

Bouquets from the Cannon's Mouth: Soldiering with the Eighth Regiment of the Pennsylvania Reserves

By Robert E. Eberly, Jr.

Shippensburg, Pa.: White Mane Books, 2005

Illustrations, maps, index, bibliography, 373 pp.,

\$34.95 hardcover

Bouquets from the Cannon's Mouth is a non-traditional history of the unchronicled Eighth Regiment of the Pennsylvania Volunteers — historically important and narratively engaging. Using primary sources, *Bouquets* traces the lives of five Fayette County men from their enthusiastic enrollment with the Union forces through battles, injury, and captivity, to their return home and post-war lives. The near-daily descriptions of their four-year journey gives insight into not just the details of battle, but also the struggles of marching and searching for food, the humor and camaraderie of wartime fellowship, and the hardship and humanity borne of great trials. The men's transformation from greenhorns to veterans is palpable.

While the text mainly consists of letters from the Eighth and reminiscences published

soon after war's end, Eberly draws from a deep reserve of primary documents to place the men's journey in the context of the larger war and immerse the reader in the spirit of the time. Of interest is the inclusion of diaries kept by two Eighth Regiment comrades while in Salisbury Prison, North Carolina. Thomas Springer's original diary can be found at the University of Virginia, while James Eberhart's resides in our own History Center's Library & Archives, published in 1973 in *Western Pennsylvania Historical* magazine.¹ Although tables and timelines are intentionally lacking, the soldiers' narratives clearly lay out the regiment's history and give a compelling, authentic account.

Divided into four parts, the first introduces the five protagonists and gives the reaction of the county to the election and secession. Opinions on slavery vary, but all are joined by their commitment to preservation of the Union. The young men are filled with patriotism as they enlist, travel to Pittsburgh for training, and begin their tour of duty. The mood is light heading to Dixie, as they have yet to be tested in battle.

The second section, the heart of the story, chronicles the hardships and brutal engagements that earned the Eighth Regiment and the Pennsylvania Volunteers the reputation of the most tenacious and reliable of the Union forces. The Battles of

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Mechanicsville, Gaines's Mill, Glendale, Second Bull Run, South Mountain, Antietam, and Fredericksburg receive solid treatment from the perspective of the Eighth.

The expiration of the Eighth Regiment's contract of duty begins the third section. While one of the men returned home due to injury, the remaining four chose to reenlist. All were captured at the Globe Tavern, and three spent over 100 days at Salisbury Prison. The parallel captivity diaries of Springer and Eberhart are presented in full. Springer's, published for the first time, comprises a chapter, with footnotes after many entries. Springer dies in November 1864, 103 days into captivity with Eberhart completing the final entries. The following chapter continues with Eberhart's diary, until his (and Isaac Moore's) release and return home in March 1865. Chilling and stark, these accounts relay important documentation of the inhumane conditions of Salisbury Prison, little known today but judged by many to be worse than Libby and Andersonville prisons.

The final chapters bring the soldiers and effects of the war full circle. In addition

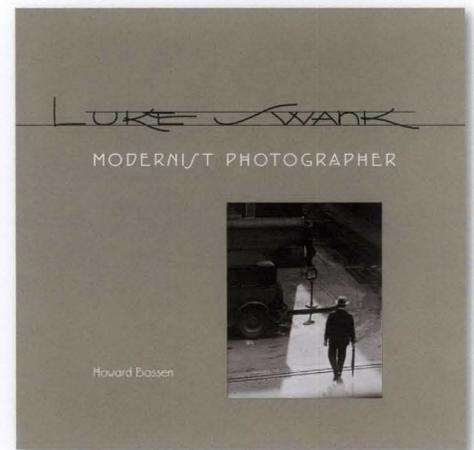
to chronicling the post-war lives of the survivors, Eberly includes a retelling of the 1911 Salisbury memorial dedication to the Pennsylvania Volunteers.

The maps are the sole weakness of the volume. Individual battles are sufficiently illustrated but are not labeled or referenced within the text. The included maps mainly detail troop movements of those engaged with the Eighth; general maps of relevant regions would have been helpful to those without detailed knowledge of Virginia or Maryland's geography.

Through masterful compilation and selection of primary sources, Eberly creates a tremendous historical account that should satisfy both the expert and the reader seeking a great story.

¹ Florence C. McLaughlin, ed. "Diary of Sailsbury [sic] Prison" by James W. Eberhart, Sergt. Co. "G" 8th Pa. Res. Vol. Cor (ps) Also Co "G" 191st Pa. Vet. Volunteer, *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, Vol. 56, No. 3 (July 1973), 211-251.

Lisa A. Lazar is reference librarian at the History Center Library & Archives



Luke Swank: Modernist Photographer

By Howard Bossen

Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005

Foreword, preface, 141 photographs, 64 illustrations, notes, index, 248 pp., \$65 hardcover

The photographs of Luke Swank were well known in the 1930s and '40s, but a half-century later, his work was remembered mostly by archivists and academics. In 2002, Howard Bossen, a professor of journalism at Michigan State who was visiting professor at Carnegie Mellon University, discovered Swank's cache while browsing Carnegie Museum of Art's photography archives. The result is this well-researched and informative book that serves as biography, analysis, and exhibition catalogue for Swank (an exhibition

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of the same name was up this past winter at Carnegie Museum of Art). It includes an in-depth, multi-chapter essay and a generous selection of Swank photographs taken from 1919-1943, divided into six sections: Steel, Circus, People, Transformations, Rural Architecture and Landscape, and This Is My City.

Swank (1890-1944) was born into a noted publishing and sales family in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. A historical marker there notes that his grandfather, James M. Swank, was long-time editor of the *Cambria Tribune*, and until recently, the impressive Swank building overlooked Main and Bedford streets. It had housed the once-powerful Swank hardware company where both Swank and his father worked. In 1911, Swank earned a degree in horticulture from Penn State University. His cousin Earl remembers him as “a good source for a quick loan of five dollars and as a tutor in chemistry.” Swank held a number of divergent jobs including hardware, motor sales, horticulture, dog-training, and as a chemist making gases during World War I.

A self-taught photographer, Swank was nearly 40 years old when he was embraced by the new modernist movement in a show at the Museum of Modern Art. His “Steel Plant” image was exhibited alongside work by such well-known photographers as Berenice Abbott and Edward Steichen. By November 1931, influential New York gallery owner Julien Levy gave Swank a solo exhibition called *Photographs of the American Scene*. From then on, Swank exhibited throughout the country with the likes of Walker Evans, Edward Weston, and Margaret Bourke-White. He was compared to photography notable, Alfred Stieglitz, known for his atmospheric photographs that elevated everyday city scenes to fine art.

The new modernist movement in photography had broken away from the soft-focus techniques of pictorialism and instead embraced clarity of image without manipulation, stressing form above sentiment. As Bossen notes, “With its hard-edged realism it [modernism] was better suited than pictorialism to express the post-World War I fascination with industrial themes of the dawning machine age.”

With Swank, the beauty and intrigue is in the details — objects perfectly placed in light and shadow, the timing of the photograph everything. Bossen succinctly sums up Swank’s intentions, “Swank’s photographs are intimate without being intrusive. Swank

viewed the picture frame as his stage, the people in the frame as actors, and the moments of exposure as the dramatic climax.”

Bossen’s essay is articulate and accessible, whether the reader is familiar with photographic history or not. He tracked down Swank’s distant relatives and childhood friends to unearth much previously undiscovered correspondence. These connections form a fresh portrait of this forgotten modernist, who near the end of his life also worked as a stock photographer for the H.J. Heinz Company in Pittsburgh. Swank captured many exquisitely composed interior and exterior views of Pittsburgh and

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Everett Shinn (1876-1953), *The Green Ballet*, 1943



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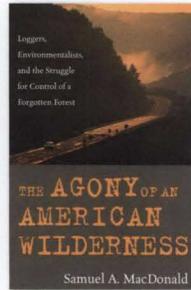
BOOK REVIEWS

Johnstown steel mills (Cambria and Franklin Works) as well as rural compositions of Washington and Lancaster counties. After moving to Pittsburgh in the late 1930s, he began photographing the Strip, Hill District, and downtown. His body of work, spanning the two World Wars, brings to light the intriguing composition and form underlying both the urban and rural American scene.

Sherrie Flick is editorial assistant for *Western Pennsylvania History* magazine

BOOK REVIEW CAPSULES

The Agony of an American Wilderness



By Samuel A. MacDonald
New York: Rowman & Littlefield
Publishers, Inc., 2005
Notes, index, 187 pp., \$21.95
softcover

This well-written, engaging account of the battle over logging in the Allegheny National Forest traces the land's history through oil claims, tanneries, and timber mills to its eventual purchase and stewardship by the

Pennsylvania Game Commission. Under the commission's watch, this "brush heap" turns into a bonanza of Allegheny hardwoods. MacDonald patiently introduces the parties that lay claim to this sought-after patch of land. Each chapter offers a different, thoroughly-researched perspective on the timber industry and its relation to the forest. Interviews, a history of regional logging and environmentalism, and a look at locals versus tourists make this a must-read for those who believe heated environmental controversies only exist on the west coast.

Shadows on a Wall: Juan O'Gorman and the Mural in Pátzcuaro



By Hilary Masters
Pittsburgh: University of
Pittsburgh Press, 2005
Black-and-white
reproductions, 140 pp.,
\$24.95 hardcover

By combining research, interviews, and creative non-fiction, Masters illuminates a fascinating, yet little known, period in Pittsburgh history. The cast of notable characters includes Edgar and Liliane Kaufmann, Frank Lloyd Wright, Diego Rivera, Frida Kahlo, and Juan and Helen O'Gorman. In the midst of a writing residency, Masters becomes intrigued with a large mural painted by Juan O'Gorman on the wall of a library in Pátzcuaro, Mexico. Although Masters does not know it at the time, he soon discovers a connection to his hometown of Pittsburgh: in 1940, O'Gorman was invited by the Kaufmanns to design a mural for the Oakland Y. Although

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he spent six months in Pittsburgh sketching the mural, it was never painted. Masters pieces together the mystery.

Front-Page Pittsburgh: Two Hundred Years of the Post-Gazette



By Clarke M. Thomas
Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005
Illustrated, bibliography, index, xii, 332 pp., \$34.95 hardcover

It has been almost 70 years since J. Cutler Andrews wrote *Pittsburgh's Post Gazette*, and the wait has been worth it. Clarke M. Thomas has updated the history of the first newspaper west of the Alleghenies. A retired senior editor for the paper, Thomas has witnessed many of the notable events since the last published history. Andrews' book was staid while *Front-Page Pittsburgh* makes the subject engaging by offering a much more approachable and readable text. The history of the newspaper and the city are thoroughly entwined, which results in an enjoyable look at Pittsburgh's past, from a different perspective.

Andy Warhol's Time Capsule 21

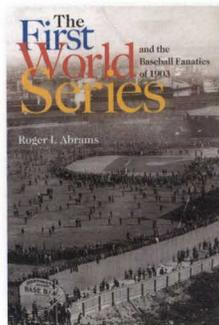
By John W. Smith, Mario Kramer, and Matt Wrbican
(The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh and Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main)
Cologne, Germany: DuMont Literatur und Kunst Verlag, 2003
Color photographs, 286 pp., \$35 hardcover

This book was written in conjunction with the 2004 exhibition of a selection of Warhol's Time Capsules. Described as Warhol's "most extensive, complex, and personal work,"



the book offers a detailed "tour" of one Time Capsule. Four short essays by the Director and Curator for the Museum für Moderne Kunst and the Assistant Director of Collections Research and the Assistant Archivist at the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh provide perspective on these brown boxes — which Warhol randomly loaded with photographs, correspondence, and other ephemera. Accordingly, however, the book lets *Time Capsule 21* speak for itself through 235 glossy pages of color photographs. The reader can turn every page without interruption, exploring number 21 of Warhol's 612 capsules.

The First World Series and the Baseball Fanatics of 1903

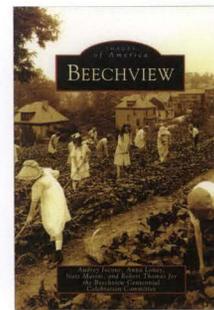


By Roger I. Abrams
Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2003
Illustrations, bibliography, index, 195 pp., \$16.95 softcover

An insight into the pastiche of classes, ethnicities, and economic realities in 19th-century Boston and Pittsburgh is seen through the 1903 World Series. A baseball game, Abrams posits, is a "rare opportunity for the disparate groups ... to meet in one place at one time and root in unison for a common goal." Baseball history, game accounts, and profiles of the colorful

characters involved in the sport are interwoven with histories of immigrant groups and descriptions of the social fabric of each city. Although an interesting read for fans of the early years of the game and of this time period, the heavy emphasis on Boston yields an uneven account that may leave Pittsburgh-minded readers hungry for more.

Images of America: Beechview



By Audrey Iacone, et al.
Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2005
Photographs, 127 pp., \$19.95 softcover

Compiled to celebrate the centennial of Beechview, a town that is now a neighborhood in the City of Pittsburgh, this image-rich publication is a fine example of Arcadia's work in helping towns, cities, and counties throughout the United States compile photographic histories. A number of their titles have focused on Western Pennsylvania; Squirrel Hill, Oakland, Duquesne, and Greensburg were published in the past year. It is well worth your time to check the publisher's website, www.arcadiapublishing.com, to see what else may be of interest from this region.

Those interested in reviewing books should contact

Art Louderback at calouderback@hswp.org.

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