

BOOKREVIEWS

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

Guide to the Homes of Famous Pennsylvanians: Houses, Museums, and Landmarks

By Arthur P. Miller and Marjorie L. Miller
(Stackpole Books: Mechanicsburg, 2003). 82 photos, 256 pp., \$18.95 softcover

Profiles 39 well-known people from the state, from William Penn to Andy Warhol. Provides information on visiting the houses and museums which memorialize them. Of regional interest are Rachel Carson, George Westinghouse, Stephen Foster, Andrew Carnegie, Henry Clay Frick, Warhol, Albert Gallatin, and Jimmy Stewart.

The Best Places You've Never Seen: Pennsylvania's Small Museums, A Traveler's Guide

By Therese Boyd (State College: Penn State University Press, 2003). 84 illustrations, maps, appendix, 224 pp., \$18.95 softcover

A guide to 42 attractions mixed with observations about the people and places. Divided by region, each site also has a standard list of amenities, hours, directions, and contact info. Not every museum is included, but locals will find five in the Iron City section, two of those in Pittsburgh: the Mattress Factory and Photo Antiquities.

The Scotts from the Hill In Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

By Patricia Scott (Pittsburgh: Beacon Litho, 2002). Photos, drawings, two maps, 380 pp., \$20 softcover

An insightful, century-spanning story of a family in Lawrenceville, full of first-hand quotes and local-flavor anecdotes. The original printing has sold out; a revised edition is finished but not yet published. First edition available at the HSWP Library & Archives.

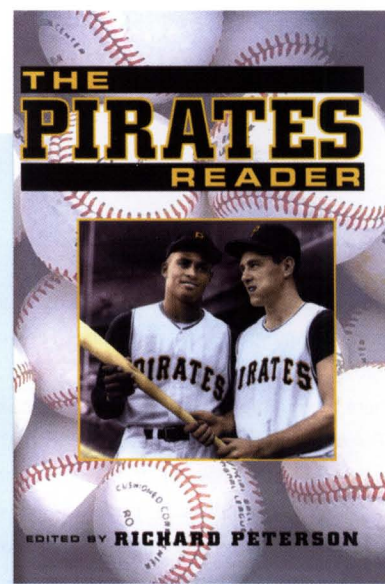
The Pirates Reader

Edited by Richard Peterson
(Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003). Illustrations, 339 pp., \$27 hardcover

The first baseball season I can remember was the seemingly miraculous run of the 1979 "We Are Fam-I-Lee" Pirates, and my hero Willie Stargell leading us (yes "us," though I was only six years old) to World Series victory. In the mid-'80s, I questioned my loyalty as we finished in last place for two consecutive years – but still it was "we" who had finished last and not "they." I was learning about being a fan and Pirate team loyalty.

Richard "Pete" Peterson has collected a broad array of articles from some of baseball's great writers to tell the rich story of the Pirate franchise. Myron Cope and Dave Barry both provide humorous accounts of the championship 1960 team, while former catcher Joe Garagiola comically remembers probably the worst Pirate team ever: the 112-game losing squad of 1952. Several stories are borrowed from Lawrence Ritter's excellent baseball book, *The Glory of Their Times*. Legendary journalists such as Ring Lardner, Henry Chadwick, and Alfred H. Spink complement local *Press* and *Post-Gazette* writers such as Al Abrams, Jack Hernon, Roy McHugh, and Bob Smizik. Other noted baseball writers are *Eight Men Out* author Eliot Asinof and George Will, author of *Men at Work: The Craft of Baseball*. The players themselves chip in, too: Bill Mazeroski, Steve Blass, Ralph Kiner, Babe Ruth, and Christy Mathewson.

There are so many stories to be told. Peterson – a fan whose boyhood began with the lousy teams of the early 1950s – begins his collected



stories in 1876 with the Pittsburgh Alleghenies. The Alleghenies played through unstable times; competitive leagues arose, and players were often shipped from team to team. We became the Pirates after securing the rights to one of the best second basemen of the era, Louis Bierbauer, "an act of piracy" to Philadelphia sportswriters. (Generations later, the Pirates again seized an advantage and signed a young unprotected Brooklyn Dodgers prospect named Roberto Clemente.) Visionary owner Barney Dreyfuss led the team through largely successful years. Honus Wagner and Fred Clarke battled Cy Young's 1903 Boston Americans unsuccessfully in the first World Series, but then, along with Babe Adams, defeated Ty Cobb's Tigers in 1909. We won again in 1925, beating Walter Johnson and the Senators on Kiki Cuyler's double, but in 1927, Pie Traynor, the Waner brothers, and Max Carey could not match up to Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig's Yankees.

Lean years followed when fans seemingly only came out to see Kiner. The Pirates went an unmatched 33 years until their next pennant in 1960, when Mazeroski subdued years of frustration with his dramatic home run. It may be the single greatest moment in Western Pennsylvania sports history. There are great stories of

mentoring, too: Hank Greenburgh helping Kiner, Clemente teaching Stargell, and Stargell serving as a father figure to the 1979 team.

There are not highs without lows in baseball, and Pirates fans are all too familiar with this fact. Lester Beiderman of the *Post-Gazette* writes on Harvey Haddix's 12 perfect innings – but still ending in a loss – which capped many dismal decades, yet a World Series championship was just a year away. Fans who can remember, cringe at the mention of Gabby Hartnett's 1938 home run to effectively crush the Pirates' pennant hopes. Fans remember how Bob Moose's wild pitch in the 1972 playoffs was hard to swallow, but the tragic death of Roberto Clemente shortly afterwards struck players and fans as a much larger loss to the team and humanity. We are left to wonder that if somehow Barry Bonds had stayed a Pirate ... and memories of the Braves' Francisco Cabrera haunts us from a pennant race of a decade ago.

Peterson provides knowledgeable fodder for the baseball junkie in his preludes to each selection. The reader can survey how baseball journalism has changed over the years; attention to grandiose description and hero worship of players such as Babe Ruth may have been more important in the times before television. Some may argue we are now more reliant upon dry statistics than colorful descriptions; *Pittsburgh Gazette-Times* writer Charles Doyle colorfully commented about the 1925 World Series, "Not since Braddock clashed with the French and Indians back around 1750 has there been such fighting in the relative sectors bordering on the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers."

Being a Pirates fan has bred loyalty, elation, and disgust. Laurie Graham writes, "Overriding all the negatives is the simple fact that, in baseball, we find a focus and a context for our

capacity to love." Flowers and poems aside, the selling of the team in the mid-1980s and 1996 left us with the all too-frightening prospect of the Pirates leaving Pittsburgh. As Kevin McClatchy battles the challenges of a small market, Peterson provides an excellent reminder of the rich heritage of one of baseball's most storied franchises.

**Craig Britcher, Museum Exhibits Associate,
Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania**

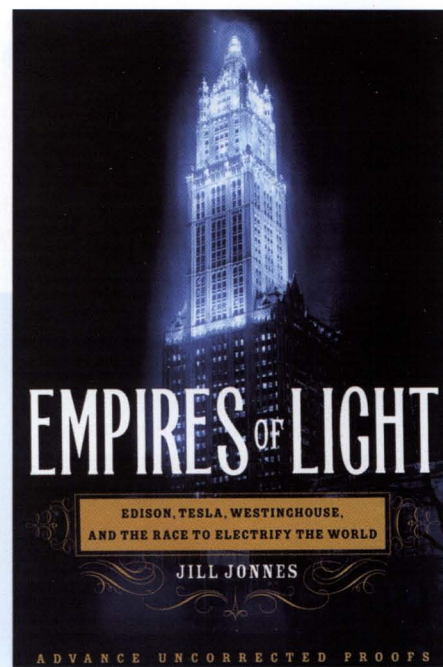
Empires of Light: Edison, Tesla, Westinghouse, and The Race To Electrify the World

By Jill Jonnes

(New York: Random House, 2003).
Illustrations, 430 pp., \$27.95 hardcover

Electricity is taken for granted today. We flick the switch and the lights come on. But few truly understand how electricity works and how it came to be. This book presents the story of electricity from its earliest beginning through to the fascinating period of time when the electrification of the world began. Local readers will especially appreciate the role Pittsburgh plays in the story.

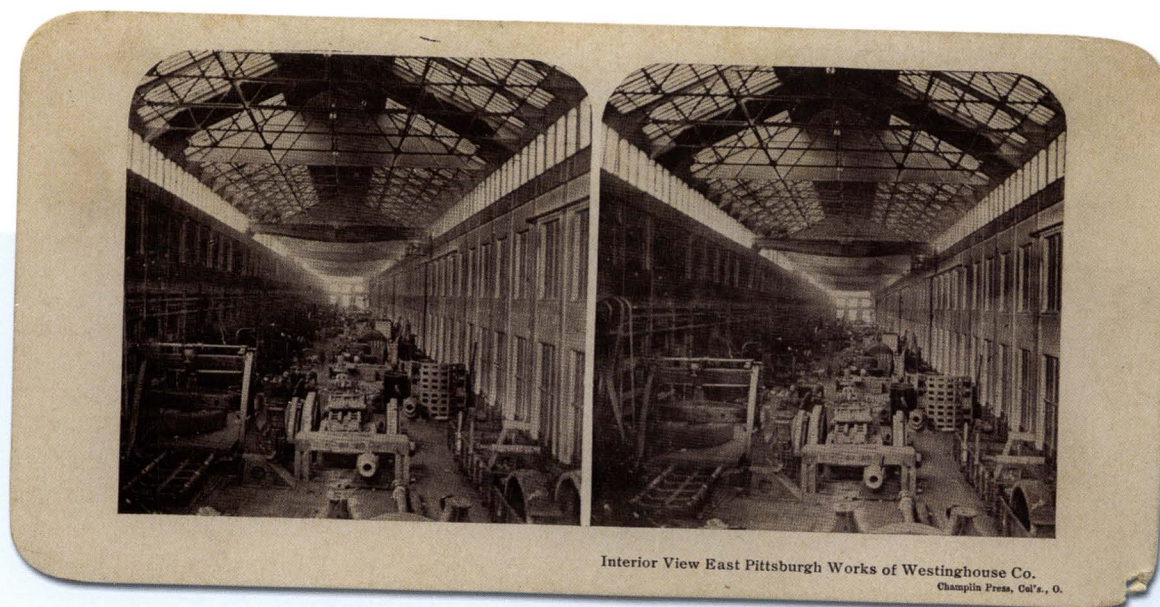
The story is one most deserving to be told, and this book does it extremely well. Jonnes's diligent in-depth research allows her to provide many details and technical explanations, but she has also made the book most interesting to read. The focus is on three talented but quite different individuals: Thomas Edison, the great



American inventor who most people today give credit for all things electrical; Nikola Tesla, a somewhat eccentric Serbian genius who played an important role in the early days of electricity; and Pittsburgh's George Westinghouse, one of America's great industrialists who was determined to benefit all of mankind by electrifying the world. Jonnes also covers other individuals like the powerful and ruthless banker J.P. Morgan, as the story of electricity has many players.

Edison invented his incandescent electric lamp in 1879 and successfully started to provide electric lighting to parts of cities with his central direct current (DC) power plants. Others, like Tesla and Westinghouse, believed direct current electricity had serious limitations. They felt that the true potential of electricity could better be realized by using alternating current (AC) electricity. Thus the stage was set for the "Battle of the Currents." Although Tesla had invented the induction motor which operated on AC electricity and the polyphase system of alternating current, he did not have the wherewithal or resources to make alternating current a success. Edison had become a very respected and powerful person. Only Westinghouse had the audacity and determination to take on Edison and his compatriots in this great battle.

Two of the great events in history related to electricity are covered in detail in the book. The



Westinghouse
stereograph.

Interior View East Pittsburgh Works of Westinghouse Co.
Champion Press, Col'ra., O.

HSWP Library & Archives

first was the successful illumination of the Chicago World's Fair of 1893. Opening night saw the Court of Honor, which was instantly referred to as the Great White Way, brightly lighted by the 92,000 two-piece glass Westinghouse stopper lamps. People could enjoy a great event at night – and not be restricted to visit only during the day. The second was when electricity was sent on April 16, 1895, from the Westinghouse generators that had been installed at Niagara Falls. The great power of Niagara Falls had been harnessed using Westinghouse alternating current electricity. This became the model that was used to electrify the world.

Jill Jonnes tells the stories behind the story of electricity. This book gives one an excellent understanding of the roles that Edison, Tesla, Westinghouse, and others played in the evolution of electric current. It is a fascinating story and a fascinating book – a story that deserves to be told and a book that deserves to be read.

Edward J. Reis, Executive Director, George Westinghouse Museum, Wilmerding, Pa.

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