Patti Faloon

Tarentum, Pa.: Word Association Publishers, 2013

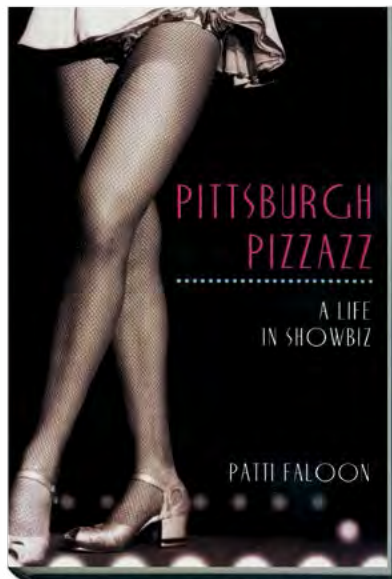
376 pps., photographs

\$18.95 paperback

Reviewed by Paul Roth

I had a hard time putting this book down! Let me explain. This is a memoir (actually, each chapter is a mini-memoir) written by a local entertainer who is a contemporary of the reviewer. It is, essentially, the calendar of a life: family, friends, marriage, and especially show business. Therefore many of the references to local and national celebrities and locations were very familiar and nostalgia-provoking. Harold V. Cohen! Baron Elliott! Bill Bickel! Ted Weems! Vogue Terrace! Syria Mosque! Gordon MacRae! Morey Amsterdam! WCAE! Charlie Byrd! Slim Bryant! Lenny Litman! Rummy Bishop! The list goes on and on.

In its entirety, the book constitutes a biography of the life and career of a Pittsburgh singer-dancer-entertainer, which is enhanced contextually by the plethora of acquaintances and colleagues with whom she and her musician-husband, guitarist Marty Faloon, were associated. The reader will happily discover



that the author appeared in various personas: it depended upon the booking whether she was featured as a balloon-twister, a clown, member of a girl's singing duo, vocalist with her husband (as a duo or with his band), or featured vocal soloist. All of these talents provided for a lifelong, productive career.

Easy reading is accommodated by the book's organization: a chronologic sequence of short chapters, each devoted to a specific narrative or topic. Many photographs enhance the text.

I recommend it both to contemporaries who want to be treated to memories of the popular showbiz and club entertainers of the greater Pittsburgh region and to younger folk who desire to be oriented in what show business was like during the period covered by the author's career.

Another appealing facet is the author's memory (or diary), such as when she

Due to a computer error, the Spring Book Reviews contained typos; those reviews are reprinted here in full, followed by new reviews.

reflects upon the details of her Niagara Falls honeymoon stay in 1950: "The prices at the hotel seem archaic compared to today. Hotel Statler was a 'big deal' hotel at the time. A three-night stay: \$9.50 per night including a meal and valet. Total with taxes: \$31.75. Wow!" Wow indeed.

What is most compelling is the author's optimistic and sometimes humorous takes on the events in her life. She even conveys these traits in her narrative of confronting some of the more tragic occurrences like death and illness. The initial printing had some loose editing, especially in the spelling of proper names and song titles, which was fixed in later printings.

An excerpt from the book's last paragraph pretty well covers the author's (and for that matter, the reviewer's) outlook: "Here I am, an octogenarian and still doing what I love! Call me spunky or spry, I'm fine with that. I say to those still able to do something well that they love, DON'T EVER STOP!"



**Paul Roth** is retired from the Computer Science faculty of Virginia Tech. He is a noted musicologist, specializing in popular and show music from 1900 through 1960, and has produced and hosted musical radio and TV programs. He wrote "Pittsburgh's Dance Band Era" in the Fall 2013 issue of this magazine.



## Over the Alleghenies: Early Canals and Railroads of Pennsylvania

By Robert J. Kapsch

Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2013

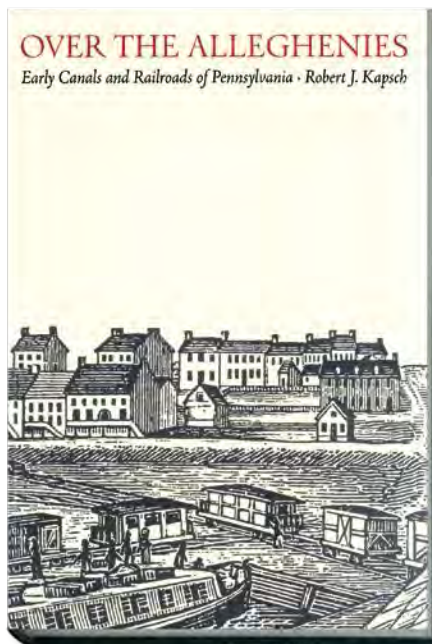
376 pps., maps, photographs, bibliography

\$39.99 paperback

Reviewed by Andrew Stroud

In 1825 the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania was faced with a dilemma: whether to build a canal or a railroad to compete with New York's newly completed Erie Canal. The controversy involved the use of conventional stillwater canals to cross the Allegheny Mountains and connect Philadelphia with Pittsburgh, or to use the neophyte technology of railroads. In the new book *Over the Alleghenies: Early Canals and Railroads of Pennsylvania*, veteran canal historian and engineer Robert Kapsch tells the story of the engineering, economic, and political history of this early system of transportation.

After the War of 1812, politicians in East Coast states began to see the need for lines of transportation to connect with the growing Ohio Valley and Great Lakes regions. New York was fortunate in that receding glaciers had left a



high shoreline around Lake Ontario, which was perfect for a contour canal from Albany over to Lake Erie. With no mountains to cross, the Erie Canal was built across relatively flat areas of land and required few technological innovations. Pennsylvania was different: the same glaciers had left a topography of twisting ridges, narrow river valleys, and the problematic Susquehanna River. With no easy route through the veil of mountains, the engineers were forced to build riverside canals through the steep valleys. This direct connection to the temperamental rivers made the canals extremely sensitive to floods and droughts. Between the east-west river

systems was the Allegheny Ridge—a 35-mile wall of heavily forested mountain that rose 1,200 feet above the headwaters. After looking at canal, tunnel, and turnpike options, the engineers settled on a complicated railroad arrangement. The resulting Allegheny Portage Railroad was a marvel of its time.

Political maneuvering complicated the grand scheme of the Pennsylvania Public Works. To sell the concept of the canal, promoters rationalized financial and technological miscalculations that wildly underestimated the scope of the project. The project was then fast-tracked without a clear plan to vault the mountains. Expensive lateral canal projects were initiated to entice politicians from the fringe counties to support the Mainline. Bonds to finance the project were then shunned as it became apparent that the construction costs far exceeded estimates, and that maintenance costs alone outstripped income from tolls. The heavy debt from the Public Works placed Pennsylvania in a precarious position when the Panic of 1837 arrived.

Despite its many shortcomings and expense, the Public Works succeeded in creating



Look for more reviews at <http://www.heinzhistorycenter.org/secondary.aspx?id=340>

NEW  
FOR  
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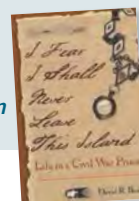
*A Most Magnificent Machine: America Adopts the Railroad, 1825-1862*



*James Buchanan and the Coming of the Civil War*



*The Western Front Companion*



*I Fear I Shall Never Leave This Island: Life in a Civil War Prison*

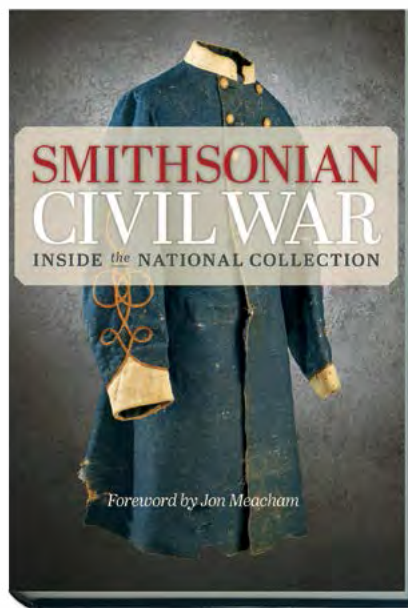


# BOOK REVIEWS

an expanded transportation link between the Eastern seaboard and the Ohio/Mississippi River systems. The increased volume, lower costs, and greater speed over the turnpikes for transporting raw materials allowed fledgling industries such as iron and glass production to develop. Passenger service by packet boats made the trip west faster and more comfortable than by stagecoach. And, like the modern NASA space shuttle program, the Public Works pioneered many technological innovations.

*Over the Alleghenies* is a large book and is copiously illustrated with period artwork, technical drawings, and antique map reproductions. The format is uncluttered and the writing style flows easily. The focus of the book is from the mid-1820s (when construction of the system was begun) to 1857, when the Public Works was sold to the Pennsylvania Railroad. All 15 divisions of the system are reviewed and documented. Observations are often reinforced with quotations from the reports of the Pennsylvania Canal Commission, both from the commissioners and also technical reports submitted by the individual canal engineers. A substantial section of endnotes and a bibliography make the book a valuable reference. With *Over the Alleghenies*, Robert Kapsch has created a definitive textbook on the Pennsylvania Public Works that is both educational and entertaining. ✪

**Andrew Stroud** is a native of Pennsylvania, attended the Montana School of Mines for Geological Engineering, and is currently working on a guidebook series for the Pennsylvania Canal.



## Smithsonian Civil War: Inside the National Collection

Edited by Neil Kagan; foreword by Jon Meacham  
Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 2013

368 pps., color photographs, index

\$40.00 hardcover

Reviewed by Michael G. Kraus

One would expect a book featuring Civil War treasures from the Smithsonian Institution to be impressive given the amount of important material in the museum network's vast holdings. Impressive is too simple a word for *Smithsonian Civil War: Inside the National Collection*. From the moment the large hardcover arrived for review it was clear that this book was something to savor. An astounding 550 color photographs of objects that represent the heart and soul of American Civil War history come to life in 368 pages. Setting the bar for what lies inside are two iconic artifacts featured on the covers: Confederate General John S. Mosby's uniform on the front and General Ulysses S. Grant's on the back.

Putting together a comprehensive book about the Civil War is challenging, but Neil Kagan aptly edited 49 well-written essays by Smithsonian curators into a cohesive anniversary tribute. What makes this book unique is that each curator selected an artifact that he or she felt spoke to the issues of the conflict and the space around it. Rare military items, such as magnificent presentation swords given to Generals Judson Kilpatrick and Phil Sheridan, share equal space with more utilitarian objects, like postage stamps and illustrated envelope covers. Other topics include artifacts that evoke the pain and reality of slavery and the new domain African American soldiers entered with the birth of the United States Colored Troops. More pieces chronicle the growth of technology and industry, arsenals, music, and even Native Americans issues. Page after page reveals the depth of the Smithsonian collection and the multifaceted knowledge of the curatorial staff.

As a coffee table book, reference book, or as a gift to your favorite Civil War buff, this volume is well worth having. Even the most well-versed Civil War aficionado will want to rally around it. ✪

**Michael G. Kraus** is curator of collections at Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall. He co-authored *The Civil War in Pennsylvania: A Photographic History*, and contributed to *The Civil War in Pennsylvania: The African American Experience*.



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### Wolverine Mechanical Toys: A Collector's Journal

By Terry Mowrey

Tarentum, Pa.: Word Association Publishers, 2013

186 pps., 400+ illustrations

\$69.95, \$49.95

In stores or at [www.tintypetoys.com](http://www.tintypetoys.com)

Reviewed by Anne Madarasz, Museum Division Director

As a center for the manufacture of metals, especially steel, in the late 19th and 20th centuries, this region attracted or supported many ancillary industries. *Wolverine Mechanical Toys: A Collector's Journal* tells the sometimes surprising story of one of those companies—the Wolverine Supply & Mfg. Co., later known as the Wolverine Toy Co., and its founder Benjamin Bain. Originally a manufacturer of household goods, the company also designed, produced, and repaired tools and dies for stamped sheet metal parts for other firms. Bankruptcy at the Sand Toy Co. of Pittsburgh launched Wolverine (who inherited its dies and patents) in the toy business, an enterprise it would continue on the North Side at 1212 Western Avenue until 1971.



**Kitchen cabinet and box, made by Wolverine Toy Co., 1964. Wolverine produced a line of toy appliances that illustrate the changes in consumer tastes and lifestyles. They also served as instructional tools that taught socially acceptable behavior or reinforced gender roles.**

HHC Collections, gift of Spang & Co., 98.17.252. Photo by Paula Andras.






# INFORMATION

Little has been published on this national toy maker and Mowrey has done the work of chasing the company's background through the primary records and detailing a chronology of plant and production history. Sand-activated metal toys, such as the "Sandy Andy," became the first products of this fledgling toy company; by the late 1910s, it could manufacture them in high enough volume to sell through mass market catalogs such as Sears and Roebuck. The company added wheeled toys, mechanical pull rabbits and circus animals, and also streamlined modernistic trains, trolleys, and boats by the mid-1920s. The purchase of the mechanical toy division of the Walbert Manufacturing Co. of Illinois by 1927 increased Wolverine's offerings to include games such as "Pitch'em" horseshoes. The book is a treasure trove for collectors or lovers of Wolverine's sand toys, stamped metal toys, mechanical toys, and games, as well as the household toys. Amply illustrated with catalog page reprints, advertisements, and photographs, almost half the book documents the toys produced by this Pittsburgh maker. With color images, dates, and some patent information, the book provides an excellent guide for identifying the output of Wolverine and tracing the evolution of the toy line through the decades. One chapter even focuses on the corporate collection

held by the History Center and the prototypes in that collection.

This book, as the author acknowledges, provides a much-needed resource correcting some of the myths and half-truths printed about Wolverine, as well as serving as a first catalog of company products. Collectors will especially appreciate the imagery, supporting documentation, and price guide. Mowrey draws upon earlier oral history work done by S. Greene Drucker and the Allegheny City Society with former Wolverine workers, but the book only hints at the importance of the machinist in the industrial milieu

of the Pittsburgh region and the role that mechanics played in regional manufacturing. More could also be said about the American toy industry and Wolverine's place in it as a producer of lithographed metal toys for a mass market, as well as the design and meaning of toys and what they tell us about the social and cultural life of children in our society. Those topics await exploration, but Terry Mowrey's book is the first to give Wolverine the place it deserves in the pantheon of American toy manufacturers. 

**This Zilotone musical toy, along with all other Wolverine items, was manufactured in Allegheny City.**

HHC Collections, gift of Spang and Co., 98.17.549. Photo by Paula Andras.

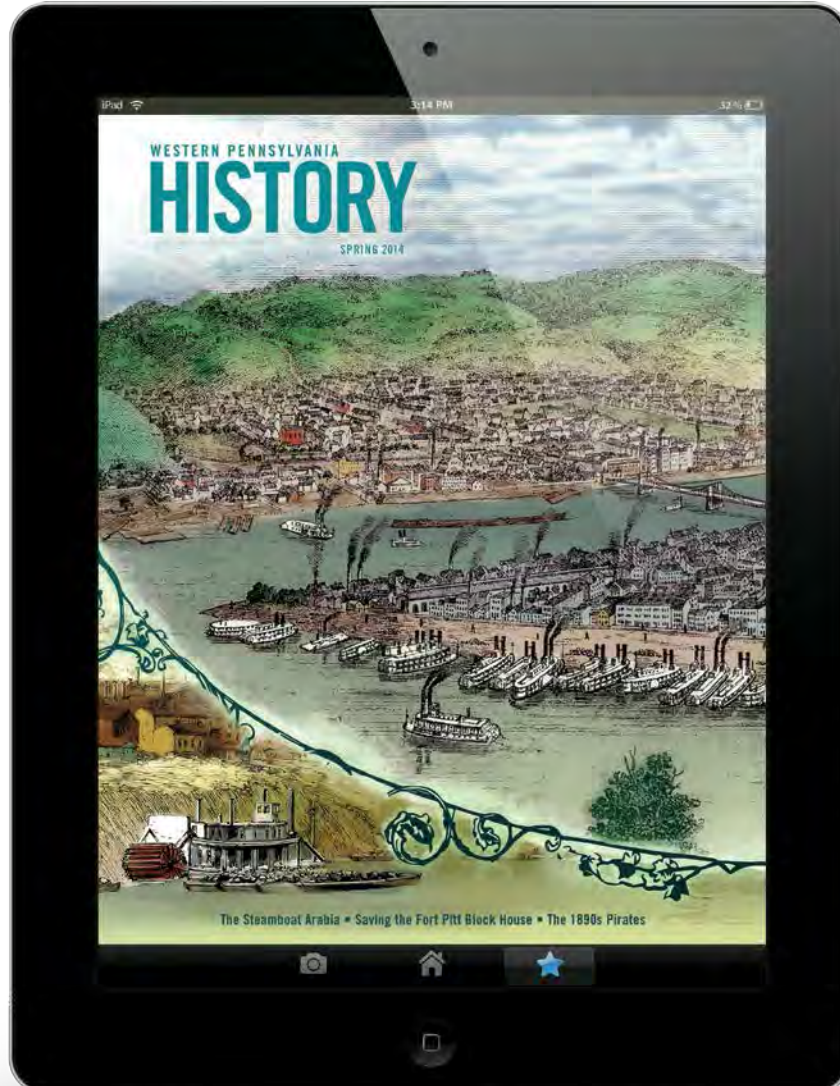




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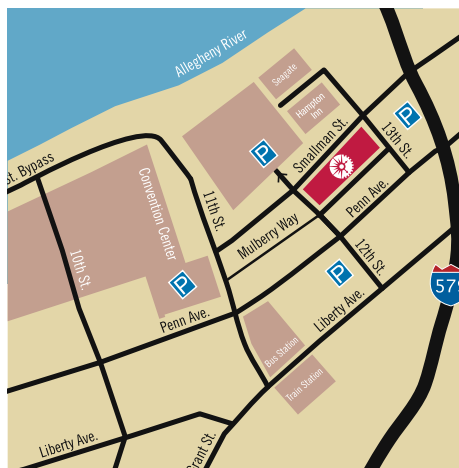
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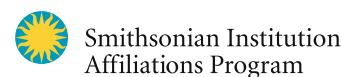
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