Thus McCullough enlightens us with delightful tales of the Pittsburgh performances of such visiting luminaries as Jenny Lind, Nellie Melba, Lucrezia Bori, and six other grand ladies. Of how “Tristan and Isolde” in 1904 thrilled the German-American community, and—who would guess it?—in 1916 “Siegfried” was staged at Forbes Field. Kudos, too, to the book’s designer, Pittsburgh artist and teacher Robert Bowden.

The book makes clear the role of five women in forming the Pittsburgh Opera Society for its first performance, “Tales of Hoffman,” on March 15, 1940, in Carnegie Music Hall. Rehearsals were held in the home of one of the five, another designed the costumes, and others in the Tuesday Musical Club provided stage furniture from their own homes. Indeed, across the years the leadership for the often-precarious Pittsburgh Opera endeavor was to be provided by women and men other than the industrial and commercial titans who led the way in most Pittsburgh endeavors. Two particular examples: Gurdon Flagg, manager of the Duquesne Club, president of the opera from 1954 to 1984; and Kathleen “Honey” Craig, chair 1984-85 and 1988-89, called “our magnanimous angel” by Director Tito Capobianco. Among other benefactions was her underwriting of the opera’s 1984 American premiere of Verdi’s “La Battaglia di Legnano.”

Hax McCullough’s book is like opera itself; sumptuous, lavishly produced, and crammed with both history and the tidbits of backstage gossip that make the opera world so fascinating.

McCullough provides a 19th and early 20th century background of visiting opera stars and companies who graced the Pittsburgh arts scene but also may have forestalled the formation of a local opera company. One foundation official in a “let them eat cake” comment famously said that Pittsburghers who wanted opera could go to New York for that pleasure.
The key figure for decades was Richard Karp as general manager and music director (1942-1977). McCullough enlivens the account of Karp's accomplishments by the story of his scolding of a 1966 audience at Syria Mosque when it prematurely applauded after the curtain fell by mistake during Act I of "Faust."

The book benefits from McCullough's insider knowledge as publisher of the opera's programs from 1971-1991. This also may have inhibited him in some value judgments. One example: praise for Capobianco as director from 1983 to 2000 with such words as “This powerful and creative leader set high standards for PO productions.” It is not until a later chapter that we glimpse another side, noting that when Mark J. Weinstein took over as general director in 2000, "PO was on a path that would lose $750,000 yearly if changes weren't made. Immediate needs were to control non-essential spending, increase emphasis on education and outreach, and begin a comprehensive fund-raising campaign to refinance the company.” One of the surprising things about McCullough’s book is that while he has lists of about everything imaginable (a virtue of the book), he doesn't have it in sufficient detail for board officers — with a period in the 1980s left out entirely. Also, an index would have been helpful.

These comments aside, here is a delightful book for any Pittsburgh lover of the arts, with its profusion of pictures and descriptions of artistic and supportive notables both from Pittsburgh and elsewhere.

Clarke M. Thomas retired as senior editor at the Pittsburgh Post Gazette. He is the author of Front-Page Pittsburgh: Two Hundred Years of the Post-Gazette and other books.

The Politics of Place: Contentious Urban Redevelopment in Pittsburgh
By Gregory J. Crowley
(Pittsburgh: The University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005)
B/W photos, charts, notes, bibliography, appendix, index, pp. 207, $22.95 softcover

Those interested in reviewing books should contact Art Louderback at calouderback@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
The Politics of Place: Contentious Urban Redevelopment in Pittsburgh provides an interesting perspective on the role and place of an organized and connected citizenry in thwarting and/or redirecting large-scale redevelopment efforts. Through a well-written narrative that focuses on five episodes spanning the late 20th century, Crowley demonstrates the impact that contentious redevelopment had on both the city’s political process and its infrastructure. As a result, he reinforces the role power and influence played in attempts to restore vitality to Pittsburgh.

At its core, Crowley’s analytic framework reflects an amalgam of urban politics, sociology, and social movements literature. The author deftly moves among these areas and demonstrates how lessons from each can and should be combined. His integration of Banfield, Logan and Molotch, Eisenger, Tilly, and Tarrow (among others) is informative and novel. I found his discussion of use values (the value of having and possessing a given resource) and exchange values (the value of selling or harvesting a resource) especially relevant. This distinction is routinely overlooked by many writing about similar redevelopment issues. The pursuit of exchange values and use values is inherently contradictory and a source of conflict, especially when local elites pursue exchange values of place at the expense of the vast majority of the population whose interests revolve around use values. As Crowley suggests, there is no impunity in ignoring such differences.

Despite this, the resulting model is weakened by several factors. First, definitions of central terms (e.g., social control and structure) are provided with little support and even less application. Given their central roles, this deficiency is curious. Other terms critical to an assessment of the efficacy of citizen involvement (cooptation and quiescence, for example) are never invoked. The former could well have played a role in the Highland Park case and the latter in the Lower Triangle-Gateway Center, St. Clair-Spring Hill-City View, and St. Peter’s Church-Lower Hill District cases. Second, despite his interest in the importance of land use to the welfare of American communities, Crowley exclusively turns to urban literature. Important studies from nonmetropolitan areas and communities provide relevant insights into the role that local community action plays in directing government and non-government actions designed to improve a community’s quality of life.

Third, in developing his rationale, the role of steel and elliptically the agglomeration economies generated by it in Pittsburgh are necessarily given significant attention. The role of the larger social context associated with post-World War II exuberance, however, receives less mention. This is curious given how important the GI Bill was to most metropolitan areas of the nation. The GI bill stimulated demand for single-family housing that when coupled to the authorization and implementation of a national highway system...
made formerly exurban reaches prime location for suburban residential and commercial development. The latter obviously had major impacts still being felt by the downtowns of many great American cities.

While adding richness to his argument, the author's use of incomplete and interrupted stories and non-defined names adds questions left unanswered for readers neither familiar with the city nor its politics. For example, Robert B. King's offer to donate his property for use as a park and bird sanctuary was clearly not what the ruling elite were interested in and was parried for quite some time. What tensions did this create in the King-Mellon family and how were they resolved? What was the response after the city eventually accepted his offer? Only partial answers are provided here. Given the role of this family when steel was king, such omissions are not helpful. Nor is the absence of any post-company closing comments from the moderate-income steelworkers displaced by the expansion of the Jones & Laughlin Steel Company. Whether these same families still saw the utility of declaring their neighborhood blighted to assist this industry would provide visceral evidence of their thoughts about the redevelopment political process.

Crowley is at his best in capturing the passions and frustrations of people and the obvious dominance of exchange values in these various urban redevelopment plans. He has provided an interesting and informative perspective on the urban redevelopment process. His selection of cases, while limited, covers a range of situations faced by tenants, resident-owners, and businesses when confronted by a local government with designs on their buildings and property. This book contributes to our understanding of the frustrations aroused by a public taking of private property for sale to other private interests. The fact that the last case occurred so recently indicates we may not have moved very far along in the citizen involvement process. I recommend this book to anyone interested in such issues. For those interested in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, it is a good companion piece to Buzz Bissinger’s book, *A Prayer for the City*, which in a very real way focuses on similar events and issues in Philadelphia.

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**Book Review Capsules**

**Pursuing Peace Across the Alleghenies: The Rodef Shalom Congregation, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1856-2005**

By Walter Jacob, editor (Pittsburgh: Rodef Shalom Press, 2005)
Illustrated, xii, 370 pp. $15.00 hardcover

This book of essays explores the Rodef Shalom Congregation and its significant impact on the community. A small Jewish congregation had formed and dissolved in the early days of the city, then finally formed a permanent group, the Rodef Shalom, in 1856. The essays chronicle the history of the Congregation and also the Jewish experience in the Pittsburgh area. The remarkable story of David Glick, Pittsburgh’s own Schindler during the Holocaust, is also included.

**The Bridges of Pittsburgh**

By Bob Regan, photos by Tim Fabian (Pittsburgh: The Local History Company, 2006)
150 illustrations and maps, bibliography, index, 182 pp., $22.95 softcover

This is a wonderful book about the bridges in our region, both numerous in number and style. It combines the scholarly aspect of Walter Kidney’s bridge book with the thoroughness of Bruce Cridlebaugh’s website, www.pghbridges.com on Allegheny County bridges, and mixes it all with the quirkiness caused by the geography of Pittsburgh to create a very enjoyable book. The text has sections on terminology, history, famous bridge builders, histories of the major bridges and some of the smaller ones, tours, and complete lists of all the bridges in the area, and who is responsible for them. There are many photographs interspersed through the book. It is almost guaranteed there are bridges mentioned that even a lifelong resident will be pleased to discover.

**Industry in Art: Pittsburgh, 1812-1920**

by Rina C. Youngner (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006)
Illustrated (some color), bibliography, index, viii, 188 pp., $29.95 hardcover

This is an interesting look through the eyes of painters and illustrators at Pittsburgh during the amazing growth of its industries. The period covered begins with the idyllic paintings of Russell Smith and ends with the romantic murals of industry by John White Alexander at the Carnegie Museum. The portraits of David Gilmore Blythe and line drawings of Joseph Stella and Jean-Emile Labourer are likewise examined. There is also a long section devoted to illustrators who portrayed Pittsburgh for books and magazines during both quiet industrial periods and the violent 1877 Railroad and 1892 Homestead strikes.

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