



A TALE OF TWO CITIES:  
PITTSBURGH THEN AND NOW

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*Allegheny Institute Report #99-18  
December 1999*

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## Executive Summary

- Pittsburgh was a rapidly growing city in 1900, with a population roughly equivalent to today's. City residents in 1900 did not have, and were not accustomed to, modern conveniences that we take for granted. Therefore, their level of expectation was not as high.
- Many city residents had positive attitudes, and a strong work ethic. These were put to good use by the outstanding opportunities that Pittsburgh offered.
- Light taxation, moderate regulation, and an attitude of restraint towards spending public money, on the part of the Mayor and others, accounted for the climate of opportunity and success.
- The present-day city budget is extremely contentious. Anti-competitive attitudes on the part of the City Council have put a stop to the idea of privatizing city garbage collection that could save millions of dollars.
- Present-day city government is much more centralized than that of 1900, and the Mayor is much stronger. These are the result of the phenomena of public-private partnership, the Great Depression of the 1930's, the policies pursued by David L. Lawrence, and the City Home Rule Charter of 1976.
- Pittsburgh has become very unfriendly towards small business, because of high taxation and frequent use of the doctrine of eminent domain. In 1900, small business was the backbone of city commerce.
- City education a century ago was more rigorous, with fewer options concerning curriculum. Discipline in city schools was much stronger than today.
- Pittsburgh was a safer city a century ago, and local prisons did a better job of weaning inmates away from crime. There is a lot more youth crime today.

- Eminent domain has proven to be of marginal usefulness as a redevelopment tool. The costs of eminent domain greatly outweigh the benefits, and this doctrine should not be used again.
- In short, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Pittsburgh was city where economic freedom and entrepreneurial spirit abounded. At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century economic freedom has been replaced by high taxes, endless regulations and an excessive reliance on government to solve economic problems that are better left to the market.

## Introduction

What was life like in Pittsburgh at the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century? With the approach of a new Century and new millennium, it is instructive to take a close look.

Quality of life has many aspects. In 1900, heavy industry was in its heyday, and the modern conveniences that we take for granted were either non-existent or just beginning. There were no computers, no television or radio, no chain grocery stores, no automobiles to speak of, no HMO's, no air travel, and vacations were for the very rich. Processed food products in standardized containers were a new phenomena. Indoor plumbing was just beginning, and city residents were subject to epidemics of cholera and typhoid fever, before the city water purification system was put in place.

In 1870, there were nine steel manufacturers in Pittsburgh, and "The capital invested in these nine establishments cannot be less than \$4,500,000. The annual production amounted to eighteen thousand five hundred tons."(1) The city steel industry proceeded to grow exponentially, so that by 1904, the capacity of U.S. Steel's Homestead Steel Works was such that the mill "...covered only 156 acres...yet into this Carnegie Steel squeezed 0.7 million tons of iron, 2 million tons of steel and 1.4 million tons of rolling mill capacity, as well as some ancillary plant."(2) The city population also grew rapidly during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries as illustrated by the following table (3):

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>
1870	86,076
1880	156,389
1890	238,617
1900	321,616
1910	533,905
1920	588,343

For the fiscal year 1895-1896, city real estate was valued at \$250,000,000.

By 1899-1900, this figure had increased to \$265,000,000, a 6% increase in only 4 years.(4)

For the majority of Pittsburghers, life consisted of physical labor six days per week, often twelve hours per day. 14-year-old boys worked as runners in many area glassworks, carrying newly finished glass bottles, piping hot, to conveyor belts for packaging. Workers at Andrew Carnegie's Homestead Steel Works labored in the slabbing mills or open-hearth furnaces, toiling as heaters, first or second helpers, or tongmen. They were paid according to the market price of a billet of steel. In 1892 that translated into wages of \$2.27 to \$6.37 per day for a six-day week.(5) Carnegie's workers were relatively well paid. By comparison, workers at Henry Ford's auto plant in the Detroit area did not earn as much as \$5 per day until 1914.(6) Prices were correspondingly low. In 1900, ground

beef sold for seven cents a pound, a loaf of bread was three cents, and a half-gallon of milk brought thirteen cents,(7) and "...a family of four could subsist on \$12 per week."(8) The average steelworker therefore lived very well.

Many Pittsburgh women worked in the newly opened plant of the H.J. Heinz Company, in Allegheny City, where they worked sixty hours per week . They received five cents per hour, and if they advanced to piecework, one cent for each jar they packed correctly. Many packed more than one hundred jars per day. In the Heinz plant, opened in 1890, they enjoyed many amenities. These included a dressing room "which had hot and cold running water...two bathrooms with showers, ...an emergency hospital with two beds, and a matron with some nursing experience."(9) Heinz also provided, free of charge, an on-call company physician, and two dentists. Workers could swim in the company pool, and during the summer, female employees could take carriage rides through Pittsburgh during the workday, at no loss in pay.

However, quality of life also depends on outlook. Pittsburgh was an expanding and growing city in 1900, and the outlook of many reflected that fact. A live-and-let-live, positive attitude, combined with a strong work ethic, prevailed. Opportunity for success abounded, and many became successful. Indeed, an editorial in the *Pittsburgh Leader*, dated June 13, 1908 suggested that each person who "found the old town a good place to make money in" should be asked to contribute (to the Sesquicentennial celebration) "\$100 for every million dollars he is now worth as a result of the exceptional opportunities that Pittsburgh gave him."

An example of the laissez-faire attitude was provided by iron magnate Henry W. Oliver. Oliver's firm of Lewis, Oliver, and Phillips manufactured wagon hardware, which was but a fraction of their business. A small competing firm, the Cleveland Hardware Company, was nearly put out of business when Oliver's firm cut the price of wagon hardware. The President of Cleveland Hardware paid Oliver a visit, and explained the circumstances. Oliver promised to assist the smaller firm. Cleveland Hardware returned to prosperity.(10)

What accounted for the success of so many? "Often overlooked in Pittsburgh's impressive development as America's leading industrial city was the concurrent expansion of the city's middle class, white collar population."(11) How did a viable middle class develop and expand?

#### A. Taxation and City Budget

Some of the answers can be found in the very moderate taxation in turn-of-the-century Pittsburgh. In 1899, taxation in Pittsburgh consisted of a city tax, a South Side special tax, a very small "car tax", on trolley cars, and a miniscule school tax in certain sub-school districts. In addition, there were modest water rents levied on homeowners. The City tax was "Upon all property taxable for State or County purposes taxable 15 mils upon each dollar of valuation, except the property in said city designated as rural..."(12) (A mil is 1/10 cent)

The South Side special tax was set at between 5 and 10 mils, “Upon all property taxable for State or County purposes within the limits of the former borough of East Birmingham...”(13) The “Car Tax” was levied on traction companies-trolley lines-and for 1899, estimated receipts from the Car Tax totaled \$16,000. In addition, homeowners and public schools were charged modest water rents. These were \$2 annually for one room, \$1 for each additional room, and \$1 for each sink. The water rates for boarding houses were \$5 annually for “Boarders not exceeding ten”, and for “Boarders not exceeding twenty-five”, the rate was \$10 annually.

By 1910, the property tax rate had actually fallen to “8.1 mills upon each dollar of the assessed valuation...upon all property taxable for state, county, and city purposes within limits of said city...” Also, by 1910 a city school tax had appeared, “The Central Board of Education having in charge the Pittsburgh School District...three(3) mills upon each dollar of valuation, except as property of said district classified as rural...”(14)There was then no personal income tax in Pittsburgh.

The municipal tax rate on buildings was one-half of the tax rate levied upon land. This latter feature is known as “the graded tax.” In 1916, future Mayor William McNair advocated a higher tax on vacant land (versus buildings), to encourage construction of homes, businesses, and factories.(15) In addition, there were no pollution regulations, only the most rudimentary of building codes, and no minimum wage laws.

The above is in stark contrast to present-day city tax structure. Presently, the city tax on real estate is really four (4) taxes-on land, buildings, real estate transfers, and a school tax on real estate. The tax on land is 184.5 mils, or 18.45 cents on every dollar of assessed valuation; on buildings it is 32 mils. The deed transfer tax is 1.5%, on consideration paid for real estate transfers. The school tax is 59.7 mils, or about 6 cents on each dollar of assessed valuation. Not including the deed transfer tax, the current city and school tax is 12 cents on each dollar of valuation. In 1899, it was 1.5 cents on each dollar of valuation.

In addition, presently there is a tax of 1 mil on gross receipts of wholesalers, a 2-mil tax on retail vendors, an amusement tax of 5% “on the admission price paid by patrons of all manner and forms of amusement.” There is a parking tax, levied on patrons of non-metered lots. This is 31% of parking fees. The occupational privilege tax is \$10 annually, levied for the “privilege” of working in Pittsburgh. There is an income tax of 1% on wages earned by city residents, which comes with an additional 1.875% school wage tax.

The City Council first enacted an earned income tax under the authority of (Public Law) P.L. 1145, passed on June 25, 1947. However, the city wage tax did not actually take effect until March 1, 1954. City Ordinance #15 states: “Imposing a tax for general revenue purposes on salaries, wages, commissions, and other compensation earned during the period beginning March 1, 1954 and ending December 31, 1954. This was a tax of one percent of earned income.

(Source: City Clerks Office)

In addition, there is a business privilege tax, “on gross receipts of a service business, trade or profession in, or attributable to the city”; and institutions and services privilege tax, which is 6 mils “on certain receipts of non-profit, non-charitable institutions.”

The present Pittsburgh City budget is likewise more complicated than that of a century ago. Estimated receipts for 1899-1900 include \$3,975,000 from the city tax, \$800,000 from water rents, \$48,000 from vehicle licenses, \$225,000 in “warrants from state”, \$460,000 from liquor licenses, \$16,000 from the above-mentioned “car tax”, and \$350,135 from “City attorney collections.” Total estimated receipts for FY 1899-1900 came to \$6,163,216.80.

Estimated receipts for FY 1999 are \$334,730,970 (55 times the 1900 level) , including \$113,310,500 from current year real estate taxes, \$42,550,000 from earned income taxes, and \$28,927,500 from parking taxes.(16) These receipts are spent on police-\$63,983,666, fire fighters-\$50,349,331, city employee salaries-\$61,316,281, and \$68,099,493 on debt service-interest paid on bond issues and loans.

As a way to balance a projected \$28.7 million budget shortfall for 1999, Mayor Tom Murphy solicited bids for privatizing city garbage collection. Collecting city garbage is carried out by the Department of Public Works, and costs around \$14 million annually. Privatizing garbage collection”...is one of the ways the city could cut spending, according to a 1996 report called “Competitive Pittsburgh.” (18) Privatization would be in lieu of a \$36 annual garbage collection fee, which Murphy proposed to help balance the 1998 budget. For 2000, the Mayor recommended a \$99 per household garbage fee.

The probability of a private company performing city garbage collection is doubtful. Two trash collection companies, The Allegheny Group and BFI, stated in writing that they would not bid for the job. BFI stated “...it was put off by a City Council resolution denouncing the bid process, and the “amount of financial and personnel resources needed to do the job.” (19) “At least six council members have said they are against privatization, saying it will hurt services and deprive the city of a valuable asset...council passed a resolution to stop the administration from taking bids for garbage collection, saying the process was an unfair pressure on the union for garbage workers, currently in contract negotiations with the city.” (20) As of November, 1999, the City Council remains entirely opposed to privatization.

## B. City Government Over the Last Century

Even more than moderate taxation, the attitude of many in the city government towards spending public money contributed considerably to the climate of achievement and success. The City Sesquicentennial Celebration of 1908 is a case in point. This was the celebration of Pittsburgh’s 150th anniversary, occurring September 27th through October 3rd, 1908, with a special ceremony on November 25th, the day General Forbes’ army occupied the Point. The celebratory attitude of the press was evident in the headline of an article in the Pittsburgh *Gazette-Times*, dated May 25, 1908, “Father Pitt will be Young at

150 Years.” Descendants of William Pitt, Forbes, and George Washington were on hand for the ceremonies. On Friday, October 2, 1908, the cornerstone of the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial, in Oakland, was laid as part of the Celebration.

The cost for the Sesquicentennial Celebration was about \$100,000. An article in the Pittsburgh *Chronicle-Telegraph*, dated June 22, 1908, was entitled, “City Needs Cash for Celebration.” Mayor George W. Guthrie made a strong public appeal for contributions to defray celebration expenses. The previous year, Guthrie had vetoed a city ordinance, which would have appropriated \$2,500 for a Firemen’s Convention. He based his veto on the fact that there was no legal basis for city funding of celebrations of a public character.

Another article in the *Chronicle-Telegraph*, dated June 23, 1908, is entitled, “Opposes Use of the City’s Cash: Controller stands against Expenditure of Money for Sesquicentennial.” The article describes how City Controller E.S. Morrow was against an Ordinance presented to the City Council, by William H. Stevenson, requiring the use of \$25,000 of City funds to pay for the celebration. Morrow was opposed to an expenditure of even \$10,000 of city funds, “. . .I shall not favor even that amount until I am satisfied that the city can legally spend money in that way. . . .” He further stated, “The city cannot afford a draft of \$25,000 on the contingent fund.”(21) The attitude of restraint on the part of Morrow and Mayor Guthrie is evident.

But City Solicitor W.B. Rodgers overturned Morrow, “Who returned a decision, based on one by the Supreme Court, stating in effect that Pittsburgh Councils have a legal right to appropriate money to be applied to celebrations of events relating to the city, state, or nation.”(22) Thus an expenditure of \$10,000 of the City contingency fund was authorized, and paid for decorations. Even so, the Sesquicentennial Celebration was 90% funded by private contributions, and it was very successful.

Present day city government in no way resembles that of 1900. City government in 1900 was more responsive to individuals and small businesses, because it was local in nature. The city council consisted of two legislative bodies, and was therefore referred to as “Councils.” Council members were usually from the ward they were elected to serve. The “Councils” have since been changed to a single chamber body. Council members in 1900 were definitely not the career politicians of today. Henry Gourley, Mayor from 1890 to 1893, was a teacher. His successor, Bernard McKenna, was a fire fighter. McKenna’s successor, Henry P. Ford, was an accountant and sawmill operator.

A century ago, If a resident or businessman needed a problem solved—removal of a nuisance—they went to their ward boss or, if necessary, to City “Boss” Christopher Magee. Magee, through a carefully constructed system of influence, controlled the City Councils and the heads of city departments, to the exclusion of the Mayor. In 1900, the mayor of Pittsburgh was little more than a figurehead.

To be sure, there was a corruption in municipal government. The City Councils were controlled by Magee, who was in partnership with the city department heads, to the exclusion of the Mayor. Through his patronage system of grants and favors, Magee came

to control many politicians. Magee was a Republican, but “nearly one-quarter of the places on the payroll were held by Democrats, who were, of course, grateful to Chris Magee, and enabled him...to wield their influence against revolting Republicans.”(23)

Magee also controlled industrialists and merchants, who “were kept well in hand by many little grants and privileges, such as...wharf rights, and street and alley vacations. These street vacations are a tremendous power...”(24) If a business occupied two consecutive city blocks, with a street or alley in between, the owner simply talked to Magee, and for a price, was granted authority over that section of street. Magee was also the President of the Consolidated Traction Company, a streetcar company. Lincoln Steffens states that Magee did not pay the entire amount of tax on the company’s trolley cars, and failed to live up to the requirement that the traction company “...shall keep in repair the pavement between and a foot outside the tracks”, and used city policemen as crossing guards.(25)

However, there were then many in city government who sincerely desired to further the best interests of city residents. In addition to Mayor Guthrie and controller E.S. Morrow, Councilman William H. Stevenson acquired a reputation as an honest politician. In the words of John F. Kline, a member of the city council, accused of graft, “Stevenson is so straight that when he walks along the street he bends backward.”(26) Stevenson was the head of a successful grocery firm, the G.K. Stevenson Company, started by his father, George K. Stevenson. He served on the city council from 1902 to 1909, and ran unsuccessfully for Mayor in 1909. Both Andrew Carnegie and H.J. Heinz contributed to his campaign. He was one of the founders of the Civic movement, started to make city government more responsive to the people. In response to a Republican sponsored Ordinance calling for the city to spend \$50,000 on alley repaving, Stevenson introduced an amendment requiring that the money be spent only on street repaving.(27) In the administration of Mayor William B. Hays, the city controller was John B. Larkin, known as Honest John, for his efforts to bring integrity and economy into city government.(28)

Present-day city government is much more centralized. The Mayor is much stronger, both in his own right, and relative to the City Council and City department heads, which he appoints. The enormous increase in mayoral power has occurred gradually, but is the result of political and economic events that facilitated the election of David L. Lawrence, and increased his power in office. The phenomena of public-private partnership, and the revised City Charter of 1976 also increased the mayor’s powers.

Centralization began with the development of the automobile. Existing streets were widened to adopt, and new streets caused City neighborhoods to become more interconnected. Examples of connecting roads were the Boulevard of the Allies, built in 1922, which connected downtown with the neighborhoods of Oakland and Squirrel Hill, and the Liberty Tunnels, built in 1931.

The process of centralization was continued by the necessity of instituting smoke and flood control measures. Flooding was a problem to the British garrison at Fort Pitt, and on St. Patrick’s Day, 1936, a wall of water 46 feet high—21 feet above flood stage—

crashed through the downtown business district. 47 people were killed, 2800 were injured, and 67,500 were left homeless. Property loss was estimated at \$50 million.

In addition to flooding, the consumption of tremendous amounts of bituminous coal, by commercial and home furnaces, often turned Pittsburgh dark at noon. In the winter of 1940-1941, "several temperature inversions...prevented the polluted air from entering the atmosphere."(29) The flooding and foul air discouraged corporate managers from remaining in the area. "Solving the problem (air pollution) was the single most important factor in the rehabilitation of the city."(30)

Flood control measures were instituted, and Mayor Lawrence, making a strong case against coal producers and individual coal users, instituted smoke control measures in the fall of 1946. Solving the smoke problem increased Lawrence's popularity. Some called him "the savior of Pittsburgh."(31)

The Great Depression of the 1930's assured the ascendancy of Lawrence, head of the city Democratic party. Prior to the Depression, the Republican party was dominant. "The Depression of the 1930's hit Pittsburgh particularly hard...Unemployment exceeded 25 percent...One study estimated that in March, 1933 more than 200,000 Allegheny County residents were unemployed...In the vital steel industry, less than one-third of the 1929 work force remained on full-time status. Those able to hold onto their jobs were forced to take large pay cuts..."(32) However, "During the first year of the Roosevelt administration,...Pennsylvanians, including 27,000 from Pittsburgh, secured temporary jobs through the Civil Works Administration."(33) During the first two years of its existence, the WPA (Works Progress Administration) spent nearly \$70 million in Allegheny County, 80 percent of which went for worker's wages." (34) By 1935, Lawrence had "...virtually unquestioned control over 150,000 jobs, including 57,000 in Western Pennsylvania alone." (35) Lawrence therefore controlled patronage jobs created by New Deal instituted work programs, and had at least some control over the flow of Federal Government money into Pittsburgh. The disappearance of Republican opposition by 1937 virtually assured Lawrence's election as Mayor.

Lawrence's method of governing was illustrated soon after his election. On February 9, 1946, the Independent Union of Power Workers went on strike against Duquesne Light Company, cutting off all but emergency power to Allegheny and Beaver counties. Lawrence proclaimed a state of emergency, and his first reaction was to call "...the Secretary of Labor in Washington to request that the federal government seize the light company." (36) When President Truman postponed action for 24 hours, Lawrence called a press conference, and verbally attacked the federal government. The strike ended eight months later in a stalemate.

Lawrence's powers grew stronger with time, and events turned in his favor. In 1946, the Allegheny Conference on Community Development (ACCD) took advantage of a state law that gave municipalities the right to condemn and acquire land if an area was certified as "blighted", to begin condemnation proceedings against property owners in the

lower Point area. The Urban Redevelopment of Pittsburgh (URA) was thereby established. The URA's function was to procure private funding for redevelopment, and using the power of eminent domain, acquire private properties for development. These properties were then sold to private developers.

A suit against Point area redevelopment was brought against the City of Pittsburgh, (37) but proved unsuccessful. Point redevelopment therefore began, with the wrecking ball, on May 18, 1950.

However, the Lawrence administration took eminent domain and public-private partnership one step further. For the first time in city history, the doctrine of eminent domain was used for the benefit of a private company. In 1948, Jones & Laughlin Steel Company announced plans to add six new open-hearth furnaces. Sites considered were Aliquippa, Cleveland, Ohio, and Pittsburgh's South Side. The URA, of which Lawrence was chairman, persuaded Jones & Laughlin to select the South Side, "...a 19.5 acre site containing sixty-one workers houses and several small commercial establishments." (38) Michael P. Weber states, "...the existence of the authority (URA) gave Pittsburgh a clear advantage over the other two sites." (39) What was this "clear advantage"? He further states, "In contrast, the firm (Jones & Laughlin) faced the harrowing prospect of negotiating with individual owners in the other two locations." (40) A reasonable person might conclude that these negotiations would be harrowing, but for whom?

At the hearing to secure city council approval for these evictions, "Lawrence explained that the city had been in danger of losing not only the Jones & Laughlin expansion, but the entire industry." His deliberate use of scare tactics here was entirely unnecessary. Pittsburgh was in no danger of losing the steel industry in 1949. Further irony may be found in the fact that those evicted from their property were steelworkers, and open-hearth furnace expansion was one of the main factors causing the disappearance of the steel industry. "It is difficult to determine whether residents were adequately compensated for their property." (41) However, Lawrence backed off when a group of disgruntled citizens threatened to mount a legal challenge to city development of a Highland Park site for the Civic Arena. "Abandoning the Highland Park site eliminated a potential threat to the Renaissance." (42) Critics labeled the Civic Arena project "urban removal rather than urban renewal." Some 1551 families, mostly black, were dislocated to make way for the Civic Arena, and most of these re-settled in already crowded neighborhoods. Weber further states, "The auditorium proved unsuitable for its original purpose, and the Civic Light Opera (the reason for its construction) later abandoned the area." (43) Lawrence had previously exclaimed to the effect that "only the meanest spirited citizen" would oppose city redevelopment, and that such opposition was "morally unacceptable." (44)

Pittsburgh's Home Rule charter of 1976 further increased mayoral power. It states, "The basic form of government is to be the "strong mayor" form. This form is one in which the mayor controls, and has wide powers of appointment over the units of city government, the power to initiate and veto legislation, and to propose the city's budgets." (45) The Charter gave the mayor power to "...hire and supervise most city

employees; appoints members of boards, commissions and authorities, ...submit and veto legislation.” (46)

### C. Education

Education in early Pittsburgh was church based. S. Trevor Hadley, in Only in Pittsburgh, states: “...It had taken more than two decades early in the 19th Century to develop popular support for public elementary schools, and it took even longer to extend that support to public secondary schools. As a result, when Central High School opened, the school was unpopular with the general public.”(47) Central High School was Pittsburgh’s first, opening in 1855. It had two locations before rapidly increasing enrollment forced the Pittsburgh School Board to purchase land and construct a building at the corner of Fulton Street and Bedford Avenue in the Hill District. The new school’s opening, on September 29, 1869, was the occasion for a big celebration. Ten thousand friends of public education, and hundreds of students, marched in a parade, from Penn Avenue and 5th Street to the new building, which was near the present-day Civic arena.

Teachers were well respected at Central High. Their salaries started at \$500 per year, with the high salary just over \$1,000 annually, for a 36-week school year. Writer Willa Cather began her career as an English teacher at Central High, but later left to teach at Allegheny High School, on the North Side. In 1916, the faculty and student body of Central High moved to the new Schenley High School, and Central High became a business school. Business education was popular in turn-of-the-century Pittsburgh.

As the city expanded eastward, public education followed. At a meeting of the Central Board of Education, on December 12, 1893, Mayor Bernard McKenna authorized a city lease of an old market house at the corner of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Miltenberger Street, to be used as a high school. The first commencement of what became Fifth Avenue High School was held on the second floor of this market house. In the spirit of saving public money, the Board of Education did not want to spend \$100 to hold the commencement ceremony in a theatre. The new Fifth Avenue High School cost about \$250,000.(48) Concerning the cost of private education, a year at the Shadyside Academy in 1904-1905 cost \$195.(49) In 1894, there were 68 public school buildings in the city, with 36,000 students and 727 teachers.(50)

School discipline was strict, but not oppressive. The view of one principal was, “...In the four years existence of this school, our directors have not been called upon to expel a pupil from its walls....”(51) Discipline was carried out “...for misconduct...reprimands, public and private, are administered, and, when the nature of the case requires it, the rod is applied....”(52) The types of student offenses listed were, “Whispering, idleness, noisy or careless conduct...quarreling or fighting on their way to and from school...lying, stealing, cheating, profanity, insolence, injuring school property.”(53)

The types of punishment were, "...detention after school hours...reprimand, deprivation of recess for one or two days...expulsion by the Board of Education, corporal punishment, tasks, cold looks and the rod..."(54) Incidents of corporal punishment decreased from a high of 113 during the 1893 school year to only 5 in 1895. Reports of corporal punishment ceased to exist after 1898. The attitude of the Central Board of Education on student discipline was expressed in the Rules and Regulations for the school year ending June, 1873: "The teachers shall practice a kind, firm and judicious discipline in the Schools, and they shall avoid corporal punishment when obedience and good order can be preserved by milder measures."

As of 1997, the minimum requirements for graduation from city high schools are:

1. -Completion of 22 units taken in grades 9 through 12. A unit is one two-semester course. The 22 units must be earned in an academic curriculum, or in an Applied Technology/Career Development curriculum. As a third alternative, a student may elect to attend the Pittsburgh High School for the Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA). There they study one or more of the Fine Arts. The CAPA certificate "...may be substituted for the Academic or Applied Technology and Career Development Certificate.(56)
2. -"All students in grades 9-12 will be required to enroll in a minimum of six periods of instruction per day, per year." (56)
3. -Each student will receive 15 hours of library instruction when "...they are scheduled for English 2 and United States History." (57)
4. -"A student who completes graduation requirements in three years need earn only .75 unit in physical education...." (58)

Both the Academic program and the Applied Technology program require four years of English, three years of Mathematics, three years of science, three years of social studies, two years of Fine and/or Practical Arts, one year of Health, and one year of Physical Education. The Academic program requires two years of a foreign language. The Applied Technology program does not. There is the Pittsburgh Scholars Program (PSP) for exceptional students. "At least 12 of the 22 units required for graduation must be earned in Scholars subjects, grades 9-12...An additional .25 quality point per semester is awarded for each Scholars course successfully completed..."(59) There is also the Centers for Advanced Studies program, which awards an additional 0.5 quality point for each course successfully completed.

A full-time student "...may leave high school prior to the senior year to attend approved colleges full-time at the discretion of the school district...Any student who wishes to leave high school at the end of the junior year must express his/her intentions to do so during the first semester of the 10<sup>th</sup> grade by written request to the school principal. The high school diploma will be awarded upon successful completion of the first full year of the "approved college." (60) A student may also attend college part-time while still enrolled in high school. Also, to obtain a Pittsburgh day high school diploma, a student

must, "...earn, *in actual attendance in Pittsburgh high schools*, (Authors italics) at least 3 of the 22 units required for graduation."

The city high school curriculum a century ago was different in several respects. Four years of English were required, but it was separated into two courses: Writing, and Composition and Declamation. There were four years of mathematics-arithmetic, algebra, geometry, trigonometry, calculus, and civil engineering. Unlike the 1990's, there were four years of foreign language-Latin, with French or German as substitutes. Students were required to take one year of general history, and one year of "History of France and England." In addition, they were required to take "Constitution of the United States", and "Constitution of Pennsylvania." Also, they took two years of chemistry, one year of biology, one year of astronomy, one year of surveying, and two years of philosophy. In addition, they took three years of "vocal music", and one year of bookkeeping.

A century ago, students had to pass difficult examinations to get into high school. Insofar as the author knows, there are no such examinations today. Also, in the 1890's, there were no alternative curricula available, unless a student went to a specific business school.

#### D. Societal Issues

##### *Unemployment*

In times of economic hardship, citizens of Pittsburgh banded together to assist those in need. The Depression of 1893 hit the city particularly hard. A police census of December, 1893, indicated that 4,000 families-about 20,000 people-were in need of assistance. This was somewhat less than 10% of the 1890 city population of 238,617. The Citizens Employment and Relief Committee was organized in response, for the purpose of providing gainful employment to those without work. Anyone in need of work simply filled out a work card, with his/her name, address, and occupation. They were then matched with an opening that suited their skills.

Funding came from the citizens of Pittsburgh. "...about 2,000 subscriptions were received, ranging from 25 cents to \$10,000..." (61) Andrew Carnegie doubled the amount contributed by giving \$125,922. A total of 13,529 people were put to work. In this manner, those in need were assisted to pass through the financial crisis of 1893, without becoming wards of charity.

With the proliferation of government programs designed to assist the unemployed, methods of dealing with unemployment have a different character than those of the 1890's. Instead of a privately funded Citizens Employment and Relief Committee, Pittsburgh now has manpower training programs and training centers. "There are approximately 20 organizations in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County directly involved with manpower training programs. They consist of those organizations actually performing the training...and large and small umbrella organizations responsible for

funding and in some cases coordinating other programs.” The Bidwell Training Center is one such training center.(62)

To be sure, there are in the 1990’s privately funded methods of dealing with the unemployed, but they are in the form of corporate training programs. An article in the *Post-Gazette*, entitled “Forging New Lives from Steel: Heinz Endowments funds program to train 240 machinists”, explains Manufacturing 2000, a program funded by the Heinz Endowment, which trains people between the ages of 18 and 28 to be machinists. The initial grant from Heinz was \$120,000, with another \$600,000 to be spent over the next two years. The article states that Barry Maciak, director of the Institute for Economic Transformation at Duquesne University, which helped start Manufacturing 2000, said that “young people graduating from high school were under the impression that there were no more manufacturing jobs in the area since the closing of the steel mills.” Manufacturing 2000 serves 17 local manufacturers, who “...talked about the difficulties of hiring people. They were constantly telling us they had to turn down sales orders because they didn’t have the workforce to meet the needs.”(63)

As of July, 1998, the unemployment rate in the six-county Pittsburgh area was about 4.3%.(64) This was well under the unemployment rate in 1993, when there were 662, 100 employed in Allegheny County, and 40,200 unemployed, for an unemployment rate of 5.7%.(65) There are no statistics kept in the Pittsburgh area concerning the unemployment rate, and number of employed, for 1900.

### *Crime*

City crime a century ago had a decidedly different character than present-day crime. There were far fewer violent crimes, but more crimes involving gambling and graft. Houses of prostitution were tolerated, but closely watched by city police. In 1907-1908, beat policemen were paid \$3.00 per day, which was “less than the rates paid organized labor in the skilled trades in Pittsburgh, but above the average for...semi-skilled men in the mills.”(66)

Under the administration of Mayor George Guthrie, the city detective bureau was brought under the direct control of the superintendent of police. Guthrie subsequently fired the Chief of Detectives when “he would not get evidence against a Sixth Avenue establishment of common notoriety.”(67) Also, liquor sales in brothels were halted, and brothels were ordered removed from streets with trolley tracks.

There were far fewer violent crimes in Pittsburgh a century ago. The 28<sup>th</sup> *Annual Report of the Allegheny County Workhouse*, dated December 31, 1897, lists 4450 commitments for that year. Out of this figure, a total of two(2) were committed for murder. There were 103 commitments for assault and battery, 3 for attempted rape, and 2 for manslaughter. By comparison, 1369 were for disorderly conduct, 949 were for vagrancy, and 884 were for “suspicious characters.” 62 were committed for “visiting a bawdy house”, while 18 were committed for “keeping a gambling house.”(68)

Prisoners were also treated somewhat differently a century ago. Referring to inmates' deprivation of liberty, the report states, "...But this restraint of liberty must not extend to a restraint in the discharge of their moral obligations. The state may not say to them, "You shall not be honest while in prison: you must not be truthful: you must not earn your own living: you shall not work."(69) Inmates were employed making brooms and mats, but by act of the state legislature, were not allowed to use steam or electrical power.

The frequency of city crime, relative to the population, is much greater at present than in the 1890's. A *Post-Gazette* article, dated May 19, 1998, is entitled "City crime 6<sup>th</sup> lowest among 60 U.S. cities". However, the article states that, "...there were 20, 573 serious crimes in Pittsburgh in 1998." Police chiefs nationwide consider Pittsburgh to be a "safe" city, but by 1900 standards, it is riddled with crime. The contrast between the above figure and the 4450 commitments to the Allegheny County Workhouse in 1897 gives the reader an appreciation for the exponential increase in crime in the last hundred years. In 1900, city population was 321,616.(70) The article quoted above states that city population in 1998 was 368,473.

In 1995, there were 59 crimes of murder and non-negligent manslaughter in the city. (71) Another article in the *Post-Gazette*, dated December 15, 1998, stated: "...the city's overall serious crime rate rose by 4.5 percent."(72)

There is a lot more youth and drug-related crime in present-day Pittsburgh. Another *Post-Gazette* article, dated January 2, 1994, is entitled "Masloff takes pride in balanced budgets, but rues City's failure to control teen gangs."(73) Present-day responses to youth gangs and drug-related crime include locally funded programs, such as the Community Partnership for Safe Children program, "...which is designed to curb youth violence by reducing risk factors such as academic failure, child abuse and illiteracy. (74) Another *Post-Gazette* article, dated February 13, 1995, is entitled "Civilian Crime Patrols on the move in the city", discusses the efforts of Bloomfield Block Watch, Inc., to prevent crime.

But crime in present-day Pittsburgh has been largely handled by the construction of the new Allegheny County jail, on Second Avenue. Overcrowded conditions in the Western Penitentiary and the old County jail resulted in the new prison, which opened in April, 1995. The jail was built so that "...no more prisoners had to be released into the community..." It cost \$147 million, and the cost per bed is about \$47,000. The new jail can house 2400 inmates, compared to 1400 for the old county jail, and the longest time an inmate can be incarcerated is 23 months.(75)

Concerning prison conditions, inmate television viewing is closely controlled, and most have strict daily work schedules that don't permit recreational viewing. Also, the inmates themselves pay for their television watching, not the taxpayer. Inmates are responsible for the cleanliness of their cells. They can earn high school diplomas through GED classes while incarcerated, but not college degrees.

How effective are present-day county prisons in weaning inmates away from crime? Out of a total prison population of 4,093 at the end of 1996, the Western Penitentiary experienced 497 parole violations, about 12.5% of the prison population.(76) Lax enforcement of regulations governing tool privileges at this prison resulted in a big prison break in February, 1996.

If these parameters can be taken as a reliable indicator of prison morale, then the reader might be well justified in concluding that the Western Penitentiary is not terribly effective in reforming prisoners. The Assistant to the Superintendent stated that “they did not keep statistics”, concerning the return of parolees/discharged prisoners. (Author’s telephone conversation with Tim Collins) By comparison, the Allegheny County Workhouse discharged, by due process of law, 4600 inmates, out of a total of 5407, in 1897. There were no figures for re-commitments, so these figures should not be taken as irrefutable indicators of Workhouse success. Nevertheless, it is quite probable that a majority of those discharged from the Workhouse never returned.(77)

#### E. City Business Climate

##### *Renaissance II*

The response of city government officials and leaders in business and education to the final failure of the steel industry was Renaissance II, and cooperative efforts to create a positive environment for high technology companies.

The first reference to Renaissance II was in the inaugural address of Mayor Richard Caliguiri, in 1978. "He cited the goals of neighborhood redevelopment and downtown street improvements. But the agenda quickly expanded to encompass the renewed public-private partnerships and major downtown office expansion." (78)

Mayor Pete Flaherty's emphasis on efficient government, moderate taxation, neighborhood improvement, and opposition to SkyBus—an inefficient mass transit system supported by corporate leaders—was succeeded by Caliguiri's renewed emphasis on the development of the downtown business district. "Caliguiri recognized that Pittsburgh confronted a crisis at least equal to that following World War II. Its century-old economic base was shattered by the 1980's, and the city required a fundamental reconstruction of its economy and quality of life."(79)

By 1978, downtown office buildings were experiencing a near 100 percent occupancy rate. In the 1980's, public-private cooperation brought about private investment, which built One Oxford Center—with its indoor shopping mall—PPG Place, One Mellon Bank Center, Liberty Center, and Two Chatham Center. "A "Fifth and Forbes" revitalization proposal by the Mayor's office in 1990 never materialized. It is doubtful whether these cosmetic improvements could have overcome the more fundamental problems of downtown retailing—suburban competition and the parking and traffic congestion.... It

is also doubtful that the partiality towards food courts in latter-day office towers such as PPG and Fifth Avenue Place can increase the allure of the downtown."(80)

But the decade of the 1990's has indeed witnessed the imminent materialization of "Fifth and Forbes." The state has pledged \$10 million for this project, which will be used "...to pay for site acquisition, demolition and relocation of current businesses."(81)

The development will start just west of Smithfield Street and extend to Liberty Avenue, on both sides of Fifth and Forbes Avenues. The project "...is expected to cost from \$170 million to \$200 million dollars." If the cost is \$200 million, "...Urban Retail Properties, the company now negotiating a development agreement with the city, would shoulder most of that load...."(82)

On the future of current businesses in the target area, Mayor Tom Murphy stated: "We have no interest in driving these retailers out, but I think we all recognize that we need to give people a reason to shop downtown, and we need a mix of stores that's different than we have now." The list of businesses in the new "Fifth and Forbes" will include Lazarus, Saks Fifth Avenue, Lord & Taylor, Computer City, Finish Line, Polo, J.Crew, FAO Schwarz, Victoria's Secret, Abercrombie & Fitch, and Borders Books & Music. These are large national companies. There are no single-proprietorship businesses in the list.

In a *Post-Gazette* article entitled, "Merchants Wary of Development Plan", (83) Sook Kay, proprietor of Eastern Wigs, on Fifth Avenue is quoted, "I do not like it ("Fifth and Forbes")They are trying to take in our business, and it is not good. The project is the idea of a few powerful people." The article stated that "at least five people" in Sook's shop could be put out of work. Sook is further quoted, "We already have Kaufmanns in town. What do we need Lazarus and other big[retail stores] for?"

### *Cooperative Efforts*

Public-Private cooperative efforts to improve Pittsburgh's economy have met with mixed results. In 1984, then state representative Tom Murphy persuaded City and County officials to coordinate requests for capital funding. The result was a public/private coalition, which included representatives of city and county government, private corporations, the Pennsylvania Economy League, CMU, and the University of Pittsburgh. The coalition came to be known as Strategy 21. One of Strategy 21's most important funding requests was for the creation of a new airport.

The opening of the new Pittsburgh International Airport in 1992 was responsible for the creation of 17,600 jobs in Allegheny County, "Yet the airport's economic stimulus had not lived up to expectations by the mid 1990's."

"What emerges beyond the vision of a modern airport with vast economic potential is a region which government officials battle over political turf, the economy is threatened by the instability of a major employer (USAir), taxes are inordinately high and some existing buildings and land are haunted by environmental neglect."(84)

In addition, four companies left the city in 1991 for suburban industrial parks. (85) These parks were provided by the Regional Industrial Development Corporation (RIDC), a developmental agency founded in 1962. It established three industrial parks outside the city-O'Hara Industrial Park in Blawnox, in 1964; Thorn Hill Industrial Park, in Warrendale, in 1971; and Park West, near Pittsburgh International Airport, in 1979. These three parks have "...more than 200 companies and 15,000 employees." (86)

In 1991, then state representative Tom Murphy complained, in the state legislature, that "...RIDC was using public funds to develop suburban industrial parks that were drawing businesses from distressed areas in Pittsburgh. Murphy also put forth that "...the RIDC was not implementing the goal of the Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority Act, which was "to help businesses relocate and create jobs in distressed areas.""(87) Frank Brooks Robinson, president of RIDC, replied by stating, "...that companies could not be forced to relocate where they did not want to go..."(88)

The state of Pennsylvania played a greater role in regional economic development than it did in Renaissance I. An example of this was the Ben Franklin Partnership, first given impetus by Governor Richard Thornburgh. Ben Franklin was established in 1982, and linked higher education with the private sector through the creation of technology centers. Ben Franklin distributed \$6 million to Western Pennsylvania in 1991, and "...claimed to have created 3,711 jobs in its first decade and to have played a role in launching 208 new companies..."(89)

Further examples of public-private cooperative efforts center around the development of local universities as research centers. Both the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie-Mellon University greatly expanded their research and development activities. Under

Chancellor Wesley Posvar, "...who viewed higher education as a form of entrepreneurship, a provider of services to government, business, and the local community."(90) At the urging of Posvar, Chevron donated its Gulf research center in Harmarville to Pitt. It became known as the University of Pittsburgh Applied Research Center—U-PARC. It consists of "...fifty four buildings on eighty five acres", and by the 1990's, "...it accommodated 130 companies and 1,200 workers..."(91)

In 1984, the Department of Defense awarded CMU "...a five-year, \$103 million contract to establish a Software Engineering Institute (SEI). Its purpose is to develop software that supports weapons development.(92)

### **Pittsburgh—Past, Present, and Future**

Life in America, and in Pittsburgh, was markedly different a century ago; in some ways better, in some ways unquestionably worse. The regulatory aspect of city government was almost non-existent. Business taxation was very moderate. Output of the iron, steel, and glass industries was growing fast, and these industries had not yet matured. Those times were definitely not "the good old days" for most citizens of Pittsburgh. They labored ten or twelve hours per day for meager pay, six days per week, often in wretched circumstances. Nevertheless, many managed to save enough money to send for relatives still overseas.

But there was a celebratory, optimistic outlook pervading the city. Sometimes it took the form of patriotism, as in the Sesquicentennial celebration. Patriotism, however, was not limited to celebrations. Lieutenant Friend W. Jenkins, of Allegheny City, was a flag officer on the *U.S.S. Maine* when it blew up and sank in February, 1898. Jenkins was killed in the explosion. His funeral was the largest military funeral in Western Pennsylvania up to that time. Several thousand people attended the ceremony at Uniondale Cemetery, and the intersection of Grant and Fifth Avenues was roped off. (93)

Some of the changes in city life over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have been beneficial. Pittsburgh is certainly a healthier, cleaner, and more attractive city, as a result of smoke and flood control measures, and park and road construction. Initiatives resulting in the development, as research centers, of the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie-Mellon University, have provided some measure of badly needed stability. The development of the health care industry has done likewise. Also, Pittsburgh's many cultural attractions have ensured a decent quality of life. However, research, health care, cultural amenities, and service industries have still not filled the gaping hole left by the failure of the steel industry.

Solutions to Pittsburgh's future are neither simple nor easy. What are the parameters that determine the city's competitiveness? One is city receptiveness towards small business. Small business has been the backbone of city commerce since General James O'Hara's Point Brewery (Circa 1803). Large companies, such as Carnegie Steel, H.J. Heinz, the Pittsburgh Reduction Company (ALCOA), Pittsburgh Plate Glass, and the Pennsylvania

Railroad, received the attention of the press. But in 1870, there were no less than nine (9) steel firms in the city. In addition, there were many small to medium sized manufacturing firms and retail establishments. A few examples were the George K. Stevenson grocery firm, the South Side glass firm of Thomas Wightman, and various steam engine manufacturers.

But Pittsburgh has become very unfriendly towards small business. Although various state initiatives, such as the Ben Franklin Partnership, have provided start-up capital for high-tech firms, many have located outside the city. An article by Jeff Sewald, in *Executive Report* (May, 1992), states, “According to Murphy (then state representative Tom Murphy), the small business friendly environment of the early 1980’s has turned sour. The city has become difficult for small business, city Finance Director Ben Hayllar concedes.”

One reason for the difficult environment is ruinously high taxation. The above article further quotes Hayllar, “The major corporations in the city do not pay mercantile or business privilege tax. They are exempt. In essence, the only people who pay those taxes are the little guys. The state general assembly...granted exemptions for manufacturing...and anything that is regulated—banks, insurance companies, and so forth. The only guy left is the shoemaker on North Craig Street. And It’s a tax on gross, as opposed to profit, which is unfair. “ Hayllar was city Finance Director under Mayor Sophie Masloff.

Another reason for the difficult environment is the city’s frequent use of the doctrine of eminent domain. The city first used eminent domain in 1949 to facilitate a Jones & Laughlin open-hearth furnace expansion on the South Side, then used it to condemn private properties in the Point area, to pave the way for Point State Park construction. Eminent domain has been used many times since then. These occasions include, but are not limited to, the near eviction of residents in Highland Park, to make way for the planned Civic Arena, and the actual eviction of 1551 families in the Lower Hill area, where the Civic Arena was eventually built. Eminent domain has also been used for the building of Three Rivers Stadium, Two Chatham Center, PPG Headquarters, the recent near eviction of the Pittsburgh Wool Company, and will most certainly be used to evict small businesses for the “Fifth and Forbes” redevelopment project.

How effective has eminent domain been as a redevelopment tool? Is Pittsburgh a more competitive city as a result of its use? 61 steelworkers and their families, and several small businesses, were evicted to make way for the Jones & Laughlin open-hearth expansion. Open-hearth expansion hastened the demise of the steel industry. Was Pittsburgh made more competitive? No.

Nobody will argue against the utility of Point State Park, which definitely makes the city a better place to live. But why is this area still designated as “blighted”? The original purpose for the construction of the Civic Arena was to build a home for the Civic Light Opera. It proved unsuitable for that purpose. The cost of the Civic Arena, both in

monetary and human terms, was very high. Was Pittsburgh made more competitive by the building of the Civic Arena? No.

Eminent domain was used to build Three Rivers Stadium. Has it brought people to Allegheny County, as originally publicized? No.

The building of skyscrapers such as PPG Place has solved, at least temporarily, the downtown office space problem. Will the “Fifth and Forbes” redevelopment make downtown Pittsburgh more competitive by bringing in large retailers? It is hard to see how the city will compete with the free parking offered by suburban shopping malls. It is definitely “in the public good” to keep small business in the city. The benefits of eminent domain—Point State Park and more downtown office space—have not outweighed the cost. The cost has been the eviction/relocation of dozens of small businesses, thousands of families, and the setting of dangerous precedent for further increases in government power.

The new century should continue to prove the marginality of eminent domain as a redevelopment tool. Perhaps the 21<sup>st</sup> Century will also see a restoration of those conditions—moderate taxation, smaller and more efficient government, fewer regulations—and a general commitment to economic freedom that allowed Pittsburgh to become the number one industrial city in America, just a century ago.

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