ONE

The Balance of Life and Work

Pittsburgh, the "Renaissance" and "Cinderella" city of urban renewal after World War II, projected a more squalid image throughout most of its history. It was the "Smoky City," America's classic Coketown. Few communities were so frequently compared to hell. A visitor in the 1880's felt as though he had "reached the outer edge of the infernal regions. . . . One pictures, as he beholds it, the tortured spirits writhing in agony, their sinewy limbs convulsed, and the very air oppressive with pain and rage." And Lincoln Steffens never forgot his first impression: "It looked like hell, literally."[1]

Social critics, by the early twentieth century, likened Pittsburgh to a human as well as a physical "inferno." Labor conditions were "horrifying"; men were treated as "cogs" and "animals." The journalist Samuel Hopkins Adams, after an investigation of the city's health problems, arrived at the morbid conclusion that the infant mortality rate was too low. It might be better, he reflected, "for the unfortunate and innocent victims themselves, and certainly for the community at large, that this puny, helpless breed of hunger, filth, and misery which creeps about the city's man-made jungles, should succumb in infancy to the conditions that bred but cannot support them."[2]

[1] Willard Glazier, *Peculiarities of American Cities* (Philadelphia: Hubbard Brothers, 1885), 332, 333; *The Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1931), 401.

[2] "In the Interpreter's House," *American Magazine,* **69** (September 1909), 518; James Oppenheim, "The Hired City," *American Magazine,* **70** (May 1910), 38; Samuel Hopkins Adams, "Pittsburgh's Foregone Asset, the Public Health: A Running Summary of the Present Administrative Situation," *Charities and the Commons,* **21** (February 6, 1909), 945.

Pittsburgh was a symbol as well as a city. It was synonymous with the spectacular advance of American industry, and the byproducts: labor unrest, poverty, assimilation of a heterogeneous immigrant working force, and disruption of community cohesion. Pittsburgh was also the symbol for a broader metropolitan and regional complex whose one unifying force was business enterprise. Whether conceived as city, district, or region, Pittsburgh was an economic rather than a civic entity. Economic rationalization existed in a context of governmental and social fragmentation. In America's representative industrial center, both physical environment and social institutions were shaped by a relentless economic discipline.

The city of Pittsburgh sprawled out in all directions from the confluence of the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers. East of the Point, where the rivers joined, was Pittsburgh's cramped central business district. The Ohio River flowed westward past Pittsburgh's North Side (Allegheny City before 1907) and West End. Most of the flatland fronting on all three rivers was preempted by industrial and commercial enterprises. The desecration of a superb natural environment—one of America's most spectacular in its combination of water-breaks, topography, and verdure—was total. "Man befouled the streams, bedraggled their banks, ripped up the cliffs, hacked down the trees, and dumped refuse in their stead. He sowed the imposing heights with hovels and set beneath them black mills to cover everything far and wide with a film of smoke."[3]

The metropolis had some redeeming features. There were the giant Schenley, Highland, and Riverview Parks and the fascinations of the river scene. Spacious mansions and homes dotted the suburban East End. H. H. Richardson's downtown county courthouse and jail had enriched America's architectural heritage since the 1880's. It sparked a Romanesque revival well suited to the elephantine stone and brick architecture favored by Pittsburghers.[4] The city also possessed an elaborate "Civic Center"

[3] Robert Haven Schauffler, *Romantic America* (New York: Century Company, 1913), 71.

[4] On Richardson and the Romanesque, see James D. Van Trump, "The Romanesque Revival in Pittsburgh," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, **16** (October 1957), 22–28.

in its Oakland district adjoining Schenley Park. Here was the showplace of Pittsburgh culture, and an enduring testimony to the follies of the City Beautiful movement that had been inspired by the Chicago Fair of 1893. The Civic Center became the "cosmetic," as Mumford termed it, applied to the ugly sores of the nineteenth century industrial city.[5]

As one left the city and penetrated the hinterland, visual or cultural amenities became scarce. Allegheny County, roughly coterminous with the Pittsburgh industrial district, contained a population of little over 1 million in 1910. Of these, 271,000 were foreign-born, and another 342,000 were the children of foreign-born. A procession of mill towns lined the rivers, especially the barge-laden Monongahela, drab and muddy as the atmosphere of the coal and steel communities it passed on route to Morgantown, West Virginia. Surrounding Allegheny were the five other counties that comprised the Pittsburgh region: Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Washington, and Westmoreland. The 4500 square miles of the Pittsburgh region claimed a population of 1.6 million in 1910 (534,000 of whom resided in the city of Pittsburgh).[6]

[5] The Oakland civic center area, then known as the Schenley Farms district, included the Carnegie Institute (library, museum, and music hall); Carnegie Technical Schools (Carnegie Institute of Technology); University of Pittsburgh; Rodef Sholem Synagogue; Soldiers' and Sailors' Memorial; Pittsburgh Athletic Club; Masonic Hall; University Club; Colonial Club; Twentieth Century Club; Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania; Forbes Field; Schenley Hotel; First Congregational Church; First Baptist Church; and Calvary Church. Many of the buildings were designed by two firms: Palmer, Hornbostel, and Jones; and Janssen and Abbott. See Aymar Embury II, "Impressions of Three Cities, III, Pittsburgh," *Architecture,* **31** (April 1915), 105–09; and Montgomery Schuyler, "The Building of Pittsburgh," *Architectural Record,* **30** (September 1911), 229 ff.

[6] Bertram J. Black and Aubrey Mallach, *Population Trends in Allegheny County, 1840–1943* (Bureau of Social Research, Federation of Social Agencies of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County, April 1944), 2, 4; and *Economic Study of the Pittsburgh Region* (conducted by the Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association), Vol. II, *Portrait of a Region,* Ira S. Lowry (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1963), 37, 39.

The definition of the six-county Pittsburgh region follows the usage of the *Economic Study of the Pittsburgh Region* upon which I have drawn liberally for the following regional economic analysis. The other two volumes are *Region in Transition* and *Region with a Future,* also published in 1963. Although this study does not include Fayette County in the defini-

The regional economy had once been balanced, and included a large agricultural sector. In the quarter century after 1800 Pittsburgh served as a major trade entrepot for markets to the west and south. Ready access to raw materials such as coal and timber soon fostered industrial activity: iron-smelting, metals fabrication, textiles, boat building, and the manufacture of glass-stone-clay products. The locational advantages that had stimulated Pittsburgh's commercial growth diminished with the arrival of the railroad, decline of the river trade, and competition from cities closer to western markets. Uniquely dependent upon locational advantages throughout the nineteenth century, Pittsburgh responded with a maximum exploitation of its competitive superiority in raw materials (notably mineral fuels) needed for heavy industry.

The Pittsburgh region's preeminence in iron and steel production after the 1880's was inseparable from the adoption of coke as the chief iron-smelting fuel. Pittsburgh area manufacturers had ready access to the nearby Connellsville coke fields (Fayette County), whose beehive ovens produced the best metallurgical coke in the United States. As long as coke costs represented the key differential in pig iron (hence steel) costs, no other region could compete. Pittsburgh's hegemony would end only when the semi-monopoly in blast furnace coke was undermined in the twentieth century by the development of by-product coke ovens, which were more economical when situated near the furnaces rather than the mines. This technological innovation facilitated the use of competing coals, and made access to new, rapidly growing markets in the west more important than availability of a single source of coking coal.

The regional economy and community system were fixed in the period 1880–1910, when Connellsville coke established Pittsburgh as the leading iron and steel producer. Coal mining employment grew steadily, reaching a peak of 82,000 by 1914 in the six-county region. The prevalence of cheap fuel, including natural gas, stimulated the growth of the glass industry. Another regional specialty, heavy electrical machinery and transformers, was

tion of the Pittsburgh region, its economic ties with the other counties were close in the early twentieth century.

launched by George Westinghouse; by 1899 the region's proportion of total national employment in electrical manufacturing was 15.3 percent. By the early twentieth century, the Pittsburgh region had developed an economic mix that distinguished it from most other metropolitan areas—an over-specialization in a limited range of heavy industrial enterprises and a concentration of the labor force in the large plants associated with its specialties.

Metal production, more than any single factor, shaped the regional work and community system. The era of steel arrived when Carnegie opened the Edgar Thomson works at Braddock in 1875. This was followed by a rapid expansion of steel facilities, which lasted until 1890. A second period of expansion occurred between 1900–1903. The opening of the Aliquippa works of Jones and Laughlin around 1909, and the Midland Works of Crucible Steel in 1911, marked the last major new plant construction in the region.

Fierce competition in the steel industry until the formation of the United States Steel Corporation in 1901 profoundly influenced labor relations. It led, particularly in the Carnegie domain, to a managerial obsession with cost reduction. One expression of the drive for economy was technological innovation, which reduced both costs and the industry's dependence upon skilled labor. Costs were also controlled by disassociating labor productivity from wage levels; increased productivity led frequently to reductions in tonnage rates. The ability of the industry to economize in its labor costs hinged, ultimately, upon the suppression of unionism. This policy was successfully inaugurated with the defeat of the Homestead strikers in 1892. Company power to control working conditions was reinforced by political influence in the mill towns and by divisions within the labor force between skilled and unskilled, American- and foreign-born. The era of comparatively enlightened, paternalistic management after 1901 was designed primarily to cement the loyalty of the skilled worker. For the unskilled, foreign labor force, who constituted the majority, continuity of employment and a degree of mobility apparently sufficed to insure stability.[7]

[7] See David Brody, *Steelworkers in America: The Nonunion Era* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960).

In this master industry of the Pittsburgh region, the destruction of unionism, company political influence, and ethnic fragmentation produced an enlightened despotism, at best, and a ruthless suppression of dissent, at worst. The ultimate control lay in the use of force, as at Homestead in 1892 and during the great steel strike of 1919, supplemented by an elaborate espionage system to root out malcontents. John Fitch, during his investigations for the Pittsburgh Survey, found that men feared to discuss mill conditions or politics. "I doubt," he explained, "whether you could find a more suspicious body of men than the employes of the United States Steel Corporation. They are suspicious of one another, or their neighbors, and of their friends." At a time when over 500 men a year were killed in the industries of Allegheny County, one worker at the Homestead works assured Fitch that he had never heard of any dangers or seen anybody get hurt. The men believed in the existence of Corporation secret service departments, whose agents were "working shoulder to shoulder at the rolls or furnaces with honest workmen, ready to record any 'disloyal' utterances. . . ."[8]

In the absence of any significant countervailing power, the business leadership was free to shape the life of the region. This had led, by the early twentieth century, to the mutilation and pollution of the physical environment, and to a low priority for housing, health, and social welfare institutions. It was the discrepancy between the level of centralization, coordination, and planning in the economic sector, and the failure to apply similar techniques to environmental and social change, which constituted the main theme of the Pittsburgh Survey of 1907–1908.

The Pittsburgh Survey was not the product of widespread local demand for social criticism and reform. It was engineered by a small group of Pittsburgh business, professional, and welfare leaders in collaboration with the Charities Publication Committee of New York (later Survey Associates). The latter, the official sponsor of the Survey, had undertaken an investigation of social conditions in Washington, D.C. in 1905. Published as a special number of *Charities and the Commons*, the Wash-

[8] John A. Fitch, *The Steel Workers* (New York: Charities Publication Committee, Russell Sage Foundation, 1910), 214, 215, 219.

ington study aroused the interest of Alice B. Montgomery, chief probation officer of the Allegheny Juvenile Court. Her proposal for a similar investigation of Pittsburgh was strongly endorsed by Frank Tucker, a member of the Committee and former journalist. William H. Matthews, headworker at Pittsburgh's Kingsley House settlement, played an important role in lining up local support. Prominent Pittsburghers who consented to serve as references included Mayor George Guthrie, H. D. W. English, president of the Chamber of Commerce, and Judge Joseph Buffington of the United States Circuit Court.[9]

A field staff invaded Pittsburgh in the fall of 1907. It was decided, on the basis of their reports, to expand the scope and depth of the inquiry beyond the "journalistic diagnoses" originally planned; and the newly-organized Russell Sage Foundation granted $27,000 in three installments to finance the project.[10] The main investigations were completed by the spring of 1908, supplemented in 1909 and 1910 by examinations of children's institutions, taxation, and labor law administration. In November, 1908 a graphic exhibit was held at the Carnegie Institute.[11] Survey findings were published in three successive monthly is-

[9] Paul U. Kellogg, "The Social Engineer in Pittsburgh," *New Outlook*, 93 (September 25, 1909), 165–66; and Paul U. Kellogg, "Field Work of the Pittsburgh Survey," in *The Pittsburgh District: Civic Frontage* (New York: Survey Associates, Russell Sage Foundation, 1914), 492–515.

[10] The Survey was launched with a contribution of $1000 from the Charities Publication Committee, supplemented by the following sums from Pittsburgh sources: Civic Club, $50; H. J. Heinz, $100; Wallace H. Rowe, $100; Benjamin Thaw, $50; and Mrs. William R. Thompson, $50. The first Russell Sage grant of $7000 was allocated in the spring of 1907. *Ibid.*, 497–498; John M. Glenn, et al., *Russell Sage Foundation, 1907–1946* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1947), I, 211.

[11] Paul U. Kellogg, "The New Campaign for Civic Betterment: The Pittsburgh Survey of Social and Economic Conditions," *Review of Reviews*, 39 (January 1909), 77–81. The Exhibit was the first general one on social conditions and was based upon specialized precedents like the Tenement House Exhibition of the New York Charity Organization Society in 1900. It was sponsored by a local Citizens' Reception and Entertainment Committee, headed by Oliver McClintock and organized by Benjamin C. Marsh, secretary of the New York Committee on Congestion of Population. The Exhibit included material on typhoid fever and pure water, model company housing, the composition of the labor force, stogy manufacture, and Homestead.

sues of *Charities and the Commons,* beginning in January, 1909, followed by six summary volumes (1909–1914).[12]

The Pittsburgh Survey was a unique experiment in American social and community analysis. Never before had so many specialists been drawn together to explore so many facets of a community's life. The field staff and contributors to the published reports constituted an honor roll of authorities in social welfare and social investigation. The Survey was equally distinctive in its effort to explore a wide range of social, industrial, and civic issues, and relate them to each other. It differed, in this respect, from earlier but more limited investigations of housing, health, cost of living, or vice in American cities. Third, the Survey, focusing upon the wage-earning population, attempted to "reduce conditions to terms of household experience and human life," to put institutions to the "test of a distinctively human measure."[13] It achieved, in this connection, an impressive synthesis between the statistical, empirical perspective of the census report, and the vivid, personalized touch of the journalist.

[12] Elizabeth Beardsley Butler, *Women and the Trades, Pittsburgh, 1907–1908* (New York: Charities Publication Committee, Russell Sage Foundation, 1909); Margaret F. Byington, *Homestead: The Households of a Mill Town* (New York: Charities Publication Committee, Russell Sage Foundation, 1910); Crystal Eastman, *Work-Accidents and the Law* (New York: Survey Associates, Russell Sage Foundation, 1910); Fitch, *The Steel Workers; The Pittsburgh District: Civic Frontage; Wage-Earning Pittsburgh* (New York: Survey Associates, Russell Sage Foundation, 1911).

The Pittsburgh Survey led, in 1912, to the establishment of a Department of Surveys and Exhibits in the Russell Sage Foundation. After a few years, survey technique shifted from appraisals of general conditions to specialized investigations such as that conducted by Leonard P. Ayres on education in Cleveland. On the origins and development of the survey idea, see Paul U. Kellogg, "Our Hidden Cities: And the American Zest for Discovery," *Survey,* **60** (July 1, 1928), 391–392, 409–411, 416; Paul U. Kellogg and Neva R. Deardorff, "Social Research as Applied to Community Progress," First International Conference of Social Work, *Proceedings* (1928), I, 784–831; Shelby M. Harrison, *The Social Survey: The Idea Defined and its Development Traced* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1931).

[13] Paul U. Kellogg, "The Spread of the Survey Idea," New York Academy of Political Science, *Proceedings* (1911–1912), 476; "The Pittsburgh Survey: Of the National Publication Committee of Charities and the Commons," *Charities and the Commons,* **19** (March 7, 1908), 1667.

Finally, the Pittsburgh Survey was notable for its action orientation. The findings were too timely, the issues too pressing, to await publication in book form. As the studies proceeded, they were interpreted through "luncheon meetings, newspapers, magazine articles, pamphlets, addresses, exhibits."[14] And the Survey attempted to stimulate and link up with local reform efforts in health, housing, taxation, charity organization, and other fields.

Paul U. Kellogg, editor of the Survey, and his colleagues emphasized that Pittsburgh had not been singled out as some monstrous aberration among American communities. To the contrary, they stressed the city's representative qualities; their effort would not have been worthwhile if it had merely local significance. This was the whole point of the endeavor, despite misunderstanding by native Pittsburghers who reacted with "feelings of mingled humiliation and indignation" because they were "held up as a money grasping people, with little of the milk of human kindness." Pittsburgh, Kellogg insisted, "is not merely a scapegoat city. It is the capital of a district representative of untrammeled industrial development, but of a district which, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, for vigor, waste and optimism, is rampantly American."[15]

Edward Devine of the New York Charity Organization Society summarized the indictment against the "rampantly American" city of Pittsburgh. Nothing disturbed the authors of the Survey more than the "incredible amount of overwork by everybody, reaching its extreme in the twelve-hour shift for seven days in the week in the steel mills and the railway switchyards." Wages, for the majority of mill workers, were not commensurate with the hours or strenuous physical demands; they were adjusted to the single man rather than the family, and they were low in relation to prices. Pittsburgh suffered from an absentee capitalism and landlordism that undermined civic cohesion. Confronted with overwhelming problems of social and environmental pathol-

[14] Kellogg, "Field Work of the Pittsburgh Survey," 501 (cited in footnote 9).

[15] Pittsburgh Association for the Improvement of the Poor, *Thirty-Eighth Annual Report, 1913–1914,* 5; Paul U. Kellogg, "The Pittsburgh Survey," *Charities and the Commons,* **21** (January 2, 1909), 525.

ogy, Pittsburgh abounded in "archaic social institutions" and "unregenerate" charities.[16]

It added up to an imbalance of life and work. No community in history had ever generated such "prosperity" and "surplus" from its production machinery, but "never before has a great community applied what it had so meagerly to the rational purposes of human life." Workers in the "master industry" were "driven as large numbers of laborers whether slave or free have scarcely before in human history been driven." The imbalance of life and work had become lethal, resulting in the "destruction of family life, not in any imaginary or mystical sense, but by the demands of the day's work, and by the very demonstrable and material method of typhoid fever and industrial accidents."[17]

Paul Kellogg interpreted the Survey as an "appraisal, if you will, of how far human engineering had kept pace with mechanical in the American steel district." The Survey demonstrated, if anything, that "democracy must overhaul the social machinery through which it operates if it would bring its community conditions up to standards comparable to those maintained by its banks, its insurance companies and its industrial corporations." We needed a "social hydraulics" that would insure the continuous adaptation of "old social institutions and usages" to "changing tides." Efficiency through centralization and planning were required for social as well as business institutions. Thus the crucial contrast in Pittsburgh lay between the "haphazard development of its social institutions [and] the splendid organic development of its business enterprises." All the "progressiveness and invention" had gone into Pittsburgh the industrial center, and not Pittsburgh the community. One had only to compare the efficiency of the blast furnace in performing its function with the efficiency of many of the houses in performing theirs.[18]

Wherever they looked, the authors of the Survey found a

[16] Edward T. Devine, "Results of the Pittsburgh Survey," *American Journal of Sociology*, 14 (March 1909), 661, 662.
[17] *Ibid.*, 662, 664.
[18] Kellogg, "Our Hidden Cities," 392; Paul U. Kellogg, "The Civic Responsibilities of Democracy in an Industrial District," Conference for Good City Government, *Proceedings* (1908), 399–400, 394, 398, 403; Kellogg, "The Pittsburgh Survey," 524.

startling contrast between the dynamic, planned industrial sector, and the bumbling, archaic mix of governmental and civic institutions that failed, literally, to safeguard human life. Crystal Eastman documented this point in her study of work injuries. She revealed that 526 men were killed by work accidents in Allegheny County alone between July 1, 1906 and June 30, 1907. Most were under 40 years of age. Responsibility for the accidents was often attributable to circumstances beyond the worker's control, yet the survivors usually received little or no compensation from employers. On the grounds of equity and social expediency, she urged the enactment of a workmen's compensation law to prevent destitution and penalize the careless employer. Meanwhile, considering the human and economic repercussions of industrial accidents, it was "no wonder that to a stranger Pittsburgh's streets are sad."[19]

Elizabeth Butler explored the status of working women. She found, in the winter of 1907–1908, a total of 22,185 female wage earners (exclusive of agriculture, domestic service, and the professions). Over a third (7540) were employed in mercantile houses, followed by food production (2726), laundries (2685), and stogy manufacture (2611). Many of these women, she observed, "are put to work at wages below the cost of subsistence, for hours longer than the measure of their strength, in buildings and at ill-constructed machines which cannot but injure their health, and at processes which must handicap heavily the development of both body and mind."[20] More than 60 percent of the women earned less than $7 a week, the sum considered to be the subsistence minimum for a self-supporting working girl.

John Fitch examined the steel industry, whose work force in Allegheny County totaled 70,000 to 80,000. This was the prime exhibit of the imbalance of life and work, of economic rationalism in a context of social and community fragmentation. The organization of the United States Steel Corporation in 1901 placed 50 percent of the nation's steel workers under a single employer, "with a resulting promotion of uniformity of conditions of labor. Administrative decisions from a single head affect, without

[19] Eastman, *Work-Accidents and the Law,* 13 (cited in footnote 12).
[20] Butler, *Women and the Trades,* 28 (cited in footnote 12).

chance of protest, vast masses of men." Isolated individuals confronted an impersonal economic machine, and the "steel worker sees on every side evidences of an irresistible power, baffling and intangible." Neither church nor town exerted any countervailing influence "through which democratic action and ideals may find expression and conditions be improved."[21] The orientation of the churches was individualistic and moralistic. The sanctity of the Sabbath (as far as amusement was concerned), vice, and liquor absorbed the attention of the clergy. Except in McKeesport, where authority was shared with the brewing interests, the steel companies were "commonly understood" to be the dominant political force. Social alignments in the mill towns "also buttressed the dominance of management." Merchants and professional men "recognized a kinship with the plant officialdom," while the English-speaking worker identified more with the town middle class than with the despised "Hunky."[22]

The isolation and powerlessness of the steel worker would be starkly dramatized in the strike of 1919, when the normal pattern of stability and control broke down as a result of World War I. The interlocking of plant and town officialdom explained "not only the ease with which normal civil rights have been shelved, but the ease with which, under the guise of law enforcement, deputies and troopers get away with reckless action in the streets and alleys, and with which the petty courts turn trumped-up grounds for the arrest of labor organizers and strikers into denials of justice." In denying a permit to union organizers for a meeting, Mayor Crawford of Duquesne reputedly stated that "'Jesus Christ himself couldn't hold a meeting in Duquesne.'"[23]

[21] Fitch, *The Steel Workers*, 5, 232, 223 (cited in footnote 12).

[22] *Ibid.*, 229; Brody, *Steelworkers in America*, 118, 121 (cited in footnote 7).

[23] S. Adele Shaw, "Closed Towns: Intimidation as it is Practiced in the Pittsburgh Steel District," *Survey*, **43** (November 8, 1919), 64, 62. For John Fitch, events in the Pittsburgh steel district in 1919 ran "true to form. Unionism was destroyed there in 1892. Since then every manifestation of an independent spirit on the part of the workers has been met by ruthless and unscrupulous opposition." John A. Fitch, "Democracy in Steel: A Contrast between the Rhine and the Monongahela," *Survey*, **41** (January 4, 1919), 453. Charges of repression and other events surrounding the strike of 1919 are examined in Interchurch World Movement, The Commission of Inquiry,

The Mayor was president of the First National Bank of Duquesne, and his brother was president of the McKeesport Tin Plate Company. Years earlier, Fitch concluded that the worker in quest for democracy and solidarity had nowhere to turn except his saloon and fraternal lodge.

Politics, health, and housing suffered in the eyes of the Pittsburgh Survey investigators, when economic cohesion confronted class, ethnic, and governmental fragmentation. This militated against a mobilization of resources in the civic sector comparable to that in the economic sector. Pittsburgh's ward-centered political, school, and tax systems before 1911 were symptomatic of the "organic problem of American cities generally"—a "neighborhood instead of municipal spirit" that gave free reign to parochial interests. The absence of any "communal interests" helped explain why it was so difficult to apply the "economy of organization to the common uses of the people."[24]

The "economy of organization" was urgent in public health and housing. Typhoid fever was endemic in the decade preceding the establishment of a water filtration plant in 1907. The Pittsburgh and Allegheny typhoid death rate of 130.0 and 104.4 per 100,000, respectively, were the highest in the nation.[25] Skunk Hollow and Painter's Row were characteristic of the housing of a community in which the industrial sector alone was expertly administered and capable of decisive action, yet indifferent to

Report on the Steel Strike of 1919 (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1920), and Interchurch World Movement, *Public Opinion and the Steel Strike. Supplementary Reports of the Investigators to the Commission of Inquiry* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1921). A recent study is David Brody, *Labor in Crisis: The Steel Strike of 1919* (Philadelphia and New York: J. P. Lippincott Company, 1965).

[24] Allen T. Burns, "Coalition of Pittsburgh's Civic Forces," in *The Pittsburgh District: Civic Frontage,* 47; Paul U. Kellogg, "Pittsburgh: Community and Workshop," in *Wage-Earning Pittsburgh,* 5.

[25] Frank E. Wing, "Thirty-Five Years of Typhoid: The Economic Cost to Pittsburgh and the Long Fight for Pure Water," in the *Pittsburgh District: Civic Frontage,* 66. The first filtered water was pumped into the Highland Reservoir in December, 1907. By the end of 1908, the city's water supply, except for the South Side, was filtered. Filtered water for the South Side followed in 1909. See Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Health, *Report on the Sanitary Survey of the Allegheny River Basin* (Harrisburgh, 1915), 314.

any aspect of civic life that had no bearing on production efficiency. Ewing Street ran along the edge of Skunk Hollow, close by the Bloomfield Bridge. So fantastic was the dilapidation here that it was difficult to tell whether the shacks were supposed to accommodate humans or animals. Official condemnation would be superfluous since the dwellings were already falling apart. The contents of outside privies seeped down the slope to the rubbish-laden Hollow. Painter's Row, on the South Side, belonged to the U. S. Steel Corporation. It had inherited the property from the Carnegie Company which, in turn, had absorbed Painter's Mill. Although the Carnegie firm had renovated the plant, it did nothing for the 91 families who inhabited the six rows of brick and frame homes. Five hundred persons lived in these "back-to-back houses with no through ventilation; cellar kitchens; dark, unsanitary, ill-ventilated, overcrowded sleeping rooms, no drinking water supply on the premises; and a dearth of sanitary accommodations that was shameful."[26] An old pump in the mill yard was the sole source of drinking water.

Margaret Byington devoted considerable attention to housing in her portrait of Homestead, a classic account of a milltown spawned in the nineteenth century. Byington's Homestead was the Pittsburgh region in microcosm—a case study in industrial cohesion and community fragmentation. The mill masters, she complained, did not consider living conditions as a factor of production, but there was no alternative group or institution with the power to intervene effectively in the environment. Homestead's physical environment, family life, and social institutions were the product of "indifference on one side," paralysis and "ignorance" on the other.[27]

Originally established as a residential suburb of Pittsburgh in the 1870's, Homestead's industrial phase opened with a glass factory in 1878 and a steel mill in 1881 (later absorbed into the Carnegie empire). The protracted, bloody strike in the Homestead steel works in 1892 precipitated the destruction of unionism

[26] F. Elisabeth Crowell, "Three Studies in Housing and Responsibility, 2. Painter's Row, The Company House," in *The Pittsburgh District: Civic Frontage,* 130.

[27] Margaret F. Byington, "The Family in a Typical Mill Town," *American Journal of Sociology,* **14** (March 1909), 655.

in the Pittsburgh steel industry, and insured that the worker would have little share in determining "his hours, his wages, and the conditions under which he works,—and which in turn vitally affect the well-being of his family."[28]

According to the census of 1900, native whites of native white parents were already a minority of 36 percent of the population. Fifty-three percent of the men employed in the mill in 1907 were of Slavic origin. As in other milltowns, there was a large number of unmarried transient males, particularly among the immigrants; and the corps of young college graduates employed in the mill added to the transient population. English- and foreign-speaking groups led parallel lives with virtually no social intercourse. Class stratification reinforced the separation and contributed to the breakdown of community cohesion. Absentee ownership was another factor that undermined Homestead as a civic entity.

Political and topographical fragmentation also limited the community's ability to define and cope with its problems. The original steel works were situated in Homestead Borough, a small triangle whose base touched the Monongahela River. Mill expansion along the riverfront stimulated additional settlement to the east and west of Homestead. This led, not to the enlargement of the borough's boundaries, but to the creation of two new boroughs—Munhall to the east and West Homestead. Each of these autonomous jurisdictions had its own set of officials, ordinances, and tax levies. Although Homestead had the largest population and concentration of low-paid workers, most of the mill property was located in Munhall, whose borough and school taxes were little more than half the rate in Homestead. Since assessors tended to value smaller properties at the highest rates, the large industries contributed a disproportionately small share of taxes. In contrast to the industrial sector, the civic sector was hopelessly atomized.

Homestead's water supply was drawn from the Monongahela, polluted by sewerage from numerous towns and villages as well as industrial wastes and acid discharges from mines. Individuals sunk wells, but these were frequently contaminated by seepage from privy vaults. No business corporation, certainly, would have

[28] Byington, *Homestead,* 11 (cited in footnote 12).

allowed its production facilities to be developed in the sporadic, planless manner of the health and housing environment. Beyond Munhall, for example, was the Hollow, a "deep ravine with a meandering stream at the bottom and with irregular rows of houses, often hardly more than shanties, on either hand."[29] No streets led to the 250 small frame boxes in which unskilled mill workers resided. An intensive study of 21 courts in Homestead's second ward portrayed a characteristic housing style in the Pittsburgh area. These courts accommodated 239 families (102 of whom took lodgers) sharing yard, toilet, and water facilities. Only three houses had indoor running water, and in some cases, more than 100 persons depended on one yard hydrant. There was not a single indoor toilet in any of the courts. Some houses were four to six stories high, but the majority were two stories with four rooms, and all suffered from an absence of light and ventilation.

In Homestead, and elsewhere in the Pittsburgh region, family and town confronted the mill—the "new, insurgent" force, as Kellogg described it. The confrontation led to a disequilibrium in the "balance of life and work" and to a bitter irony. Homestead received a library from Carnegie, a manual training school from Schwab, and a "charming little park in the centre of the hill section" from Frick. One witnessed the spectacle of a philanthropy that "provides opportunities for intellectual and social advancement while it withholds conditions which make it possible to take advantage of them."[30]

Another philanthropy found in Homestead and other mill and mining communities was company housing. The Carnegie Land Company, following the Homestead strike, had acquired property later incorporated into Munhall. It built and sold a number of homes to employees and retained others for rental. Company housing, however, was not as extensive in the Pittsburgh district as in other parts of the country.[31] It was most prevalent in isolat-

[29] *Ibid.*, 18.
[30] *Ibid.*, v, 178.
[31] The greatest proportion of the labor supply, 71 percent, was housed by southern cotton mill owners, followed by soft-coal operators at 61 percent. Preference, in most cases, was given to skilled workers. Leifur Magnusson,"Employers' Housing in the United States," United States

ed or temporary communities and was more characteristic of the mining than the steel industry in the relatively urbanized Pittsburgh area. In a few cases the establishment of a major steel plant, such as Jones and Laughlin at Aliquippa in 1909, and Crucible Steel at Midland in 1911, led not only to company housing but extensive town development as well.[32]

Vandergrift was a rare, often cited example in the Pittsburgh region of an effort to coordinate industrial planning with high standards of town planning. It was the Pullman of western Pennsylvania, self-consciously conceived as a model community that would demonstrate that men lived up to their environment (and that a good environment would produce respectable citizens and a stable labor force). Nestled in the Kiskiminetas River valley in Westmoreland County, forty miles east of Pittsburgh, Vandergrift was established by George McMurtry in the 1890's. President of the Apollo Iron and Steel Company (later American Sheet and Tin Plate Company), McMurtry apparently was not fazed by the disastrous climax of Pullman's experiment in community planning. He was determined to prove anew that men, "given an opportunity to live in a clean, healthy, beautiful town," would become model citizens.[33] He studied precedents in Europe and the United States, and hired Frederick Law Olmsted as his planner. Most visitors to Vandergrift were favorably impressed.

Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Monthly Review*, **V** (November 1917), 44. More extensive treatment of the subject appears in Leifur Magnusson, "Housing by Employers in the United States," United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Bulletin*, Miscellaneous Series, No. 263 (Washington, D.C., 1920).

[32] John Ihlder, "Midland," *Survey*, **33** (December 12, 1914), 300; Albert H. Spahr, "The Town of Midland, Pa.: A New Development in Housing near Pittsburgh," *Architectural Review*, **21** (N.S.4) (March 1916), 33–36; *Boot Straps: The Autobiography of Tom M. Girdler*, in collaboration with Boyden Sparkes (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1943), 169 ff.; Agnes W. Mitchell, "The Industrial Backgrounds and Community Problems of a Large Steel Plant (The Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation, Aliquippa, Pa.)," unpublished M. A., University of Pittsburgh, 1932, 17 ff.

[33] Ida M. Tarbell, *New Ideals in Business: An Account of Their Practice and Their Effects Upon Men and Profits* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1916), 154.

In Ida Tarbell's opinion, "it would be difficult in the United States to-day to find a prettier town, greener, trimmer, cleaner, and more influential."[34]

More typical of the company town were the "ghastly" communities established for bituminous coal and coke miners. The problem was not the individual house but indifference to the broader environment. One village was like another for the immigrant Slavs who constituted a majority of the labor force in the bituminous mining country by the early twentieth century. Regular rows of 50 to 100 box-like, two-story frame dwellings spanned the hillsides. At one end of the village was the company store and at the other a schoolhouse or church. Below, enveloped in the valley smog, were the engine house and coal tipple. Along the valley floor were the coke ovens, spewing flames and a thick, dirty smoke that the wind lofted up to the village. Sometimes, not a "spear of grass" survived the pollution. The coal companies did not bother with sanitation and other improvements, claiming that the "foreigner is too dirty for the town to be other than what it is." Gutters, ditches, and gulleys collected refuse, and the sidewalks often consisted of coke ash. Surface drainage and privy vaults near the houses were characteristic sanitary expedients.[35]

Sanitary conditions in the city of Pittsburgh were not much better. Before the turn of the century, the Metropolis, like the meanest mining village, exerted few controls over the physical environment. A limited conception of municipal service and welfare functions had prevailed through the nineteenth century.

[34] *Ibid.*, 151. Unskilled workers were later accommodated by the company in an adjoining development, Vandergrift Heights. Others settled in East Vandergrift. The model town is also described in Eugene J. Buffington, "Making Cities for Workmen," *Harper's Weekly*, **53** (May 9, 1909), 16.

[35] This portrait of the coal village is drawn from Reports of the Immigration Commission, *Immigrants in Industries (in twenty-five parts)*, Part 1: Bituminous Coal Mining (in two volumes), Vol. 1, 61st Cong., 2nd sess., Senate, Doc. No. 633 (Washington, D. C., 1911), 322 ff.

An effort to improve the housing environment of coke workers is described in, "Better Living Conditions for Coke Workers: Some Account of the Improved Relations between the H. C. Frick Coke Company and Its Employees Due to Welfare Measures," *Iron Age*, **95** (January 7, 1915), 48–49. The initiative was taken by Thomas Lynch, president of the company.

Miningtown.

Indeed, the least efficient business organization was better administered than the most vital public enterprise. Even the much maligned Pittsburgh Street Railway Company compiled a detailed street survey as a basis for future expansion; yet the Pittsburgh Bureau of Health did not publish one report between 1899 and 1907 "showing how people died."[36] If industry was indifferent to health, housing, and social welfare, little was accomplished. There was no alternative system of authority and decision making, no consensus on what action was needed.

The Pittsburgh Survey had stressed the discrepancy in America's greatest industrial district between economic cohesion and planning, on the one hand, and community fragmentation, on the other. It was a multidimensional fragmentation—topographical, governmental, ethnic, and class—which inhibited response to environmental and social problems. Outside the industrial sector, there was no coherent mechanism for defining issues and mobilizing resources. This book is concerned with efforts in the twentieth century to devise techniques of intervention, focusing primarily upon the physical environment and the role of both governmental and nonstatutory institutions. It is concerned, in short, with what the Pittsburgh experience reveals about the process of environmental change in the twentieth century urban community, with specific reference to government and to voluntary agencies imbued with a public purpose.

[36] Kellogg, "The Social Engineer in Pittsburgh," 153 (cited in footnote 9).