

## *A Fair History of Pittsburgh*

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THE MORNING OF June 1, 1864, was hot and muggy, but the cities of Pittsburgh and Allegheny were abuzz with activity and anticipation. Months of planning were about to culminate in the ceremony scheduled for that afternoon, beginning with a parade. The mayors of both cities suspended all business between three and seven o'clock so that as many citizens as possible could attend the festivities and demonstrate their patriotism. The procession gathered at the Monongahela House and after four o'clock it began to march down Smithfield Street toward Fifth Avenue. From there the parade proceeded onto Market and Saint Clair Streets before crossing the suspension bridge to Allegheny, where it continued on Federal and Ohio Streets. In Allegheny's North Commons the group reached its final destination—the site of the Sanitary Fair.<sup>1</sup>

The United States Sanitary Commission formed in 1861 to support sick and wounded Union soldiers during the Civil War. Branches of the commission in cities throughout the country coordinated local fundraising initiatives and in autumn 1863 the Chicago branch held the first Sanitary Fair. This fundraising bazaar became the most popular and extravagant of the events held by several local branches. After attending Chicago's fair, Rachel W. McFadden and Mary

Ann Brunot, both members of the Pittsburgh Ladies' Branch, sought to bring a similar sanitary fair to Pittsburgh.<sup>2</sup> After their idea was rejected by Pittsburgh Branch president Thomas Bakewell, the Ladies' Branch took up the challenge of organizing the event, recruiting Brunot's husband, Felix, to serve as general chairman.<sup>3</sup> Felix Brunot used his network of friends and influence to convince the Pittsburgh Sanitary Commission to hold a fair, and on March 6, 1864, its leadership agreed. The commission decided that the fair would be held in June on the site of the old Allegheny City Hall. They also sorted area volunteers into committees to plan and organize the various exhibits and features of the fair. In addition to the formal work of Pittsburgh and Allegheny's more prominent citizens, local ethnic communities and churches supported the fair through donations of food and crafts.<sup>4</sup>

With just over two months to organize and build the Sanitary Fair, committee members sought out assistance from nearby communities. After the closure of the North Ohio Sanitary Fair in Cleveland on March 10, John W. Chalfant, James Park Jr., and Captain Charles W. Batchelor visited that city to purchase some of the buildings and fixtures for use at the Pittsburgh fairgrounds.<sup>5</sup> Once the trio secured the buildings, volunteer carpenters, committeemen, and other men with horses and wagons set off to Cleveland to dismantle the structures and load them onto railcars for the return trip to Pennsylvania, while another volunteer corps hauled the material from the Federal Street depot to the fair-ground site. Carpenters and laborers then donated their time to expand and erect the buildings in anticipation of the June 1 opening.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, the planning committee issued an address on April 15 to formally announce the Sanitary Fair and its purpose to raise money to support the work of the commission. To ensure the success of its event, the committee proclaimed, "We cordially invite the donations, contributions, aid and co-operation, not only of Allegheny City, Birmingham, Allegheny County and the State of Pennsylvania, but of Ohio, and all the States of the Republic."<sup>7</sup> The Pittsburgh Sanitary Fair would be a regional event in preparation as well as tourism and the sudden outpouring of support meant that exhibits began to arrive before the fair's buildings were completed and decorated.<sup>8</sup>

Chief Marshal General James S. Negley led the opening day parade, which included dignitaries like Pennsylvania governor Andrew Gregg Curtin. Local railroad administrator and former telegraph operator Andrew Carnegie, then overseeing Union military use of railways and telegraphs, marched in the group of assistants between local military and invited guests.<sup>9</sup> Also in the procession were the fair organizers, the mayors and councilmen from both cities, fire



Fig. 1. Monitor Hall contained models of the USS *Monitor*, the Confederate ship *Merriamac*, and cannon patterns from the Fort Pitt Works. In the background, the new Allegheny City Hall contained an art gallery and a museum called the Curiosity Shop. Harper Family Papers and Photographs, MSS 8, Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center.

companies, and bands.<sup>10</sup> Once they reached the fairgrounds, the participants entered Audience Hall for the opening ceremonies. Felix Brunot presided over the ceremony and Reverend William Preston from Saint Andrew's Episcopal Church delivered the invocation. After speeches by Governor Curtin and General Negley, the fair was officially declared open to visitors.<sup>11</sup>

Allegheny Commons contained several wooden buildings hastily constructed for the Sanitary Fair, including Audience Hall for concerts; Mechanics Hall to display locally produced machines, goods, and inventions; and Floral Hall, which included a Garden of Eden exhibit and miniature buildings in various international styles. The Ladies' Bazaar contained booths that displayed goods for sale and also included a Scotch Booth designed in that nation's traditional style. The Dining Hall included tables labeled for many of the area neighborhoods, towns, and counties so that members of the same community could come together to share a family-style meal for fifty cents. Farmers and other residents who could not afford to make monetary donations to the fair's cause contributed surplus meat and produce for the meals served there. Monitor Hall, the largest of the fair buildings, contained cannon patterns from the Fort Pitt Works, makers of the famous cast-iron Rodman guns, and samples of cannonballs. The

building also housed a miniature lake containing models of the USS *Monitor*, the Confederate ship *Merrimac*, and several other smaller, less notable ships. Residents from outside the city made fresh evergreen wreaths that decorated these temporary buildings, giving their interiors a burst of color and the smell of Christmas, perhaps eliciting the giving mood that the holiday fosters.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to the wooden structures built for the fairgrounds, the Sanitary Fair also used Allegheny's new city hall, at the periphery of the Commons. The city council chambers hosted both an art gallery and a museum called the Old Curiosity Shop. Several local artists displayed their works in the gallery, which also included a collection of photographs.<sup>13</sup> More than 1,100 items were on display in the Curiosity Shop. Some of the more notable exhibits included the table used to write the Declaration of Independence, Continental money, and samples of clothing from various countries.<sup>14</sup>

The primary goal of the fair was to raise money, and its organizers collected donations in several ways. Admission to the many buildings, attractions, and evening entertainments ranged from twenty-five cents to one dollar.<sup>15</sup> In addition to the continual transactions at the bazaar, the final week of the fair included the sale of special items "such as autograph letters of well-known public characters, and photographs of persons and places of interest as well as curiosities and war relics, and good prices were obtained."<sup>16</sup> One such item was a letter signed by President Abraham Lincoln in which he specifically referenced the Pittsburgh Sanitary Fair. When the fair closed on June 18, it had raised over \$320,000 for the Sanitary Commission. Although this was not the most money raised by a city's fair, the per capita donation of \$3.47 proved that Western Pennsylvania was the most generous region in the country, and perhaps the most eager to attend an exhibition.<sup>17</sup>

While the noble patriotic cause of the Sanitary Commission was a strong factor in drawing residents to the fair, attendees' curiosity about the displays and entertainment was another likely influence. Upon the opening of the fairgrounds, the *Pittsburgh Gazette* proclaimed, "Never before in the history of Western Pennsylvania has an opportunity been presented to look upon so many, so rare and so exquisite attractions as will be exhibited in the various halls and booths of this Sanitary Fair."<sup>18</sup> In just eighteen days, the Pittsburgh Sanitary Fair had sparked a desire in Western Pennsylvanians to attend fairs, peruse their exhibits, and enjoy their entertainment. Furthermore, it provided valuable experience in organizing a large-scale public exhibition. Pittsburghers, like most white, middle- and upper-class Victorians, had developed a taste for

the spectacular, and the era's obsession with great expositions would feed their craving through the rest of the nineteenth century.

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The Civil War had a significant impact on Western Pennsylvania. The successful application of railroads to move soldiers and supplies, thanks in part to Andrew Carnegie, demonstrated that this mode of transportation had a viable postwar future, especially for industrial and commercial centers like Pittsburgh. As networks of railroads began to radiate from cities throughout the country, regions that had been largely isolated from each other prior to the war were suddenly connected to more established cities in the East. While the railroads were able to quickly transport goods over long distances, they also created a sudden need for coal and rails and, perhaps more importantly, they spread news, ideas, and people. Trains transported newspapers and mail across regions in a matter of hours and across states in days, providing more robust accounts of events only minimally described via telegraph. Performers could also easily traverse the country, providing a more cohesive nationwide experience to theatergoers, circus attendees, and the like, thus helping to form a national cultural identity.<sup>19</sup> As a major transportation hub connecting the East Coast to the West, many of these people, goods, and information passed through Pittsburgh.

The proliferation of railroads in Western Pennsylvania also tied into the expansion of pre-existing industries, like oil. Edwin Drake drilled the first commercial oil well in Titusville, Pennsylvania, in 1859. The sudden supply of petroleum fed into the need for a better, cheaper fuel source than the whale fat then used for lighting, thus ensuring its early success.<sup>20</sup> As oilmen developed and improved drilling processes, there was a sudden demand for iron to manufacture the required boilers, engines, derricks, and piping, among other items. Once the oil was secured, it had to be sent to refineries, which used iron stills. Efficient transportation of oil was also necessary to meet increasing demands, and so companies laid rail lines to connect the oil fields to river transportation or established rail routes, requiring a greater supply of iron rails in the Pittsburgh region.

Iron production had been a part of Pittsburgh's economy for nearly a century before the Civil War, but the sudden demand for rails resulted in the tripling of the iron and steel workforce during the 1860s, with the amount of money invested in the metal industries increasing over 300 percent and product value rising over 500 percent.<sup>21</sup> It was during this period that Carnegie planted the

seeds for his future steel empire with the consolidation of two companies to form the Union Iron Mills in 1865. That same year he also created the Keystone Bridge Company to design and build railroad bridges, placing orders for all its required iron with his Union mills. In 1870 he formed a company to manage his new blast furnaces, thus controlling the production of iron from raw materials to finished product. Advancing his enterprise even further, in 1875 Carnegie led the transition from iron to mass-produced steel in Allegheny County, and soon the entire country, with the opening of the Edgar Thomson Works in Braddock.

Other industries related to railroads, including the manufacture of locomotives, train components, and equipment, flourished in the region. These ventures, combined with the increased need for coal, resulted in an influx of wealth and people suddenly thrust upon Western Pennsylvania. Furthermore, the proliferation of railroads throughout the country allowed for cheaper and faster shipping of wares from already established industries like glass. In a little over a decade after the Sanitary Fair, Pittsburgh found an opportunity to showcase its growth at the first major world's fair hosted in the United States—the 1876 Centennial Exposition.

Held in Philadelphia to celebrate the centennial of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the International Exhibition of Arts, Manufactures and Products of the Soil and Mine, also known as the 1876 World's Fair, comprised thirty thousand exhibits in buildings covering over 230 acres of the city's Fairmount Park.<sup>22</sup> Capitalizing on the experiences of the Civil War, many of the exposition's directors and officials had participated in planning large-scale events such as Philadelphia's Sanitary Fair or military mobilization, which made them well suited to organize a spectacle like the fair. While American fairs up to this point had focused on regional products and typically attracted a local audience, the Centennial Exposition featured exhibits from all over the country in an attempt to prove to the world that the American economy and government had fully recovered from the stresses of Reconstruction and were ready for business.<sup>23</sup> By the conclusion of the Centennial Exposition, ten million visitors from all over the globe had experienced the fair.

True to its name, much of the exposition was a celebration of America's natural resources and industry. While the fair included such groundbreaking inventions as Alexander Graham Bell's telephone and the Remington typewriter, the main attraction was the enormous Corliss steam engine. Standing forty-five feet high and connected to much of the machinery on the fairgrounds by over a mile of belts, the Corliss engine was the centerpiece of the opening day festivities on May 10, 1876, when US president Ulysses S. Grant and Brazilian emperor

Dom Pedro II pulled the levers to release the steam and start the machine.<sup>24</sup> The Centennial Exposition was the first international showcase of American innovation and manufacturing might, putting the country's burgeoning industry on display for the world.

The exhibits of Western Pennsylvanian companies and inventors demonstrated the beginnings of the shift from established industries like glass to growing interest and successes in railroads and iron and steel production. Traditional products of Western Pennsylvania were well represented at the Centennial Exposition, with *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Historical Register* of the fair proclaiming that "Pittsburg comes out stronger than any other section in the matter of glass, for which her manufacturers are celebrated. The fine glass of the O'Hara works is particularly beautiful."<sup>25</sup> In addition to glass, the fair also featured the work of craftsmen and manufacturers of agricultural machinery, indicating that while the city of Pittsburgh was urban the surrounding areas of Western Pennsylvania remained primarily rural.<sup>26</sup>

Highlighting new areas of focus, Porter, Bell and Company displayed narrow-gauge locomotives and tenders. Other Pittsburgh companies exhibited components used by the rail industry, like railway springs.<sup>27</sup> Perhaps the most successful railroad-related Pittsburgh exhibit was from the Westinghouse Air Brake Company. George Westinghouse had moved to Pittsburgh from Schenectady, New York, in 1868 with an idea for a new, more effective train-braking mechanism using compressed air. After the first successful test of the Westinghouse brake, he was able to convince the Pennsylvania Railroad and several others of the value of the invention, giving him the backing he needed to establish the Westinghouse Air Brake Company.<sup>28</sup> After a business trip across the Atlantic to sell his brakes to railroads in England, Westinghouse was able to reach the entire world through his exhibit in Philadelphia. In addition to a variety of his revolutionary air brakes, Westinghouse also displayed air compressors and signaling devices.<sup>29</sup>

The growing and evolving metal industries of Western Pennsylvania were also on full display in Philadelphia. The Jones and Laughlin American Iron Works displayed samples of its iron products, including rails, and its pulleys and hangers were used to drive machine shop tools for the exposition. Iron tubing and pipes, as well as rolling mill rolls, were also exhibited as examples of the industry that would soon dominate the Pittsburgh region.<sup>30</sup> Overall, more than a dozen area companies exhibited iron and steel product samples in Philadelphia, signifying that this industry was the future of the region's economy.<sup>31</sup>

Foreshadowing his fast-approaching dominance of Western Pennsylvania,



the greatest displays of Pittsburgh's developing iron industry were the contributions made by the companies of Andrew Carnegie. Carnegie found himself on the American Iron and Steel Association committee that organized the exhibits of iron ore and products at the exposition and, not coincidentally, his companies exhibited their displays in the Main Building of the fair. These exhibits included a model of the Lucy Furnace and samples of Union Iron Mills' wrought iron products, including bars and beams.<sup>32</sup> While abstract samples were fine to look at, examples of material used in real projects were more effective in demonstrating the importance of Carnegie's mills. Union Iron brought some of the wrought iron couplings used in the arches of the recently completed Eads Bridge in St. Louis.<sup>33</sup> An even more impressive and immediate demonstration of its product, though, was the wrought iron used by Keystone Bridge in the structure of the exposition's Horticultural Building.<sup>34</sup>

While Pittsburgh's future tycoons Westinghouse and Carnegie were busy exhibiting at the Centennial Exposition, another visited the fair seeking inspiration. H. J. Heinz was still recovering from his early venture into processed and packaged foods, which had driven him to bankruptcy despite its success in the market. Borrowing money from his cousin Frederick and brother John, he founded the F. & J. Heinz Company in February 1876 and began the difficult process of restarting his business and repairing his reputation.<sup>35</sup> While Heinz took his family to visit the Philadelphia exposition, the company also benefited from the trip. After reviewing the products exhibited in the Agricultural Hall and all the types of new machinery available, including a canning machine, he returned to Pittsburgh with a notebook full of ideas to further develop his company. One such revelation was the potential and importance of advertising, including the packaging and display of the products being sold.<sup>36</sup> Abundant, and sometimes elaborate, advertising campaigns and the use of glass bottles to show the purity of his products became a hallmark of Heinz as his company rocketed to success throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century, and he had the Centennial Exposition to credit for this inspiration. Having fallen in love with the exposition and subscribing to the ideals and potential that fairs promised, Heinz would spend the rest of his career exhibiting his products all over the world and working to craft effective local exhibitions in Western Pennsylvania.

In addition to Heinz, over fifteen thousand Pittsburghers took advantage of specially arranged excursions to Philadelphia to experience the Centennial Exposition. One particularly large trip included two thousand area schoolchildren, their parents, and other interested citizens.<sup>37</sup> Facilitated by the spreading rail network, waves of tourists flocked from the West to Philadelphia, meaning



that Pittsburghers could easily partake in the East Coast event and bring their experiences back home to share with others. Western Pennsylvanian exhibitors may have enjoyed an increase in business at the conclusion of the exposition, but more influential was the affirmation that exhibitions like the sanitary and world's fairs were a valuable source of information, advertisement, and recreation to be enjoyed by all who could afford admission. The task at hand, then, was to identify a means of reproducing the exposition idea in Pittsburgh.

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While people from all over the country worked to plan Philadelphia's world's fair, men in Pittsburgh and Allegheny were also striving to organize their own industrial exposition as a means of promoting local companies. In November 1874 the newly founded chamber of commerce created the Tradesmen's Industrial Institute to develop a fair and it settled on a site in Allegheny for its buildings.<sup>38</sup> Area businessmen funded the first exposition in 1875 to promote the region as an industrial and commercial powerhouse; however, the event appealed more to members of the working class and tradesmen than it did to entrepreneurs, financiers, and capitalists.<sup>39</sup> Nonetheless, organizers deemed the early expositions a success, drawing some now familiar names including exhibits of Heinz pickles, steel rails from the Edgar Thomson Works, iron from Sligo Mills and Crescent Tube, and other products.<sup>40</sup>

As the exposition strove to promote local industry, the manufacturers they wished to advertise were growing at a rapid pace. Carnegie aimed to have the most technologically advanced steel mill in the world when he constructed the Edgar Thomson Works, hiring the best men in the industry, including mill designer and Bessemer process patent owner Alexander Holley and inventor and mill supervisor William R. Jones. These men, along with Carnegie's willingness to implement the newest and most efficient machinery and methods, ensured that his mill would produce the best, most economically produced steel in the country. To guarantee that his product would sell, Carnegie capitalized on his friends still working for his former employer, the Pennsylvania Railroad. In exchange for the Pennsylvania's purchase of rails from the Edgar Thomson Works, Carnegie hired the company as the main transporter of their products throughout the country. By 1880, steel made up half of Allegheny County's total industry, and one-eighth of the nation's steel originated there. This output would become even greater in the ensuing decade with the addition of fully integrated mills in Homestead and Duquesne, as well as the conversion of American Iron's facility into Jones and Laughlin Steel's Pittsburgh Works.<sup>41</sup>

With such a dramatic rise in both locomotives in service and iron and steel production, Western Pennsylvania coal and coke also became a dire necessity. Bituminous coal mines in nearby Fayette and Westmoreland Counties suddenly became a significant part of Pittsburgh's economy. The demand for coal also drove support industries producing machinery, equipment, and other provisions along the rail routes connecting the coal towns to Pittsburgh.<sup>42</sup> In 1871 Judge Thomas Mellon provided a loan to a young bookkeeper named Henry Clay Frick so he could expand his new coke-processing company in the Connellsville region.<sup>43</sup> Frick's keen sense of business, as well as union-busting shrewdness toward his employees, allowed the company to flourish. Soon, his business prowess and products caught the eye of Carnegie, who invited Frick to join his steelmaking enterprise, Carnegie Brothers and Company, which he formed in 1881 to consolidate all of his existing interests under one company. By 1884 Allegheny, Westmoreland, Fayette, and Washington Counties mined 20 percent of the nation's coal, over 13 million tons. Frick also supplied much of the 5.5 million tons of coal that was converted to coke for regional consumption.<sup>44</sup>

The region's natural resources, location as a hub for both river and rail commerce, and good fortune to have the right entrepreneurs invest in up-and-coming industries, particularly steel, all amounted to a period of great prosperity and growth in Western Pennsylvania. In turn, this led to changes in local society as people moved both geographically out of the city and socially upward to the middle and upper classes. Because new mills moved outside of Pittsburgh's central business district to alternative locations with easy access to water and railways, towns consequently sprang up around them filled with millworkers and proprietors of ancillary services like stores and bars. While Carnegie located his massive works in towns outside of the city, other mills and factories along the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers fell within the expanding boundaries of the cities of Pittsburgh and Allegheny. As noted by Joel Tarr, a result was that "from 1868 to 1900, the city grew in population from about fifty-five thousand to over three hundred thousand and increased its land area from 1.77 to over 28 square miles."<sup>45</sup>

Much of the increase in population during this time was the result of unskilled workers from central and eventually eastern Europe seeking employment in the Bessemer, and later open hearth, steel mills. While these new processes were highly mechanized and standardized, iron- and steelmaking methods of the early and mid-nineteenth century had traditionally relied on skilled workers of primarily English and German ancestry. The dependence of companies on skilled labor for production had resulted in a middle class of

metalworkers who exercised a considerable amount of influence over the workforce. Among these Presbyterian ironmasters and other industrial elites little recreation was tolerated; however, the working class who served under these men enjoyed music, art, theater, and sports. By removing the influence of these skilled workmen, the shift from iron production to unskilled steel production, along with an increase in free time and disposable income, contributed to a cultural change that was more accepting of leisure activities and by 1890 the middle class incorporated recreation into their lives.<sup>46</sup>

In order to fully include leisure in their way of life, this new middle class of managers, sales agents, and bookkeepers required neighborhoods conducive to such activities as music and reading clubs. As a location for these new residential oases, developers looked to Pittsburgh's newly acquired bucolic areas collectively known as the East End, separating their emerging community from the older neighborhoods closer to the Point. To further distinguish themselves from the working class, they also embraced material culture as a means of reinforcing their status.<sup>47</sup> In particular, middle-class women benefited from their ability to purchase consumer goods such as washing machines, gas stoves, and other appliances, and to hire servants to use most of these conveniences. These amenities provided these women with the time that was necessary to become more involved in activities outside of the home, including social clubs, while working-class women lived in dirtier neighborhoods and thus spent even more time on housekeeping chores.<sup>48</sup>

The construction of these new middle-class communities required not only new homes but also improved and expanded infrastructure such as paved roads, water mains, and sewers.<sup>49</sup> The swift completion of these projects required both the allocation of municipal funds and compliance with local laws, and so the growing population of these neighborhoods conceded some of their political power to the city's Republican machine, led by Christopher Lyman Magee and William Flinn. Magee served as city treasurer during the 1870s and developed a relationship with many of the area's prominent businessmen. By appealing to influential men throughout Pittsburgh, he was able to gain considerable political power and could sway elections. To supplement his influence in the city of Pittsburgh, Magee partnered with Flinn, who had control over Allegheny County officials.<sup>50</sup>

To keep his power, Magee's men would grant small privileges that benefited the companies, industries, and personal lives of his supporters. These could run the gamut from the granting of railroad rights of way and the construction of new bridges to paving roads and running water lines in affluent

neighborhoods.<sup>51</sup> While these projects benefited his supporters, they also lined the political boss's pockets. For example, Magee invested in traction, or streetcar, companies to connect suburban expansion to the Golden Triangle. While on the surface this act aided his constituents, the increase in miles of streetcar lines also led to more fares and larger profits for his company. Not by accident, the construction company co-owned by Flinn became the contractor of choice for many of these public works projects.<sup>52</sup> As the cycle of increased power and expanded improvement projects continued to grow toward the end of the nineteenth century, Pittsburgh's East End found itself in an opportune situation to incorporate any new advancement or national trend into the fabric of its continually developing neighborhoods.

In addition to the upper class's desire to improve their own living conditions, Carnegie popularized the notion that they were also responsible for spending their money on programs that would benefit the lower classes. In his 1889 article "The Gospel of Wealth," Carnegie proposed that society could not trust the working class to invest their own money in improving their status, and so it was the duty of the rich to earn as much as they could so they would have more money to spend on the betterment of their employees. By promoting this way of thinking, Carnegie laid out a justification for his companies' aggressive pursuit of profits, as well as maintaining low wages for his employees. Serving as an example of his views, Carnegie began to build libraries in places of significance to his life, including his birthplace of Dunfermline, Scotland; his hometown of Allegheny; and Braddock, the location of his massive Edgar Thomson Works. Carnegie paid for the buildings, but he made the cities responsible for their maintenance. This arrangement reinforced his idea not only that the wealthy knew how to spend money better than workers, thus emphasizing social Darwinist views of the era, but also that cities needed the upper class to guide municipal spending.<sup>53</sup> When civic leaders combined the principles of "The Gospel of Wealth" with an environment in Western Pennsylvania that nurtured public works projects, it became evident that Pittsburgh was on the cusp of a period of great urban development.

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In the wake of the Centennial Exposition, it was clear that Western Pennsylvania had advanced beyond the agriculturally based county fairs that influenced the Sanitary Fair and the small-scale industrial fair efforts of the Tradesmen's Institute. In response to observations made in Philadelphia, a meeting was held on March 7, 1877, to reorganize the failing Allegheny County Tradesmen's

Industrial Institute, forming the Pittsburgh Exposition Society. The changes in leadership and organization were effective and the next several years' expositions proved to be a success. The Main Building of the exposition, built for the Tradesmen's exhibition, was six hundred feet long and housed the exhibits of merchants and companies from throughout the country, but primarily from Allegheny County. In the middle of the building stood a stage for musical performances.<sup>54</sup> By the early 1880s the exposition replaced many of its popular entertainments—such as horseraces, fireworks, and illegal gambling wheels—with more cultured lectures and displays, such as art galleries, that appealed more to the upper and middle classes.<sup>55</sup> Since admission to the exposition cost twenty-five cents for adults by 1883, many members of the working class simply could no longer afford to attend the festivities.<sup>56</sup>

In 1882, Pennsylvania's Agricultural Society decided to hold its annual fair in Allegheny County, and held a joint event with the Pittsburgh Exposition.<sup>57</sup> To accommodate the increase in exhibits, the Floral Hall and Machinery Hall were added to the Main Building, as was an expanded boiler house to provide power to the exhibitors. Floral Hall housed the displays of flowers and plants while Machinery Hall contained exhibits of engines, pumps, and other types of machinery from various industries. Additionally, there was a dining pavilion and, between the buildings and the Allegheny River, was the exposition grounds, which included a half-mile racetrack, a stockyard, and an athletic field that eventually served as the home of the professional baseball team that later became known as the Pirates.<sup>58</sup>

The following year tragedy struck the fairgrounds. At 1:45 on the morning of October 3, 1883, fire destroyed the exposition building. In addition to the structure, the goods and displays of dozens of exhibitors were a complete loss. While damages were estimated at over \$375,000, the value of many historic artifacts and works of art on display was immeasurable.<sup>59</sup> At the time, the Pittsburgh Exposition was one of only six industrial expositions held in the United States, but with no building to house the displays and a bruised reputation, organizers were forced to put the fair on hiatus until they could regroup.<sup>60</sup>

On November 7, 1885, the Western Pennsylvania Exposition Society formed to pick up the pieces of the Pittsburgh Exposition. Among the new exposition directors was H. J. Heinz, a consistent exhibitor at the local exhibitions and an avid participant and award winner at fairs throughout the country. Heinz and the twelve other directors of the exposition society purchased six acres of land near Pittsburgh's Point as the site for its new buildings. At a cost of \$450,000, the new grounds included three structures: the Main Building, Machinery

Hall, and Music Hall.<sup>61</sup> The society dedicated the facilities in May 1889 with a weeklong series of concerts. The first Western Pennsylvania Exposition opened on September 4; however, many exhibitors did not have their displays completely installed by opening day. While the location and name had changed, the exposition attractions were consistent with those previously hosted in Allegheny. Glass, brick, and tile production were popular exhibits, as were floral and art displays.<sup>62</sup>

One interesting difference, though, was that the Western Pennsylvania Exposition aimed to appeal to the working class in addition to the upper and middle classes. The society branded Saturdays as People's Days and admission to the exposition buildings was free to all. Along with the usual exhibits, concerts featured popular music that would appeal to the working class.<sup>63</sup> The exposition society hoped that these days would instill civic pride in the thousands of workers who lived in Pittsburgh so they might better understand and embrace their role in the growing metropolis and thus produce more goods for the local economy. Other evening performances featured music from the many ethnic groups represented in Western Pennsylvania. Members of those communities who could afford to pay admission to the concerts would do so, and regular exposition attendees would also take advantage of the opportunity to experience entertainment and music from different cultures.<sup>64</sup>

The persistence of organizers in continually retooling and rebuilding an exposition in the Pittsburgh area demonstrates that there was a real or perceived value in holding such events. Developing local industries like steel needed an outlet to advertise their products and the crowds at the exposition provided a ready audience. Concerts and art displays at exhibitions also allowed Pittsburgh to demonstrate that it was becoming a city of culture. With the successful return of the local exposition in 1889, Western Pennsylvania proved that it was among the increasing number of fair-loving industrial regions with a variety of exhibits to offer, many of which appealed to more than just a local audience. Furthermore, civic and business leaders gained valuable experience in organizing large-scale events and marketing their products, as well as their city. Pittsburgh had grown tremendously since the Centennial Exposition and only needed another opportunity to prove itself on the world stage. Fortunately, such an opportunity was close at hand.