



Mines, Mills and Malls



Regional Development
in the Steel Valley



Allen Dieterich-Ward

**MINES, MILLS AND MALLS:
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE STEEL VALLEY**

by

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In memory of Kenneth Ward and James Lowry Witherow.

In honor of Helen Ward and Dolores Witherow.

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ABSTRACT

MINES, MILLS AND MALLS: REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE STEEL VALLEY

by

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Chair: Matthew D Lassiter

Mines, Mills and Malls is a case study of political and social development in twentieth century America from the perspective of the metropolitan region, a vantage midway between the local community and the national polity. The narrative traces the evolution of the ‘Steel Valley’ – Pittsburgh and its hinterlands in southeastern Ohio, southwestern Pennsylvania and West Virginia – as residents and communities faced the turmoil caused by the decline of the area’s heavy industrial base. By explicitly focusing on the metropolis as a whole, my research provides a new model transcending the urban decay/suburban ascendance divide in favor of a more heterogeneous landscape that includes failing suburbs, gentrified city centers, and de/industrialized rural communities.

The story of the Steel Valley pushes urban historians to accept rural communities and their residents as full-fledged actors on the metropolitan stage instead of merely green spaces waiting for suburban development. I also move beyond the declension model characterizing recent labor and urban historiography by focusing on the shift from heavy industry to services. This approach challenges the easy distinctions drawn between Rust Belt and Sunbelt economies by pointing to the important disparities *within* regions among populations with varying levels of access to employment opportunities.

The metropolitan framework I adopt to tell the story of the Steel Valley synthesizes urban, economic and environmental histories, while never straying far from the real life choices of the region's residents. Divided loosely by theme and geography, my narrative looks beyond the artificial borders of municipal limits and state lines in order to see the real and symbolic bonds knitting diverse communities into a unified region. At the same time, I acknowledge the very real impact of political and administrative boundaries that limited governmental and private sector responses to the dual Appalachian and urban crises affecting the area.

During the 1950s and again during the 1980s, Pittsburgh's business and political elite reinvented the city, first as a center of corporate administration and later as a 'post-industrial' hub of the high-tech and service sectors. However, this transition remained largely confined to select neighborhoods and certain wealthy suburbs, while the remainder of the region continued to face chronic unemployment and out-migration. The Steel Valley today thus features a complex social and cultural system combining aspects of both industrial and post-industrial worldviews.

Chapter 1

Introduction

When workers first erected the Homestead Works' mammoth 12,000-ton forging press in 1903, they stood at the heart of the world's greatest steel-producing area.

Though built upon an earlier foundation of frontier cities including Pittsburgh, Wheeling and Steubenville, by the early twentieth century heavy industry formed the core of the Steel Valley's civic, cultural, and political life. After being rebuilt in 1944, the 12,000-ton press went on to produce armor plates for the great shipbuilding program of World War II and later for the conflicts in Korea and Vietnam. By the 1950s, the fortunes of Pittsburgh's steel industry had begun visibly to decline and by the late 1980s the once fabled Homestead Works had been demolished and much of its equipment sold for scrap.

In 1991, the press, still standing in the same spot, was left exposed to the elements, presiding over the social and economic devastation left in the wake of steel's collapse. This is not solely a tale of decline, however, for in 1997 a private development corporation announced plans to remake the site into an upscale riverfront shopping center. The new Waterfront Town Centre catered to the region's middle class consumers, many of whom worked in the growing health care, high-tech and service sectors. By the end of the decade, the refurbished 12,000-ton press had once again assumed a position of prominence, its hulking mass and brightly painted exterior serving as a backdrop for the shoppers and tourists milling at its base.¹

¹ For the history of the 12,000-ton press through 1991, see William Serrin, *Homestead: The Glory and Tragedy of an American Steel Town* (New York: Times Books, 1992).

Mines, Mills and Malls explores the political and social evolution of postwar America from the perspective of the ‘Steel Valley’ – Pittsburgh and its hinterland in southeastern Ohio, southwestern Pennsylvania and northern West Virginia – as its residents and communities faced the economic turmoil caused by the decline of the area’s heavy industrial base. By focusing on key transitions in the social and physical landscape, I bring together the histories of such disparate elements as suburbanization, the rise and fall of the Great Society, the conflict over coal surface mining, and the feminization of labor in a service economy. My research engages with recent studies on the trajectory of postwar growth liberalism, the spatialization of racial and class inequality within the metropolitan landscape and the modernization of mass consumer culture by scholars such as Thomas Sugrue, Robert Self, and Lizabeth Cohen.² But through a focus on the metropolitan region as a whole, this project offers a new model that transcends the traditional urban decline/suburban ascendance divide in favor of a more heterogeneous landscape that also includes suburbs in crisis, gentrified city centers, and a de/industrial-ized countryside.

The story of the Steel Valley also progresses beyond the postwar decline of heavy industry and challenges the easy dichotomies drawn between the decaying “Rust Belt” and the booming “Sunbelt.” Pittsburgh provides a particularly important example of postwar economic and cultural transformation due to the intensity of its real and symbolic reliance on a heavy industrial economy. As early as the 1920s, the area began to show

² Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumer’s Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Knopf, 2003); Robert Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003). On the ascendance of growth liberalism as the dominant paradigm of postwar politics, see Robert M. Collins, *More: The Politics of Economic Growth in Postwar America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

the signs of decline associated with both older industrial cities and rural Appalachia. Beginning in the late 1940s, the region's economic and political leaders, spearheaded by the elite Allegheny Conference on Community Development (ACCD) launched the Pittsburgh "Renaissance," a campaign of physical and environmental improvements, including urban redevelopment and smoke abatement, which reinforced the city's importance as a center for corporate administration. ACCD-backed highway construction also relieved an acute housing shortage and prompted a boom in middle class commuter suburbs with easy access to the Golden Triangle, the city's revitalized central business district. Faced with the collapse of the region's steel industry, during the 1980s the city again reinvented itself as a center of high tech and service sector industries based in the brainpower of its research universities. By 1990, the Steel City had gained a national reputation for such advanced activities as organ transplantation, robotics, and software engineering. "The exuberant feeling of the first Renaissance is back," declared Mayor Richard Caliguiri in 1987. Pittsburgh "is the place to live, to work and play. Its future looks golden."³

The history of the Steel Valley demonstrates that the postwar evolution of public policy, transportation infrastructure, and economic development created disparities within the metropolitan areas equal to or exceeding those among different regions. Pittsburgh's victories in negotiating the decline of heavy industry largely benefited select neighborhoods and certain booming commuter suburbs, while the majority of local communities struggled with rising unemployment and poverty. Mining-dependent rural areas on the metropolitan fringe suffered from an Appalachian crisis of declining

³ Stefan Lorant, *Pittsburgh: The Story of an American City*, fifth ed. (Pittsburgh: Esselmont Books, 1999), 589.

manpower needs, high out-migration, and environmental degradation from coal surface mining. The region's smaller cities, such as Wheeling, West Virginia and Steubenville, Ohio, were also largely unable to generate the political and financial resources necessary to counter postwar urban problems of decentralization and downtown deterioration. Pittsburgh "is not the whole city nor has it been for several decades," warned former Appalachian Regional Commission executive director Ralph Widner in 1973. "The future of the region rests as much with what can be initiated in the outlying areas as with what can be done downtown."⁴

The failure adequately to address regional problems meant that while most other large metropolitan areas in the United States grew during the postwar period, each year between 1960 and 1990 the Steel Valley lost an average of nearly eleven thousand residents. The vision of Pittsburgh as headquarters to the region's large industrial corporations rested on the maintenance of profitable conditions in the hinterlands, which discouraged the pollution controls, costly urban redevelopment, and economic diversification central to the Pittsburgh Renaissance. Consequently, the collapse of steel and coal employment during the 1980s and early 1990s disproportionately affected the region's industrialized river valleys and rural areas even as suburban communities, such as Cranberry and Monroeville, achieved the status of "edge cities" complete with a growing population, booming employment base and the problems of sprawl.⁵ By 1990, the region had "transformed from a heavy industry manufacturing center to a services

⁴ Ralph R. Widner, "The Regional City: An Approach to Planning Our Future Urban Growth," An Address to the Annual Dinner Meeting of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, Pittsburgh, November 26, 1973, 23.

⁵ Joel Garreau, *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier* (New York: Doubleday, 1991). Journalist Joel Garreau coined the term edge city in 1991 to indicate suburban communities that provide a level of urban services traditionally associated with the central city.

economy,” reported a study by the University of Pittsburgh’s Center for Social and Urban Research. However, “the growth of the nonmanufacturing sector in the region has had only a marginal impact in alleviating the economic plight” of many residents.⁶

In the decades after World War II, the process of industrial decline coupled with the failure adequately to address key regional development issues helped break down social and cultural bonds as symbolized by the rusting of Homestead’s 12,000-ton press. At the same time, increased commuting for work and play, the creation of new institutions, and the articulation of a “post-industrial” vision of the natural environment encouraged new links between and among communities for both production and consumption. By the 1990s, mines and museums, mills and malls, each formed integral parts of the social and physical environment, though ongoing tensions over competing land uses revealed the simultaneous existence of multiple regional identities. The story of the Steel Valley, then, is about the ways in which residents interpreted a common landscape in multiple ways, mobilized both local and non-local resources to reshape their environment, and conceptualized themselves in relation to each other and the regional community. Homestead’s 12,000-ton press no longer stood at the center of the nation’s steel industry, but its presence continued to provide meaning, whether for the tourists at its base, the former steel worker toiling at a retail job in its shadow, or the software engineer bicycling by on her way home from work.

Rethinking Region

The Steel Valley’s location at the intersection of the cultures and economies of the Northeast, the Midwest and the Appalachian South makes it both historically

⁶ Ralph L. Bangs et al., *The State of the Region: Economic, Demographic and Social Trends in Southwestern Pennsylvania* (Pittsburgh: University Center for Social and Urban Research, 1988), vii, 98.

important and difficult to categorize, as the unifying factors of a shared geography and economy vied with the various political and administrative boundaries inherent in a multi-state region. Nevertheless, by the late nineteenth century, a system of rural coal mines and industrial mill towns, connected by an extensive network of railroads, and administered by corporate executives in Pittsburgh formed the foundation for a common regional economy and culture.⁷ The rolling hills of southeastern Ohio and the rugged Appalachian Mountains separated and distinguished Steel Valley communities from those in other areas, while creating similar problems and opportunities for residents.⁸ The Ohio River and its tributaries, for example, were a constant presence whether commuters were on bridges, miners were loading coal onto barges, residents were dealing with water pollution, or boaters were enjoying a sunny day on the water.⁹

The tension between regional commonalities and outside influences suggests a concept of region that is both historically and analytically contingent. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Pittsburgh area emerged first as an imperial frontier, then as “Gateway to the West” and finally the “Steel City,” with shifting boundaries, social systems, and imagery.¹⁰ Recent studies by Edward Muller, Roy Lubove and Sherie Mershon have rightly expanded the metropolitan story to include the

⁷ Harold Livesay, *Andrew Carnegie and the Rise of Big Business* (New York: Harper Collins, 1975), 90-120; Edward Muller, “Industrial Suburbs and the Growth of Metropolitan Pittsburgh 1870-1920,” *Journal of Historical Geography* 27, no. 1 (2001): 58-73.

⁸ Kim M. Gruenwald, *River of Enterprise: The Commercial Origins of Regional Identity in the Ohio Valley, 1790-1850* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002); Franklin Toker, *Pittsburgh: An Urban Portrait* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1986), 1-6.

⁹ On the importance of rivers to regional identity, see Edward K. Muller, “River City” in Joel A. Tarr, ed., *Devastation and Renewal: An Environmental History of Pittsburgh and Its Region* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003), 41-63.

¹⁰ Anthony N. Penna, “Changing Images of Twentieth-Century Pittsburgh,” *Pennsylvania History* 43 (Jan. 1976), 49-63; Edward K. Muller, “Ash Pile of Steel City? H.L. Mencken Helps Mold an Image,” *Pittsburgh History* 74, no. 2 (Summer 1991), 51-61.

industrial satellites, commuter suburbs, and coal fields outside the city's limits.¹¹ My research pushes this regional framework beyond arbitrary state boundaries to incorporate the city's hinterland in the upper Ohio River Valley (ORV), which was always "closely identified with [and], in effect, a continuation of the heavy industrial concentrations upstream toward Pittsburgh."¹²

Pittsburgh was the closest big city to Wheeling and Steubenville, which were not large enough to support independently the universities, theaters, professional sports teams, and large corporations found in their larger neighbor. Retail, wholesale and other sales districts generally extended throughout the area, mail delivery and the number of telephone calls from the ORV to the Steel City far surpassed the volume to any other metropolis, and the region's residents shared a common culture, environment and economy irrespective of political and administrative boundaries. "If proximity is a measure of being part of the Pittsburgh area, Steubenville has it," declared one local businessman in 2001. "We proudly call ourselves the 'Burb of the Burgh.' Steubenville is just 10 miles from the Post-Gazette Pavilion and just 30 minutes from Pittsburgh International Airport. How much more 'Pittsburgh area' can a city be than that?"¹³

Transportation infrastructure served as an important indicator of this common culture as rivers, wagon roads, and later railroad tracks, bound the Steel Valley,

¹¹ Edward K. Muller, "Industrial Suburbs and the Growth of Metropolitan Pittsburgh, 1870-1920" in Robert Lewis, ed., *Manufacturing Suburbs: Building Work and Home on the Metropolitan Fringe* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University, 2004); Roy Lubove, *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh Volume Two, The Post-Steel Era* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996); Sherie R. Mershon, "Corporate Social Responsibility and Urban Revitalization: The Allegheny Conference on Community Development, 1943-1968" (Ph.D. thesis, Carnegie Mellon University, 2004).

¹² Regional Industrial Development Corporation, *A Community of Interest between the Pittsburgh Metropolitan Area and the Upper Ohio Valley: A Preliminary Analysis* (Pittsburgh: RIDC, 1959), i.

¹³ William Chesson, "Making the Case for Steubenville," editorial, *Pittsburgh Business Times*, December 28, 2001.

separating it from other early corridors such as the Great Lakes or the Cumberland Gap.¹⁴ Pittsburgh historian Joel Tarr and others have described the role of railroads and trolleys in creating and reinforcing an urban development pattern that began at the riverfront, extended up the surrounding hills and connected through a dense network of tracks to the mining towns and rural hamlets in the surrounding countryside.¹⁵ Studies of the postwar period have highlighted how the shift from railroads to automobiles altered key relationships both between and among local communities as federally subsidized highway spending “reshaped the American landscape” through unchecked and increasingly expensive decentralization.¹⁶ “Currently, the federal surface transportation law does as much as any cluster of programs to influence the spatial form and social fabric of our cities and suburbs,” concluded Brookings Institution researchers Bruce Katz and Robert Puentes in 2005. “The result is that cities and older suburbs frequently look on helplessly as commercial strips decline and infrastructure crumbles while growth follows new public investment in highways out to the suburban fringe.”¹⁷

My research provides an important intervention into the historiography of postwar highway construction by focusing on the multiple ways in which highways shaped regional identity and local economies. Mountainous terrain and dense settlement in the narrow river valleys made road construction difficult and expensive, which decreased the

¹⁴ On the role of transportation routes in differentiating different portions of Appalachia, see John Alexander Williams, *Appalachia: A History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 19-82

¹⁵ Joel A. Tarr, *Transportation Innovation and Changing Spatial Patterns in Pittsburgh, 1850–1934* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978); Muller, “Industrial Suburbs.”

¹⁶ Owen D. Gutfreund, *Sprawl: Highways and the Reshaping of the American Landscape* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 1; Stephen B. Goddard, *Getting There: The Epic Struggle Between Road and Rail in the American Century* (New York: Basic Books, 1994); James Howard Kunstler, *The Geography of Nowhere: The Rise and Decline of America’s Man-Made Landscape* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993).

¹⁷ Bruce Katz and Robert Puentes, “Transportation Reform for the Twenty-First Century,” in Bruce Katz and Robert Puentes, eds., *Taking the High Road: A Metropolitan Agenda for Transportation Reform* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2005), 4.

region's ability to attract the highway-oriented light manufacturing and service sector industries driving postwar economic growth. A powerful progrowth coalition in southwestern Pennsylvania successfully attracted millions in state and federal road dollars, but the growing network of highways stopped at the state line as Steubenville, Wheeling and other more rural areas failed to generate equivalent support from Charleston and Columbus. Between the 1950s and 1980s, the relative distance between Pittsburgh and its smaller neighbors increased, challenging traditional bonds of commerce and consumption. Conversely, the completion of long-delayed highway links during the 1990s encouraged a reformulation of regional identity in many parts of the metropolitan fringe as new roads allowed residents to access educational, employment and other opportunities previously unavailable. "There were a whole group of economic potentials that opened [in Pittsburgh] that weren't available here," explained Gary Dufour, city manager of Weirton, West Virginia. "There were more options for what people could access. Not only for just basic employment [and] career development, but it also meant rather than the traditional, get an education, get up and move somewhere else, you could still live here and be a part of the Ohio Valley and commute."¹⁸

The expansion of the highway system reflected the escalating role of state and federal agencies in shaping regional economic and urban development. The Steel Valley contained the only major metropolis situated within Appalachia, a location that deepened problems caused by the postwar loss of manufacturing employment plaguing other cities of the Northeast and Great Lakes region.¹⁹ Consequently, the region was a primary focus

¹⁸ Author's Interview with Gary Dufour, August 2004.

¹⁹ Williams, *Appalachia*, 309-398; Steven C. High, *Industrial Sunset: The Making of North America's Rust Belt, 1969-1984* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003); John P. Hoerr, *And the Wolf Finally Came: The Decline of the American Steel Industry* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1988).

of government intervention in economic planning from Eisenhower's Area Redevelopment Administration (ARA) to the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) of the Great Society era to the retraining programs of the post-steel era.²⁰ Federal programs, even regionally oriented agencies such as the ARC, were generally administered by either state or municipal governments, which isolated specific communities and limited intra-regional cooperation.²¹ Federal spending, from highways to healthcare and from urban redevelopment to subsidies for colleges and universities, spread benefits throughout the region, but southwestern Pennsylvania's larger size and greater political clout allowed local leaders to marshal significantly greater funds than the smaller, less savvy communities of the ORV, exacerbating the economic gulf between the two parts of the region. "For over three decades Jefferson County [Ohio] has suffered a decreasing population of approximately three percent per decade," complained one local businessman in 1973. "We watch more affluent and seemingly more important [communities] enjoy the benefits of modern highways and now go on to the luxury of planning space age mass transit systems, and all the while our citizens are fighting to work in outmoded, substandard two-lane roads."

Issues in a Region of Contrasts

²⁰ John A. Andrew, *Lyndon Johnson and the Great Society* (Chicago: U.R. Dee, 1998); Michael J. Bradshaw, *The Appalachian Regional Commission: Twenty-Five Years of Government Policy* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1992); Michael J. Landini, *Understanding Federal Training and Employment Programs* (Washington, D.C.: National Commission for Employment Policy, 1995). Increased federal subsidies for retraining in the region came from the Economic Dislocation and Worker Adjustment Assistance Act (1988), the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act (1988) and Title XI of the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990.

²¹ Edward Weiner, *Urban Transportation Planning in the United States: An Historical Overview* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger Publishers, 1999); Virginia Ann Randolph Grottendieck, *Problems of Administration in a Bi-State Metropolitan Region* (master's thesis, West Virginia University, 1970). A notable exception was the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1962 and the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966, which required metropolitan-level cooperation first for highway planning and later for a wide variety of requests for federal funding. These programs led to the creation of regional planning commissions, including bi-state agencies in the ORV, and later councils of government with very limited implementation powers.

Over the past decade, Thomas Sugrue and other urban historians have successfully challenged the notion that postwar urban decline was largely a result of the tumultuous race relations of the 1960s by implicating a broad range of federal policies that enabled and encouraged the decentralization of resources and residents.²² This urban crisis narrative tended to stop at the municipal limits, however, and does not properly address the evolution of the heterogeneous suburban landscape or the simultaneity of multiple metropolitan crises including exurban sprawl and rural poverty. Beginning in the 1980s, historians also began to detail the physical, social and political development of postwar suburbia, with a particular emphasis on the rise of automobile use, which was enabled by an explosion in federal highway spending.²³ While historians generally portrayed suburban development in terms of middle and upper class whites, recent studies by Andrew Wiese, Robert Lewis, and Becky Nicolaides point toward a more complex landscape, which also included industrial, working class, and African American communities.²⁴

The story of the Steel Valley, with its diverse urban and suburban forms, decentralized settlement pattern, and cacophony of overlapping political boundaries,

²² Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*; Joshua Benjamin Freeman, *Working-Class New York: Life and Labor since World War II* (New York: New Press, 2000); Alison Isenberg, *Downtown America: A History of the Place and the People Who Made It* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

²³ Robert Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia* (New York: Basic Books, 1987); Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

²⁴ Robert D. Lewis, *Manufacturing Suburbs: Building Work and Home on the Metropolitan Fringe* (Philadelphia: Temple University, 2004); Becky M. Nicolaides, *My Blue Heaven: Life and Politics in the Working-Class Suburbs of Los Angeles, 1920-1965* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Andrew Wiese, *Places of Their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004). For critiques of the white middle class bias in suburban history, see Richard Harris and Robert Lewis, "Constructing a Fault(Y) Zone: Misrepresentations of American Cities and Suburbs, 1900-1950," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 88, no. 4 (1998); Andrew Wiese, "Stubborn Diversity: A Commentary on Middle-Class Influence in Working-Class Suburbs, 1900-1940," *Journal of Urban History* 27, no. 3 (2001).

requires the unification of these literatures into a truly metropolitan framework. William Cronon's analysis of nineteenth century Chicago and its hinterlands sets the stage for this type of regional narrative, but few historical studies have yet applied the Cronon model to the postwar period.²⁵ On the other hand, urban planners and theorists, such as Bruce Katz and Edward Soja, do adopt a regional approach, asserting that, "cities, suburbs and green spaces cannot be considered in isolation. Places have relationships and connections to other places that should not be ignored."²⁶ In his study of postwar Los Angeles, Mike Davis focuses on the interplay between industrial restructuring and the dynamic reorganization of metropolitan space and his evocation of the deindustrialized suburb of Fontana as a "junkyard of dreams" in the midst of deceptively opulent San Bernardino necessarily complicates the linear model of suburban ascendance.²⁷ This vision of the contemporary metropolitan landscape as simultaneously utopian and dystopian also provides a framework for Pittsburgh, which during the 1980s attracted middle class professionals while thousands of industrial workers lost their jobs.

Much of this metropolitan-level analysis focused on southern California as the archetype for decentralized postwar development, and it is time for historians to adopt this regional model for studies of the Midwest and Northeast. My research contributes to this literature, while working further to contextualize the relationship between cities and suburbs by also including the third, largely absent, element of the metropolitan landscape – rural space. Studies such as John Mack Faragher's *Sugar Creek* positioned rural

²⁵ William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991). For a recent monograph that does merge urban and suburban history, see Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

²⁶ Bruce Katz, ed., *Reflections on Regionalism* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2000); Edward W. Soja, *Postmetropolis: Critical Studies of Cities and Regions* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 2000); Myron Orfield, *American Metropolitics: The New Suburban Reality* (Brookings Institution Press, 2002).

²⁷ Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (London: Pimlico, 1998), 376.

residents at the heart of the great transformations of the nineteenth century, but the subsequent economic, political and cultural shift to the large industrial cities encouraged scholars to overlook the continued importance of small towns to the national experience.²⁸ Decreasing social capital corresponded to a rural population that declined from 65 percent of the national total in 1890 to less than 45 percent by 1940 and 25 percent in 1990. While still a substantial portion of the nation's total inhabitants, the postwar rural population was far from the overwhelming numerical majority found in the agrarian republic of the Jacksonian period.²⁹ Finally, social and political historians often focused their attention on the increasingly evident problems of the inner city, including the formation of a ghettoized "under-class" and the effects of massive deindustrialization, with an eye to understanding and ameliorating the causes of urban poverty.³⁰

The story of the Steel Valley breaks open the implicit urban/suburban dichotomy prevalent in most scholarly discourse by positing rural space as a distinct metropolitan component and not merely a *tabula rasa* for suburban sprawl. My research draws upon a vibrant literature by rural sociologists and urban planners on the development of varying types of rural communities as well as recent historical studies by Carl Abbott, Sy Adler and Margery Post Abbott on the Columbia River Gorge and David Walbert on Lancaster

²⁸ John Mack Faragher, *Sugar Creek: Life on the Illinois Prairie* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1986); Alan Kulikoff, *The Agrarian Origins of American Capitalism* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992); Arthur Meier Schlesinger, *The Rise of the City, 1878-1898* (New York: Macmillan Press, 1933). On Schlesinger's role in forming the field of urban history, see Terrence J. McDonald, "Theory and Practice in the 'New History': Rereading Arthur Meier Schlesinger's *The Rise of the City, 1878-1898*," *Reviews in American History* 20, no. 3 (September 1992): 432-445.

²⁹ David A. McGranahan and Calvin L. Beale, "Understanding Rural Population Loss," *Rural America* 17, no. 4(2002). The number of rural residents employed in agriculture declined even more precipitously, removing one of the traditional determinants of rural identity. Jack Temple Kirby, *Rural Worlds Lost: the American South, 1920-1960* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987).

³⁰ Arnold R. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983); William Julius Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged: the Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Reynolds Farley, Sheldon Danziger, Harry J. Holzer, *Detroit Divided* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2000).

County, Pennsylvania, which position rural space within the larger metropolitan region.³¹ Pittsburgh was the most decentralized metropolitan area in the nation during the early twentieth century, prefiguring by decades the postwar trend toward the multi-nucleated regions of scattered centers of production and consumption.³² As the new wave of suburban growth expanded up from the region's river valleys in the 1950s, white-collar commuters encountered pre-existing communities ranging from mill and market towns to coal camps.³³ This meant that residents with different social, economic and cultural perspectives often inhabited the same geographical space, further complicating notions of individual and community identity. "Coverdale, which closed its mines only two years ago, has painted and prettied up," reported one observer of the transition from rural mining camp to middle class suburb in 1951. "Out-houses are gradually being replaced by inside facilities [and the community] is well on the way to becoming one of the brighter suburbs. It has made certain that coal is dead by outlawing strip mining."³⁴

Scholars such as Myron Orfield, Bruce Katz and Peter Calthorpe point to the connections between urban decline and suburban sprawl, making a strong case for public

³¹ Emery N. Castle, *The Changing American Countryside: Rural People and Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995); Amy K. Glasmeier and Marie Howland, *From Combines to Computers: Rural Services and Development in the Age of Information Technology* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995); Owen J. Furuseth and Mark B. Lapping, *Contested Countryside: the Rural Urban Fringe in North America* (Brookfield, Vt.: Ashgate Press, 1999); Robert M. Moore, ed., *The Hidden America: Social Problems in Rural America for the Twenty-First Century* (Selinsgrove, Penn.: Susquehanna University Press, 2001); Carl Abbott, Sy Adler and Margery Post Abbott, *Planning a New West: The Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1997); David Walbert, *Garden Spot: Lancaster County, the Old Order Amish and the Selling of Rural America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

³² Edward K. Muller, "The Pittsburgh Survey and Greater Pittsburgh: A Muddled Metropolitan Geography," in Maurine W. Greenwald and Margo Anderson, eds., *Pittsburgh Surveyed: Social Science and Social Reform in the Early Twentieth Century* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996).

³³ Joel A. Tarr and Edward K. Muller, "The Interaction of Natural and Built Environments in the Pittsburgh Landscape," in Tarr, ed., *Devastation and Renewal*; David Demarest and Eugene Levy, "Touring the Coke Region," *Pittsburgh History* 74, no. 3 (Fall 1991): 100-113.

³⁴ Edwin Beachler, *Growing Pains in the Suburbs: The Story of Metropolitan Pittsburgh's Building Boom* (Pittsburgh: The Pittsburgh Press, 1951).

policies that extend from the central city to the region's most distant exurb.³⁵ However, by treating rural communities simply as "green spaces" on the map that need to be preserved from development, advocates of regionalism often ignore the continuing poverty and job losses in many rural areas that encouraged local officials to eye hungrily the opportunities provided by new highway and residential construction.³⁶ From the perspective of the Steel Valley's rural communities, the postwar period was not one of decentralization, but of increasing concentration as the failure of agricultural and mining employment forced residents either to relocate or to commute to jobs closer to the metropolitan core.³⁷ Consequently, while many local residents recognized the problems of suburban sprawl, for others, such as those in rural Armstrong County northeast of Pittsburgh, it simply provided a viable opportunity to remain in their hometowns.³⁸ Through a more accurate portrayal of the multiple links between rural, urban and suburban development, my research thus provides a better basis for metropolitan dialogue and policy-making.

Mines and Malls

The Steel Valley's social and environmental landscapes begin at its rivers, which carved deep valleys from the surrounding mountains and served as the basis for a riverine

³⁵ Myron Orfield and Metropolitan Area Research Corporations, "Pittsburgh Metropolitcs: A Regional Agenda for Community and Stability," a Report to the Heinz Endowments, June 1999; Peter Calthorpe and William Fulton, *The Regional City: Planning for the End of Sprawl* (Washington, DC : Island Press, 2001); Myron Orfield, *American Metropolitcs: The New Suburban Reality* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2002); Katz, ed., *Taking the High Road*.

³⁶ *American Metropolitcs* only briefly mentions rural poverty in connection with at-risk low-densities areas.

³⁷ Max Nurnberg, *Economic Study of the Pittsburgh Region, Vol. III Region with a Future* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1963), 237.

³⁸ " 'Positively' Armstrong County...The Best Thing Next to Pittsburgh," special insert, *Kittanning Leader-Times*, February 27, 1989. Local leaders in rural Armstrong County spent nearly thirty years advocating for high speed highway access to Pittsburgh. The completion of the route during the 1980s prompted employment growth in new industrial parks along the route and an ad campaign describing the areas as "The Best Thing Next to Pittsburgh."

culture of market towns that shuttled migrants westward and exchanged agricultural products for manufactured goods. As the area grew into the center of the nation's steel production, corporations marshaled the financial capital of industrialists and bankers, such as Andrew Carnegie, Thomas Mellon and Ernest Weir, in order to shape this landscape to their will.³⁹ Mammoth mills sprang up on the narrow flatlands along the river banks, connected via an extensive railroad network to hundreds of coal mines dotted throughout the countryside.⁴⁰ Mill towns and mining camps provided labor for these new integrated facilities, while the rivers served as transportation conduits and drains for industrial effluents.⁴¹ During the postwar period, corporate elites again reshaped the landscape first by initiating environmental cleanup in order to improve the image and quality of life in the region's cities, and later by dismantling the urban-industrial complex during the massive deindustrialization of the 1980s.⁴² Following extensive environmental activism, litigation and cleanups of the land, air and water, many residents have reimagined the region's mountains, rivers, and wild areas as sites for recreation, residence, and other forms of consumption, creating tension with others who continue to rely on natural resource extraction or industrial production for employment.

Whether the landscape was used as a mine or a mall, social institutions and the physical environment were tightly interwoven in the regional development of the Steel Valley. Despite the obvious ramifications of business and technology for the natural world, the fields of environmental, business and technological history developed quite

³⁹ Livesay, *Andrew Carnegie*; David T. Javersak, *History of Weirton, West Virginia* (Virginia Beach: The Donning Company, 1999)

⁴⁰ Tarr and Muller, "Interaction."

⁴¹ Edward K. Muller, "The Legacy of Industrial Rivers," *Pittsburgh History* 72, no. 2 (Summer 1989): 64-75.

⁴² Sherie Mershon and Joel Tarr, "Strategies for Clean Air: The Pittsburgh and Allegheny County Smoke Control Movements, 1940-1960" in Tarr, ed., *Devastation and Renewal*.

independently of one another. Postwar historiographical trends in business history discouraged scholars from examining the relationship between corporations and the environment and society.⁴³ Chandlerian business theory, the dominant paradigm of the field, posits that the adoption of specific technologies formed the major determinant of business organization and evolution and focuses on common patterns in the evolution of corporations, industries, and economies rather than their social construction or interactions with specific environments.⁴⁴ Environmental historians and post-1950s environmentalists, on the other hand generally imagined businesses as the monolithic Corporation, which they understood all too well as the greedy, powerful and destructive antagonist in the drama of large-scale environmental degradation.⁴⁵ Finally, until the more recent emergence of the field of Science and Technology Studies (STS), historians of technology often emphasized an engineering driven internalist approach favoring an examination of the inner workings of the technological black box.⁴⁶

A number of recent works have begun to address the need for a better synthesis of these fields by focusing on the natural and built landscapes of the metropolitan region.⁴⁷

⁴³ David B. Sicilia, "Technological Determinism and the Firm," *Business and Economic History* 22, no. 1 (Fall 1993): 67-78.

⁴⁴ Alfred Dupont Chandler, *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1977).

⁴⁵ Donald Worster, "Transformations of the Earth: Toward an Agroecological Perspective in History," *The Journal of American History* 76, no. 4 (1990). For example, this 1990 roundtable presented virtually no discussion of the shift to corporate capitalism that forms a central preoccupation of business history.

⁴⁶ John M. Staudenmaier, "Rationality Versus Contingency in the History of Technology" in Merrit Roe Smith and Leo Marx, ed., *Does Technology Drive History: The Dilemma of Technological Determinism* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994). Foundational works of STS included, Donald MacKenzie and Judy Wajcman, eds., *The Social Shaping of Technology: How the Refrigerator Got Its Hum* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1985); Wiebe Bijker, Thomas Hughes and Trevor Pinch, eds., *The Social Construction of Technological Systems: New Directions in the Sociology and History of Technology* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987). Currently, more than two dozen universities worldwide offer bachelor's degrees in STS and about half of these also have graduate programs.

⁴⁷ Mark H. Rose and Joel A. Tarr, "Introduction: Technology, Politics, and the Structuring of the City," *Journal of Urban History* 30, no. 5 (2004). A good recent example of this literature is Chad Montrie,

Building from the unified city-country narrative adopted by Cronon and others, Adam Rome's *The Bulldozer in the Countryside* explores how the ecological consequences of post-war metropolitan growth spurred an environmentalist movement among middle-class suburbanites.⁴⁸ This model provides an analytical framework for understanding the interplay between the growth of consumer culture, grassroots political activism and the cultural consequences of ecological change.⁴⁹ Through his single focus on residential suburbanization, however, Rome pays less attention to other environmental and industrial land use issues, such as mine runoff and air pollution, that were important to the environmental movement in the Steel Valley.⁵⁰

Conversely, Cronon's *Nature's Metropolis* does provide a model for a synthetic analysis on the regional level, but devotes little space to the traditional subjects of urban history -- "neighborhoods ... social conflicts ... the actions of municipal authorities, even the environmental history of public services such as sewage disposal or water supply."⁵¹ In telling the story of the Steel Valley, I merge these two strains of environmental history into a narrative integrating a regional level analysis of the political economy with a focus on the myriad ways in which multiple factors interacted in the local landscape to shape identity formation, land use decision-making, and public policy. The battle over surface mining on the metropolitan fringe, I argue, was less about grassroots opposition to a

"From Dairy Farms to Housing Tracts: Environment and Race in the Making of a Memphis Suburb," *Journal of Urban History* 31, no. 2 (January 2005): 219-240.

⁴⁸ Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*; Adam Ward Rome, *The Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of American Environmentalism, Studies in Environment and History* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

⁴⁹ Another example of this type of single issue literature is Chad Montrie, *To Save the Land and People: A History of Opposition to Surface Coal Mining in Appalachia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

⁵⁰ Samuel P. Hays, "Beyond Celebration: Pittsburgh and its Region in the Environmental Era -- Notes by a Participant Observer" in Tarr, ed., *Devastation and Renewal*.

⁵¹ Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, xvii.

greedy corporate monolith than a struggle between various constituencies on the local, state and national levels over how best to manage natural resources during a period of high rural poverty and out-migration. While environmental activists and others pointed to the economic benefits of tourism and other land uses, public policy failures left rural infrastructure largely undeveloped and forced communities to rely even more heavily on extractive industries. Conversely, in those areas with significant public and private investment, such as Ohiopyle in southwestern Pennsylvania, a thriving tourist industry provided legitimate economic alternatives, which served as an organizing framework for successfully limiting mining operations.⁵²

The story of the Steel Valley's mines and mills also draws upon recent trends in the historiography of production and consumption. Following in the wake of E. P. Thompson and Herbert Gutman, labor historians of the 1970s and 1980s moved beyond studies of formal institutions and analyzed the daily lives of residents in their communities.⁵³ In this model, class experience formed from the interplay between modernity and the traditional culture of the workers. This production-oriented narrative often downplayed the racialized and gendered aspects of class identity, which brought sharp criticism from scholars of women and minorities.⁵⁴ Over the last fifteen years, labor history has expanded to include groups formerly marginalized by the labor

⁵² "Hit-and-Run Strip Miners Hit," *Water Land and Life* 3, no. 2 (Autumn 1961), 13; "Cucumber-Jonathan Strip Fight Won," *Water Land and Life* 4, no. 2 (Summer 1962), 10. On the origins and development of Ohiopyle State Park, Fallingwater, Ferncliff Park, Bear Run, Laurel Ridge State Park and other developments in the Laurel Highlands, see M. Graham Netting, *50 Years of the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy: The Early Years*, (Pittsburgh: The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, 1982).

⁵³ E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1963); Herbert Gutman, *Work, Culture and Society: Essays in American Working-Class and Social History* (New York: Knopf: Distributed by Random House, 1976).

⁵⁴ Ava Baron, ed., *Work Engendered: Toward a New History of American Labor* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991); Kathleen Canning, "Gender and the Politics of Class Formation: Rethinking German Labor History," *American Historical Review* 97, no. 3 (1992); David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, Rev. ed. (New York: Verso, 1999).

movement, such as women and Asian- and African-Americans, creating a better representation of how race, class and gender interact in the process of individual and group identity formation.⁵⁵

The shift toward examining workers in their communities also resulted in a growing literature focused on the role of consumptive activities in class formation.⁵⁶ In a recent study on the postwar evolution of suburban shopping malls, Lizabeth Cohen deconstructed the postwar vision of a dynamic mass consumptive economy that purported to deliver prosperity while promising a more egalitarian society by identifying the race and class inequalities embedded in the consumer narrative.⁵⁷ Similarly, Andrew Hurley's *Diners, Bowling Alleys and Trailer Parks* examined the repackaging of traditionally male, ethnically-oriented establishments such as diners and bowling alleys into acceptable middle class pursuits while, at the same time, owners reinforced rigid segregationist policies that consolidated a white middle class in opposition to African, Asian, and Hispanic-Americans.⁵⁸ This model of consumer class formation is particularly useful within the framework of postwar suburbanization that combined seemingly color blind access to new forms of consumption, such as the working-class residential suburb and automobile-oriented shopping mall, with the implicit exclusion of racial minorities.

⁵⁵ John H. Hinshaw, *Steel and Steelworkers: Race and Class Struggle in Twentieth-Century Pittsburgh* (Albany : State University of New York Press, 2002); Carol E. Morgan, *Women Workers and Gender Identities, 1835-1913: the Cotton and Metal Industries in England* (New York: Routledge, 2001); Alice Kessler-Harris, *In Pursuit of Equity: Women, Men, and the Quest for Economic Citizenship in 20th-Century America* (New York : Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁵⁶ Kathy Lee Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in New York City, 1880 to 1920* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986); Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Dana Frank, *Purchasing Power: Consumer Organizing, Gender, and the Seattle Labor Movement, 1919-1929* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

⁵⁷ Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*, 1st ed. (New York: Knopf, 2003).

⁵⁸ Andrew Hurley, *Diners, Bowling Alleys and Trailer Parks: Chasing the American Dream in the Postwar Consumer Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 2001); Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic*.

Throughout the postwar period, I argue, Steel Valley residents expressed individual and community identity based in competing interpretations of the desirability of particular forms of production and consumption. During the Pittsburgh Renaissance, civic boosters presented a regional vision of a revitalized Golden Triangle providing employment and entertainment for middle class commuter suburbs scattered throughout the surrounding area. The transformation of mixed-use urban neighborhoods to office towers and a civic arena, however displaced thousands of mainly African American residents barred from the white suburbs by housing and job discrimination. Those left out of Renaissance imagery, including residents of urban areas targeted for redevelopment, overthrew the region's progrowth leadership in the late 1960s and articulated an alternative agenda of neighborhood rehabilitation and social renewal.⁵⁹ Similarly, during the late 1980s steelworkers and their supporters countered a new post-industrial vision of economic development through high-tech and service sector employment with their own conceptualization of economic recovery through the re-industrialization of urban river valleys.⁶⁰

The Political Economy of Place

Mines, Mills and Malls examines postwar American politics and society from a vantage point midway between the local community and the national polity. As such, the narrative is in dialogue with the historiography of national politics and the economy. In the current model, a liberal progrowth consensus based on a Depression-era union of

⁵⁹ On the growth of neighborhood opposition to urban renewal in Pittsburgh, see Louise Ann Jezierski, "Neighborhoods and Public-Private Partnerships in Pittsburgh," *Urban Affairs Quarterly* 26, no. 2 (1990): 217-49; William J. Mallett, "The Lower Hill Renewal and Pittsburgh's Cultural District," *Pittsburgh History* 75 (Winter 1992): 172-90; Gregory J. Crowley, *The Politics of Place: Contentious Urban Redevelopment in Pittsburgh* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005)

⁶⁰ Lubove, *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh Volume One*, 16-23.

Democratic politicians, working-class ethnics, and African-Americans dominated U.S. politics throughout the economic boom of the early postwar period.⁶¹ This coalition dissolved as the liberal “Great Society” programs of the late 1960s and a series of urban riots prompted a white backlash that emptied northern industrial cities and eventually resulted in the ascendance of the conservative Ronald Reagan in 1980.⁶² This framework of political change is complemented and reinforced by a focus on demographic and economic shifts to the South and West, which juxtaposes the decline of older industrial cities in the “Rust Belt” of the Northeast and Midwest with the booming Sunbelt stretching from North Carolina’s Research Triangle to California.⁶³

While this model has some utility in describing overall national trends, it is less useful in understanding political and economic changes on the metropolitan level. In his study of Detroit, Thomas Sugrue argued that the abandonment of central cities and liberal politics had less to do with a racialized breakdown in the progrowth consensus than with government and corporate policies that favored the periphery over the center and exposed the internal inconsistencies of the liberal coalition.⁶⁴ In the Steel Valley, which did not

⁶¹ Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle, *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930-1980* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989); Alan Brinkley, *The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War* (New York: Knopf, 1995).

⁶² Jonathan Rieder, *Canarsie: The Jews and Italians of Brooklyn Against Liberalism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985); Thomas Byrne Edsall and Mary D. Edsall, *Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights, and Taxes on American Politics* (New York: Norton, 1991); Dan T. Carter, *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995); Stanley B. Greenberg, *Middle Class Dreams: The Politics and Power of the New American Majority* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).

⁶³ Kevin P. Phillips, *The Emerging Republican Majority* (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Arlington House, 1969); Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: the Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison, *The Deindustrialization of America: Plant Closings, Community Abandonment, and the Dismantling of Basic Industry* (New York: Basic Books, 1982); Ann R. Markusen, *The Rise of the Sunbelt: The Military Remapping of Industrial America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Bruce J. Schulman, *From Cotton Belt to Sunbelt: Federal Policy, Economic Development, and the Transformation of the South, 1938-1980* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

⁶⁴ Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*; Self, *American Babylon*.

receive the massive influx of southern blacks following World War II, race was less an issue in regional development than was continued out-migration prompted by overall economic decline.⁶⁵ With the rise in federal spending during the 1960s, political power in the region was increasingly based on the ability to harness and distribute resources to local constituencies. In southeastern Ohio, a powerful partnership emerged between Martins Ferry Mayor John Laslo and Democratic Congressman Wayne L. Hays, the powerful chair of the House Administration Committee. While Laslo delivered votes from the riverfront industrial communities ensuring Hays' reelection, the congressman ensured the community received its share of Great Society largesse.⁶⁶ "There were opportunities ... when these programs started to arrive," explained a former Laslo aide. "Hays needed good things to happen, Laslo needed good things to happen and they would meet, and they did not like each other, but they ... needed each other."⁶⁷

The ability of local institutions and communities to leverage state and federal funds for economic and urban development depended in large part on the creation and maintenance of a series of public-private partnerships.⁶⁸ The heart of the Pittsburgh Renaissance, for example, was a progrowth coalition between corporate executives affiliated with the ACCD and the city's Democratic political leadership held together by

⁶⁵ This is not to suggest that race was not an important facet of local politics and urban development. During the 1960s, African Americans played a major role in shifting the attention of Pittsburgh's political and business leaders from physical renewal to investment in social programs. Lubove, *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh Volume One*, 142-165; Laurence Glasco, "The Civil Rights Movement in Pittsburgh: To Make This City 'Some Place Special'," Freedom Corner 2001 Memorial Booklet, available at <http://www.freedomcorner.org/downloads/glasco.pdf>

⁶⁶ "From Here to Obscurity; Underachievers Give Ohio a Checkered History of Power in Congress," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, October 30, 1994, 1C; Reggie Bashur, "Federal Funding Found Frustrating," *Times Leader*, September 2, 1978, 1, 19.

⁶⁷ Author's Interview with Donald Myers, July 2004.

⁶⁸ R. Scott Foster and Renee A. Berger, eds., *Public-Private Partnerships in American Cities* (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1984); Clarence N. Stone, *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1946-1988* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1989); Brian Jacobs, *Strategy and Partnerships in Cities and Regions: Economic Development and Urban Regeneration in Pittsburgh, Birmingham, and Rotterdam* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000).

the common goal of revitalizing the central business district and maintaining the local tax base.⁶⁹ This progrowth coalition expanded during the mid-1980s to include Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Pittsburgh, part of a national trend toward an expanded university role in economic development programs.⁷⁰

The most successful of these public-private partnerships created and maintained regional links for economic development, infrastructure improvement and service provision that transcended municipal boundaries. Sustaining these regional coalitions, however, depended upon preserving the public's perception of serving the greater good.⁷¹ The rise of the healthcare industry in the Steel Valley, which I argue was perhaps the most successful of Great Society-era initiatives, came in large part from the ability of hospital administrators to harness public funds, such as urban redevelopment subsidies and Medicare/Medicaid payments, for private purposes that in turn contributed to regional employment and the municipal tax base.⁷² Wheeling's Urban Renewal Authority (URA) successfully cleared and redeveloped urban land for hospital expansion during the mid-1960s, but subsequent efforts to revitalize the city's central business

⁶⁹ Shelby Stewman and Joel A. Tarr, "Four Decades of Public-Private Partnerships in Pittsburgh" in R. Scott Fossler and Renee A. Berger, eds., *Public-Private Partnership in American Cities: Seven Case Studies* (Lexington: D.C. Heath and Company, 1982), 66. On the formation and persistence of progrowth coalitions, see Harvey Molotch, "The City as Growth Machine: Toward a Political Economy of Place," *American Journal of Sociology* 82 (Sept. 1976): 309-332; John H. Mollenkopf, *The Contested City* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983), 139-179; John Logan and Harvey Molotch, *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987).

⁷⁰ Morton Coleman, "Public/Private Cooperative Response Patterns to Regional Structural Change in the Pittsburgh Region" in Joachim Jens Hesse, ed., *Regional Structural Change and Industrial Policy in International Perspective: United States, Great Britain, France, Federal Republic of Germany* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1988); Margaret Pugh O'Mara, *Cities of Knowledge: Cold War Science and the Search for the Next Silicon Valley* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

⁷¹ Mershon, "Corporate Social Responsibility," 653-663. The leaders of the Pittsburgh Renaissance, for example, implemented an extensive public relations campaign for consumption by local and national audiences.

⁷² Walter I. Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State: A History of Social Welfare in America*, Sixth ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1999): 304-362;

district failed when officials encountered stiff resistance to the transfer of private businesses to an urban mall developer. “Prior to moving into the commercial (downtown) area, the URA was very popular,” recalled local attorney Arch Riley. “Now, when it got into the idea of businesses relocating and competing against stores in a mall, that’s where problems came about.”⁷³

The story of the Steel Valley suggests that the Sunbelt/Rust Belt model does not account for dramatic economic and social variations *within* metropolitan regions. Through the mid-1990s, the dominant approach to studying the older industrial regions emphasized continued de-industrialization and regional decline as global competition shifted industries, firms, and jobs from core to periphery on all levels – First to Third World counties, Rust Belt to Sunbelt, and city to hinterland.⁷⁴ The post-Fordist (or post-industrial) approach, however emphasized an alternative framework whereby metropolitan regions could be partly reenergized by leading firms that underwent a sharp break from past organizational and operating principles.⁷⁵ Census data from the mid-1990s indicating the “rebound” of certain metropolitan regions within the Rust Belt supported this conclusion, leading Carnegie Mellon University planner Richard Florida, to call for a process of “regional creative destruction,” which would allow employers to “harness intellectual and physical resources at all levels of the firm as well as the broader production system.”⁷⁶

⁷³ Michelle Blum, “Mall Disintegrated with Urban Renewal Rejection,” *Wheeling Intelligencer*, April 10, 2004, 6.

⁷⁴ Lawrence A. Brown, Linda M. Labao, and Anthony L. Verheyen, “Continuity and Change in an Old Industrial Region,” *Growth and Change* 27, no. 2 (Spring 1996): 175-205.

⁷⁵ Michael Storper and Richard Walker, *The Capitalist Imperative: Territory, Technology and Industrial Growth* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989).

⁷⁶ Bureau of the Census, “Census Briefs: “Rust Belt” Rebounds,” December 1998; Richard Florida, “Regional Creative Destruction: Production Organization, Globalization, and the Economic Transformation of the Midwest,” *Economic Geography* 72, no. 6 (July 1996): 314-324; Allegheny Conference on

By the late 1980s the Steel Valley exhibited many of the features associated with this post-Fordist economy including high levels of suburban manufacturing and a focus on high-tech industries and the service sector. Civic and political elites also articulated an image-conscious boosterism aimed at making the area appear more attractive to mobile, middle class professionals, what Florida described as the “creative class.”⁷⁷ New economic growth was not distributed equally throughout the region, however, which also featured shuttered mills, an aging population and areas of high unemployment that were in close proximity to Pittsburgh’s flourishing research universities and booming suburban communities.⁷⁸ The Steubenville and Wheeling areas had a particularly difficult time in mounting any sort of economic recovery and lost the highest percentage of residents of any metropolitan region in the nation during the 1990s.⁷⁹ In addition, Pittsburgh’s growth also slowed by the middle 1990s, raising questions about the depth of the region’s post-industrial transformation.⁸⁰

Organization of the Dissertation

“The Pittsburgh region faces a challenge of transition, which to date it has not fully succeeded in meeting,” explained the authors of the influential *Economic Study of the Pittsburgh Region* in 1963. “It is a long step from a coal miner to an electronics

Community Development et al., “Toward a Shared Economic Vision for Pittsburgh and Southwestern Pennsylvania,” 1993. For example, while the Detroit-Ann Arbor-Flint area declined by 2 percent during the 1980s, between 1990 and 1997 population levels increased by nearly 5 percent, while the number of businesses grew by more than 6 percent

⁷⁷ Greater Pittsburgh Office of Promotion, *Five Pittsburghs* (Pittsburgh: Greater Pittsburgh Office of Promotion, 1991); Richard L. Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It’s Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life* (New York: Basic Books, 2002). On the importance of image to urban development, see Michael A. Pagano and Ann O’M. Bowman, *Cityscapes and Capital* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 44-68.

⁷⁸ Ralph L. Bangs, *Linking the Unemployed to Growth Centers in Allegheny County: Final Report* (Pittsburgh: University Center for Social and Urban Research, 1991).

⁷⁹ Census, “Rebounds.”

⁸⁰ Sabina Deitrick, “The Post Industrial Revitalization of Pittsburgh: Myths and Evidence,” *Community Development Journal* 34, no. 1 (1999).

technician: from an obsolete steel mill to a modern industrial park; from a giant corporation to a multitude of innovators and ambitious small entrepreneurs; from a Sharpsburg or a Turtle Creek to a Santa Monica.”⁸¹ Thus, the postwar story of the Steel Valley is about how, in facing the decline of the heavy industrial infrastructure that formed the basis of economic, social and cultural identity, the region’s inhabitants attempted to rework the raw materials of their surroundings and the resources of state and federal government into new and meaningful relationships with each other and with the physical environment. My dissertation treats the rural, suburban and urban areas of the Steel Valley as components of a spatially integrated region and I organize each chapter around a key change in the region’s physical and social landscape. These “community studies” are book-ended by chapters examining the entire Steel Valley respectively through World War II and during the 1990s.

The first chapter explores the creation of a regional culture and economy that featured important racial and gender inequalities and was based in the massive coal mines and steel mills scattered throughout the urbanized river valleys and rural coal camps. The next chapter, “Planning for the Periphery,” investigates the postwar Appalachian crisis in rural counties suffering from the steady loss of agricultural and mining jobs as well as pollution from coal mining operations. Chapter 3 examines responses to a simultaneous urban economic crisis in the region’s small de-industrializing cities, such as Steubenville, Ohio, and Wheeling, West Virginia, which attempted to use highways, shopping malls, and hospitals as urban redevelopment strategies.

⁸¹ Nurnberg, *Region with a Future*, 267.

While a wide variety of factors constrained urban and economic development in the region's smaller communities, "Steel and Silicon" traces the economic development and image making of Pittsburgh's "Renaissance" as a progrowth coalition of corporate elites and Democratic politicians remade the Steel City through public works spending, attention to quality-of-life issues, and a focus on 'high-tech' and service sector jobs. Chapter 5, "Salvation and Sprawl," continues Pittsburgh's story by focusing on the economic and social fragmentation of the metropolis through suburbanization patterns that empowered some communities while leaving others to bear the brunt of the steel industry's collapse. The final chapter explores the trajectory of the Steel Valley during the 1990s as residents envisioned new possibilities for regional identity and development, while struggling to reconcile competing land uses in a region featuring both strip mines and strip malls and producing both steel and silicon.

Chapter 2

Constructing the Steel Valley: Ecology, Economy and Politics in an Industrialized Region

A cacophony of strange lights, sounds, and smells confronted the wide-eyed Valentine Reuther in 1899 when he stepped off the train in Wheeling, West Virginia. Greeted by his brother Jake at the station, the 18 year-old German émigré had just made the trip from his family's farm in Illinois to seek his fortune in the city. Turn-of-the-century Wheeling, like the rest of the Steel Valley, was bursting with vitality and Val quickly found quarters in a "very proletarian" boarding house in South Wheeling, an area full of "Germans, Poles, Scandinavians, Yugoslavs, and Irishmen." He soon started work as a laborer in the Riverside Ironworks, located in a nearby industrial suburb, where he worked seventy-two hours a week for \$1.50 a day. Through hard work and personal relations with the foreman, Val worked his way up the labor hierarchy, eventually landing a job as a "heater" in the rolling mill and earning 10 to 12 dollars for the same twelve-hour shift.¹

With this new position, Reuther gained a spot in the labor aristocracy, making him eligible to join the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel, and Tin Workers. Wheeling was a hotbed of labor activism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Of the 152 union locals and 10,000 union members in the state of West Virginia in 1902, the city boasted 42 locals with 4,000 members. The mill closed

¹Victor G. Reuther, *The Brothers Reuther and the Story of the UAW* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1976), 10-13.

following a strike in which Val worked to reconcile the differences between the elitist Amalgamated and the unskilled workers at Riverside. “He walked the picket line, spoke at many rallies, and tried to bridge the gap between the craft union men and the unorganized mill hands,” recalled son Victor. “This put him in a crossfire between two camps: his employer had already marked him as a troublemaker, and his own craft colleagues had disdained him for trying to water down the quality of their union with ignorant, common laborers.”²

Val continued organizing activities at his next job delivering beer for the Schmulbach Brewing Company and served as a delegate for the newly-formed local of the brewery workers union to the Ohio Valley Trades and Labor Assembly (OVTLA). The OVTLA was an umbrella organization that encompassed unions from both sides of the Ohio River and Reuther’s position, first as a delegate and eventually as OVTLA President, included organizing and political activities throughout the region.³ He was often called to the coal camps scattered in the hills beyond the river valleys, where miners were beginning to organize against tremendous odds in communities completely controlled by mine operators and subject to brutal oppression by local police and state troops. His duties took him to meetings of the West Virginia Federation of Labor in Charleston and to give testimony before the state legislature, which was considering banning child labor. Val also became a close associate and ardent supporter of Eugene

² Reuther, *The Brothers Reuther*, 14.

³ David T. Javersak, “The Ohio Valley Trades and Labor Assembly: The Formative Years, 1882-1915” (Ph.D. thesis, West Virginia University, 1977).

Debs, often visiting him in a prison south of Wheeling after the latter was convicted of violating the wartime espionage law.⁴

In 1914, Prohibition took effect in West Virginia, closing one of Wheeling's largest industries and throwing Reuther, now with four children, out of work again. Val made the round of local employers for many weeks, but his reputation as a union man and the prevailing prejudice against German-Americans made finding new employment difficult. Following an eye injury that left him partially blind, Val concentrated on correspondence schooling and eventually became an agent for the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. Assigned to South Wheeling, Val obtained success as an insurance agent that provided a decent and steadily rising income for the family. After the birth of Christine, the Reuthers' fifth child, the family decided to move from their home next to an abandoned mine shaft in South Wheeling to Bethlehem Hill overlooking the city. "The neighborhood had become tougher as well as dirtier," recalled Victor Reuther. "Wetzel Street had been paved, [the] automobile had come into wide use, and Dad was concerned about [three-year old daughter] Christine's safety. I imagine that nostalgia for country and farm life may have become too strong for Dad to resist."⁵

Their new house, a crumbling relic of a river-oriented agricultural past that had since been replaced by an industrial economy, was once the center of a typical southern plantation with a separate brick smokehouse and a double-deck porch running the length and width of the inner court. Though they now lived outside of Wheeling's limits, the

⁴ On the labor movement in West Virginia, see David Alan Corbin, ed., *The West Virginia Mine Wars: An Anthology* (Charleston, WV: Appalachian Editions, 1990); Evelyn L.K. Harris, and Frank J. Krebs, *From Humble Beginnings: West Virginia State Federation of Labor, 1903-1957* (Charleston, WV: West Virginia Labor History Pub. Fund, 1960); John Williams, *West Virginia and the Captains of Industry* (Morgantown, WV: West Virginia University Library, 1976).

⁵ Reuther, *The Brothers*, 24-37. Quote from p. 37.

family's economic and social ties remained firmly bound to the city. Val maintained his position as an insurance agent and labor leader in the largely immigrant neighborhoods of South Wheeling. The Reuthers' eldest son, Ted, worked as an accountant for the Wheeling Corrugating Company, where his younger brother Walter also found a position apprenticing in the tool shop.⁶ The couple's other children, Victor, Roy and later Christine also traveled regularly to the city, riding the streetcar or walking to attend school in South Wheeling. "The mine, the mills, and the river made a fascinating setting for exploring boys," recalled Victor of his youth in the community. "Calliope organs resounding from the river drew us to the banks to watch the steamers go by, creating great waves with their side or rear paddle wheels. We fished and swam; it was a rite of adolescence for each boy to make it all the way to the other side of the water."⁷

Despite the success of the Reuthers, by the 1920s the economic forces that had drawn both Val and wife Sara to the community were already beginning to shift to other areas, such as Detroit, Chicago, and Los Angeles. Walter's pay as an apprentice toolmaker at Wheeling Corrugating was only eleven cents an hour, while the skilled toolmakers themselves only made seventy-five cents. After a few years apprenticing, Walter began "getting very restless in the Wheeling Corrugating tool room, where he had heard much talk about Detroit," recalled brother Victor. In 1927 when he left for the Motor City, Walter was receiving forty-two cents an hour compared to the sixty cents an hour he subsequently made as a drill press operator at Briggs Body Works in Highland

⁶ Ted Reuther would spend forty-eight years with the firm. Wheeling Corrugating was the forerunner of Wheeling Steel Corporation, which merged with Pittsburgh Steel to form Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel Corporation in 1968. "Wheeling Steel Corp. Is Major Producer: Plants Stretch for 30 Miles Along River," *Wheeling News-Register*, January 15, 1956; "Wheeling Steel Merger with Pittsburgh Steel Approved by Directors," *Wall Street Journal*, September 26, 1968, 29.

⁷ Reuther, *The Brothers Reuther*, 33.

Park. Using the skills he had gained as an apprentice, within a few months Walter secured a job as a tool and die maker at Ford Motor Company making a \$1.05 an hour. His two younger brothers soon followed him to the Detroit, where they became instrumental in the rise of the United Auto Workers union.⁸

The Reuthers' story provides a window into the rise of the Steel Valley – Pittsburgh and its hinterlands in southwestern Pennsylvania, southeastern Ohio, and the West Virginia Panhandle -- and the beginning of its decline. The Steel Valley sits in the northwestern part of the Appalachian Mountains, where the ancient eroded peaks and deep valleys of the Allegheny, Monongahela and Ohio Rivers fade into the gently rolling hills of the Appalachian Plateau. From the late eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries, the region's strategic position at the headwaters of the vast Ohio-Mississippi river system made it politically significant and provided access to the economic markets of the western frontier. While the expansion of the railroads lessened the area's locational advantages, it also marked a new industrial phase of the region's history as iron works and coal mining camps sprouted up throughout the area to service the iron horse. The area's location and abundance of natural resources also attracted investment in manufacturing, especially steel-making. By the end of the nineteenth century, the Steel Valley formed the center of heavy industrial manufacturing in the United States.⁹

The transformation of the Upper Ohio Valley into the 'Steel Valley' owed as much to the evolution of new forms of management among the region's industrial elite as

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 41-48 Quote from p. 42.

⁹ For the evolution of the Upper Ohio Valley region during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, see Kim M. Gruenwald, *River of Enterprise: The Commercial Origins of Regional Identity in the Ohio Valley, 1790-1850* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002). For a history of the railroads and rise of the steel industry in the region, see Harold C. Livesay, *Andrew Carnegie and the Rise of Big Business* (New York: Harper Collins, 1975).

it did to either its location or its natural resources. Industrial entrepreneurs such as Andrew Carnegie, Ernest Weir and Henry Frick pioneered the development of the vertically integrated corporation, creating an interconnected system of mammoth steel mills, coking plants, and mines extending from the heavily industrialized river valleys to the mining camps of the region's mountainous interior.¹⁰ These new forms of production transformed the natural landscape in profound ways, creating a settlement pattern that was both heavily concentrated and dispersed as factories and communities spread out like ribbons following the rivers and mineral deposits. Even by the beginning of the twentieth century, the growth of mining and manufacturing also created a host of environmental problems, extending from acid mine drainage and surface scarring to the smoke-belching furnaces that kept many of the region's communities engulfed in a perpetual twilight.¹¹

The creation of the Steel Valley also reshaped the daily rhythms, identities, and demographics of the regions' residents. Between the 1880s and the 1920s, the region's cities, industrial suburbs and mine camps experienced a massive influx of immigrants, many from southern and eastern Europe. Kinship networks, bolstered by employment policies designed to splinter class unity along ethnic lines, encouraged the formation of small tightly knit communities. Combined with the dispersed industrial development pattern and the region's mountainous landscape, this settlement pattern resulted in the formation of hundreds of separate political jurisdictions extending from tiny crossroads

¹⁰ In making this argument about the role of the vertically integrated industrial corporation in reshaping the social and physical landscape of the Steel Valley, I am drawing from the research of historical geographer Edward K. Muller. See Edward Muller, "Industrial Suburbs and the Growth of Metropolitan Pittsburgh 1870-1920," *Journal of Historical Geography* 27, no. 1 (2001): 58-73.

¹¹ For a recent overview of the environmental history of southwestern Pennsylvania, see Joel A. Tarr, ed. *Devastation and Renewal: An Environmental History of Pittsburgh and Its Region* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003). See also Geoffrey L. Buckley et al, "Living on the Fringe: A Geographic Profile of Appalachian Ohio," in K. Patrick and J. Scarpaci, *A Geographic Perspective of Pittsburgh and the Alleghenies: From Precambrian to Post-Industrial* (Washington, D.C.: Association of American Geographers, 2000), 140-147.

communities of less than a hundred residents to single-industry mill towns such as Homestead and Weirton to the booming cities of Steubenville, Wheeling and Pittsburgh. Despite annexation campaigns by the larger cities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Steel Valley remained the most decentralized of the nation's major metropolitan regions with hundreds of political and administrative divisions extending from neighborhood ethnic enclaves to municipal, county and state boundaries.¹²

Despite the fragmented nature of the region's urban and political landscape, a dense network of streetcars, inter-urban trains, and main line railroads crisscrossed the area connecting Pittsburgh to Steubenville and Wheeling as well as hundreds of smaller communities in their hinterlands. This transportation system largely transcended political boundaries and knit the region together culturally, socially, and economically. McKeesport native Dolores Witherow recalled riding the streetcar to visit her grandparents on their farm near Irwin in Westmoreland County.¹³ Residents rode the streetcar for work or shopping in nearby towns or in other parts of the city. The development of the railroad was also essential for managing new systems of production, as industrialists were able to transport raw materials quickly from distant mines to mills in the river valleys and then between various plants at different stages in the production process.¹⁴

¹² The literature on the Steel Valley's ethnic communities and cultural identity is extensive and varied. Some examples include Franklin Toker, *Pittsburgh: An Urban Portrait* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1986); Scott C. Martin, *Killing Time: Leisure and Culture in Southwestern Pennsylvania, 1800-1850* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1995); John E. Bodnar, Roger D. Simon, and Michael P. Weber, *Lives of Their Own: Blacks, Italians, and Poles in Pittsburgh, 1900-1960* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981).

¹³ Author's Interview with Dolores Witherow, December 2000.

¹⁴ For the role of transportation in shaping the social and physical landscape in the Steel Valley, see Joel A. Tarr, *Transportation Innovation and Changing Spatial Patterns in Pittsburgh, 1850-1934* (Chicago:

As the Reuthers' story suggests, however, by the 1920s the region had reached its peak in terms of both population and industrial supremacy. Technological advances in the farm fields, coal mines and industrial workplaces increasingly replaced employees with machines as the westward expansion of markets and changes in transportation systems decreased the region's locational advantages. While natural increase and the back-to-the-farm movement of the Depression years provided relatively stable population levels, even by the late 1920s many community leaders grew concerned about the region's future.¹⁵ Because of the cyclical nature of the heavy industries upon which the Steel Valley's residents increasingly depended, the Great Depression hit the region particularly hard. The close association with big business and conservative fiscal policies of the Republican leadership caused a collapse of Republican machines in many of the region's communities. In Pittsburgh, a Republican dynasty that had dominated municipal and county politics since the mid-nineteenth century collapsed during the mid-1930s to be replaced by Democratic leadership under Pittsburgh Mayor and later Pennsylvania Governor David Lawrence.¹⁶

The collapse of Republican dominance in politics paralleled the first large-scale successes of labor organization in the region's mills since the disastrous Homestead strike in 1892. By the late 1940s, CIO-sponsored industrial unions in the mills and the United Mine Workers forced company executives to the bargaining table. A series of union-

University of Chicago Press, 1978); Edward Muller and Joel Tarr, "The Interaction of Natural and Built Environments in the Pittsburgh Landscape" in Tarr, *Devastation and Renewal*, 11-40.

¹⁵ For a history of early twentieth century regional reform efforts in southwestern Pennsylvania see Brian Kent Jensen, "Masters of Their Own Destiny: Allegheny County Government Reform Efforts, 1929-1998" (Ph.D. thesis, Carnegie Mellon University, 2004); John F. Bauman and Edward Muller, "The Olmsteds in Pittsburgh (Part II): Shaping the Progressive City," *Pittsburgh History* 76 (1993): 191-205.

¹⁶ For an analysis of Steel Valley politics during the 1930s and 1940s, see Michael P. Weber *Don't Call Me Boss: David L. Lawrence, Pittsburgh's Renaissance Mayor* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1988); Bruce Stave, *The New Deal and the Last Hurrah: Pittsburgh Machine Politics* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1970).

backed initiatives provided industrial workers with generous salaries, pension and benefit programs. In exchange the unions agreed to provide a stable workforce, stay out of operational decisions, and to accept labor-saving technologies. While labor-management relations remained contested ground, by the late-1940s workers had established unions in nearly all of the region's major industrial production facilities.¹⁷

The ascendance of Democratic politicians and the success of labor unions in organizing the region's industrial workers provided an important counterpoint to the powerful industrial and banking elites that had dominated the Steel Valley since the late nineteenth century. Fueled by the turmoil of the depression and war years, however, by the late 1940s a powerful progrowth consensus emerged in Pittsburgh between Democratic Party boss and Pittsburgh mayor David Lawrence and the economic elite-dominated Allegheny Conference on Community Development, led by banker R.K. Mellon. This new civic partnership quickly began planning for a major urban redevelopment campaign focused on refashioning the "Steel City" into the "Renaissance City" by adopting pollution controls, building highways, and rebuilding the city's downtown business district.¹⁸

¹⁷ The literature on unionization in the coal and steel industries is extensive. See, John P. Hoerr, *And the Wolf Finally Came: The Decline of the American Steel Industry* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1988); John H. Hinshaw, *Steel and Steelworkers: Race and Class Struggle in Twentieth-Century Pittsburgh* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2002); Melvyn Dubofsky and Warren R. Van Tine, *John L. Lewis: A Biography* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986); Richard P. Mulcahy, *A Social Contract for the Coal Fields: The Rise and Fall of the United Mine Workers of America Welfare and Retirement Fund* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2000).

¹⁸ John P. Robin and Robert Pease, "Robert Pease Interviews John P. Robin for the Pittsburgh Renaissance Project," 1972, in Pittsburgh Renaissance Project: The Stanton Belfour Oral History Collection, OH 73:24, Archives of Industrial Society, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA (Hereafter abbreviated as Belfour Collection). Park H. Martin, Narrative of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development and the Pittsburgh Renaissance, 1943-1958 (Pittsburgh: Unpublished, 1964). Archives of Industrial Society, Park H. Martin Papers [Hereafter abbreviated as Martin Papers].

The region's other communities were less able to assemble the massive political and economic capital necessary for transforming themselves. Instead, residents continued to rely both symbolically and materially on the heavy industrial consensus forged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The experience of many communities mirrored that of Homestead, where much of the downtown was demolished in the mid-1940s to make room for an expansion of U.S. Steel's Homestead Works.¹⁹ The vision that drove the region's economic elite to refashion Pittsburgh as a center for service industries and corporate offices actually relied upon the continuing dominance of heavy industrial and natural resource production in the city's hinterland. Coal company executives such as George H. Love could support smoke control efforts in Pittsburgh while the company remained adamantly opposed to legislation limiting the abuses of coal surface mining in the rural countryside. This growing disparity between Pittsburgh and the rest of the Steel Valley would have profound repercussions in the postwar years.²⁰

Empire, Enterprise and Industry

By the time Valentine Reuther stepped off the train in Wheeling in 1899, it had been more than 125 years since the Zane brothers first settled the area as a western outpost of the British Empire. During the late eighteenth century, the Upper Ohio Valley was an imperial frontier, where European, colonial British and Native American forces battled over control of the headwaters of the Ohio River and thus access to the North

¹⁹ Curtis Miner and Paul Roberts, "Engineering an Industrial Diaspora: Homestead, 1941," *Pittsburgh History* 72 (1989): 4-25.

²⁰ For the role of corporate executives in the Pittsburgh Renaissance, see Charles J.V. Murphy, "The Mellons of Pittsburgh, Part I," *Fortune*, November 1967; Roy Lubove, *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh Volume One: Government, Business, and Environmental Change* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1995). For corporate opposition to surface mining reform in the Steel Valley, see Erving E. Beauregard, "L. Milton Ronsheim and Strip Coal Mining in Ohio," *Journal of Unconventional History* 9, no. 3 (1998): 16-33; Chad Montrie, *To Save the Land and People: A History of Opposition to Surface Coal Mining in Appalachia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), esp. Chapters 2 and 3.

American interior. Between the 1780s and 1830s, the region transformed into the gateway to the Northwest Territory and as western markets expanded, merchants in Pittsburgh, Wheeling, and Steubenville prospered, using the Ohio River to gather produce and distribute manufactured goods from Europe and the Atlantic seaboard.²¹

Victor Reuther's recollection of listening to the calliope organs on passing steamers indicates that vestiges of this riverine economy still existed long after the rise of the railroad as the nation's chief form of long-distance transportation. But, by the 1830s, the communities of the Upper Ohio Valley already had begun to decline as their locational advantage in relation to western markets and transportation systems diminished in comparison to other cities, especially Cincinnati, St. Louis and later Chicago. While the rise of the railroads prompted an economic crisis in the region, the iron horse also initiated an industrial revolution that featured increasing demands for fossil fuels and expanding markets for iron and steel manufacturing. The communities of the Upper Ohio Valley and especially Pittsburgh, being located on top of enormous coal and oil reserves and strategically positioned at the intersection of river and rail transportation networks, were ideally situated to take advantage of the economic transformation of the U.S. economy in the late nineteenth century.²²

The transformation of the Upper Ohio Valley owed as much to the evolution of new forms of management among the region's industrial elite as it did to either its location or its natural resources. During the 1870s and 1880s, Pittsburgh industrialists such as Thomas Scott, Andrew Carnegie and Henry Frick pioneered the development of a new way of managing railroad, iron making and steel production -- the large, vertically

²¹ Gruenwald, *River of Enterprise*.

²² Livesay, *Andrew Carnegie*.

integrated industrial corporation. The rise of the corporation reshaped the physical, social, and cultural landscape of the Upper Ohio Valley in profound ways, creating new economic and demographic arrangements to service the region's rapidly expanding mines and mills. By the early twentieth century, enormous firms with names such as Westinghouse, Pittsburgh Consolidation Coal, and Weirton Steel had remade the region into the center of the nation's heavy industrial production -- the "Steel Valley."

River of Empire

For centuries the Steel Valley has marked an important dividing line between the cultures and economies of the coastal plains and those of the North American interior. The region lies in the northwestern part of Appalachia, the mountainous region stretching from southern Quebec to central Alabama and separating the coastal plains from the North American interior. The region's landscape ranges from the steep hillsides of the Allegheny Mountains in southwestern Pennsylvania and northern West Virginia to the gently rolling hills of eastern Ohio. Numerous rivers and streams punctuate the terrain with the two largest, the Monongahela and Allegheny, merging in what is now Pittsburgh to form the Ohio River. The area has a temperate climate and relatively fertile soils replenished by seasonal flooding. In addition to the surface topography, the region is also rich in natural resources, including abundant coal, high quality clays, and other minerals.²³

Depopulated in the 1600s by drought, intertribal warfare and imported European diseases, by the mid-eighteenth century the Upper Ohio River Valley had become a rich hunting ground and refuge for a diverse group of Native Americans forced to emigrate

²³ Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association, *Economic Study of the Pittsburgh Region, Vol. I Region in Transition* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1963).

from eastern North America. The rivalry between British and French empires created numerous dangers for the region's residents but also allowed native peoples to extract gifts and favorable terms of trade from the European intruders. While the majority of its population lived along the St. Lawrence River in Canada, New France, especially depended upon Native American allies in defending and maintaining its network of trading posts, forts and settlements, which extended from Quebec to Louisiana. For France, the Upper Ohio Valley was the economic linchpin uniting their far-flung empire.

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British encroachment on these Ohio Valley lands also claimed by the French and Native Americans erupted into a conflict that reshaped the political and social landscape of both Europe and North America. The region was the western terminus for one of the natural corridors used by the British Empire as a gateway to the North American interior. Following the founding of Jamestown in 1607, a chain of British settlements developed along the Atlantic seaboard. By 1750, immigration and natural growth propelled the colonial population to more than 1.5 million, creating a demand for western expansion. Unlike the Chesapeake colonies, where the major east-west river system passed through deep gorges, the Susquehanna River from Philadelphia through Harrisburg was easily traversed. From there settlers followed a Native American trail, the Allegheny Path, along the ridge tops farther and farther westward.²⁵

While France and Britain officially remained at peace, British officials viewed the prospect of a French empire stretching continuously from Canada to Louisiana as a threat

²⁴ Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

²⁵ John Alexander Williams, *Appalachia: A History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

to the American colonies, and perhaps Great Britain itself. Early in 1753, nearly 2,000 French soldiers, Canadian militiamen, and Indian allies set out from Montreal on a mission to build a series of forts along the Allegheny and Ohio Rivers. The first battle of the conflict later known as the French and Indian War took place on May 28, 1754, when Lieutenant Colonel George Washington's company of Virginia militiamen and a group of Seneca warriors under Chief Tanaghrisson attacked a detachment of Canadian militiamen near the forks of the Ohio River. The surrender of Montreal in September 1760 effectively ended the American conflict between Britain and France, leaving the Ohio Valley's Native American residents with no ally to check the advance of British settlers.²⁶

In 1768, the Treaty of Fort Stanwix forced all the region's Native Americans to leave their lands east of the Ohio River. By 1776, two of the three early trans-Appalachia routes used by British and American colonists ended at the Ohio River in Pittsburgh (Forbes Road) and northwestern Virginia near Wheeling (Braddock's Road). Consequently, while most of the American Revolution was fought on the Atlantic coast, the Upper Ohio River Valley remained strategically important and witnessed numerous skirmishes between the fledgling Continental Army and combined Native American and British forces. In 1777, the Continental Congress designated Fort Pitt, located at the forks of the Ohio, as the headquarters of the Continental Army in the Western District, and a series of campaigns west from the fort resulted in a nonaggression pact with local Native Americans in September 1778, the first peace treaty ever signed by the new United States of America.²⁷

The defeat of the British Army by American colonists in the 1780s hastened a

²⁶ R. Scott Stephenson, *Clash of Empires: The British, French, and Indian War, 1754-1763* (Pittsburgh, PA: Senator John Heinz Pittsburgh Regional History Center, 2005).

²⁷ "A History of the Point," <<http://www.fortpittmuseum.com/History.html>>

massive influx of white residents and land speculators as the new American government opened the Northwest Territory for settlement. In addition to resolving the competing claims to the region by the British, Native Americans and American colonists, the American Revolution also established an important boundary between two other burgeoning empires – Virginia and Pennsylvania. Nevertheless, Pennsylvania authorities continued to clash with Virginian settlers and land speculators over the exact location of the boundary. One contingent to the Continental Congress even proposed resolving the territorial dispute by creating a new state of Westsylvania, an acknowledgement of the diverging regional interests of Philadelphia and the state's frontier residents. The western edge of Pennsylvania was finally established in 1784 - one year before the passage of the Land Ordinance of 1785 defined how the lands across the Ohio would be surveyed and sold to settlers. As a result, while Pittsburgh and its immediate environs remained part of the state of Pennsylvania, by the turn of the eighteenth century the growing city was separated politically from its “natural” hinterlands to the south and west.²⁸

River of Enterprise

The relationship between geography and transportation technology drove regional development in the Steel Valley during the nineteenth century. After the Upper Ohio Valley's status as an imperial frontier had been settled by the beginning of the 1800s, it assumed a new position as the principal gateway to the land, resources, and markets of the trans-Appalachian West. Unlike the Chesapeake colonies, there was no mountain barrier between the Piedmont and the Great Valley in Pennsylvania. The early nineteenth century was a booming time for the new communities of the Upper Ohio Valley as

²⁸ “Virginia-Pennsylvania Boundary,” <<http://www.virginiaplaces.org/boundaries/paboundary.html>>; “The Virginia - Pennsylvania Border During the French and Indian War,” <<http://www.fortedwards.org/va-pa.htm>>.

market towns, such as Pittsburgh and Wheeling, grew up near early forts and expanded along the banks of the Ohio, competing for control of western markets. The presence of the rivers and early roads proved to be the deciding factor in town locations. Of the seventeen towns in Washington and Fayette Counties in 1796, all were located on rivers or tributary streams, and only two lacked through roads.²⁹

These early market towns and river cities followed a development pattern of expansion outward on the relatively narrow flatlands between the riverbanks and the steep escarpment of the surrounding hills. Town lots began appearing on local tax assessment records in southwestern Pennsylvania in the 1790s. By 1820, Pittsburgh's population had topped 7,200, making it second in size only to Cincinnati along the length of the Ohio. Wheeling scored an important coup in 1818, when it became the western terminus of a new National Road that connected the port of Baltimore with the Ohio River. To the west, the village of Steubenville was laid out in 1797 near a fort established to protect surveyors in the Northwest Territory. At the time of Ohio's entry into the Union in 1803, the community was the second largest in the state.³⁰

At the same time, a regional hinterland was also forming, with river and farming communities for hundreds of miles down river dependent upon these larger communities for links to eastern markets and manufacturers. These small towns served a number of important functions in frontier society, clustering together a variety of skills, professional services, and economic opportunities for the region's residents. By 1790, Washington, Pennsylvania, located on Braddock's Road midway between Pittsburgh and Wheeling,

²⁹ Eugene R. Harper, "Town Development in Early Western Pennsylvania," *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 71, no. 1 (January 1988): 3-26, pp. 4-5.

³⁰ Gruenwald, *River of Enterprise*, 130.

boasted sixteen retailers, thirty merchants and more than ninety three other artisans and tradesmen, including such new trades as Windsor chair makers and coppersmiths.³¹

During this early stage of development, the geographical barriers limiting contact with the more settled areas to the east coupled with a shared distribution and transportation system oriented toward the Ohio River created cultural, economic, and social ties that extended for hundreds of miles to the south and west. Centered on Pittsburgh, this riverine economy transcended state boundaries and created a common regional identity. “People, goods, and news traveled slowly across the mountains,” according to historian Kim Gruenwald, “and so the regional aspect of Ohio Valley residents’ sense of place sometimes overshadowed national ties. Ohioans, western Virginians, and Kentuckians [as well as western Pennsylvanians] called home ‘the Western Country’.”³²

By the 1850s, however, the regional identity binding Pittsburgh and its regional hinterlands was overshadowed by an increasing identification along state lines and between North and South, slave and free. This transition was due in large part to the decline in the importance of the river for inter-regional transportation and marketing in the face of canal construction. President Andrew Jackson’s veto of the federal Maysville Road proposal in 1830 further heightened the role of individual states in determining the route of new transportation corridors, thus shifting the emphasis away from inter-regional improvements.³³ Canals reshaped the economies of the valley, reorienting residents toward the cities that served as hubs for these new transportation corridors. In Ohio, the

³¹ Harper, “Town Development in Early Western Pennsylvania,” 24.

³² Gruenwald, *River of Enterprise*, 122.

³³ For more on the role of internal improvements in the early United States, see John Lauritz Larson, *Internal Improvement: National Public Works and the Promise of Popular Government in the Early United States* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

newly constructed Ohio and Erie Canal, connecting the Ohio River to the Great Lakes, served to strengthen the influence of non-river communities, such as Columbus and Cleveland that soon outpaced Steubenville in population and economic growth. The growth of Cincinnati, located at the intersection of the canal and the Ohio River, especially contributed to the decline in importance of Pittsburgh and Wheeling as marketing and distribution centers, cutting them off from markets farther to the south and west.³⁴

While Pittsburgh soon developed its own canal link to the Great Lakes and the Atlantic Ocean, the growth of railroads beginning in the 1830s posed an even bigger threat to the importance of the region's riverine economy and culture. By 1860, the Baltimore & Ohio and Pennsylvania Railroads completed lines linking Wheeling and Pittsburgh respectively to eastern markets. The completion of the railroad lines coupled with a common geography, culture and perceived economic interests, however, did serve to create a strong Unionist movement in northwestern Virginia. In a series of conventions in Wheeling between 1861 and 1863, the first held with Union troops gathered across the river and within sight of the meeting place, northwestern Virginians formally ratified the ties to their regional neighbors in Pennsylvania and Ohio and the new state of West Virginia took its place in the Union on June 20, 1863.³⁵

The creation of West Virginia is the most dramatic case of regional ties trumping intra-state connections, but also it highlights the divisions between Ohio Valley residents

³⁴ While Pittsburgh's population trailed Cincinnati's by only 2,400 in 1820, by 1850 the city was double Pittsburgh's population trailing only New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, New Orleans, and Boston. Census data are from the University of Virginia's Historical Census Data Browser, available at <<http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus>>.

³⁵ On the statehood movement in West Virginia, see John Williams, *West Virginia: A History*, 2nd ed. (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2001).

and the remainder of the states of Pennsylvania and Ohio. The West Virginia statehood movement was in part an “alliance of the alienated” composed of business and political leaders who blamed the Virginia government’s banking and railroad policies for the widening economic gap between Wheeling and Pittsburgh.³⁶ Indeed, the boundaries of the new state were designed to include every section of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad between the Maryland border and its terminus in Wheeling. While residents of the region remained oriented to the declining riverine economy, the rise of Cleveland and Cincinnati among other cities indicates the increasing competition within state legislatures for influence and infrastructure development. The statehood movement itself emphasizes the degree to which Panhandle communities felt themselves to be marginalized within the Virginia state government. As a result, if the early nineteenth century was the economic and cultural peak of the Upper Ohio Valley’s status as the “Gateway to the West,” by the time of the Civil War the region’s residents were already searching for a new role in the emerging national marketplace.

River of Industry

While the relative decline of the Ohio River as an inter-regional transportation artery marked the end of Pittsburgh as the chief city of the trans-Appalachian West, the rise of the railroad created new institutions that would reshape the physical, cultural, and social fabric of the Upper Ohio Valley. As in the rest of the nation, railroads were key to the industrial revolution of the late nineteenth century. In addition to providing faster, more direct and reliable means of transporting goods, the development of railroads also created a vast market for iron and steel products as well as coal. The establishment of a

³⁶ Williams, *Appalachia*, 166.

national railroad system also prompted changes in the structure of business management and radical advances in information technology. These procedures were then carried over into other fields, most notably steel production.³⁷

Faced with the crisis of the city's declining fortunes as a trading center, beginning in the 1840s Pittsburgh merchants such as Anson Phelps, Benjamin Jones, and James Laughlin began shifting their surplus capital into manufacturing and influenced a handful of banks to follow. In this process, Pittsburgh residents drew on three important regional assets: a location at the intersection of river and rail transportation networks; abundant nearby deposits of iron, coal and other minerals, and a pre-existing labor supply that relieved the need for employers to provide workers with homes and services. Between 1860 and 1890, Pittsburgh's population again surpassed that of Cincinnati, more than tripling from fewer than 180,000 to nearly 552,000. This population increase corresponded to a growth in manufacturing employment from 20,500 in 1860 to 97,600 in 1890 as compared to a growth from 30,208 to 103,010 in Cincinnati. Pittsburgh also dramatically outpaced its downriver rival in the size of manufacturers, with an average plant size of forty employees in 1890, compared to only eleven employees per factory in Cincinnati.³⁸

The Upper Ohio Valley's transition into the nation's largest steel producing area resulted from new forms of management among the region's industrial elite as well as its location and natural resources. Perhaps no one was more responsible for the perfection

³⁷ For a systematic examination of the evolution of management in American railroads, see JoAnne Yates, *Control through Communication: The Rise of System in American Management*, ed. Glenn Porter, *Studies in Industry and Society* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1989).

³⁸ In order to correct for vagaries in municipal boundaries, these statistics are for Allegheny County in Pennsylvania and Hamilton County in Ohio. Census data are from the University of Virginia's Historical Census Data Browser, available at <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/>.

of the vertically integrated industrial corporation than Pittsburgh's Andrew Carnegie. Carnegie emigrated as a youth from Scotland to Pittsburgh and began his career in the telegraph office. He soon joined the Pennsylvania Railroad as personal telegrapher and secretary to Thomas Scott, the superintendent of the railroad's western division. In 1872 after rising to the rank of superintendent, Carnegie left the railroad and formed his own company to manufacture Bessemer steel. Carnegie designed the firm, which became the embryo of Carnegie Steel, to take advantage of two opportunities for enormous profits he perceived while at the Pennsylvania Railroad – the vast market for steel rails and the ability to dominate the industry by applying new cost-based financial accounting and management techniques to the older trade of iron-making. Between 1872 and 1901, when he sold the company to financier J.P. Morgan, Carnegie created a vast steel empire, centered in Pittsburgh, with an enormous array of iron and coal mines, railroad links, furnaces and rolling mills that allowed for the transformation of raw materials into finished products all by Carnegie-controlled companies.³⁹

While Pittsburgh was most successful in managing this transition during the middle part of the century, other Upper Ohio Valley communities also reoriented their economies away from agriculture and small-scale craft industries toward heavy industrial manufacturing and the extraction of natural resources. Wheeling and Steubenville emerged as important centers of heavy industry with their own steel and iron producers, railroad links and burgeoning workforce. Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries a host of new mill towns sprang up throughout the region. In 1909, Ernest T. Weir began construction on a new tin mill across the Ohio River from

³⁹ Livesay, *Andrew Carnegie*.

Steubenville, thirty-five miles west of Pittsburgh. So many people came to work that they overwhelmed the ability of mill owners to construct houses as the new community's population tripled to nearly twenty thousand by 1920.⁴⁰

Outside of the cities, farmers, capitalists and local entrepreneurs teamed up to transform the countryside into sites of corporate production. Following the success of the first major producing oil well in 1858, much of western Pennsylvania and northern West Virginia was caught up in a rush for "black gold." During the 1880s and 1890s, John D. Rockefeller brought much of the chaotic landscape of individual "wildcatters" and small-time speculators under the control of his mammoth Standard Oil conglomerate. Similarly, by the end of the century, most of the hundreds of small mines dotted throughout the region producing coal for home heating, steel production and the railroads were gradually consolidated into a handful of conglomerations generally controlled by railroad or steel interests.⁴¹ As a result, by the end of the nineteenth century the region that had once been an imperial frontier and later a gateway to western settlement and markets had become the world's greatest steel-producing region with a new economic system based on the large vertically integrated corporation.

Remaking the Steel Valley Region

Between 1880 and 1920, capitalists and corporate managers as well as entrepreneurs and local residents looking to participate in the heavy industrial economy reshaped the social and physical landscapes of the Steel Valley. On top of a pre-existing framework of agricultural settlements, market towns, and river-oriented cities,

⁴⁰ David T. Javersak, *History of Weirton, West Virginia* (Virginia Beach: The Donning Company, 1999).

⁴¹ Charles E. Beachley, *History of the Consolidation Coal Company, 1864-1934* (New York: The Company, 1934); John Williams, *West Virginia and the Captains of Industry* (Morgantown, WV: West Virginia University Library, 1976).

industrialists created a new system of urban factories, mill towns, and mining camps linked by a dense network of railroad lines and streetcars. Growth in the Steel Valley was quite decentralized compared to other metropolitan regions in the nation.

Development in the older cities, such as Pittsburgh and Wheeling, was largely limited to the narrow floodplain between the barriers of the river and the steep surrounding mountains. Employers looking for flat space on which to locate their enormous

integrated mills and factories had little choice but to expand beyond the city limits. The accompanying need for access to river and rail transportation networks resulted in a dense, ribbon-like pattern of industrialized urban development extending upstream along the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers from Pittsburgh and downstream to Wheeling.

The relationship between market town and agricultural hinterland was also remade during the period with rural mining camps forming an integral part of the region's new industrial paradigm.

An Industrial Mosaic

Everything in the Steel Valley's older communities began at the water. Prior to the arrival of the railroad in the 1850s, the region's rivers were the primary means of getting goods and people in and out of urban areas. Consequently, urban development spread away from the banks with wharfs and merchant residential neighborhoods giving way to retail establishments and central business districts and finally houses, which often spread to the lower slopes of the surrounding hills. Despite the region's rough topography, city founders in Steubenville, Wheeling, and Pittsburgh each adopted a grid pattern of development, making for a haphazard patchwork of steep, often impassable streets climbing up and down through hills and ravines as builders attempted to master

the landscape. The broken topography of steep hills and river valleys also tended to concentrate the population in the narrow flatlands as well as to foster the growth of numerous, politically independent communities divided by breaks in the terrain.⁴²

In the growing city of Pittsburgh, commercial activity focused on the Monongahela River, known locally as the Mon. Wharfs covered the mudflat stretching down to the riverbank and urban development spread across the triangle of land at the point where the Mon and Allegheny Rivers joined to form the Ohio. Spreading out from the wharf in a gridiron pattern, the city featured professional and mercantile offices, inns and taverns, artisan shops, and small residences crammed into the narrow space between “The Point” and the steep surrounding mountains. Small industries occupied riverfronts around the edge of this settlement core, with only church spires and steamboat stacks interrupting the skyline of uniformly low brick and frame buildings. Although encompassing a radius of only two miles, the collection of communities centered on the three rivers housed nearly 80,000 residents at mid-century. Despite enormous population growth after 1860, Pittsburgh did not begin to consolidate its political power in the region and spread across the Mon and Allegheny Rivers until it annexed the small towns of the South Side in 1872 and its commercial rival Allegheny City in 1907.⁴³

The opening of the PA Main Line Canal in 1830 and the completion of the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1853 spurred more rapid economic and population growth and

⁴² For the role of transportation networks in shaping urban and regional development in the Steel Valley, see Tarr, *Transportation Innovation*. The University of Pittsburgh Library has an excellent collection of digitized maps demonstrating the spatial development pattern of nineteenth century Pittsburgh available from <<http://digital.library.pitt.edu/maps/browse.html>>. See esp. “1872 Atlas of the Cities of Pittsburgh, Allegheny, and the Adjoining Boroughs” and “1886 - Atlas of the Vicinity of Pittsburgh and Allegheny, Pennsylvania.”

⁴³ For the early history of annexation efforts in Allegheny County, see David W. Lonich, “Metropolitanism and the Genesis of Municipal Anxiety in Allegheny County,” *Pittsburgh History* 76, no. 2 (Summer 1993): 79-88.

pushed new manufacturing firms up the Allegheny and Monongahela floodplains and across the water. Similar developments occurred in the region's other cities with the arrival of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad in Wheeling in 1853 and the construction of a railroad bridge across the Ohio River to Steubenville in 1865. Railroads soon formed the pulse of daily life, disgorging thousands of commuters into downtown districts, clogging city streets with tracks, tunneling through and bridging over the landscape, and filling the skies with dense black smoke. In addition to facilitating the development of larger and more profitable manufacturers, railroad tracks, freight and passenger terminals, and support facilities took up a large portion of the narrow riverbanks on which early communities were founded. This pushed residential areas even further into the surrounding hills, a process facilitated by the formation of extensive streetcar systems, inter-urban passenger lines, and inclined railways that further altered the landscape. By the early twentieth century, Pittsburgh alone had six major trunk lines, sixteen industrial and switching railroads, fifteen inclines, and dozens of streetcar and feeder lines that honeycombed throughout its area.⁴⁴

The rise of the railroads and dispersal of manufacturing strengthened the connections between areas within the Steel Valley region that had previously been largely autonomous. Beginning in the 1870s, the transformation from small craft-based industries to enormous integrated mills requiring river and rail access increasingly pushed companies to search for outlying sites for new facilities. This trend was accelerated by land speculation and a desire for more control over workers, as well as the region's rugged topography and the distribution of its mineral wealth. As new mills and mines

⁴⁴ Tarr, *Devastation and Renewal*, 18.

sprang up throughout the rapidly urbanizing river valleys and the rural countryside, manufacturers, political leaders, and engineers developed an extensive railroad system spreading throughout the region. Trunk lines and regional carriers connected the major cities, while inter-urban lines and streetcars enabled speedy movement within communities and out to their growing hinterlands. By the late nineteenth century, a trip from Pittsburgh to Wheeling that had once been counted in days by steamboat or wagon road (if the season permitted the journey at all) could now be accomplished in a matter of hours, no matter what the weather.⁴⁵

The industrial transformation of the Steel Valley also affected the rivers around which the region's communities formed. Throughout the nineteenth century, the riverfront wharfs bustled with activity as all kinds of crafts, and especially steamboats as time went on, tied up and cast off, loaded and unloaded goods and passengers coming from and going to other port cities from New York to Louisiana. In order to enhance shipping, especially of bulky materials such as coal, beginning with the Monongahela River in the 1840s, shippers, industrialists and mine owners built dams and locks to create slack water pools and thus extend the navigation season. As factories, mines and the railroads spread over every available inch of the narrow floodplains, the river edges hardened with piles of debris stranded during seasonal high water, concrete piers, bridges, and other man-made structures that crowded out most vegetation. Industrial and municipal growth also increased the amount of toxic chemicals, storm water, sewage and silt released into the rivers, often turning the water a muddy brown color. By the beginning of the twentieth century, Steel Valley communities that had once begun at the

⁴⁵ Muller, "Industrial Suburbs."

waters' edge increasingly turned their backs as the rivers became ever more unappealing, unsanitary and inaccessible to residents.⁴⁶

Mountains of Fire

Away from the river cities, the rapid industrialization of the Steel Valley built upon a preexisting system of hinterland seats and crossroads villages that served as collection points for agricultural goods and trading centers for the region's farmers. Communities such as Washington and Kittanning near Pittsburgh, Cadiz near Steubenville and Barnesville across the Ohio River from Wheeling were established in the mid-nineteenth century. These small towns were hubs of regional activity, drawing local farmers weekly to downtown markets, hosting small craft-based manufacturing and artisan's shops, and serving as centers for county government. The arrival of the railroads between 1840 and 1870 generally enhanced this position, fostering the growth of larger factories, providing a better outlet for locally grown produce, and allowing quicker connections with the region's cities for both work and leisure.⁴⁷

As with the region's cities, the growth of smaller Steel Valley communities during the mid-nineteenth century depended in large part on their location in relation to existing transportation systems and migration routes as well as the vagaries of the local landscape and the productivity of the soil. Kittanning was founded in the late 18th century and developed along a similar pattern as Pittsburgh, its neighbor down the Allegheny River. Washington, the site of the 1791 Whiskey Rebellion, was located along

⁴⁶ For a discussion of the role of rivers in the industrial revolution in Southwestern Pennsylvania, see Edward Muller, "River City" in Tarr, *Devastation and Renewal*, 41-63.

⁴⁷ While there are few scholarly works dealing with the evolution of rural communities in the Steel Valley during the nineteenth century, a number of useful local histories exist that give a sense of the vitality of market towns in the period. For example, see Betty J. Pokas, ed. *Belmont County Bicentennial, 1801-2001* (Martins Ferry, OH: The Times Leader Company, 2000); Butler County Sesqui-Centennial Association, *Butler County, Pennsylvania, 1800-1950* (Butler, PA: The Association, 1950).

Braddock's Road, a major east-west route across the Appalachian Mountains. Cadiz and Barnesville were both founded in the early nineteenth century as hilltop market towns serving the surrounding areas. Unlike settlements in the steeper and rockier terrain of southwestern Pennsylvania and West Virginia, the gently rolling hills and fertile soils of eastern Ohio made family farming a more profitable proposition and the two communities gained fame for the quality and quantity of their produce during the late nineteenth century.⁴⁸

Despite these outlying regions in eastern Ohio, one of the key differences between Pittsburgh and most other major American cities is the lack of a viable agricultural hinterland. As opposed to cities on both the coastal and interior plains, Pittsburgh's position on the western edge of the Appalachian Mountains meant that beyond the river valleys much of the region remained sparsely populated through the late nineteenth century. In Pennsylvania, the vast Allegheny Plateau separating Pittsburgh from Philadelphia became an "interior frontier" of "hunters and raft-building lumbermen," that was left behind as the western line of settlement passed over the Mississippi. As Native American slaughter and removal opened up more fertile lands to the west, the Steel Valley's rural population growth slowed and in some cases even began to decline in the mid-nineteenth century.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Author's Interviews with Milton Ronsheim, November and December 2004. See also, Dempsey O. Sheppard, *The Story of Barnesville, Ohio, 1808-1940* (Barnesville, OH: 1942; Reprinted by Belmont County Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society; Freeport, Ohio: Freeport Press 1983).

⁴⁹ Douglas Macneal, "How Can You Call Pittsburgh Appalachian?" *Now & Then: The Appalachian Magazine* 14, no. 3 (Winter 1997): 10-16. For a more thorough analysis of the implications of this sparsely settled hinterland by the former Executive Director of the Appalachian Regional Commission, see Ralph R. Widner, "The Regional City: An Approach to Planning Our Future Urban Growth, an Address to the Annual Meeting of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development" (Pittsburgh: The Conference, 1973).

The massive development of the iron and steel industries after 1870 reshaped this landscape as urban capitalists and industrialists joined forces with local farmers and entrepreneurs to produce the large quantities of coal and oil necessary to feed the ravenous appetites of the region's industrial revolution. Almost overnight hundreds of mining camps, oil rigs, and coking ovens sprang up throughout the countryside. These developments in turn spawned manufacturing opportunities in nearby towns and small cities, which served as centers of administration, capital, and supply for the coal mining regions. Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this industrialized countryside existed side-by-side with earlier agricultural modes of production. Indeed, the relationship between the two was often complementary with local farmers tending their livestock and lands during the summer and producing a supplemental income by either working coal seams on their own property or traveling to nearby mines.⁵⁰

As mines in the Steel Valley grew larger and more numerous they quickly outstripped the local labor capacity, necessitating the increased importation of immigrants to meet greater industrial demand. These new residents often settled in shoddily constructed company towns where they were subject to the will of their employers, unlike the situation in the region's more urbanized areas with pre-existing housing. This settlement pattern often had a spatial element, with the older agricultural communities occupying the flatter uplands and newer mining camps in the river and creek valleys.⁵¹ These "patch" towns were often ruled with an iron fist and, when

⁵⁰ Author's Interview with Earl and June Stephens, January 2000; H.R. Moore and R.C. Headington, *Agricultural and Land Use as Affected by Strip Mining of Coal in Eastern Ohio* (Columbus: Ohio State University and Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station, 1940).

⁵¹ On the spatial dimensions of rural settlement, see Nelson Vernon Frazier, "The Development of the Dairy Industry in Belmont County, Ohio" (masters thesis, Ohio State University, 1959); Ira S. Lowry, *Economic Study of the Pittsburgh Region, Vol. II Portrait of a Region*.

coupled with the demands of a dirty, dangerous and debilitating workplace, were the site of some of the most violent labor wars of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁵²

The industrialization of the countryside had a profound effect on the physical landscape of the Steel Valley, eventually leading to conflicts between mine owners and local residents. Even at the end of the twentieth century, abandoned structures relating to this mining boom remained scattered throughout the region. As mining progressed, huge heaps of wastes accumulated near the mine entrances, looming over nearby housing. Silt from the piles clogged nearby streams as acid mine drainage turned the water orange and coated the hillsides in rivulets.⁵³ Subsidence from underground mining was a frequent occurrence and the increased use of surface mining during World War I left enormous scars on the landscape itself, eventually prompting outcries by some local residents that their “country would be better fit for farming.”⁵⁴ In her 1947 book, *Cloud by Day*, Muriel Earley Sheppard described the Steel Valley’s rural landscape as “a country of extremes, ugly by day with banks of coke ovens, tipples, sidings, and fields gnawed to the rock with strip-coal operations; luridly beautiful by night when the glare of the ovens paints the sky ... a place of wealth and great poverty, with too much smoke, too much violence, and far too many people.”⁵⁵

The most dramatic change in the economic and social structure of the countryside

⁵² Reuther, *The Brothers Reuther*, 19-24. See also, Williams, *West Virginia*; Corbin, *The West Virginia Mine Wars*; Dubofsky and Van Tine, *John L. Lewis*.

⁵³ Nicholas Casner, “Acid Mine Drainage and Pittsburgh’s Water Quality,” in Tarr, *Devastation and Renewal*, 89-109.

⁵⁴ Montrie, *To Save the Land and People*, 34; H.R. Moore and R.C. Headington, “Agricultural and Land Use as Affected by Strip Mining of Coal in Eastern Ohio”; The Commission, “Report of the Strip Mining Study Commission to the Governor and the 97th General Assembly of the State of Ohio” (Columbus: State of Ohio, 1947).

⁵⁵ Muriel Earley Sheppard, *Cloud by Day: The Story of Coal and Coke and People* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991, reprint ed.), 1.

took place in the Connellsville region, southeast of Pittsburgh near the Monongahela River. The area was particularly appealing to mine and mill operators because of the high quality coal, known as Connellsville Coke for its utilization in the steel-making process, as well as the ease of transporting large amounts of coal on the river to mills in and around Pittsburgh. At its peak in 1910, over 40,000 “beehive” coking ovens in the Connellsville region produced 18 million tons of coke annually, 60 percent of the nation’s total. Most of this tonnage went directly to feed Pittsburgh’s blast furnaces. In addition to the creation of dozens of mining camps throughout the area, the small cities of Connellsville, Uniontown, and Greensburg also grew dramatically during the period as local foundries and machine shops sprang up to produce and repair mining equipment as well as service and equip the railroad spur lines built in the late 1870s.⁵⁶

By the 1920s, the rural areas of the Steel Valley had become an integral part of the region’s heavy industrial economy reflected in the transformation of natural and social landscapes. According to historical geographer Edward K. Muller, the Frick-Carnegie partnership, established during the early 1880s when the former purchased a controlling interest in the Frick Coke Company, symbolized this integration of urban and rural industries as new forms of industrial production reshaped existing relationships between and among Steel Valley residents and communities. Nearly thirty miles separated the closest portion of the Connellsville district from the Pittsburgh iron market at the time of its initial exploitation by Frick in 1871. By World War I, a dense network of railroads, capital and labor links, and heavy industrial plants along the Mon River knit the two areas

⁵⁶ David Demarest and Eugene Levy, “Touring the Coke Region,” *Pittsburgh History* 74, no. 3 (Fall 1991): 100-113.

tightly together, both spatially and functionally.⁵⁷

Big Steel

In 1909, Pittsburgh industrialist Ernest T. Weir purchased 105 acres of farmland overlooking the Ohio River across from Steubenville. Located thirty-five miles west of Pittsburgh and thirty miles north of Wheeling, the area appealed to Weir as a location for his new tin mill for a variety of reasons both economic and ideological. The site sat at the intersection of river and rail transportation with good connections to both Steubenville and Pittsburgh and featured a ready supply of cheap land. The relative isolation of the site also allowed Weir, a veteran of the Steel Valley's contentious labor wars, more control over his employees' environment. Cities, Weir believed, "if not breeders, were certainly magnifiers of discontent among workers." "In a small town," he continued, "workers and management lived near each other; they belonged to the same churches and fraternal organizations; they participated in the same recreations; their children attended the same schools, and ... workers and managers were friendly ... relatives or close friends." In 1920, the new community of Weirton already counted 9,500 residents and by the 1940s its population of approximately 25,000 made it the largest unincorporated community in the nation.⁵⁸

The development of Weirton was part of the enormous growth in manufacturing and the corporate reorganization of industrial production driving the spatial extension of development far beyond the Steel Valley's older urban centers. This trend gained momentum during the 1870s with the construction of huge integrated steel mills, such as Andrew Carnegie's Edgar Thomson Works (ET), completed in 1875 and located twelve

⁵⁷Muller, "Industrial Suburbs." For the tumultuous relationship between Carnegie and Frick, see Livesay, *Andrew Carnegie*, 138-139, 154-161 and 194-201.

⁵⁸ Ernest T. Weir as quoted in Javersak, *History of Weirton, West Virginia*, 74.

miles south of Pittsburgh on the Monongahela River. A variety of factors contributed to the decentralization of industrial development in the Steel Valley. A new breed of industrial executives wanted to integrate various parts of the production cycle, while increasing demands for heavy industrial products created a need for a large physical plant. New mills required access to river and rail facilities, while the region's rugged landscape prevented simple contiguous growth. As time went on, the construction of an extensive transportation system made up of railroads, streetcars and inter-urban lines facilitated the continued dispersal of manufacturing centers. Finally, as the Weirton example suggests, while economic issues most often underlay the decision to develop a green field site at the turn of the century, management sometimes had social and political reasons as well.⁵⁹

Industrial decentralization in the Steel Valley went hand in hand with the creation of new urban forms.⁶⁰ Between 1880 and 1920, developers built dozens of enormous mills and factories that hugged the narrow flatlands up the Mon and Allegheny Rivers from Pittsburgh and down the Ohio Valley through Steubenville and Wheeling. In addition to Weirton, corporate managers laid out entirely new mill-oriented communities, such as Homestead (1881), Monessen (1896) and Follansbee (1905). These community-building projects were part of a larger North American phenomenon that belies the easy urban-suburban dichotomy developed by later scholars.⁶¹ In contrast to the middle-class

⁵⁹ For another example of a "model" industrial community in the Steel Valley, see Anne E. Mosher, *Capital's Utopia: Vandergrift, Pennsylvania, 1855-1916* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

⁶⁰ There is an excellent and growing literature on the changing form and function of late nineteenth and early twentieth century mill towns and industrial "satellite" cities. Richard Harris and P. J. Larkham, *Changing Suburbs: Foundation, Form and Function* (New York: Routledge, 1999); Robert D. Lewis, *Manufacturing Suburbs: Building Work and Home on the Metropolitan Fringe* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University, 2004).

⁶¹ Richard Harris and Robert Lewis, "Constructing a Fault(y) Zone: Misrepresentations of American Cities

model, recent studies of pre-World War II suburbia have affirmed the importance of understanding mill towns and mining camps as a part of a heterogeneous landscape encompassing a wide variety of community types.⁶² This emerging model is particularly important for understanding the trajectory of the Steel Valley, which by 1920 featured the nation's most decentralized metropolitan region.

Further complicating this picture, Pittsburgh historian Edward Muller suggests that what contemporaries and later historians often viewed simply as industrial decentralization also involved the creation or expansion of local production systems.⁶³ Consequently, older settlements that had previously been oriented toward riverine or agricultural economies experienced a massive influx of new immigrants as existing industries grew or entrepreneurs built entirely new facilities. Many small settlements, such as Martins Ferry, located across the Ohio River from Wheeling, featured stable or declining populations from 1840 to 1870. Over the next fifty years, industrial expansion in coal mining and steel production prompted a population explosion in the region's hinterland, with largely rural Belmont County, Ohio growing from 40,000 residents in 1870 to more than 93,000 residents by 1920. Between 1910 and 1920 alone, the number of inhabitants in the county increased by more than 17,000. By the conclusion of World War I, more than two-thirds of Belmont County residents lived in a heavily industrialized and nearly continuous string of mill towns, mining camps and small cities stretching

and Suburbs, 1900-1950," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 88, no. 4 (1988): 622-639; Andrew Wiese, "Stubborn Diversity: A Commentary on Middle-Class Influence in Working-Class Suburbs, 1900-1940," *Journal of Urban History* 27, no. 3 (2001): 348-54.

⁶² Becky M. Nicolaides, *My Blue Heaven: Life and Politics in the Working-Class Suburbs of Los Angeles, 1920-1965* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Andrew Wiese, *Places of Their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

⁶³ Edward Muller, "Industrial Suburbs and the Growth of Metropolitan Pittsburgh 1870-1920," 68.

along the river's west bank.⁶⁴

The concentrated growth of mill towns in the river valleys exacerbated the issue of air pollution, leaving a legacy of environmental degradation and spawning some of the region's earliest anti-pollution legislation. By the early twentieth century, a thick smoky haze that deepened with winter's cold air blanketed many Steel Valley communities.⁶⁵ According to local lore, smoke from the city's stoves and furnaces so fouled the air that Pittsburgh businessmen would often have to change shirts at lunch due to the grime.⁶⁶ "I remember," recalled Wheeling resident John Hunter II, when "you drove downtown in the mornings, you'd have to turn on your headlights at ten or eleven o'clock in the morning because of the smoke."⁶⁷ As modes of energy production changed and the city's economy slowly began to diversify away from its heavy industrial base, interest grew among Pittsburgh's elite in alleviating some of the problems of air pollution.⁶⁸ For much of the remainder of the region, smoke remained a nuisance, but one synonymous with economic prosperity and in later years many residents looked back on it with some level of nostalgia. Nowadays, Hunter continued in his 1994 interview, "we don't have the smoke. You don't have to turn on your headlights at ten or eleven o'clock in the morning, but we also don't have the business or industry."⁶⁹

⁶⁴ Census data are from the University of Virginia's Historical Census Data Browser, available at <<http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus>>.

⁶⁵ The most extreme example of this occurred in 1948 southeast of Pittsburgh along the Monongahela River in Donora, Pennsylvania. See Lynn Page Snyder, "Revisiting Donora, Pennsylvania's 1948 Air Pollution Disaster" in Tarr, *Devastation and Renewal*, 126-44.

⁶⁶ Author's Interview with Dolores Witherow, December 2000.

⁶⁷ John B. Hunter II, "Marine Memories," recorded October 11, 1994, Wheeling Area Historical Database, Ohio County Public Library (Hereafter abbreviated as WAHD).

⁶⁸ For an interesting cultural analysis of residents' perception of air pollution in the early twentieth century, see Angela Gugliotta, "How, When, and for Whom was Smoke a Problem in Pittsburgh?" in Tarr, *Devastation and Renewal*, 110-125. For a case study of the Pittsburgh Smoke Control Movement, see Joel A. Tarr, "Changing Fuel Use Behavior and Energy Transitions: The Pittsburgh Smoke Control Movement, 1940-1950 - a Case Study in Historical Analogy," *Journal of Social History* 14, no. 4 (1981).

⁶⁹ Hunter II, "Marine Memories."

By 1920, the expansion of massive vertically integrated corporations transformed the Steel Valley's physical and economic landscape into a form suitable for large-scale production and natural resource extraction. Mill towns and mining camps joined a preexisting pattern of river cities and market hamlets, creating heavily developed corridors that extended throughout the region's river valleys. The region's broken topography concentrated this urban population, leaving large amounts of open space on steep hillsides away from the rivers and unsuitable for either industrial development or commercial agriculture. An extensive network of railroads, necessary for the centralized coordination of diverse corporate interests, connected Steel Valley communities, fostering industrial growth in some rural areas and allowing residents to commute to the larger cities for work, shopping, and leisure. Finally, smoke, sewage and surface mining increasingly spoiled the environment as corporations extracted resources and emitted pollutants that reshaped the relationship between Steel Valley residents and the region's natural landscape.

“Wide-Open Days”

Just as industrial capital remade the region's economic and physical topography, so too did the Steel Valley's transformation result in the formation of new social and cultural institutions. Hundreds of thousands of new residents, including Val Reuther, poured into newly built mills and mines looking to escape the declining fortunes of the nation's family farms as well as the oppressive segregation of the Jim Crow South. Corporate recruiters drew in hundreds of thousands more workers from the impoverished and war-torn regions of eastern and southern Europe. These new residents settled into existing ethnic neighborhoods in the region's cities or formed entirely new communities

established around the enormous mills and factories covering the narrow flatlands between the rivers and the surrounding hillsides. Public administration remained relatively weak in the region, especially in the corporate-controlled mill towns and machine-run cities. “Let’s put it this way,” Wheeling resident Bill Hogan recalled, “23d Street was wide-open. It was nothing for neighborhood kids...to go over and sit in the houses of prostitution, because you could listen to the jukebox free; and the ladies of the evening would give you free soda pop.... It was just accepted fact. While it was against the law, it was condoned. As long as everything stayed below the creek, this was considered entertainment for the working man; prostitution, gambling, so forth.”⁷⁰

While the region was a hotbed of working-class and ethnic organizations, labor unrest in the region’s mines and mills during the 1890s convinced corporate managers of the need to reshape Steel Valley culture into more controllable forms. Through a combination of corporate paternalism and the use or threat of force, employers throughout the region largely stifled the union movement during the early decades of the twentieth century. However, the failure of corporate employers and Republican political machines successfully to deal with the crisis of the Great Depression prompted a major shift in the region’s social and political structures. By the end of the 1930s, CIO-backed unions in the steel mills and a Democratic political machine in city hall forced Pittsburgh’s economic and social elite to share the reins of power they had held firmly since the late nineteenth century.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Bill Hogan, “Wheeling’s Wide Open Days,” recorded on July 5, 1994, WAHD.

⁷¹ On the decline of nineteenth century labor activism in the Steel Valley, see William Serrin, *Homestead: The Glory and Tragedy of an American Steel Town* (New York: Times Books, 1992). For the rise of the CIO, see Robert H. Zieger, *The CIO, 1935-1955* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995). For the evolution of machine politics in the Steel Valley during the 1930s, see Stave, *The New Deal and the Last Hurrah*.

During the mid-1940s, Pittsburgh's powerful new mayor, Democrat David Lawrence, forged a progrowth coalition with the city's Republican economic elite led by banker and financier R. K. Mellon that sought to remake the city's downtown into a form more suitable for corporate administration.⁷² However, this new consensus never took root outside of Pittsburgh nor did it fully replace a pre-existing system that emphasized political docility and reliance on a few large industrial employers. As Steel Valley residents faced the challenges of the postwar period, they did so from a social and cultural foundation laid in the ethnic communities and industrial workplaces of the early twentieth century.⁷³

“From 21st and Main on South”

The demands of the Steel Valley's mines and integrated industrial mills dominated the rhythms of everyday life from the 1870s to World War II. In order to fill the demands of the massive factories, mills, and coal mines being built in the area, employers recruited workers from eastern and southern Europe, who joined an influx of native-born residents, including African Americans fleeing segregation in the Jim Crow South. Wheeling nearly tripled its total 1870 population, peaking at nearly 62,000 in 1930, while Allegheny County (Pittsburgh) grew from 262,000 to more than 1.3 million during the same period.⁷⁴ Community life revolved around workplace and ethnic groups, the latter practice encouraged by employers interested in blocking class-based

⁷² The most comprehensive examination of the postwar pro-growth coalition in Allegheny County is Sherie R. Mershon, “Corporate Social Responsibility and Urban Revitalization: The Allegheny Conference on Community Development, 1943-1968” (Ph.D. thesis, Carnegie Mellon University, 2004).

⁷³ For an excellent overview of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County during the early and mid twentieth century, see Roy Lubove, *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh, Vol. I: Government, Business, and Environmental Change* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1995).

⁷⁴ Census Data from the University of Virginia Library's Historical Census Data Browser.

organization efforts by the expanding labor movement.⁷⁵ For recent immigrants, who often did not speak or read English fluently, the ethnic enclave within the larger community took the place of the village or town in their native country. Many of the smaller communities along the riverbanks took on distinctly ethnic tones, while the larger cities such as Pittsburgh, Wheeling, and Steubenville acquired Polish, Italian, Hungarian, and Jewish neighborhoods alongside the older German and Irish areas.⁷⁶

George Thomas, the son of Lebanese and Syrian immigrants, was born in 1926 at the corner of 21st and Main Street in one of Wheeling's working-class immigrant neighborhoods. One of his first memories, he recalled in a 1994 interview, was of the Turkish coffee house next door to his home. "I remember looking [in the window] when I was a very small boy. If you walked into the coffee house, most of them were just older men playing cards and drinking.... [what] we call demitasse, but it is really Turkish coffee, a very rich, very strong coffee." As residents remember them, these were vibrant communities filled with grocers, butchers, restaurants and taverns. "Saseen's Pool Room used to be on Main Street," Thomas continued, "Armands's Restaurant, that was across the street. Brice's Dime-A-Dance...Mike's, Pete's, Nosey's, Harry's--all good restaurants. Nosey's was the South Side Restaurant. His name was George Marakapopolus, or something like that. He had an immense bulbous nose, but he was a

⁷⁵ For company efforts to manage labor policy in the steel mills during the early twentieth century, see Jonathan Rees, *Managing the Mills: Labor Policy in the American Steel Industry during the Nonunion Era* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2004).

⁷⁶ Toker, *Pittsburgh*.; Martin, *Killing Time*; John E. Bodnar, Roger D. Simon, and Michael P. Weber, *Lives of Their Own: Blacks, Italians, and Poles in Pittsburgh, 1900-1960*. For an overview of settlement patterns of different ethnic groups in southwestern Pennsylvania, see <<http://www.nauticom.net/www/maduro/ethnic.htm>>.

good person. He was the salt of the earth. We used to give him a bad time, but of course, we were young.”⁷⁷

Outside of the region’s cities and established villages, the workplace dominated community life even further. While some mill towns and mining camps were the result of well-laid plans and designed as comprehensive communities, the majority were hastily built and often resulted in shoddy construction, devastation of the natural environment and poor living conditions for their residents.⁷⁸ Mill towns generally consisted of rows of tightly-packed workers’ housing extending away from the riverfront factory and increasing in size and quality as they worked their way up the lower slopes of the surrounding hills.⁷⁹ Consequently, the spatial layout of the towns themselves reflected the hierarchy of the workplace with unskilled workers occupying the dirtiest, noisiest and cheapest housing followed by skilled workers, foremen and finally executives in their hillside mansions. Many communities also included a small business district a few blocks from the factory gates, though residents generally traveled to more established city centers for shopping and other services.⁸⁰

The borough of Homestead, just up the Mon from Pittsburgh, provides an important example of this development pattern. Following the construction of the Homestead Works in 1881, the community expanded along the flat land and lower

⁷⁷ George Thomas, “From 21st and Main on South,” recorded on June 28, 1994, WAHD. The coffee shop was an important meeting place and cultural center in many ethnic communities in the Steel Valley. See also, James G. Patterson, “Kafenias and Community: Coffee Houses and Greek Life in Aliquippa and Ambridge, Pa., 1938-1941,” *Pittsburgh History* 74, no. 4 (Winter 1991): 147-155.

⁷⁸ Edward K. Muller and Joel A. Tarr, “The Interaction of Natural and Built Environments in the Pittsburgh Landscape,” in Tarr, *Devastation and Renewal: An Environmental History of Pittsburgh and its Region*, esp. 19-20.

⁷⁹ The most celebrated planned mill town in the Steel Valley was Vandergrift, built in 1895 on a tributary of the Allegheny River northeast of Pittsburgh. See, Mosher, *Capital’s Utopias*.

⁸⁰ Paul Underwood Kellogg, *The Pittsburgh Survey; Findings in Six Volumes, Publications of the Russell Sage Foundation* (New York: Charities Publication Committee, 1910-1916).

reaches of the river escarpment within walking distance of the steel mill. The steel industry's dramatic expansion prompted a flood of new immigrants, including southern blacks brought in by management to break strikes in the mills following World War I, to the lowland area known locally as "the Ward." As select ethnic groups capitalized on increased opportunities at the workplace, those who could afford to move abandoned the cramped, dirty and ethnically diverse Ward for the cleaner, roomier and more homogenous hilltops. At the same time, an expanding network of streetcars and later roads opened more areas for development. In contrast to the dynamic growth of the Ward, these newer hilltop communities in Homestead and neighboring Munhall reflected more centralized decision-making. The original boundaries of Munhall, incorporated in 1901, corresponded to Carnegie Land Company holdings and U.S. Steel invested heavily in public works and housing for management in the new community as well as the upper reaches of Homestead itself.⁸¹

Despite the Ward's social and physical features' being undesirable to Homestead's more affluent population, over time the area evolved into a thriving urban community with distinct Slovak, Hungarian, Polish, Lithuanian and African-American neighborhoods. A dozen churches, from Roman Catholic to Baptist, provided for residents' spiritual needs, while numerous saloons, theaters, coffee houses, social clubs and gymnasiums provided space for socializing and entertainment. While U.S. Steel planned for the creation of hilltop communities for management and skilled workers, the working class African-American and immigrant neighborhoods of the Ward eventually made way for a war-time expansion of the Homestead Works. Between June 1941 and

⁸¹ William Serrin, *Homestead*. On the contrast between Munhall and Homestead, see Judith Modell and Charlee Brodsky, *A Town without Steel: Envisioning Homestead* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998): 4-7.

June 1943, a consortium of U.S. Steel managers, local developers and officials of the federal Defense Plant Corporation purchased and demolished the homes of more than 1,500 families, nearly half of Homestead's prewar population, as well as twelve churches, five schools, two convents and dozens of small businesses, groceries, restaurants and saloons.⁸² Most of those displaced were expected to find homes in new federal defense housing projects scattered throughout the region. By end of World War II, nothing remained of the Ward outside of the steel mills of the expanded Homestead Works.⁸³

Deserted Parthenons

While their mines and mills physically dominated the landscape, industrial corporations also used a wide variety of tactics to manage the social lives of their employees.⁸⁴ Corporate managers generally controlled municipal government, ensuring that what was best for the community was also best for the company. While Weirton Steel employees owned or rented their own homes and shopped at privately owned businesses, the company provided electricity, constructed a water and sewer system, subsidized the volunteer fire department, built and repaired the roads, and cleaned the streets.⁸⁵ Corporate control of community life was even more pervasive in the mining

⁸² Curtis Miner and Paul Roberts, "Engineering an Industrial Diaspora: Homestead, 1941," *Pittsburgh History* 72, no. 4 (Winter 1989): 4-25.

⁸³ "Steel Towns: Two In Pittsburgh will be Made Over by Plant Expansions," *Wall Street Journal*, July 19, 1941. On defense housing in the Pittsburgh region, see Kristin Szylvian Bailey, "Defense Housing in Greater Pittsburgh, 1941-1945," *Pittsburgh History* 73, no. 1 (Spring 1990): 17-28.

⁸⁴ Thomas Dublin, *Women at Work: The Transformation of Work and Community in Lowell, Massachusetts, 1826-1860* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979); Jacqueline Dowd Hall et al, *Like a Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1987); Crandall A. Shifflett, *Coal Towns: Life, Work, and Culture in Company Towns of Southern Appalachia, 1880-1960* (Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 1991); Daniel J. Walkowitz, *Worker City, Company Town: Iron and Cotton Worker Protest in Troy and Cohoes, New York, 1855-84* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978).□

⁸⁵ Javersak, *History of Weirton, West Virginia*. Unlike other communities that maintained the semblance of separate municipal leadership, Weirton also remained unincorporated through the 1940s, despite a burgeoning population, in order to prevent even the possibility of political resistance to corporate decision-

camps where companies often owned the housing, required workers to make their purchases at inflated prices in company stores, and sometimes even paid employees in scrip. This ensured workers' dependence on the good will of management for life as well as livelihood.⁸⁶

From the 1860s to the early 1890s, organized labor had a powerful presence throughout the Steel Valley. While much of the region was subject to one-party Republican rule, union leaders, both Republican and Democrat, often served as town burgesses and other key officials. As Valentine Reuther's account demonstrates, skilled workers in the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers exercised critical control over work processes in the mills. Union officials also teamed up with civic leaders to push for improvements to the quality of life of working-class residents through public works spending.⁸⁷ Organized labor's influence over the cultural, political and economic life of the Steel Valley in the late nineteenth century stands in sharp contrast to the period from 1892 to the mid-1930s, when company officials and their allies in state and local government systematically rooted out union activity in mills and undermined pro-labor candidates in local government. Anti-union sentiment among employers was especially strong in southwestern Pennsylvania and extended beyond the steel mills, with only one union, a carpenter's local, remaining intact throughout the entire period.⁸⁸

making. See also Elizabeth Fones-Wolf and Ken Fones-Wolf, "Cold War Americanism: Business, Pageantry, and Antiunionism in Weirton, West Virginia," *Business History Review* 77, no. 1 (2003).

⁸⁶ For a discussion of the evolution of a number of coal towns, or "patches," see Demarest and Levy, "Touring the Coke Region." For a broader discussion of labor organizing in the coal industry, see Dubofsky and Van Tine, *John L. Lewis*.

⁸⁷ On coalition-building between unions and civic leader in turn-of-the-century Wheeling, see Javersak, "The Ohio Valley Trades and Labor Assembly: The Formative Years, 1882-1915" (Ph.D. thesis., West Virginia University, 1977).

⁸⁸ Richard Oestreicher, "The Spirit of '92: Popular Opposition in Homestead's Politics and Culture, 1892-1937" in Maurine Weiner Greenwald and Margo J. Anderson, *Pittsburgh Surveyed: Social Science and Social Reform in the Early Twentieth Century* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996).

One of the chief tools for controlling union activity in the Steel Valley was the company spy.⁸⁹ Officials refused to confirm or deny their existence, but early twentieth century researcher John Fitch and other observers believed U.S. Steel maintained espionage files on all of its employees. While few statistics are available, one scholar discovered that officials at six Carnegie and U.S. Steel mills fired at least 700 workers between 1896 and 1910 as a result of company spy reports.⁹⁰ In addition to refusing to hire blacklisted union men, Weirton Steel also maintained a network of company spies and private police officers. “I was accosted by a person who informed me he was a [company] guard,” one union organizer recalled of a trip to Weirton in the early twentieth century. He “took me by the arm and said, Get the hell out of town. You have four minutes to make the train and if you don’t get out, we will carry you out.”⁹¹ During the nationwide steel strike in 1919, Weir ordered his private police force to round up suspected radicals, whom he accused of being members of the Industrial Workers of the World. A mob then dragged the group, many of whom were Finnish immigrants, to the center of Main Street, forced them to kneel and kiss an American flag and then expelled them from town.⁹²

U.S. Steel, Weirton Steel and other industrial employers matched their anti-union activities at the workplace with a positive campaign to win the hearts and minds of the area’s residents. Company coffers paid for playgrounds, community centers, government buildings, pools, libraries, and hospitals. Construction crews helped build and maintain roads and even decorate for Christmas. Throughout the Valley, local politicians said if

⁸⁹ On the company spy system in the auto industry, see Nelson Lichtenstein, *Walter Reuther: The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997).

⁹⁰ Oestreicher, “The Spirit of ‘92,” 193.

⁹¹ Javersak, *History of Weirton, West Virginia*, 98.

⁹² Fones-Wolf and Fones-Wolf, “Cold War Americanism.”

they needed something, they simply went to the mill superintendent or plant foreman and asked for it.⁹³ Many corporations also instituted corporate welfare programs aimed at encouraging workers to identify with company interests. Beginning in 1903, U.S. Steel instituted a profit-sharing stock purchase program for employees and joined other large employers in instituting modest pension and accident benefits programs in the early twentieth century. A wave of steel strikes following World War I prompted further expansion of corporate welfare activities. Companies held huge picnics and organized excursions to local amusement parks, such as Kennywood near Homestead and the White Palace in Wheeling, designed to cement the relationship between employees and management.⁹⁴

This increase in corporate paternalism coincided with the rise of Progressive politics among the Steel Valley's middle and upper class residents. The Progressivist impulse among the region's corporate elite grew from a worldview that ascribed the appalling conditions of the region's social and physical landscape to the greed and corruption of nineteenth century industrial capitalism. Order could only be restored to the urban environment, so the argument ran, by experts' employing rational scientific programs aimed at making cities safer, healthier, more efficient and more profitable for business. Progressivist sentiment was particularly strong in Pittsburgh, where Lincoln Steffen's stinging 1903 rebuke "Pittsburgh: A City Ashamed" spurred moral crusaders

⁹³ Author's Interview with Donald Myers, August 18, 2004.

⁹⁴ Matthew Magda, *Monessen: Industrial Boomtown and Steel Community, 1898–1980* (Harrisburg, PA: 1985). Oestreicher, "The Spirit of '92." For similar efforts in Chicago, see Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

such as the Rev. George Hodges to action and helped elect a reform-minded Democratic mayor, George W. Guthrie, in 1906.⁹⁵

Despite a number of important victories, however, the social and political systems of the Steel Valley forged in the late nineteenth century largely stymied these Progressive reforms. For example, in 1911 noted architect and urban planner Frederick Law Olmstead, Jr. completed a plan for “remodeling the downtown district and improvement of main traffic between the heart of the city and the outlying districts,” commissioned by the Pittsburgh Civic Commission.⁹⁶ The report envisioned a wide variety of civic improvements from flood control and a commercially revitalized waterfront to an expansive network of tunnels and bridges framing the proposed Pittsburgh Civic Center, many of which came to fruition in the years following World War II. During the early twentieth century, however, Olmstead’s plan, along with many similar efforts, faltered in the face of entrenched opposition from a variety of sources.⁹⁷

While many reform-minded groups of the period blamed urban blight and the failure of elite-driven reforms on corrupt Republican political machines, opposition can also be understood as a response by the Valley’s working-class residents to further attempts at domination by the economic elite. A closer look at one of the most recognized examples of corporate paternalism and Progressivist moral reform, the Carnegie Libraries, reveals both the extent and limits of corporate domination of social and political life in the Steel Valley. While Andrew Carnegie eventually donated close to

⁹⁵ John F. Bauman and Edward Muller, “The Olmsteds in Pittsburgh (Part II): Shaping the Progressive City,” *Pittsburgh History* 76 (1993): 191-205; Lubove, *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh Volume One*.

⁹⁶ Frederick Law Olmstead, “Pittsburgh Main Thoroughfares and the Down Town District: Improvements Necessary to Meet the City’s Present and Future Needs, A Report” (Pittsburgh Civic Commission, 1911, 1). Available at <<http://pghbridges.com>>.

⁹⁷ For an examination of county government reform efforts beginning in the early twentieth century, see Jensen, “Masters of Their Own Destiny.”

thirty libraries to communities in Pennsylvania alone, he located his earliest and largest libraries in towns like Braddock and Homestead where Carnegie Steel was the major employer. As corporate managers sought to remake the physical and social landscape of the region, company-sponsored institutions such as libraries, community centers, and parks were part of a strategy to control the cultural aspects of community life as well. Many of these early libraries were extravagant affairs, including extensive and well-manicured lawns, large collections housed in imposing structures, clubrooms, auditoriums, bowling alleys and swimming pools. Carnegie used the dedication ceremony for the Carnegie Library of Homestead in 1898 to outline his program for the library system that would serve to educate, improve, and uplift the region's working-class families. "May it indeed be between capital and labor," he noted at one point in the speech, "an emblem of peace, reconciliation, confidence, harmony and union."⁹⁸

Many civic and political leaders supported construction of Carnegie libraries both as needed investments in their communities and also in recognition of the financial power wielded by the Carnegie interests. Shortly before a measure to raise the required 10 percent local contribution for library construction came up for a referendum, Wheeling's newspaper, *The Daily Intelligencer*, warned "Mr. Carnegie is so situated that any affront to him at this time might in the end prove very disastrous to the physical welfare of Wheeling." The editor then cited all the steel mills in the vicinity as evidence of the city's dependence on the man, concluding, "We desire Mr. Carnegie's good will. He deserves our good will."⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Andrew Carnegie as cited in Curtis Miner, "The 'Deserted Parthenon': Class, Culture and the Carnegie Library of Homestead, 1898-1937," *Pennsylvania History* 57, no. 2 (1990): 112.

⁹⁹ Reuther, *The Brothers Reuther*, 25.

Others, however, were less enthusiastic about the new cultural jewels scattered throughout the Steel Valley. Many labor leaders, such as Valentine Reuther, decried the libraries as Trojan horses designed by the villain of the Homestead Massacre to undercut labor's position in the region even farther. Wheeling's funding issue failed by a slim 201 votes after members of the local Carpenters' and Joiners' Union declared that they wanted a library that would be Wheeling's own, "not a Carnegie monument where a large portion of our citizens could only enter with repugnance and servility."¹⁰⁰ Other working-class residents were either unable or unwilling to participate in the beneficent program laid out by the library's founder. Laboring under the exhausting schedule required by the mills left workers little time to spend in the quiet halls of the libraries, many of which stood at an inconvenient distance from the mostly immigrant neighborhoods near the mills. Margaret Byington, a researcher affiliated with the 1907 Pittsburgh survey, described Carnegie's libraries as "a philanthropy, which provides opportunities for intellectual and social advancement while it withholds conditions which make it possible to take advantage of." "What use has a man who works twelve hours a day," declared one Homestead steelworker even more succinctly, "for a library, anyway?"¹⁰¹

Workers also remained ambivalent about the cultural mission of personal uplift embraced by the libraries as part of the larger turn-of-the-century Progressivism. Pennsylvania historian Curt Miner argues that the Carnegie Library of Homestead quickly became a "deserted Parthenon" due to the cultural divide separating its financial patrons from its purported working-class audience. Throughout the early twentieth century, workers and immigrants selectively participated in certain library programs, like

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 26.

¹⁰¹ Margaret Frances Byington, *Homestead: The Households of a Mill Town* (New York: Charities Publication Committee, 1910), 178. Available at <<http://digital.library.pitt.edu>>.

the athletic department, while shunning others in favor of the variety of informal recreation in communities such as the Ward in lower Homestead. Despite repeated attempts to “bring the library to the people,” membership at the libraries often dropped off considerably throughout the 1920s, even before the Depression pushed membership fees out of the reach of mill workers. By avoiding or even opposing efforts to rationalize and uplift their private lives, “immigrants questioned, if not always consciously the cultural order prescribed by Homestead’s [and the larger region’s] economic and cultural elite, and mitigated efforts to establish cultural hegemony.”¹⁰²

Crisis and Consensus

By 1920, the Pittsburgh region had the third largest population in the United States and remained the country’s largest steel producer as well as the headquarters of some of the nation’s top industrial corporations. Even before the shock of the 1930s, however, the Steel Valley already had begun to decline in relation to other areas such as Detroit, Chicago, and Los Angeles. The Reuthers’ story of leaving Wheeling in search of higher-paying jobs in the auto industry symbolizes this progression as capital was shifted away from basic manufacturing and toward consumer-oriented production. In addition, changes in the manufacturing process allowed managers to substitute technology for manpower while continuing to increase output. This was particularly true in the mining industry, where employment peaked during World War I and then quickly fell by more than half over the next two decades, though output remained steady.¹⁰³ By the early twentieth century, changes in production technology had already begun to slow population growth in parts of the Steel Valley, especially more rural areas. “Grass grew

¹⁰²Miner, “The ‘Deserted Parthenon’,” 129-130.

¹⁰³ Coal production and employment statistics from Douglas Crowell, *History of the Coal Mining Industry in Ohio* (Columbus: Ohio Division of Geologic Survey, 1995).

around the tunnel heads and on the yard, and an air of desolation then settled about the plant,” wrote one observer of a trip to Westmoreland County in 1905, “giving a hint of what the famous Connellsville coking field may look like half a century hence.”¹⁰⁴

The Great Depression was longer and harsher in the Steel Valley than in other regions as falling demand and the economies of scale on which the coal and steel industries depended produced a glut in the national market. As Steel Valley corporations laid off workers and scaled back their corporate welfare programs, the uneasy peace between skilled workers and management that had dominated industrial relations since the 1890s began to falter. The declining economy also produced an atmosphere that encouraged workers to think about their common interests, partially ameliorating the barriers of race, ethnicity and skill level that had long divided working-class residents. The election of President Franklin Roosevelt in 1932 further diminished the ability of employers completely to dominate the social and economic landscape of the region. In July 1933 shortly after the passage of the National Industrial Recovery Act, Roosevelt’s Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins held a fact-finding meeting in Homestead to help establish a code of fair labor practices for the steel industry. As Perkins left the meeting, she heard the shouts of workers prohibited from attending the session by the company-backed burgess, John Cavanaugh. When Cavanaugh refused Perkins’ request to hold an open area meeting at a nearby park, Perkins adjourned to a nearby post office to listen to everyone who wanted to talk to her.¹⁰⁵

The failure of corporate paternalism and the support of federal authorities demonstrated by episodes such as the Perkins visit contributed to a rebirth of unionism in

¹⁰⁴ “Connellsville Letter,” in *Coal*, October 7, 1905, op cit. Demarest and Levy, “Touring the Coke Region,” 100.

¹⁰⁵ Serrin, *Homestead*, 174-76.

the Steel Valley. When organizers for the CIO-sponsored Steel Workers Organizing Committee (SWOC) arrived in the region in 1936, the ground had already been prepared by three years of organizing activity. Despite resistance by company executives, after the CIO demonstrated its ability to halt production at a major corporation with its sit-down strike at General Motors in Flint, U.S. Steel President Myron Taylor invited CIO President John L. Lewis to begin secret negotiations in January 1937. The formal pact between USS and SWOC signed on March 17, 1937 led directly to a host of other labor agreements in the steel industry that would continue without serious challenge for the next forty years.¹⁰⁶

The success of the Democratic Party on a national level paralleled the collapse of the Republican political machine that had dominated Allegheny County since the mid-nineteenth century. Democratic politicians had long since reconciled themselves to minority party status in much of the region, even agreeing to deliver votes to Republican candidates in exchange for a share of the patronage spoils.¹⁰⁷ Political infighting among the Republican candidates as well as federal patronage garnered after the Roosevelt victory in 1932 ushered in one of the most durable and efficient political machines in the nation's history when Democrats won the city's mayoral race as well as all five open positions on the city council. The Republicans carried only seven wards, the party's worst defeat ever, and an embarrassment from which the party would not recover. "For Pittsburgh's Republicans," concludes political historian Bruce Stave, "the advent of the

¹⁰⁶ Oestreicher, "The Spirit of '92"; John P. Hoerr, *And the Wolf Finally Came*; Zieger, *The CIO, 1935-1955*.

¹⁰⁷ The system was especially predominant in Allegheny County and Pittsburgh where Democratic Party boss David Lawrence repeatedly came under fire for handing his party over to the opposition. Weber, *Don't Call Me Boss*.

New Deal signified ‘the Last Hurrah’; for the city’s Democrats it sounded the first Hallelujah.”¹⁰⁸

Conclusion

Following the difficult years of the Depression, World War II was a boom time for Steel Valley communities. War-time production reached all-time-highs as the region’s mills, mines, factories, and shipyards turned out products in record amounts, while federally-monitored agreements between employers and industrial unions ensured that wages remained steady. As regional elites and working-class residents alike began to make their plans for the future, however, the troubling trends of the 1920s and 1930s appeared set to continue into the postwar period. In the countryside, technology continued to replace workers in mines and on family farms, prompting an “Appalachian crisis” that received national attention beginning in the early 1960s.¹⁰⁹ Communities in the industrialized river valleys faced an aging urban infrastructure as well as the environmental and social impacts of the region’s heavy industrial economy, even as many residents left for the hilltops and open space on the metropolitan fringe.¹¹⁰

Faced with these crises a new consensus emerged that joined Pittsburgh’s traditional corporate elites with the city’s new Democratic political leadership. Beginning in the mid-1940s, this alliance spearheaded a series of initiatives, collectively dubbed the “Pittsburgh Renaissance,” designed to reshape the Steel Valley into a form more suitable for middle class residents and corporate investors. A partnership between

¹⁰⁸ Stave, *The New Deal and the Last Hurrah*, 182.

¹⁰⁹ For general histories of the Appalachian region, see Williams, *Appalachia: A History*; Richard B. Drake, *A History of Appalachia* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2001). On the distinctiveness of northern Appalachia, which includes the Steel Valley, see Sandra Barney, “Coming to Terms with Northern Appalachia,” 8-10; and Macneal, “How Can You Call Pittsburgh Appalachian?”

¹¹⁰ In 1963, the Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association published an extensive study of southwestern Pennsylvania that highlights many of these issues. Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association, *Economic Study of the Pittsburgh Region*, 3 vols. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1963).

R.K Mellon, Pittsburgh banker and chairman of the newly-formed Allegheny Conference on Community Development, and the city's Democratic boss, Mayor David Lawrence stood at the heart of this new progrowth consensus, which united for the first time a strong political base behind many of the policy initiatives first proposed earlier in the century. By 1947, the Allegheny Conference already had begun work on implementing its diverse program in such areas as highway construction, urban redevelopment, and smoke control.¹¹¹

This strong progrowth partnership was largely limited to the regional core, and the Steel Valley's smaller communities were less able to assemble the massive political and financial capital necessary for transforming themselves. The new partnership between steel executives and union leaders, which resulted in increased job security and steadily rising pay and benefits, actually meant that many residents increasingly looked to the region's heavy industrial employers for solutions to community problems. Weirton residents, for example, though they finally incorporated in 1947, promptly elected Weirton Steel President Thomas Millsop as their first mayor.¹¹² The progrowth vision that drove the region's economic elite to refashion Pittsburgh as a center for service industries and corporate offices relied upon the continuing dominance of heavy industrial and natural resource production in the city's hinterland. Within a few decades, this growing material and symbolic disparity between Pittsburgh and its hinterlands would

¹¹¹ Martin, *Narrative of the Allegheny Conference*.; Mershon, "Corporate Social Responsibility and Urban Revitalization."

¹¹² Millsop would hold the position until being succeeded by his campaign manager in 1955. Javersak, *History of Weirton, West Virginia*.

result in a “region of contrasts,” challenging the social and cultural bonds uniting the Steel Valley.¹¹³

¹¹³ Southwestern Pennsylvania Regional Planning Commission, *Issues in a Region of Contrasts* (Pittsburgh: SWPRPA, 1968).

Chapter 3

Planning for the Periphery: Land Use and Identity on the Metropolitan Fringe

January 4, 1973, will live on in the collective memories of an entire generation of southeastern Ohioans as the day the shovels crossed the road. In the wee hours of a bitterly cold winter morning, two of Consolidation Coal Company's (CONSOL) mammoth earth moving machines, the *Mountaineer* and the *Tiger*, crossed one of the nation's busiest highways, Interstate 70 (I-70), closing it to traffic for an unprecedented twenty-four hours.¹ An expansion of surface mining operations in the company's Egypt Valley Mine to an area south of the highway prompted the move, which took place during increasing state and national attention to the issue of surface mining.² The symbolism of the road crossing was not lost on the residents of Barnesville, a small community of about four thousand people four miles to the south. The announcement of the crossing in 1971 sparked a debate within the community pitting those who supported the financial benefits of surface mining against those concerned about the environmental and economic impact of mining near the village. As a result, among the thousands who gathered to watch the event were several dozen protestors who staged a mock funeral for

¹ "Ohio to Shut Interstate a Day for Shovel Crossing," *New York Times*, January 1, 1973. Consolidation Coal or Pittsburgh Consolidation Coal changed names a variety of times between the 1950s and the 1990s. I use the term CONSOL in this chapter to refer to the company throughout the postwar period.

² For the purposes of this paper, I use the terms surface and strip mining interchangeably. Strip mining actually refers to a particular subset of surface mining and the majority of surface mining discussed in this chapter is properly described as wide area or contour surface mining.

Barnesville complete with eulogies, candles and a coffin.³ “The demonstration,” according to a *Washington Post* reporter covering the event, “while short and peaceful, was one of the first of its kind seen in this coal oriented region.”⁴

CONSOL’s decision to expand mining operations south of I-70 exposed a simmering contest over proper land use and the future of the Steel Valley’s rural communities. The crossing debate occurred in an era of increasing national attention to environmental problems and in the midst of a battle in the state legislature over the Ohio Strip Mine Law, a stringent new measure that required companies to “return strip mined land to [its] approximate original contour.”⁵ During the late 1960s and 1970s, national environmental groups such as the Sierra Club, Natural Resources Defense Council and the Friends of the Earth declared themselves in favor of a total ban on surface mining.⁶ Many locals met the company’s announcement in late 1970 with apprehension, and in the year leading up to the crossing some of the more militant, including Barnesville City Council member Richard Garrett, formed Citizens Organized to Defend the Environment (CODE), a grassroots effort aimed at halting or mitigating the environmental impact of surface mining. In August 1972, CODE joined the Ohio Public Interest Research Group (PIRG) in a lawsuit attempting to block the Interstate crossing entirely. “We,” stated

³ John Chancellor and Lou Davis, NBC Evening News for Friday, January 5, 1973, Headline: Strip Mining (1973), Debbie Phillimore, “Environmentalists Protest Peacefully,” *Martins Ferry Times Leader*, January 5, 1973.

⁴ William Richards, “Strip Miners’ Move Alarms Ohio Town,” *Washington Post*, January 4, 1973, A4.

⁵ Division of Mineral Resources Management, *Ohio Abandoned Mine Lands Reforestation Program* (Columbus: Ohio Department of Natural Resources, 2005). For the growth of the postwar environmental movement, see Samuel P. Hays, *A History of Environmental Politics Since 1945* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000). For opposition to surface mining in Appalachia, see Chad Montrie, *To Save the Land and People: A History of Opposition to Surface Coal Mining in Appalachia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

⁶ Montrie, *To Save the Land and People: A History of Opposition to Coal Surface Mining in Appalachia*, 147.

Garrett, “are going to fight every one of those machines when they try to bring them across.”⁷

The crossing debate in Barnesville raised important questions about the postwar evolution of rural space in the Steel Valley as well as the nation because of the community’s dual identity as industrial and post-industrial, Appalachian and cosmopolitan. Unlike more remote portions of the Appalachian region, Barnesville was easily accessible by car and thousands of motorists passing by on I-70 could witness CONSOL’s mining operations and the approach of the giant earth moving machines. Though residents faced being “stranded on a left-over plateau,” wrote one observer, “Barnesville is no mountain hamlet. It is a viable middle-American town with a council, a weekly newspaper and ... mothers shopping on the crossroads mainstreet.”⁸ Accessibility, the scale of mining operations and the similarities between nearby communities and towns in other parts of the country made the Egypt Valley Mine an important example of the excesses of the industry. The crossing debate appeared in major newspapers across the country from the *Akron Beacon-Journal* to the *New York Times*.⁹ When Congress finally enacted a surface mine law in July 1977, several local activists received personal invitations to the White House signing ceremony.¹⁰

Coal executives, such as CONSOL Hanna Division President Ralph Hatch, presented a different vision of the Steel Valley’s rural communities, arguing that the

⁷ “Suit Eyed to Stop GEM Move,” *Martins Ferry Times Leader*, August 7, 1972, 1.

⁸ “GEM Devastates Ohio Hillside in Search for Coal,” *Denver Post*, September 17, 1972.

⁹ Doral Chenoweth, “Say Good-bye to Hendrysburg,” *New York Times*, January 3, 1972; George Vecsey, “Strip Mining and an Ohio Town: Economy vs. the Environment,” *New York Times*, September 4, 1972; “Gem Power Shovel Casts a Shadow over Barnesville,” *Akron Beacon-Journal*, April 2, 1972.

¹⁰ Author’s Interview with Richard Garrett, November 2004; Author’s Interview with Theodore Voneida, December 2004.

imperatives of industry demanded the extraction of coal in the cheapest way possible.¹¹ Hatch pointed out that the average income of Belmont County farmers in 1969 was \$34 per acre. “Is it any wonder that the farmer wants to sell his land?” he continued. “He can’t make a living at it.”¹² In the years leading up to the crossing, surface mining companies also increasingly co-opted the language of reclamation, boasting of their ability to turn “worked-out soil and hilly terrain” into tourism-generating recreation areas complete with lakes, forests, and abundant wildlife.¹³ One article by a Columbus sportswriter invited to tour the Egypt Valley Mine even compared the hundred foot cliffs, or high walls left by surface mining, to the landscape of Colorado, stating that while others might travel 1,500 miles for scenery, he could find his “among the hills of Ohio and right in the middle of the surface mining area.”¹⁴

Support for mining operations had a firm base within the local community, where increases in mining employment beginning in the mid-1960s were helping to reverse postwar economic and population declines. “I don’t like stripping or any part of it,” noted Barnesville furniture storeowner John Kirk, who had recently traveled to Columbus to protest new mining regulations. “But it isn’t that simple. Better than 10 percent of the work force in this county works for the mines.” *Barnesville Enterprise* editor Bill Davies agreed, “Our future is definitely tied to the strip mining industry – it’s more important to us that you think.” “We are pretty strongly divided,” declared Mayor George Fitch, “but

¹¹ Hanna Coal Company became a subsidiary division of CONSOL in 1945, but many local residents continued to refer to the company’s surface mining operations as Hanna Coal or just Hanna.

¹² Ben A. Franklin, “Strip-Mining Boom Leaves Wasteland in Its Wake,” *New York Times*, December 15, 1970, A1, 34.

¹³ Hanna Coal Company, *Egypt Valley ... Today and Tomorrow* (Cadiz, OH: The Company, 1967).

¹⁴ Bob Rankin, “A Second Look at Surface Mining,” *CONSOL News*, January-February 1966, 7.

I think the majority clearly favors the move... Hanna's payroll pumps a lot into this town. We're pretty dependent on that mining."¹⁵

Between these positions, many local leaders and residents sought to retain coal employment while requiring a level of reclamation conducive to industrial and community development.¹⁶ After learning of the coal company's plan to begin mining on the south side of I-70, Barnesville planning commission president Norma Schuster and local textile plant manager Carla Rizzi enlisted the aid of Ohio governor John Gilligan, who was at loggerheads with the surface mining industry over the proposed new Ohio Strip Mine Law. "We've been a sleepy little town up until now," declared Rizzi, "but now the newer people in town are trying to get it going forward. We are trying to attract industry, but we need to have room to grow."¹⁷

With Gilligan's support, the two women met with Hatch to discuss the future of the community. On December 27, 1972, days before the crossing and less than two weeks after the failure of the CODE-PIRG lawsuit, the Ohio Department of Development signed a contract with the village of Barnesville for a community planning project designed to develop local industry and tourism. The heart of the deal was an agreement between Hatch, Governor Gilligan and the Barnesville Planning Commission establishing a "Greenbelt," limiting mining activities in the direct vicinity of the village and requiring reclamation up to the more stringent provisions of the Ohio Strip Mine Law.¹⁸ While protestors, many of them from outside of the immediate area, still attended the crossing,

¹⁵ John S. Brecher, "A Stripper Threatens to Invade Ohio Town; Citizenry is Divided," *Wall Street Journal*, August 16, 1972, 12.

¹⁶ Author's Interview with Aida Rizzi, December 2004.

¹⁷ Richards, "Strip Miners' Move Alarms Ohio Town."

¹⁸ "Hatch Pledges to Aid Barnesville Leaders," *Columbus Dispatch*, March 15, 1972.

the majority of local leaders turned to the difficult task of balancing the negative consequences of surface mining with the imperatives of economic development.¹⁹

Decline was the defining feature during the postwar period for much of the Steel Valley's rural periphery. In western Belmont, Harrison and Monroe Counties in southeastern Ohio, this decline manifested itself in three ways – declining population, declining employment opportunities, and a decline in environmental quality. While agriculture was an important economic activity in the area up until the middle part of the twentieth century, from the late nineteenth century mines and other industries had gradually supplanted farms as the primary economic generators.²⁰ Postwar competition with corporate agribusiness made it increasingly difficult for small farmers to remain self-sufficient, while advances in mining technology dramatically reduced the manpower needs of local coal mines.²¹ Between the late 1940s and the mid-1960s, the area produced a steady stream of out-migration, particularly of young workers and families because of levels of unemployment and poverty among the highest in the state. The dramatic increase of surface mining in many parts of the region compounded these

¹⁹ Rizzi Interview; Garrett Interview.

²⁰ For an overview of the agricultural conditions in the Ohio and West Virginia portions of the Steel Valley, see Candeub, Fleissig, and Associates, *Regional Comprehensive Plan for the Bel-O-Mar Area: Phase I, Basic Research, Surveys and Analysis* (Wheeling: Bel-O-Mar Interstate Planning Commission, 1969), 33-41. For southwestern Pennsylvania, see Ira S. Lowry, *Economic Study of the Pittsburgh Region, Vol. II Portrait of a Region* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1963).

²¹ While focused on the American South, Jack Temple Kirby's *Rural Worlds Lost* provides an excellent overview of the decline of family farming in the early and mid-twentieth century. Jack Temple Kirby, *Rural Worlds Lost: The American South, 1920-1960* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 275-308. For an overview of postwar technological change in the American mining industry, see Duane A. Smith, *Mining America: The Industry and the Environment, 1800-1980* (Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1993), 123-135.

problems, leaving unproductive and unattractive land that affected both environmental quality and the social fabric of rural communities.²²

By the early 1960s, many rural communities in the Steel Valley faced severe problems similar to those experienced throughout the Appalachian region.²³ Though aware that the root of the area's problems lay in a lack of employment, local and state authorities remained largely unable to stem the tide of out-migration. A 1964 report by the Ohio Department of Development advocated a six-point program aimed at "maximizing utilization of the Region's resources and realization of its potentials" through investment in highway construction and other basic infrastructure such as vocational education and improved healthcare. The report suggested that new growth in the region would not come from agriculture or coal mining, but instead pointed to the potential for the "Three R's [of] Recreation, Resort and Retirement development."²⁴ During the late 1960s and 1970s, local groups worked with state and federal officials associated with the War on Poverty and the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) in developing a number of important new institutions, including a vocational school and technical college in western Belmont County and a new health clinic in Harrison County. Despite these successes, investment in rural infrastructure never reached levels adequate for implementing comprehensive economic development initiatives.²⁵ The centerpiece of Ohio's ARC program, the Appalachian Development Highway, quickly faced major

²² Arnold W. Reitze, Jr., "Old King Coal and the Merry Rapists of Appalachia," *Case Western Reserve Law Review* 22 (1971): 650-739; Candeub, Fleissig, and Associates, *Regional Comprehensive Plan for the Bel-O-Mar Area*.

²³ On the postwar evolution of the Appalachian region, see John Alexander Williams, *Appalachia: A History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 309-398.

²⁴ Ohio Department of Development, *A Development Program for the Ohio Valley Region* (Columbus: The Department, 1964), 1.

²⁵ James Guthrie Coke, *Ohio's Urban Policy: A Non-Intervention Approach* (Washington, DC: Office of Policy Development and Research, 1980).

funding shortfalls and did not open, even in a scaled-back version that completely bypassed the local area, until the 1990s.²⁶

The real turning point in the region's fortunes occurred because of a dramatic upturn in the demand for coal by electrical utilities beginning in the mid-1960s. During the 1970s, the mining boom brought a new level of prosperity to the region, decreased unemployment to below the national average, and even prompted a small population gain in the three southeastern Ohio counties.²⁷ Mine employers also benefited from War on Poverty initiatives as the region's new vocational schools quickly opened mine training programs and local officials pushed federal administrators to provide housing near mine entrances.²⁸ Earlier state intervention programs, while failing significantly to alter the employment structure, also laid the foundation for a shift in the region's employment base to long-distance commuting along state and federal highways as well as to more service-oriented industries. This was especially the case in Belmont County, which boasted the region's only major four-lane highway and was more successful than either Harrison or Monroe in attracting public and private investment.

By the late 1970s, the rise in mining employment coupled with the failure significantly to diversify employment or to develop the region's infrastructure meant that the area's economic fortunes increasingly rested on a single industry. The continued use of surface mining had also depopulated large swaths of the area, leaving behind

²⁶ Michael Sangiacomo, "Athens Area Awaits its Promised Highway," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, March 6, 2000, 1B.

²⁷ Coopers & Lybrand Associates, *A Study of the Economic Impact on the Greater Wheeling Area if Local Coal Mines are Closed* (Wheeling: Coopers & Lybrand, 1973); D. Reed, "Ohio Valley: America's Newest Industrial Empire," *Reader's Digest*, December 1963, 193.

²⁸ C.D. Keyser, "Ohio Mine Manpower Development Project, Final Draft Report," July 16, 1970; Terry Flynn, "Homes for 1,600: Coal Operators Seek Housing Aid for Miners," *Wheeling Intelligencer*, n.d. 1969, all in Box 3932, Ohio Office of Appalachia Files, Series 2319, Records of the Ohio Department of Development, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus Ohio (Hereafter abbreviated as OOA Files).

thousands of acres unsuitable for either industrial or recreational development. The collapse in the market for the area's high sulfur coal during the 1980s prompted a steep drop in mine employment. Combined with losses in the heavy industrial employers along the Ohio River, the mine closures created a mass exodus from the region and the collapse of the local economy. By the early 1990s, the rural communities on the periphery of the Steel Valley faced a new crisis of production, one with which they were ill equipped to deal.

The Appalachian Crisis

During the 1940s a visitor driving west either on U.S. Route 40 from Wheeling or along U.S. Route 22 from Steubenville and Weirton would see the countryside much as it had been for the previous half century. "West of Steubenville," wrote one visitor in 1940, "the highway winds for several miles along a ridge, offering quick change in scene. A deep valley (R) holds a patchwork of fields and pastures set off by rambling rail fences and tree-fringed creeks." The larger settlements, such as Cadiz in Harrison County and Woodsfield to the south in Monroe County, formed around county courthouses. Others such as Barnesville in western Belmont County grew up along the railroad lines connecting the rural hinterland to the region's larger cities. Many of the communities supported coal mines that mixed in with the small dairy, sheep and cattle farms. Cadiz, located on a large hill in the heart of a rich sheep-raising and coal mining district, for decades was even "considered to have the greatest per capita wealth in Ohio."²⁹

During the twentieth century, this system of rural production gradually began to break down. In 1950, one could still find nearly six thousand farms in the three counties.

²⁹ Work Projects Administration Writer's Program, *The Ohio Guide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1940), 461-462.

Twenty years later that number fell to fewer than 2,500 as residents left the region in search of better economic opportunities, with many never permanently returning following World War II. According to Earl Stephens, a resident of Egypt Valley, a small farming community in northwestern Belmont, “the younger people left the farms. The single people, they left the farms. There were a lot of them ... came back and after they’d get married, they leave the farms you see. Cause the farm wasn’t big enough to support two families. So, they went north with the industry. They was working at Goodyear, Firestone, Timken. I’ve seen a lot people farm till they was thirty-thirty five years old and get a job someplace and I only know one or two that ever came back to the farm.”³⁰

Farmers who remained in the region had to increase the size and efficiency of their operations and shift to products more suited to the hilly terrain, such as poultry, dairy and beef production. From 1954 to 1969 alone, average farm size grew from 132 acres to 172 acres despite limited capital available to local farmers and restrictions imposed by the landscape.³¹ Belmont’s milk industry provides a good example of agricultural trends in the region. During the 1930s, milk production grew in the county as farmers attempted to take advantage of new markets opened by increases in transportation as well as a need to overcome the low prices of the Depression. Advances in agricultural science and technology allowed farmers to continue to increase total annual production from fewer than 4,000 pounds per cow in 1940 to more than 5,000 a

³⁰ Author’s Interview with Earl and June Stephens, January 2000.

³¹ United States Bureau of the Census and Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research, “*County and City Data Book*” (Ann Arbor, MI: ICPSR, 1947, 1956, 1962, 1972, 1977, 1983). Hereafter abbreviated as *County and City Data Book*.

decade later. Sales generated by World War II, the Marshall Plan and the Korean War also kept prices relatively high.³²

For those unable or unwilling to compete in the new marketplace, the 1940s often meant a shift away from farming. Despite the rise in production, as early as the mid-1940s the number of dairy cows in the county began to decline. Between 1950 and 1955 alone, totals dropped by more than 12 percent as the number of dairy farms fell by 20 percent and the amount of whole milk sold declined by nearly 4 percent.³³ After 1955, supply began to outpace the demand for milk at existing prices, exacerbating this trend and forcing many residents to take jobs off the farm to supplement their income. Sam and Janet Smith grew corn and raised dairy cattle in Egypt Valley. Following a disastrous flood in 1956 that destroyed the family's entire corn crop, Sam took a job with CONSOL's Hanna Division and Janet began teaching at a local elementary school. "I thought I was going to go broke," Mr. Smith recalled, "so I went to work for the coal company. I [earned enough] to pay for the production of corn and all the machinery costs of the farm. Her salary helped us an awful lot because she put food on the table and paid the light bill."³⁴

This symbiotic relationship between farm and non-farm work was central to making ends meet for many rural families in the Steel Valley. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, local farmers routinely went to work in the mines during the winter when demand for coal was highest, while continuing to maintain their farms. Others

³² Nelson Vernon Frazier, "The Development of the Dairy Industry in Belmont County, Ohio" (master's thesis, Ohio State University, 1959).

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Author's Interview with Sam and Janet Smith, January 2000; Moore and Headington, *Agricultural and Land Use as Affected by Strip Mining of Coal in Eastern Ohio* (Columbus: Ohio State University and Ohio Agriculture Experiment Station, 1940).

even ran their own small mines, taking advantage of the coal under their fields.³⁵ This was especially true in Harrison and Belmont, two of the state's highest coal producing areas, where coal seams were often very near the surface. While the Great Depression caused a major slump in the local mining industry, the wartime boom more than tripled local production to nearly 19 million tons annually. By 1940, mines in the three counties employed more than 7,000 and had an annual payroll of more than \$6 million.³⁶

The wartime boom in the industry prompted mine executives to paint a prosperous vision for coal mining in the area. In a 1946 speech before company management, CONSOL vice president James Hyslop explained his belief that “now that the war is over the coal industry can get down to normal operations and become a basis for security and stability for thousands of persons in Eastern Ohio.” In a vision echoed by other coal executives, Hyslop linked the region's prosperity with production, going so far as to declare coal mining “a social obligation [we have] to perform for mankind.” The talk outlined future plans for the company's mines, such as the installation of “the most modern of machinery” and the purchase of additional coal lands, as well as issuing an invitation for service men to return to their former jobs where “the manpower situation is well on the road to complete recovery.” “We expect,” he concluded, “to be working in Eastern Ohio at least a half century from now.”³⁷

Steel Valley coal miners also benefited from a series of new agreements between the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) and the newly created Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA). Following government seizure of the mines during a

³⁵ Stephens Interview.

³⁶ *County and City Data Book*; Douglas L. Crowell, *History of the Coal-Mining Industry in Ohio* (Columbus: Ohio Division of Geologic Survey, 1995).

³⁷ “Hyslop Paints Prosperous Picture for Coal Industry,” *Martins Ferry Times Leader*, January 7, 1946, 11.

wave of strikes in the mid and late 1940s, the National Bituminous Coal Wage Agreement of 1950 served as the basis for a partnership between coal operators and their unionized workforce that lasted for the next twenty-two years.³⁸ In exchange for providing a disciplined workforce as well as union acquiescence to increasing mine mechanization, UMWA members received a generous set of benefits subsidized by a royalty on every ton of coal mined.³⁹ The chief architect of this new social contract, United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) President John L. Lewis, encouraged mechanization as well as mine consolidation by arguing that while decreasing the number of miners, it would also provide stability in an industry subject to frequent and dramatic fluctuations.⁴⁰ In contrast to the bitter strikes extending from the late-nineteenth century to the 1940s, the postwar period witnessed less hostility between union leadership and management as the two sides came together in an almost collaborative effort to remake the industry.⁴¹

Changes in consumption patterns following World War II resulted in the industry's overall decline despite the prosperous picture painted by both executives and labor leaders. This slump primarily resulted from the loss of two important markets: the railroads, which converted from coal to diesel fuel; and the residential and commercial markets, which converted to fuel oil or natural gas. Between 1947 and 1961, total annual

³⁸ Richard P. Mulcahy, *A Social Contract for the Coal Fields: The Rise and Fall of the United Mine Workers of America Welfare and Retirement Fund* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2000).

³⁹ Melvyn Dubofsky and Warren R. Van Tine, *John L. Lewis: A Biography* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986).

⁴⁰ A prime example of this trend is CONSOL, which resulted from a variety of mergers culminating in the absorption of Republican powerbroker Mark Hanna's Ohio holdings in 1945. Charles E. Beachley, *History of the Consolidation Coal Company, 1864-1934* (New York: The Company, 1934).

⁴¹ The creation of the UMWA's Welfare and Retirement Fund, which was tied through a royalty system to the total amount of coal produced, gave the union a direct stake in the overall health of the industry and played a large role in this partnership. Mulcahy, *A Social Contract for the Coal Fields: The Rise and Fall of the United Mine Workers of America Welfare and Retirement Fund*, xii.

U.S. consumption of coal declined by 36 percent, with railroads alone accounting for the loss of over a hundred million tons per year.⁴² The loss of these key markets and the introduction of labor saving technology resulted in a dramatic reduction in mining employment during the early postwar years. Throughout Ohio, mine employment declined by nearly two-thirds, from the postwar peak in 1948 to fewer than 7,400 in 1964.⁴³ By 1960, unemployment in Harrison exceeded 6 percent, Monroe climbed to nearly 9 percent, and Belmont soared to twice the state average of 5 percent.⁴⁴

In addition to declining employment in agriculture and mining, a third interrelated factor exacerbated the postwar crisis in the Steel Valley's rural communities. Surface or strip mining began in the Steel Valley as early as 1810, when it consisted of digging coal out of exposed hillsides using picks and shovels and occasionally horse drawn scrapers. Technological advances in excavating machinery developed by the railroads and in the construction of the Panama Canal (1905-1914) dramatically increased the efficiency of surface mining methods during the early twentieth century. In 1913, the United Electric Coal Company began using two electric-power shovels in a mine near Steubenville; by 1917, six surface mines were operating between Cadiz and Steubenville. Between 1932 and 1948, surface mining rapidly grew from less than 6 percent of total production to overtake underground mining as the chief method for extracting coal in the state.⁴⁵

The increasing scale of mining operations by huge corporations such as CONSOL had a variety of long-term consequences for the region. In 1935, the world's largest

⁴² Martin B. Zimmerman, *The U.S. Coal Industry: The Economics of Policy Choice* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1981), 5-6. For a case study of fuel switching in a Steel Valley community, see Joel A. Tarr, "Changing Fuel Use Behavior and Energy Transitions: The Pittsburgh Smoke Control Movement, 1940-1950 - A Case Study in Historical Analogy," *Journal of Social History* 14, no. 4 (Summer 1981).

⁴³ Crowell, *History of the Coal-Mining Industry in Ohio*.

⁴⁴ *County and City Data Book*.

⁴⁵ Crowell, *History of the Coal-Mining Industry in Ohio*.

electric shovel began mining near Cadiz, and by 1947 surface mining accounted for more than two-thirds of all coal produced in Harrison and more than half of the total production of Belmont.⁴⁶ Surface mining was cheaper and required less labor than traditional underground mines, further decreasing overall mining employment in the region. Between 1921 and 1945, coal stripping in twenty-two Ohio counties affected nearly thirty-thousand acres. Unlike the underground mining of the period, which left overlying property generally undisturbed, the surface mining process radically altered the landscape by leaving behind overturned and unproductive lands, enormous cliffs or high walls, and a variety of other environmental problems.⁴⁷ A 1916 article in the trade publication *Coal Age* admitted, “Coal stripping absolutely destroys the land for farming purposes. It is hard to imagine what further use could be made of such land.”⁴⁸

The issue of land use for surface mining tied directly in with the crisis in agriculture and mining employment. Because of the decline in both underground mines and family farms, the opportunity to sell mining rights and even an entire property appealed to many farm families struggling to make ends meet, especially if the land owners had already moved away or were old enough to retire from full-time farming. Kenneth Ward, who grew up in Egypt Valley, recalled opposing his father’s decision to sell mining rights to the family farm. “Well, I’d come home on furlough [from the Army in 1945]. When I went back, the first thing I said to my mother was don’t let [dad] sell that coal. And then the first letter I got back from her, he’d sold it. That’s all there is to

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Jack Hill, “Social and Economic Implications of Strip Mining in Harrison County” (master’s thesis, Ohio State University, 1965). For the best secondary work on surface mining in the Steel Valley, see Montrie, *To Save the Land and People*.

⁴⁸ *Coal Age* 9 (January 1916), 162. Between 1915 and 1940 coal-stripped land in neighboring Tuscarawas County suffered a 94 percent decline in assessed valuation. During the same period, agricultural land declined by 22 percent. Moore and Headington, “Agricultural and Land Use as Affected by Strip Mining of Coal in Eastern Ohio.”

it.”⁴⁹ This issue of economics and land use proved especially difficult to solve throughout the postwar period as local residents, political leaders and government officials struggled to protect sustainability, while acknowledging the immediate economic needs of those living on the metropolitan fringe.

By the early 1960s, declines in family farming and mining employment along with the problems associated with surface mining created a crisis in the rural areas of the Steel Valley similar to that faced by other areas of Appalachia. Between 1940 and 1960, the rural population of the three counties declined by nearly one-fifth, with losses among younger working age adults resulting in an increasingly elderly and poor population.⁵⁰ Lower tax revenues stemming from industrial and population loss also resulted in a lack of highways, basic sewer and water systems, and social services, with overall education levels in Appalachian Ohio a full grade level behind the rest of the state.⁵¹ Ohio Route 800 formed the major corridor for those fleeing this Appalachian crisis and seeking work in Akron, Canton, and Cleveland. Earl and June Stephens, local farmers who owned a gas station along the highway, recalled that “on a Friday night, 800 would just be full of cars coming from [the] north, down into southern Ohio and West Virginia and Sunday evening it would be full of cars going back up north to work that week. There was just an exodus one-way or the other, because people had left this whole part of Ohio to go up there to good jobs.”⁵²

“We’re Appalachia, Yet We Need Not Be”

⁴⁹ Author’s Interview with Kenneth Ward, November 1999.

⁵⁰ The mining counties of Kentucky, West Virginia, Tennessee, Alabama and Virginia all suffered population losses between 15 and 30 percent during the 1950s. Williams, *Appalachia*, 318.

⁵¹ Ohio Department of Development, *Ohio Appalachian Development Plan* (Columbus: The Department, 1974).

⁵² Stephens Interview.

“If ‘some towns have the right to die,’ then it might be pointed out that they have a right to adequate medicine before they succumb.” This was the opening line of a January 1972 editorial in the *Steubenville Herald-Star* decrying state officials who seemed willing to ignore the many small villages in the area that lacked “industrial potential.” “Part of the charm and beauty of Ohio is to be found in its smaller communities,” the article continued. “Is this to be lost for lack of industry? Do we write [them off] because they don’t conform to a metropolitan pattern? We think not.” Instead, the author concluded, “we believe the emphasis should be on finding cures, rather than dwelling on the symptoms and giving up [on] patients.”⁵³

Beginning with the Eisenhower administration, and accelerating through the creation of the ARC and the War on Poverty, millions of dollars of federal and state money flowed into the rural areas of the Steel Valley, attempting to cure the Appalachian crisis afflicting the region. Local residents and civic leaders, keenly aware of the problems facing their communities, actively initiated, developed, and administered these programs. As early as the mid-1950s, some local residents and civic leaders had already begun to organize around the issue of reversing losses in agriculture and traditional industries by attracting new employers to the area. This self-help attitude was summed up in the words of Cadiz newspaper editor and community activist Milton Ronsheim. “We’re Appalachia, yet we need not be,” argued Ronsheim. “Because we have a lot of things that we could get going for us if we had the will to do them. Not only in our county, but in adjacent counties.”⁵⁴

Faced with a declining economy and population, local leaders increasingly turned

⁵³ “The Right to Live,” *Steubenville Herald-Star*, January 31, 1972.

⁵⁴ Author’s Interviews with Milton Ronsheim, November and December, 2004.

to state and federal governments for assistance in building the physical infrastructure necessary for economic development. Monroe lost nearly 20 percent of its population in the 1940s alone, and by 1950 had the lowest median income in the state. Poor highway connections, the lack of a bridge over the Ohio River to West Virginia, and no railroad service further complicated the county's rugged topography.⁵⁵ In 1954, a group of local ministers organized to promote industrial development in the area and attracted the attention of the Eisenhower administration, which secured Monroe's participation in the federal Rural Development Program.⁵⁶ Under the auspices of the program, the group secured funding for a railroad spur extending through the county along the Ohio River, as well as improvements to nearby Ohio Route 7 and Route 78. In 1957, the Ormet Corporation, a subsidiary of industrial giants Olin Corporation and Revere Copper and Brass, announced it would construct a huge aluminum production facility in the area. Within a few years, several other companies, including chemical manufacturer Ohio Ferro-Alloys, announced they would also move to the county.⁵⁷

These early successes in government-sponsored industrial development produced a mixed result for Monroe. Between 1954 and 1958, manufacturing employment in the county grew more than 1,700 percent as aluminum production instantly replaced agriculture as the area's leading industry. Population loss also leveled off, and by 1970 the county actually registered a slight increase. Similar changes occurred in the standard of living in the area as median family income increased 265 percent, from fewer than

⁵⁵ Wade H. Andrews, Wade H. Bauder, and Everett M. Rogers, *Benchmarks for Rural Industrialization: A Study of Development in Monroe County, OH* (Wooster: Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station, 1960).

⁵⁶ A Monroe native, Paul Fankhauser served in the United States Department of Agriculture under Eisenhower. Interview with Mark Forni, November 2004.

⁵⁷ Andrews et al, *Benchmarks for Rural Industrialization: A Study of Development in Monroe County, OH*. Improvements included expanding Ohio Route 7 to serve the new mill. Officials also paved Ohio Route 78, the main east-west highway in Monroe, for the first time; Forni Interview.

\$1,500 in 1949 to nearly \$4,000 by 1959. Despite dramatic increases in the standard of living for some residents, the median income for Monroe remained far below the state average and less than both Harrison and Belmont.⁵⁸ Further, the success of government intervention in the county depended on the willingness of new industry to locate to the area and was largely due to the suitability of a site along the Ohio River.⁵⁹

The availability of federal funds for infrastructure development increased rapidly throughout the 1960s by way of a host of War on Poverty, Great Society and other programs including the ARC.⁶⁰ Local leaders met the creation of urban and economic programs with a great deal of enthusiasm, and dozens of local and regional groups formed to take advantage of development funds between 1964 and 1968. In 1967, for instance, a community action group in Harrison secured more than \$180,000 for strip mine reclamation, and more than \$1 million for construction of a health center, of which the Appalachian Regional Commission contributed nearly half.⁶¹ In April 1968, the Buckeye Hills-Hocking Valley Regional Development District announced plans for a highway spur extending the Appalachian Development Highway through Monroe and

⁵⁸ *County and City Data Book*.

⁵⁹ On the growth of industry along the Ohio River during the late 1950s, see W.H. Hessler, "Big Boom Along the Ohio," *Reporter*, September 1957, 22-25; Regional Industrial Development Corporation, *A Community of Interest between the Pittsburgh Metropolitan Area and the Upper Ohio Valley: A Preliminary Analysis* (Pittsburgh: RIDC, 1959).

⁶⁰ For an overview of the Great Society and War on Poverty, see John A. Andrew, *Lyndon Johnson and the Great Society* (Chicago: R. Dee, 1998); Walter I. Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State: A History of Social Welfare in America*, Sixth ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1999): 304-362. For an overview of the Appalachian Regional Commission, see Michael J. Bradshaw, *The Appalachian Regional Commission: Twenty-Five Years of Government Policy* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1992); Ralph R. Widner, "Appalachian Development After 25 Years: An Assessment," *Economic Development Quarterly* 4, no. 4 (1990): 291-312.

⁶¹ Ohio Committee on Human Resources, "Progress Report: Projects in Har-Ca-Tus Area," 1967, Box 52039, Folder "HarCaTus," Ohio Office of Opportunity, Community Action Files, 1965-69, Series 629. Records of the Ohio Department of Development, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, OH (Hereafter abbreviated as Community Action Files).

Belmont.⁶²

While the Monroe pilot project under the federal Rural Development Program provides an example of direct federal intervention, the state of Ohio actually administered the majority of government development programs in rural areas. From 1963 to 1983, Republican governor James Rhodes controlled state government in Ohio, except for a brief interlude under liberal Democrat John Gilligan in the early 1970s. Through the 1970s, Republicans also maintained a comfortable majority in both houses of the Ohio legislature. Operating under the slogan, “profit is not a dirty word in Ohio,” the Rhodes administration emphasized job creation and fiscal austerity and developed a reputation for doing anything to attract new industries. Railing against the apparent perception of Ohio as a high tax state, Rhodes declared, “We might as well hang signs at the state borders that say ‘Industry Not Welcome Here’.”⁶³ Taxes, the governor’s rhetoric suggested, were the key obstacle to employment growth, and his administration cut government social programs and relied heavily on bond issues to pay for infrastructure development projects. “There’s no substitute for a job,” recalled Rhodes in a 1999 interview. “And my main target was jobs, employment.”⁶⁴

When Rhodes, a native of southern Ohio and the son of a coal miner, assumed office in 1963, he was keenly aware of the problems facing the region. In April 1964, the state development department published a systematic examination of Appalachian Ohio, which served as a blueprint for state efforts during the next two decades. Stating that the main deterrents to growth were the lack of key infrastructures and the backwardness of

⁶² Buckeye Hills-Hocking Valley Regional Development District, “Look What’s Happening in Buckeye Hills,” 196, OOA Files, Box 3907, Folder “BH-HVRDD.”

⁶³ Alexander P. Lamis and Mary Anne Sharkey, *Ohio Politics* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1994), 105.

⁶⁴ Randy Ludlow, “Ohio’s Lion in Winter,” *Cincinnati Post*, September 11, 1999, 1A.

area residents who maintained “strong traditional ties to agricultural economy” and were “limited in experience in industrial society,” the report recommended the formation of a regional development council, investment in infrastructural development such as highways, promotion of industrial diversification, including the “Three R’s” of recreation, resort and retirement development, broadening education and research initiatives, and the establishment of Community Improvement Corporations for each county. Significantly, the report concluded that new growth in the region would not come from agriculture or traditional industries, but from “high-tech” manufacturing and tourism.⁶⁵

Despite the broad goals outlined in the state’s development program and a great deal of local support, Ohio’s low tax–low spend emphasis throughout the postwar years limited the state’s ability to intervene directly in the Appalachian crisis. The small size of the state development department essentially restricted staff to providing information and limited support, which left much of the onus on municipalities. Ohio had “a state-local service delivery system that places heavy responsibility on local governments,” concluded a 1972 study of state development programs. “The legislature, in effect, has patted the localities on the back, handed them a set of procedural and financial tools, and wished them the best of luck.”⁶⁶ While this hands-off approach arguably benefited larger urban areas by reducing government bureaucracy, it proved disastrous for rural communities that often lacked the skilled personnel necessary for even rudimentary planning and development programs. A 1966 letter from Ohio development director Albert Giles apologized for the inability of any among his staff to attend a local meeting

⁶⁵ Ohio Department of Development, *A Development Program for the Ohio Valley Region*.

⁶⁶ John J. Gargan and James Guthrie Coke, *Political Behavior and Public Issues in Ohio* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1972), 39, 303.

in Belmont, “because [our] limited staff is overwhelmed.”⁶⁷

A decreasing local tax base and a lack of state development spending meant that officials made little progress on improving southeastern Ohio’s highway system and other physical infrastructure. The key component in the state’s development program was a proposed highway that would stretch from Belmont south through Monroe and all the way through the state to Cincinnati.⁶⁸ “The Appalachia Development Highway construction presents a tremendous step forward in the economic potential of the area and ... its construction should be accomplished as rapidly as is possible,” concluded one report commissioned by state development officials.⁶⁹ Financial constraints imposed by Rhodes, however, delayed the beginning of construction, and by 1969 officials had reduced the length of the highway by more than one-third, diverting its original eastern terminus south to Interstate 77 in Marietta and completely bypassing Monroe and Belmont.⁷⁰ Even in its shortened form, construction of the highway progressed slowly with portions left uncompleted through the end of the 1990s.⁷¹ In 1973, Harrison County Engineer Forrest Thaxton complained, “We are greatly concerned about the shrinking dollars which are badly needed to repair roads with bad bases, sharp curves, too narrow and poor surfaces.”⁷²

Funds provided through the ARC and other agencies targeted communities and

⁶⁷ Letter from Director Albert G. Giles to William Donahoe, May 5, 1966, Community Action Files, Box 52035, Folder “Belmont County.”

⁶⁸ Ohio Department of Highways, “Proposed Ohio Portion of the Appalachia Highway,” 1965; Robert Crater, “Ohio Highways Creep in Under Appalachia Program,” *Columbus Citizen-Journal*, May 13, 1965.

⁶⁹ Edward R. Hurley and Associates, *The Appalachian Ohio Development Plan* (Columbus: Ohio Department of Development, 1969), 31.

⁷⁰ Ohio Department of Development, “Highway Needs Study, Phase 1,” 1970, OOA Files, Box 3911, Folder “Highway Needs Study.”

⁷¹ Sangiacomo, “Athens Area Awaits its Promised Highway.”

⁷² “Transcript of Hearings in Cambridge, Ohio, August 23, 1973,” 147, Records of the Ohio Department of Transportation, Series 2610, Box 54329.

programs that showed the greatest potential for job creation. As a result, only select rural communities with access to local capital or that were already experiencing economic growth generally received development money. “The sizable investments in the highway program are frequently justified as the only practical way to redistribute income to rural areas and provide social services,” concluded a 1973 study. “In fact, the redistribution has been in favor of urban and suburban centers [and] it is highly probable that some of the inequities to be decreased by the program will actually increase.”⁷³ Cambridge, Ohio, in neighboring Guernsey County, received millions in ARC and other public development funds after the completion of Interstates 70 and 77 through the community in the early 1970s.⁷⁴ The county then experienced a 130 percent jump in manufacturing employment over the next decade.⁷⁵ Conversely, a January 1973 letter to the state development director requesting sewer improvements for the Monroe County Water District pleaded, “This truly Appalachian County has yet to receive any funds.”⁷⁶

A 1977 editorial in a Monroe newspaper summed up the promise of highway and other infrastructure development as “a beautiful dream [that would] provide an economic stimulus for our community.”⁷⁷ A decade later a local survey found that 45 percent of businesses in Monroe still listed “the adequacy of highways and roadways” as their most

⁷³ Howard L. Gauthier, “The Appalachian Development Highway System: Development for Whom?” *Economic Geography* 49, no. 2 (April 1973), 108.

⁷⁴ Ohio Department of Development, “Ohio Appalachian Investment Strategy” (Columbus: The Department, 1972), Box 3719, Folder “ARC 1972,” Director’s Files, 1960-1982, Series 1857, Records of the Ohio Department of Development, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, OH (Hereafter abbreviated as ODOT).

⁷⁵ *County and City Data Book*.

⁷⁶ Letter from Robert Manley to David Sweet, January 20, 1973, ODOT Box 3719, Folder “ARC, 1973.” Sweet replied that he would need more information about the project, especially considering the Nixon Administration’s moratorium on grants-in-aid.

⁷⁷ Pam Sloan, “Route 800: An Editorial,” *Spirit of Democracy*, May 13, 1977.

important complaint.⁷⁸ This lack of government funding during the 1960s and 1970s had important ramifications not only for industrial development but also for burgeoning efforts to promote outdoor recreation and tourism, which formed an important component of the state's rural development program. By the late 1960s, local officials increasingly looked to the thousands of acres in the county contained within the Wayne National Forest, Sunfish Creek State Forest, and a handful of other state and county parks, as potential economic generators.⁷⁹ A 1973 comprehensive plan predicted a 500 percent increase in land used for recreation in Monroe, which had an "exceedingly rich but grossly underdeveloped resource base that includes ... outdoor areas, forests, natural and scenic areas, plus historic sites and tourism with important resources located in all parts of the county."⁸⁰

The process of transforming Monroe's public lands into an economically significant tourist industry depended on two key issues: improving access into the county for out-of-area visitors and developing the local facilities necessary to retain tourism dollars. A 1964 study by the federal Bureau of Outdoor Recreation found that the few public recreation areas in Monroe were "virtually undeveloped, and picnicking and camping facilities are not adequate to meet even local area needs." The report concluded that investment in local infrastructure "could lead to a moderately broader and more significant tourism-recreation base."⁸¹ Several years later, Monroe officials received a

⁷⁸ Ellen Hagey, Sally Giese Knight, and George Wilson Morse, *Monroe County's Business Retention and Expansion Program: 1988 Final Report* (Columbus: Ohio Cooperative Extension Service, 1989), 30. Through the end of the twentieth century, Monroe had no 4-lane highway through the county.

⁷⁹ By the end of the 1990s, the Wayne National Forest alone accounted for nearly 8 percent, or 24,000 acres, of Monroe's land area. Author's Interview with James Hyman, May 2006.

⁸⁰ James M. Jennings Associates, *Comprehensive Plan, Monroe County, Ohio* (Woodsfield: Monroe County Planning Commission, 1973), 79.

⁸¹ Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, "Tourist and Recreation Potential: Monroe County, Ohio," January 1964, 3.

\$140,000 grant to plan a lodge and golf course in the Monroe Lake State Wildlife Area, established in 1957. At about the same time, state officials proposed to reroute OH 800, the area's main north-south highway, to provide improved access to I-70, twenty-five miles away. In 1972, William Clift, executive director of the Monroe Regional Planning Commission, declared that planning for both projects was "progressing well" and that the "location for improvement of the road should be established yet this year, with design work begun."⁸²

Despite strong public support for highway development, the proposed Route 800 improvements faltered over the state's unwillingness to build a costly new road through the county's hilly terrain.⁸³ When challenged about the lack of progress on highway improvements during a public forum in 1978, Rhodes pointed out that the majority of state tax revenues came from urban areas and testily replied that "his administration had done more for the state's poor rural areas 'by accident' than any others had done on purpose."⁸⁴ Plans for the development of Monroe Lake also collapsed by the end of the decade over a variety of issues, including the use of eminent domain. This lack of state spending on highways and recreation development meant that despite the existence of large swaths of public forests and recreation areas, including one of Ohio's best rivers for canoeing, during the 1980s Monroe could not boast of even a single hotel to house out-

⁸² David Bovenizer, "Monroe Planners Eye State Survey," *Martins Ferry Times Leader*, July 8, 1972.

⁸³ In 1978 engineers estimated that a proposed project to improve a single 2.3 miles would cost nearly \$3 million. "Route 800 Improvements Scheduled for 1980," *Spirit of Democracy*, October 27, 1978. On public support for highway development in Monroe County, see the letter from Mrs. Ralph R. McCoy and Monroe County Extension Homemakers Council to David C. Sweet, February 1972, in ODOD Series, Box 3719, Folder 14 "ARC."

⁸⁴ Pam Sloan, "Comment by Pam Sloan: Governor Rhodes and Route 800," *Spirit of Democracy*, July 28, 1978, 10.

of-town guests.⁸⁵ This led county commissioner Mark Forni to complain that while Monroe remained one of the state's poorest areas, other communities, such as "Zanesville, Columbus, even Wheeling and St. Clairsville, are making money off of the Wayne National Forest" and other local attractions.⁸⁶ By 1988, a survey of local businessmen concluded that recreational opportunities were still "perceived as limited and poor," and one local newspaper editor resigned herself simply to being "glad no one is smart enough to see the potential in our area and enjoy our beautiful, pleasant country, crooked roads and all."⁸⁷

Compared to economic development programs, federal initiatives aimed at providing social services in rural areas were less dependent on a local community's potential for job creation. Beginning with amendments in 1962 to the Social Security Act, and accelerating after the establishment of the Office of Economic Opportunity in 1965, a slew of programs, aimed at everything from assisting the developmentally disabled to spurring highway beautification, poured millions of federal dollars into local communities.⁸⁸ By the end of 1966, all three counties had established Community Action Commissions (CAC), with nearly half a million dollars channeled into the Belmont CAC in 1967 alone.⁸⁹ Requests for grant applications flooded into the Ohio Office of

⁸⁵ The river is the Little Muskingum River, which flows through the Wayne National Forest under a number of covered bridges. http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/wayne/recreation_sites/canoe.html.

⁸⁶ Forni Interview.

⁸⁷ Ellen Hagey, Sally Giese Knight, and George Wilson Morse, *Monroe County's Business Retention and Expansion Program: 1988 Final Report*; Pam Sloan, "Comment by Pam Sloan: Governor Rhodes and Route 800."

⁸⁸ The Economic Opportunity Act included provisions for an independent Office of Economic Opportunity, VISTA, Job Corps, Upward Bound, Neighborhood Youth Centers, and Operation Head Start, as well as grants and loans to low-income rural families, and a number of other programs. Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State*, 322-323.

⁸⁹ "Over a Million Dollars Channeled into County: CAC Programs Given \$484, 472 from OEO," *St. Clairsville Gazette-Chronicle*, October 13, 1967. "Federal Projects Analysis Sheet, 1965-1966," Box 51952, Folder 16 "Belmont County, 1965-1966," Ohio Office of Opportunity, Office Files, 1965-1970,

Opportunity (OOO), which coordinated statewide programs. “Please send me several,” one hand-scrawled letter from a Steel Valley resident asked, “as we are interested in qualifying [for] this program.”⁹⁰ The OOO also provided technical assistance to local and county groups, which often had little experience in coordinating programs. A January 1965 letter from Belmont commissioner W. T. McCort thanked Giles for assigning a field representative to assist the new Belmont CAC. “I am sure you realize,” McCort wrote, “that we have all been running around, more or less in the dark on these programs and that some aid from headquarters was direly needed.”⁹¹

Not everyone, however, greeted increased government intervention in the Steel Valley’s rural communities as enthusiastically. Some residents applauded the increased funding but resented the stigma attached to accepting poverty relief. “It was like a black mark on us that we had so many [poor] people,” recalled Harrison County Planning Commission member Nately Ronsheim. “Quite often Appalachia is ... a derogatory thing. People were so insulted by it, but it was true.”⁹² Disruptions to entrenched political and economic interests formed another area of conflict. In Steubenville, a battle broke out over the relationship between the CAC board and the county commissioners.⁹³ In another case, a fight erupted over a federal grant in July 1967 to establish a rural health center along the Ohio River in Belmont. The long-standing conflict, which was eventually investigated by a special studies subcommittee of the House Committee on

Series 765, Records of the Ohio Department of Development, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, OH (Hereafter abbreviated as OOO Office Files).

⁹⁰ Letter from Dennis Palmer to Albert Giles, April 8, 1965, Community Action Files, Box 52039, Folder “Jefferson County.”

⁹¹ Letter from W.T. McCort to Albert Giles, January 18, 1965, Community Action Files, Box 52035, Folder “Belmont County.”

⁹² Author’s Interview with Nately Ronsheim, December 2004.

⁹³ Roger T. Beitler, “Field Report Re: Problems with Jefferson County CAC,” May 6, 1965, Community Action Files, Box 52039, Folder “Jefferson County.”

Government Affairs, involved a pitched battle between a group practice associated with the United Mine Workers of America and the county medical society.⁹⁴

In addition to helping thousands of local residents, especially disadvantaged groups such as the developmentally disabled, the elderly and children, federal programs helped to create and maintain a number of key facilities in the rural Steel Valley. As in the rest of Appalachia, the 1964 state development program pointed out that “educational attainment [has] not kept pace with the State of Ohio,” and that local skill levels “do not meet industrial requirement.”⁹⁵ Consequently, the 1965 Appalachian Regional Development Act earmarked funds specifically for building new schools, and by 1973, the ARC had financed ten new vocational schools in Ohio as well as several technical colleges to provide post-high school training to local residents.⁹⁶ In 1970, Belmont Technical College, located adjacent to Interstate 70, opened its doors. The new institution was fully financed by the ARC; administrators intended the college, which was complemented by an adjacent vocational school as well as another near Woodsfield, to provide training to the residents of Harrison, Monroe, and Belmont.⁹⁷

The creation of the Medicare/Medicaid program in 1965 also fueled an expansion in healthcare, resulting in better services for local residents as well as a significant economic intervention in the Steel Valley’s rural communities. Between 1960 and 1975, nearly every hospital in the region launched a building campaign in order to meet the

⁹⁴ U.S. House of Representatives Special Studies Subcommittee of the Committee on Government Operations, *Office of Economic Opportunity and the Medical Foundation of Bellaire, Ohio*, Ninety-First Congress, First Session, May 20, 21, and 22, 1969.

⁹⁵ Ohio Department of Development, *A Development Program for the Ohio Valley Region*, 7. Reports sponsored by President Kennedy’s Appalachian Development Council noted this trend both in southern Ohio and throughout Appalachia, which lagged significantly behind national standards. Williams, *Appalachia*, 328-330.

⁹⁶ Ohio Department of Department, *Ohio Appalachian Development Plan*, 1974.

⁹⁷ Milton Ronsheim Interview.

needs of the increasingly poor and elderly population.⁹⁸ At Barnesville Hospital, the only hospital in western Belmont, Harrison and Monroe, the number of employees grew from fourteen in 1945 to 272 in 1997, making it the community's largest private employer during a period marked by a significant drop in both population and industrial employment.⁹⁹ According to hospital administrator Susan Ward, during the 1990s, 90 percent of the hospital's patients were over the age of 65, with 75 percent of patient insurance provided by Medicare/Medicaid.¹⁰⁰

While increased federal spending on economic development programs produced only mixed results in the Steel Valley's rural communities, federal intervention in social service provision, especially in education and healthcare, as well as increased federal support for existing institutions amounted to the direct creation of new employment for the area. While modest in employment when they began, institutions such as Belmont Technical College, the two vocational schools, and new and expanded clinics, shelters for the developmentally disabled and other healthcare facilities in Cadiz, Woodsfield, St. Clairsville and Barnesville employed an increasing number of area residents in a substantial number of capacities. Though they did little to halt out-migration, these jobs in the public and publicly subsidized private sector laid the foundation for increasing employment in the service industries during the 1980s and 1990s.

Strip Mine Salvation

When officials of Consolidation Coal's Hanna Division invited members of the public to attend the Grand Opening of the Egypt Valley Mine in late January 1967, an

⁹⁸ Author's Interview with Susan Ward, July 2004.

⁹⁹ American Hospital Association, *AHA Guide to the Health Care Field* (Chicago: The Association, 1945, 1997).

¹⁰⁰ Susan Ward Interview.

estimated twenty-five thousand people traveled to the site from throughout the local area, other states, and even abroad. The centerpiece of the tour was the colossal strip mining shovel, the Giant Earth Mover (GEM) of Egypt, which stood more than twelve stories high, was capable of picking up two thousand tons of rock and clay at a time (equivalent of two Greyhound buses), and was one of the largest machines in the nation.¹⁰¹ Earl Stephens, a local farmer, township trustee, and storeowner, attended the event. Stephens was concerned about the effect of the mine, which actually cut through the middle of his farm, on the local community. Nevertheless, the sheer size and power of the machine impressed him, and more than thirty years later he could still recall its capacity and other statistics of which the company boasted at the time. His wife June spent that day at their store, pumping gas for the “continuous stream of cars” traveling down State Route 800 from Cleveland, Canton, and Akron in a reversal of the earlier migratory pattern of area residents.¹⁰²

In addition to highlighting the technological mastery of the GEM and its contribution to local employment, coal mine executives incorporated the language of reclamation into their descriptions of mining operations and emphasized the restoration of the land to “productive use after the coal is removed.”¹⁰³ This integration of economics with the language of environmentalism, which gained new currency during the 1960s and 1970s, amounted to a vision of strip mine salvation. As with the state’s economic development plan, this vision largely disregarded small farming as a profitable venture and focused on the possibilities of using mined-out land for attracting tourists. In

¹⁰¹ “Hanna Moves into Egypt Valley,” *CONSOL News*, March-April 1967. For a further discussion of the event, see the January 26, 1967 edition of the *Barnesville Enterprise*.

¹⁰² Stephens Interview.

¹⁰³ Consolidation Coal Company, “Egypt Valley ... Today and Tomorrow.”

glowing terms, CONSOL's promotional literature described how post-mining reclamation would transform the "small farms with worked-out soil and hilly terrain" into numerous small lakes fulfilling "the demand of sportsmen and the public for increased recreational facilities," forests fostering "the growth of game animals, and choice sites...so that cottages and sports lodges can be erected." The company even envisioned the use of spoil piles, the mountains of overturned topsoil and rock left over from the mining operation, to create a facility "unique in southeastern Ohio – ski runs."¹⁰⁴

The relationship between economy and ecology on the Steel Valley's metropolitan fringe grew increasingly divisive during the late 1960s and early 1970s because of the rapid expansion of mining operations in the region. Between 1965 and 1980, the combined population of Monroe, Belmont and Harrison rose for the first time since the early twentieth century.¹⁰⁵ While the Appalachian Regional Commission and the War on Poverty continued to provide a hodge-podge of programs and assistance that raised the standard of living for many residents, the drop in out-migration primarily occurred because of a revival in the coal mining industry.¹⁰⁶ Beginning in the late 1960s, rising demand for low-cost electricity and the increasing price of oil and natural gas drove a wave of coal-fired power plant construction along the Ohio River as dozens of new and expanded mines sprang up throughout the Steel Valley.¹⁰⁷ An extensive canalization project along the upper Ohio River completed by the early 1970s also deepened the channel and regularized water levels by way of a series of locks, allowing larger and more heavily loaded coal barges to travel the river.¹⁰⁸ This project made the region's coal cheaper to transport. The number of Ohio miners more than doubled

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

between 1965 and 1979.¹⁰⁹

This increase in demand for coal used in electrical production prompted a major expansion in CONSOL, which by the mid-1970s owned fifty-six mines, employed 19,000 miners, and was the nation's largest coal exporter.¹¹⁰ In 1956, the company transferred the *Mountaineer* coal shovel from West Virginia to its mines in southern Harrison. The shovel, billed as the world's largest, stood as tall as a sixteen-story building, had a 65 cubic yard bucket capable of moving 7,200 tons of coal per hour, and required the electrical equivalent of a small town.¹¹¹ In 1965, the company acquired an even larger shovel, the *Silver Spade*, for use in its Georgetown Mine near Cadiz, and erected the *GEM of Egypt*, a "sister" shovel to the *Silver Spade* in northwestern Belmont, two years later.¹¹² "That's the damn'ist machine I've ever seen," remarked L.F. McCollum, chairman of Continental Oil, CONSOL's parent firm, on a visit to the site. In 1967, the year the Egypt Valley Mine opened, Hanna Coal executives predicted a 100 percent

¹⁰⁵ This does not include the temporary gains of the back-to-the farm migration of urban industrial workers during the Great Depression. *County and City Data Book*.

¹⁰⁶ For a short overview of the postwar decline and revival of the American coal industry, see Zimmerman, *The U.S. Coal Industry: The Economics of Policy Choice*, 1-5.

¹⁰⁷ On the history of economic development along the Ohio River, see Darrel Bigham, "River of Opportunity: Economic Consequences of the Ohio" in Robert L. Reid, *Always a River: The Ohio River and the American Experience* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 130-180; Lawrence Brown, Linda Lobao and Scott Digiacinto, "Economic Restructuring and Migration in an Old Industrial Region: The Ohio River Valley" in Kavita Pandit and Suzanne Davies-Withers, ed. *Migration and Restructuring in the United States: A Geographic Perspective* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999), 37-58.

¹⁰⁸ Belomar Regional Council, *Belomar Regional Development Plan, 1980* (Wheeling: The Council, 1980); U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Pittsburgh District, "Pike Island Locks and Dam," 1990 (copy in possession of the author).

¹⁰⁹ Crowell, *History of the Coal-Mining Industry in Ohio*.

¹¹⁰ CONSOL Energy Inc. <http://www.consolenergy.com>, [accessed 01/10/2002].

¹¹¹ Crowell, *History of the Coal-Mining Industry in Ohio*, 22-26.

¹¹² For information on the large surface mine shovels used in CONSOL's Ohio's mines, see Eric O. Ortemann, *Giant Earth Moving Equipment* (Osceola: Motorbooks International, 1995); <http://www.stripmine.org/> [accessed 5/23/2006].

output hike within four years, and by 1972 surface mine production in Harrison and Belmont climbed to nearly thirteen million tons.¹¹³

While state development officials had insisted “a new diversification is needed” and “new jobs will not be generated by mining, farming or forestry,” during the late 1960s local, state, and federal administrators quickly reoriented their strategies to provide support for the coal mining industry.¹¹⁴ The sharp rise in demand for coal prompted the spread of surface mining as well as the construction of more labor-intensive underground mines, which quickly exhausted the local supply of trained workers. “A coal miner is the kind of worker you don’t just grab in off the streets,” explained a local manpower coordinator. “He has to be trained. In the past, the company and the union worked together and brought young men along as they needed them. Now we need a lot of men in a hurry.”¹¹⁵ Responding to complaints from the coal industry that the lack of trained workers “forced them to increasingly hire those persons who are inexperienced in the mines and ... contribute to their high rates of both turnover and absenteeism,”¹¹⁶ the newly built vocational and technical schools financed by the ARC stepped in to offer miner training courses.¹¹⁷ Belmont Technical College instituted a pilot project to provide “the motivational training and emphasis on job responsibility that will provide a stable employee.”¹¹⁸

The manpower needs of the coal industry sparked increasing cooperation between mine officials and government administrators. Seeking to alleviate local unemployment,

¹¹³ Crowell, *History of the Coal-Mining Industry in Ohio*. “Hanna Plans 100 Per Cent Output Hike,” undated newspaper article.

¹¹⁴ Ohio Department of Development, *A Development Program for the Ohio Valley Region*, 2.

¹¹⁵ Terry Flynn, “Leaders Start Work to Train 1,400 Miners: Federal Agencies to Assist Firms, UMW in Program,” *Wheeling Intelligencer*, u.d.

¹¹⁶ Keyser, “Ohio Mine Manpower Development Project,” 5.

¹¹⁷ Flynn, “Leaders Start Work to Train 1,400 Miners: Federal Agencies to Assist Firms.”

¹¹⁸ Keyser, “Ohio Mine Manpower Development Project,” 3.

state and federal officials especially targeted “disadvantaged persons interested in making a career in underground coal mining” by offering mine training free of charge, with heads of households or self-supporting individuals receiving an additional stipend for the duration of the course.¹¹⁹ Coal company executives and community leaders also called on federal and state officials for help in constructing new housing throughout the area for miners and their families. One delegation of coal executives and local officials traveled to Washington D.C. to meet with administrators in the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Economic Development Administration and the Federal Housing Administration to gain their cooperation in accommodating the 1,600 new miners anticipated to begin work in the area. “They were not talking company houses, which once were so closely identified with coal mines,” reported Wheeling mayor Charles Ihlenfeld. “Miners make a living wage, I am told, and what the executives were talking about was a down payment to buy a house.”¹²⁰

The expansion of the coal industry in the Steel Valley affected the communities and residents of Harrison, Belmont and Monroe in accordance with the timing and extent of mining operations, geology, mining method, and the passage of environmental legislation, especially the Ohio Strip Mine Law. While there was abundant coal in Monroe, the area’s topography made it all but inaccessible from the surface. Aside from a few small operations at peak times, Monroe County had no coal mining from 1935 to 1965. In 1966, the Allison Mine, a large new deep mining facility with 600 employees,

¹¹⁹ “Training Course Offered,” *Model Cities Review* 3, September 1972, 3, ODOD, Box 55526, Folder “Model Cities.”

¹²⁰ Terry Flynn, “Homes for 1,600: Coal Operators Seek Housing Aid for Miners,” *Wheeling Intelligencer*, n.d.

opened in the northeastern portion of the county.¹²¹ Regional planners and community leaders saw this as a good development, that provided the benefits of wages and tax revenue without the negative consequences of surface mining.¹²² By the late 1970s, Monroe's economic base was overwhelmingly industrial with nearly 50 percent of the county's workforce employed in the mines or three large plants along the Ohio River.¹²³

Strip mines produced the majority of Harrison's coal throughout the postwar period. The decline in agriculture and increase in surface mining had a centralizing effect as rural residents either left the county entirely or moved into a handful of villages. Beginning in 1966, deep mining in the county also began to increase, prompting a sharp decline in unemployment to 3.3 percent in 1970.¹²⁴ Taxes remained low with basic infrastructure, such as water and sewer, largely confined to Cadiz, the county seat.¹²⁵ CONSOL's Hanna Division was headquartered near Cadiz and coal operators dominated local politics.¹²⁶ As in the region's steel towns, the resulting quasi-paternal system was not without benefits, especially after the early 1960s when coal executives were eager to counter growing efforts to enact tougher reclamation laws. In addition to creating employment and tax revenue, the company provided the land for the county airport, donated funds for the new Harrison Health Center, and built a large park on reclaimed mine land near Cadiz complete with camping sites and three lakes stocked with sport fish.¹²⁷

¹²¹ Cliff McLane, "Monroe County -- A Profile," *Spirit of Democracy*, December 2, 1977.

¹²² James M Jennings Associates Company, *Comprehensive Plan, Monroe County, Ohio* (Columbus: The Company, 1973), 37, 85.

¹²³ *County and City Data Book*.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*; Crowell, *History of the Coal-Mining Industry in Ohio*.

¹²⁵ Stanley Consultants, *Comprehensive Plan, Harrison County, Ohio* (Cleveland: The Company, 1971).

¹²⁶ Milton Ronsheim Interview.

¹²⁷ "Strip Mining Heals its Own Scars," *Business Week*, November 19, 1965, 140-145.

Despite the benefits both provided and projected by the proponents of strip mine salvation, the dramatic upswing in the coal mining industry during the 1960s and early 1970s exacerbated a number of important problems in the region. Mining essentially erased some small communities, such as the Egypt Valley, leaving others to deal with lingering environmental issues.¹²⁸ “The importance of coal to local people has caused them to develop protective attitudes towards it,” reported one study. “These attitudes are commonly expressed in a preference for acting on economic needs over environmental concerns, and a general mistrust of environmental protection.”¹²⁹

While surface mining as a land use choice decreased the future viability of the area for other purposes, mine subsidence also became a major concern in attracting new industries.¹³⁰ Beginning in the mid-1970s, the switch by local mines from conventional mining, which left behind pillars of coal to support the overlying strata, to the more efficient long-wall method, which allowed overlying rock to collapse after extracting the coal, meant that the surface above mined areas grew more susceptible to varying degrees of subsidence.¹³¹ Over the next thirty years, the surface effects of longwall mining increasingly concerned some Steel Valley residents, who took legal action to stop mining beneath their homes and businesses.¹³² “Coal companies own the mineral rights, but home- and landowners own the surface, and no one should be permitted to take away those surface rights,” wrote one angry southwestern Pennsylvania resident. “With the

¹²⁸ On the environmental impact of surface mining on the region, see Arnold W. Reitze, Jr., “Old King Coal and the Merry Rapiers of Appalachia,” *Case Western Reserve Law Review* 22, (1971): 650-739.

¹²⁹ Belomar Regional Council, *Belomar Regional Development Plan*, 1980.

¹³⁰ Author’s Interview with Donald Myers, July 2004; “Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of Belmont County, Ohio,” St. Clairsville, October 10, 2001; Bob Dreitzler, “Sinking Section of I-70 Is Closed,” *Columbus Dispatch*, March 8, 1995, 1A.

¹³¹ Forni Interview; Charles Callaway, “Longwall Mining at North American Coal in Ohio Becomes Record-Breaking Event,” *Coal Monthly and Energy News*, June 1978, 1, 7.

¹³² “Township Residents Settle Mining Lawsuit,” *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, August 15, 1991, 1C.

surface caving in, land will become useless for [other purposes], and the rest of landowners not affected by the mining, will suffer through higher property taxes.”¹³³

The reliance on coal to solve the problems of the Appalachian crisis meant that local communities increasingly depended on mining revenue generated directly by property taxes or through mine employees. This was particularly evident in local school districts that received large injections of revenue from the higher tax rates charged during mining operations.¹³⁴ During the economic and population boom of the early 1970s, many schools built new facilities and oftentimes paid salaries well above state and national averages. In the Bel-O-Mar region, which included Belmont as well as Marshall and Ohio counties in West Virginia, property taxes provided more than 50 percent of total tax revenue to eight municipalities, with funding in three communities coming entirely from real estate.¹³⁵

In addition to paying taxes, coal companies built or funded parks, airports, clinics, and other public facilities throughout the region. “A private contractor would probably charge \$50,000 for the work being done” on a new park, proclaimed one Belmont official in 1978, “but R&F Coal Co. is doing it free of charge.”¹³⁶ These good times only came, however, from the sustained profitability of the coal industry, a fact that both regional planners and coal industry executives were quick to point out. “If, to avoid large scale fluctuations in its economy, a region should be diverse,” reported one study, “it is

¹³³ Warren E. Sheppick, “Ruining Fallowfield,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, November 26, 2004, A24.

¹³⁴ Bill Mcnell, “The Area’s Economic Problems,” *Martins Ferry Times Leader*, January 6, 1973, 7.

¹³⁵ Milton Ronsheim Interview. For example, in 1980, Belmont teachers made \$15,000 annually compared to an average of \$10,000 across the river in Ohio and Brooke counties. This was despite a 28% dropout rate in Belmont. Belomar Regional Council, *Belomar Regional Development Plan, 1980* (Wheeling: The Council, 1980).

¹³⁶ “R&F Coal Provides Bellaire Recreation,” *Martins Ferry Times Leader*, October 4, 1978, 24.

apparent that the Bel-O-Mar region is too heavily dependent upon mining.”¹³⁷ “If the town depends on us,” added Hanna President Ralph Hatch at the height of postwar coal production in 1972, “things are good as long as business is good.”¹³⁸

Interpreting Egypt

The trajectory of the small farming community of Egypt Valley highlights the complex issues faced by Steel Valley residents during the postwar period. According to local lore, the name Egypt came from an early nineteenth century traveler, who upon reaching the fertile cornfields in northwestern Belmont after the hills and rocky soil of the Appalachian Mountains, remarked, “This must be the land of Egypt.”¹³⁹ Through the mid-twentieth century, community life revolved around a few small churches, a one-room schoolhouse and the Egypt Grange. “That was a nice community, I mean it was a close knit community. Everybody helped each other. Everybody worked together,” recalled former resident Sam Smith. “Everybody there had a few cattle, a few chickens and a few hogs and maybe a few sheep. They just were self-sufficient really.”¹⁴⁰ The first blow to the area occurred in the mid-1930s when the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District built a dam nearby that flooded several farms and a church.¹⁴¹ “They drowned me out,” recalled John Major. “See that water come up on [the family farm], it’s under water – part of it. That’s when I left Lick Run. In there were people farming. They had raised corn you know and had it cut up in shocks and the first thing I

¹³⁷ Belomar Regional Council, *Belomar Regional Development Plan*, 1980.

¹³⁸ “Hatch Pledges to Aid Barnesville Leaders,” *Columbus Dispatch*, March 15, 1972. See also Coopers and Lybrand, *A Study of the Economic Impact on the Greater Wheeling Area if Local Coal Mines are Closed* (Oakland, Ca: Coopers & Lybrand, 1973).

¹³⁹ Christy S. Collins, “Kirkwood Township, Belmont County, Ohio,” unpublished manuscript, late 1990s; D.O. Sheppard, “History of Salem Methodist Episcopal Church,” unpublished pamphlet, August 1938. Both in author’s possession.

¹⁴⁰ Smith Interview.

¹⁴¹ Hal Jenkins, *A Valley Renewed: The History of the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1976).

remember [was] that water coming up in their shocks of corn. They were floating on top of the water.”¹⁴²

Speculators and coal company purchasing agents obtained the mineral rights in much of the Egypt Valley during the late 1930s and 1940s when the area’s farmers were particularly vulnerable to the effects of the Depression. “You see times were bad; that was when you didn’t have much money,” recalled Verna Kaiser. “They come around offering these prices for the land ... for the coal. Of course that really enticed people to sell.”¹⁴³ Local real estate records indicate that while property transfers occurred throughout the early postwar years, the majority of purchases by Hanna Coal and later CONSOL occurred in two waves during the mid-1940s and then again in the early 1960s.¹⁴⁴ “Well [residents] sold in different ways,” explained local resident Rex Kaiser. “When [the coal company] first started, they were going to buy just the coal and they wouldn’t strip for years and years, they said. Later they decided they was going to strip, so they come around and bought the surface.”¹⁴⁵ Money obtained by selling mineral rights or through mine employment allowed some farmers in the region to modernize their operations and continue farming despite the pressures of the Appalachian crisis.¹⁴⁶ “They could buy equipment,” explained June Stephens. “I know dad, when they sold, he bought

¹⁴² Author’s Interview with John Major, June 1998. Lick Run was a stream adjacent to Egypt Valley. See also W.H. McWilliams, “Egypt Valley not as Biblical Days,” *Martin’s Ferry Daily Times*, March 1941; “Conservancy Authority to Provide Relief for Victim of Piedmont Dam,” March 14, 1941.

¹⁴³ Author’s interview with Rex and Verna Kaiser, December 1999.

¹⁴⁴ “Index to Deeds – Belmont County, Ohio.” Available at the Belmont County Courthouse, St. Clairsville, Ohio.

¹⁴⁵ Kaiser Interview.

¹⁴⁶ Even for those residents who did sell outright, companies would often allow owners to continue living and farming on the land until mining operations reached their property. Kenneth Ward Interview; Smith Interview.

a tractor. But if all the young guys would have stayed on the farm, there just wouldn't have been a living for everyone.”¹⁴⁷

CONSOL began construction of the Egypt Valley Mine in the early 1960s. Since many residents had sold either surface or mineral rights to their properties, this left the remainder faced with the prospect of living in the middle of a wasteland. CONSOL's “sales pitch was everybody else is going to sell around you and you're gonna be setting here,” recalled Rex Kaiser.¹⁴⁸ In the end, nearly everyone did sell, leaving nearly 100,000 acres in northwestern Belmont virtually uninhabited.¹⁴⁹ “There ain't nobody owns nothing that used to,” concluded John Major. “Maybe there's another answer to it, but the coal company was giving [local farmers] more money to sell out than they could to raise corn or oats or something. They drowned [lowland farmers] out when they built that dam, but [other farmers] still owned up above, a lot of them, they still owned the hills. Then here come the coal companies along and got them hills.”¹⁵⁰

The opening of the Egypt Valley Mine in 1967 allowed Belmont to overtake Harrison as the state's highest coal producing county, with annual production doubling to more than sixteen million tons by 1972.¹⁵¹ Despite the destruction of Egypt Valley, most local residents saw the opening of the mine not as a threat to community stability but as an opportunity for economic development. This changed early in the 1970s when CONSOL announced plans to expand its operations across Interstate 70 and closer to the village of Barnesville, a municipality of several thousand residents four miles south of the

¹⁴⁷ Stephens Interview.

¹⁴⁸ Kaiser Interview.

¹⁴⁹ “Hanna Moves into Egypt Valley,” *CONSOL News* 6, no. 2 (March-April 1967): 12-14.

¹⁵⁰ Major Interview.

¹⁵¹ Crowell, *History of the Coal-Mining Industry in Ohio*. The geology of the area limited surface mining to the northern part of the county, while the southeast boasted several significant underground operations. “Eastern Ohio Mining Operations, Active and Proposed” in C.D. Keyser, “Ohio Mine Manpower Development Project, Final Draft Report,” 8.

highway. Opposition to surface mining near Barnesville arose from two interrelated but distinct positions. The first, which pushed for a “Greenbelt” surrounding Barnesville limiting the amount and type of surface mining in its vicinity, originated with Barnesville Planning Commission member Norma Schuster. Schuster, a native of Cincinnati, had recently moved to the community with her children and husband, a physician at the local hospital.¹⁵² With a background in urban planning, Schuster was concerned with the economic and environmental effects of large-scale surface mining near the village. Pointing to other nearby communities, especially Cadiz, she expressed horror at the prospect of Barnesville surrounded on all sides by devastation with no room to expand and “without a future.”¹⁵³

Schuster quickly contacted her friend Aida Rizzi, a resident of the community since the early 1960s and manager of the local textile mill, who obtained a meeting with Governor John Gilligan and David Sweet, director of the state development department.¹⁵⁴ Gilligan was at loggerheads with coal executives over the Ohio Strip Mine Law, which was still pending in the Ohio Legislature, and the governor provided Schuster and Rizzi with a stronger bargaining position in an effort otherwise confined to generating publicity about the community’s plight. Gilligan, a liberal Democrat, had temporarily replaced Jim Rhodes and publicly expressed concerns over the agreement signed by the Rhodes Administration permitting CONSOL to move its giant coal shovels across Interstate 70.¹⁵⁵ During the spring of 1972, state officials served as intermediaries between Schuster, Rizzi and Hanna Division President Ralph Hatch in negotiating

¹⁵² Author’s interview with Michael Schuster, November 2004.

¹⁵³ “Ohio to Shut Interstate a Day for Shovel Crossing”; Girard Krebs, “A Gem in Egypt? Part II,” *Mountain Life and Work* 48, no. 18 (September 1972): 23-31, 39-40.

¹⁵⁴ Letter from David Sweet to Norma Schuster, May 2, 1972, ODOD, Box 3723, Folder 2 “Barnesville.”

¹⁵⁵ Girard Krebs, “A GEM in Egypt?” *Mountain Life and Work* 48, no. 7 (August 1972): 14-20.

concessions that would help to decrease the impact of mining on the community.¹⁵⁶

Despite the governor's support, state and local officials were faced with the facts that CONSOL's operations were perfectly legal, that surface mining had support even in Barnesville itself, and that state permission to cross the interstate was only a convenience for the company, as the company could find other ways to continue its southward expansion.¹⁵⁷

While seen as a symbolic blow by many environmental groups, Gilligan's June 20 announcement of an agreement permitting the highway crossing contained two key concessions directly affecting Barnesville and in accordance with the goals of Schuster, Rizzi and their supporters. First, CONSOL agreed to conform to the new Ohio Strip Mine Law in reclaiming all of its holdings south of I-70. Without this provision, the company could have continued operations under the old, weak 1965 law. Hatch also agreed to fund a land use plan for the area around the village and to work with local officials to ensure that the company's reclamation efforts did not violate the plan, which was published in May 1973.¹⁵⁸ The "Greenbelt Plan – Barnesville, Ohio" prohibited new surface mining within a one mile radius of the village and imposed additional reclamation for areas leading to and from the village so as to "reduce the visual aspect of strip mining." The proposal also called for the post-mining planning of key areas to provide "for the development of industrial sites and access roads."¹⁵⁹ In August 1973, a

¹⁵⁶ Andreis Preide, "Barnesville Community Planning," August 28, 1972; David Sweet, "Barnesville Community Attitude Survey 8/21/1972"; Carol Reed, "Another Ralph Hatch Story," n.d., ODO, Box 3723, Folder 2 "Barnesville."

¹⁵⁷ Doral Chenoweth, "...by the same people who brought you Kent State....," n.d., ODO, Box 3723, Folder 2 "Barnesville."

¹⁵⁸ "Greenbelt Ideas Extensively Aired by Planners and Coal Co. Officials," *Barnesville Enterprise*, January, 25 1973.

¹⁵⁹ Barnesville Planning Commission and Hurley Schnauffer & Associates, "Greenbelt Plan -- Barnesville, Ohio," 1973.

CONSOL spokesman agreed to the plan, stating that the company's mining program was in "no real conflict with greenbelt goals."¹⁶⁰

Barnesville's Greenbelt Plan was limited in scope and applicability from its inception. Most importantly, the greenbelt was outside of municipal limits and had no enforcement mechanism other than the good will of the company. Though the report called for the community to join with other groups in seeking legislative authority to limit strip mining near urban areas, no efforts to codify the greenbelt concept ensued either on the local or state level.¹⁶¹ CONSOL's acquiescence to local demands did not extend to the numerous smaller companies also operating in the area, and the plan itself listed a number of surface mines already in existence within the boundaries of the greenbelt.¹⁶² At the same news conference in which Gilligan announced the agreement, Ohio Department of Natural Resources Director William Nye pointed out these issues, saying that since the CONSOL was only one of several strippers in the area, Barnesville officials would have to negotiate with every mine that approached the community. Nye called local residents 'neophytes to planning' who should have accomplished their goals by implementing zoning laws.¹⁶³ As a result, while the greenbelt did solve some of the immediate problems of surface mining near Barnesville, its voluntary nature and limitations to the local situation meant that the relationship between strip mining and community development remained ambiguous.

¹⁶⁰ "Coal Officials Re-Affirm Concern and Cooperation for Town's Future," *Barnesville Enterprise*, February 15, 1973; "10-Year Egypt Valley Mining Plan in No Real Conflict with Greenbelt Goals," *Barnesville Enterprise*, August 16, 1973.

¹⁶¹ Rizzi Interview. Author's interview with Patrick Hunkler, November 2004.

¹⁶² Barnesville Planning Commission and Hurley Schnauffer & Associates, "Greenbelt Plan -- Barnesville, Ohio."

¹⁶³ Krebs, "A GEM in Egypt? Part II," 26.

While company concessions succeeded in mollifying the concerns of some local residents, the greenbelt agreement did not satisfy everyone either in the community or in the statewide anti-stripping movement. Local residents, including Cadiz editor L. Milton Ronsheim, had long voiced concerns about the effect of surface mining on their communities.¹⁶⁴ In a series of articles in the 1930s, Ronsheim tried to balance the concerns of economy and ecology by promoting underground mining while pushing for tougher reclamation laws as “the only way to save our fair hills from further destruction.”¹⁶⁵ Bills introduced in 1937, 1939 and 1941 faced the determined resistance of the powerful coal lobby and never made it out of committee.¹⁶⁶ In 1940, Hanna Coal and other surface mine operators also created the Ohio Reclamation Association, which by 1947 planted nearly two million trees on spoil banks and launched a publicity campaign to blunt charges of economic and environmental decline.¹⁶⁷ Despite the passage of the state’s first strip mine law in 1947, Ronsheim and other activists remained dissatisfied with its relatively weak provisions.¹⁶⁸ Between 1951 and 1956, at least six bills more strongly to regulate strip mining failed, with coal executives furiously insisting that increased regulation would lead to further mine closures.¹⁶⁹ “True,” Ronsheim

¹⁶⁴ L. Milton Ronsheim is the father of the Milton Ronsheim interviewed in 2004. Both served as editor of the *Cadiz Republican*.

¹⁶⁵ Erving E. Beauregard, “L. Milton Ronsheim and Strip Coal Mining in Ohio,” *Journal of Unconventional History* 9, no. 3 (1998): 16-33.

¹⁶⁶ Julian Feldman, “The Development of a Regulatory Policy for the Coal Stripping Industry in Ohio” (master’s thesis, Ohio State University, 1950).

¹⁶⁷ Robert Vincent, “Strip Mining to ‘Improve’ Land: Ireland Testifies at State Hearing,” *Martins Ferry Times Leader*, January 24, 1946, 1; W.C. Bramble, “Strip Mining: Waste or Conservation?” *American Forests* (June 1949): 24-27.

¹⁶⁸ Milton Ronsheim Interview.

¹⁶⁹ Robert Vincent, “Strip Mine Law Would Up Coal Cost: Says Consumers Would Have to Pay for Increase,” *Martins Ferry Times Leader*, January 17, 1946, 1; Robert Vincent, “Strip Restoration Cost Told Group: Ohio Farm Bureau Scored by Hyslop,” *Martins Ferry Times Leader* January 18, 1946, 1; A.E. Flowers, “Harmon Creek Goals: Profitable Stripping,” *Coal Age* (May 1955): 112-113; Daniel Jackson, “Strip Mining, Reclamation, and the Public,” *Coal Age* (May 1963); “Strip Mining Heals its Own Scars,” *Business Week*, November 13, 1965, 140-145.

admitted, “coal has supplanted agriculture and is providing employment, [but] when the stripping is completed, when the coal is exhausted, then we will have no farmers and no miners. We will have lost our natural resources and the possibility of a self-sufficient economy.”¹⁷⁰

Following its opening in 1967, the Egypt Valley Mine became a rallying point for the anti-stripping movement due to the scale of operations and its proximity to I-70. In one influential article, “Old King Coal and the Merry Rapists of Appalachia,” Case Western Reserve University environmental law professor Arnold Reitze detailed the excesses of the state’s surface mine industry, with particular attention to Egypt Valley. “Belmont ... has 200,000 of its 346,000 acres sold, leased, or optioned to coal strippers. That beautiful county, like scores of others, seems destined to become a wasteland of silted, acid waters, barren land, and patches of crown vetch, all legally reclaimed.”¹⁷¹ The most important individual linking local concerns with state and national debates over surface mining was Dr. Theodore Voneida, a professor of neurobiology in Cleveland. During the late 1960s, Voneida and his wife built a cottage on Piedmont Lake, the flood control reservoir on the border of Egypt Valley. “We built a little cottage there with the help of a man named Delbert Starr,” he recalled. “Delbert talked to us about strip mining because their house was being rocked by the blasts ... and we started looking around It looked like a moonscape.” According to Voneida, the effects of surface mining on the environment and his neighbors angered him. “All you have to do is drive through Belmont County and if you’re not angry with what they’re doing there is something wrong with you. I mean, good Christ, they’re tearing the earth to bits,” he explained. “It

¹⁷⁰ Grace Goulder, “Flea on the Strip Mine Elephant,” *Cleveland Plain Dealer Sunday Magazine*, April 10, 1966, 9.

¹⁷¹ Reitze, “Old King Coal,” 719.

just blew my mind. I couldn't believe what people were doing to the earth and other people in the area."¹⁷²

After becoming aware of the effects of the Egypt Valley Mine on his neighbors, Voneida began conducting experiments to measure the water pollution caused by the mine as well as taking hundreds of photographs and videos chronicling the mine's impact. Drawing from his experience in the anti-war movement, he worked to create publicity about the mine, giving speeches throughout the state, contacting activists in other areas, such as West Virginia's Ken Hechler, and providing press releases to state and national news organizations.¹⁷³ "We were pretty naïve," he recalled. "So we started going down and taking pictures and so on, just all on our own. We weren't working with anybody. It was just us. And then I went out for publicity. I got the [*Cleveland*] *Plain Dealer* interested, and I got the *Akron Beacon Journal* interested and I got *Huntley-Brinkley*."¹⁷⁴ According to Voneida, the latter was "a sort of a turning point," followed by steadily increasing national attention. In October 1971, he joined Hechler and other anti-stripping activists from throughout the Appalachian coalfields in forming the Appalachian Coalition, an umbrella group focused on enacting federal surface mining regulation.¹⁷⁵

While Voneida and his supporters worked to create publicity about the problems of surface mining in Egypt Valley, other local activists explored legal options for halting

¹⁷² Author's interview with Theodore Voneida, December 2004.

¹⁷³ Hechler, a Representative from southern West Virginia, was the leading opponent of surface mining in Congress. See Montrie, *To Save the Land and People*, 127-155.

¹⁷⁴ For a sampling of state and national news coverage of surface mining in Egypt Valley, see Ben A. Franklin, "Strip-Mining Boom Leaves Wasteland in Its Wake"; "Ohio to Shut Interstate a Day for Shovel Crossing"; Editorial Cartoon. *Dayton Journal Herald*, March 31, 1972; "GEM Power Shovel Casts a Shadow over Barnesville," *Akron Beacon Journal*, April 2, 1972; Brecher, "A Stripper Threatens to Invade Ohio Town"; Chenoweth, "Say Good-bye to Hendrysburg." The *Columbus Dispatch* also did a three part series on the issue on March 13, 14 and 15, 1972.

¹⁷⁵ Voneida Interview; Montrie, *To Save the Land and People*, 140-141.

the I-70 crossing. In June 1971, Barnesville Village Council Member Richard Garrett, a transplanted New Englander and local retail manager, formed Citizens Organized to Defend the Environment (CODE). Garrett first became involved in the anti-stripping movement after two local residents, Florence Bethel and Mary Workman, approached him about damage to their homes near the Egypt Valley Mine.¹⁷⁶ “It started around Christmas of 1969,” recalled Bethel, one of the Barnesville residents who approached Garrett. “You could feel the blasting three and a half miles away. I had a brand-new sealed well, 53 feet deep. The water got so muddy it clogged the valves. Then my basement walls cracked...At times, I even considered returning their violence. But I signed into a rest home instead.”¹⁷⁷ Throughout 1971 and 1972, Garrett quietly established contact with environmental groups throughout the state and region. One of these, the Ohio branch of Ralph Nader’s Public Interest Research Group (PIRG), had been looking for a local affiliate to join in mounting a legal challenge to the I-70 crossing.¹⁷⁸ In August 1971, PIRG provided the legal team through which CODE, the national environmental group Friends of the Earth and two local residents filed suit to stop the crossing.¹⁷⁹

“Initially I think what we were trying to do was stop the stripping,” recalled Garrett. “And then as a councilman I think I went with Mrs. Workman up to Columbus and we met with this group there. Of course, I think we felt that perhaps we could never really do that, but we wanted to prevent the *GEM of Egypt* from coming across because that

¹⁷⁶ Garrett Interview.

¹⁷⁷ “GEM Devastates Ohio Hillsides in Search for Coal.”

¹⁷⁸ Garrett Interview; Ben A. Franklin, “Giant Mine Shovels Finally Cross Road,” *New York Times*, January 5, 1973; Richards, “Strip Miners’ Move Alarms Ohio Town”; George Vecsey, “Strip Mining and an Ohio Town: Economy vs. the Environment,” *New York Times*, September 4, 1972.

¹⁷⁹ “Suit Eyed to Stop GEM Move.”

was all in the news at the time.” While the CODE lawsuit ultimately failed to keep Hanna from expanding its operations south of the interstate, the company chose not to use the controversial *GEM of Egypt* and instead moved two smaller shovels, the *Mountaineer* and the *Tiger*.¹⁸⁰ “We did prevent that from coming across,” Garrett concluded. “Now that was perhaps the only victory we had I think that probably [our campaign] put a bad light on Hanna’s PR, I don’t know.”¹⁸¹

Local activists often saw opposition to surface mining as part of the larger social and political movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Voneida was an associate of Dr. Benjamin Spock and hosted an anti-Vietnam War radio show during the mid-1960s.¹⁸² Bill Hunkler, a young Barnesville native who participated in the I-70 crossing protest, recalled that the shootings at Kent State the year before had radicalized his activism. “Many of our critics,” he declared in a speech delivered as the shovels crossed the highway, “see in our pleas to halt strip mining the same mindlessness we see in their goals of maximum profit. Unfortunately, we can only plead for understanding, while they ... can set out their private interests, campaigning behind the façade of public interest.”¹⁸³ While Garrett, Voneida and other local activists remained concerned about the specific effects of mining on Barnesville and the surrounding community, many of their non-local allies saw the crossing debate as an opportunity to attract public support in the ongoing struggle against strip mining in other areas. Activist Doral Chenoweth, a Columbus newspaperman and shopping mall executive, emphasized the pure symbolism

¹⁸⁰ “Ohio to Shut Interstate a Day for Shovel Crossing”; “Environmentalists Plan Protest to ‘Mourn Land’ as Shovels Move,” *Martins Ferry Times Leader*, January 3, 1973; “Citizens Organized to Defend the Environment v. Volpe,” *Environmental Law Reporter* (1972), S.D. Ohio, 72-289.

¹⁸¹ Garrett Interview.

¹⁸² Author’s Interviews with Doral Chenoweth, December 2004 and William Hunkler, November 2004.

¹⁸³ “A Plea for Concern and Understanding,” Press Release, Barnesville, Ohio, January 4, 1973. Copy in author’s possession.

of the move within this larger framework. “No one says so in so many words,” he declared, “but opposition to Hanna’s intended move of the costly GEM is just so much hogwash. Hanna could buy and assemble a dozen south of I-70 and still make a profit. The attempt to stall the GEM is symbolism. A clenched fist in the nose of the Establishment.”¹⁸⁴

Statements by non-local activists and reporters had a tendency to depict the rural Steel Valley with idealistic or nostalgic representations. Chenoweth began a *New York Times* “op-ed” with a description of the community fifty years earlier, complete with “lots of timber, goats and cattle, and good corn-whiskey making.”¹⁸⁵ This vision of the community was out of step with the region’s long history of rural industrialization as well as the poverty, unemployment and out-migration of the postwar period. Numerous articles from big city newspapers also implied that local supporters of mining operations were somehow backward, misguided and in thrall to the mining companies, suggesting that they needed outside leadership to show them the error of their ways.¹⁸⁶ While this view had some merit, it was a dramatic oversimplification of local reality, which overlooks the economic and social structures binding locals to the mines and allowing many residents both to remain in the community and to earn middle-class wages.

There was some local support for limiting surface mining near the community, but the majority of residents remained supportive of the coal industry. “Of course the people are coal mining people in that area,” acknowledged Richard Garrett. “I think that if they had just said we’ll go after it deep and we’ll build a shaft and go down and get it, I

¹⁸⁴ Chenoweth, “...By the Same People That Brought You Kent State...”

¹⁸⁵ Chenoweth, “Say Good-by to Hendrysburg.”

¹⁸⁶ See for instance, “Gem Power Shovel Casts a Shadow over Barnesville,” *Akron Beacon Journal*, April 2, 1972 as well as the three part series in the *Columbus Dispatch* on April 13, 14, and 15, 1972.

don't think people would have had a problem with it. When they destroy the land and they don't reclaim it, that's when the issues come in.”¹⁸⁷ For other residents, especially mine employees and their families, the issue was simply economics versus the environment. At a summer 1972 public meeting sponsored by CODE in Barnesville, Bernard Delloma, a bulldozer operator at the Egypt Valley Mine, voiced his objection to the recently filed lawsuit angrily stating “If that [mine] shuts down, there are 322 of us [out of a job]. If that GEM is not able to cross the road, I'm out of a job. I'm out of a ten or twelve thousand dollar a year job.” He further utilized a tactic particularly feared by small town businesses, the boycott. “The strip miners, we have organized,” he declared, “and we say that if they keep the publicity up on this thing, we are going to boycott the businesses in town. If we do, there won't be no town left.”¹⁸⁸

Conclusion

The early 1970s were a golden period for Harrison, Monroe, Belmont and many other rural communities in the Steel Valley. Mining employment in Ohio nearly doubled during the decade, and the imposition of surface mining regulation did little to dampen the expansion of mining operations in the region. Between 1970 and 1975, surface mine production in Belmont remained steady, while underground production increased slightly.¹⁸⁹ This boom in mining employment prompted the first population increase in the three counties since the 1930s, while the new Ohio Strip Mine Law blunted some of the more onerous environmental effects of mining operations.¹⁹⁰ Tougher reclamation requirements also allowed a fuller version of strip mine salvation, giving farmers such as

¹⁸⁷ Garrett Interview.

¹⁸⁸ JG Films and ABC News, *Echo of Anger* (1972).

¹⁸⁹ Crowell, *History of the Coal-Mining Industry in Ohio*.

¹⁹⁰ *County and City Data Book*.

Kenneth Ward an opportunity to sell the mineral rights to their properties with the expectation that their land would be returned to its original condition.¹⁹¹ However, by the end of the 1980s, Harrison and Monroe ranked fourth and sixth in the state for unemployment, with rates above 10 percent compared to a statewide average of less than 6 percent. Between 1980 and 1990, the two counties lost more than 10 percent of their residents, while Belmont County declined by nearly 14 percent, the largest level of out-migration in the state.¹⁹² By the early 1990s, one report by a state task force declared, “Poverty in [Ohio’s] Appalachian Counties is more severe than it was two decades ago.”¹⁹³

The dramatic decline in fortune experienced by local residents was due in large part to the collapse of the region’s coal mining industry. Between the mid-1970s and the early 1990s, coal production in Harrison, Monroe and Belmont dropped by more than 75 percent as utilities began substituting coal imported from other parts of the country for the high sulfur coal available locally in order to comply with new regulations imposed by the Clean Air Act.¹⁹⁴ While federal environmental regulation undoubtedly precipitated the rapid decline of the Steel Valley’s coal industry during the 1980s, state and local policy choices during the 1960s and 1970s exacerbated the effects of that decline on local communities. The failure significantly to diversify employment or to develop the region’s infrastructure meant that the area’s economic fortunes primarily rested on a single, notoriously volatile industry.

¹⁹¹ Ward Interview.

¹⁹² *County and City Data Book*.

¹⁹³ ODOD ARC Grant Files, Box 7. Appalachian Task Force et al., “Appalachia Ohio: Economic, Infrastructure, and Human Resource Development Issues for the 1990’s and Beyond, A Presentation to Governor George V. Voinovich,” September 25, 1991, 13.

¹⁹⁴ Crowell, *History of the Coal-Mining Industry in Ohio*.

Increased surface mining left behind thousand of depopulated and unsightly acres, and a lack of highways continued to pose a formidable barrier to both industrial and tourism development in much of the area as declines in local tax revenues further limited the potential for economic development.¹⁹⁵ ARC-financed technical and vocational schools quickly turned to retraining unemployed workers, many of whom had trained as miners only a few years before, and some local residents found employment in the service sector or commuted to other areas for work. However, graduates faced the same obstacles as in the mid-1960s of finding suitable jobs in a rural area suffering from high unemployment. Even those who retrained or commuted were unlikely to find jobs with wages comparable to those previously available in the mines.¹⁹⁶

Thus, heading into the 1990s the Steel Valley's rural communities faced a new crisis of production, one with which they were ill equipped to deal. The decline in coal mining dramatically decreased the overall economic vitality of the Steel Valley's periphery, but not all parts of the area were equally devastated. State and federal infrastructure development created the framework for service sector employment, especially in Belmont, which featured a technical college, a branch campus of Ohio University, and a large regional shopping center adjacent to Interstate 70.¹⁹⁷ The shift to a diversified economy formed the foundation for a new economic vision that allowed one local businessman to express cautious optimism about the region's future. "People are

¹⁹⁵ Scott P. Eder, "Economic Development and Growth Possibility: The Loss of Primary Industry – A Case Study of Harrison County, Ohio" (master's thesis, University of Toledo, 1999).

¹⁹⁶ Bonnie Ellis, *West Virginia Northern Community College*, recorded on November 17, 1994; Mark Uraco, *Interview with Mark Uraco, Coordinator for the Blaw-Knox Retraining Grant*, recorded on May 5, 1995; Butch Walker, *Job Retraining and the Clean Air Act*, recorded on May 5, 1995, WAHD.

¹⁹⁷ Letter from Harry Smock to John J. Gilligan, August 25, 1974, ODOD, Box 3761, Folder 34 "TVRAC." See also "East St. Clairsville Sewer Project Completion Near; FHA Loan Due," *St. Clairsville Gazette-Chronicle*, August 3, 1978.

going to have to learn to live with lower wages, [but] it's on the upswing. It'll be back up."¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁸ Jim McPharlin, prod. "The Ohio Remote: American Dreams Shattered," in *The Oprah Winfrey Show* (USA: WLS-TV, 1988), 9. Transcript available from Burelles-Luce Transcripts.

Chapter 4

River of Industry, Ribbons of Concrete: Highways, Hospitals and Urban Development in the Ohio Valley

When Belmont resident Betty Bonley went shopping on October 5, 1978, she participated in one of the most important events in the postwar evolution of the western Steel Valley. Rather than the short trip across the Ohio River to the area's traditional retail core in downtown Wheeling, Bonley traveled west on Interstate 70 to what had recently been a coal strip mine and before that a family farm. Cresting the valley escarpment that day, a dramatically different sight met her eyes -- the parking lots, restaurants, and sprawling retail complex of the newly opened Ohio Valley Mall. Built by a Youngstown developer, the single story mall extended for more than half a mile and contained national retail chains Montgomery Ward, J.C. Penney's, and Sears as well as more than one hundred other stores. For Bonley, a senior citizen living on Social Security, the mall seemed ideal. "It's just wonderful," she gushed. "We can do all our shopping here without having to go anywhere else. It's just what we needed."¹ Another customer, Audrey Dolan, compared the mall to shopping in downtown Wheeling. "People like to get where they can park close without any problems and don't have to be out in the weather." "It's wonderful," added Mary Berka. "In the winter, you don't have to run out in the snow to get from store to store, and now you don't have to go to Pittsburgh or somewhere in Pennsylvania to get to a mall." "I'll definitely be shopping

¹ Bill Speer, "Shoppers Flock to Mall," *Wheeling Intelligencer*, October 5, 1978, 1.

here when it's all open," concluded St. Clairsville resident Pat Keller. "I'll be shopping here every day."²

Not everyone was as enthusiastic about the new mall, with merchants in the surrounding communities worried about the loss of sales in downtown business districts. In numerous meetings with civic clubs in the months leading up to the mall's opening, mall executives fielded questions from civic leaders and tried to allay fears of boarded up downtowns in the wake of competition from the new facility. Admitting that the mall would draw people away from downtown at first, general manager John Vandergrift assured members of a local Kiwanis Club, "once the mall is in, the local businesses will probably not be able to detect any noticeable change."³ The most threatened community was Wheeling, the traditional retail and social hub of the Ohio River Valley (ORV), one of the three urban-industrial corridors radiating out from Pittsburgh.⁴ Despite Vandergrift's assurances, one by one the national retailers in downtown Wheeling held "going-out-of-business" sales and invited customers to expanded quarters in the new suburban facility.⁵ Local stores extended hours, cut prices, and frantically searched for ways to make their businesses more accessible, but the Steel Valley's aging downtowns were ill equipped to compete with the convenience, variety, and comfort of regional shopping centers such as the Ohio Valley Mall. Wheeling's flagship retailer, Stone &

² Susan Holub, "Shoppers 'Ecstatic' over Ohio Valley Mall," *Martins Ferry Times Leader*, October 6, 1978, 1.

³ "Mall Promotions Expected to Help Area Merchants," *St. Clairsville Gazette-Chronicle*, August 31, 1978, 1. On concerns about the mall in smaller Steel Valley communities, see "Comment by Pam Sloan: The Ohio Valley Mall's Effect on Barnesville," June 10, 1978, 12; "Comment by Pam Sloan: Monroe County and the Ohio Valley Mall," *Spirit of Democracy*, December 1, 1978, 10.

⁴ The Ohio River Valley extends north and west from Pittsburgh until it reaches West Virginia where it flows south and west along the Ohio border. For the purposes of this chapter, ORV indicates the Ohio and West Virginia portions of the upper Ohio Valley, which includes Brooke, Hancock, Ohio and Marshall counties in West Virginia and Belmont and Jefferson counties in Ohio.

⁵ "Removal Sale! Penney's Downtown Store Closing Soon," *Martins Ferry Times Leader*, September 18, 1978, 6

Thomas, announced it would remain open until 9:00 p.m. on the night of the grand opening to compete with the mall's longer hours, while another merchant hosted a "Founder's Festival" complete with \$20,000 in prizes.⁶

The Ohio Valley Mall and its smaller predecessor in Steubenville, the Fort Steuben Mall, arrived relatively late to the ORV.⁷ Unlike the massive postwar suburbanization experienced by other metropolitan regions, out-migration, prompted by the region's overall economic decline, reduced the impetus for new housing and retail development in much of the area until the coal and steel boom of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Growth that did occur generally took place on the hillsides overlooking the flatlands near the river, but often still within the corporation limits of the traditional urban centers. Consequently, as late as the mid-1970s many downtown areas retained a vibrancy that had long deserted urban centers in other regions. "Shopping at Stone & Thomas on the Plaza is a joy," proclaimed one downtown retailer in 1977. "You'll find ... a complete department store ... where friendliness, cooperation and courtesy meet you at the door."⁸ This vigor was in large part a chimera, resulting not from the proactive policies of local businesses and civic leaders but from the lack of any real competition, and the region's downtowns declined rapidly with the economic collapse of the 1980s. "The worst thing that could happen," wrote Wheeling eleventh grader Connie Burig in 1976 "would be further deterioration of our downtown shopping area. With many of our

⁶ "Boury's Founders Festival has Free \$20,000 in Prizes," *St. Clairsville Gazette-Chronicle*, August 17, 1978, 1; "Special Night Opening," *Martins Ferry Times Leader*, October 3, 1978. The article notes that 9:00 p.m. was still earlier than the new mall's closing time of 9:30 p.m.

⁷ On the evolution of regional shopping malls in the United States, see "AHR Forum: Shopping Malls in America," *American Historical Review* 101, No. 4, (October 1996): 1049-1121. On the postwar decline of cities in the face of suburbanization, see Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Robert Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

⁸ Wheeling Area Chamber of Commerce, *Wheeling Area: West Virginia, Ohio, Pennsylvania* (Wheeling: The Chamber, 1977), 25.

businesses threatening to leave ... our [local] government needs to ‘wake’ up and modernize this area.”⁹ The Steel Valley’s central business districts were largely empty by the early 1990s, with Stone & Thomas, a Wheeling fixture since the 1870s, shuttering its landmark downtown location by the end of the decade.¹⁰

Scholars and local residents have generally focused on the decline of mines and mills, but changing consumption patterns also played a role in the deterioration of some Steel Valley communities, while privileging others.¹¹ Public policy interventions in highway construction, urban development, and healthcare presented possibilities for ORV residents to adapt to changing economic and social realities and blunted the decline of the region’s traditional industries. Beginning in the mid-1950s, civic leaders in Steubenville and Wheeling, alarmed by high levels of out-migration and the aging of central business districts, worked to implement a wide range of economic development programs. “It will be our objective,” declared the director of the Wheeling Area Conference on Community Development in 1956, “to stimulate more participation by more people over the entire area in the civic projects which are to come.”¹² The ORV’s location on the geographical and social periphery of both Ohio and West Virginia limited state support for local programs as “the multiplication of governmental entities, two

⁹ Ohio County Board of Education, *Wheeling Rediscovered: A Bicentennial Project of Ohio County’s Public, Private, and Parochial Schools: Essays, Sketches, and Photographs on Wheeling’s Past, Present, and Future* (Wheeling: The Board, 1976).

¹⁰ Margaret Beltz, “Stone & Thomas W.Va.’s Oldest Family Business Before its Sale,” *Wheeling News-Register*, March 21, 1999. Andy Stamp, “Going Downtown? Those Who Survived, Downtown Business Owners Discuss Wheeling,” *Wheeling Intelligencer*, April 11, 2004, 1, 6.

¹¹ On postwar changes in consumption, see Elizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers’ Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003). For the evolution of central business districts, see Alison Isenberg, *Downtown America: A History of the Place and the People Who Made It* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004). For the decline of heavy industry in the Steel Valley, see John P. Hoerr, *And the Wolf Finally Came: The Decline of the American Steel Industry* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1988).

¹² “Area Conference’s Activity Revealed,” *Wheeling New Register*, October 25, 1956, 1.

states, two sets of legislatures, even two federal regions ... certainly made its own set of complexities in some issues of regional [importance].”¹³ Development programs also faced “a lot of personality politics and these conflicts took away from the central issues,” recalled Steubenville manager Gary Dufour. A 1972 state report revealed that, “from all indications, [local] leaders are disunited in their efforts and generally conflict with others, if not deliberately, then coincidentally.”¹⁴

This lack of leadership was most notable in the inability of ORV communities to take advantage of massive postwar spending on highway construction.¹⁵ “The greatest inhibitor of economic development is unanimously reported to emanate from poor transportation linkages,” concluded one survey of local business leaders. But “the alternatives set forth have ripped the already fractionated community asunder.”¹⁶ The region’s highway system remained patchy and under-developed, except for Interstate 70 through Wheeling, leaving ORV residents increasingly distant from each other as well as the remainder of the Steel Valley. “You had a 2 lane road [and] in Pittsburgh they would say, ‘Oh, you’re over in Weirton, West Virginia or Steubenville, Ohio. You’re clear over there?’ ” recalled Dufour.¹⁷ This isolation exacerbated the collapse of the region’s heavy industry during the 1980s and slowed the subsequent economic recovery in many areas. The lack of highways further complicated urban redevelopment initiatives in Steel Valley communities that already suffered from ethnic and religious fragmentation and a history

¹³ Author’s Interview with Gary Dufour, August 2004.

¹⁴ ODOT Box 55526, Binder “Second Progress Report in Compliance to the ARC Contract Number 72-37/RP-216 March 5, 1972.” “Community Attitude Survey: Steubenville,” February 19, 1972.

¹⁵ On the postwar development of highways, see Owen D. Gutfreund, *Twentieth-Century Sprawl: Highways and the Reshaping of the American Landscape* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Mark H. Rose, *Interstate: Express Highway Politics, 1939-1989* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990).

¹⁶ “Community Attitude Survey: Steubenville.”

¹⁷ Dufour Interview.

of weak civic administration.¹⁸ “It was very hard getting an audience initially [for] new highways tying us to the Pittsburgh metro area and then the bridge across the river. They were struggles that went on for over 40 years,” Dufour concluded.¹⁹

Between the mid-1950s and the early 1970s, residents in each of the ORV’s major communities put forth proposals to reshape downtown areas into forms more suitable for economic development. Martins Ferry, in eastern Belmont, attracted millions in state and federal aid largely through the political savvy of its visionary mayor, John Laslo, while Weirton Steel Corporation (WSC) demolished much of downtown Weirton to make way for a company expansion in the early 1970s. Residents of Steubenville and Wheeling tried to chart a middle course between these extremes of government and corporate driven redevelopment by assembling coalitions of municipal officials and business leaders in an attempt to arrive at mutually acceptable programs. Urban redevelopment projects had varying success depending on the local political situation, but none was able to alter significantly the overall economic decline of the ORV or to staunch the rapid out-migration following the collapse of the steel and coal industries during the early 1980s. “You could let off a howitzer down in Market Street on Steubenville and not harm a soul,” declared one resident in the early 1990s. “In fact, I’m not even sure there would be enough people there [to notice] a big bang.”²⁰

A key issue at stake in urban redevelopment throughout the Steel Valley was the nature of the relationship between public institutions and private enterprise.²¹ While

¹⁸ On urban redevelopment in the Steel Valley, see Gregory J. Crowley, *The Politics of Place: Contentious Urban Redevelopment in Pittsburgh* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005).

¹⁹ Dufour Interview.

²⁰ David Javersak, *A Historical Perspective*, recorded on December 15, 1994, WAHD.

²¹ On public-private partnerships for regional development in other older industrial cities, see Sherie R. Merishon, *Corporate Social Responsibility and Urban Revitalization: The Allegheny Conference on*

attempts at highway construction and urban redevelopment produced mixed results, federal intervention in health care moved hospitals from relative obscurity to the Steel Valley's number one private employer in the 1990s. The health care industry bridged the gap between public and private interests and capitalized on new sources of federal funding during the 1960s.²² Regional hospitals featured centralized leadership structures, took advantage of highway and urban development programs, and were able to sustain links with Pittsburgh hospitals via personal relationships, technological innovations such as emergency helicopter transportation, and institutional partnerships. "We joined with Ohio Valley Hospital then Allegheny came down. Then we partnered there, the three hospitals," recalled Don Myers, a board member of Martins Ferry City Hospital. "It's a major player, the hospital itself, in Martins Ferry. It is actually the largest [private] employer in Belmont County. The good thing is that it has jobs that usually pay far above the minimum wage and the average wage. Many of the jobs are professionally related, we're happy about that."²³

The Urban Crisis in a Declining Region

The Steel Valley's urban-industrial river communities featured a juxtaposition of the postwar economic boom characteristic of the nation's industrialized cities and the poverty and social stratification popularly associated with Appalachia.²⁴ During the

Community Development, 1943-1968 (Ph.D. thesis, Carnegie Mellon University, 2004); Joseph Heathcott and Maire Agnes Murphy, "Corridors of Flight, Zones of Renewal: Industry, Planning, and Policy in the Making of Metropolitan St. Louis, 1940-1980," *Journal of Urban History* 41, no. 2 (January 2005): 151-189.

²² For an overview of the postwar federal intervention in healthcare, see Walter I. Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State: A History of Social Welfare in America* (New York: The Free Press, 1999), 304-336; Paul Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine* (New York: Basic Books, 1982), 290-378.

²³ Author's Interview with Donald Myers, August 2004.

²⁴ Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 17-32; Self, *American Babylon*, 23-60; Joshua Benjamin Freeman, *Working-Class New York: Life and Labor since World War II*. (New York: New Press, 2000), 99-166; John Alexander Williams, *Appalachia: A History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press,

1950s and 1960s, workers in the region's numerous mills generally prospered, with median family income higher than the national average and, after a wave of strikes in the late 1940s, a high percentage of unionized workers with generous health and pension benefits.²⁵ "If you were fortunate enough to work in a mine or a mill or a glass factory, that was the higher grade of employment," recalled Don Myers of his childhood in Martins Ferry during the early 1960s. "It was a struggle, but as long as ... dad never got killed in a mining accident or a mill accident, you survived and you ate and you were clothed and you went to school."²⁶ The ORV depended heavily on industrial employment, but Wheeling and Steubenville also contained thriving service sectors with dozens of local and national retailers, wholesalers, business offices, hospitals and theaters.²⁷ "Incessant activity in the business district marks Wheeling as more akin to its neighbor cities of Ohio and Pennsylvania than to the more leisurely-pace cities of West Virginia," reported one visitor to the region. "Wheeling, with its throngs of shoppers, its traffic-filled streets, and the variety and abundance of its cultural and recreational facilities appears to be a larger city than its population figures indicate."²⁸ Smaller cities and villages, such as Martins Ferry and Weirton, provided more localized services as well as industrial employment and housing for thousands of local residents.²⁹

2002), 309-334.

²⁵ Javersak, *A Historical Perspective*.

²⁶ Myers Interview.

²⁷ 37.6 percent of workers in the Wheeling-Steubenville Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area held manufacturing jobs in 1950. The Wheeling-Steubenville SMSA included Brooke, Hancock, Ohio and Marshall Counties in West Virginia and Belmont and Jefferson Counties in Ohio. After the 1950 census, government geographers formally split the area into two SMSA's, Steubenville-Weirton to the north and Wheeling-Bridgeport to the south. United States Bureau of the Census and Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, *County and City Data Book* (Ann Arbor: ICPSR, 1956). Hereafter abbreviated as *County and City Data Book*.

²⁸ Writers' Program of the Works Projects Administration, *West Virginia: A Guide to the Mountain State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941), 282.

²⁹ Dufour Interview; Myers Interview.

Despite relative prosperity for many residents, between 1950 and 1980 the ORV lost nearly 6 percent of its population due to declining employment in the coal, steel and glass industries.³⁰ Out migration among the young and better educated disproportionately affected older urban centers in Steubenville, Wheeling, and Martins Ferry. “The children started to move away and the workforce started to get older,” explained Myers. “Older people do not have children the majority of times and they don’t produce like a twenty and thirty year old. Deaths started to exceed births. It just took your breath away.”³¹ Other areas, such as newly incorporated Weirton and St. Clairsville gained population during the postwar period. Both communities had available open space and St. Clairsville especially benefited from postwar highway construction. “The first leg of the Interstate (I-70) was actually the bypass around St. Clairsville,” recalled local developer John Goodman, “Did it help, yes. [Corporate managers] desired to drive that ten or twelve miles away from the plant to get on the hilltop to have a little bit of country living.”³²

John Goodman’s father, Harvey, coined the phrase ‘Come to Paradise on the Hilltop’ and it stuck as St. Clairsville nearly doubled in size during the postwar period.³³ Growth patterns within the region’s cities also contributed to the urban crisis with most new development taking place on the hillsides overlooking the river. The Steel Valley’s mountainous terrain largely limited expansion during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to the valleys of the Ohio River and its tributaries. A traditional

³⁰ *County and City Data Book*.

³¹ Myers Interview.

³² Author’s Interview with John Goodman, August 2004. See also, “News Flashes,” *Highlights on Community Progress*, April 1956, 1, OCPL.

³³ Ohio Department of Development Office of Strategic Research, “Ohio County Profiles: Belmont County,” 1988. This was during a period when Belmont County declined from more than 95,600 to less than 80,000. *County and City Data Book*.

pattern of urban development emerged in communities up and down the river, with manufacturing occupying the space closest to the water. Downtown shopping areas came next with residential areas spreading to the hilltops “on the Ohio side westward and on the West Virginia side eastward, more toward the Pennsylvania border as more and more housing sites became available [due] to the trolley and then the automobile.”³⁴ Wheeling developer Jack Waterhouse pioneered techniques for hillside development in the mid-1950s and subsequently built the community’s first strip mall, the Elm Terrace Plaza on the city’s east end. “Yes, in those days they thought I was going too far out and of course [now] its a very active center,” the developer recalled. “Elm Terrace was an ideal location and we won an award with the National Association of Homebuilders in Chicago for a well-planned subdivision on a hillside.” “Some of the demand,” according to Waterhouse, “was caused by road expansion and so on, [also] I did an awful lot through veteran financing. After the war all of the young people coming back, we did a lot of VA loans and the FHA was active, too.”³⁵

These demographic shifts resulted in the beginning of deterioration in older downtown areas and concerned civic groups began organizing urban redevelopment campaigns. In 1953, a group of businessmen and community leaders formed the Wheeling Area Conference on Community Development (WCCD) to study and implement solutions to the city’s mounting problems.³⁶ The group modeled itself on the

³⁴ Dufour Interview.

³⁵ Author’s Interview with Jack Waterhouse, August 2004; “New Ideas in Land Planning,” *National Association of Homebuilders Journal*, May, 1962, 93. On the role of federal spending in the postwar expansion of the suburbs, see Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

³⁶ On the formation of the WCCD, see Robert M. Rownd, “President’s Report,” *Highlights on Community Progress*, April 1957, 1. OCPL. On early attempts at redevelopment in Steubenville, see T.D. Best et al., “Summary Report on the Economic Potentialities of the Upper Ohio River Valley to the Upper Ohio Valley Development Council,” (Steubenville: Battelle Memorial Institute, 1955).

Allegheny Conference on Community Development (ACCD), which had begun a massive urban renewal program in Pittsburgh during the mid-1940s.³⁷ After pushing through smoke abatement laws and a variety of other measures, the WCCD commissioned a study by urban planner Francis Dodd McHugh in order to “build scientifically for the future so that the final results will all dovetail and assure us of an orderly arrangement of all civic facilities.”³⁸ McHugh’s 1957 report, “Master Plan, Wheeling, West Virginia,” envisioned a properly designed and redeveloped downtown that, through a variety of public policy initiatives, would allow “Wheeling and its environs to become a more attractive and desirable urban community for working and living.”³⁹ Embodied in the WCCD’s slogan, “live on the hills and work in the city,” these initiatives included improving highway access to the central business district, flood protection, urban redevelopment for industrial use, home construction on the hillsides surrounding the city, and the modernization of apartment buildings and existing housing.⁴⁰ “Goals set out at the beginning of this venture have been far exceeded on many of the phases of civic improvement and a widespread public approval of our aims has been the result,” reported WCCD president Robert Rownd in April 1957. “We are now looking forward with hopes for an even greater success in the future.”⁴¹

“The trip to Pittsburgh has galvanized our city government into action in support of the urban renewal program,” wrote Wheeling businessman and WCCD executive

³⁷ For an overview of the early activities of the ACCD, see Roy Lubove, *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh Volume One: Government, Business, and Environmental Change* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1995), 106-141.

³⁸ Rownd, “President’s Report,” 1.

³⁹ Francis Dodd McHugh & Associates, “Master Plan: Wheeling, West Virginia, Studies made for the Wheeling Area Conference on Community Development, Inc.” (Wheeling: The Conference, 1957), 1.

⁴⁰ “Enlarged Business District Seen Here,” *Wheeling Intelligencer*, October 25, 1956, 1; “Now Plans are Begun to ‘Open Up’ the Hilltops: ‘Live on the Hills and Work in the City’ is the Credo of Wheeling Planning Group,” *Wheeling Intelligencer*, December 25, 1962.

⁴¹ Rownd, “President’s Report,” 1, 2.

committee member Robert Levenson to ACCD director Edward Magee in 1959. “I want to express my gratitude for the wonderful cooperation and inspiration you provided.”⁴² By 1959, the ACCD-sponsored Pittsburgh Renaissance provided a model for urban renewal that was celebrated throughout the nation. The WCCD and other proponents of urban renewal in the ORV, however, faced important obstacles that limited their efficacy. McHugh’s 1957 “Master Plan” called for “coordinated and vigorous action” by both public and private interests to implement the economic and social objectives laid out in the WCCD program.⁴³ However, unlike the ACCD, which had a unified and influential leadership that worked closely with a powerful city administration, the WCCD had no formal connection with local government and found itself maneuvering between various political factions, some of which denied the existence of the city’s mounting urban crisis.⁴⁴ When WCCD planner Fred Utevsky reported on an economic study of the region conducted in preparation for the 1957 master plan, F. Leslie Body, manager of the Ohio Valley Board of Trade, challenged the planner’s figures and insisted that the area economy remained robust.⁴⁵

While Pittsburgh was one of the largest cities in Pennsylvania with one of the state’s most powerful Democrats as mayor, political power in the ORV was dispersed throughout two states, six counties, and dozens of local jurisdictions separated by the Ohio River and mountainous terrain.⁴⁶ There was a great deal of travel within the ORV for employment, shopping, and entertainment, but these economic and social

⁴² HSWP ACCD Box 166, Folder 16. Letter from Robert Levenson to Edward Magee, November 12, 1959.

⁴³ Francis Dodd McHugh & Associates, “Master Plan: Wheeling, West Virginia, Studies Made for the Wheeling Area Conference on Community Development, Inc.”, MP-v.

⁴⁴ Wilbur S. Jones, “Past President’s Report,” *Highlights on Community Progress*, April 1957, 1, OCPL.

⁴⁵ Sam Norton, “Wheeling’s Losses Told Civic Clubs,” *Wheeling News-Register*, January 22, 1957.

⁴⁶ Michael P. Weber, *Don’t Call Me Boss: David L. Lawrence, Pittsburgh’s Renaissance Mayor* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1988).

relationships did not always extend to the political sphere. During the 1950s, little political interaction occurred across municipal boundaries, let alone the Ohio River, which officials often described as the “Ohio Ocean” for the obstacles it presented to regional cooperation.⁴⁷ The transportation infrastructure of the area oriented along a north/south axis following the river valley encouraged and reinforced this political estrangement, with no highway bridge across the river for the thirty-five miles between Wheeling and Weirton. Because of the rugged topography, as well as the political and geographical divisions imposed by the river, transportation is especially important to understanding the evolution of the ORV.

Highways and Regional Development

“We, as homemakers and parents are urging all concerned to think of the future needs of our children and their environment,” declared a group of Monroe women in a 1972 letter to state officials concerning proposed highway improvements in their community. “We wish to see the reality of more cultural and educational facilities made available to them and us. The improvement of roads and highways can make all these things more readily available and bring growth to our area.”⁴⁸ The following year, Joseph Kennedy, vice president of the Steubenville Chamber of Commerce, mirrored this equation of highways with opportunity as he described watching “more affluent and seemingly more important counties enjoy the benefits of modern highways...and all the while our citizens are fighting to work in outmoded, substandard two-lane roads.”

Kennedy went on to cite a poll in which 78 percent of local businesses listed “highways

⁴⁷ Belomar Regional Council, *Belomar Regional Development Plan, 1980* (Wheeling: The Council, 1980), HR-10.

⁴⁸ Letter from Monroe County Extension Homemakers to Director David C. Sweet, February 10, 1972, ODOT, Box 3719, Folder 14 “Appalachian Regional Commission.”

and access into the area as being the number one problem of our area.”⁴⁹

Postwar highway development, both where implemented and where absent, was particularly important for regional development in the Steel Valley, simultaneously opening new areas for expansion and contributing to the deterioration of other communities. The network of highways in the ORV formed around a system of national routes (US 22 and US 40) going east-west and state routes (OH 7 and WV 2) running north-south along the Ohio River. Because of the mountainous terrain, the US 22 and US 40 were narrow, twisting, dangerous and subject to frequent jams as through-traffic crowded into downtown retail and industrial areas in the narrow river valley. Routes 7 and 2 were less convoluted, but they cut through the middle of the more urbanized river communities, which made highway expansion or improvement expensive and required the loss of prime developable land.⁵⁰ Because railroads and trolleys declined in the face of competition from the automobile, volume on local highways grew dramatically as residents of the region’s relatively small and scattered communities traveled for work, education, shopping, and other opportunities.⁵¹ According to Wheeling manager Charles Steele, “Transportation during the period was terrible. [Highways] were all two-lane. [US 40] still used city streets going through Wheeling. All the traffic was growing [and] it was just choking the communities.”⁵² The lack of a good system of roads also stifled

⁴⁹ Transcript of Hearings in Cambridge, Ohio,” August 23, 1973, 132-141. Recor

⁵⁰ On the need for developable land, see Candeub, Fleissig and Associates, “Regional Comprehensive Plan for the Bel-O-Mar Area, 1970.” For a municipal perspective, see City of Martins Ferry Ohio, “Application to the Department of Housing and Urban Development for a Grant to Plan a Comprehensive Model Cities Program.”

⁵¹ For the role of transportation in shaping the social and physical landscape in the Steel Valley, see Joel A. Tarr, *Transportation Innovation and Changing Spatial Patterns in Pittsburgh, 1850–1934* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978); Muller, Edward and Joel Tarr, “The Interaction of Natural and Built Environments in the Pittsburgh Landscape” in Joel A. Tarr, ed. *Devastation and Renewal: An Environmental History of Pittsburgh and Its Region*, pp. 11-40.

⁵² Author’s Interviews with Charles Steele, July 2004.

growth in expanding industrial sectors more dependent on highway transportation than the region's traditional employers. By the early 1960s, highway construction was "the most prominent need in making the Ohio Valley region realize its optimal potential."⁵³

The construction of Interstate 70 through Wheeling and Belmont between the mid-1950s and the early 1970s was the greatest postwar change in the ORV's highway system. Even before the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, work had begun on the route that would become Interstate 70, which crossed the Ohio River at Wheeling and replaced US 40 through the southern part of the region. "My recollection of the highway system in Wheeling actually goes back to 1940," recalled one local resident. "We lived in North Wheeling and my sister and brother and I spent the summer with my grandmother. So when we came home, [we] started to walk in the direction of where we lived. My father stopped us and said we don't live up there any more, we live down here now."⁵⁴ Despite the demolition of entire neighborhoods, engineers completed the bulk of the interstate, including a new bridge across the Ohio River and the Wheeling Tunnels through the overhanging escarpment by the mid-1960s.⁵⁵ According to Frank Jouanou, former director of Wheeling's Urban Renewal Authority, highway officials working on I-70 used the powers of eminent domain, and were therefore relatively uninfluenced by local political concerns, and were not mandated to provide relocation services. "By today's standards, it was a brutal eviction," recalled Jouanou. "There was no effort to help you relocate, there were no moving expenses, or anything like that. You just had to get out and on your way, you know, or fight it in the courts. They'll come get your property

⁵³ Ohio Department of Development, *A Development Program for the Ohio Valley Region*, (Columbus, OH: The Department, 1964), 6-7.

⁵⁴ Author's Interview with Frank Jouanou, August 2004.

⁵⁵ Steele Interview.

whether you are fighting it in court or not.”⁵⁶

Postwar highway construction provided new opportunities for some Steel Valley residents, but others saw road building as a challenge to traditional markets and institutions. I-70 was designed by state and federal officials for through traffic and only served a small portion of the ORV. Harrison engineer Forest Thaxton complained, “We have no traffic congestion problem in Harrison County nor in any rural counties of Ohio, [but] we are greatly concerned about the shrinking dollars which are badly needed to repair roads with bad bases, sharp curves, too narrow and poor surfaces.”⁵⁷ A group of local merchants concerned about the loss of retail traffic and commercial property also delayed completion of I-70 east of Wheeling until the early 1970s.⁵⁸ “It was primarily because there was a lot of opposition in Wheeling [from merchants who] didn’t want to lose what they perceived as traffic that stopped and shopped,” recalled Steele. “It was wild. The tunnels were done. [I-70] was built all the way in through West Virginia to Elm Grove [East Wheeling], then the traffic all had to dump off on a temporary ramp and go down and back onto old Route 40, work its way all the way down to the other side of Elm Grove [and] back on the interstate.”⁵⁹ The problem was not resolved until 1968, when West Virginia Governor Arch Moore personally oversaw planning for the project, which was completed in the early 1970s.⁶⁰

The relatively rapid completion of I-70 contrasted with a lack of development for the remainder of the ORV’s highway system. Unlike the federally controlled interstates,

⁵⁶ Jouanou Interview.

⁵⁷ “Transcript of Hearings in Cambridge, Ohio,” 147.

⁵⁸ Steele Interview.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ The last straw for Moore, formerly a congressman from Brooke County, was when his mother-in-law was forced to wait in traffic at the Elm Grove bypass for eight hours on Thanksgiving. Steele Interview.

state general funds financed improvements to the area's other major routes. In the early 1960s, the Ohio portion of the Appalachian Development Highway was intended to intersect with I-70 near Wheeling, but administrators quickly scrapped the plan as too expensive.⁶¹ Regions with growing populations offered expanding tax bases to support new services and highway development, but a declining and increasingly elderly population doomed ORV communities to shrinking revenues and little state incentive to develop outlying areas. While the ORV had more than 350,000 residents, the scattering of residents over two states meant the dispersal of funding through separate legislatures, with federal funds also flowing from regional offices in Chicago and Philadelphia.⁶² Political calculations also played a major role in the distribution of highway funds. The Ohio portion of the region generally voted Democratic during a period of Republican control on the state level.⁶³ Conversely, Wheeling and Weirton residents consistently returned Republican Arch Moore to Congress while "it was the Democratic Party that ran West Virginia," explained a Moore aide. "The northern panhandle historically did not get its share of any resources that had to be funneled through state government."⁶⁴

The absence of strong support among the region's heavy industrial employers also hindered highway planning and construction in the ORV. "Weirton Steel was employing

⁶¹ Ohio Department of Highways, "Proposed Ohio Portion of the Appalachia Highway," 1965; Ohio Department of Development, "Highway Needs Study, Phase 1," 1970, OOA Files, Box 3911, Folder "Highway Needs." For an overview of the Appalachian Regional Commission, see Michael J. Bradshaw, *The Appalachian Regional Commission: Twenty-Five Years of Government Policy* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1992); Ralph R. Widner, "Appalachian Development After 25 Years: An Assessment," *Economic Development Quarterly* 4, no. 4 (1990): 291-312. For an analysis of the Appalachian Development Highway program, see Howard L. Gauthier, "The Appalachian Development Highway System: Development for Whom?" *Economic Geography* 49, no. 2 (April 1973), 108.

⁶² Author's Interview with Nicholas Kaschak, July 2004..

⁶³ Myers Interview; Alexander P. Lamis, and Mary Anne Sharkey, *Ohio Politics* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1994).

⁶⁴ Steele Interview; Roger W. Haigh, *Wheeling, West Virginia: A Community Profile* (Wheeling: Center for Wheeling Area Studies, 1969).

about 13,000 people at that time,” recalled Weirton city manager Robert Wirgau. “They were the powerhouse in this town, you know. I found that out quickly. You don’t do anything unless Weirton Steel says its o.k. They taught me what this town was about, it was about steel.”⁶⁵ Many local business and civic leaders did take a strong stance advocating highway construction, but the issue was less important for a heavy industrial sector served by the river and the railroads. Some companies were interested in selected projects, but because most mills shared the flat lands adjacent to the river with the major highways, they often opposed road construction that might disrupt production.⁶⁶ “I mean there were all of the big cities that had to be taken care of, first, with federal dollars, and these communities were progressive in going after it,” Wirgau explained. In the ORV, the mines and mills were “taken care of by the river and the railroad and the highway really wasn’t that big a deal. So therefore the powers that be [decided] it wasn’t important enough to organize and go after it.”

The one major exception to this rule provides an example of the politics behind highway construction in the ORV. During the mid-1960s, the Ohio Department of Transportation widened and improved OH 7 through the community of Martins Ferry, providing access to Interstate 70 a few miles to the south. This project was the result of Martins Ferry’s energetic mayor, John Laslo, who broke Democratic ranks in 1962 to support the gubernatorial bid of Republican James Rhodes. Like other community leaders throughout the region, Laslo saw in highway construction the opportunity to

⁶⁵ Author’s Interview with Robert Wirgau, August 2004. See also, David T. Javersak, *History of Weirton, West Virginia* (Virginia Beach: Donning Company, 1999).

⁶⁶ For example, a major bridge project between Steubenville and Weirton was delayed for nearly thirty years as residents wrangled over its precise location in the crowded river valley. Ohio Department of Economic and Community Development, “Community Attitude Survey: Steubenville”; Wilbur Smith and Associates, *U.S. Route 22 Feasibility Study, Steubenville-Weirton Area* (New Haven: The Company, 1970), 93.

replace deteriorating residential districts with industrial sites along newly built transportation corridors.⁶⁷ The community's major employer, Wheeling Steel, which needed access to its mill in the city, also supported expansion of the highway. "The mayor at that point [worked] at Wheeling-Pittsburgh steel," explained regional planner James Weaver. "They needed it to move product out of Martins Ferry."⁶⁸ The region's larger cities were able to obtain some piecemeal highway construction within their municipal limits, but the key to effectively using highways for economic development was not simply improvements in and around communities, but to and from them. Nevertheless, until the early 1990s, Martins Ferry remained one of the only ORV communities not directly along I-70 with four-lane access to an interstate highway.

Increasing federal intervention in the mid-1960s offered new opportunities for highway planning and construction. The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962 required states and local governments to implement a "continuing, comprehensive and cooperative" process for urban transportation planning.⁶⁹ Highway officials divided responsibility in the ORV between the Steubenville-Weirton Area Transportation Study (SWAT) to the north and the Belmont-Ohio-Marshall Transportation Study (BOM).⁷⁰ Each commission encompassed two counties in West Virginia and one in Ohio and consisted of representatives from local, state and federal jurisdictions. The Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966 expanded regional

⁶⁷ Myers Interview.

⁶⁸ Steele Interview.

⁶⁹ Edward Weiner, "Urban Transportation Planning in the United States: An Historical Overview," 5th ed., September 1997, 36. Available at <<http://tmip.fhwa.dot.gov/clearinghouse/docs/utp/>>

⁷⁰ Virginia Ann Randolph Grottendieck, "Problems of Administration in a Bi-State Metropolitan Region" (master's thesis, West Virginia University, 1970); Hammer Greene Siler Associates, *Guidelines for Regional Growth: Brooke-Hancock Counties, W. Va. and Jefferson County, Ohio* (Weirton: BHJ Metropolitan Planning Commission, 1970); "What is the Future of Our Metropolitan Area," *Steubenville Herald Star*, December 5, 1967.

planning requirements to a wide variety of federal environmental and urban development programs, and the two transportation studies formed the nuclei of new regional planning councils funded by a per-capita contribution from participating governments. In the Steubenville-Weirton area responsibility was assigned to the Brooke-Hancock-Jefferson (BHJ) Metropolitan Planning Commission and to the south, the Belmont-Ohio-Marshall (Belomar) Metropolitan Planning Commission encompassed the Wheeling area. At the commission's first meeting in March 1969, Belomar chairman Charles Steel declared that, "for the first time in the two-hundred year history of the area, various government bodies had agreed to cooperate in the establishment of an organization that can be of real assistance to the entire area."⁷¹

By the early 1970s, existing political rivalries already threatened the fledgling organizations, which had little local political support. "Self-interest is probably the key phrase to describe" the ORV, concluded one 1970 report. "The federal government, with its offer of funds for updating the area, is the only measure which will bring the area together."⁷² Commission members from smaller communities were "always suspicious of what Steubenville would do or not do," recalled BHJ representative Nicholas Kaschak.⁷³ The voluntary structure of the two commissions also left construction projects up to the local units, limiting the ability of staff to implement their designs. In 1971, BHJ completed a plan for Weirton, which emphasized civic and commercial improvements downtown.⁷⁴ Concerned about the cost of carrying out parts of the renewal program, administrators in Weirton drastically reduced financial support for the

⁷¹ Grottendieck, "Problems of Administration in a Bi-State Metropolitan Region," 85.

⁷² Ibid, 61.

⁷³ Kaschak Interview.

⁷⁴ Brooke-Hancock-Jefferson Metropolitan Planning Commission, "A Way to the Future: A Long-Range Look at the Future of Downtown Weirton" (Weirton, WV: The Commission, 1971).

commission. At the same time, leaders in Steubenville and Jefferson County, upset at the BHJ's office location in Weirton, also cut payments. While the participating governments later reached funding agreements, this type of fiscal restraint kept BHJ's staff to a minimum and limited its effectiveness.⁷⁵ "Since we really didn't have a history of an integrated area, we still thought in terms of Brooke Countians and Hancock Countians and Jefferson Countians, [each] pushing their own kind of agenda whenever they could. And it wasn't really much in the way of progress as far as the general area was concerned."⁷⁶

Rivalry at the state and federal levels mirrored competition among local leaders. Ohio Congressman Wayne L. Hays used his connections in Washington and Columbus to control federal spending in his district, channeling it to local political supporters. Hays was rumored to be one of the most powerful men in Washington before being censured and removed from the House of Representatives in 1976 due to a sex scandal.⁷⁷ Hays struggled with Ohio governor Jim Rhodes over control of government spending in eastern Ohio, and, according to numerous local officials, violently opposed cooperation between communities in his district and those across the river in West Virginia.⁷⁸ A staunch partisan, he had a particular animosity for the West Virginia Republican congressman, later state governor, Arch Moore. In one episode from the early 1970s, Hays was attending a meeting at a Belmont country club when a county official announced that Belomar could fund a highway study on linking Monroe to I-70, the very desire

⁷⁵ Wirgau Interview.

⁷⁶ Kaschak Interview.

⁷⁷ Hays was a former schoolteacher. Much of his power reputedly stemmed from his ruthless tactics and acerbic wit. Nicholas M. Horrock, "U.S. Investigating Charges on Hays," *New York Times*, May 26, 1976.

⁷⁸ Ted Hacquard, "Report of Field Visit: Jefferson County Community Action," April 11, 1969, Community Action Files, Box 52039, Folder "Jefferson County"; Myers Interview; Steele Interview.

expressed by residents in their letter to state officials. Upon hearing the news, however, the Congressman stood up, struck the table with his fist and with the entire room staring at him, declared, “God damn they will. That organization is controlled by West Virginia and Governor Moore.”⁷⁹

Most politicians in the ORV during the 1960s and 1970s tolerated regional planning only in order to obtain federal funding, but the weak structure of many local governments also limited regional planning and community development. While some cities had relatively strong administrations capable of planning, developing, and enacting civic improvements, the political fragmentation of the region meant that the region’s six counties generally carried out major development projects. County governments had a decentralized structure, with neither a chief executive nor any focus of centralized authority, and independently elected administrators often had little contact with each other. County commissioners, through their control of the budget and appropriations, did have some legislative authority, but state law severely restricted their duties and powers. In addition to commissioners, Jefferson had an independently elected engineer, sheriff, coroner, prosecuting attorney, county auditor and treasurer, many with overlapping responsibilities. Federal and state agencies further diluted this administrative structure by employing their own systems for locating the county within various economic, social and environmental programs.⁸⁰ “In Steubenville, you had the urban development office, which was partially financed by HUD,” explained one local administrator. “Then you had the Jefferson County Planning Agency, then there was the metropolitan planning commission, and then you had OMEGA, that was for ARC designated agencies and then

⁷⁹ Author’s Interviews with James Weaver, July 2004.

⁸⁰ Hammer, Greene, Siler Associates, “Guidelines for Regional Growth: Brooke-Hancock Counties, W. Va. and Jefferson County, Ohio.”

EDA. That was part of the dilemma, [with] one agency, things would have been better today.”⁸¹

The possibilities and problems exposed by attempts at regional highway planning were part of a series of larger conflicts over control of Steel Valley markets and institutions. Despite the construction of I-70, most of the ORV’s densely settled river communities, and especially Steubenville became increasingly isolated from the markets of Pittsburgh and disadvantaged in comparison to more accessible areas. “The fact that Pittsburgh is that large city for the Upper Ohio Valley further enhances the Valley’s attractiveness for additional industrial development there,” reported one study. “This being an Age on Wheels, a substantial portion of goods and people travel the highways of today and will use the expressways of tomorrow between Pittsburgh and the cities in the Valley.”⁸² To a large extent, these “expressways of tomorrow” never materialized and many ORV residents looked toward increasing federal intervention in urban redevelopment as another opportunity to improve their communities. The same issues limiting highway construction also plagued attempts at reshaping downtown areas and, as a result, even where examples of urban and industrial renewal occurred, the lack of regional cooperation and leadership meant that these projects generally had little effect outside of their immediate surroundings.

Urban Development in the Ohio Valley

In January 1966, John King Mussio, the Catholic bishop of Steubenville, requested assistance in obtaining federal funding for a housing project that he believed would slow out-migration and “help in the process of keeping those young people near

⁸¹ Wirgau Interview.

⁸² Regional Industrial Development Corporation, *A Community of Interest between the Pittsburgh Metropolitan Area and the Upper Ohio Valley: A Preliminary Analysis* (Pittsburgh: RIDC, 1959), 2,10.

the downtown area, a move that would help in the process of revitalizing the central business district, now being discussed by [downtown] merchants.”⁸³ The project was the latest from the energetic bishop who also helped build a new Catholic high school, the city’s first college, numerous churches and schools, and an expanded hospital. Mussio’s crowning achievement had come less than five years earlier with the dedication of a \$1.5 million Diocesan Community Arena, the largest in the Steel Valley outside of Pittsburgh. Municipal officials also embarked on a number of projects during the 1960s, including improvements to the central business district and the city’s roads.⁸⁴ Despite private and public investment in the community, urban redevelopment faltered in Steubenville, as in much of the ORV, leaving the community ill-prepared to face the challenges of deindustrialization with a downtown “basically unchanged and static.”⁸⁵

Despite increasing federal funding from the War on Poverty, urban redevelopment in the Steel Valley’s older industrial communities faced a number of important obstacles.⁸⁶ Urban planning, the basis for many federally subsidized programs, had a limited history in many communities. “When I arrived in Jefferson County, planning was regarded with suspect, with suspicion,” recalled one local official. “It was as if it had little ‘Pinko’ shades to it.”⁸⁷ No single community commanded the political or economic resources needed for large projects, leaving local officials at the mercy of politicians, such as Congressman Wayne Hays, who in 1968 accused the Rhodes administration of stealing credit for local development programs and threatened “that no

⁸³ Brown, 374-375.

⁸⁴ Author’s Interview with Nicholas Kaschak, July 2004; Dufour Interview.

⁸⁵ Simonds and Simonds, *Steubenville Central Business District Study* (Steubenville: Steubenville Metropolitan Planning and Redevelopment Commission, 1968), 1.

⁸⁶ For an overview of the Great Society and War on Poverty, see John A. Andrew, *Lyndon Johnson and the Great Society* (Chicago: U.R. Dee, 1998); Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State*, 304-362.

⁸⁷ Kaschak Interview.

other Appalachia project would be automatic in his district.”⁸⁸ Weak urban administrations also made it difficult to marshal the political power to make controversial decisions within a climate of ethnic, religious, and social divisions. “A serious impediment to progress derives from the strange ethno-nationalism that prevails” in the region, reported one state official in 1972. “The various European émigrés’ and their offspring have retained strong ties to their region, thus a melting pot that didn’t melt, which has perpetrated factionalism that approaches total chaos.”⁸⁹ Finally, the ORV’s declining population helped remove potential challengers to the existing leadership and lessened the impetus for expanded services and opportunities. “With the industrial move to the Sunbelt ... the college educated engineers, chemists, and business people left their hometown for greater opportunities in the South,” concluded one resident. “This trend has deprived Steubenville of fresh ideas and the potential leadership these people could provide.”⁹⁰ By the 1980s, the failure of economic diversification and urban redevelopment during the postwar period left the tenuous prosperity of industrial workers dependant upon out-migration to thin the ranks of the unemployed.

Downtown Wheeling and Steubenville served as the social and cultural hubs of the ORV and featured a wide variety of shops, theaters, businesses and restaurants. “At midnight on a Saturday night, people had no room to walk on the sidewalks [on] 4th and Market Streets,” Steubenville resident Nicholas Kaschak recalled. “They spilled over into the street walking. It was absolutely tremendous.”⁹¹ While employment in the local

⁸⁸ Ted Hacquard, “Field Visit to Jefferson County Community Action,” April 11, 1968, Community Action Files, Box 52039, Folder “Jefferson County.”

⁸⁹ Hal Maggied, “Report on Official Travel to Steubenville, OH,” December 10, 1972, ODOD, Box 55526, Binder “Second Progress Report.”

⁹⁰ Therese M. Sagun, “Steubenville: Will It Survive?” (honors thesis, Kent State University, 1983), 42.

⁹¹ Kaschak Interview.

steel mills and factories remained steady during the 1950s and 1960s, the region's traditional residential and commercial core along the river increasingly suffered from aging and poorly maintained buildings as well as air and water pollution from nearby steel mills.⁹² Increases in automobile traffic and frequent disruptions from the railroad lines crisscrossing the crowded river valleys also overwhelmed market areas designed for horse-carts. The region's cities had grown old, concluded one study, "with little or no attention given to the renewal, rehabilitation, design, and planning [necessary to establish] a new and inviting image of the downtown central business district in an urban community."⁹³

The decline of downtown corresponded to and stimulated the development of hilltop residential areas throughout the Steel Valley. "In Allegheny County there is enough land to furnish every family with the space needed for a decent living--enough land to relieve the present population congestion which exists in many parts of Pittsburgh--enough land so that housing objectives may be realized, and every family live within easy commuting distance of the heart of the city," reported an ACCD report in 1944. Downtown redevelopment often contributed to this trend as local officials and civic boosters flattened mixed-use neighborhoods to further their vision of downtown as a center for economic activity.⁹⁴ The first major push for urban renewal in the ORV began in 1953 with the founding of the WCCD, in part to assist in "breaking the logjam which

⁹² On pollution in Steubenville during the period, see Harry Krause, "Tri-State Conference Finishes with Decision that Pollution Harms Health," *Wheeling News Register*, July, 26 1968, 22. Robert DeFrancis, "Air Pollution Watchdogs Raise Cry for Ohio Edison Shutdown," *Wheeling Intelligencer*, July 24, 1969, 1.

⁹³ Simonds and Simonds, *Steubenville Central Business District Study*, 1.

⁹⁴ See, for example, William J. Mallett, "Redevelopment and Response: The Lower Hill Renewal and Pittsburgh's Original Cultural District," *Pittsburgh History* 75, no. 4 (Winter 1992): 172-190; Lubove, *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh Volume One*, 142-145.

in the past has held up many worthwhile and needed projects.”⁹⁵ WCCD supporters in the West Virginia legislature proposed and passed enabling legislation for an urban redevelopment authority, the first in the state, and in June 1957 Wheeling’s newly formed Urban Renewal Authority (URA) submitted a plan to redevelop Center Wheeling, an area known for its ethnic neighborhoods, brothels, and organized crime.⁹⁶ “All the blacks lived in Center Wheeling,” recalled Darlene Stradwick. “We lived at 2308 Market Street, and Center Market--we played there. And then, when one of the state/federal projects came through ... they tore all of the houses down.”⁹⁷ In accordance with the WCCD’s motto, “live on the hills and work in the city,” officials initially proposed that the area be developed as an industrial park. “Surveys show that the land is ideally suited for industrial development,” reported the URA. “With basic industry established in other sectors ... Wheeling should seek some satellite plants which should eventually locate in this area.”⁹⁸ However, when the site was completed in the early 1960s, there was little demand for the site by private developers and the site was used instead for a new post office.⁹⁹

Despite the desire of municipal authorities to strengthen downtown business districts, employers also began leaving the crowded and dirty river valleys.¹⁰⁰ Under the

⁹⁵ Wheeling Area Conference on Community Development, “Editorially Speaking,” *Highlights on Community Progress*, April 1956, OCPL.

⁹⁶ Wheeling Area Conference on Community Development, “Redevelopment Plan Approval Awaited,” *Highlights on Community Progress*, April 1957, OCPL. The area also had a disproportionately large, though still minority black population.

⁹⁷ Darlene Stradwick, *Growing Up as One of 13 Kids: Entrenched Values*, recorded on May 16, 1994, WAHD.

⁹⁸ “Fact Sheet on Center Wheeling Redevelopment Project,” 1, OCPL.

⁹⁹ Jouanou Interview; Steele Interview.

¹⁰⁰ On pollution in the ORV, see “Area Conference’s Activity Revealed: Air Pollution Fight Exceeds Expectations”; “Court Action Sought Against Koppers Co for Alleged Pollution,” *Wall Street Journal*, February 19, 1971, 3; Joe McLaughlin, (reporter), “Transcript of Proceedings of the Conference in the Matter of Pollution of the Interstate Waters of the Ohio River and its Tributaries in the Wheeling, West Virginia Area,” October 13, 1971; William K. Stevens, “Ohio is Crucial Testing Ground in U.S. Pollution

auspices of Bishop Mussio and other religious leaders, the Catholic Church became a major employer and developer as well as an important part of the region's religious life. In Wheeling, the church built a hospital and college east of downtown, and in Steubenville, Mussio directed construction of a new central high school and civic arena on church property on the west end. He also persuaded administrators of the local Catholic hospital to move from their downtown location to expanded quarters on the site and convinced a group of Franciscans to found a college on a bluff overlooking the city.¹⁰¹ Mussio "didn't speak much, but when he spoke, people listened," recalled a Steubenville resident. "Of course, [the new facilities] had an impact and still do, but they were not done in concert with the locals, the civic officials."¹⁰²

Not everyone was free to relocate to the region's new hilltop neighborhoods as poverty among the elderly and racist housing practices against African Americans limited many residents to the aging urban core.¹⁰³ "Steubenville [had] moved in terms of its population to the western part of the city," explained Nicholas Kaschak. "The downtown is still populated with the poor and unemployed and so forth. It is not a desired place to live."¹⁰⁴ Urban renewal programs had a mandate to provide relocation services for affected residents, many of whom moved to newly built apartments, such as Lincoln Heights in Wheeling and St. Myer Terrace in Martins Ferry. In addition to opening downtown for economic development, local officials saw the relocation program as an

Fight," *New York Times*, February 10, 1976; Janet Raloff, "Dust to Dust: A Particularly Lethal Legacy," *Science News*, April 6, 1991, 212.

¹⁰¹ Brown, *A History of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Steubenville, Ohio*, 51-54, 155-158.

¹⁰² Kaschak Interview.

¹⁰³ On the role of racism in federal housing policy, see Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*. On grassroots racism in neighborhood housing markets, see Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 209-258. On African American suburbanization, see Wiese, *Places of their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century*.

¹⁰⁴ Kaschak Interview.

opportunity to improve living conditions for poor residents. Don Myers recalled one elderly black resident who “lived with no flooring and just a coal hod for winter heating.” After she moved to St Myers Terrace, “I never remember walking into her house when she did not have newspapers laid throughout the white kitchen floor, it was just immaculate. At the time it seemed like something special. You could relocate these people from very substandard housing and you could put them in something that was so fresh and clean and bright and affordable.”¹⁰⁵ Poverty and the racism of white residents limited housing choices in other neighborhoods, especially in the expanding hilltop communities. While Wheeling’s 1960 population was more than 95 percent white, African American residents were largely confined to a cramped area just east of downtown.¹⁰⁶ In 1967, a group of civil rights activists, called Community Organization Members Build Absolute Teamwork! (COMBAT), dispatched a white couple to inquire about renting a home on Steubenville’s west end. “The figure they were quoted was \$87,” recalled Rose Marie Schick. “But, when the owner’s next inquiry came from a COMBAT! planted black couple, it had jumped to more than \$200.”¹⁰⁷

While Steubenville and Wheeling were the first ORV communities to launch downtown redevelopment campaigns, during the 1960s local leaders also worked to reshape the region’s smaller communities. Martins Ferry and Weirton, both communities with strong ties to the steel industry, took separate paths toward urban development, with the municipal government spearheading efforts in the former and corporate executives in

¹⁰⁵ Myers Interview.

¹⁰⁶ Haigh, *Wheeling, West Virginia: A Community Profile*, 27. In 1960, the African American population of the ORV ranged from less than 6 percent in Jefferson to less than 1 percent in Marshall. *County and City Data Book*.

¹⁰⁷ Brown, *A History of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Steubenville, Ohio*, 328; Daniel Greene, “Steubenville’s Black Ghetto,” *National Observer*, April 1, 1968.

the latter. Martins Ferry was one of the first settlements in Ohio, and by 1960 the city was even worse off than Steubenville, its larger neighbor to the north. The community had a crumbling physical infrastructure, an increasingly elderly population living in deteriorating housing, and a downtown retail sector that had been lost largely to Wheeling, a short trip across the river on the newly built Fort Henry Bridge.¹⁰⁸ City government was in such tight fiscal constraints that local merchants would not extend credit to municipal employees. A 1962 *Life* article, “Rocky Cradle of the Mill,” dismissed the community as a “depressing mill town...where men missing fingers or arms or legs wander the streets.” Football, the article declared, was the only way to win a “scholarship to college and a chance for a better life” away from the Steel Valley.¹⁰⁹

In 1960, John Laslo, a Democrat running in a traditionally Republican town, won office as mayor on a three-part platform of obtaining new housing for the elderly, improving Ohio Route 7 connecting the city to I-70, and creating new jobs by building a riverfront industrial park.¹¹⁰ Though a staunch Democrat, Laslo gave his support to Republican governor James Rhodes to ensure that Martins Ferry received an expansion to OH 7, providing access to I-70. The demolition of blighted housing along the route and resettlement of nearly 10 percent of the city’s population cleared the way for a new industrial park on the highly prized flatlands of the river valley, fulfilling the last of Laslo’s campaign promises.¹¹¹ The mayor also served as campaign manager for Congressman Wayne L. Hays and in return for Laslo’s delivery of votes in the river

¹⁰⁸ Steele Interview.

¹⁰⁹ “Rocky Cradle of the Mill,” *Life Magazine*, November 2, 1962, 70. Laslo was reportedly so enraged by the article that he staged a ceremony for residents to throw copies of *Life* into a bonfire. Myers Interview; Steele Interview.

¹¹⁰ Steele Interview.

¹¹¹ Myers Interview.

communities, Hays used his considerable political influence to deliver millions in federal funds to the community. Beginning with an initial planning grant in the early 1960s, eight years later the community of fewer than 12,000 residents received more than \$11 million in federal aid for an industrial park, two high rise apartment buildings, a day care center, a municipal park, and a senior center.¹¹² In 1968, Laslo received one of the first Rural Service Awards from the federal Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO). OEO director Bertrand Harding said that Laslo exhibited “progressive and dynamic leadership [and] unselfish dedication to the welfare of your fellow man,” and that the award affirmed a “deep appreciation for your work in behalf of the poor.”¹¹³

The influx of federal funding allowed the city administration to expand services to residents and employ a staff of, at one time, more than one hundred employees.¹¹⁴ “The role of government was just so well thought of at that time. Government was a way out,” recalled Myers. Municipal officials “started step by step. They crawled, they walked and then they took off running in the 70s. The front page story was Martins Ferry, Martins Ferry, all of these programs taking place.”¹¹⁵ In 1969, HUD included the city in its Model Cities program, which emphasized a “total attack” on the social, economic, and physical problems of impoverished communities.¹¹⁶ Model Cities in Martins Ferry included a wide variety of initiatives from the construction of a youth center, housing for

¹¹² Maxine S. Plummer, “Field Report Re: Laslo Rural Service Award Banquet,” September 26, 1968, Community Action Files, Box 52035, Folder “Belmont County.”; John Laslo, “City Tour Features Projects, Buildings,” *Model Cities Review*, August 1972, ODO, Box 55526, Folder “Model Cities.”

¹¹³ “Program Planned for Mayor Laslo,” *Martins Ferry Times Leader*, n.d.; Frank Moses, “Laslo Receives Rural Service Award,” *Martins Ferry Times Leader*, n.d.

¹¹⁴ A number of former Laslo Administration officials went to head War on Poverty, municipal, county and other development programs throughout the region. Myers Interview.

¹¹⁵ Myers Interview.

¹¹⁶ Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Demonstrations and Intergovernmental Relations, “Model Neighborhoods under the Demonstration Cities Act,” (Washington D.C.: The Department, 1967). Martins Ferry was the smallest city in Ohio to qualify under the program, joining much larger communities such as Cleveland, Youngstown, and Dayton.

the poor and elderly, and land clearance for industrial projects to job training for young people, employment and recreation programs and subsidized aides for local schools.¹¹⁷ City officials were particularly concerned with the community's growing elderly population, which by 1970 headed 24 percent of local households.¹¹⁸ In addition to housing in the new federally subsidized high-rise apartment buildings, city administrators also developed nationally recognized elderly employment and recreation programs, which were especially important in a region where elderly residents routinely refused government charity.¹¹⁹

While Martins Ferry continued to attract millions of dollars in state and federal aid through the early 1980s, by the mid-1970s a flaw in the city's overall program had become increasingly apparent. The Laslo administration recognized that the city's long-term viability depended on attracting new employers and job creation informed nearly every aspect of its program from highway construction to elderly services.¹²⁰ "Social programs were kind of stop gap measures, because it all still went back to [Laslo's] idea of housing, industrial development and highway construction," explained Charles Steele, the city's urban renewal director from 1964 to 1968. "All the rest of this was just other opportunities to bring money into Martins Ferry."¹²¹ Officials were largely unable to diversify the local economy by attracting employers to the new industrial park along OH 7, leaving the community mostly dependent on two large employers, Wheeling-

¹¹⁷ Martins Ferry Model Cities Dept., "First Year Action Plan: To the Department of Housing and Urban Development," (Martins Ferry: 1970). "Second Year Action Plan" (1971). "Third Year Action Plan" (1972). "Fourth Year Action Plan" (1973).

¹¹⁸ Charles Barresi et al., *Elderly Services and Industries: An Evaluation of a Program of Paid, Part-Time Employment for Elderly Poor* (Akron: University of Akron Center for Urban Studies, 1970).

¹¹⁹ "Ferry Area Unique in Aiding Elderly," *Model Cities Review*, November 1972, ODOD, Box 55526, Folder "Model Cities."

¹²⁰ "Second Year Model Cities Program in Ferry Reviewed," *Model Cities Review*, June 1973, ODOD, Box 55526, Folder "Model Cities."

¹²¹ Steele Interview.

Pittsburgh Steel and Valley Machine Company.¹²² “Unless you can find somebody who is willing to develop the site, if you don’t have the developer, then you don’t achieve it,” concluded Steele. “Martins Ferry with all its success and all of its efforts, it’s not an island. It had to rely on things happening from outside, and those things didn’t happen.”¹²³

While city officials led urban redevelopment efforts in Martins Ferry, corporate executives dominated the postwar evolution of Weirton. The youngest of the major Ohio Valley communities, Weirton was formed in 1947 as a merger of three smaller communities with the unincorporated area around the mills of Weirton Steel. The company maintained its control during the postwar years by filling or controlling municipal positions, through its influence as the state’s largest taxpayer, and by providing employees with the highest wages in the industry as well as excellent health and pension benefits.¹²⁴ “Because of the basic metals industry, folks were able to buy the home of their choice [and] took the vacation of their wish. They were able to be very strong consumers. The company paid their holiday pay, their vacation pay, people actually went out and bought new cars,” explained city manager Gary Dufour.¹²⁵ Viewed across the bridge from Steubenville, the chimneys of Weirton Steel’s four blast furnaces dominated the community forming what sociologist Sharon Zukin describes as the “archetypal industrial landscape.”¹²⁶ “When I came for the interview, I came down the old

¹²² “Economic Planning Questionnaire: Economic Changes, Martins Ferry,” 1973, ODOD, Box 3719, Folder 14 “Appalachian Regional Commission, 1973.”

¹²³ Steele Interview.

¹²⁴ Javersak, *History of Weirton, West Virginia*, 14. For a more scholarly analysis of community-company relations, see Elizebeth Fones-Wolf and Ken Fones-Wolf, “Cold War Americanism: Business, Pageantry, and Antiunionism in Weirton, West Virginia,” *Business History Review* 77, Iss. 1, (Spring 2003): 61.

¹²⁵ Dufour Interview.

¹²⁶ Sharon Zukin, *Landscapes of Power: From Detroit to Disneyworld* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 62.

Pennsylvania Avenue. I stopped at a defunct gas station they had there and I could see the top of the mill belching smoke,” recalled Robert Wirgau, of his first visit to the community. “It’s improved considerably today, but that was the physical impression. [I thought] why in the world would anyone want to be here? But the people of the town, they looked at that smoke and they saw gold.”¹²⁷

Mill expansion and the resultant residential relocation added impetus to other trends moving new development to the hilltops. Industrial expansion fueled a 14 percent population increase during the 1950s and expansive municipal limits allowed new residential areas in Weirton to be more suburban in appearance than the region’s older communities.¹²⁸ The growing population, high mill employment and small town atmosphere also kept older residential areas fairly stable during the 1960s, but while mill production continued to take place in the valley Weirton Steel moved its administrative offices to a hilltop on the city’s east side.¹²⁹ During the late 1960s, the company began demolishing downtown homes and businesses to make way for industrial expansion. In order to house displaced residents, the company built new housing on a hilltop opposite the mill, and in 1973 national retailer Kmart moved into a new store in Weirton Heights. In 1972, state administrators established a community college in the vicinity, and in 1978 Weirton General Hospital relocated to a new medical campus nearby.¹³⁰

The shift in the community’s appearance from urbanized river valley to hilltop suburbs mirrored a gradual shift away from total dominance by heavy industry, though the percentage of area residents employed in heavy manufacturing remained well above

¹²⁷ Wirgau Interview.

¹²⁸ *County and City Data Book*.

¹²⁹ Wirgau Interview.

¹³⁰ Javersak, *History of Weirton*.

the national average throughout the postwar period.¹³¹ In 1965, an industry executive proclaimed that “the future growth of all businesses in the Ohio Valley is tied to the growth and success of the steel companies.”¹³² Despite Weirton Steel’s optimistic plan for building “the most modern steel mill in the world,” the early 1970s marked the high point both of the company and the community. While 47 percent of the workforce in Weirton and Steubenville had a manufacturing job in 1960, only 43 percent worked in industry in 1970, and 39 percent in 1980. During the same period, the percentage of employed men declined as women’s share of the Steubenville-Weirton workforce rose from 25 to 30 percent, mostly in the expanding education and healthcare fields. Despite this slight shift in the overall occupational structure of the area toward service-sector jobs, the continued dominance of heavy industry ensured that higher paying employers in expanding economic sectors were relatively absent from the area.¹³³ Consequently, despite divergent paths in urban redevelopment during the 1960s, both Weirton and Martins Ferry ended the 1970s with deteriorating downtowns, a continued dependence on a handful of large industrial employers, and increasingly elderly and poor populations.

Unlike the smaller mill towns, Wheeling began the 1960s with a strong urban redevelopment agenda and an increasingly service-oriented economy. In 1967, the National Planning Association projected that Wheeling’s employment base would grow “substantially faster than its major market area [due] to its role as a transportation-utilities and trade center for the neighboring areas,” outpacing Charleston, Huntington, and

¹³¹ *County and City Data Book*

¹³² Javersak, *History of Weirton*, 161.

¹³³ Managers and professionals only accounted for about 5 percent of the workforce, with only 3 percent of jobs in the lucrative finance, insurance, and real estate sectors. Zukin, 84; *City and County Data Book*.

Steubenville.¹³⁴ Urban redevelopment in Wheeling was based on a tenuous partnership between municipal officials and a number of influential business groups. In 1971, the Wheeling Urban Renewal Authority put forward a plan to redevelop the city's aging central business district based on the concerns among national retailers in the city over the lack of space to expand their facilities as well as problems with congestion and customer parking.¹³⁵ Backed by the municipal planning commission, city council, and the Chamber of Commerce, the Fort Henry Mall proposal coincided with a successful referendum approving funds for a new downtown civic center, which planners hoped to link with the new mall through pedestrian walkways and shared parking facilities.¹³⁶ Proponents hoped the new facility would help to "achieve realization of Wheeling's full potential as a complete regional commercial center as well as the chief location for cultural, civic and recreational activities in the region." Further, "[t]he need for additional personnel with a variety of management, service, and administrative skills," planners argued, "will be accelerated as the downtown area is transformed, increasing employment opportunities in the city and surrounding region."¹³⁷

The URA quickly secured both public and private money for the new mall, and a national developer, Arlen Inner-Cities Industries, agreed to oversee the project.¹³⁸

Proponents obtained commitments by retailers Sears, J.C. Penney's, and Montgomery Ward to anchor the facility and began assembling land for the first stage of development

¹³⁴ op cit. Roger Haigh, *Wheeling, West Virginia*, 34-36.

¹³⁵ Michelle Blum, "Mall Disintegrated with Urban Renewal Rejection," *Wheeling Intelligencer*, April 10, 2004, 1, 6. C.J. Kaiser, "Hubris," unpublished pamphlet, 1999. Copy in author's possession.

¹³⁶ Wheeling City Council and Wheeling Municipal Auditorium Board, "Progress Is a Civic Center, Vote 'Yes' (Wheeling: The Board, 1971), OCPL.

¹³⁷ Wheeling City Council and Wheeling Urban Renewal Authority, "Fort Henry Mall: Wheeling, West Virginia" (Wheeling: The Authority, 1971), OCPL.

¹³⁸ Blum, "Mall Disintegrated with Urban Renewal Rejection."

early in 1972.¹³⁹ However, the Fort Henry Mall proposal soon generated stiff resistance from local merchants who felt threatened in their traditional dominance of the area's market and believed that downtown Wheeling could retain its traditional role as the region's marketplace without the loss of autonomy implicit in an enclosed shopping center.¹⁴⁰ While the Fort Henry Mall project incorporated the largest of the locally owned retailers, Stone & Thomas, Inc., into its design, developers would demolish and replace other structures with new buildings. As a result, owners of those buildings, many of whom were second or third generation retailers, were upset at the loss of property made possible by the URA's power of eminent domain.¹⁴¹ "Many of my friends, and very, very good friends, were violently against Urban Renewal," recalled local businessman John Hunter II. "Lloyd Stenger's feed store [was] taken by Urban Renewal, and it made him very mad. And he was a very influential person."¹⁴²

A number of major local retailers such as Boury Corporation and Reichart Furniture were located outside the project area, requiring them to rent space from the mall's developer if they wished to participate. Some store owners felt that this amounted to paying for entry to a retail market they currently controlled and for smaller retailers, renting space in the mall potentially involved a higher rental fee than they previously paid for downtown properties. "Robert Levenson, who helped create the URA, and George Boury were [t]wo of the greatest merchandisers I have ever known in my life," continued Hunter. "But they loaned their services, their talent, and some of their people to

¹³⁹ Jouanou Interview.

¹⁴⁰ "Wheeling Proposed Shopping Mall," OCPL; Rich Crofton, "Thomas Recalls Earlier Downtown Mall Plan," *Wheeling Intelligencer*, September 6, 1991; Hunter, *Marine Memories*.

¹⁴¹ Jouanou Interview.

¹⁴² Hunter, *Marine Memories*.

campaigning and working against Urban Renewal.”¹⁴³ Local retailers also disliked the arrangement between the publicly chartered URA, with its powers of eminent domain, and Arlen Industries, which would manage the Fort Henry Mall. For many opponents, a national developer would have an inherent bias toward national chains and local retailers, many of which were mom-and-pop establishments, feared competition from new stores. From this point of view, the paucity of developable land in the downtown was actually a blessing because if “there was no room for the marketplace to expand, there was no reason to allow any more national competition into the marketplace.”¹⁴⁴

In April 1971, a representative of the Downtown Wheeling Associates (DWA), the local merchants group, denounced the proposed mall at a public hearing as “entirely unfeasible, unrealistic, and financially unsound.”¹⁴⁵ The DWA followed this action with a series of lawsuits against, and a publicity campaign attacking, the URA as “ignor[ing] the wishes of the people.”¹⁴⁶ After the Ohio County Circuit Court dismissed their suit, mall opponents launched a ballot initiative to revoke the URA’s 1957 charter, which would disband the authority entirely. When the proposed Fort Henry Mall came to a public vote in 1972, residents voted by a two-to-one margin to scrap the project as well as the previously popular Urban Renewal Authority itself.¹⁴⁷ “I’ve never talked to George [Bowry] about it,” recalled Hunter. “I remember I said something to Bob Levenson once and he shook his head and said - I just forget what he said, but it was a terrible thing to

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Kaiser, “Hubris,” 8.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, 7-8.

¹⁴⁶ “Renewal Agency Dying in Wheeling,” *Wheeling Intelligencer*, September 2, 1973.

¹⁴⁷ Michelle Blum, “Mall Disintegrated with Urban Renewal Rejection,” *Wheeling Intelligencer*, April 10, 2004.

¹⁴⁷ Hunter, *Marine Memories*.

do. The city died from there on for many, many years.”¹⁴⁸

As early as August 1973, Belmont officials began seeking federal and state funds to prepare the site for a proposed regional shopping center seven miles to the west of Wheeling.¹⁴⁹ With the failure of the Fort Henry proposal, Sears, Montgomery Ward, and J.C. Penney’s quickly signed agreements to anchor the new facility, to be called the Ohio Valley Mall.¹⁵⁰ “Had we redeveloped downtown Wheeling like we wanted to, would that have stopped the mall from coming in out at St. Clairsville?” concluded Jouanou. “No, but I really think they could have neutralized that mall because at least we could have had an answer for the mall downtown. We had nothing to combat it with and no matter what you did to try to attract people to the downtown, the mall was between us and the people.”¹⁵¹

The failure of the Fort Henry Mall demonstrated the difficulty in assembling and maintaining public-private coalitions for urban redevelopment. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the URA confined its activities to slum clearance and hospital development, activities viewed as directly serving the public interest. When planners attempted to move beyond these relatively small-scale projects and intervene in the city’s central business district, the resulting controversy revealed the unstable political foundation on which the URA was formed. “You just cannot discount the influence of the grass roots people on these various council members in this community,” Jouanou explained. “We had a feed store in downtown Wheeling, Becker’s hardware store. I mean, it had everything -- feed for rabbits, dogs, chickens, birds, everything you wanted. But I submit

¹⁴⁸ Letter from Harry Smock to Ira L. Whitman, August 25, 1973, ODOD, Box 3761, Folder 34 “TVRAC.”

¹⁴⁹ Kaiser, “Hubris.”

¹⁵⁰ Hunter, *Marine Memories*.

¹⁵¹ Jouanou Interview.

to you, is a Becker's feed store a viable thing in a downtown area in 1980 and 1990? I don't think so. But yet, they were one of the big, big opponents of this thing and as a merchant they were a nothing store."¹⁵²

Perhaps the greatest failure of the proponents of urban renewal was their inability to convince residents like Lloyd Stenger and the Beckers that they stood to benefit from the reorganization of consumption patterns in the region. "Within every councilman's ward or district," Jouanou concluded, "there were these business people and now all of a sudden you have a project that is going to come in and eliminate them all together. The people that ended up killing that thing, I mean, they were just simply the salt of the earth, grass root people."¹⁵³

Great Society-era programs in the Ohio Valley during the 1960s and early 1970s offered local communities unprecedented access to federal funds. The inability of local communities fully to utilize these opportunities came on a number of fronts, economic, political, and cultural. Even when they were able to do so, as in Martins Ferry, the regional nature of economic problems demonstrated the difficulties faced by even a strong and determined local government to influence new private sector capital to move into the area. Out-migration and the lack of highway infrastructure in many parts of the area contributed to the most visible aspects of urban decline, but once new competition arrived in the form of regional shopping centers, downtowns quickly emptied.

However, a strong and lasting private-public partnership did form out of federal intervention in the ORV, one that would have a lasting impact on regional development throughout the Steel Valley. Building on other postwar health-related programs, the 1965

¹⁵² Jouanou Interview

¹⁵³ Ibid.

enactment of Medicare/Medicaid provided an influx of federal dollars into local doctors offices, nursing homes and hospitals. Blurring the line between public and private interests, Medicare/Medicaid directly subsidized the healthcare industry, providing jobs for thousands of Ohio Valley residents as well as providing needed services to the area's disproportionately poor and elderly population. With the decline of heavy industries, healthcare moved from a tiny portion of the region's economy in the 1950s to the area's largest private employment sector by the mid-1980s.¹⁵⁴

Rise of the Healthcare Industry

When 26-year-old Sam Nazzaro arrived in Wheeling in 1956 as an administrator at the local Catholic hospital, the institution faced a number of major problems shared by other healthcare facilities throughout the Ohio Valley. Wheeling Hospital's newest wing dated from 1929 and the facility was located in one of the oldest parts of the city, hemmed in by the Ohio River on one side and a state highway on the other. By the mid-1960s, administrators were concerned about adapting the facility to new medical techniques as well as meeting rising demand for hospital services fueled by advances in medical technology and changes in health financing that allowed increasing numbers of residents to afford better healthcare.¹⁵⁵ Nazzaro explained, "After a while I think we all saw that there was a need to do something more and we were constrained with the location of the property. We did a long-range plan and ... then we decided that we should find a location and move. We found over 200 acres off of Interstate 70 and we bought some additional property there and that's where Wheeling Hospital was born as

¹⁵⁴ *County and City Data Book*.

¹⁵⁵ Author's Interview with Sam Nazzaro, Former CEO of Wheeling Hospital and Wheeling Medical Park, August 2004. Hereafter cited as Nazzaro Interview.

you see it today. That was in 1972.”¹⁵⁶ By the early 1990s, the renamed Wheeling Medical Park was the largest private employer in the city with over one thousand employees and an annual payroll of over \$40 million.¹⁵⁷

The hospital system in the ORV formed around a series of municipal and Catholic hospitals in the major urban areas, including Wheeling Hospital (Catholic) and Ohio Valley General Hospital in Wheeling, Gill Memorial Hospital (Catholic) and Ohio Valley Hospital in Steubenville and Martins Ferry City Hospital, as well as a number of smaller facilities.¹⁵⁸ Through the beginning of the postwar period, hospital stays were generally quite long, requiring a large number of in-patient beds. For example, hernia surgery that by the 1990s was performed on an outpatient basis required a hospital stay of seven to ten days in the 1960s.¹⁵⁹ Healthcare centered on the relationship between individual consumers and their physicians, which often took the form of showing up unannounced at a doctor’s office with an ailment and simply waiting until he was available.¹⁶⁰ “At one point, the hospitals and the physicians were kind of independent of each other,” Robert Filby explained. “They just came in and used the hospital as a workshop and that was it. Most of them were private practitioners.”¹⁶¹ County medical societies, guided by the policies of the American Medical Association, jealously guarded the patient-doctor relationship in terms of both payment and treatment. As a result, physicians and hospitals usually received payment for individual services, generally

¹⁵⁶ Nazzaro Interview.

¹⁵⁷ American Hospital Association, *American Hospital Association Guide to the Healthcare Field* (Chicago: The Association, 1945-). Hereafter cited as AHA Directory.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ In 1945, the number of beds ranged from 14 at Barnesville Hospital to 333 at Ohio Valley General Hospital in Wheeling. AHA Directory.

¹⁶⁰ Author’s interview with Susan Ward, July 2004.

¹⁶¹ Author’s Interview with Robert Filby, August 2004.

directly out of the patient's pocket.¹⁶²

By the 1960s, the medical system in the Ohio Valley was inadequate in a number of ways. First, the population was relatively scattered over a large number of small urban centers, making healthcare delivery difficult for many residents.¹⁶³ “The Martins Ferry Hospital has no interns or resident physicians; doctor's agencies are provided on an ‘on call’ basis serving an area of approximately 30 miles,” reported one study. “As a result, much services are not always immediately available for emergency situations.”¹⁶⁴ Hospital facilities were also largely inadequate, and state officials determined that the number of hospital beds in the area was too few for the population.¹⁶⁵ During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the area had grown rapidly as large numbers of immigrants arrived to work in the region's mines, mills and glass factories. As the number of public facilities could not keep pace with the rising population, medical care, if provided at all, came from company physicians in the coal camps and mill towns.¹⁶⁶ Until 1951, “Weirton's babies came into the world at Steubenville's Gill Memorial Hospital or the Ohio Valley General Hospital, or at home,” recalled local historian David Javersak. “Weirton, despite its size and wealth, had no medical center.”¹⁶⁷ Political fragmentation and the devastating effects of the Great Depression exacerbated this situation, leaving local hospitals underfunded and overcrowded. Barnesville resident

¹⁶² Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*, 290-335.

¹⁶³ United States House of Representatives Special Studies Subcommittee of the Committee on Government Operations, *Office of Economic Opportunity and the Medical Foundation of Bellaire, Ohio*, Ninety-First Congress, First Session, May 20, 21, and 22 1969, 52.

¹⁶⁴ City of Martins Ferry Ohio, “Application to the Department of Housing and Urban Development for a Grant to Plan a Comprehensive Model Cities Program,” Section III, 11.

¹⁶⁵ Susan Ward Interview; Nazzaro Interview.

¹⁶⁶ On the struggle over healthcare in the coalfields, see Richard Mulcahy, *A Social Contract for the Coal Fields: The Rise and Fall of the United Mine Workers of America Welfare and Retirement Fund* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2000).

¹⁶⁷ Javersak, *History of Weirton, West Virginia*, 147.

Susan Ward recalled, “Back then, as I said, it was very common to put beds in the hospital corridors. You couldn’t do that today without somebody going to jail for it. When my mom went unconscious, the day she died, we rushed her back to the hospital. She actually died in a bed in a hallway.”¹⁶⁸

Funding for patient services was also a major issue, and the existing fee-for-service model meant that many poor and often elderly residents were unable to afford even a minimum of healthcare coverage. As late as 1969, poor residents in Belmont had to travel across the Ohio River to Wheeling Hospital for medical care because the local hospital did not have a charity ward. “If you do not have hospitalization and who of us can afford it, you cannot hardly get into the hospital,” complained one Martins Ferry resident. “Many times you go to the Emergency Room for treatment and you can’t find a doctor in the hospital. We pray that nothing will happen to us.”¹⁶⁹ The first major challenge to this traditional system of healthcare financing emerged during the 1950s when the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), one of the largest unions in the Ohio Valley, won a national agreement with mine operators establishing a nation-wide pension fund. The Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA) provided a direct royalty on every ton of coal mined to pay for the program, and unlike other benefit systems, which reimbursed members for medical charges or channeled money through state Blue Cross/Blue Shield networks, the UMWA set up independent clinics staffed by groups of salaried physicians.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ Susan Ward Interview.

¹⁶⁹ City of Martins Ferry Ohio, “Application to the Department of Housing and Urban Development for a Grant to Plan a Comprehensive Model Cities Program,” Section 111, 10.

¹⁷⁰ Mulcahy, *A Social Contract for the Coal Fields*, 33-55; “UMW Health Unit Set in Pittsburgh; It Will Care for Medical Needs of Idle, Disabled Miners in Tri-State Area,” *New York Times*, November 28, 1948, 10.

Opposition to the UMWA's group practice system from local physicians revealed anxieties about changing patterns of healthcare consumption in the Steel Valley. In 1952, UMWA administrators encouraged four physicians to relocate to Belmont in order to provide medical services for union miners and retirees in a group practice setting. Despite the group's expansion over the following decade to fifteen members at three locations, ORV medical societies refused membership to participating physicians, resulting in doctors' inability to obtain privileges in local hospitals.¹⁷¹ "The staff that they had, the physicians they had were very well trained and very well specialized," recalled Nazzaro of the UMWA doctors. "I remember myself, saying gee, it would be good to have these guys, we'd get more business. But the doctors were pretty strong about their sentiment towards these guys. The attitude was that they were Communist, don't ask me why they thought they were Communist, I can't figure that out, but I do know that as time went on there was a lot of lawsuits going on."¹⁷²

Increased federal funding during the mid-1960s exacerbated the conflict over healthcare delivery when the UMWA group applied for a federal grant to subsidize medical services for poor and elderly residents. The Belmont County Medical Society (BCMS), which first refused to acknowledge that some residents had difficulty obtaining healthcare services, quickly produced their own counter-proposal. Local leaders eventually endorsed the BCMS proposal, but federal administrators funded the original UMWA plan.¹⁷³ "Patients fall into two categories," explained BCMS physician Richard B. Phillips, before a federal oversight hearing on the issue in 1969. "One patient is like

¹⁷¹ Special Studies Subcommittee of the Committee on Government Operations, *Office of Economic Opportunity and the Medical Foundation of Bellaire, Ohio*, 209-211.

¹⁷² Nazzaro Interview.

¹⁷³ "Much to be Done Before Neighborhood Health Center Plan Opens in County," *Martins Ferry Times Leader*, July 12, 1967; "CAC Approves Health Plan," *Martins Ferry Times Leader*, n.d., 1967.

yourself, who shops for a doctor, like you go shopping for groceries. If you think you can get better care or a better price from one doctor, then you go to one doctor for one thing, and another doctor for another thing. And another 50 percent of our patients -- and this is probably more true in rural areas than in Washington D.C.-- look on their family doctor like religion. Many of these doctors are in their 60's and have cared for the same families for 30 years. To this group of people, their family doctor is just like their religion, and it is an imposition to tell them it is necessary for them to go somewhere for a doctor they didn't choose and may not like."¹⁷⁴

The battle in the ORV over changes in healthcare consumption mirrored the fierce debate during the mid-1960s over the creation of a national health insurance program for the poor and elderly. Beginning in the 1930s, many liberals advocated a national healthcare system similar to those found in other industrialized countries. Strong opposition from a number of groups, including the American Medical Association, which was concerned about maintaining profits as well as the traditional patient-doctor relationship, defeated several attempts to create a federal program during the 1940s and 1950s.¹⁷⁵ Nevertheless, by the 1960s a new constituency had arisen that keenly felt the effects of paying for healthcare – the elderly. Medical coverage for elderly Americans was a particularly salient issue throughout the nation, not least because there was a greater percentage of Americans over the age of sixty-five. One in six elderly residents entered the hospital each year and stayed twice as long on average as younger patients. The price of hospital care also doubled during the course of the decade, forcing older patients to pay an increasing amount of their income for medical services. The new U.S.

¹⁷⁴ Special Studies Subcommittee, *Bellaire, Ohio*, 56.

¹⁷⁵ Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*.

Senate Subcommittee on Aging held hearings throughout the country, and “the old folks lined up by the dozen everywhere we went,” one staffer recalled, “And they didn’t talk much about housing or recreational centers or part-time work. They talked about medical care.”¹⁷⁶

The creation of a federal health insurance program for the poor (Medicaid) and elderly (Medicare) in 1965 increased access to medical care for thousands of Steel Valley residents and subsidized changes in healthcare consumption that had begun in the 1950s. The ORV experienced massive out-migration of working-age residents after World War II, and the elderly made up more than 10 percent of the total population by 1967.¹⁷⁷ Elderly residents in the region were also disproportionately poor, and more than a thousand elderly households in Martins Ferry had annual incomes below \$2,000, while 496 single residents in the city made less than \$1,500 per year.¹⁷⁸ Residents who had relied on charity wards or suffered without hospital treatment were now subsidized consumers, and this new influx of patients sparked a major expansion effort among ORV hospitals. Between 1960 and 1975, local administrators expanded and updated facilities at every hospital in the region using a wide variety of local, state, and federal programs.¹⁷⁹ Administrators at Wheeling Hospital’s new campus on the east side of Wheeling provided expanded services, modernized their facilities and constructed innovative new office towers for physicians. ARC and other federal funds allowed the hospital to be remodeled and subsidized a new drainage system after a disastrous flood forced the evacuation of the new facility for several months. According to Nazzaro, improved

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, 368.

¹⁷⁷ *County and City Data Book*.

¹⁷⁸ Charles Barresi et al., “Elderly Services and Industries.”

¹⁷⁹ Filby Interview; Nazzaro Interview; Susan Ward Interview.

access to the facility was key to the hospital's growth. I-70 "was very important. Everybody got concerned that we were kind of moving out of town. I mean we really weren't, but that interstate was very important. Through federal funds, [West Virginia officials] installed that road into Wheeling Hospital. And later on, I would say in the mid or late 80s, we convinced state government to put those ramps on and make that a full interchange. That immensely helped the hospital."¹⁸⁰

While Wheeling Hospital moved its entire facility to a new campus along the newly built I-70, its cross-town rival, Ohio Valley Medical Center (OVMC), formed a partnership with the Wheeling URA in the early 1960s to expand its location in Center Wheeling. The URA used federal money and the power of eminent domain to purchase and clear a large residential area around the hospital, a process completed by 1968. "There were only two urban renewal projects that ever took place in the city of Wheeling," explained Jouanou. "Ohio Valley General Hospital certainly was and still is one of the oldest institutions in this community. You can make a case that even though the hospital is a private entity it is a nonprofit, community-based, community-need type of a facility. Whereas anything else that we were involved in, we were going to be taking private land, assembling private land to then turn over to private ownership. Without urban renewal I doubt if we would have in Center Wheeling the medical complex that is now there."¹⁸¹

Changes in Steubenville paralleled the evolution of healthcare delivery in Wheeling. When Sister Ann Glowczak arrived in 1946 as administrator of Steubenville's tiny Gill Memorial Hospital, both Gill and the larger municipal Ohio Valley Hospital

¹⁸⁰ Nazzaro Interview.

¹⁸¹ Jouanou Interview.

were “overcrowded and in need of more space.” “Qualified personnel were scarce” and difficult to attract “under these circumstances,” she recalled of the hospital, which was staffed primarily by a local group of Franciscan Sisters.¹⁸² State officials urged the two hospitals to merge and offered federal funds for a joint infrastructure-development campaign. This plan collapsed in the early 1950s and Bishop John King Mussio offered the Sisters land to build a new facility in the city’s growing west end. Opened in June 1960, the \$3 million St. John Hospital quickly expanded to 192 beds and a staff of 395 by 1971.¹⁸³ Federal funds allowed the facility to purchase a wide variety of medical equipment, including CT scanners and linear accelerators, and in the early 1970s county officials built a new mental health center adjacent to the hospital. “Medicare was still a relatively new thing and with the aging population, we had a high percentage of patients that were Medicare recipients,” explained St. John administrator Robert Filby. “In those days, it was in a significant growth mode in healthcare [and] if you were going into a big expansion ... Medicare was picking up the tab.”¹⁸⁴

Federal healthcare spending allowed Steel Valley hospitals to expand dramatically and subsidized rising health sector employment that could not have occurred with local funding sources alone. Rising employment in the health sector was part of an overall national trend based in the transition of healthcare provision from a craft to an industry. The expansion of health-related sectors, as well as the evolution of medical technology and medical financing, prompted the transformation of hospitals from the physician’s workshop to a center for the provision of a wide variety of medical

¹⁸² Brown, *A History of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Steubenville, Ohio*, 379.

¹⁸³ Ohio Valley Hospital also continued to grow, increasing from 248 to 757 employees with nearly 400 beds. *AHA Directory*.

¹⁸⁴ Filby Interview.

services.¹⁸⁵ As a result, medical-related personnel with a wide variety of skill sets were necessary to perform the multiple tasks required for changes in medicine.

“We found that when patients came in, the shorter the stay the more intensive care they needed,” explained Nazzaro. “So that’s when the intensive care units were developed and the cardiac intensive care units.” As the patients came in, “they need more attention from the nursing personnel because they stayed shorter. The key to the whole thing to run efficiently is the way that it’s structured. If you’ve got a bad heart you’re in cardiac care, and then you go to intermediate care, and then you go to skilled care. And they all have different levels of employees, or different ratios of employees to patients. You’ve got occupational therapy, more physical therapy. That’s elaborate, when I first started physical therapy was just putting your hand in a tub or your foot in a tub or a few exercises ... but they got more things to do to make the patient recover quickly. So all that has changed the complete environment.”¹⁸⁶

While historically physicians were primarily men, women held the majority of new positions created by expansion of the health industry in the Steel Valley. After 1970, the St. John Medical Center expanded from fewer than fifteen departments to more than fifty-five.¹⁸⁷ While women made up only 32 percent of the 1970 labor force in the ORV, they held more than eight out of every ten positions in healthcare. “I don’t really think any nurses coming out of nursing school had any trouble getting jobs at that time,” recalled Susan Ward, who started working in the operating room at Barnesville Hospital in 1975. “There were plenty of openings, you could get a job just about anywhere.”¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁵ Starr, *Social Transformation*, 379-450.

¹⁸⁶ Nazzaro Interview.

¹⁸⁷ Filby Interview.

¹⁸⁸ Susan Ward Interview.

For those who did not complete a post-secondary degree, the expanding healthcare field offered other opportunities. Outside of the professional and technical positions, women comprised 95 percent of health service workers.¹⁸⁹ “When I finished high school, I went to West Liberty [State College]” recalled Wheeling resident Darlene Stradwick. “It was just too much. So I did drop out after just one semester [and] then I started working at Ohio Valley Medical Center in Dietary. I was making \$1.80 an hour, and I thought that was tremendous money. I worked on the patient tray line, and I was part-time, then I became full-time there, and I worked up from that to working in the office to being the supervisor of the Dietary Department.”¹⁹⁰

Between the 1970s and 1990s, local hospitals developed stronger ties with one another as well as institutions in larger cities, especially Pittsburgh. The private-public model of ORV hospitals allowed administrators to take advantage of federal subsidies while maintaining a management structure that enabled rapid adaptation to changing economic realities. Hospitals increasingly shared physicians and equipment and formed strategic partnerships to take advantage of specialty areas, culminating with the 1996 creation of Trinity Health System from the merger of Steubenville’s St. John Medical Center and Ohio Valley Hospital.¹⁹¹ Pittsburgh’s hospitals also played an increasing role in healthcare delivery for ORV residents. During the 1980s, Martins Ferry City Hospital formed an alliance with OVMC and Pittsburgh’s Allegheny General Hospital, which provided administration for the smaller facilities.¹⁹² Patients and physicians frequently moved from one institution to the other, especially for specialized services and

¹⁸⁹ Bureau of the Census, *Census CD 1970* (East Brunswick, NJ: GeoLytics Inc, 2002).

¹⁹⁰ Stradwick, *Growing Up as One of 13 Kids: Entrenched Values*.

¹⁹¹ <<http://www.trinityson.com/about.asp>> [accessed 5/6/2006].

¹⁹² Myers Interview.

emergency care.¹⁹³ While the highway system remained underdeveloped in many parts of the area, close physical proximity allowed rapid response for survival flights from local hospitals to Pittsburgh's expansive medical facilities. "I had a heart attack after running one night with my wife," recalled a local resident. "We got to the hospital, the emergency care. They knew exactly what to do. I was life-flighted to Pittsburgh the next day. The next day at 11:00 at Presbyterian Hospital I was getting operated on. I think we're getting a little bit smarter."¹⁹⁴

As late as 1980, local and regional development agencies treated healthcare primarily as a human services issue, but with the decline of heavy industry, hospitals quickly became the major employer in many local communities.¹⁹⁵ Martins Ferry's hospital became the largest employer in Belmont during the 1990s, while three of the county's seven largest businesses were in the healthcare field.¹⁹⁶ "I did not realize the importance that healthcare could play in the community," recalled Don Myers who joined the county development department in 1987. "One of my first jobs was to aid Fox Run Hospital [a Washington D.C.-based chain of pediatric mental healthcare facilities]. They came in and said we will bring this facility in. I started to fully support it. I gave them a tax abatement on it. All of a sudden we ended up getting it. I'm going holy cow, I mean we've got 130 people now, 140 people now. The payroll goes to 4.1 [million dollars] and then 4.7 and I started to look at the amount of professional people out there and it was like half. These are people who buy houses, want quality schools, buy cars and this is

¹⁹³ Filby Interview.

¹⁹⁴ Myers Interview.

¹⁹⁵ See for example, Belomar Regional Council, *Belomar Regional Development Plan*, 1980.

¹⁹⁶ Ohio Office of Strategic Research, "Ohio County Profiles: Belmont County," 2003. Available from <<http://www.odod.state.oh.us/research/files/S0/Belmont.pdf>> [accessed on 6/6/2006].

beautiful.”¹⁹⁷

Hospitals were among the largest employers in Steel Valley, but the heavy reliance on Medicare/Medicaid and other federal subsidies ensured that any changes in public policy had immediate results on the local economy. Pittsburgh hospitals, such as Allegheny General and the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, gained a national reputation during the 1980s for research and specialty services, such as biotechnology and organ transplantation.¹⁹⁸ The smaller ORV hospitals primarily served local residents, with a large percentage of patients covered by either Medicare or Medicaid.¹⁹⁹ The inability to attract non-local patients placed limits on the expansion possibilities for health sector employment as Medicare and other federal programs increasingly regulated the procedures they would cover and steadily decreased the amount paid for many services. Outpatient services became increasingly important and patients were encouraged to forego extensive (and expensive) hospital stays in favor of home health services, resulting in a 6 percent decline in hospital beds between 1972 and 1997.²⁰⁰ Medicare administrators “started out paying on the cost and they weren’t very attentive to what the cost was and the cost was pretty good in terms of the hospital getting reimbursed,” explained Nazzaro. “And then it went to a strict cost payment [and] that became more difficult. Then they paid a certain amount for a certain case [with] add-ons depending on severity and that kind of stuff. Of course Medicare keeps cutting every year.”²⁰¹ In addition, as the steel industry began to decline and the UMWA’s health and pension fund suffered revenue losses from strikes and declining sales during the mid-

¹⁹⁷ Myers Interview.

¹⁹⁸ Lubove, *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh, Volume Two*, 48-50.

¹⁹⁹ Susan Ward Interview.

²⁰⁰ *AHA Directory*.

²⁰¹ Nazzaro Interview.

1970s, local institutions found it increasingly “difficult to keep the bottom line black.”²⁰²

Financial pressures from insurers and local hospitals forced local physicians to accept the economic benefits of the group health model, accelerating the transformation of healthcare consumption begun by the UMWA fund in the 1950s. Like suburban shopping centers, group health programs arrived relatively late in the ORV. In 1978, a group of physicians associated with the Ohio County Medical Society, one of the loudest critics of the UMWA group health practice, negotiated a price scale with local hospitals and incorporated as the Health Plan of the Upper Ohio Valley (Health Plan).²⁰³ Earlier that year, under pressure from coal operators to cut health costs, the UMWA signed a new contract that abolished the royalty-based fund and instituted a benefits system based on employee-employer contributions. “I can remember when we had just the UMW Health and Benefits Fund as our health insurance,” recalled the wife of a local coal miner. “When we had the girls, I mean, you didn’t even consider about having to pay anything. You didn’t have to get anything pre-authorized. You went wherever you wanted. I guess that kind of changed as there became less coal mines in the area. Then the mines that were here kind of started offering other insurance.”²⁰⁴ Because of its not-for-profit status, the low overhead of a locally administered program, and its connection to local industry, ORV employers and especially coal mine operators quickly adopted the Health Plan as their medical provider.²⁰⁵ Competition from the new organization soon forced the original UMWA group practice out of business, and by 1997, the Health Plan

²⁰² Filby Interview.

²⁰³ The Health Plan grew directly out of a federally subsidized study conducted in the mid-1970s to determine the plausibility of a not-for-profit physician administered health plan. Weaver Interview.

²⁰⁴ Susan Ward Interview.

²⁰⁵ Phil Wright, President of the Health Plan from the mid-1980s had been the head of Human Resources for one the region’s largest mine operators. Weaver Interview.

had agreements with twenty hospitals, enrolled nearly 93,000 users and employed more than a hundred people at its headquarters near the Ohio Valley Mall.²⁰⁶

Conclusion

The rapid social decline of the Steel Valley during the early 1980s was largely due to the collapse of the area's coal and steel industries, but failures in public policy exacerbated long-term economic problems in the urbanized river valleys and stalled subsequent recovery attempts. Between the late 1940s and late 1970s, federal interventions in transportation, urban development, and healthcare presented opportunities for ORV residents and mitigated the economic problems of the 1980s. However, the location of the region on the political and geographical periphery of Ohio and West Virginia, combined with the failure of local residents to unite behind a plan for regional growth, resulted in a failure to take full advantage of government spending. The construction of I-70 through Wheeling did provide some benefits to the southern part of the region, but local leaders failed substantially to improve highways along the Ohio River or between Steubenville and Pittsburgh. As a result, the ORV did not attract new employers outside its traditional industrial base or share in the economic recovery of other parts of the Steel Valley during the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Government intervention during the 1960s and 1970s privileged some Steel Valley communities, while others fell into an urban crisis of deteriorating infrastructure, an increasingly elderly and poor population, and waning employment. Despite plans to “live on the hilltops and work in the valleys,” the decline of urban manufacturing and commercial employment failed to provide a counter balance to a postwar residential

²⁰⁶ “1997-1998 Directory of Managed Care Providers,” *Business Insurance* 31, no. 53 (December 1997).

exodus, leaving downtowns more vulnerable to the growth of suburban shopping centers in the 1970s. In Steubenville and Wheeling, conflicts over the scope and desirability of redevelopment resulted in the inability of local governments to enact substantial changes, especially in central business districts. The smaller communities of Martins Ferry and Weirton took different approaches to urban development during the period, with municipal government spearheading efforts in the former and private industry in the latter. However, neither sufficiently diversified its economy away from large heavy industrial employers, which increased vulnerability to cutbacks in both federal spending and steel production. Suburban hilltop communities with good highway access and developable land captured a large portion of new commercial and residential development. Between 1950 and 1980, St. Clairsville nearly doubled its population, while a location adjacent to I-70 attracted a wide variety of public and private investments, including a technical college, a vocational school, a branch of Ohio University, and, in 1978, the Ohio Valley Mall.

Increased government spending during the 1960s and 1970s subsidized the rise of the healthcare industry in the Steel Valley. Federal programs were especially important in the ORV due to its high proportion of elderly and low-income residents and by the 1990s, Medicare or Medicaid covered nearly three-quarters of the patients in local hospitals.²⁰⁷ Hospitals replaced steel mills as the region's largest private employers during the 1980s, and the success of the healthcare industry was in large part due to the ability of administrators to bridge the gap between public and private interests. While some hospitals took advantage of new highway infrastructure to relocate to more

²⁰⁷ Susan Ward Interview.

spacious quarters away from the river valley, others served as important anchors in ailing downtown neighborhoods. Despite dramatic increases in hospital employment, the dependence on federal subsidies for the poor and elderly limited the growth of the ORV's healthcare industry. Local hospitals continued to rely on other facilities for specialized services, with patients and medical professionals regularly commuting between the ORV and Pittsburgh, which had developed a national reputation for medical research during the 1970s and 1980s.

In 1959, the Regional Industrial Development Corporation (RIDC) published a study outlining the relationship between Pittsburgh and its hinterland in Ohio and West Virginia. In order to encourage regional development and maintain this bond between the various components of the Steel Valley, RIDC planners illustrated a system of existing and proposed expressways extending along the Ohio, Allegheny and Mon Valleys and from Pittsburgh to Wheeling and Steubenville.²⁰⁸ While portions of this highway system were rapidly completed, a lack of development in the industrialized river valleys had important repercussions for the ORV, Pittsburgh and the region as a whole.

In 1973, former ARC executive director Ralph Widner explained to an audience of ACCD members that “because of very poor and inconvenient highway access to the surrounding areas of western Pennsylvania, eastern Ohio, and northern West Virginia, Pittsburgh suffered from a shrunken retail trade area for a metropolis its size” as well as the inability effectively to harness the tourism potential of the rural periphery.²⁰⁹ “The future of the region rests as much with what can be initiated in the outlying areas as with

²⁰⁸ Regional Industrial Development Corporation, *A Community of Interest between the Pittsburgh Metropolitan Area and the Upper Ohio Valley: A Preliminary Analysis*.

²⁰⁹ Ralph R. Widner, “The Regional City: An Approach to Planning Our Future Urban Growth, an Address to the Annual Meeting of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development,” November 26, 1973, 15-16.

what can be done downtown,” Widner concluded; but the failure of Steel Valley residents to strengthen regional bonds or adapt to changing patterns of production and consumption during the 1960s and 1970s increasingly created a region of contrasts between growing suburban communities with good highway access and the declining areas in the river valleys and on the rural periphery.²¹⁰

²¹⁰ Ibid, 23.

Chapter 5

Steel and Silicon: Economic Development and Image Making in Southwestern Pennsylvania

The closure of U.S. Steel's Homestead Works on a hot, muggy day in July 1986 symbolically ended a chapter in the Steel Valley's history that had begun in the nineteenth century and made the region the hub of the nation's heavy industrial production. The mill, which supplied steel beams for such iconic American structures as the Empire State Building and the Sears Tower, had slowly been shutting down over the previous years until only 23 workers and a few supervisors remained in a facility that had employed 20,000 during World War II and several thousand through the late 1970s. "I got 38 years in that rusty mother," declared Bob Krovocheck, a 56 year old crane operator. "It's a damn shame."¹ Homestead's abandonment was just one step in a process of divestment for U.S. Steel and other large corporations that had begun with the shuttering of the Donora Works in 1966 and accelerated rapidly during the early 1980s. The plant closures devastated the region's industrialized river valleys as thousands of residents swelled the ranks of the unemployed and many communities cut services and declared bankruptcy. "We come today to beg of your help," pleaded a local pastor to Allegheny County commissioners in 1991. "Clairton [in the Mon Valley] has fallen down and we can't get up."²

¹ William Serrin, "A Chapter of Industrial History Closes with the Homestead Steel Works," *New York Times*, July 27, 1986, 16.

² Taylor Davidson, "Better Protection Sought in Clairton Housing Projects," *Pittsburgh Press*, July 11, 1991, B7.

Seven miles away from Homestead in downtown Pittsburgh, the Benedum Center for the Performing Arts opened on September 25, 1987 with the debut of “Purely Pittsburgh,” a musical variety show featuring local composers and performers.³ “What this represents is just the beginning of a lengthy program to retain artistic talent in our own community,” announced Carol Brown, president of the Pittsburgh Trust for Cultural Resources, which was spearheading efforts to create a new downtown cultural district.⁴ As the region’s traditional industries steadily declined, many Steel Valley residents looked to high-tech manufacturing, research and development, healthcare, and other service industries for employment and economic growth. “The day might not be far off when Pittsburgh will no longer be referred to as ‘the steel city,’ but as ‘the university town’,” predicted the city’s biographer, Stefan Lorant, in 1975.⁵ The opening of the Benedum Center signaled not only the revitalization of a deteriorating downtown neighborhood but also the transformation of the Steel City into a post-industrial mecca for the educated, middle class residents Pittsburgh hoped to attract. “The center represents much more than the restoration of the former Stanley Theater into one of the finest performance centers in the United States,” explained the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. “Pittsburgh’s distinction as a center of the arts will prove a unique asset as this region competes for jobs and growth [and establishes] a level of cultural amenity that will be critical to this region’s long-term prosperity.”⁶

³ Mary Brignano, *Curating the District: How the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust is Transforming the Quality of Urban Life* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Cultural Trust, 2000).

⁴ “Arts Center for Pittsburgh,” *New York Times*, September 26, 1987, 9.

⁵ Stefan Lorant, *Pittsburgh: The Story of an American City*, fifth ed. (Pittsburgh: Esselmont Books, 1999), 493.

⁶ “The Benedum Begins,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, September 25, 1987.

The juxtaposition of the Homestead Works and the Benedum Center highlights the deepening economic and symbolic divisions between and among Steel Valley communities and residents during the postwar period. Following World War II, a progrowth coalition of Pittsburgh's corporate and political leaders worked to diversify southwestern Pennsylvania away from heavy industrial production while reinforcing the "region's traditional economic base as a center for the metals industry."⁷ For economic development officials as well as residents employed in the region's expanding research and service sectors, Steel Valley imagery rooted in the dirty, blue-collar mills of the industrialized river valleys increasingly became "a barrier to recruiting talent, attracting businesses, and giving the Pittsburgh market area the economic stature it deserves."⁸ Jay Aldridge, director of Penn's Southwest, a marketing firm established in 1971 to promote the region, even joked that the community's beloved football franchise should consider a name change from the "Pittsburgh Steelers" to the "Pittsburgh Softwares" in order to encourage new investment.⁹ Other residents, particularly steelworkers and their families, met attempts to separate the region's economy and imagery from heavy industrial production with skepticism and alarm, especially during the economic upheaval of the 1980s. "Pittsburgh looks beautiful," declared AFL-CIO president Lane Kirkland on a

⁷City of Pittsburgh et al, "Strategy 21: Pittsburgh/Allegheny Economic Development Strategy to Begin the 21st Century: A Proposal to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania," June 1985, 1. On the importance of imagery in economic development, see Carl Abbott, *Boosters and Businessmen: Thought and Urban Growth in the Antebellum Middle West* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981); Michael A. Pagano and Ann O'M. Bowman, *Cityscapes and Capital* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 44-68; Margaret Pugh O'Mara, *Cities of Knowledge: Cold War Science and the Search for the Next Silicon Valley* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005).

⁸Allegheny Conference on Community Development, "A Strategy for Growth: An Economic Development Program for the Pittsburgh Region," (Pittsburgh: ACCD, 1984).

⁹Don Oldenburg, "The Selling of American Cities," *Washington Post*, December 17, 1985, B5.

visit to the Mon Valley in 1985. “But I’d like to see it a little dirtier, a little more smoke. The most environmentally offensive thing I see is the shutdown mills.”¹⁰

Despite important economic and cultural similarities, the postwar development of metropolitan Pittsburgh differed significantly from the regional periphery in West Virginia and Ohio.¹¹ Unlike the ORV’s uncoordinated, spasmodic and under-funded attempts at postwar urban and regional development, a ‘progrowth coalition’ between the Allegheny Conference on Community Development (ACCD), a business-sponsored coordinating group led by the heads of the region’s largest corporations, and the Democratic leadership of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County embarked on a revitalization campaign known as the Pittsburgh Renaissance.¹² From the 1940s to the late 1960s, this public-private partnership initiated and implemented a wide range of programs from smoke abatement and flood control dams to regional highway construction and the recreation of Pittsburgh’s central business district, known as the Golden Triangle.¹³ The larger population of metropolitan Pittsburgh also commanded more political clout than smaller Steel Valley communities in Ohio and West Virginia, while Pennsylvania was more involved in urban and economic development than either West Virginia or Ohio.¹⁴

¹⁰Peter Perl, “Union Leaders Tour Rusty ‘Mon Valley’,” *Washington Post*, August 13, 1985, A4.

¹¹Metropolitan Pittsburgh includes the southwestern Pennsylvania counties of Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Washington and Westmoreland.

¹²On the formation and persistence of progrowth coalitions, see Harvey Molotch, “The City as Growth Machine: Toward a Political Economy of Place,” *American Journal of Sociology* 82 (Sept. 1976): 309-332; John H. Mollenkopf, *The Contested City* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983), 139-179; John Logan and Harvey Molotch, *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987).

¹³On the role of public-private partnerships in postwar urban development, see R. Scott Foster and Renee A. Berger, eds., *Public-Private Partnerships in American Cities* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1984); Clarence N. Stone, *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1946-1988* (Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 1989); Brian Jacobs, *Strategy and Partnerships in Cities and Regions: Economic Development and Urban Regeneration in Pittsburgh, Birmingham, and Rotterdam* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000).

¹⁴James Guthrie Coke, *Ohio’s Urban Policy: A Non-Intervention Approach* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Policy Development and Research, 1980); David Osborne, *Economic Competitiveness: The States Take the Lead* (Washington, D.C.: Economic Policy Institute, 1987), 25-41, 56-59.

In December 1945, the Pennsylvania Postwar Planning Commission, established by the legislature to coordinate postwar development programs, named the ACCD “the recognized representative for western Pennsylvania” in carrying out the state’s program of redevelopment in The Point area of downtown Pittsburgh.¹⁵ Backing by state and local government provided the private ACCD with a quasi-public status resulting in numerous private-public and local-state partnerships in a wide range of endeavors, including the Pittsburgh Urban Redevelopment Authority (1946) in urban renewal, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (1951) in parkland conservation, and the Regional Industrial Development Corporation (1955) in economic development.¹⁶

Urban and economic development initiatives in southwestern Pennsylvania faced obstacles stemming from the nature of the Steel Valley’s postwar economic problems as well as the structure and focus of the elite-driven policies of the ACCD. Between 1953 and 1995, manufacturing’s share of employment in southwestern Pennsylvania declined by nearly 75 percent, as the Steel Valley’s traditional industries “all at the same time ceased to provide further growth of employment.”¹⁷ This drop in employment partly resulted from automation and industrial migration away from the Northeast and Midwest, but Pittsburgh’s rough terrain, population characteristics, and economic structure made it

¹⁵ On the redevelopment of the Point, see, Robert C. Alberts, *The Shaping of the Point, Pittsburgh’s Renaissance Park* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1980).

¹⁶ Rachael Balliet Colker, “Gaining Gateway Center: Eminent Domain, Redevelopment, and Resistance,” *Pittsburgh History* 78 (1995): 134-44; M. Graham Netting, *50 Years of the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy: The Early Years* (Pittsburgh: The Conservancy, 1982); Roy Lubove, *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh Volume One: Government, Business, and Environmental Change* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1995), 133-135.

¹⁷ Edgar Hoover, “Pittsburgh Takes Stock of Itself, An Address Delivered to the Economic Club of Pittsburgh,” reprinted in “Summary Report of the Allegheny Seminar Conference, Oglebay Park, Wheeling West Virginia,” September 20-22, 1964, 2.

increasingly unattractive for the nation's fastest growing industries.¹⁸ Further, while the ACCD radically transformed much of downtown Pittsburgh virtually unchallenged, by the late 1960s, resistance from residents in neighborhoods proposed for demolition and national trends, such as the civil rights movement, increased attention to community organizing, and a growing disillusionment with large scale urban redevelopment programs, slowed the pace of urban redevelopment in the city.¹⁹ The failure of a proposed "Center for the Arts" in the face of opposition from the neighborhood's predominantly African American population during the late 1960s, and the election of ACCD critic Pete Flaherty as Pittsburgh mayor in 1970, marked the demise of the city's postwar progrowth coalition.²⁰

Economic development programs went hand-in-hand with efforts to transform the Steel Valley's image, making the Pittsburgh Renaissance a cultural as well as an economic effort. City officials and private boosters carefully fashioned a mythological depiction of the city's transformation, known as "The Pittsburgh Story," for consumption by local and national audiences.²¹ Delivered by an extensive public relations campaign, the Pittsburgh Story invariably began with a dystopic vision of Pittsburgh in the 1940s,

¹⁸ On postwar trends in manufacturing employment, see Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison, *The Deindustrialization of America: Plant Closings, Community Abandonment, and the Dismantling of Basic Industry* (New York: Basic Books, 1982); Ann R. Markusen, *The Rise of the Gunbelt: The Military Remapping of Industrial America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), 125-152. For the particular challenges faced by the Steel Valley, see Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association, *Economic Study of the Pittsburgh Region Volume One, Region in Transition* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1963).

¹⁹ Lubove, *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh Volume One*, 142-176.

²⁰ On the growth of neighborhood opposition to urban renewal in Pittsburgh, see Louise Ann Jezierski, "Neighborhoods and Public-Private Partnerships in Pittsburgh," *Urban Affairs Quarterly* 26, no. 2 (1990): 217-49; William J. Mallett, "The Lower Hill Renewal and Pittsburgh's Cultural District," *Pittsburgh History* 75 (Winter 1992): 172-90; Gregory J. Crowley, *The Politics of Place: Contentious Urban Redevelopment in Pittsburgh* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005).

²¹ A good analysis of early efforts to promote the Pittsburgh Renaissance appears in Sherie R. Mershon, "Corporate Social Responsibility and Urban Revitalization: The Allegheny Conference on Community Development, 1943-1968" (Ph.D. thesis, Carnegie Mellon University, 2004), 653-663.

highlighted the partnership between corporate executives and city officials, especially financier R.K. Mellon and Mayor David Lawrence, and went on to describe specific local projects within a context of the region's overall growth program.²² In 1971, ACCD chairman Henry Hillman announced the formation of Penn's Southwest, a nonprofit marketing firm charged with shaping an image for southwestern Pennsylvania that was attractive to highly educated professionals. "We were not trying to put the knock on steel," recalled Penn's Southwest director, Jay Aldridge, of the group's marketing campaign, which increasingly downplayed the region's connections to heavy industry. "What we were trying to say was the community thrived whether steel was here or not."²³

Despite a gradual loss of industrial employment, mines and mills accounted for nearly 30 percent of jobs in metropolitan Pittsburgh through 1970.²⁴ While the increasing proportion of hospital and other service sector employment in the ORV and the region's other urbanized river valleys was largely a factor of industrial decline, Pittsburgh's public-private progrowth coalition funded and encouraged the growth of the city's two research universities, which became important economic generators during the late 1970s and 1980s.²⁵ In 1987, Pittsburgh mayor Richard Caliguiri envisioned the city resurrected as a "service and retailing center, a center for health care, a city of transplants, a city of High Technology, a city of Robotics, of computer programming."²⁶ Though some Pittsburgh neighborhoods and select suburbs made a relatively painless transition to a

²² A summary of laudatory articles dealing with the Pittsburgh Renaissance appears in Alberts, *The Shaping of the Point*, 129.

²³ Dan Fitzpatrick, "Stuck with Steel – As Experts Work on Devising a New Regional Marketing Campaign, They're Looking at How to Build On, Not Abandon, The Steel City Image," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, November 3, 2002, D1.

²⁴ On the decline of manufacturing in the Steel Valley, see John P. Hoerr, *And the Wolf Finally Came: The Decline of the American Steel Industry* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1988).

²⁵ On the use of research as an economic development tool, see O'Mara *Cities of Knowledge*.

²⁶ Lorant, *Pittsburgh*, 619.

post-industrial economy, constraints imposed by gender, race and class as well as geographical boundaries limited the ability of many residents to participate in the new economy, challenging boosters' vision of post-industrial prosperity.²⁷ By the early 1990s, the Steel Valley increasingly featured two societies, divided by economics, geography, and cultural identity, that frayed the social and cultural bonds uniting the region.

Renaissance and Revolt

The close relationship between economic development and image making that distinguished the Pittsburgh Renaissance had its roots in the city's industrial revolution of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. During the city's evolution from Gateway to the West to the Steel City, it gained a national reputation both as a thriving industrial city and "hell with the lid taken off," as journalist James Parton described the community in 1868.²⁸ Despite boosters' attempts to shape a positive image of the city's smoke and dirt as the outward manifestations of a healthy economy, the Pittsburgh Survey, published between 1909 and 1914, lent credence to this smoky city imagery by drawing attention to the gap between the efficiency of the Steel Valley's industrial production and the backwardness of its social relations.²⁹ Pittsburgh's declining image

²⁷ For an overview of the economic and social dislocations of the 1980s, see Roy Lubove, *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh Volume Two: The Post Steel Era* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996), 3-23. On the negative aspects of a post-industrial urban economy, see Stephen J. Pitti, *The Devil Silicon Valley: Northern California, Races, and Mexican Americans* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003), 173-197; Robert E. Fogelson, *Married to the Mouse: Walt Disney World and Orlando* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2001), 122-141.

²⁸ James Parton, "Pittsburgh," *Atlantic Monthly* 20, no. 123 (January 1868), 21. Historian Anthony Penna described this dichotomy as "smoky city" vs. "great workshop." Anthony N. Penna, "Changing Images of Twentieth-Century Pittsburgh," *Pennsylvania History* 43 (Jan. 1976), 49-63. See also Edward K. Muller, "Ash Pile of Steel City? H.L. Mencken Helps Mold an Image," *Pittsburgh History* 74, no. 2 (Summer 1991), 51-61.

²⁹ Paul Underwood Kellogg, ed., *The Pittsburgh Survey: Findings in Six Volumes* (New York: Charities Publication Committee, 1909-1914). See also, Maurine W. Greenwald, "Visualizing Pittsburgh in the 1900s: Art and Photography in the Service of Social Reform," and John F. Baumann and Margaret Spratt, "Civic Leaders and Environmental Reform: The Pittsburgh Survey and Urban Planning," both in Maurine

and environment prompted a variety of efforts to clean up the city by middle and upper class Progressives, including a 1910 plan by noted urban designer Frederick Law Olmsted for “the rearrangement and improvement of what has already been unwisely done [and the design of a] wise and economical layout of what still remains to be done.”³⁰ While officials implemented some parts of Olmsted’s program, the plan fell victim to the political battle between reformers and the Republican political machine, which held power through most of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.³¹ “Here was the very heart of industrial America, the center of its most lucrative and characteristic activity,” wrote newspaper columnist H.L. Mencken in 1926. “Here was wealth beyond computation, almost beyond imagination – and here were human habitations so abominable that they would have disgraced a race of alley cats.”³²

The prolonged economic depression preceding World War II created a sense of crisis among many Steel Valley residents regarding the future of the region. Despite the continued dominance of Pittsburgh’s steel industry, few mills opened or expanded in the area following World War I, while the city’s real estate assessments declined by \$206

W. Greenwald and Margo J. Anderson, *Pittsburgh Surveyed: Social Science and Social Reform in the Early Twentieth Century* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996).

³⁰ Frederick Law Olmsted, *Pittsburgh Main Thoroughfares and the Downtown District: Improvements Necessary to Meet the City’s Present and Future Needs, A Report* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Civic Commission, 1910), 1. On urban planning and Progressivism, see William H. Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989); Mary Corbin Sies and Christopher Silver, eds., *Planning the Twentieth-Century American City* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 37-160. On Olmsted and Pittsburgh, see John F. Bauman and Edward K. Muller, “The Olmsteds in Pittsburgh: (Part I) Landscaping the Private City,” *Pittsburgh History* (Fall 1993): 122-140; John F. Bauman and Edward K. Muller, “The Olmsteds in Pittsburgh: (Part II) Shaping the Progressive City,” *Pittsburgh History* (Winter 1993/94): 191-204.

³¹ For the politics of urban development in early twentieth century Pittsburgh, see Lubove, *Twentieth-Century Pittsburgh Volume One*, 41-58. For the Republican dominance of municipal government, see Bruce M. Stave, *The New Deal and the Last Hurrah: Pittsburgh Machine Politics* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1970); Michael P. Weber, *Don’t Call Me Boss: David L. Lawrence, Pittsburgh’s Renaissance Mayor* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1988), 3-36.

³² H.L. Mencken, “The Libido for the Ugly” in *Prejudices: Sixth Series* (New York: Knopf, 1927), 187. See also, John W. Lerner, “The Libido for the Ugly: H.L. Mencken Versus Western Pennsylvania,” *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 71, no. 1 (January 1988), 84-94.

million between 1933 and 1944 with an annual loss of approximately \$6 million in taxes.³³ The transformation of the natural environment during the late nineteenth century exacerbated chronic flooding, the ever-present pall of smoke created health problems, and the central business district was visibly declining, affecting the decision of corporate elites to locate or expand operations in the area.³⁴ In 1939, the Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association (PRPA), a business-backed group led by condiment king Howard Heinz, commissioned New York City development czar Robert Moses to prepare a new highway program for the city.³⁵ Proponents of the Moses plan understood highway construction and urban redevelopment as serving both an economic function, helping residents “maintain the supremacy of their City as the heart of the Steel industry,” and as a step in remaking the city’s image for a national audience. “We can imagine no better advertising of Pittsburgh and no more interesting experience for a motorist than to follow the route which we have recommended,” Moses explained. “It will carry visitors not only past Frick and Schenley parks through an unspoiled valley, but will afford a remarkable closeup of operating steel plants, [and] enable visitors to see the triangle itself, the Blockhouse and the beginning of the Ohio river, without getting into crosstown traffic.”³⁶

³³ Weber, *Don’t Call Me Boss*, 229.

³⁴ The urban crisis literature on postwar Pittsburgh is extensive. For an overview, see Lubove, *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh Volume One*, 106-107; Alberts, *Shaping of the Point*, 64-65. On the relationship between the natural and man-made environments, see Edward K. Muller and Joel A. Tarr, “The Interaction of Natural and Built Environments in the Pittsburgh Landscape” in Joel A. Tarr, ed., *Devastation and Renewal: An Environmental History of Pittsburgh and its Region* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003), 11-40.

³⁵ On the relationship between Moses and the PRPA, see Lubove, *Twentieth-Century Pittsburgh Volume One*, 102-105.

³⁶ Robert Moses, *Arterial Plan for Pittsburgh* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association, 1939), 2, 9.

The increasing push for planned development in Pittsburgh was part of a wider national trend toward economic and community planning during the Depression and wartime years.³⁷ Following New York and Massachusetts, in 1943 the Pennsylvania legislature created a Post-War Planning Commission (PWPC) to coordinate the transition from war to peacetime among the various state departments.³⁸ “Pennsylvanians have fought hard and won a great Victory in the fields of war but the true meaning of victory must finally be development on the Main Street of every Pennsylvania town through what that town provides for its citizens,” state planning officials declared.³⁹ In Pittsburgh, PRPA director Wallace K. Richards and Robert E. Doherty, president of the Carnegie Institute of Technology, sponsored a “Citizens Conference on the Postwar Situation for Allegheny County” in May 1943, which aimed at fostering a successful transition to a peacetime economy and “the resuscitation of a devitalized and deteriorating metropolitan area” through comprehensive, coordinated planning.⁴⁰ The group, soon renamed the Allegheny Conference on Community Development (ACCD), received the backing of

³⁷Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle, *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930-1980* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989); Mark I. Gelfand, *A Nation of Cities: The Federal Government and Urban America, 1933-1965* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975).

³⁸H.W. Prentis, Jr., “Post-War Planning in Pennsylvania,” Address at Dinner tendered for the Governor’s Cabinet and the Pennsylvania Post-War Planning Commission by the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, Bellevue Stratford Hotel, Philadelphia, Pa., October 6, 1944, in Box 1, Folder “Minutes, July 20-Dec 27, 1944,” Records of the Pennsylvania Post-War Planning Commission, RG 25.153-157, Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg, PA (Hereafter abbreviated as PWPC).

³⁹“Progress Through Community Action,” *Know Your State Release #461*, November 8, 1945, in Box 2 “Minutes and Agenda,” Folder 44-46, Records of the Pennsylvania State Planning Board, RG10.58, Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg, PA (Hereafter abbreviated as SPB). Similar calls for postwar planning included: John Andrews, “Re-Employment and Postwar Planning,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 220 (March 1942): 186-192; “Text of Governor Dewey’s Message to the Legislature on the State’s Problems,” *New York Times*, January 7, 1943, 16; C.T. Hoffman, “A Guide to Postwar Planning for the Manufacturer,” *Journal of Marketing* 9, no. 1 (July 1944): 5-10.

⁴⁰Robert E. Doherty, “Statement Presented by Dr. Robert E. Doherty at the Organization Meeting of the Citizens Sponsoring Committee Leading to the Creation of the Allegheny Conference on Post-War Community Planning,” May 24 1943, quoted in Lubove, *Twentieth-Century Pittsburgh Volume One*, 109.

financier R.K. Mellon, who also served as the region's spokesperson on the PWPC.⁴¹ In December 1945, Mellon's support enabled the ACCD to secure the commission's recognition as its official representative in southwestern Pennsylvania for the redevelopment of downtown Pittsburgh.⁴²

Between 1943 and 1947, the ACCD developed a program, backed by Pittsburgh's largest corporations and municipal officials, that was based in an elite understanding of the environmental, economic, and social issues facing the city as well as a limited endorsement of expanded public sector intervention.⁴³ The ACCD served as the primary instrument for private sector participation in public policy formation in postwar Pittsburgh and reflected a growing acceptance among business groups of the role of government in areas traditionally viewed as the private domain.⁴⁴ ACCD Executive Committee member Arthur Van Buskirk, who served as deputy administrator of the Lend Lease program during World War II, was typical of this new generation of civic-minded businessmen. "A Republican, he was nonetheless in Pittsburgh and Pennsylvania, a liberal," recalled fellow ACCD member Leland Hazard. "He could live with the New

⁴¹ Alberts, *The Shaping of the Point*, 64-67.

⁴² "Minutes of the Meeting of the Pennsylvania Post-War Planning Commission, October 6, 1944," PWPC, Box 1; "Telegram from Secretary James A. Kell to Robert E. Doherty," October 29, 1945 reprinted in Richards, "A Fifty-Seven Million Dollar Program."

⁴³ Earlier business-sponsored civic organizations in Pittsburgh had more limited views of the role of government in urban and economic development than that espoused by the ACCD. For an analysis of this transition, see Mershon, "Corporate Social Responsibility and Urban Revitalization," 19-24.

⁴⁴ Robert M. Collins, *More: The Politics of Economic Growth in Postwar America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). In St. Louis, for example, corporate executives joined urban politicians, civic organizations and construction unions in a program to stem industrial flight from the city through the expanded use of eminent domain to clear "blighted areas," the implementation of smoke control legislation, and increased public works spending on highways and physical infrastructure. Joseph Heathcott and Maire Agnes Murphy, "Corridors of Flight, Zones of Renewal: Industry, Planning, and Policy in the Making of Metropolitan St. Louis, 1940-1980," *Journal of Urban History* 31, no. 2 (2005): 151-89. This theme is also discussed with particular reference to Pittsburgh in Mershon, "Corporate Social Responsibility and Urban Revitalization," 19-24.

Deal when others in his era spent their time in futile fulmination.”⁴⁵ While the ACCD’s focus was regional, initial projects focused on rebuilding and stimulating investment in downtown Pittsburgh in order to address concerns about the continued viability of the city as an administrative center and the declining real estate values of some of the region’s largest private property owners.⁴⁶ Public officials agreed with this approach, believing that the downtown area furnished a tax base that supported the remainder of the city and wanting to maintain Pittsburgh as a corporate headquarters.⁴⁷

The success of Pittsburgh’s progrowth coalition was due to the nature of the city’s economic and political structure, a strong partnership between business elites and municipal officials, and the ability to present the group’s program as serving the public interest.⁴⁸ The public-private partnership between Republican financier Richard King Mellon and the city’s Democratic mayor, David Lawrence, came to symbolize this progrowth coalition.⁴⁹ One of the most striking aspects of this arrangement was the institutionalization of the relationship between local government and business interests. For example, in 1946 the city, acting on a request from the ACCD, established an Urban

⁴⁵ Leland Hazard, *Attorney for the Situation* (Pittsburgh: Carnegie-Mellon University Press, 1975), 235.

⁴⁶ ACCD-backed initiatives included highway construction, urban redevelopment, Greater Pittsburgh Airport, air and water pollution abatement and flood control. AIS Park H. Martin Paper. Park H. Martin, “Narrative of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development and the Pittsburgh Renaissance, 1943-1958,” 1964.

⁴⁷ Shelby Stewman and Joel A. Tarr, “Four Decades of Public-Private Partnerships in Pittsburgh” in R. Scott Fosler and Renee A. Berger, eds., *Public-Private Partnership in American Cities: Seven Case Studies* (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath and Company, 1982), 66. On municipal officials’ desire to maintain the city’s status and prestige, see “Interview with Robert Pease,” 13, in *Stanton Belfour Oral History Project*, 1971.

⁴⁸ For an overview of the postwar relationship between business interests and municipal officials in Pittsburgh, see Stewman and Tarr, “Four Decades of Public-Private Partnerships in Pittsburgh.” On the forging of Pittsburgh’s progrowth coalition, see Mershon, “Corporate Social Responsibility and the Allegheny Conference,” 222-290.

⁴⁹ Lawrence, who served as mayor from 1945 until elected governor in 1959, controlled the city’s Democratic political machine and was one of the most powerful politicians in the state. The heir to the Mellon banking interests, R.K Mellon was one of the state’s most prominent Republicans and had become president of the PRPA in 1941. On the relationship between Mellon and Lawrence, see Lawrence, “Rebirth,” 402-408.

Redevelopment Authority (URA) with Lawrence as chairman, Van Buskirk as vice chairman and Lawrence's secretary, John P. Robin as executive director.⁵⁰ The official recognition afforded the ACCD by state and local governments provided a vehicle to harness private funds behind a unified urban and economic development program, while Lawrence provided the necessary political clout to ensure cooperation from elected officials and local constituencies.⁵¹ ACCD leaders were careful to maintain elected officials as the public face of the progrowth partnership in order to defuse potential criticisms of using government authority in the service of private interests.⁵² "David Lawrence took his political life in his hands when he collaborated with the mostly Republican establishment in urban renewal," Hazard explained. "But he was clever. He always took the credit and R.K. Mellon, who disliked publicity, was happy for him to have it. Actually, either would have been helpless without the other."⁵³

The first major test of the city's private-public partnership came with the drive to implement the city's 1941 smoke control law that had been held in abeyance pending the end of the war. If periodic flooding constituted the region's most awesome and

⁵⁰ Other groups that shared this system of interlocking directorates included the Pittsburgh Parking Authority, the Allegheny County Sanitary Water Authority (ALCOSAN), the Regional Industrial Development Corporation (RIDC), the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (WPC), and Penn's Southwest Association (PSA).

⁵¹ Scholars have identified a number of other important characteristics distinguishing the ACCD. By the end of the 1940s, the ACCD's executive committee included the presidents and chief executive officers of the region's major commercial, financial, and manufacturing interests. Early on, the ACCD instituted a policy that individuals represented themselves not the company. This policy meant that members could not designate proxies and were expected regularly to attend meetings. Decisions were reached by consensus, with the result that policies when decided upon had the backing of the bulk of the business community. For a thorough analysis of the ACCD's institutional structure, see Mershon, "Corporate Social Responsibility and the Allegheny Conference," 153-221.

⁵² Deflecting this criticism was an ever-present concern of progrowth boosters who faced a series of court challenges during the late 1940s and 1950s over the use of eminent domain to transfer property from one private landowner to another. Rachael Balliet Colker, "Gaining Gateway Center: Eminent Domain, Redevelopment, and Resistance," *Pittsburgh History* 78 (1995): 134-44.

⁵³ Hazard, "Attorney for the Situation," 238.

devastating environmental concern, air pollution was the most pervasive.⁵⁴ The Steel Valley's smoky skies resulted from a combination of dense development in the urban-industrial river valleys with the wide usage of low-cost bituminous coal from nearby mines for domestic heating and industrial production.⁵⁵ Pittsburgh's dismal reputation for smoke raised important environmental and health concerns and threatened the city's stature as a corporate headquarters during a period of national affluence when a growing middle class of professionals was increasingly able to look at "quality of life" issues in deciding where to settle. Lawrence took a major political risk when he agreed to support an ordinance requiring the substitution of "smokeless" coal and furnaces for domestic use beginning in October 1947 due to the potential hardships it imposed on low-income families.⁵⁶ The extension of smoke control laws to Allegheny County also raised objections from the Pennsylvania Railroad, which was the largest coal consumer and hauled more tons of coal than any other product. Delaying actions by the railroad's lobbyist in Harrisburg threatened legislative authorization for a county smoke control ordinance, requiring the direct intervention of R.K. Mellon, a Pennsylvania Railroad director, and U.S. Steel president Benjamin Fairless.⁵⁷ The railroad backed down,

⁵⁴ Flooding had been a perennial issue in the region, but by the 1950s, a program of federally constructed dams had greatly reduced the threat to downtown Pittsburgh. For a history of flood control efforts in southwestern Pennsylvania, see Roland M. Smith, "The Politics of Pittsburgh Flood Control, 1908-1936," 2 parts, *Pennsylvania History* 42 (January 1975): 5-24 and 44 (January 1977): 3-24.

⁵⁵ In 1941 Pittsburgh has the highest rate of pneumonia of any city in the nation, with a death rate from it that was 40 percent higher than the average. During the November through February period, the city received only one-third as much sunshine as did the Allegheny County Airport, only seven miles away. Weber, *Don't Call Me Boss*, 201.

⁵⁶ Pittsburgh's smoke abatement laws were based on a St. Louis program implemented in 1940. On the smoke abatement movement in southwestern Pennsylvania, see Angela Gugliotta, "How, When and for Whom was Smoke a Problem in Pittsburgh" and Sherie R. Mershon and Joel A. Tarr, "Strategies for Clean Air: The Pittsburgh and Allegheny County Smoke Control Movements, 1940-1960" both in Tarr, ed. *Devastation and Renewal*, 110-125, 145-173.

⁵⁷ While the Pennsylvania Railroad was in the process of transitioning to more efficient and less polluting diesel engines. A popularized and partly apocryphal version of this story appears in Lawrence, "Rebirth," 392-397. For a more thorough analysis, see Mershon and Tarr, "Strategies for Clean Air," 165-166.

allowing county legislation to pass, and between 1946 and 1955, there was a reduction of smoke in the city of nearly 90 percent.⁵⁸ “Statistics and the shirt collar both proved that Pittsburgh had become as clean as the average American city,” Lawrence proclaimed. “The victory over smoke [was] the signal for a concentrated attack on the entire range of community problems. It was Pittsburgh’s breakthrough from the landing beaches; the other triumphs came in an accelerating rush.”⁵⁹

With plans in place to improve the region’s environmental quality, Pittsburgh’s progrowth partnership turned to revitalizing the city’s urban infrastructure. The heart of the Pittsburgh Renaissance was the redevelopment of the tongue of land at the confluence of the Monongahela and Allegheny Rivers. Throughout the early twentieth century, “The Point” was a densely developed, bustling area crisscrossed by dozens of railroad tracks and packed with aging and tightly packed tenements.⁶⁰ Both the Olmsted (1910) and Moses (1939) plans called for revitalizing the “forgotten and disregarded” riverfront area by establishing “a landscape area to be known as Point Park” partly to spur a wider redevelopment of the city’s adjacent central business district.⁶¹ In October 1945, Secretary of Forests and Waters James Kell wired Dougherty asking the ACCD to “take steps to carry forward Governor Martin’s program for Point Park development.”⁶² The following year, local officials secured an agreement from the Equitable Life Insurance Company to construct the 23-acre Gateway Center adjacent to the proposed Point State Park on land cleared by the URA through eminent domain.⁶³ Work on the redevelopment

⁵⁸ ACCD, *Allegheny Conference Presents*, 18.

⁵⁹ Lawrence, “Rebirth,” 402.

⁶⁰ For the pre-Renaissance history of the Point, see Alberts, *The Shaping of the Point*, 29-63.

⁶¹ Olmsted, *Main Thoroughfares*, 29 ; Moses, *Arterial Plan*.

⁶² Kell, “Telegram.”

⁶³ Colker, “Gaining Gateway Center,” 136-138.

program began in 1946, with some sixty major new structures built in the area, now known as the Golden Triangle, by 1967.⁶⁴ “Changes in the Golden Triangle ... have been the most obvious and spectacular,” praised the *Christian Science Monitor* in 1957. “In this oldest part of the city ... new skyscrapers of steel, aluminum and glass have ... changed dramatically Pittsburgh’s skyline. Most important, they exemplify a resurgence of the city’s spirit.”⁶⁵

Throughout the Steel Valley, business leaders and local officials legitimized the ongoing migration of residents from the crowded river valleys to the expanding hilltops while working to remake downtown neighborhoods into industrial and commercial properties. Pittsburgh’s Renaissance was based on a vision of the revitalized Golden Triangle as the region’s economic, cultural and government core, which the URA emphasized, “helped stabilize the City’s supply of jobs, particularly in managerial, administrative, professional and skilled industrial occupations.”⁶⁶ However, the transformation of downtown Pittsburgh from mixed-use neighborhoods to high-rise offices necessitated the migration of other urban functions, especially housing, to the periphery.⁶⁷ ACCD leaders acknowledged and even encouraged this demographic shift declaring, “that in Allegheny County there is ... enough land so that housing objectives may be realized, and every family live within easy commuting distance of the heart of the city.”⁶⁸ To support this vision of Pittsburgh as an office park staffed by middle class

⁶⁴ Lubove, *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh Volume One*, 128.

⁶⁵ Max K. Gilstrap, “Pittsburgh Earns Title of ‘Renaissance City’,” *Christian Science Monitor*, May 7, 1957, 10.

⁶⁶ Pittsburgh Urban Redevelopment Authority, *Digest of the Urban Renewal Program*, September 1967 (Pittsburgh, PA: The Authority).

⁶⁷ This migration was part of a trend that had accelerated with bridge and tunnel construction during the 1920s.

⁶⁸ Allegheny Conference on Community Development, “Report of Working Committees of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development,” (Pittsburgh, PA: ACCD, 1944), in Box 377, Folder 2, Records

suburban commuters, progrowth boosters also focused on the development of a series of highways, bridges, and tunnels radiating out from the Golden Triangle and cutting through the region's hilly landscape.⁶⁹ Corporate leaders, too, used the city's growing residential suburbs to entice middle-class professionals to the region. In addition to "high pay, advancement, pleasant associations [and] sickness and accident insurance," a 1951 Westinghouse ad proclaimed, employees could live in "splendid conditions" in Pittsburgh's South Hills with "pleasant suburban, residential and rural sections [and] excellent schools, summer camps, hunting, fishing nearby."⁷⁰

The Pittsburgh Renaissance focused as much on the city's image as its economy as political and civic leaders marshaled the symbols of modernity to maintain community support for the development program, to attract new investment in the region, and to promote the city's public-private partnership model.⁷¹ "Smoke must go," declared Pittsburgh retail mogul and ACCD executive committee member Edgar Kaufmann during the fight to implement smoke control in 1945. "Our region, freed of smoke, slums, and decay, can in our own day use the magnificent mountain air, the panoramas of our valleys, the inspiring might of our mills to ... hold and draw the best of labor, the best of technical skills [and give] them a place to raise their families."⁷² During the 1950s,

of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, MSS #285, Western Pennsylvania Historical Society, Pittsburgh, PA (Hereafter cited as ACCD Records).

⁶⁹ Wallace Richards, "A Fifty-Seven Million Dollar Program," *Allegheny Conference Digest*, December 1945, ACCD Records, Box 129, Folder 5. The most important of these projects, the Penn-Lincoln Parkway, provided a non-toll limited access link between downtown, the new Greater Pittsburgh International Airport in western Allegheny and the Pennsylvania Turnpike in the east. On the role of highway construction in suburban expansion during the 1930s and 1940s, see Edwin Beachler, *Growing Pains in the Suburbs: The Story of Metropolitan Pittsburgh's Building Boom* (Pittsburgh: The Pittsburgh Press Company, 1951).

⁷⁰ "Untitled Ad," *Los Angeles Times*, February 25, 1951, B10.

⁷¹ On the importance of promoting Pittsburgh's model of limited public sector involvement in economic development to national audiences, see Mershon, "Corporate Social Responsibility and the Allegheny Conference," 652-657.

⁷² Quoted in "World Leadership Seen By Kaufmann For City Free of Smoke," *Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph*,

officials praised the contrast between the smoky air of the early twentieth century with the city's visibly clearer skies as proof of the city's progress and as evidence of the enlightened leadership of Pittsburgh's progrowth coalition. Businessmen and municipal officials traveled throughout the country telling the "Pittsburgh Story" and hosted dozens of out-of-town delegations who came to see the 'Pittsburgh Renaissance' first hand.⁷³ "I want to express my gratitude for the wonderful cooperation and inspiration you provided on Tuesday," wrote Wheeling Urban Renewal Authority chairman Robert Levenson in 1959. "The trip to Pittsburgh has galvanized our city government into action in support of the urban renewal program."⁷⁴ The ACCD also paid \$45,000 a year to house a team of nationally-known photographers at the University of Pittsburgh in order to document the city's changes, resulting in a host of celebratory articles in national magazines.⁷⁵ As a result of these publicity efforts, overseen by ACCD assistant director John J. Grove, Pittsburgh gained a reputation as a model for urban redevelopment with a host of conscious imitators, including the Wheeling Area Conference on Community Development, the Greater Philadelphia Movement and St. Louis's Civic Progress, Inc.⁷⁶

The most thorough elaboration of the Pittsburgh Story appears in a mammoth, full-color history of the community by author, journalist and filmmaker Stefan Lorant. The edited volume, *Pittsburgh: The Story of an American City*, appeared in 1964 and included chapters by a number of distinguished scholars including Henry Steele

September 12, 1945. op cite Mershon, 297.

⁷³ See, for example, "Attendance List for John J. Grove Speech in Steubenville, Ohio" September 28, 1964, ACCD Records, Box 166, Folder 9.

⁷⁴ Robert Levenson to Edward Magee, "Letter," November 12, 1959, ACCD Records, Box 166, Folder 16.

⁷⁵ Dan Fitzpatrick and Corilyn Shropshire, "Allegheny Conference Oversees Effort to Recast Pittsburgh's Image," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, November 27, 2005.

⁷⁶ Jon C. Teaford, *The Rough Road to Renaissance: Urban Revitalization in America, 1940-1985* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 47-49. On the role of Civic Progress, Inc. in the postwar development of St. Louis, see Heathcott and Murphy, "Corridors of Flight."

Commager, Oscar Handlin, Henry David, and John Morton Blum.⁷⁷ Lorant reserved the climax, “Rebirth,” for David Lawrence who tells the story of the Pittsburgh Renaissance from the early 1940s to the 1961 opening of the city’s new Civic Arena east of the Golden Triangle largely in the first-person.⁷⁸ “The city welcomed tomorrow, because yesterday was hard and unlovely,” Lawrence began. “The town took pleasure in the swing of the headache ball and the crash of the falling brick. Pittsburgh, after all the grim years, was proud and self-confident.” The only “sure irritant” marring the city’s “rebirth” was a lingering image problem, “a reference to ‘The Smoky City’ [with which] no Pittsburgher would be patient.”⁷⁹ Edgar Kaufmann, the driving force behind the project, believed that a “deluxe book” was needed to “show how the city has grown and how it became what it is today.” The ACCD combined advertising with civic boosterism through full page newspaper ads describing *Pittsburgh* as “a major work of American history [that] traces the evolution of Pittsburgh ... to its dramatic rebirth following World War II as the nation’s prototype for urban redevelopment.”⁸⁰ Sales of the first two editions exceeded 100,000 copies, and the book captured Pittsburgh’s changing image for an entire generation of residents.⁸¹ Writer and native Kristin Kovacic recalled that when she was growing up, her neighbors all “had two books in the house, the Bible and *Pittsburgh*.”⁸²

⁷⁷ Stefan Lorant, *Pittsburgh: The Story of an American City* (Pittsburgh: Esselmont Books, 1964, revised and expanded editions in 1975, 1980, 1988 and 1999).

⁷⁸ While Lawrence is listed as author, the section was largely written by Lawrence’s secretary John P. Robin and edited by Lorant.

⁷⁹ “Rebirth,” 373. Page references are to the 1999 edition.

⁸⁰ Bob Hoover, “W. Eugene Smith: 46 Years Later, His Images Continue to Inspire Other Photographers Trying to Catch the Spirit of Pittsburgh,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, December 9, 2001; “Pittsburgh: The Story of an American City,” *New York Times*, December 15, 1964, 62.

⁸¹ Publication information comes from the dust jacket for the 1999 edition of *Pittsburgh*.

⁸² Hoover, “W. Eugene Smith.”

Reversing Pittsburgh's mill town image was a central tenet in postwar plans for a 'Center for the Arts' that would replace 100 acres of "blighted" housing east of the Golden Triangle with a civic arena, auditorium, theatres, offices and luxury apartments.⁸³ During the late 1940s, municipal officials turned their attention to the Hill District, a mixed-use neighborhood with a lively nightclub scene, high poverty rate, deteriorating buildings and a high percentage of the city's black residents.⁸⁴ Civic boosters envisioned recreating the social and economic makeup of the area, which lay between the Golden Triangle and the university community of Oakland, into a "cultural acropolis" that would dispel "the lingering conception of Pittsburgh as a 'milltown' that is bereft of any beauty and grace" and form "the true regional capital of the Pittsburgh metropolitan area."⁸⁵ The passage of state and federal housing laws in 1949 paved the way for the beginning of demolition in the Lower Hill in 1956 by subsidizing more than two thirds of the cost of land purchase and clearance. "I think you will agree that no greater service to slum clearance could be provided anywhere in the United States than in the redevelopment of the lower Hill," declared John Robin in 1950. "Nor, could the State's funds be used anywhere in the Commonwealth to greater advantage for decent housing, improved living standards, and better public health and morals."⁸⁶

Municipal officials proclaimed the 1961 opening of a \$22 million Civic Arena in the Lower Hill as a symbol of the city's transformation, but the event also marked the high tide of postwar redevelopment and raised important questions about the desirability

⁸³ Municipal officials originally considered building a new civic arena in the upscale Highland Park area, but abandoned the project in the face of opposition from community residents including Robert King, an uncle to R.K. Mellon. Weber, *Don't Call Me Boss*, 266-268.

⁸⁴ Michael A. Fuoco, "Return to Glory,: Hill District Determined to Regain Lost Greatness," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, April 11, 1999.

⁸⁵ Mallett, "The Lower Hill Renewal," 180, 182.

⁸⁶ "Federal Redevelopment Fund Reservation for the Commonwealth," John P. Robin to Wallace Richards, "Letter," June 6, 1950, both in SPB, "Minutes and Agenda, 1950";

of the progrowth vision for the city. “The Lower Hill district ... was an area of dense slum with the worst housing in the city,” Lawrence declared in “Rebirth.” “Now it’s gone. That the community was willing to spend so much for recreation and amusement is as sharp a break with its past as pure air and clean rivers... and the Golden Triangle and the university district in Oakland ... no longer seem so far apart.”⁸⁷ Private corporations, too, portrayed the Civic Arena, with its distinctive retractable roof, as a symbol of industry in the service of culture and an indicator of the city’s improved quality of life. “Can you spot the men on the scaffolding?” asked a 1960 ad for U.S. Steel. “They’re putting a stainless steel skin on the retractable roof covering Pittsburgh’s new civic area – one of the new engineering wonders of the world.”⁸⁸

URA clearance of the Lower Hill eliminated over 400 businesses and forced the relocation of 8,000 mostly black residents. Of the 1,239 black families displaced, about 800 relocated to nearby predominantly black neighborhoods contributing to overcrowding and making Pittsburgh one of the nation’s most segregated cities.⁸⁹

Consequently, while many black leaders supported (or at least did not oppose) clearing of the Lower Hill, by the early 1960s local activists began mobilizing grassroots protests against the proposed second phase of the “Center for the Arts” in the Upper Hill.⁹⁰ In

⁸⁷ Lawrence, “Rebirth,” 436-437.

⁸⁸ “Untitled Advertisement,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 5, 1960, 30.

⁸⁹ In 1958, the URA released a sample of the 1162 families displaced by the Lower Hill renewal. Of the 263 white families displaced, 51 percent purchased homes in neighborhoods on the southern edge of the City or the South Hills. Fourteen white families moved into public housing, one rented a substandard apartment, and the remaining 113 (43 percent) moved into standard quality rental housing in the South Hills or Uptown areas. Only 6 percent of the 899 black families could purchase homes, all of which were in the Upper Hill or the predominantly black East End. 56 percent of the dislocated black families moved into public housing, 30 percent moved into standard-quality rental housing in the Hill District, North Side, or East End and 8 percent rented substandard apartments. “Segregation Builds Slums On Hill Ruins,” *Pittsburgh Press*, February 2, 1958.

⁹⁰ For example, the city’s black newspaper, the *Pittsburgh Courier* praised the Renaissance for “redevelopment of the now famous Hill District” and boasted of the list of well-known performers appearing at the new Civic Arena. By 1963 the paper charged the city’s planning department with

1960, a group led by James McCoy, a civil rights officer with the United Steelworkers union who subsequently founded the United Negro Protest Committee (UNPC), and Frankie Pace, an activist with the Urban League and Pittsburgh NAACP, erected a large billboard at Centre Avenue and Crawford Street proclaiming “No Development Beyond This Point.”⁹¹ Riots in cities such as New York and Rochester during the early 1960s escalated both tensions and rhetoric, and in August 1965 police arrested eleven civil rights pickets outside the Civic Arena on charges ranging from disorderly conduct to inciting a riot and resisting arrest.⁹² Militant residents of the Hill labeled Crawford Street “the end of the line” and a UNPC official declared, “I swear to God that you will be sorry if any more of the Lower Hill is devoted to construction of housing for the affluent society.”⁹³

Opposition from black residents in the Hill District was part of a larger challenge to the ACCD’s vision for the city that stalled the Renaissance program by the late 1960s. Removal of homes to make way for large-scale economic development projects ran into a need for urban housing for residents barred from suburbs and upscale neighborhoods by poverty and racism.⁹⁴ A series of high-profile protests by the UNPC, including a 1967

“brainwashing” the community in an attempt forcibly to relocate residents to make room for middle and upper income residents. “Fabulous Night Spots Pep Renaissance of City: Is Pittsburgh Entertainment Capital of the United States?” *Pittsburgh Courier* (National edition), February 13, 1960, 23; “City Mum on Planning for ‘Upper Hill’ Area,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, April 6, 1963; “New Hill will have New Faces,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, April 13, 1963; “New Hill will Erase Landmarks,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, April 20, 1963.

⁹¹ The site, subsequently known as “Freedom Corner,” became the assembly point for civil rights marches and demonstrations and was later dedicated as a memorial to local civil rights leaders. Laurence Glasco, “The Civil Rights Movement in Pittsburgh: To Make This City ‘Some Place Special’,” Freedom Corner 2001 Memorial Booklet, available at <<http://www.freedomcorner.org/downloads/glasco.pdf>>

⁹² “Harlem Fallout: Some Big Cities Fear the Spread of Race Rioting; Others are Unworried,” *Wall Street Journal*, July 27, 1964, 1; “11 Arrested in Pittsburgh,” *New York Times*, August 19, 1965, 4.

⁹³ The protestors were referring to plans to construct additional towers of the Washington Plaza Apartments, an upscale housing complex being built by Alcoa as part of the “Center for the Arts” redevelopment program. “Alcoa may not Finish Hill Area Apartments,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, February 4, 1965.

⁹⁴ Despite a 1952 fair housing law in the city, Pittsburgh’s segregation index rose from approximately 50

demonstration at Duquesne Light that turned out some 5,000 pickets, also drew attention to job discrimination limiting both white- and blue-collar employment for black residents.⁹⁵ At the same time as grassroots protests halted the URA's program for Upper Hill redevelopment, other neighborhood groups focusing on renovation rather than demolition gained ground in the wake of increasing national criticism of large-scale urban renewal.⁹⁶ Even as boosters promoted the Renaissance as a model for downtown development, Pittsburgh became a particular target of critics, such as Jane Jacobs, who condemned the Golden Triangle as a lifeless "ersatz suburb."⁹⁷ In 1969, Pittsburgh council member Peter Flaherty won election as mayor on a platform of "being nobody's boy."⁹⁸ During his tenure as mayor, Flaherty severed the institutional links between city hall and the ACCD, directed a larger portion of urban development funding to neighborhoods outside the Golden Triangle, and dramatically cut the municipal spending necessary to maintain the massive urban development projects of the Pittsburgh Renaissance.⁹⁹ When the public-private progrowth coalition reformed during the late

percent in 1950 to nearly 70 percent in 1960. Mallett, "Lower Hill Renewal," 186.

⁹⁵ The protest at Duquesne Light was especially important as it targeted white-collar employment, which made up an increasing portion of Pittsburgh's economy. At the time, only 33 of the 1,000 employees were black — 32 were janitors and one was a receptionist. Glasco, "The Civil Rights Movement in Pittsburgh"; Carmen J. Lee and Barry Alfonso, "Elders' Wisdom," *h: The Magazine of the Heinz Endowments*, (Fall 2005), 8. On the history of race relations in Pittsburgh, see John E. Bodnar, Roger D. Simon and Michael P. Weber, *Lives of Their Own: Blacks, Italians, and Poles in Pittsburgh, 1900-1960* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981); Laurence Glasco, "Double Burden: The Black Experience in Pittsburgh" in Samuel P. Hays, ed., *City at the Point: Essays on the Social History of Pittsburgh* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1989); John H. Hinshaw, *Steel and Steelworkers: Race and Class Struggle in Twentieth-Century Pittsburgh* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002).

⁹⁶ On the rise of neighborhood groups in Pittsburgh, see Jezierski, "Neighborhoods and Public-Private Partnerships"; Lubove, *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh Volume Two*, 86-116.

⁹⁷ Jane Jacobs, "Downtown is for People" in William H. Whyte, Jr. ed., *The Exploding Metropolis* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 159. This essay was originally written for *Fortune* in 1958.

⁹⁸ Stefan Lorant, *Pete: The Life of Peter Flaherty* (Boston: Author's Edition, 1978), 60.

⁹⁹ For an analysis of the relationship between the ACCD and city hall during the Flaherty Administration, see Stewman and Tarr "Four Decades of Public-Private Partnerships," 89-94.

1970s, new players would hold key roles in the partnership and civic boosters' vision of the region would evolve due to changes to the region's economy.

Remaking Region

The ACCD's economic development and image making program during the Renaissance primarily focused on downtown Pittsburgh, while its regional agenda aimed at providing air and highway links to the metropolitan core.¹⁰⁰ It was "apparent that the pressing problems in Pittsburgh [needed to] be solved if the region as a whole was to remain healthy," explained ACCD director Park Martin. Although "the Conference was not unmindful of the region in certain elements of its program," Martin said, it "was a matter of taking care of first things first."¹⁰¹ While civic boosters might have dismissed complaints about Golden Triangle revitalization as either aesthetic or provincial, Jacobs' 1969 observation that Pittsburgh's devotion to "immensely expensive urban renewal and highway programs that have not helped the economy at all" struck at a deeper concern – the effectiveness of their program in increasing employment and stemming the flow of out-migration.¹⁰² Following the Renaissance, 22,000 people worked in the Golden Triangle compared to only 4,000 before 1950, but southwestern Pennsylvania's population grew only 8 percent between 1950s and 1960.¹⁰³ The Steel Valley's continued over-reliance on heavy industry and difficulty in attracting new employers was also

¹⁰⁰ On the ACCD's highway development program during the early postwar years, see Mershon, "Corporate Social Responsibility and the Allegheny Conference," 552-593.

¹⁰¹ AIS Park H. Martin Papers. Park Martin, "Narrative of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development and the Pittsburgh Renaissance, 1943-1958," 1964, 4.

¹⁰² Jane Jacobs, *The Economy of Cities* (New York: Random House, 1969), 199.

¹⁰³ This compares to 26.4 percent growth for all SMSAs, 13 percent for PA, and 18.3 percent for Philadelphia. Lowry, *Portrait of a Region*, 35. Pittsburgh fared even worse, experiencing a population decline of 11 percent (72,000) during the same period, while Allegheny County gained 113,000.

exacerbated by national recessions, boosting unemployment in southwestern Pennsylvania to 10.7 percent in 1961, the second highest rate in the nation.¹⁰⁴

With the city firmly established as an administrative center, business and political leaders expanded the scope of their economic development efforts beyond downtown to the region's rural and suburban communities. Pittsburgh's boosters recognized the importance of developing the periphery to improve the city's quality of life and maintain its status as a major metropolitan area, but through the early 1960s, the ACCD's regional program remained largely limited to encouraging civic and political leaders in outlying areas to develop and implement their own plans.¹⁰⁵ One of the earliest public-private partnerships with an explicitly regional agenda was the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (WPC), an ACCD-backed nonprofit group formed in 1951 in response to concerns about "deficiencies in recreational areas which exist in Allegheny, Beaver and Washington Counties."¹⁰⁶ The Allegheny County Sportsmen's League and other local groups had been pressuring state officials since the mid-1940s to develop public recreation areas "where our children can go [but] they don't have to go many miles away from home."¹⁰⁷ In 1945, the PWPC recommended the establishment of a new system of state parks "for urban populations within reasonable travel distance" of the state's

¹⁰⁴ This compared to a national average of 6.7 percent.

¹⁰⁵ The principal tool for suburban development during the 1950s was the PRPA, which formally affiliated with the ACCD in 1952. The PRPA provided subsidized planning services to communities in an effort to encourage certain types of planned growth, to avoid waste and overlap in public service provision, and to improve the quality of life in the rapidly growing suburbs. On the relationship between the PRPA and suburban planning efforts, see Mershon, "Corporate Social Responsibility and the Allegheny Conference," 595-607.

¹⁰⁶ Michael Baker Jr. Inc., "A Report on the Recreational Survey of Allegheny, Beaver and Washington Counties," (Harrisburg, PA: PWPC, 1945).

¹⁰⁷ Bob Prince, "A Network of Lakes for Pittsburgh and Vicinity," An Address Delivered on Radio Station WJAS on Friday, December 17, 1943, Printed through the courtesy of the Allegheny County Sportsmen's League, Inc.; Samuel E. Phillips to Mark James, "Letter," May 22, 1944, PWPC, Box 4 "General Correspondence."

metropolitan areas, but by December 1946, president Ellwood Chapman complained, “notwithstanding the repeated promises that the large metropolitan centers would receive first attention ... I am commencing to wonder, after all of the political friends thruout the state have been cared for, whether there will be anything left at all for Pittsburgh and Philadelphia.”¹⁰⁸

The WPC’s formation and organizational structure mirrored the public-private partnerships formed to redevelop the Golden Triangle, and the group combined preservation of scenic areas to improve the region’s quality of life with a vision of rural economic development through tourism. In 1950, members of the ACCD’s Recreation, Conservation, and Park Council began discussions with civic and political representatives of Lawrence and Butler Counties to establish “a close working relationship with regard to the acquisition of strategic land parcels” at McConnell’s Mill, a scenic area thirty miles north of Pittsburgh.¹⁰⁹ These negotiations resulted in the formation of the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, and within two years, the new group purchased nearly four thousand acres in Lawrence, Butler and Fayette Counties using funds donated by individuals, civic clubs, and Pittsburgh foundations, most notably the A.W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust.¹¹⁰ In 1954, the WPC entered a new phase of its

¹⁰⁸ “Development of Recreational Resources in Pennsylvania,” 1945, PWPC Box 2, Folder “Recreation Comm., 1943-47”; Ellwood Chapman to Hannah M. Durham, “Letter,” December 16, 1946, PWPC, Box 3, Folder “Durham, Hannah M.”

¹⁰⁹ Adolph W. Schmidt to Park H. Martin, “Letter,” December 29, 1950, ACCD Records, Box 376, Folder 5. The vehicle for this cooperation was the Greater Pittsburgh Parks Association, an elite conservation-minded group whose directors included ACCD members Charles F. Chubb, B.F. Jones III, and retail magnate Edger Kaufmann, which agreed to add four new board members from Lawrence and Butler and change its name to reflect its expanded regional mission.

¹¹⁰ Adolph W. Schmidt to Charles F. Chubb, “Letter,” July 5, 1951, “Re: Prospectus for the Development of the Slippery Rock-Muddy Creek Drainage Area,” in Box 2, Folder 2, M. Graham Netting Papers, MSS #122, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, PA; M. Graham Netting, *50 Years of the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy: The Early Years* (Pittsburgh: The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, 1982). Overseen by R.K. Mellon associate and ACCD Executive Committee member Adolph Schmidt, the Mellon Trusts provided funding at strategic moments in the WPC’s evolution,

partnership by conveying its property at McConnell's Mill to the state government at cost for use as a state park, and by 1967, the group had acquired 29,000 acres for five more state parks as well as a handful of recreation areas and nature preserves.¹¹¹

The most significant WPC-backed project was the creation of a series of nature preserves and state parks around the waterfalls and adjacent village of Ohiopyle, fifty miles southeast of Pittsburgh.¹¹² “The Ohiopyle region was a classic example of the tragedy which comes from areas which depend upon the extractive industries,” proclaimed WPC leaders in 1967, shortly after the group had conveyed 10,000 acres to the state for use in the new Ohiopyle State Park. “The coal had gone; the forests had been cut; the once popular tourist and vacation hotels had disappeared; the population was scarcely a third of what it had been a half century ago; many buildings along the waterfront were vacant, doors flapping in the wind.”¹¹³ By 1982, annual park attendance reached more than 1.5 million, the third highest in the state, with whitewater activities alone producing multi-million dollar revenues and well over 100 jobs.¹¹⁴

While encouraging the preservation of open space, Pittsburgh's progrowth partnership remained wedded to an industrial vision of the Steel Valley, which limited the

including at its founding in 1950 and its re-organization as a dues paying organization in 1958.

¹¹¹ Charles F. Lewis and John R. Schell, “Impressive Growth and Achievements Recorded by Conservancy in Past Year (Annual Report),” *Water Land and Life* 9, no. 1 (April 1967).

¹¹² On tourism development in southwestern Pennsylvania through the mid-1960s, see Pennsylvania State Planning Board, “Regional Development Reconnaissance: Region 12,” 1966, 37-43. On the origins and development of Ohiopyle State Park, Fallingwater, Ferncliff Park, Bear Run, Laurel Ridge State Park and other WPC-sponsored developments in the vicinity of Ohiopyle, see Netting, *50 Years*.

¹¹³ “Major Construction Work is Underway on Ohiopyle Sewer and Water System,” *Water Land and Life* 9, no. 2 (July 1967), 6. On opposition to the transfer of rural land from private to public ownership in Ohiopyle, see Nina J. Webb, “‘Green’ Legacy,” letter to the editor, *Wall Street Journal*, March 3, 1965, 14. In response, see Howard M. Swartz, “Citizens and Conservation,” letter to the editor, *Wall Street Journal*, March 24, 1965, 16.

¹¹⁴ Arthur A. Davis, “The Impact of Land Acquisition on Local Economies: Benefit or Burden?” 1983, ACCD Records, Box 377, Folder 1. On the development of the whitewater rafting industry in the Steel Valley, see Ralph Gray, “Spanking the Wild Water with Canoes,” *Water Land and Life* 4, no. 3 (Autumn 1962), 7; “White Waters of Yough Draw Many,” *Water Land and Life* 7, no.2 (December 1965), 23; “White Water Brings Thrill In ‘Yough’,” *Water Land and Life*, 9, no. 4 (Winter 1967), 17.

ability of ACCD affiliates to take a hard-line stance on some environmental issues during the 1960s. At the same time as civic and political leaders were implementing their vision of downtown Pittsburgh as a white collar workplace and the rural periphery as a tourist destination, J&L Steel, Westinghouse, and other large corporations were clearing mixed-use urban areas such as Pittsburgh's South Side and Hazelwood neighborhoods, Homestead and Turtle Creek for mill expansion, making residents and communities even more dependent on heavy industry for employment and tax revenue.¹¹⁵ Similarly, while boosters praised improvements to air and water quality in the region, pollution regulation was largely voluntary and designed to impose the least amount of restrictions on industrial production. As environmental activists pressured state and federal agencies to impose tougher standards during the 1960s, they faced considerable opposition from some of the same corporate leaders who made the Pittsburgh Renaissance possible.¹¹⁶ Indeed, the vision of Pittsburgh as headquarters for the Steel Valley's industrial corporations depended on maintaining profitability in manufacturing and mining operations throughout the region.

The WPC's position toward coal surface mining reflected the conflicting motivations of the Pittsburgh Renaissance and moderated the group's activities in response to mining operations near WPC lands. The Conservancy's policy on surface

¹¹⁵ Lubove, *Twentieth-Century Pittsburgh Volume One*, 127-128; Curtis Miner and Paul Roberts, "Engineering an Industrial Diaspora: Homestead, 1941," *Pittsburgh History* 72 (1989): 4-25; Marshall Kaplan, Gans, and Kahn, "The First Action Year of the Model Cities Program in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania: A Case Study," Model Cities Reports, no. PA 37, 1972.

¹¹⁶ On the increasing opposition by Pittsburgh's progrowth coalition to state and federal environmental regulation, see Mershon, "Corporate Social Responsibility and the Allegheny Conference," 734-740. On the growth of the environmental movement in Pittsburgh, see James Lewis Longhurst, "Don't Hold Your Breath, Fight for It! Women's Activism and Citizen Standing in Pittsburgh and the United States, 1965-1975" (Ph.D. thesis, Carnegie Mellon University, 2004); Samuel P. Hays, "Beyond Celebration: Pittsburgh and its region in the Environmental Era – Notes by a Participant Observer" in Tarr, *Devastation and Renewal*, 193-215.

mining was deeply influenced by James Hillman, president of Harmon Creek Coal Company and an important financial backer of conservation efforts in southwestern Pennsylvania.¹¹⁷ Hillman was one of the few mine operators in Pennsylvania to advocate state regulation of the industry, and his company instituted a policy of land reclamation long before required to do so by law.¹¹⁸ The WPC favored restriction of mining near “areas of such imposing beauty, history, significance, or recreational potential, that they should not be stripped” and supported efforts to stop mining near “those parks which have been created through Conservancy initiative,” such as McConnell’s Mill and Ohiopyle.¹¹⁹ The group’s leaders stopped short of calling for the total abolition of mining, however, stating that while “anxious to contribute to the eventual establishment of a system of regular and administrative enforcement,” they were “not opposed to all stripping of minerals.” The Conservancy also resisted efforts by more militant members and local residents to “participate in protests against these stripping operations and [various] instances of coal stripping in other counties,” explaining that the group had “neither the staff, nor the funds, nor the privilege, as a nonprofit organization to engage widely in public controversy.”¹²⁰ Thus, while WPC efforts resulted in the maintenance of

¹¹⁷ Hillman was an executive committee member and later president of the ACCD as well as the founder of Pa Pitt’s Partners, an ACCD-backed urban beautification group credited with dramatically improving Pittsburgh’s physical appearance in the late 1940s and early 1950s. In 1969, the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy awarded Hillman an Honorary Lifetime Membership after he donated 3,654 acres of mined-out land in Washington County for use as a state park. “Hillman Cited as Honorary Life Member,” *Water Land and Life* 11, no. 1 (Spring 1969): 19-20; Martin, *Narrative*, 37-38; Paul Roberts, “Cleaning Up an Ash Pile Reputation,” *Pittsburgh History* 74, no. 2 (Summer 1991), 55.

¹¹⁸ Joseph A. Krivak, “Strip Mining by a Real Conservationist?” *Water Land and Life* 3, no. 1 (Spring 1961); “Strip Mining Heals its Own Scars,” *Business Week*, November 13, 1965, 140-145. On the evolution of surface mine regulation in Pennsylvania, see Chad Montrie, *To Save the Land and People: A History of Opposition to Surface Coal Mining in Appalachia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 43-60.

¹¹⁹ “Hit-and-Run Strip Miners Hit,” *Water Land and Life* 3, no. 2 (Autumn 1961), 13; “Cucumber-Jonathan Strip Fight Won,” *Water Land and Life* 4, no. 2 (Summer 1962), 10.

¹²⁰ “Stripping Near McConnell’s Mill Alerts State,” *Water Land and Life* 4, no. 2 (Summer 1962), 19.

scenic areas and economic development through recreational tourism, the group's vision did not include a radical reordering of the overall rural landscape.

By the mid-1950s, southwestern Pennsylvania's declining industrial base and continued out-migration prompted civic and political leaders to expand their economic development efforts beyond the Golden Triangle. "There is need for an intelligent approach to the problems of inducing manufacturers to locate plants in Pittsburgh," explained ACCD member Earl Hollinshead, and local leaders planned to apply the same combination of private and public resources used in downtown revitalization to stimulate new manufacturing in nearby neighborhoods.¹²¹ Rather than approaching companies individually, officials explored the possibility of developing a planned industrial district, which provided ready-made sites, physical infrastructure, utility hookups, and benefits packages, within the city.¹²² At the initial meeting of the URA in November 1946, David Lawrence expressed his concerns about strengthening the city's industrial base, and officials soon focused specifically on the neighborhood of Manchester, located on the city's North Side across from the Golden Triangle.¹²³ Manchester was situated on a flat river plain, featured good transportation connections, already had light industries, and would meet the criteria for a "blighted" area necessary for condemnation and clearance through eminent domain. However, as in urban areas throughout the Steel Valley, redeveloping Manchester as an industrial district faced the formidable obstacles of high

¹²¹ E.D. Hollinshead, "Locating Industry in the Pittsburgh Area, An Address to the Pittsburgh Junior Chamber of Commerce, June 14, 1946," Reprinted in *Allegheny Conference Digest*, September 1946, 9-10, ACCD Records, Box 129, Folder 5.

¹²² Robert Lewis, "Planned Industrial Districts in Chicago: Firms, Networks, and Boundaries," *Journal of Planning History* 3, no. 1 (February 2004), 29-49.

¹²³ Weber, *Don't Call Me Boss*, 263. For a description of the Manchester neighborhood, see Toker, *Pittsburgh*, 168-176; James D. Van Trump, *1300-1335 Liverpool Street, Manchester, Old Allegheny, Pittsburgh* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation, 1964).

land costs and the need to relocate thousands of residents.¹²⁴ While the URA subsequently embarked on several major industrial expansion projects for J&L Steel, by the mid-1950s officials increasingly looked “toward locations away from existing industrial centers” as sites for building a planned industrial district.¹²⁵

A 1954 report on the potential for institutionalizing government-business partnerships for economic development pointed out that “industrial development [was] steadily becoming more competitive and complex, requiring a highly organized and coordinated approach both by individual communities and by regions.”¹²⁶ Based on the report’s recommendations, the ACCD, municipal officials, and county leaders formed the Regional Industrial Development Corporation (RIDC) and in 1962 charged it with developing county property in O’Hara Township north of Pittsburgh into a planned industrial district, the RIDC Industrial Park.¹²⁷ By 1969, the RIDC invested more than \$21 million of public and private funds in the park, which featured more than twenty buildings and employed four thousand workers.¹²⁸ In 1971, the RIDC established the Thorn Hill Industrial Park on 925 acres in northern Allegheny and southern Butler and in 1979 opened RIDC Park West on six hundred acres adjacent to the Penn-Lincoln

¹²⁴ Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association, *North Side Study* (Pittsburgh: PRPA, 1954).

¹²⁵ Pennsylvania Economy League Inc. — Western Division, *A More Effective Industrial Development Program for the Pittsburgh Region* (prepared at the request of Allegheny Conference on Community Development for the Joint Committee of the Allegheny conference and the Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce, November, 1, 1954), 11. See also, Park Martin, “Does Pittsburgh Need a Planned Industrial District?,” address to the Western Pennsylvania Chapter, Society of Industrial Realtors, January 9, 1951. Available in ACCD “Speeches” file.

¹²⁶ Pennsylvania Economy League Inc. -- Western Division, “A More Effective Industrial Development Program for the Pittsburgh Region,” 1954.

¹²⁷ Regional Industrial Development Corporation of Southwestern Pennsylvania, *The Mid-Sixties: Profile for Future Regional Growth, Fifth Annual Report* (1966)

¹²⁸ “RIDC Park Makes Jobs for 4,000: More Plants for O’Hara Twp. On Plan Board,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, January 3, 1960.

Parkway near the Greater Pittsburgh International Airport.¹²⁹ “Teamwork has been the answer, with the private and public sectors working together [and] helping bring jobs here,” declared RIDC president Frank “Brooks” Robinson in 1982, by which time the three RIDC industrial parks provided nearly 6.5 million square feet of space for 185 different companies employing more than sixteen thousand people.¹³⁰

The creation of the RIDC marked a new phase in Pittsburgh’s public-private progrowth coalition, which featured increasing input from regional partners as well as state and federal agencies.¹³¹ The Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Act of 1945 also laid the foundation for subsequent state programs, such as the Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority, established in 1956 to provide state subsidized loans to encourage plant expansion and relocation and the Site Development Act of 1968, which provided funds for water and sewer connections and access roads.¹³² State and local efforts to bolster the local economy culminated in the successful campaign to attract German automaker Volkswagen (VW) to New Stanton, thirty miles east of Pittsburgh in suburban Westmoreland County. “Virtually every state east of the Mississippi is interested and nearly every one of their governors has been to Germany to woo VW,” declared one observer in 1976, so when Pennsylvania governor Milton Shapp announced

¹²⁹ Joe Grata, “RIDC: Attractive Industrial Proposition,” *Pittsburgh Press*, January 29, 1979; Joe Grata, “RIDC Doing a Job by Helping Many Keep Theirs,” *Pittsburgh Press*, January 22, 1980.

¹³⁰ Sam Spatter, “RIDC Good Economic Tonic for District,” *Pittsburgh Press*, January 18, 1982.

¹³¹ Beginning in the late 1950s, a host of federal programs, such as the Area Redevelopment Administration and the Appalachian Regional Commission, funded urban and economic development programs that supplemented local, state and private spending. The majority of federal funds were distributed through and/or administered by state agencies. ARC funds were allocated to the nine counties of southwestern Pennsylvania through the Southwestern Pennsylvania Economic Development District (SPEDD). For an overview of ARC programs in the region through the early 1970s, see Appalachia Division of the Bureau of State and Federal Economic Aid et al, “Pennsylvania Appalachian Development Plan Revision for 1972,” December 1971, 229-258.

¹³² Charles J. Blankenship, “The State Role in Urban Economic Development: A Task Force Report Executive Summary,” November 1974.

an agreement that would bring the company to the state, boosters hailed the decision as a vindication of the state's development efforts.¹³³ VW's incentive package, which included nearly \$100 million in public subsidies, took advantage of the full array of local, state and federal economic development programs as well as infrastructural investments and job training programs.¹³⁴ At the press conference announcing the deal, the governor justified the expense, declaring "the 5,000 base jobs [at the new plant] should result in ... 13,500 to 15,000 [additional jobs] and \$140 to \$165 million in additional payrolls."¹³⁵

As with the Pittsburgh Renaissance, progrowth boosters complemented their economic development efforts with a marketing strategy aimed at selling the region to a national and international audience. In 1971, ACCD chairman Henry Hillman announced the creation of Penn's Southwest, a non-profit regional marketing firm charged with luring "plants, offices, conventions and tourists" to southwestern Pennsylvania by reshaping the Steel Valley's heavy industrial image.¹³⁶ Like earlier spin-offs, Penn's Southwest developed out of an ACCD committee and the group's marketing campaign expanded the theme of Pittsburgh's transformation to the wider region.¹³⁷ "Sure, we still make steel," boosters proclaimed. "And we still mine some coal. But the old stereotypes

¹³³Terry P. Brown, "Chasing the Rabbit," *Wall Street Journal*, April 22, 1976, 1. Critics complained that the deal left taxpayers to "subsidize a huge multinational corporation, a competitor of American manufacturers." George F. Will, "Pennsylvania, Volkswagen Climb into Bed," *Los Angeles Times*, September 17, 1976, C7.

¹³⁴ Shapp planned to finance the state's share through employee retirement funds and by "maxing out" the PIDA, while state and local governments also provided extensive tax exemptions. "PA Plans \$100 Million in Aid for New VW Plant," *New York Times*, June 2, 1976, 53, 61. For local criticism of the deal, see Gay Sands Miller, "Pennsylvania Acts to Sweeten VW Move for Communities Upset over Tax Breaks," *Wall Street Journal*, July 7, 1976, 4.

¹³⁵"PA Plans \$100 Million in Aid."

¹³⁶ Fitzpatrick, "Stuck with Steel."

¹³⁷Susan Yore, "New Association Tackles Economic Bootstrapping," *Kittanning Leader-Times*, November 16, 1981. Penn's Southwest originated in the Area Development Committee, which was co-chaired by the heads of Duquesne Light and Mellon Bank.

are ashes from the past.”¹³⁸ From 1962 to 1973, the region gained 136,000 jobs of which only 10,000 were in manufacturing, and the creation of Penn’s Southwest emphasized a concern with countering the still-prevalent smoky city imagery at a time when the region’s economy was rapidly changing.¹³⁹ “About the only thing that hasn’t changed much is our image,” boosters complained. “We’re well into our second renaissance, yet many sophisticated businessmen are only vaguely aware of our first, which began a quarter of a century ago.”¹⁴⁰

Penn’s Southwest’s advertising campaign merged the diverse economic and urban development strategies adopted by business and political leaders during the 1950s and 1960s into a comprehensive regional vision. “Look around,” declared a 1972 ad in the *Wall Street Journal*. “You’ll find parks that were once strip mines. New colleges, lakes, ski slopes and skating rinks” as well as the big city amenities of “a new international airport,” “Three Rivers Stadium,” “Heinz Hall for the Performing Arts,” and the “new 64-story U.S. Steel Building, towering over a rebuilt downtown Pittsburgh with its bustling new nightlife.”¹⁴¹ Through these virtual tours, officials targeted middle class professionals by emphasizing consumptive activities, the province of organizations such as the WPC, as well as new employers through a focus on the region’s successful private-public economic development partnerships. The vision that ads presented was of a regional “neighborhood” where children could “watch Slippery Rock Creek roar between

¹³⁸ “When We Brag About Our Area’s Growth, We Mean White Oaks and Mountain Laurel, Too,” *Wall Street Journal*, March 22, 1972.

¹³⁹ These statistics are for a nine county region in southwestern Pennsylvania. William K. Stevens, “Pittsburgh, Revamped and Revitalized, Sheds its Steel-Town Image,” *New York Times*, April 16, 1977, 54. On the prevalence of Steel City imagery, see “Business: Bulletin: Local Hero,” *Wall Street Journal*, April 13, 1972, 1; “Allegheny Conference Oversees Effort to Recast Pittsburgh’s Image”; “Stuck with Steel”; “Forum: Bridging Pittsburgh’s Image Gap,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, January 26, 2003.

¹⁴⁰ “Getting Bigger isn’t Our Idea of Progress. Getting Better Is,” *Wall Street Journal*, December 15, 1971, 15.

¹⁴¹ “When We Brag About Our Area’s Growth, We Mean White Oaks and Mountain Laurel, Too.”

snow-capped boulders,” while their parents’ employer took advantage of “an unlimited supply of professional, skilled and semiskilled workers” as well as “both private and public financial strength and expertise.” “You’ll find that Penn’s Southwest is a great place to work,” declared executive director Jay Aldridge, “but more importantly, it is a great place for you and your employees to live, relax and raise a family.”¹⁴²

Post-Industrial Pittsburgh

On a late November evening in 1973, the crème of Pittsburgh’s elite streamed into the beautiful surroundings of Oakland’s Carnegie Music Hall for the annual meeting of the ACCD. As they walked through the grand foyer with its crystal chandeliers and elaborately carved pillars, the university presidents, industrialists, financiers, labor leaders, and politicians gathered there had reason to be proud of their accomplishments in the Golden Triangle, the RIDC’s industrial districts, and the handful of state parks dotting the rural periphery. Oakland, home to Carnegie-Mellon University (CMU) and the University of Pittsburgh (Pitt), was also a good setting for that night’s keynote speech, which touched upon the city’s growing reputation as a center for research.¹⁴³ That night’s speaker, former ARC executive director Ralph Widner, counseled that “if experience elsewhere in the country is a guide, [Pittsburgh] could scarcely do better than to continue to concentrate upon developing its universities into centers of innovation and excellence. The city must try to capture that flavor of ferment and entrepreneurship that helped

¹⁴² Ibid; “Let Me Show How We Can Make Your Business Feel at Home When You Move to My Neighborhood,” *Wall Street Journal*, April 24, 1973, 7.

¹⁴³ On Pittsburgh’s reputation as a research center, see David K. Willis, “Pittsburgh Quickens Economic Stride,” *Christian Science Monitor*, December 15, 1964, 9; Neal Stanford, “Industrial Fallout” Garnered from U.S. Space Program, June 22, 1965; “Pittsburgh Area a Research Center,” *New York Times*, October 27, 1968, F17; Marilyn Bender, “An Elite Brain Factory,” *New York Times*, October 17, 1971, F3; Bill Zlatos, “Posvar Pushed Economic Rebirth at Pitt, Growing Pains and All,” *Pittsburgh Press*, May 13, 1990.

preserve Boston from final decline.”¹⁴⁴ By 1980, research and development spending by Pitt and CMU totaled nearly \$100 million annually, while the region hosted 170 private R&D laboratories, including forty major corporate facilities that employed more than 25,000 with an annual expenditure of nearly \$1.5 billion.¹⁴⁵

By the late 1970s, many Steel Valley residents and community leaders believed the cultivation of high tech and service sector industries presented the city’s best hope for the future. While Pittsburgh’s size, political power and corporate clout enabled the city’s postwar Renaissance of the 1950s, the city also differed from the region’s urban-industrial river valleys in the size and strength of its non-profit community, particularly research universities and their affiliated hospitals.¹⁴⁶ The transition to service sector work in the ORV was largely a function of outside forces, but beginning in the early 1980s a coalition among businessmen, politicians and university administrators worked to create a “post-industrial metropolis” through infrastructure improvements, human and business resource development, and image making. “Left alone our region’s research and development activities will continue to employ tens of thousands of Pittsburghers and will spin off economic growth in various forms,” concluded a 1984 study. “Yet, the potential for something much greater exists. We have the financial, corporate and

¹⁴⁴ Ralph Widner, “The Regional City: An Approach to Planning Our Future Urban Growth,” presented at the Annual Dinner Meeting, Allegheny Conference on Community Development, Carnegie Music Hall, Pittsburgh, Pa., November 26, 1973, 24.

¹⁴⁵ Allegheny Conference on Community Development, “A Strategy for Growth: An Economic Development Program for the Pittsburgh Region,” November 1984, 27.

¹⁴⁶ On the role of Pittsburgh’s universities and hospitals in employment growth during the 1970s and early 1980s, see Lindsey Gruson, “Center for Transplants Aids Pittsburgh Ascent,” *New York Times*, September 16, 1985; William Hershey, “Rust Belt Cities are Trading in Old Economies,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 26, 1987, J1; Zlatos, “Posvar.”

industrial base to help nurture the application of new technologies on a scale that could make Pittsburgh an example to the rest of the world.”¹⁴⁷

During the early 1980s, Pittsburgh’s progrowth coalition dedicated itself to a regional economic development program, dubbed “Renaissance II,” which envisioned the city resurrected as a “service and retailing center, a center for health care, a city of transplants, a city of High Technology, a city of Robotics, of computer programming.”¹⁴⁸

Renaissance II hinged upon a renewed partnership between the ACCD and local Democratic political leaders symbolized by the 1977 election of mayor Richard Caliguiri, who had run on a platform of building better relations with the business community.¹⁴⁹

Building upon a number of key projects initiated or completed during the mid-1970s, including a new convention center and a light rail system, as well as the new emphasis on neighborhood rehabilitation, officials embarked upon a program of downtown high rise construction coupled with historic district revitalization and riverfront renewal.¹⁵⁰

Prompted by complaints from state legislators, especially Tom Murphy (D-North Side), concerning “the apparent lack of coordination” in funding requests, the city’s progrowth coalition formally expanded its membership when ACCD executive director Robert Pease invited administrators from CMU and Pitt to help business and political leaders develop a comprehensive economic development proposal.¹⁵¹ The new “Strategy 21” initiative unveiled in June 1985 reflected the ACCD’s agenda of creating a region

¹⁴⁷ ACCD, “A Strategy for Growth,” 13, 27.

¹⁴⁸ Lorant, *Pittsburgh*, 614. This quotation is from a 1987 interview with Pittsburgh mayor Richard Caliguiri.

¹⁴⁹ Earl Bohn, “Pittsburgh Begins Renaissance Phase II,” *Washington Post*, February 28, 1981, E38-41.

¹⁵⁰ For useful charts listing the bricks-and-mortar accomplishments of Pittsburgh’s postwar progrowth partnerships, see Stewman and Tarr, “Four Decades,” 115-127.

¹⁵¹ Thomas J. Murphy to Richard Caliguiri and Thomas Foerster, “Letter re: Economic Development Activities in Allegheny County,” January 14, 1985, in Thomas J. Murphy Papers, MG 444, Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg, PA (Hereafter cited as Murphy Papers); Coleman, “Public Private Cooperative Response,” 141-145.

“marked by a renewed spirit of entrepreneurship and university linked research and development” through airport expansion, a riverfront technology park, and handful of new research centers to be operated by Pitt and CMU.¹⁵² By the time Pittsburgh International Airport’s new Midfield Terminal, dubbed the “Airport of the Future” by boosters, opened in 1991, the Strategy 21 partnership had also resulted in the start of construction on a 49-acre Pittsburgh Technology Center, a planned industrial district located on a former mill site near downtown, which included Pitt’s Center for Biotechnology and Bioengineering, CMU’s Research Institute as well as a host of private ventures that provided 1,000 jobs by early 1995.¹⁵³

In addition to incorporating the nonprofit sector as an important ally, the progrowth coalition of Renaissance II also benefited from increased intervention from state government. By the late 1970s, officials had grown alarmed at the decline of the state’s traditional manufacturing base as well the state’s inability to attract the types of high tech employment characterizing other areas such as Massachusetts, North Carolina and northern California.¹⁵⁴ The failure of the VW plant in New Stanton to live up to expectations as well as new evidence pointing to the role of small and new businesses in job creation led to a repudiation by Governor Richard Thornburgh of the “smokestack chasing” that had guided state economic development programs in favor of modernizing the existing manufacturing base and diversifying the economy through the growth of small businesses and advanced technology companies.¹⁵⁵ “We are determined to make

¹⁵² City of Pittsburgh et al, “Strategy 21,” 1.

¹⁵³ Lubove, *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh Volume Two*, 293 n. 48.

¹⁵⁴ Between 1970 and 1980, Pennsylvania lost more than 190,000 manufacturing jobs for a loss of more than 435,000 residents. State Planning Board, *Choices for Pennsylvanians: Final Report*, September 1981, 1.

¹⁵⁵ These new policies included changes to the PIDA for a new focus on small and medium size businesses;

Pennsylvania a leading competitor in advanced technology enterprise,” Thornburgh declared in 1982 after announcing his support for the new Ben Franklin Partnership (BFP), which provided grants to universities for entrepreneurial development activities requiring a private sector match.¹⁵⁶ In southwestern Pennsylvania, Pitt and CMU jointly administered the BFP program, which they claimed had created nearly 4,000 new jobs and helped launch more than 200 new companies by the early 1990s.¹⁵⁷

The creation of Strategy 21 and BFP was part of a national trend of looking to research universities to stimulate employment growth, especially in urban areas.¹⁵⁸ However, during the 1980s civic boosters and the regional marketers of Penn’s Southwest struggled to translate growth in the high-tech and service sector into a positive image for Pittsburgh. In 1981, eighteen of the region’s largest corporations agreed to contribute \$850,000 to fund a series of ads in the *Wall Street Journal* promoting the new slogan, “Dynamic Pittsburgh.”¹⁵⁹ The Dynamic Pittsburgh campaign revisited earlier themes of transformation, emphasizing the region’s “diversity” and blending each

by 1984, half of all PIDA loans went to businesses with fifty or fewer employees. Michael Osborne, *Economic Competitiveness: The States Take the Lead* (Washington D.C., Economic Policy Institute, 1987), 25-26. On the performance of VW New Stanton, see John R. Emshwiller and Charles B. Camp, “Shock Waves: Strike at VW Disturbs Foreign Automakers Weighing U.S. Plants,” *Wall Street Journal*, October 13, 1978; Winston Williams, “VW: Growing up in America,” *New York Times*, May 27, 1979; Dale D. Buss, “VW Probes Charges of Racial Inequalities at Assembly Plant,” *Wall Street Journal*, November 1, 1982; “VW of American Closes Plant in Pa. Until Feb. Because of Slow Sales,” *Washington Post*, January 22, 1983.

¹⁵⁶ Richard Thornburgh, *Advanced Technology Policies for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, August 5, 1982, 1.

¹⁵⁷ Ben Franklin Technology Center of Western Pennsylvania, *Commemorating Ten Years of Achievement*, 1993, 2. For an example of the types of grants awarded, see “25 Largest Ben Franklin Challenge Grant Recipients,” *Pittsburgh Business Times*, April 5-11, 1993, 15.

¹⁵⁸ On the relationship between state and local government and research universities in Pennsylvania, O’Mara, *Cities of Knowledge*, 142-181. See also, Karen De Witt, “Universities become Full Partners to Cities in South,” *New York Times*, August 13, 1991, A12.

¹⁵⁹ Doron P. Levin, “Big New Buildings Going Up in Pittsburgh Raise Fears of Another Office-Space Glut,” *Wall Street Journal*, February 25, 1982, 29; Fitzpatrick, “Stuck with Steel.” The Dynamic Pittsburgh moniker also showed up in celebratory newspaper stories of the city during the period. John Kiplinger, “Pittsburgh Turned Out to be Dynamic Once the Smoke Cleared,” *Christian Science Monitor*, May 29, 1984, B28.

corporate sponsor's particular interest-Gulf Oil showed VW's New Stanton plant and PPG Industries highlighted its new 40-story headquarters-with a general overview of recreational, cultural and economic opportunities.¹⁶⁰ In retrospect, the Dynamic Pittsburgh ads are mildly disconcerting, but more importantly largely fail to convey the image of a high tech boomtown outlined in the Strategy 21 report.¹⁶¹ Consolidation Coal's claim that "wind turbines, solar cells, and geothermal power are only some of the alternative energy sources that companies here are investigating" is overshadowed by adjacent pictures of oil rigs, nuclear cooling towers, and a coal loading facility.¹⁶² In 1982, a *Wall Street Journal* reporter dismissed the campaign's effect in attracting new downtown businesses, while a 1997 telephone survey of 380 people who had never been to the area found the dominant image of the region was still a "blue collar, smoky industrial city with lots of steel mills."¹⁶³

Boosters also faced the difficult task of managing the city's image in the face of massive layoffs and mounting unemployment.¹⁶⁴ "Image is terribly important [and] ours is more negative than it should be," complained Herb Burger, a local advertising executive active in promoting the city. "Image can limit the number of visitors and conventions, and poses problems of attracting personnel and new businesses."¹⁶⁵ The city's progrowth partnership seized on several key events during the mid-1980s to give

¹⁶⁰ "Dynamic Pittsburgh," *Wall Street Journal*, advertisement, May 28, 1981, 9; "Dynamic Pittsburgh," *Wall Street Journal*, advertisement, June 11, 1981, 9.

¹⁶¹ For example, J&L Steel's image of an imploding building making room for a new office tower eerily foreshadows the demolition of its own Pittsburgh facilities a few years later. "Dynamic Pittsburgh," *Wall Street Journal*, advertisement, September 17, 1981, 13.

¹⁶² "Dynamic Pittsburgh," advertisement, *Wall Street Journal*, October 29, 1981, 13.

¹⁶³ Levin, "Big New Buildings"; Fitzpatrick, "Stuck with Steel."

¹⁶⁴ For an insightful critique of this phenomenon, see Christopher H. Marquis, "When Cities Shun Their Roots," *Christian Science Monitor*, December 26, 1985, 12.

¹⁶⁵ William E. Geist, "Pittsburgh Gives a Luncheon to Try Out a New Civic Image," *New York Times*, February 29, 1984, B1.

Pittsburgh's national reputation a boost, including a Department of Defense decision to locate its new Software Engineering Institute (SEI) in Oakland and mapmaker Rand McNally's decision to rank the community as the nation's "Most Livable City."¹⁶⁶ Penn's Southwest immediately incorporated news of SEI into its Dynamic Pittsburgh campaign, proclaiming the region to be "the nation's third largest knowledge center." The Rand McNally ranking prompted an advertising blitz all its own, with civic boosters buying dozens of billboards throughout the nation with a stunning view of the city's new skyline and a caption inviting residents to come to "The Most Livable City in the U.S."¹⁶⁷ The ad campaign particularly targeted the growing cities of the Sun Belt, which marketers felt had an image "a bit better than is deserved," though boosters exhibited a desire to simultaneously emulate and disparage the South.¹⁶⁸ In Atlanta, which fell from first to eleventh in the rankings, commuters awoke to find a billboard proclaiming, "Want to Live in America's No. 1 city? Move to Pittsburgh! Y'all Come," while San Diego retaliated with its own billboards in Pittsburgh featuring a bikini-clad blonde advising, "Winter is the Pitts if you're not in San Diego."¹⁶⁹ "There's a lot of good-natured kibitzing going on," concluded Penn's Southwest's Jay Aldridge. "But [transforming a city's image] is nothing you turn on overnight. It takes time."¹⁷⁰

As the new progrowth partnership sought to improve the economy through the development of high tech and service industries, municipal officials and neighborhood

¹⁶⁶ "Carnegie-Mellon Gets Pentagon's Contract for Software Institute," *Wall Street Journal*, November 15, 1984, 54; "Pittsburgh Rated Most Livable City," *Los Angeles Times*, February 28, 1985, 4.

¹⁶⁷ "Bayer Recently Chose Pittsburgh for its American Headquarters," *Wall Street Journal*, November 5, 1986; Mairlee Enge, "Sign of Change in City: 18 Billboards Cut Down," *Los Angeles Times*, August 3, 1985, SD-A1.

¹⁶⁸ Geist, "Pittsburgh Gives a Luncheon." On Pittsburgh's fragmented image of the Sun Belt, see Tara Bradley-Steck, "Pittsburgh Wins Praise for Rejuvenation Efforts," *Los Angeles Times*, August 25, 1985, 18.

¹⁶⁹ "Pittsburgh and Atlanta in Billboard War," *New York Times*, April 9, 1985, A12; Chris De Luca, "San Diego Faces Off Against Pittsburgh," *Los Angeles Times*, November 16, 1985, OC_16.

¹⁷⁰ Oldenburg, "The Selling of American Cities."

groups worked to recreate the city as a site for consumption through investment in historic preservation and riverfront development. In 1977, the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation (PHLF) opened the first phase of its Station Square development in an old railroad passenger terminal on Pittsburgh's South Side across from the Golden Triangle.¹⁷¹ By 1993 the 134 shops, offices and restaurants overlooking the Monongahela River in Station Square's five main buildings received more than three million visitors a year and created an estimated 3,000 jobs.¹⁷² The commercial success of the Station Square project prompted URA-led rejuvenation efforts on the city's North Side, which included the Carnegie Science Center (1991), the Andy Warhol Museum (1994), and the Strip District near the Golden Triangle.¹⁷³ In 1987, a college student visiting the city recalled, "I was surprised by what the core looked like. In the early 80's it had lost 100,00 jobs there in steel in just a matter of years, but this was now half a decade or more after that and the city was reinventing itself."¹⁷⁴

Programs for neighborhood revitalization during Renaissance II acknowledged the city's declining residential population and sought to attract the middle class professionals employed in the city's expanding high tech and service sectors.¹⁷⁵ "We don't need 700,000 residents in Pittsburgh, as we had in 1970," Caliguiri declared. "I'd

¹⁷¹ The PHLF grew out of a backlash against the urban renewal programs of the Pittsburgh Renaissance. On the PHLF and the development of Station Square, see Crowley, *Politics of Place*, 99-104. On the evolution of Pittsburgh's South Side neighborhood through the mid-1980s, see Toker, *Pittsburgh*, 131-152.

¹⁷² Lubove, *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh Volume 2*, 221.

¹⁷³ Chriss Swaney, "Redeveloping the North Side," *New York Times*, September 30, 1992; Ibid, "Warhol Helps Blighted Area," *New York Times*, February 22, 1993; Patricia Lowry, "Cultural District Slowly Evolving," *Pittsburgh Press*, October 11, 1987.

¹⁷⁴ Author's Interview with Andrew Wiese, January 2006.

¹⁷⁵ The city's residential restructuring during the 1980s and 1990s raised the issue of gentrification, which state and local authorities attempted to address through the passage of gentrification laws limiting property taxes for long time residents in areas with rising tax rates. Robert Zausner and Russell E. Eshleman Jr., "With Time Short, Legislature Makes Some Headway," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 17, 1988, B4; David Michelmore, "Legislature Debates Tax Relief Plans," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, February 5, 1994, A1.

rather have less people with high incomes than more people with relatively low earning and spending power.”¹⁷⁶ Pittsburgh’s most ambitious effort to use historic preservation and culture as the stimulus for economic development came with the creation of the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust (the Trust) in 1984.¹⁷⁷ The Trust’s first project was the restoration of the Stanley Theater into the \$43 million Benedum Center for the Performing Arts, which served as the anchor for the Cultural District, a 14-square block mixed-use neighborhood that grew to include the David Lawrence Convention Center, several hotels, the Heinz Regional History Center, dozens of galleries, shops and restaurants, eight public parks, and five major theaters with more than 1,000 performances each year.¹⁷⁸

By the early 1990s, the rapid decline of Pittsburgh’s steel industry and the increasing emphasis on consumptive activities and service sector employment prompted an important shift in the way the city marketed itself. In 1991, the Greater Pittsburgh Office of Promotion released “Five Pittsburghs,” a brochure and companion video profiling five families and individuals who recently moved to the area and collectively represented the city’s image of itself as a post-industrial metropolis.¹⁷⁹ While those profiled moved to Pittsburgh from different locations (San Diego, rural Illinois, Germany, Detroit and Boston) and included a variety of family and ethnic types (single black male,

¹⁷⁶ Lorant, *Pittsburgh*, 586.

¹⁷⁷ For a history of the Trust, see Mary Brignano, *Curating the District: How the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust is Transforming the Quality of Urban Life* (Pittsburgh: The Trust, 2000).

¹⁷⁸ The concurrent construction of the adjacent CNG Tower provided an ongoing revenue source for The Trust. “The Benedum Begins,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, September 25, 1987; Barbara Vancheri, “Carol Brown,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, September 25, 1987; Buckhurst, Fish, Hutton, Katz Inc., “Downtown Pittsburgh Cultural District: Application for the Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence,” 1988; Chriss Swaney, “\$512 Million for Mixed Uses,” *New York Times*, August 23, 1992. See also the Cultural Trust website <<http://www.pgharts.org/venues/oreilly.aspx>>.

¹⁷⁹ Greater Pittsburgh Office of Promotion, “Five Pittsburghs: Discoveries by some Recent Settlers,” 1991, in unprocessed materials, ACCN #2651, Box 81542, Slot Location 16-0160, Records of the Department of Commerce, RG 31, Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg, PA (Hereafter abbreviated as PA Commerce).

single white female, married couples with children), they were all middle and upper middle class professionals with a minimum of a master's degree. All worked in the city in high paying service sector positions, but residences ranged from Gene Lowe's North Side neighborhood, "two blocks and a bridge away" from downtown, to the Dreisbachs' homestead eleven miles outside the city "with plenty of land for their horses."¹⁸⁰

In addition to mentioning their workplaces, interviewees uniformly described both the city and its hinterland in terms of consumption, with themes ranging from skiing and biking to the growing theater and art scenes to professional sports. Boston natives Pat and Ted Dreisbach were also quick to point out the difference between their "visions of smokestacks and dirt" and Pittsburgh's reality as "one of the most beautiful urban sites that Pat and I had ever seen."¹⁸¹ "Five Pittsburghs" publishers explained the blend of friendliness, industriousness, and ethnic flair described by the interviewees with the hip, high tech, middle class image presented by the families chosen for the brochure by explaining, "Blue collars have mostly turned to white collars here, but the work ethic we've inherited is still alive and well. Nonmanufacturing businesses makes up more than 80 percent of our economy.... Some say we've gone from brawn to brain."¹⁸²

Dilemmas of Deindustrialization

In the summer of 1987, two college students from Cleveland set off from the North Side of Pittsburgh in a small canoe down the Ohio River. "I guess we must have had my uncle or my mom drop us off in Pittsburgh, across from the Golden Triangle," recalled Andrew Wiese. "In we went, right in the area where the Ohio begins, took a bunch of pictures and kinda headed south." Contrary to his expectations, Wiese found

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 3,5.

¹⁸¹ Ibid, 3.

¹⁸² Ibid, 12.

he was “favorably impressed with Pittsburgh at that time as a place that had a physical landscape that was attractive and intriguing. The section right across from Three Rivers Stadium was undergoing a lot of gentrification, mid nineteenth century brick row houses [that] may have been Italian at one time, [but] the brass door set was now on their way in.”

As they left the city, however, this vision of a post-industrial metropolis that the architects of Renaissance II were working hard to convey quickly melted into a deindustrialized landscape shaped by the collapse of the region’s steel industry. “We got to Ambridge, which is not far from Pittsburgh and pulled the canoe out because the mill was closed and was right along the water,” Wiese continued. “We went into one of these big factory buildings, where they built ships, as far as I know. We had driven through Ambridge on the way down to Pittsburgh, so we had seen the town itself, which was devastated. The taverns were closed and people were selling their houses, it was a wreck at the time. Here we were in the mill [and] it was sort of like touching what had been left behind. It seemed like a big thing to throw away. Not just crush a beer can and toss it in the garbage, but crush an industrial infrastructure and just leave it to rot.”¹⁸³

While the highly proclaimed rise in service sector employment and high-tech industries drove investment in select urban and suburban neighborhoods and helped buoy the overall regional economy, post-industrial Pittsburgh existed side-by-side with the “deindustrialized” metropolis of Rust Belt imagery.¹⁸⁴ The rapid decline of heavy

¹⁸³ Wiese Interview.

¹⁸⁴ “Rust Belt” was the popular name applied to the Manufacturing Belt of the Northeast and Great Lakes region beginning with the economic recession of the late 1960s as the region began to lose manufacturing facilities due to a variety of factors, such as labor costs, management decisions, and global competition. Steven C. High, *Industrial Sunset: The Making of North America’s Rust Belt, 1969-1984* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003); Hoerr, *And the Wolf Finally Came*.

industry during the mid-1980s caused considerable hardship for thousands of Steel Valley residents, but in some ways the dramatic collapse of the steel industry is less significant than the fact that mills had long since ceased to generate new employment.¹⁸⁵ As early as the mid-1960s, regional planners warned that the declining heavy industrial economies of the river valleys coupled with the increasing affluence of middle class, highway-oriented suburbs along the ridgetops was creating “two different societies and ways of life [that] tend to be separated only by several hundred feet of elevation and a narrow band of trees.”¹⁸⁶ A renewed progrowth partnership enabled much of Pittsburgh itself to escape the massive unemployment of the 1980s, but Ralph Widner’s 1973 warning that the region’s future would “ultimately rest with its ability to plan and execute the development of a new urban region while minimizing the transitional pains of the older areas” foreshadowed the intense economic and social dislocations less than a decade away.¹⁸⁷ By 1982, J&L’s South Side plant was the only major steel-producing facility in Pittsburgh, and in the Mon Valley mill employment had declined by more than half from a peak in the mid-1940s.¹⁸⁸

Despite a stated desire to “shift people and physical resources from one activity to another, and to train and retrain individuals for changing and altogether new tasks,” corporate executive and political leaders faced several key obstacles in transforming the Steel Valley’s economy.¹⁸⁹ Pittsburgh heavily specialized in a narrow range of industries that all ceased to grow at the same time. There was also a wide disparity between the kinds of human and technical resources developed for the heavy industries and those

¹⁸⁵ Nurnburg, *Region in Transition*, 419-422.

¹⁸⁶ Southwestern Pennsylvania Regional Planning Commission, *Issues in a Region of Contrasts*, 1968.

¹⁸⁷ Widner, “The Regional City,” 21.

¹⁸⁸ Hoerr, *And the Wolf Finally Came*, 1, 11.

¹⁸⁹ Nurnberg, *Region with a Future*, 232.

required by postwar growth sectors.¹⁹⁰ RIDC President Robert H. Ryan described this problem as a “gaping hole” caused by a lack of “diversity, of small manufacturers in many fields, of service industries.”¹⁹¹ Finally, due to the Steel Valley’s early industrial development as well as its rough terrain, physical facilities and urban layouts were older and more cramped than those in areas with a more dynamic recent history.¹⁹²

The 1980s and early 1990s were a period of intense turmoil for the Steel Valley, with residents arguing, often very publicly, over how best to confront the region’s economic crisis. Proponents of “re-industrialization” were often former steel workers and their families who had a solid base in the river valley communities and coal-dependent rural areas. Some residents decried federal environmental and trade policies that seemed designed to shutter otherwise vibrant industries.¹⁹³ Others angrily pointed to a history of corporate decisions transferring profits made in the region to ventures elsewhere.¹⁹⁴ If deindustrialization was not simply the product of impersonal and irreversible market forces, proponents argued, then it could be reversed. And the

¹⁹⁰ On the shaping of the Steel Valley’s corporate structure, see Edward Muller, “Industrial Suburbs and the Growth of Metropolitan Pittsburgh 1870-1920,” *Journal of Historical Geography* 27, no. 1 (2001): 58-73.

¹⁹¹ David K. Willis, “Pittsburgh Quickens Economic Stride,” *Christian Science Monitor* December 15, 1964, 9.

¹⁹² Hollinshead, “Locating Industry in the Pittsburgh Area.”

¹⁹³ EPA critics had a powerful patron in West Virginia Senator Robert Byrd who, as Senate Majority Leader from 1977 to 1988 blocked legislation to strengthen the Clean Air Act citing cost increases for electrical power and the loss of jobs in the Steel Valley. Robert C. Byrd, *Robert C. Byrd: Child of the Appalachian Coalfields* (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2005), 462. On the role of trade policy in deindustrialization, see Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison, *The Deindustrialization of America: Plant Closings, Community Abandonment, and the Dismantling of Basic Industry* (New York: Basic Books, 1982), 111-139.

¹⁹⁴ In 1990 labor historian David L. Rosenberg formerly codified this popularly held belief in “deindustrialization by design” in an article attacking the ACCD for seeking to attain “balance and diversity in the regional economy” at the expense of the Steel Valley’s traditional industry. David L. Rosenberg, “Did the Collapse of Basic Industry Really Take the Allegheny Conference by Surprise,” *Pittsburgh*, March 21-27 1990.

campaign for re-industrialization had a number of important victories.¹⁹⁵ Following an announcement in 1984 by Pittsburgh-based National Steel that it would close its facilities in Weirton, workers and local management orchestrated an employee takeover of the mill, the nation's largest, and the new company showed a profit throughout the next decade.¹⁹⁶ In 1982, a coalition of workers and neighborhood activists calling themselves SNAC (Save Nabisco Action Coalition) was instrumental in halting the closure of a Nabisco plant in Pittsburgh and, in 1991, a group of church organizations and banks joined with the URA and state officials to finance the City Pride Bakery, which was started by unemployed residents.¹⁹⁷ "I finally cut a deal with the financial entities after promising that the employee ownership of the bakery would be phased in over the next four years," said Dan Curtis, the new company's CEO. "The banker [PNB's Ned Randall] read my business statement and told me this was exactly the kind of project that Pittsburgh needed now."¹⁹⁸

The control of Pittsburgh's image was also an important component of the conflict between those who hoped for a recovery in the steel mills and those who looked beyond the region's traditional industries to other growth sectors. In 1979, a group of Lutheran and Episcopal clergy formed the Denominational Ministry Strategy to provide

¹⁹⁵ For an overview of the ideological underpinnings and institutional mobilization of the reindustrialization campaign, see Staughton Lynd, "The Genesis of the Idea of a Community Right to Industrial Property in Youngstown and Pittsburgh, 1977-1987," *The Journal of American History* 74, no. 3 (1987): 926-58.

¹⁹⁶ David T. Javersak, *History of Weirton, West Virginia* (1999); Jonathan Prude, "ESOPs Fable: How Workers Bought a Steel Mill in Weirton, West Virginia, and What Good It Did Them," *Socialist Review* 14 (1984); Sharon Zukin, *Landscapes of Power: From Detroit to Disney World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 59-102.

¹⁹⁷ Louise Ann Jezierski, "Neighborhoods and Public-Private Partnerships in Pittsburgh," *Urban Affairs Quarterly* 26, no. 2 (1990), 239-241; Leslie Brokaw, "Fast Rising: Profile and Analysis of an Employee-Founded Bakery: The Struggles to Gain Financing and Customers," *Inc. Magazine*, August 1992.

¹⁹⁸ Chriss Swaney, "City That Can Raise Bread Will Bake It," *New York Times*, December 29, 1991. See also, Thomas J. Murphy to Ned Randall, "Letter," March 28, 1991; Thomas J. Murphy to Tom Croft, "Letter," September 12, 1989. Both in Murphy Papers, Box 17.

support for the thousands of workers being laid off by the region's steel companies. Under the influence of community organizer Charles Honeywell, the group focused on a campaign urging disinvestment in banks and corporations accused of transferring profits away from the region.¹⁹⁹ Using tactics explicitly designed to embarrass political and business leaders, the DMS challenged the post-industrial vision Pittsburgh boosters wished to project by dumping sacks of pennies in bank lobbies and depositing fish in safety deposit boxes.²⁰⁰ "If you are nice and rational about it, everyone ignores you," Honeywell declared. In one notorious episode four masked men tossed balloons inflated with skunk water and dye during a Christmas pageant at Shadyside Presbyterian Church, a congregation that included U.S. Steel chairman David Roderick. In response to challenges that their tactics were "keeping out the very people who might be able to bring some hope," DMS member the Rev. Douglas Roth of Clairton's Trinity Lutheran, replied, "They can have their image back as soon as they deliver for the people."²⁰¹

While only a handful of residents adopted the confrontational tactics of the DMS and other radical groups, unemployed steelworkers and other residents resisted boosters' efforts to craft a regional image and economy in which they were not included. "A false view is emerging of who comprises our society," editorialized Pittsburgh-based journalist Christopher Marquis. "City 'visionaries' alienate us from the vast majority of residents, workers, and consumers. Old cities understandably want a fresh start. But abandoning the people who built our cities because they don't fit into our plans (unlike the ever-

¹⁹⁹ For an extensive analysis of the radical critique of deindustrialization in Pittsburgh by a sympathetic historian, see Dale A. Hathaway, *Can Workers Have a Voice?: The Politics of Deindustrialization in Pittsburgh* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993). For an insightful critique of Hathaway's text, see Roy Lubove's review in the Autumn 1995 edition of the *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 341-342.

²⁰⁰ William Serrin, "Clerics Split in Battle Over Steel Jobs," *New York Times*, January 18, 1985, A10.

²⁰¹ Christopher H. Marquis, "Radical Ministers Make Waves Over Joblessness in Pittsburgh," *Christian Science Monitor*, September 30, 1985, 1.

malleable young professional), is ... Pittsburgh's shame."²⁰² Race, class and gender distinctions shaped the distribution of wealth in post-industrial Pittsburgh. Contrary to the experience of young professionals, such as Gene Lowe, African Americans in southwestern Pennsylvania suffered from even higher rates of unemployment and poverty than white workers. A history of racism in housing and employment prevented many residents from moving to more affluent neighborhoods, while the college education rate among blacks was less than half that of whites, blocking their entry into high-paying service sector jobs.²⁰³ The city's at-large voting system also diluted minority votes, leaving the quarter of Pittsburgh's population that was African American with no black city council members. "How can they say this is the most livable city," complained Rev. Junius Carter, "when 24% of its population has no control over its own destiny?"²⁰⁴

In 1984, the ACCD hailed the potential for women's "increased participation in the workforce," especially in health care and other services, for providing "a higher standard of living for the area."²⁰⁵ However, even by 1996 service sector participation still failed to compensate for the loss of manufacturing jobs with the hourly median wage remaining more than 13 percent lower than in the late 1970s.²⁰⁶ Civic boosters celebrated the successful transition of steel workers into nurses and other professional occupations, but the gendered nature of the region's fastest growing industries, the need for a college

²⁰² Marquis, "When Cities Shun Their Roots."

²⁰³ *County and City Data Book*. See also, Ralph Bangs and J.H. Hong, *Black and White Economic Conditions in the City of Pittsburgh* (Pittsburgh: University Center for Social and Urban Research, 1995).

²⁰⁴ Linda M. Watkins, "Pittsburgh Blacks' Paucity of Political Clout Stirs Struggle Over the City's At-Large Election System," *Wall Street Journal*, April 1, 1986.

²⁰⁵ *Strategy for growth*, 7. The Steel Valley had a relatively low rate of female labor force participation due to cultural norms, the ability of families to survive on a single income, and the lack of available jobs in an economy dominated by heavy industry. Women increased from 28 to 43 percent of the region's labor force between 1960 and 1980, which was still less than the national average.

²⁰⁶ Seitrick, *Post-Industrial Pittsburgh*. Median hourly wages in metropolitan Pittsburgh recovered somewhat during the 1990s, but workers were still earning less in real terms than in 1979 and Pittsburgh trailed PA and the U.S.

education, and the glut of job-seekers limited the ability of most working-class men to obtain high-paying employment after the mills closed.²⁰⁷ Beaver County residents Randy and Denise Weigel provide an important contrast to the families profiled in “Five Pittsburghs.” After Randy (27) lost his job at J&L Steel in 1988, his wife Denise (26) went back to work part-time as a graphic artist and a substitute teacher. While Denise paid the bills, Randy spent his days at home watching their 2 1/2 year-old daughter Aimee, an arrangement that had created tension between the couple. “Randy gets frustrated and gets on me, but I’ve got a lot on my mind ” Denise explained. “I’ve got a lot on my mind and I need that first hour or so [after work] to relax and wind down. A year ago it was the other way around.” At the time of their interview, finances were tight and Randy’s unemployment benefits were scheduled to expire in six weeks. Through her work, Denise had contact with residents of the post-industrial Pittsburgh, whose lifestyle bore little resemblance to her own. “The people I deal with all day are the ones who are making money and spending it. They drive around in a big car, they’ve got a phone in it. It’s like being in a different world. You know, this is the first time that Randy doesn’t know what to do or where to find a job. I just wonder what’s going to happen.”²⁰⁸

By the beginning of the 1990s, the push for reindustrialization had begun to run out of steam.²⁰⁹ Restarting Pittsburgh’s mills and manufacturing facilities confronted

²⁰⁷ Dale Russakoff, “Brawn Forged into Brain,” *Washington Post*, April 12, 1987, A1. On Pittsburgh’s employment situation in the late 1980s, see Ralph L. Bangs, *Linking the Unemployed to Growth Centers in Allegheny County: Final Report* (Pittsburgh: University Center for Social and Urban Research, University of Pittsburgh, 1991).

²⁰⁸ Denny Trombulak, “Steelworkers Lament from Beaver County,” in *Overtime: Punchin’ out with the Mill Hunk Herald (Worker Writer Anthology, 1979-1989)* (Homestead: Piece of the Hunk Publishers, 1990), 44-45.

²⁰⁹ Public support for free trade and environmental regulations also continued to stall calls for relaxing environmental regulations and increasing steel tariffs on the national level. Bob Downing and Margaret Newkirk, “Fatal Beauty: The East Coast Hates Ohio,” *Akron Beacon Journal*, January 10, 2001; Andrew

considerable economic barriers, including questions about the financial ability to modernize aging industrial infrastructure, continued labor force reduction resulting from modernization, and the widely recognized need to diversify an employment base overly dependant on heavy industry.²¹⁰ One of the biggest disappointments was the failure to reopen J&L's South Side facility that was closed in 1985. The Steel Valley Authority (SVA), an economic development coalition formed by nine Mon Valley communities to combat job losses in the steel industry, proposed to restart a portion of the plant and produce rough slabs for sale.²¹¹ SVA project director Robert Erikson complained that the site's owner overvalued the property, but the group also faced difficulties in attracting private capital at a time when the market for steel slabs was unfavorable. Finally, the site was located in a prime real estate area in a community that remained ambivalent about the desirability of heavy industrial production within its limits.²¹² In July 1991, the group had little to show for its efforts despite spending \$600,000, and two Pittsburgh

Welsh-Huggins, "Residents in Ohio Steel City Split on Tariffs," *The Associated Press State & Local Wire*, March 18, 2002.

²¹⁰ For a thoughtful critique of the problems facing reindustrialization in Pittsburgh, see Lubove, *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh Volume Two*, 16-23. Within a few years of their formation, both the City Pride Bakery and Weirton Steel also faced increasing financial difficulties. Len Boselovic and Jim McKay, "On and On: While the Union and the Company Remain Steadfast, the 118-Day Strike at Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel Is Wearing Down Everyone from Steubenville to Wheeling," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, January 26, 1997; Charles McCollester, "Let City Pride Bakery Give Pittsburgh Its Daily Bread," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, March 15, 1994.

²¹¹ The nine original members of the SVA were: East Pittsburgh, Glassport, Homestead, McKeesport, Munhall, Pittsburgh, Rankin, Swissvale and Turtle Creek. On the formation and evolution of the SVA, see Lynd, "Genesis"; Joan Fitzgerald and Louise Simmons, "From Consumption to Production: Labor Participation in Grass-Roots Movements in Pittsburgh and Hartford," *Urban Affairs Quarterly* 26, no. 4 (1991): 512-31; Robert A. Beauregard, Paul Lawless and Sabina Deitrick, "Collaborative Strategies for Reindustrialization: Sheffield and Pittsburgh," *Economic Development Quarterly* 6, no. 3 (1992): 418-30.

²¹² Thomas Buell, Jr., "Steel Venture's Chances of Success Dim with Time," *Pittsburgh Press*, August 19, 1990, D18; Tom Croft and Jay Weinberg, "Steel Article Faulted," Editorial, *Pittsburgh Press*, September 2, 1990, B4. At the same time that the reindustrialization program of LTV's South Side Works was finally falling through, the US EPA filed suit against the company's coke plant in Hazelwood accusing the company of violating federal clean-air laws. One Squirrel Hill resident declared, "Pittsburgh's skyline may no longer be black with soot, but those of us living downwind of LTV are still breathing polluted, unhealthy air." Catherine Becker Lanni, "A Stench in the Air," Editorial, *Pittsburgh Press*, May 21, 1991; Ralph Haurwitz and Janet Williams, "Critics Hit LTV Pollution, Firm Defends Hazelwood Unit," *Pittsburgh Press*, June 27, 1991.

councilmen urged demolition of the entire plant in order to take advantage of “a magnificent opportunity for a mixed-use development project.”²¹³ The *Pittsburgh Press* agreed with this new proposal, concluding that “it is important for all concerned to realize that the site’s future does not include steelmaking, and that postponing or deferring action in hopes of saving the electric furnaces [on the J&L site] appears futile.”²¹⁴

Militant efforts to influence Pittsburgh’s image also led to a backlash that deflected attention from the critique of corporate policy and discredited the efforts of more mainstream groups, such as the SVA, to attract investment capital for restarting mills. Bob Anderson, the founder of Rainbow Kitchen, a volunteer source for services to unemployed steel workers and a meeting place for community organizers in Homestead, tried to pinpoint the differences between his group, the Mon Valley Unemployment Committee and the DMS during the 1980s.²¹⁵ “We were directing them [people] into the political arena and [trying to] get people to run for office and social change in the government and legislature. And *they* were trying to direct it into church. The combination of things wasn’t very clear, and here were these people in the clergy and symbols of legitimacy – but all that was coming out of it was division. It just destroyed a lot of hope that people had of organizing and fighting back.”²¹⁶

Conclusion

²¹³ Kevin Guggenheim, “South Siders Present New Uses for LTV Mill Site,” *Pittsburgh Press*, July 7, 1991; Ellen M. Perlmutter, “Housing, Marinas Planned at LTV’s S. Side Site,” *Pittsburgh Press*, July 3, 1991.

²¹⁴ “Developing the LTV Site,” *Pittsburgh Press*, Editorial, July 3, 1991, B2.

²¹⁵ While many of its members remained active in community organizing, by 1991 DMS had passed into relative obscurity. Tim Coulter, “Ex-DMS Pastor Still Has Activist Agenda,” *Pittsburgh Press*, January 3, 1991.

²¹⁶ Judith Modell and Charlee Brodsky, *A Town without Steel: Envisioning Homestead* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998), 300.

Throughout the postwar period, Pittsburgh's progrowth coalition of business executives, political leaders, and later university administrators, worked to combine government intervention in economic development with a public relations campaign to remake the form and substance of a region heavily dependent on a declining industrial base. During the 1960s, challenges from those left out of the Renaissance vision forced the ACCD and municipal officials to forgo large scale urban renewal projects in favor of neighborhood revitalization and social programs. "Artificial symptoms of prosperity or a 'good image' do not revitalize a city, but only explicit economic growth processes for which there are no substitutes," Jane Jacobs warned in 1968, and the increased visibility of the Appalachian and urban crises also raised questions about the efficacy of the Renaissance in diversifying the regional economy and creating new employment.²¹⁷

The tension between Pittsburgh's image as both a Steel and Renaissance City increased following the collapse of the steel industry during the 1980s as city leaders worked to create a high-tech "Roboburgh" in the heart of the "Rust Belt."²¹⁸ Like the earlier period, new opposition emerged from those excluded from the post-industrial community envisioned by the region's corporate and political leadership. Challenges appeared especially from the urbanized river valleys where double digit unemployment and the razing of industrial properties left communities with few financial resources available for economic development efforts. Unlike the 1960s, however, the political fragmentation of mill towns and economic difficulties inherent in restarting abandoned factories prevented the proponents of reindustrialization from moving beyond a few

²¹⁷ Jacobs, *Economy of Cities*, 200.

²¹⁸ Dan Fitzpatrick, "Pittsburgh Image-Makers Battling to get Message Out, Negate Bad PR," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, June 30, 2002.

isolated victories to the limited participation in public-private decision-making achieved by neighborhood activists in Pittsburgh during the 1970s.

As difficult as life was in much of metropolitan Pittsburgh, the collapse of basic industry had an even greater effect on the Ohio River Valley (ORV), where local communities had achieved little success in economic diversification. In May 1988, millions of Americans tuned into a special edition of the *Oprah Winfrey Show*, broadcast from Bellaire, Ohio, just across the river from Wheeling, that painted a very grim picture of life in the Steel Valley. “They were middle class people, once earning good money in the coal mines [and] in the steel mills,” the show’s opening sequence declared as Rust Belt imagery flashed across the screen. “But the rug was pulled out from under them. They never imagined themselves standing in welfare lines, never imagined relying on food stamps and never thought they’d be forced to scrounge through trash cans for aluminum cans they could trade in for 35 cents a pound.”²¹⁹

As they examined the problems of job losses in the area, local residents exhibited the same conflicting visions of post-industrialization and reindustrialization found in metropolitan Pittsburgh. “I do not feel that this valley should be in the shape that it’s in,” explained James Kennedy, a fifty-year-old former coal miner. “It has the greatest potential of becoming still the industrial might that it once was.” Many in the audience, especially those laid-off from the region’s mines, mills and power plants, blamed new environmental regulations and envisioned a return to the industrial past. “The whole bottom line is: knock the EPA out!” railed one audience member. “We want work. We don’t want the clean air. We want the factories back. We want the mines back.”

²¹⁹ Jim McPharlin, prod., “The Ohio Remote: American Dreams Shattered,” in *The Oprah Winfrey Show* (USA: WLS-TV, 1988). Transcript available from Burelles-Luce Transcripts.

As in the rest of the Steel Valley, many local officials accepted the decline of heavy industry and cautiously expressed optimism about the region's future. "These [unemployed] people are within that three groups –steel, coal and glass – and they're adversely affected, no doubt," observed Don Myers, county development director. "But the time has come for us to put together a program [to] turn this around.... We're coming back. It's 10 percent unemployment, it was 14 two years ago. It's going to take some time."²²⁰ In 1991, Belmont launched the "Blue Chip Business Initiative," a program to diversify the local economy by focusing on "power retailing," service sector industries, such as universities and hospitals, and advanced manufacturing. Between 1991 and 1997, local officials credited the Blue Chip diversification program with generating more than \$550 million in investment and five thousand new jobs.²²¹

While some of this investment occurred in the traditional urban centers, several new ventures, including a large shopping center, a health/fitness complex and a publicly subsidized industrial park were built in suburban locations along Interstate 70. Belmont's efforts mirrored programs throughout the Steel Valley to use new highway connections to open up undeveloped areas along the hilltops and ridges and public funds to develop existing industries and attract employers to the region. This suburban strategy of economic development both complemented and reinforced the rapid growth of suburban communities that occurred even as the region's overall population declined by nearly 11 percent between 1960 and 1990. Increasingly, the post-industrial image of the region closely identified itself with suburban living and employment, particularly in the region's

²²⁰ McPharlin, prod., "The Ohio Remote."

²²¹ Belmont County Department of Development, "Belmont County's Blue Chip Strategy" and "Belmont County, Ohio: Blue Chip Business." Retrieved October 15, 2003 from the Belmont County Department of Development: <http://www.ohighway.com/deptdev/press.html>

fastest growing communities surrounding Pittsburgh.

Chapter 6

Salvation and Sprawl: Building Community in the Postwar Metropolitan Region

Governor Robert F. Casey made his first state visit to Homestead the day after his inauguration in January 1987 to announce plans for restoring economic vitality to the depressed areas of southwestern Pennsylvania through a variety of industrial and community development projects.¹ For the Mon Valley, however, Casey had a special project in mind — the construction of the long-delayed Mon Valley Expressway (MVE) that would connect the mill towns of the industrialized river valley to national markets as well as to the booming suburban communities on the surrounding hilltops. “This is another big step forward in our commitment to help the working people of the Mon Valley and to help bring businesses and jobs into the region,” the governor declared upon returning to break ground on the route two years later. “No longer is this valley a forgotten valley.”²

The MVE project, which continued throughout the 1990s, generated both intense support and opposition revealing the growing rift in the Steel Valley’s culture and economy. “Dear Governor Casey,” wrote a nine-year old resident of Peters Township in southern Allegheny County, “Please don’t put the [expressway here]. Many people will

¹ Michael Hirsch, “Casey Listens to Mon Valley Residents,” *Butler Eagle*, January 12, 1987, 1.

² Ron Basescu, “Casey Breaks Ground for Expressway,” *Uniontown Herald-Standard*, January 31, 1989, 1.

have to move including me and I don't want to move.”³ Others questioned why those communities disrupted by the highway construction should have to bear the costs of developing other parts of the region. “Why should West Mifflin be DESTROYED?” wrote Mrs. Norma Dearfield. “We have worked long and hard to develop our area and now it is threatened with destruction. Commuting in the Mon Valley is not reason enough to RUIN the lives in this borough.”⁴

The steel communities in the river valley most severely affected by the wave of plant closings in the 1980s welcomed the highway. “Dear Governor, I know everyone and his brother is on you for roads, [but] when do we finish [the southern portion of the expressway] and connect up the WV a highway system?” wrote J.A. Campbell of Uniontown. “This approx. 13 miles is badly need[ed] as soon as possible [and] we need the jobs to do it.”⁵ The majority of economic and community development agencies in the area also supported this position. “Just look at a map!” wrote James R. Foutz of the Uniontown Area Chamber of Commerce and Welford Swimmer of the Greater Uniontown Industrial Fund. We have “interchanges, four lane highway, thru-ways and turnpikes, but all [are] to the north of this area.”⁶ “We feel that the time has come for the Mon-Fayette Expressway to leave the talking stages and enter the construction stage,” added Mid Monongahela Industrial Development Association General Manager Robert

³ James Christoforetti to Gov. Robert Casey, “Letter,” April 17, 1992, in Box 200, “Correspondence,” Folder 1, Governor Robert P. Casey, Papers, RG 10, Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg, PA (Hereafter abbreviated as Casey Papers).

⁴ Norma Dearfield, Letter to Gov. Robert Casey, May 26, 1988, Casey Paper, Box 172 “Issues”, Folder 11 “Mon Valley Expressway” (Hereafter cited as Casey Papers MVE).

⁵ J.A. Campbell to Gov. Robert Casey, “Letter,” September 6, 1988, Casey Papers MVE.

⁶ Greater Uniontown Area Chamber of Commerce, “The Mon Valley/Fayette Expressway Must be Built Without Delay,” presented to the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission, July 31, 1990, Casey Papers MVE.

C. Watson. "The future of this Valley and of the entire area is reliant upon this vital highway."⁷

The debate over the MVE serves as a window into the competing visions of metropolitan space as well as the conflicting interests of suburban, urban and rural communities and residents that had developed in the Steel Valley by the 1990s. Officials first proposed the MVE in the mid-1960s along with similar expressway projects in the Beaver Valley to the northwest of Pittsburgh and the Allegheny Valley to the northeast. As in the Upper Ohio Valley, the push for improved highway access met with only limited success as proponents faced considerable obstacles rooted in the region's physical, political and economic landscapes. Unlike the ORV, and many other metropolitan regions, the declining communities in the river valleys were often "separated only by several hundred feet of elevation and a narrow band of trees" from areas of booming growth in suburban communities along the ridge tops.⁸ This close proximity to wealthy suburban communities highlighted the growing social and cultural fragmentation of the region but also served as a beacon of hope for valley residents and community leaders hoping to tap into employment opportunities increasingly located in the growing suburbs and in downtown Pittsburgh. While education levels, employment background, and employer perceptions separated manufacturing workers from the expanding post-industrial economy, "the unemployed do not live far from jobs," concluded a 1989 study by the University of Pittsburgh.⁹

⁷ Robert C. Watson to Gov. Robert Casey, "Letter," July 12, 1990, Casey Papers MVE.

⁸ Southwestern Pennsylvania Regional Planning Commission, *Issues in a Region of Contrasts* (Pittsburgh: SPRPC, 1968), 5.

⁹ Ralph Bangs and Thomas Soltis, *The Job Growth Centers of Allegheny County* (Pittsburgh: University Center for Social and Urban Research, 1989), 12. See also Ralph L. Bangs, *Linking the Unemployed to Growth Centers in Allegheny County: Final Report* (Pittsburgh: University Center for Social and Urban

This proximity between communities of widely diverging socioeconomic status is rooted in the settlement pattern of the Steel Valley as well as the success of progrowth boosters in transforming the economy of select portions of southwestern Pennsylvania during the 1970s and 1980s. The Pittsburgh region grew in a radial pattern throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as communities sprang up around the giant industrial sites dotting the banks of the major rivers and their tributaries.¹⁰ In addition to the thin strips of heavily developed areas along the riverbanks, smaller communities, ranging from nineteenth century market towns to mining camps, dotted the more rural areas of the region.¹¹ The construction of railroads and streetcars encouraged an increasing dispersal of the population onto the surrounding ridges and areas away from the riverbanks, but through the late 1930s, Pittsburgh's location at the intersection of three major rivers limited the city's growth.¹² Construction of the Liberty Tunnel and Bridge south of Pittsburgh during the late 1920s eased automobile commuting for work downtown, while highway development and postwar housing policies favored suburban areas.¹³ "With the aid of the automobile, the resident can traverse the steep slopes that separate the hilltops from the major transportation routes along the valley bottoms," reported the 1963 *Economic Study of the Pittsburgh Region*, which was sponsored by the

Research, 1991).

¹⁰ Edward Muller, "Industrial Suburbs and the Growth of Metropolitan Pittsburgh 1870-1920," *Journal of Historical Geography* 27, no. 1 (2001): 58-73. See also, Robert D. Lewis, ed., *Manufacturing Suburbs: Building Work and Home in the Metropolitan Fringe* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004).

¹¹ Ira S. Lowry, *Economic Study of the Pittsburgh Region, Volume 2 Portrait of a Region* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1963).

¹² Joel A. Tarr, *Transportation Innovation and Changing Spatial Patterns in Pittsburgh, 1850-1934* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1978). See also, Sam Bass Warner, *Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston, 1870-1900* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962); Robert M. Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967).

¹³ Stephen J. Hoffman, "The Saga of Pittsburgh's Liberty Tubes: Geographical Partisanship on the Urban Fringe," *Pittsburgh History* 75(1992): 128-41. See also, Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Robert Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia* (New York: Basic Books, 1987).

Allegheny Conference on Community Development (ACCD). “For the first time the highlands have become generally suitable for low-density residential development, and thousands of acres of such land, bypassed in the streetcar era, have been built up in the last twenty years.”¹⁴

Residents and community leaders in the Steel Valley’s declining rural and urban areas looked to the suburbs as models for development as well as employment centers for their increasing population of unemployed steel workers. Postwar changes in manufacturing techniques allowed employers to relocate from the crowded river valleys to new spacious suburban locations, while retailers and other commercial activities followed the decentralizing population trend.¹⁵ The *Economic Study* found that “dispersive movements are evident in all major industry divisions, and recent developments in commodity transportation, production methods, and techniques of management and control give every reason to expect a gradual shift of employment opportunities away from presently congested areas.”¹⁶ Suburban “edge cities” such as Monroeville, Cranberry, and the Airport Corridor provided an increasing portion of the region’s employment as manufacturing in the urbanized river valleys declined.¹⁷ During the 1980s, some depressed mill towns sought to emulate their suburban neighbors through the construction of suburban-style industrial parks on abandoned mill sites.¹⁸ Others saw their salvation in highway construction projects, such as the Allegheny Valley

¹⁴ Lowry, *Economic Study of the Pittsburgh Region, Volume 2*, 134.

¹⁵ Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumer’s Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Knopf, 2003).

¹⁶ Lowry, *Economic Study of the Pittsburgh Region, Volume 2*, 134.

¹⁷ Joel Garreau, *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier* (New York: Doubleday, 1991); Bangs and Soltis, *The Job Growth Centers of Allegheny County*.

¹⁸ Sam Spatter, “Creating Jobs: Old Plant Sites Attract New Manufacturers,” *Pittsburgh Press*, March, 15 1992, F7.

Expressway and the MVE, designed to link with national markets as well as to improve connections to regional growth centers.

Throughout the postwar period, community leaders and civic boosters looked to the growth of the automobile-centered suburb as an answer for pressing urban and economic development issues. During the 1940s and 1950s, the progrowth ACCD supported the opening of hilltop areas through highway construction as a means to relieve the city's housing problems and create a more attractive image of the region for white collar residents.¹⁹ From the 1960s to the 1980s, the creation of suburban industrial parks formed the core of the Steel Valley's economic development strategy.²⁰ Residents from throughout the region subsequently looked to the booming suburbs to ease unemployment from the collapse of the steel industry. Postwar suburban growth came with a price, however, and by the 1990s proponents of the suburban strategy faced increasing criticism over the issues of environmental degradation and sprawl, the relationship between suburban expansion and urban decay, and the extent of employment gains from investment in a number of high visibility development projects in suburban areas.²¹ In 1991, urban political leaders, including future Pittsburgh mayor Tom Murphy, criticized the focus on suburban development, charging that public investment in outlying

¹⁹ For an analysis of the ACCD's regional transportation policy, see Sherie R. Mershon, *Corporate Social Responsibility and Urban Revitalization: The Allegheny Conference on Community Development, 1943-1968* (Ph.D. thesis, Carnegie Mellon University, 2004), 552-594.

²⁰ Pennsylvania Economy League Western Division, *A More Effective Industrial Development Program for the Pittsburgh Region*, (Pittsburgh: The League, 1954); Jack Markowitz, "RIDC Park: Believe It," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, April 22, 1968; Ellen M. Perlmutter, "RIDC Off Course? Private Firms Charge Unfair Competition," *Pittsburgh Press* February 17, 1991, B1, 4.

²¹ Bob Schultz, "Forum Seeks Answer to Suburban Sprawl, 'Smart Growth' Sought in Region," *Butler Eagle*, March 25, 2003; Clarion Associates and 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania, "The Costs of Sprawl in Pennsylvania," January 2000. Retrieved April 6, 2006 from 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania: <<http://www.10000friends.org>>. On the issue of suburban sprawl, see Adam Rome, *The Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of American Environmentalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Jeff Speck, *Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream* (New York: North Point Press, 2000).

communities had helped to create “a region of haves and have-nots” by enabling employers to leave the industrialized river valleys.²²

The Suburban Expansion of the 1950s and 1960s

While Pittsburgh’s suburban development did follow national trends during the postwar period, the region’s topography, political systems, and economic structures also shaped the process. “With the choice property [in the region’s major cities] gobbled up long ago, people came to look on the city as a place to make a living and the suburbs as a place to live,” reported Edwin Beachler in 1951.²³ Transportation improvements played an especially important role in suburban growth due to the region’s mountainous topography. The process of suburbanization in Pittsburgh began with the introduction of a viable streetcar system in the late nineteenth century, and by 1902 nearly five hundred miles of track linked Pittsburgh neighborhoods with nearby communities in Allegheny, Beaver and Westmoreland counties.²⁴ The construction of the Liberty Bridge and Tunnels in the late 1920s and improvements to local roads paved the way for growth in the South Hills area, which, despite the collapse of the real estate market during the Great Depression and wartime housing restrictions, increased by more than 95,000 residents between 1920 and 1951.²⁵ Similar highway-oriented growth occurred in the North Hills and on the East End in Penn Township, and the extension of the Pennsylvania Turnpike to the Ohio border put portions of southern Armstrong, Butler and Beaver Counties as

²² Tom Barnes, “RIDC Chief Answers Critics,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, February 22, 1991, 7.

²³ Edwin Beachler, *Growing Pains in the Suburbs: The Story of Metropolitan Pittsburgh’s Building Boom* (Pittsburgh: The Pittsburgh Press Company, 1951).

²⁴ Tarr, *Transportation Innovation and Changing Spatial Patterns in Pittsburgh*. For an overview of the relationship between the built and natural environment in prewar Pittsburgh, see Edward Muller and Joel Tarr, “The Interaction of the Natural and Built Environments in the Pittsburgh Landscape,” in *Devastation and Renewal: An Environmental History of Pittsburgh and Its Region*, edited by Joel Tarr (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003), 11-40.

²⁵ Hoffman, “The Saga of Pittsburgh’s Liberty Tubes”; Beachler, *Growing Pains in the Suburbs*.

well as northern Allegheny within commuting distance of the region's major employers.²⁶

By the mid-1950s, the expanding suburbs stretched deep into the South Hills almost to the Washington line, east from the junction of the Allegheny and Mon Rivers to Westmoreland, north over flatter terrain to Butler, and west in an expanding corridor along the Ohio River to the existing population centers of Beaver.²⁷

The progrowth coalition formed between the ACCD and the local Democratic leadership in the late 1940s provided a means to marshal the enormous political and economic resources necessary to build highways through the region's rugged, densely populated terrain. The ACCD presented a vision of the region centered on an urban core functioning as a corporate headquarters, regional shopping area, and center for government and specialized services. Highways formed an integral part of this vision, knitting the region together and providing quick movement from the Golden Triangle to a new airport under construction west of the city as well as east to the Pennsylvania Turnpike.²⁸ Revitalizing residential areas was not a priority for the architects of the Pittsburgh Renaissance during the 1950s, and the transformation of the Golden Triangle from mixed-use neighborhoods to a landscape dominated by high-rise offices hastened the migration of other urban functions, especially housing, to the periphery.²⁹ Like

²⁶ Arthur T. Moore, *Pennsylvania Turnpike System: Boon to Business and Industry* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission, 1956).

²⁷ For contemporary discussions of the suburbanization trend in southwestern Pennsylvania during the 1950s, see Edwin Beachler, *The Story of Pittsburgh's No. 1 Headache* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Press, 1952); "Progress Report of the Allegheny County Planning Commission to the Board of County Commissioners," 1956-1959; "Proceedings...First Annual Western Pennsylvania Area Community Growth Conference," 1959.

²⁸ Wallace Richards, "A Fifty-Seven-Million-Dollar Program," *Allegheny Conference Digest*, December 1945, ACCD Records, Box 129, Folder 5.

²⁹ ACTION-Housing Inc., *Population Trends and Housing Requirements in Allegheny County to 1980: The Urban Renewal Impact Study* (Pittsburgh, PA: ACTION-Housing, 1968); ACTION-Housing Inc., *The Black Population and Its Housing: A Social and Economic Profile of the Black Community in the Pittsburgh Metropolitan Area* (Pittsburgh, PA: ACTION-Housing, 1969).

Wheeling's "Live on the Hills and Work in the City" campaign, civic and business leaders in southwestern Pennsylvania encouraged this demographic shift as a way to relieve postwar housing shortages, to make the region more attractive to white collar employees, and to clear "blighted areas" for commercial and industrial uses.³⁰ A 1944 report concluded, "It is generally recognized that in Allegheny County there is enough land to furnish every family with the space needed for a decent living--enough land to relieve the present population congestion which exists in many parts of Pittsburgh--enough land so that housing objectives may be realized, and every family live within easy commuting distance of the heart of the city."³¹

The orderly growth of suburban communities became an important and contentious issue for civic leaders concerned about maximizing investment and building a positive image of a modern metropolis. The opening of the Penn-Lincoln Parkway in 1954 prompted the rapid development of strategic communities, such as Monroeville, at the junction of the Parkway and the Pennsylvania Turnpike, which grew from 3,100 residents in 1950 to 33,000 by 1976.³² In 1948, ACCD executive director Park Martin stressed the need for zoning to the Greentree Board of Trade, warning of the dangerous potential for unplanned growth in a community that would soon be less than a ten-minute

³⁰ "Now Plans Are Begun to 'Open up' the Hilltops: 'Live on the Hills and Work in the City' Is the Credo of Wheeling Planning Group," *Wheeling Intelligencer*, December 25, 1962. This pattern repeated in other Steel Valley communities, such as Homestead and Turtle Creek, in which urban housing was cleared to make way for industrial development. Curtis Miner and Paul Roberts, "Engineering an Industrial Diaspora: Homestead, 1941," *Pittsburgh History* 72 (1989): 4-25; "Turtle Creek Valley Model Cities," in Marshall Kaplan, Gans and Kahn, *The Model Cities Program: A Comparative Analysis of City Response Patterns and Their Relation to Future Urban Policy* (Washington, D.C.: HUD, 1973).

³¹ "Report of Working Committees of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development," 1944, ACCD Records, Box 377, Folder 2.

³² Eileen Foley, "For Monroeville the Bloom is Not Off the 30-Year Boom," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, March 20, 1980.

commute from downtown Pittsburgh.³³ “For nearly two centuries, Green Tree watched the parade go by,” reported Beachler in 1951. Finally, “a group of travelers paused long enough to take a good look. They discovered the sunny, rolling hills were only a 15-minute hop from the Golden Triangle. Today... Green Tree Borough is in the midst of its biggest housing boom.”³⁴ In order to deal with this growth, the Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association (PRPA), the planning arm of the ACCD, offered subsidized services to local municipalities as dozens of communities developed comprehensive plans, enacted zoning restrictions and building codes.³⁵ “All municipalities and areas of Allegheny County are tied together in the economic and broad community sense,” concluded a group of local officials in 1961. “They will pretty much ‘sink or swim’ together as the economic future and general livability of the county rises or falls. Coordination of governmental action and policy in matters of county-wide concern is both practical and possible.”³⁶

Planning for suburban growth ran into the same political and cultural structures affecting local and regional planning in the rest of the Steel Valley.³⁷ The decentralization of housing exacerbated pre-existing ethnic, economic and social tensions as local politicians jockeyed for control over new resources, especially in the rural

³³ AIS Park H. Martin Papers Box 1, Folder 8. Park H. Martin, “Transportation and Community Development,” November 18, 1948. In 1946, officials predicted a 46 percent increase in population for Scott Township and the Boroughs of Greentree and Carnegie by 1960. Max Nurnberg, *Housing Survey of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County, Part I* (Pittsburgh: ACCD, 1946).

³⁴ Beachler, *Growing Pains in the Suburbs*.

³⁵ Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association, “A Policy Statement Regarding Future Activities of the Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association,” December 2, 1964, ACCD Records, Box 139, Folder 1.

³⁶ Allegheny Seminar, “Summary Report of Session of the Lakeview Conference, April 23-25, 1961,” 1.

³⁷ Despite a major annexation on the East End in the early twentieth century, Pittsburgh had the dubious distinction of having the smallest percentage of population within the central city of any major metropolitan region in the nation. Outside the city, the settlement pattern created a complex jumble of nearly 130 independent municipalities in Allegheny County alone. On the roots of metropolitan fragmentation, see David W. Lonich, “Metropolitanism and the Genesis of Municipal Anxiety in Allegheny County,” *Pittsburgh History* 76, no. 2 (Summer 1993): 79-88; Muller, “Industrial Suburbs and the Growth of Metropolitan Pittsburgh 1870-1920.”

townships, which experienced the greatest rates of postwar growth.³⁸ These smaller communities were limited in their taxing authority, and many residents eagerly sought annexations to neighboring cities and boroughs in order to obtain municipal services.³⁹ Existing political elites were often determined to retain their individual identity and bitterly resisted these attempts. In 1946, a group of residents clamoring for water, sewer and other infrastructure improvements in rural Versailles Township petitioned the nearby city of McKeesport for annexation. On the morning the pro-annexation group submitted its petition, a counter-group led by members of the township's board of education, volunteer fire department and board of supervisors submitted an application for incorporation as a borough.⁴⁰ Following a protracted legal battle stretching for more than a year, the Borough of White Oak finally came into existence in June 1948. "We've got growing pains bad and we'll have them for the next ten years," remarked one resident of the new community in 1951.⁴¹

Unlike metropolitan regions where suburbanization took place in a more or less concentric pattern, extending out from a central urbanized core as transportation systems improved, Southwestern Pennsylvania evolved more erratically from a series of urbanized corridors stretching along the three major river systems.⁴² The mountainous landscape of the area was not generally well-suited to the type of mass produced housing

³⁸ On the regional planning efforts of the ACCD, see Mershon, *Corporate Social Responsibility and Urban Revitalization*, 594-645.

³⁹ On two earlier conflicts over control of infrastructure development, see Hoffman, "The Saga of Pittsburgh's Liberty Tubes"; Nicholas G. Bauroth, "Water Battles: Municipal Authorities and the Destabilization of Local Governance in the Great Depression," *Western Pennsylvania History* 88, no. 4 (Winter 2005): 30-37.

⁴⁰ Brian Kent Jensen, "Masters of Their Own Destiny: Allegheny County Government Reform Efforts, 1929-1998" (Ph.D. Thesis, Carnegie Mellon University, 2004), 137-169.

⁴¹ Beachler, *Growing Pains in the Suburbs*.

⁴² Southwestern Pennsylvania Regional Planning Commission, "Issues in a Region of Contrasts."

made famous by the contemporary development of Levittown.⁴³ Instead, postwar commuter suburbs developed in clusters, generally on the ridge tops and in flatter areas to the north of the city, filling in the space between the earlier communities that spread along the river valleys.⁴⁴ “Although the greatest densities are to be found in the City of Pittsburgh, the broken terrain of the Region intersperses barriers to the continuities of block patterns and land development,” reported the *Economic Study* in 1963. “Small pockets of crowded housing are to be found even in the remote hinterland because of the shortage of level land in the vicinity of some mine or mill that provided employment for the surrounding householders.”⁴⁵ While the Steel Valley’s metropolitan fringe declined precipitously during the 1950s and early 1960s, population growth transformed rural coal mining towns such as Bethel and St. Clair in the South Hills into suburbs of Pittsburgh.⁴⁶ As mining and agricultural employment declined, residents in other communities increasingly commuted to jobs throughout the region. “The travel was a pain,” recalled Bill Arsehn, a resident of Shoaf, a coal “patch” town in Fayette County, who went to work at the Homestead Works in the late 1960s. “We’d have to get up at 5 in the morning to start at 7:30, and sometimes we wouldn’t get back until 6 or 7 at night. But it was a good paying job.”⁴⁷

Rural communities with available land and access to the region’s growing highway system featured the highest rates of growth in the region. During the late 1950s,

⁴³ Herbet J. Gans, *The Levittowners: Ways of Life and Politics in a New Suburban Community* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1967). For an overview of postwar suburbanization, see Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*; Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias*.

⁴⁴ Southwestern Pennsylvania Regional Planning Commission, *Alternative Regional Development Patterns* (Pittsburgh, PA: SPRPC, 1965).

⁴⁵ Ira S. Lowry, *Economic Study of the Pittsburgh Region, Volume 2 Portrait of a Region*, 148.

⁴⁶ Edwin Beachler, *Growing Pains in the Suburbs: The Story of Metropolitan Pittsburgh’s Building Boom*.

⁴⁷ David Demarest and Eugene Levy, “Touring the Coke Region,” *Pittsburgh History* 74, no. 3 (Fall 1991), 108.

each day more than 37,000 people commuted into Allegheny, which provided nearly 69 percent of the region's employment but contained less than 67 percent of the housing.⁴⁸ Beginning in the 1920s, the area north of Pittsburgh between the Allegheny and Ohio Rivers increasingly attracted suburban residents economically connected to the city. Up until the late 1940s, much of this growth was contained within Allegheny, but during the postwar period an increasing portion of commuter traffic originated in southern Butler County, approximately twenty miles north of Pittsburgh. The construction of the Pennsylvania Turnpike Extension and the completion of I-79 through the area in 1960 placed Cranberry Township in southern Butler at the intersection of the region's major north-south and east-west highways. "The County's excellent location with regard to highways, existing and proposed, will make the County a prime area for future development," declared the county planning commission in 1965. "Butler County is a highly rural county and has much land area available for future development subject only to limitations of soil or slope."⁴⁹

Between 1965 and 1976, Cranberry's population more than quadrupled due to its strategic location, the availability of land, Butler's lower taxation rate and a gently rolling terrain that allowed for the type of mass produced housing impractical in other more mountainous portions of the Steel Valley. The rapid growth of the township began in earnest in 1957, when Cleveland-based Dover Company began construction of its Fernway housing development offering ranch style homes on lots for \$10,495. More than 140 lots, which could be reserved for twenty-five dollars, sold in Fernway in the first

⁴⁸ The percentage of employment in other counties was: Westmoreland (10.8%), Beaver (8.5%), Washington (6.4%), Butler (3.5%) and Armstrong (2.1%). Lowry, *Economic Study of the Pittsburgh Region*, Volume 2, 25.

⁴⁹ Butler County Planning Commission, *The Comprehensive Plan for Butler County. Report 5* (Butler, Pa.: The Commission, 1965), 3.

twenty-four hours they were available. Altogether, the company sold 480 homes in the development, which also featured the township's first wastewater treatment plant.⁵⁰ The Fernway development demonstrated the profitability of mass housing projects and the township's subsequent acquisition of the subdivision's wastewater treatment plant made it one of the few rural areas in the region to offer public water and sewer services. By 1973, new housing developments included Sun Valley, Cranbrook, Woodland Estates, Fox Run and Old Towne Apartments as well as the mobile home courts of Cranberry Village, Forest Park and Oak Springs.⁵¹

Cranberry became increasingly associated with the high tech and service sector growth fueling the Pittsburgh economy during the 1980s. The community's growth slowed during the late 1970s and early 1980s, reflecting the economic decline of both the Pittsburgh region as well as the entire state of Pennsylvania. While other parts of the Pittsburgh region continued to languish following the collapse of the steel industry in the mid-1980s, however, the community underwent a new housing boom when the completion of I-279 in 1989 gave the area speedy access to the offices and universities of downtown Pittsburgh.⁵² Between 1980 and 1990, Cranberry's population nearly doubled, from 11,000 to 19,000 and featured five times the regional average for annual home construction during the early 1990s. "Half-acre lots which sold five years ago for \$30,000 today go for \$50,000," reported one local builder in 1989, and in 1992 a local official likened new residential construction to a "Wild West Stampede" with a thousand

⁵⁰ Ralph Goldinger and Audrey Feters, *Butler County, the Second Hundred Years* (Butler, Pa: Butler County Historical Society, 1994), 141-142.

⁵¹ Jim Hayes, *Cranberry Township: A History of Our Community* (Cranberry, PA: Cranberry Township Historical Society, 1989). Available from <<http://www.twp.cranberry.pa.us/information/history/index.html>>.

⁵² Scott Deacle, "Land-Use Plans, When Followed, Can Be Community Road Map to Future," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, April 14, 2002, N6.

new residents a year.⁵³ The new arrivals were also among those most desired by developers and local officials – overwhelmingly middle- and upper-middle class whites – and raised the area’s median household income by 14 percent to \$40,000. “The good-life seekers, particularly young first-time home buyers and crowd-weary Pittsburghers, are flocking here for a change of life-style,” gushed a 1992 article in the *New York Times*. “Tired of the traffic and long lines for tennis courts and tables at restaurants, they have discovered a retreat that is closer, cheaper and quieter than the old steel city.”⁵⁴

Cranberry’s postwar growth was not without controversy as residents grew increasingly concerned about maintaining the community’s natural beauty and the open areas that drew them in the first place. In 1962, planners warned about the “problem of ‘sprawl’” in the area. “The low-density residential pattern that is desired by most residents... reflects the decision of these communities to retain their spacious, semi-rural character, [but this] tends to accentuate sprawl, and this fact has certain implications with respect to the kind of communities that may emerge in the future.”⁵⁵ Critics also drew attention to haphazard growth taking place in a relatively undeveloped area without the benefits of proper zoning and an overall plan. “Low densities, as such, are not at the core of the problem outlined above,” the report continued. “Much more fundamental is the fact that rapid growth has occurred haphazardly -- that is, without the benefit of an overall plan which takes into consideration such factors as natural features, the

⁵³ Richard Souffer, “Wexford: Pittsburgh Link Spurs Building,” *New York Times*, June 18, 1989; Chriss Swaney, “An Oasis of Development in the Suburbs,” *New York Times*, November 11, 1992, R5.

⁵⁴ Swaney, “An Oasis of Development in the Suburbs,” R5.

⁵⁵ Carroll V. Hill & Associates, “Comprehensive Plan for Cranberry Township in Butler County, Pennsylvania and Bradford Woods Borough, Franklin Park Borough, Marshall Township, Ohio Township, Pine Township, in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania: Report 2,” (Pittsburgh, PA: Carroll V. Hill & Associates, 1962).

availability of adequate utilities and public services, and the need to protect and preserve open space.”⁵⁶

Despite efforts to control growth, Cranberry became closely associated with the problems of suburban sprawl, which prompted an anti-growth backlash among some residents even as other areas of the Steel Valley faced continued out-migration and high unemployment.⁵⁷ The township approved zoning regulations in 1972, and the issue of open space was of particular concern to many Butler County residents.⁵⁸ “Cranberry Township....provides abundant space in which to live in harmony with nature, but such spaciousness can be very deceptive,” concluded a local historian in the early 1990s. “In gaining accessibility we have forfeited thousands of acres to highway developments...new homes...[and] new retail, commercial and institutional developments.”⁵⁹ At about the same time, the township became the first municipality in the state to impose a \$1,000 impact fee on every new house.⁶⁰ Some private developers also sought to take advantage of this interest in maintaining community. Seven Fields, a new urbanist community, opened in the early 1990s west of Cranberry. “We knew no one would ever build behind us,” said Chuck Galbraith, an executive at Rockwell Software

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Bill Schackner, “Northern Neighbors Fear Sprawl of Suburbs,” *Pittsburgh Press*, May 13, 1992, N1; “Mall, Madness, Unhappy Cranberry Targeted for More Development,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, June 5, 1995, A8; Robert Kochanowski, “Land Use Controls Aren’t Practiced at All in Much of Our Area,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, June 28, 1995, A8; Karl Blankenship, “Author Uses Photo Book to Call for Comprehensive Planning,” *Chesapeake Bay Journal* (December 1995).

⁵⁸ On opposition to mall development, see Jeffrey Andrasovsky, “Resistance to Mall Ends with Approval,” *Butler Eagle*, October 21, 2001; Scott Dellett, “Ground Broken for \$15-Million Mall,” *Butler Eagle*, October 23, 1980, “Homes Yes! Mall No!,” *Butler Eagle*, October 21, 2001.

⁵⁹ Hayes, *Cranberry Township*.

⁶⁰ Swaney, “An Oasis of Development in the Suburbs.”

who moved to the community with his wife in 1993. “There weren’t going to be any surprises like people find in Cranberry.”⁶¹

From Point to Pointe: Mills and Malls in Suburbia

Manufacturing in the Pittsburgh Metropolitan Region was always relatively dispersed along the flat lands of the river valleys, but new industrial development did not begin to move to the overlooking ridges and hilltops until just prior to World War II. In 1938, U.S. Steel built the Irvin Works to supply an adjacent Fischer auto body plant on a bluff overlooking the Mon River. By 1951, a host of other employers, including Continental Can and Westinghouse Electric, built facilities nearby, boosting total employment by more than 10,000.⁶² The construction of the plant and improvements to nearby roads fueled the rapid expansion of rural West Mifflin, which doubled in population even as the neighboring communities of Homestead, Duquesne and McKeesport declined precipitously. Unlike earlier communities based around the river, the automobile guided industrial and residential settlement patterns in the new hilltop communities, allowing separation between conflicting land uses, a feature lauded by planners and civic boosters as a symbol of the region’s social and physical transformation. “This mill, located high above the river on a large tract of land surrounded by wooded hills is a striking contrast to those industries crowded into the valley below,” declared a 1961 PRPA report. “Most of the major industries which have located in West Mifflin have large sites and ample parking lots.... Homes are not

⁶¹ Gretchen McKay, “Town in the ‘Middle of Nowhere’ Puts Neighborhoods Back on Map,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, October 15, 2000.

⁶² Irwin Works (5,000), Fischer Body (2,500), Continental Can (1,200), Westinghouse (2,000). Beachler, *Growing Pains in the Suburbs*.

clustered around centers of employment, and shopping areas are located within driving distance rather than walking distance of residential neighborhoods.”⁶³

Following the war, the ACCD spearheaded the push for suburban manufacturing to attract more diversified industries as consumers for the region’s steel mills and employers outside the region’s heavy industrial base. “In order to be industrially well-balanced, we want our basic industries to be supplemented with plants that can use the products of the basic industries in the production of consumer goods,” explained ACCD executive committee member F.D. Hollinshead in 1946. Developers wanted “a modern, attractive building all on one floor” located on a “flat parcel of land of at least ten acres on ‘a main highway’ with plenty of light and clean surroundings.” Currently, he concluded, “we have almost no well-developed plant sites that would be of interest to the manufacturer of consumer goods.”⁶⁴ Through the mid-1950s the industrial development efforts of Pittsburgh’s progrowth coalition focused on creating additional space for existing industries in the river valleys.⁶⁵ In Pittsburgh, the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) cleared two sites for J&L Steel and the federal Model Cities program subsidized an expansion of Westinghouse in Turtle Creek during the late 1960s.⁶⁶ These expansions were limited to existing large industrial employers, however, and ACCD and local officials grew increasingly concerned with the lack of space suitable for new

⁶³ Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association, “Steel Valley District: A Long Range Development Plan for the Boroughs of Homestead, West Homestead, West Mifflin and Whitaker,” (Pittsburgh, PA: PRPA, 1961).

⁶⁴ F.D. Hollinshead, “Locating Industry in the Pittsburgh Area, An Address to the Members of the Pittsburgh Junior Chamber of Commerce, June 14, 1946,” reprinted in *Allegheny Conference Digest* 1, no. 4 (September 1946): 9-10, ACCD Records, Box 129, Folder 5.

⁶⁵ Allegheny Conference on Community Development, “Report on Industrial Sites in Allegheny County,” 1946, ACCD Records, Vertical File “Industrial Sites – Pittsburgh.” See also, Mershon, “Corporate Social Responsibility and Urban Revitalization,” 490-500.

⁶⁶ “Toward a New Pittsburgh,” *Pennsylvania Plans* 1, no. 7 (October 1951): 31-36, SPB, Box 2 “Minutes and Agenda,” Folder “1951”; Marshall Kaplan, Gans and Kahn, “The First Action Year of the Model Cities Program in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania: A Case Study,” 1972.

manufacturing facilities. A planned industrial district in Pittsburgh's Manchester neighborhood designed to compensate for and complement the commercial redevelopment in the Golden Triangle exposed the difficulty in redeveloping the region's crowded urban areas, including high real estate values and the relocation of thousands residents.⁶⁷ Though a 1954 planning study of Pittsburgh's North Side included a planned industrial district in Manchester, an address by ACCD executive director Park Martin in 1951 expressed doubt at the feasibility of the project and suggested that civic leaders would instead have to turn to suburban locations for planned industrial parks.⁶⁸

The desire to attract new and expanding industries to the Steel Valley led to the expansion of the public-private coalition driving the Pittsburgh Renaissance into the suburban periphery. In 1954, an ACCD-sponsored report declared that new firms and jobs "would not automatically distribute themselves in proportion to the present distribution of facilities and employment;" rather the trend was "toward locations away from existing industrial centers."⁶⁹ Responding to the report's conclusion that industrial development increasingly required a "highly organized and coordinated approach by individual communities and by regions," in 1955 the ACCD collaborated with politicians from Allegheny, Beaver, Washington and Westmoreland Counties to form the non profit Regional Industrial Development Corporation (RIDC). Sponsors charged the RIDC with

⁶⁷ Civic Design Committee, Pittsburgh Chapter of Pennsylvania Society of Architects, American Institute of Architects, "Report on Urban Redevelopment, Pilot Study Number One, Manchester District," report prepared for Allegheny Conference on Community Development, June 20, 1947, ACCD Records, Vertical File, "Urban Redevelopment – Pittsburgh (Folder #2)."

⁶⁸ Pittsburgh Regional Planning Commission and the Pittsburgh City Planning Commission, "North Side Study," 1954; Park Martin "Does Pittsburgh Need an Industrial Development District?" address to Western Pennsylvania Chapter, Society of Industrial Realtors, January 9, 1951, ACCD Records, Vertical File "Speeches."

⁶⁹ Pennsylvania Economy League Inc. -- Western Division, "A More Effective Industrial Development Program for the Pittsburgh Region" (prepared at the request of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development for the Joint Committee of the Allegheny Conference and the Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce, November 1, 1954), 1, 11.

fostering a healthy business climate in the area through research and education, providing employers with assistance in obtaining low-interest loans for public and private sources, and acquiring and developing sites suitable for industrial employers.⁷⁰ Between 1955 and 1960, the RIDC invested over \$21 million from public and private sector sponsors on converting former county land in O'Hara Township, north of Pittsburgh, to the region's first publicly sponsored industrial park. By 1960, the site featured nearly twenty buildings, employment for four thousand workers, and accounted for a nearly \$4 million increase in O'Hara Township's property tax valuation, the largest of any in Allegheny County.⁷¹ In 1971, RIDC established the Thorn Hill Industrial Park on 925-acres in Marshall Township and Cranberry Township in Butler County and the RIDC Park West on six hundred acres adjacent to the Penn-Lincoln Parkway West near the Greater Pittsburgh International Airport. By the early 1980s, the three RIDC industrial parks provided nearly 6.5 million square feet of space for 185 different companies employing more than sixteen thousand people.⁷²

As suburban manufacturing expanded during the 1950s and 1960s, retail trade and other urban functions followed populations into the growing periphery.⁷³ The issues of terrain and slow population growth limiting residential expansion in the Steel Valley also delayed the appearance of the first suburban shopping malls around Pittsburgh until the

⁷⁰ Mel Seidenberg, "New Non-Profit Development Group Is Formed: Board of 20 Members Composed of Top Level Business, Labor and Local Government Leaders," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, June 19, 1955; "Functions of New Industrial Development Group Summarized," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, June 19, 1955;

⁷¹ "RIDC Park Makes Jobs for 4,000: More Plants for O'Hara Twp. on Plan Board," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, January 3, 1960; Mel Seidenberg, "Labor, Two Counties Join PRIDC Program," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, January 11, 1962; William Pade, "\$50 Million Industry Park at Workhouse Gets Okay: County Gives O'Hara Plan Green Light," *Pittsburgh Press*, October 11, 1962.

⁷² Joe Grata, "RIDC Doing a Job by Helping Many Keep Theirs," *Pittsburgh Press*, January 22, 1980; "RIDC Good Economic Tonic for District," *Pittsburgh Press*, January 18, 1982.

⁷³ On the migration of urban functions to the suburbs, see Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic*.

opening of Monroeville's Miracle Mile shopping center in 1954.⁷⁴ While the Golden Triangle continued to hold the predominance of department stores, the decentralization of retail services in the late 1940s and early 1950s alarmed key backers of the Pittsburgh Renaissance, such as ACCD executive committee member and retail czar Edgar Kauffman.⁷⁵ "It's logical for Pittsburgh to be a downtown center," declared I.D. Wolf, Kauffman's Department Store general manager in 1952. "The growth of suburban centers in other cities has been because there has been no redevelopment of the city such as we have here."⁷⁶ During the early 1950s, Kaufmann reaffirmed his commitment to downtown shopping by undertaking a \$9 million expansion while rejecting overtures from suburban developers already beginning work on the Monroeville Mall.⁷⁷ By 1961, despite efforts to improve downtown parking, traffic, infrastructure, and the city's image, there were six shopping areas within a two-mile radius in the North Hills: the East Hills Shopping Center on Pittsburgh's eastern end as well as five smaller developments in nearby Penn Township and the Miracle Mile in Monroeville.⁷⁸

As in Cranberry, excellent access to the region's developing highway system as well as ample amounts of available and relatively flat land facilitated the postwar development of Monroeville. Carved from Patton Township in 1952 to prevent annexation by its larger neighbors, Monroeville was at the intersection of the Pennsylvania Turnpike, US 22, the Penn-Lincoln Parkway, and the William Penn Highway (US 30). Through the early part of the twentieth century, the area that became

⁷⁴ Edwin Beachler, *The Story of Pittsburgh's No. 1 Headache* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Press, 1952).

⁷⁵ Lubove, *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh Volume One*, 126-127.

⁷⁶ Beachler, *The Story of Pittsburgh's No. 1 Headache*.

⁷⁷ Ibid. Foley, "For Monroeville the Bloom Is Not Off the 30-Year Boom," 1980.

⁷⁸ Guide-Post Research, *Neighborhood Shopping Vs. Downtown Shopping* (Pittsburgh, PA: Pittsburgh Press, 1961). The "junior executive suburbs" south of Pittsburgh offered another attractive market, with four major and five smaller shopping centers within a four mile-wide band between Scott Township and the Mon River at Glassport.

Monroeville looked much like the rest of Pittsburgh's rural periphery. Primarily agricultural, the region's first real growth came from a coal boom during World War I that left much of the area scarred from surface mining. "I used to come out here and fish and pick elderberries 50 years ago," recalled Miles Span. "Patton Township was one of the ugliest farmlands," he continued. "It was coal country. There were big hills of coal and strip."⁷⁹

The origins of Monroeville's transformation from rural hinterland to suburban "edge city" began in 1924 with the paving of the William Penn Highway between the community and Pittsburgh.⁸⁰ "It was countryside in 1924," recalled local businessman W.H. 'Hook' Warner. "Everyone was a farmer. But the highway was paved. The automobiles began coming in. And I built a garage and started in the garage and service station business in Monroeville Village. About 1936, I went into the excavating business. They started to develop farms and put in streets and dig cellars. I was here, so I started in."⁸¹ This pre-war boom dramatically expanded during the 1950s and 1960s with the completion of additional highway projects, including Business Route 22 (1942), improvements to the William Penn Highway (1949), the Monroeville Interchange of the Pennsylvania Turnpike (1950), and the Parkway East (1954).⁸² Between the early 1950s and the mid-1990s, Monroeville's population skyrocketed from 1,500 to more than 30,000. During the first quarter of 1959 alone, Monroeville saw the construction of 272

⁷⁹ Foley, "For Monroeville the Bloom is Not Off the 30-Year Boom."

⁸⁰ On the origins of the term "edge city," see Garreau, *Edge City*.

⁸¹ Foley, "For Monroeville the Bloom is Not Off the 30-Year Boom."

⁸² On the development of southwestern Pennsylvania's highway system, see <http://www.pahighways.com>.

new homes in subdivisions sprouting up throughout the area.⁸³

Monroeville's location and rapid population growth enabled the community to capitalize on the postwar decentralization of urban services. Through the mid-1950s, Monroeville residents along with those in nearby areas such as Penn Hills, Murrysville, and Plum Township commuted to more established communities for shopping, personal services and other consumptive activities. This changed with the purchase of a large parcel of property along US 22 by Columbus (Ohio) developer Don Casto, a pioneer in shopping mall construction described by one commentator as "the man who changed the shopping habits of the free world." "This Monroeville Community will be one of America's great decentralized drive-in shopping centers," Casto predicted.⁸⁴ On November 1, 1954, the ten million dollar 'Miracle Mile' shopping center opened with a carnival-like atmosphere featuring prizes, fireworks and "Suicide Pete," an Evil Kneival precursor whose act included crashing through a tunnel of fire on his motorcycle.⁸⁵ "You can't imagine what it was like then," recalled Dorothy Larson of Penn Hills. "There was nothing but a couple of gas stations between here and the Miracle Mile. We had shopped in small towns, Wilkinsburg, East Liberty. [The new shopping center] had everything under the sun, like a bake shop, things we weren't used to having."⁸⁶

The construction of the Miracle Mile was only part of a larger development strategy that focused on providing urban services in a suburban setting. The decentralization of department stores faced opposition from Pittsburgh merchants who

⁸³ Allegheny County Planning Commission, "Progress Report of the Allegheny County Planning Commission to the Board of County Commissioners," April 8, 1959.

⁸⁴ Foley, "For Monroeville the Bloom Is Not Off the 30-Year Boom."

⁸⁵ Casto was known for using dramatic Grand Openings to advertise his developments. For Casto's contribution to the history of the suburban shopping mall, see Steven E. Schoenherr, *Evolution of the Shopping Center*, available at < <http://history.sandiego.edu/gen/soc/shoppingcenter.html> > [Feb. 17, 2006]

⁸⁶ Foley, "For Monroeville the Bloom Is Not Off the 30-Year Boom."

reportedly told Casto that suburban shopping centers would never last.⁸⁷ In a 1980 interview, Doral Chenoweth, an associate of Casto's, remarked that it was not until "much later that other developers, such as [Monroeville Mall developer] Don Mark Realty, now Oxford Development, got your town on the duff and moved them into this century."⁸⁸ Despite vocal opposition, Pittsburgh's progrowth civic leadership exhibited a more ambiguous attitude toward suburban development overall as they sought to balance downtown development with overall regional growth. At the same time as Casto began work on the Miracle Mile, home developers Sampson-Miller Associates set about creating Garden City, a five hundred acre, 1,500 home residential area nearby, designed to complement the mall by providing both amenities and a growing population to use them. In July 1954, the ACCD's Park Martin described Garden City as "the first planned and integrated unit of this size that I know of in the country. It's a big step forward and such construction as this will go far in solving our suburban problems."⁸⁹

As early as the 1960s, progrowth civic and political elites recognized the potential of strategically located suburban areas, such as Monroeville, to generate economic growth. During the early 1950s, Monroeville's population doubled as property values more than doubled from \$3 to \$7 million. "The Turnpike was a real boon to this borough," declared local burgess Samuel Jenkins in 1956. "And from the looks of new

⁸⁷ This opposition on the part of Pittsburgh's biggest retail stores to locating in enclosed, suburban shopping centers is supported by an interview with Bel-O-Mar's Jim Weaver. Weaver recalled a meeting in the late-1960s with a Kaufmann's executive who indicated his company was not interested in a shopping mall location near Wheeling, but preferred "free standing, box stores." Apparently this view changed by 1973 when Kaufmann's opened its first Ohio Valley location in the new Fort Steuben Mall. Author's interview with James L. Weaver, July 2004.

⁸⁸ Foley, "For Monroeville the Bloom Is Not Off the 30-Year Boom."

⁸⁹ Ibid.

and contemplated construction, our business district hasn't even got a good start.”⁹⁰

During the early 1960s, civic elites increasingly looked to light manufacturing and service sector growth to compensate for declining heavy industrial employment.

Allegheny's 1963 economic development plan especially pointed to the region's growing importance as an administrative and research center with 120 laboratories involved in every major industry except aircraft and automotive, employing twenty thousand residents. “In addition to self-creation of industrial opportunities in this manner the new research operations can also act as magnets to attract outside firms, anxious to benefit from any research findings, to the area,” the report concluded.⁹¹

Monroeville in particular represented a choice location for research and development due to its rapid highway links to downtown administrative offices and universities as well as its suburban atmosphere and modern image. “The virtually unanimous preference of postwar research centers for suburban locations is striking,” reported the *Economic Study of the Pittsburgh Region* in 1963. “Since they are competitors with academic institutions for professional personnel, they believe that a research center with a campus atmosphere helps their recruitment programs [and] serves as symbols of progressive management which will impress the company's customers and the general public.”⁹² Beginning with Westinghouse's construction of an atomic research center in the late 1930s, this focus on research and development continued with the consolidation of US Steel's research facilities in Monroeville in 1953-54. By the 1990s,

⁹⁰ Arthur T. Moore, “Pennsylvania Turnpike System: Boon to Business and Industry,” (Harrisburg, PA: Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission, n.d.).

⁹¹ Michael Baker Jr. Inc., “Allegheny County: Overall Economic Development Plan,” report prepared for the Allegheny County Overall Economic Development Program Committee and the Allegheny County Department of Planning and Development, 1977.

⁹² Lowry, *Portrait of a Region*, 98.

numerous corporations, such as PPG Industries, Chemical R&D, Aristech Chemical, and Cutler Hammer all had research facilities in Monroeville as well as more than thirty environmental companies and a supercomputing center operated by the National Science Foundation.⁹³

Monroeville's ability to provide services and levels of employment associated with urban centers rapidly grew during the 1970s and 1980s as the community added numerous hotels, restaurants, industrial parks, and an even larger regional shopping center, the Monroeville Mall.⁹⁴ By the early 1990s, the Monroeville Expo Mart, a convention center that encompassed 150,000 square feet, rivaled downtown Pittsburgh's David Lawrence Conference Center. Annual sales in the Monroeville area reached \$1.6 billion, making it the second largest retail center in Western Pennsylvania.⁹⁵ Borrowing from urban scholar Joel Garreau's work on suburban development, Monroeville boosters proudly began advertising their community as an "edge city," an area on the edge of a metropolitan area that could provide a high level of amenities and employment.⁹⁶ Its status as an edge city, one promotional pamphlet pointed out, "is one of a select handful in the nation...and that makes it golden to a wide variety of businesses and to a large and very satisfied group of people who call Monroeville home."⁹⁷

⁹³ Wander, "Monroeville is an 'Edge City'."

⁹⁴ "City Council Advances Plan to Finance Shopping Mall," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, October 10, 1979, "Expansion to Start in Monroeville Mall," *Pittsburgh Press*, May 27, 1979, Carl Morris, "\$17 Million Shopping Mall Plan Approved Tentatively by Council," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, October 4, 1979.

⁹⁵ Wander, "Monroeville Is an 'Edge City'."

⁹⁶ Garreau's five criteria for edge cities include: five million square feet of leasable office space, 600,000 square feet of leasable retail space (Monroeville tripled that), a population increase during the work day, a local perception as a single-end destination for mixed use, and a recent history of non-urban densities. See "The List: Edge Cities, Coast to Coast," in Garreau, *Edge City*, 423. For other efforts to describe the decentralized metropolitan areas in the late twentieth century, see Rob Kling, Spencer C. Olin, and Mark Poster, *Postsuburban California: The Transformation of Orange County since World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

⁹⁷ Wander, "Monroeville Is an 'Edge City'."

Monroeville's booster image belied a growing uncertainty about the community's status as a major service and employment provider. "Why bring in another shopping center?" asked Marilyn Chandler in 1991. Chandler, a Monroeville resident involved in local efforts to limit commercial development, complained about the effect of traffic and other urban ills on the quality of life in the community. "We're already jammed to the gills. You've got to feel sorry for the people who live here and have to leave their houses."⁹⁸ As the region's focus shifted to the booming Airport Corridor in western Allegheny County, however, the community also faced challenges in attracting high-paying jobs with office vacancy rates reaching more than 20 percent in the early 1990s. "Pittsburgh's whole growth pattern is now geared toward the airport," said John Hoy, regional managing director of real estate firm Rubenstein Co. "If you give a company a choice of where they want to locate to," added Brendan McManus, director of commercial lending at Howard Hanna Real Estate Services Inc. "it won't be the east unless they have a specific reason for wanting to be there."⁹⁹

By the late twentieth century, these twin concerns of making Monroeville a more attractive place for both new businesses and residents resulted in a push for urban redevelopment in this suburban edge city. "In the 1950s, '60s and '70s, we grew up as part of the exit out of the city and into the suburbs," said Jim Lomeo, a real estate attorney and Monroeville's mayor. "But now we have traffic issues and aesthetic issues." "What we're trying to do is keep Monroeville a vital community and keep it competitive

"At Home in Monroeville," *Pittsburgh Business Times*, March 25, 1991.

⁹⁸ "Monroeville Ails in East as Office Market Goes West: Space Surveys Report Vacancy May Be as High as 20 Percent," *Pittsburgh Business Times*, November 22, 1992.

⁹⁹ Tim Schooley, "For its Commercial Success, Monroeville Still has Image Issues," *Pittsburgh Business Times*, October 4-10, 30-31.

with the other emerging commercial areas in the region,” said Shelly Koltenbaugh, director of planning for Monroeville. “It kind of is the same thing as the revitalization of a downtown,” she added. “It’s just a different kind of downtown.”¹⁰⁰

Connecting the Valleys

While many suburban regions such as Cranberry, Monroeville and the Airport Corridor attracted new residents from both inside and outside the area, the Steel Valley as a whole began to lose population during the 1960s due to decreasing employment in the steel mills and coal mines.¹⁰¹ A model in which declining core and periphery areas are separated by an expanding middle ground of suburban growth characterizes the process of postwar regional development in Southwestern Pennsylvania. “In the recent past, shifts in the location pattern of employment and population...have resulted mainly from the net effects of two broad opposing movements,” reported the 1963 *Economic Study*. “One of these was the outward push from central city to surrounding areas; the other, the inward flow from farms and mines of the rural hinterland toward the metropolitan center.”¹⁰²

Beginning in the 1950s, federal and state-sponsored urban redevelopment programs focused on slum clearance sought to replace decaying downtowns with expanded industrial land, subsidized housing and hospital projects, and more modern business districts.¹⁰³ The largest and best known of these programs was the Pittsburgh Renaissance, but dozens of smaller communities, including McKeesport, Ambridge, and

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ The six counties of the Steel Valley in southwestern Pennsylvania lost approximately 10 percent of their population during the period.

¹⁰² Max Nurnberg, *Economic Study of the Pittsburgh Region, Vol. III Region with a Future* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1963).

¹⁰³ On the trajectory of postwar urban redevelopment programs in the United States, see Jon C. Teafor, *The Rough Road to Renaissance: Urban Revitalization in America, 1940-1985* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990).

New Kensington, also embarked on urban redevelopment projects with public housing projects in a dozen more.¹⁰⁴ By 1965, investment in the Golden Triangle increased assessed valuation of the fifty-nine acre tract from \$7 million to \$44 million, despite the creation of new open space in Point State Park. McKeesport, the region's second largest city, had also established a planning commission, a comprehensive plan, an active redevelopment authority and had provided leadership in the Mon-Yough Conference on Community Planning following its establishment in 1957.¹⁰⁵ Officials in Kittanning, the county seat of rural Armstrong County, also embarked on extensive urban redevelopment and by 1970 had completed Phase 1 of a four-part program to revive the downtown business area, construct housing for the poor and elderly and provide room to expand the county hospital.¹⁰⁶

While the level of participation and success varied widely from community to community, regional employment and population loss as well as the national trend toward increasing suburban growth limited the success of redevelopment efforts in both urban and rural areas. By 1966, according to the Pennsylvania State Planning board, the Steel Valley's older communities were "losing many of their traditional economic functions and, in the process of assuming the new role of social welfare agencies catering to the needs of the Region's poor, ill-educated, unemployed, aged and generally

¹⁰⁴ "Status of Redevelopment Program" (1952) and "Summary Report of Housing and Redevelopment Program" (1951), both in SPB, Box 2 "Minutes and Agenda." In addition to local efforts, several of the counties also oversaw redevelopment programs, including a county program in Allegheny, which culminated in the creation of the Turtle Creek Model Cities program in 1969, one of the nation's only Model Cities programs directly administered by a county government. Marshall Kaplan, Gans and Kahn and United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, "The First Action Year of the Model Cities Program in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania."

¹⁰⁵ McKeesport City Planning Commission and Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association, "Master Plan, City of McKeesport: A Technical Report," 1964; Pennsylvania State Planning Board. "Regional Development Reconnaissance: Region 12 [a Staff Working Paper]," 1966.

¹⁰⁶ "The Changing Face of Kittanning," *Kittanning Leader-Times*, January 6, 1973, "Redevelopment Here Ahead of Schedule," *Kittanning Leader-Times*, October 22, 1970.

disadvantaged, [were] acquiring the mirror-image characteristics of contemporary suburbia.”¹⁰⁷ Monessen, along the Monongahela River in Westmoreland, provides an excellent example of the limits of urban redevelopment in Southwestern Pennsylvania. Incorporated in 1898, the community hosted a number of major steel facilities including US Steel’s Monessen Works, Wheeling-Pittsburgh’s Rod and Wire Mills and the American Chain and Cable Plant.¹⁰⁸ The city’s energetic mayor, Hugo Parentes, who served from 1946 to 1971, spearheaded a major attempt to restructure the city’s economy and revitalize the cramped and aging downtown beginning in the early 1950s. The city’s master plan adopted in 1957 called for major redevelopment projects on the city’s east and west entrances.¹⁰⁹ The Eastgate project, completed during the mid-1960s, resulted in the clearing of “blighted” areas and the construction of a combined community and health center, while the Westgate project, begun in the mid 1960s, was to be the most extensive urban renewal program ever planned for the Mon Valley.¹¹⁰

While a large part of the demolition of substandard housing occurred in the area, the Westgate project was unable to cope with the size of the area to be developed and the extra costs resulting from Monessen’s rough topography. As in Martins Ferry, Parente’s goal with Westgate was to eliminate one of the worst slums in the Monongahela Valley. More than three-fourths of the structures in the fifty-five-acre project area were old,

¹⁰⁷ Pennsylvania State Planning Board, *Regional Development Reconnaissance: Region 12*, 62. Despite the existence of numerous urban revitalization programs, local redevelopment projects were generally quite limited in scope. By 1965, only Washington and Allegheny had planning staffs of more than three people, while the private sector performed 40 percent of all comprehensive planning studies in Allegheny.

¹⁰⁸ Matthew Magda, *Monessen: Industrial Boomtown and Steel Community, 1898–1980* (Harrisburg, PA: 1985); Program Book Committee, *Monessen Diamond Jubilee: Monessen Working Together, 75th Anniversary, 1898-1973* (Monessen, PA: Program Book Committee, 1973).

¹⁰⁹ Redevelopment Authority of the City of Monessen, “*Annual Report, 1968*”; Hugo J. Parente, “n.d.”; Monessen Planning Commission, *The Story of the Plan for Monessen* (Monessen, PA: The Commission, 1960), all in Matthew Magda Office Files (unprocessed). Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg, PA.

¹¹⁰ “Report on Redevelopment,” 1965, PA Commerce, Box 9, “Office of the Secretary, General Correspondence (Tabor), 1963-1965,” Folder “Community Development.”

obsolete or poorly maintained; several had only dirt floors and no indoor plumbing. The project intended to rebuild the community with good housing, parks, and playgrounds, along with improving the western entrance into the city. But the initiative bogged down in the early 1970s, leaving vacant lots along with unoccupied structures.¹¹¹ As with similar programs in Martin's Ferry and other small industrial cities in the Steel Valley, local initiatives were not sufficient to overcome problems of a regional nature. "The Westgate experience in particular and Monessen's redevelopment efforts in general raise the question of whether the outmoded infrastructure (roads, houses, sewers, etc.) in many of the aging and declining industrial towns can be modernized, and if so, who will provide the required capital for this massive task," concluded one observer.¹¹²

The continued decline of many older urban areas caused community leaders and residents in southwestern Pennsylvania to rethink their approach to urban redevelopment. Unlike earlier attempts, which involved large-scale demolition of downtown residential areas for conversion to commercial and industrial use, by the mid-1980s redevelopment agencies emphasized a two-pronged approach to community development largely modeled after the success of their suburban neighbors. The closure of steel mills in the river valleys opened large swaths of land, prompting renewed calls for planned industrial districts in many communities, while a second major push involved efforts to tie former mill towns to suburban growth areas via highway construction.¹¹³ The use of highways as a structural solution to regional development problems in the Steel Valley dated back at

¹¹¹ Redevelopment Authority of the City of Monessen, "Annual Report, 1968"; "Hugo Parente"

¹¹² Magda, *Monessen*, 140.

¹¹³ On the development of industrial parks on former mill sites, see Ed Blazina, "Reuse of Mills to be Studied," *Pittsburgh Press*, March 27, 1987; Richard Stouffer, "Big Mills Sites Go Public," *New York Times*, September 18, 1988, R25; Jim McKay, "RIDC will Spend \$20 million to Revamp Westinghouse Plant," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, January 19, 1989, 14.

least to the enactment of the Appalachian Regional Development Act in 1965.¹¹⁴

Beginning in the mid-1960s, local politicians and residents put forth proposals for a system of three highways connecting the declining Allegheny, Beaver, and Monongahela River Valleys with the region's growing suburban areas. With the decline of river and rail transportation, local officials increasingly saw highways as the key to economic development in many parts of the region. "The provision of adequate transportation routes is one of the most difficult and expensive problems facing the [Mon Valley]," declared a 1961 PRPA report. Nevertheless, the report's authors concluded, "If the Steel Valley communities are to remain good places to live and work during the next twenty years there must be adequate provision for the efficient and economic movement of people and goods to, from, within and through the District."¹¹⁵

As in the ORV, politics, geography, and settlement patterns determined the success of various highway construction proposals in southwestern Pennsylvania. The first of the proposed routes paralleling the region's major river valleys to be completed was the Allegheny Valley Expressway (AVE), which extended from Pittsburgh's North Side neighborhoods through northeastern Allegheny and southern Armstrong. Driven by declining population levels due to failing farms and mines, county commissioners and other local leaders in rural Armstrong began pushing in the early 1950s for a four-lane highway to connect with the Pennsylvania Turnpike east of Pittsburgh. In 1955, an Armstrong delegation met with civic leaders from other areas to "advocat[e] the turnpike

¹¹⁴ On the early impact of the Appalachian Regional Commission's highway program, see Howard L. Gauthier, "The Appalachian Development Highway System: Development for Whom?" *Economic Geography* 49, no. 2 (April 1973): 103-108. See also, Ralph R. Widner, "Appalachian Development After 25 Years: An Assessment," *Economic Development Quarterly* 4, no. 4 (1990): 291-312.

¹¹⁵ Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association, *Steel Valley District: A Long Range Development Plan for the Boroughs of Homestead, West Homestead, West Mifflin and Whitaker* (Pittsburgh: PRPA, 1961), 17.

to be built along the Allegheny River.”¹¹⁶ These efforts coincided with a push by the ACCD to improve the route between the city’s North Side and the Turnpike.¹¹⁷ By 1969, Due to this political pressure as well as the region’s relatively flat terrain and lower population levels (outside Pittsburgh itself), crews had begun work upgrading three portions of the highway in Butler, Armstrong and Allegheny Counties, in addition to the completed Sharpsburg-Etna bypass on the city’s North Side.¹¹⁸

Armstrong officials increasingly focused economic development efforts on maximizing benefits from the ongoing construction of the AVE, which by the 1990s also prompted a symbolic transformation of the rural area into a suburban outpost of Pittsburgh. As early as 1964, Armstrong officials pointed out the future growth expected for the southern portions of the county “as a direct result of population pressures coming out from Pittsburgh and Allegheny County.”¹¹⁹ Between 1960 and 1970, the percentage of county residents commuting for work in neighboring Allegheny and Butler nearly doubled, reflecting the increasing integration of Armstrong into the regional economy.¹²⁰ During the 1970s, county officials began work on the 142-acre West Hills Industrial Park along a completed portion of the AVE near Kittanning, which they marketed as a “totally planned and controlled development at a major highway interchange.”¹²¹ Following the

¹¹⁶ AIS William H. Claypoole Papers, Box 2, Folder 40. William H. Claypoole, Letter to R.A. House, Jr., April 4, 1955.

¹¹⁷ WPHA ACCD Box 129, Folder 5. “The Highway Program,” Allegheny Conference Digest 1, no. 2 (December): 11; Beachler, *The Story of Pittsburgh’s No. 1 Headache*; Allegheny Conference on Community Development, *Allegheny Conference on Community Development...Presents* (Pittsburgh: ACCD, 1956), 17.

¹¹⁸ Jeffrey J. Kitsko, *Pennsylvania Highways: PA 28 Allegheny Valley Expressway*, Alexander H. Lindsay Highway, 2005. [cited 6/16/2005]. Available from <www.pahighways.com>.

¹¹⁹ Armstrong County Planning and Zoning Commission, *Plans for the Future, Armstrong County, Pennsylvania, Comprehensive Plan, Report No. 3* (Kittanning, PA: The Commission, 1964), 4.

¹²⁰ Armstrong County Planning Commission, *Economic Development Opportunities Plan for Armstrong County* (Kittanning: The Commission, 1979), 30.

¹²¹ Urban Development Consultants Inc., *Economic Development Strategy and Program for Armstrong County* (Pittsburgh: Armstrong County Planning Commission, 1974), 7.

completion of the AVE in the mid-1980s, efforts to improve access or the “image” of access to the city of Pittsburgh culminated in the development of a 925 acre mixed-use residential, recreational, commercial and light industrial campus located at the closest interchange.¹²² “Northpointe” formed the centerpiece of a new marketing campaign, “Armstrong County...The Best Thing Next to Pittsburgh,” which emphasized the region’s rural atmosphere combined with easy access to the central city.¹²³ In 1998, the Southwestern Pennsylvania Growth Alliance, an ACCD-sponsored regional development partnership, included the project in its first coordinated development agendas, because all ten member counties “recognized its strategic value to the region.”¹²⁴ “We’re in a paradigm of change,” declared Commissioner Jim Scahill. “Look at Northpointe. We’re into new age manufacturing. We need to create jobs for the 24- and 25-year olds. If we had sat on our duffs and not built the parks, then where would we be?”¹²⁵

The economic decline and rise in unemployment in the region’s heavy industries also motivated civic boosters and political leaders in the Mon Valley to support highway construction. The regional highway program sponsored by the ACCD during the 1950s did not provide a direct link to the communities of the Mon Valley, prompting local business and political leaders to organize around a proposed expressway paralleling the river, which they argued “would open up the southern metropolitan area to downtown Pittsburgh and allow us to grow with the same economic advantage as witnessed in the

¹²² Steven N. Brody Associates, *AKRC Strategic Plan and Marketing Strategy Recommendations* (Indiana, PA: Alle-Kiski Revitalization Corporation, 1988).

¹²³ “Positively Armstrong County...The Best Thing Next to Pittsburgh,” *Kittanning Leader-Times*, February 27, 1995; Armstrong County Industrial Development Council, “Northpointe ... A Business and Lifestyle Community for the 21st Century,” 2002 [available from www.armstrongidc.org]; Mitch Fryer, “Building the County’s Future,” *Kittanning Leader Times*, April 15, 2005.

¹²⁴ Allegheny Conference on Community Development, *2001 Annual Report* (Pittsburgh: ACCD, 2001), 8.

¹²⁵ Suzanne Elliott, “Armstrong Gains, Loses Trying to Strengthen Economy,” *Pittsburgh Business Times*, April 23, 2004.

other metropolitan areas of Pittsburgh.”¹²⁶ Under pressure from the pro-highway Communities United for a Monongahela Valley Expressway, state officials began purchasing and clearing property for the project during the late 1960s. Construction kicked off in February 1973 with a groundbreaking ceremony attended by Pennsylvania Governor Milton Shapp. The first portion of the project, which included 1.3 miles of pavement and a new bridge to carry U.S. 40 over the expressway, opened in 1977. Officials estimated that the route would be completed through Washington County by the mid-1980s.¹²⁷

Despite the “relentless...efforts” of local leaders, the “long, hard battle to get the Mon Valley Expressway off the drawing board and into the construction stage” resulted in few results through the late 1980s.¹²⁸ While the federal government agreed to match state funding for the MVE on a 50-50 basis, during the late 1970s Pennsylvania faced a financial crisis prompted by inflation and a declining economic base that halted new highway construction statewide. The financial savior of the expressway came with new legislation in the mid-1980s that financed select state highway projects through toll collection, but legislative compromises relegated the MVE to a secondary status, delaying the start of construction until after the BVE and several other projects were completed.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ Communities United for a Monongahela Valley Expressway, Charles Chattaway (Chairman), “Report to Delegates,” 1971, Casey Papers MVE.

¹²⁷ Jeffery Kisko, “PA Turnpike 43: Mon-Fayette Expressway,” available from <www.pahighways.com>.

¹²⁸ Watson, “Letter Re: Development of the Mon Valley Expressway.”

¹²⁹ Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission, “Beaver Valley Expressway: An Overview of Toll 60: The James E. Ross Highway,” (Harrisburg, PA: The Commission, 1991). This state-level effort paralleled a bi-partisan initiative led by Pennsylvania Senator John Heinz, who pushed a bill through Congress allowing the construction of toll roads with federal matching funds, and Representative Austin Murphy (D), who secured funds for a portion of the MVE south of Uniontown in Fayette County. “Financing the Project: An Overview,” *Mon/Fayette Transportation Project: Route to Progress*, Iss. 1, 1992.

The election of Governor Robert Casey in 1987 brought highway construction in the Steel Valley's declining river valleys to the forefront of the state's economic recovery program. Casey's announcement that he would restart construction on the MVE generated political opposition from other parts of the region also struggling with high unemployment. "I read with great interest recent newspaper accounts wherein you have shown great interest in completing the Mon Valley Expressway," wrote Tim Shaffer (R-Butler County) to Casey in February. "[W]hile your efforts...are laudable, I will vigorously resist any effort to elevate that project to priority with the Beaver Valley Expressway, the completion of which is now, at long last, within our grasp."¹³⁰ Nevertheless, on March 26, Casey announced that he would commit \$40 million to resume construction on the MVE. "I have made a commitment...to revitalize the Mon Valley. Rather than wait for another study...I have decided to proceed with a portion of the long-planned expressway...to improve this area's access to other major commercial routes."¹³¹ "This is excellent news," Washington commissioner Frank R. Mascara responded upon hearing the announcement. "I think the Governor recognizes that the long-term solution for developing the Mon Valley is good highways."¹³²

Opposition to state and local plans to use highway construction to generate economic development in the Mon Valley revealed important fault lines between Steel Valley residents resulting from postwar shifts in the economy and to hilltop suburbs. First, opponents questioned the extent of the economic stimulus supposedly generated by new highway construction. "The communities that are supposed to benefit from the

¹³⁰ State Representative Tim Shaffer to Gov. Robert Casey, "Letter," February 11, 1987, Casey Papers MVE.

¹³¹ Kitsko, *Pennsylvania Highways: PA Turnpike 43, Mon-Fayette Expressway*.

¹³² Ibid.

Expressway through some mystical process of capital attraction are already little more than retirement communities and open air museums,” wrote Charles Siuta, a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh and a resident of the prosperous South Hills area. “All propaganda to the contrary, the expressway is going to be one big empty highway from nowhere to nowhere. A more practical approach is to make grants available to towns ... to preserve their historical heritage.”¹³³ Other residents, while acknowledging the economic benefits of the highway, objected to specific routes. “As senior citizens and thirty-five year residents of West Mifflin, we...are too old to be uprooted and relocated in the guise of progress when there are other routes that could be used,” complained Sarah and Norman Wiese.¹³⁴ “This expressway will disrupt our lives, jobs and property,” echoed a petition to state officials signed by more than a dozen residents. “It will not benefit anyone in West Mifflin [and] will DIVIDE our community in half and destroy those along its path.”¹³⁵

While officials first proposed the Mon and Allegheny Valley Expressways to aid the Steel Valley’s declining urban-industrial communities, by the early 1990s the use of highway construction for economic development increasingly raised concerns about suburban sprawl. Though most development officials in the Mon Valley supported the completion of the MVE during the late 1980s, Pittsburgh Mayor Richard Caliguiri opposed extending the route through the city. “Over the years, the city has given up a number of neighborhoods to highway links serving suburban and regional areas. Unfortunately, these neighborhoods are never replaced or enhanced by the projects,”

¹³³ Chester L. Siuta to Gov. Robert Casey, "Letter," August 12, 1987, Casey Papers MVE.

¹³⁴ Sarah L. Weise and Norman A. Weise to Gov. Robert Casey, "Letter," April 22, 1988, Casey Papers MVE.

¹³⁵ Norma Dearfield to Gov. Robert Casey, "Letter," May, 26 1988, Casey Papers MVE.

Caliguiri explained in October 1987. “I cannot allow that pattern to continue.”¹³⁶ In 1994, environmental activist David Tessitor accused MVE proponents “cloaked under ‘regionalism’ [of providing] an opportunity for developers and land speculators to reap a bonanza from their land consumption while the region suffers the problems of sprawl.”¹³⁷ Accusations of promoting sprawl prompted Joe Kirk of the pro-highway Mon Valley Progress Council to respond, “Is sprawl bad or a natural and historic consequence of urban development that every city exhibits? Do people really want to live in cities, or should we give them a choice to live where they want?”¹³⁸

The Suburban Strategy and the “Airport of the Future”

At the same time as Steel Valley residents were debating the economic, environmental and social impacts of freeway construction, the MVE became intertwined with the Southern Beltway, a highway project designed to link the Mon Valley with the growing suburban areas surrounding the Pittsburgh International Airport (PIA) in western Allegheny. During the 1960s and 1970s, rural communities in the Airport Corridor dramatically increased in importance as both residential and commercial growth centers. During the 1980s, the progrowth coalition between the ACCD and local political leaders looked toward the construction of a new terminal at the PIA as both a symbol and an economic generator for the Pittsburgh region. “The airport means far more than transportation,” declared Penn’s Southwest director Steven George. “It means jobs,

¹³⁶ Richard Caliguiri to James B. Wilson, “Letter,” October 9, 1987. Cited in David Tessitor, “Don’t Follow the Yellow Brick Road,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, editorial, June 12, 1994, F1.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Don Hopey, “Draft of State Environmental Strategy Draws Fire, Developers Criticize ‘Anti-Growth Bias’ of Ridge Commission,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, June 17, 1998, B7.

development, growth.” Allegheny County Commission chairman Tom Forester added, “I think whole new cities will grow up around the airport.”¹³⁹

The PIA was an important part of the Pittsburgh Renaissance partnership for remaking southwestern Pennsylvania’s image and economy. In May 1946, Allegheny residents approved an ACCD-backed bond issue for highway construction, which earmarked \$6 million for converting a military airport in rural Moon Township to civilian use.¹⁴⁰ The dedication of the Greater Pittsburgh International Airport in 1952 provided the western anchor of the Penn-Lincoln Parkway extending through Pittsburgh to the Pennsylvania Turnpike in the east.¹⁴¹ The opening of the Fort Pitt Tunnels in 1960 completed this rapid highway connection, allowing travel between the Golden Triangle and the PIA in approximately twenty minutes, making it one of the most accessible airports in the nation.¹⁴² The PIA was the hub of rapidly expanding Allegheny Airlines (renamed USAir in 1979), and officials designed the terminal to symbolize Pittsburgh’s transformation.¹⁴³ “The spacious and striking terminal building is virtually a little city within itself,” proclaimed the ACCD in 1956. “It is also a popular attraction for sightseers and the pride of Pittsburghers [with] shops, services and conveniences of all

¹³⁹ Michael Marriott, “Pittsburgh Airport of Future Being Built,” *New York Times*, November 12, 1991, A16.

¹⁴⁰ Edward R. Weidlein, “Allegheny Conference Progress,” *Allegheny Conference Digest* 2, no. 1 (June 1947), 3, ACCD Records, Box 129, Folder 5. Of the total cost of the airport, the county provided \$24.7 million, the federal government contributed \$7.6 million, and the state added \$600,000. ACCD, “Allegheny Conference on Community Development...Presents,” 14.

¹⁴¹ “Pittsburgh’s Airport Has Come a Long Way, Baby,” *Beaver County Times* (Special Supplement), September 13, 1992.

¹⁴² Bruce S. Cridelbaugh, “Field Notes: A Brief Chronology – Fort Pitt Tunnels and Penn Lincoln Parkway,” December 15, 1999. Retrieved July 1, 2006 from the website of Bruce S. Cridelbaugh: <<http://pghbridges.com>>

¹⁴³ “US Airways Introduces ‘Throwback VistaJet’ with Allegheny Airlines Aircraft,” press release, June 29, 2006.

kinds [including] a spectacular glass-enclosed skyview dining room and nightclub [that] overlooks the field.”¹⁴⁴

While progrowth boosters envisioned the new airport as complementing downtown redevelopment, during the 1950s and 1960s the Airport Corridor along the Penn-Lincoln Parkway between Pittsburgh and the PIA emerged as one of the region’s most significant commercial centers.¹⁴⁵ “Out in the coal-stripped hills that form the Western pocket of Allegheny County, giant townships are stirring from a deep slumber,” wrote journalist Edwin Beachler in 1951. “They have been awakened by the whoosh of jets at Greater Pittsburgh Airport and rumble of bull-dozer on the Penn-Lincoln Parkway West.”¹⁴⁶ In addition to single-family homes, the area also increasingly played host to multi-family and condominium developments. One development, Pennbury Hills, featured the highest density in Allegheny County at fourteen thousand residents on forty-nine acres.¹⁴⁷ By 1963, the Airport Corridor formed the region’s second largest business center as several large out-of-town firms, such as Aetna Insurance and General Electric, chose to locate their regional branch offices along the Parkway rather than in the Golden Triangle.¹⁴⁸ By 1977, Allegheny development officials went so far as to declare that the area offered “unlimited potential in terms of industrial and office development which is oriented to the Airport facility.”¹⁴⁹

Airport Corridor development formed a key component of the regional growth strategy promoted by the ACCD and the RIDC in the wake of rapid declines in the

¹⁴⁴ ACCD, “Allegheny Conference on Community Development...Presents,” 14.

¹⁴⁵ The Airport Corridor eventually consisted of 24 municipalities, including rural Moon, Robinson and Findlay Townships as well as the boroughs of Coraopolis, Greentree, and Crafton.

¹⁴⁶ Beachler, *Growing Pains in the Suburbs*.

¹⁴⁷ “Robinson Eyes Borough Status,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, June 7, 1977.

¹⁴⁸ Lowry, *Portrait of a Region*, 92.

¹⁴⁹ Michael Baker Jr. Inc., “Allegheny County: Overall Economic Development Plan,” 91.

region's traditional industries. In 1979, RIDC officials opened the third of its publicly subsidized industrial parks, RIDC Park West, just south of the PIA along the Parkway. According to L.R. Love, an executive at energy and environmental consulting firm National Utility Service (NUS), one of the site's first tenants, the "RIDC West Park site helps combine our activities here making them more efficient.... Our work involves a lot of air travel [and] we can reach the airport (Greater Pittsburgh) in a few minutes."¹⁵⁰ Private developers, too, flocked to the Airport Corridor, even as the Mon Valley and other parts of the region faced the shock of steel's collapse. The 39-acre Vista Industrial Park off the Parkway West in Robinson Township had nine buildings containing more than 400,000 square feet of space, while construction of a fifteenth building in the adjacent Parkway West Industrial Park provided a total of about 540,000 square feet of industrial space.¹⁵¹ Unlike the colossal, interconnected mills abandoned in the river valleys that local developers had difficulty leasing, the new industrial parks met the demands for the small and medium sized firms driving regional growth during the 1970s and 1980s. A 1982 industrial site survey found that while purchases of manufacturing facilities had dropped by 50 percent from the previous year, while sales of high-technology facilities, found predominantly in suburban industrial parks, rose 35 percent.¹⁵²

Airport expansion, which officials linked to just-in-time delivery techniques and high-tech manufacturing, formed a key component of the *Strategy 21* economic

¹⁵⁰ Thomas J. Porter, Jr., "RIDC West Park Gets Office, Lab Complex," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, October 24, 1979.

¹⁵¹ Sam Spatter, "Small Industries Taking over Steel's Role Here," *Pittsburgh Press*, July 8, 1982.

¹⁵² "Hi-Tech Sites Give Realtors a Boost in Industrial Sales," *Pittsburgh Press*, November 28, 1982.

development program guiding Pittsburgh's progrowth coalition during the 1980s.¹⁵³ Allegheny commissioners began planning for an airport upgrade during the late 1960s, but political wrangling and a declining local economy stalled the project for over a decade.¹⁵⁴ In January 1985, to break the log jam over airport expansion and other economic development initiatives, state representative Tom Murphy (D-North Side) persuaded officials in Pittsburgh, Allegheny County and the region's two major research universities to coordinate their requests for state funding.¹⁵⁵ Of the \$495 million in state funds requested in the resulting proposal, entitled *Strategy 21: Pittsburgh/Allegheny Economic Development Strategy to Begin the 21st Century*, officials earmarked \$173 million for construction of a new Midfield Terminal and seven mile access highway. The *Strategy 21* report, coordinated by the ACCD, argued that the airport expansion "would have a dramatic effect on the region's economy" by creating 18,000 jobs over the next fifteen years. "It would strengthen the region's attraction as a corporate headquarters and convert seriously underutilized land to diverse, new business purposes with heavy job creation potential."¹⁵⁶ Construction on the airport began in 1987, and the \$700 million Midfield Terminal and the 7 mile Southern Expressway opened in 1992. "The new airport represents our collective efforts to pull ourselves up by our economic bootstraps

¹⁵³ On the growth of high-tech manufacturing in the Pittsburgh region during the late 1970s, see Allegheny Conference on Community Development, "A Strategy for Growth: An Economic Development Program for the Pittsburgh Region," November 1984, 24-30.

¹⁵⁴ Richardson, Gordon and Associates, Tippetts-Abbett-McCarthy-Stratton, and Allegheny County Board of Commissioners, "Terminal Site Selection Study Greater Pittsburgh Airport" (Pittsburgh, PA: Allegheny County Board of Commissioners, 1967). Tasso Katselas Associates Inc., *Greater Pittsburgh International Airport Expansion Program, New Terminal Complex, Concept Development Phase: Final Report* (Pittsburgh, PA: Tasso Katselas Associates Inc., 1981).

¹⁵⁵ Thomas J. Murphy, "Economic Development Activities in Allegheny County," January 14, 1985, Murphy Papers, Box 3.

¹⁵⁶ City of Pittsburgh, County of Allegheny, University of Pittsburgh, and Carnegie Mellon University, "Strategy 21: Pittsburgh/Allegheny Economic Development Strategy to Begin the 21st Century. A Proposal to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania," June 1985, 1-2.

and prepare to assume our proper place in the emerging world economy,” declared Allegheny County Commissioners.¹⁵⁷

State and local investment in the new terminal, billed by progrowth supporters as the “Airport of the Future,” quickly appeared to pay off in millions of dollars in private development nearby. Shortly after the start of terminal construction, work began on the Airport Corridor’s largest project to date, the Robinson Towne Center, a mixed-use development fifteen miles west of downtown and two miles east of the airport, which included a 435,000 square foot strip center, a large enclosed shopping mall, and more than 1.5 million square feet of office space with facilities for research and development. “We felt that the road system combined with the growth projects due to construction of the new Midfield terminal made Robinson Towne Center viable,” explained developer Michael Zamagias.¹⁵⁸ Airport Corridor growth also began to overflow into surrounding areas of Beaver and Washington. In 1987, the Washington County Redevelopment Authority began planning a massive mixed-use development on county land twelve miles southwest of the airport that was projected to generate \$500 million in private investment and create 4,000 new jobs. The six hundred acre Southpointe, which was financed by state, county, and private funds, called for 225 townhouses, seventy-five single family homes, and forty-five commercial and industrial buildings. By 1993, two housing projects, a golf course, and office buildings for a precision tool manufacturer, an engineering firm and Mitsubishi’s Rotary Nozzle Division were already open.¹⁵⁹

The continued success of the Airport Corridor in attracting employment growth

¹⁵⁷ Tom Foerster, Pete Flaherty, and Lawrence W. Dunn, “The Allegheny County Commissioners Welcome You to the Airport of the Future – the New Pittsburgh International Airport,” *Beaver County Times*, (Special Supplement), September 13, 1992, 1.

¹⁵⁸ Richard Stouffer, “A \$500 Million Suburban Mix,” *New York Times*, October 16, 1988.

¹⁵⁹ Chriss Swaney, “Mixed Uses on a Farm Site,” *New York Times*, February 7, 1993.

prompted officials from the declining Mon and Beaver Valleys to call for better highway access to the PIA. The most successful of these campaigns called for the completion of a “missing link” in the Beaver Valley Expressway (BVE) that remained uncompleted since the mid-1970s.¹⁶⁰ The decline of steel hit Beaver communities such as Aliquippa, Ambridge and Beaver Falls hard, and residents hungrily eyed growth in the Airport Corridor and the planned construction of the Midfield Terminal just across the county line. Between 1980 and 1990, manufacturing employment in Beaver declined by 60 percent, lifting unemployment to 30 percent in 1983 and prompting a nearly 10 percent drop in the county’s population.¹⁶¹ With the completion of the BVE through the southern portion of the county in the late 1970s, airport-generated development began to spill over into the county. Because property values were typically 35 to 40 percent lower than in Allegheny, housing was an especially important growth sector with more than 1,800 employees of USAir alone living in Beaver by 1986.¹⁶² “All of us are disturbed about what has happened to the steel industry, but I think we can’t look back,” declared state representative Nick Colafella (D-Aliquippa) in 1986. Instead, he envisioned a flourishing business district bordering an expanded airport along the BVE.¹⁶³ Beaver native Jay Aldridge, the influential director of Penn’s Southwest Association, mirrored this optimism. “If you look at the employment figures today,” Aldridge reported in 1988, “they exceed the numbers we had 10 years ago.” New jobs, he added, “are not from J&L

¹⁶⁰ Conceived in the early 1960s, the Beaver Valley Expressway connected the downtown area to the suburban areas west and northwest of the city. By 1977, the entire route had opened except for a 16.5-mile gap in northern Beaver and southern Lawrence Counties. Jeffrey J. Kitsko, “Beaver Valley Expressway,” 2006. Available from <<http://www.pahighways.com>>.

¹⁶¹ *County and City Data Book*.

¹⁶² Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission, “Beaver Valley Expressway: An Overview of Toll 60: The James E. Ross Highway,” September 1991, Casey Papers, unprocessed materials, ACCN #3117, Level 2, Slot 2667.

¹⁶³ Debra Utterback, “Outlook Optimistic, Colafella Says,” *Beaver County Times*, February 3, 1986.

[Steel Corp.] like they used to be. They are from the new job generator -- the airport.”¹⁶⁴

Despite the potential, some residents worried that airport-generated growth would bypass the county. State senator Tim Shaffer (R-Butler) and other local officials helped pass a legislative initiative during the mid-1980s that provided for the completion of the BVE, which opened in 1991, as a toll road.¹⁶⁵ “The most important reason for constructing the Beaver Valley Expressway is to help Beaver and Lawrence Counties revive economically,” the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission, which oversaw the project, reported in 1991. “Community leaders [are] hoping to replace lost jobs with new positions in diversified fields.... Completion of the Beaver Valley Expressway is expected to bring new residential, retail and light industrial development.”¹⁶⁶

BVE construction alone did not relieve concerns about the Beaver Valley’s struggling economy, as public officials and private developers launched a number of programs to plan for economic development and improve the county’s image. “Will Beaver County wait hat in hand for the crumbs of economic growth to fall from the table or will it aggressively belly up to the table for a hearty meal of nourishing new development?” pondered one editorial in 1988. “Are the business, social, industrial and political leaders of our county ready to break with the past, to bury the steel mills, to sink the river-bound mentality that pervades this area and look to the future?”¹⁶⁷ Pointing to the growth in Moon and Cranberry Townships to the south and east of the county, realtor Ron Dishler asked with alarm, “How can it all be happening around us and nothing be

¹⁶⁴ John Barker, “Beaver County Economic Position a Matter of Outsider Perception,” *Beaver County Times*, October 14, 1988.

¹⁶⁵ Kitsko, “Toll Road 60: Beaver Valley Expressway.”

¹⁶⁶ Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission, “Beaver Valley Expressway,” 2, 4.

¹⁶⁷ “Real Potential for Missed Opportunities,” *Beaver County Times*, November 27, 1988.

happening here?”¹⁶⁸ In 1988, a consortium of business people organized by Dishler launched a series of radio, magazine and billboard ads in conjunction with a Chamber of Commerce campaign to lure businesses, called “The Right Connection.” “We have to make things happen,” remarked acting Chamber of Commerce director Joseph Palermo. “Allegheny County is taking serious steps to develop the airport area,” he added, and “Beaver County cannot afford to be left behind.”¹⁶⁹

Many residents looked to the growth of the Airport Corridor as a generator for regional employment and as a symbol of the Steel Valley’s transformation, but the strategy of public investment in the suburbs also generated concern about shifting further resources away from the region’s declining urban areas. In 1992, a handful of high profile relocations from Pittsburgh to the RIDC Park West prompted a legislative investigation initiated by state representatives from Pittsburgh and the Mon Valley. Headed by Tom Murphy (D-North Side), the hearings focused on the RIDC’s policy of using public subsidies to offer private companies land at below market rates, despite the fact that the Airport Corridor was one of the most lucrative real estate markets in the region. “The fact of the matter is that RIDC has provided significant subsidies to companies with no intention of leaving the region,” declared Murphy, “There are limited funds available [and] we have a responsibility to decide whether we want our public funds to be used like that.”¹⁷⁰

These criticisms of the RIDC came at a time when the organization had already begun to shift its focus to redeveloping the ailing river valleys. In addition to its

¹⁶⁸ Tim Wesley, “County’s Image in Line for a Facelift,” *Beaver County Times*, April 29, 1988.

¹⁶⁹ Jun H. Yu, “Development Plan Opposed,” *Beaver County Times*, October 2, 1988.

¹⁷⁰ Ellen M Perlmutter, “Officials Critical of RIDC Practices: Question Use of Public Funds,” *Pittsburgh Press*, February 7, 1991.

suburban properties, the organization was heavily invested in the Allegheny Conference's *Strategy 21* initiative, operating three University Development Centers in the Oakland section of Pittsburgh, managing the Software Engineering Institute, and participating with the Urban Redevelopment Authority in the development of the Pittsburgh Technology Center.¹⁷¹ In the Mon Valley, the RIDC purchased the 92-acre Westinghouse Plant in East Pittsburgh in 1988 as well as USX's 135 acre National Tube Works in McKeesport and the 240-acre Duquesne Works acquired in 1990. Rechristened the Keystone Commons, Industrial Center of McKeesport and City Center of Duquesne, the sites became the centerpieces of the state's redevelopment strategy for the Mon Valley.¹⁷²

Despite this new focus on redeveloping urban industries beginning in the mid-1980s, the RIDC's critics charged that the organization lacked transparency, contributed to the development of the suburbs at the expense of the region's urban areas, and provided unfair competition to private developers lacking access to publicly financed loans.¹⁷³ "We don't know how they rationalize how they can create low-cost parks in the suburbs when so much needs to be done in the Mon Valley and the city," complained Richard Swartz, the director of a Pittsburgh neighborhood development group. "We're (distressed areas) competing for scarce state resources."¹⁷⁴

In response to these charges, RIDC president Brooks Robinson pointed out that the RIDC's industrial parks had generated development in the northern and western

¹⁷¹ Barbara W. Stack, "Technical Frims are Hope for Economy," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, July 28, 1982; "High-Technology Unit Linked to Universities," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, October 9, 1982.

¹⁷² Stouffer, "Big Mills Sites"; McKay, "RIDC"; Regional Industrial Development Corporation of Southwestern Pennsylvania, "Keystone Commons," "City Center of Duquesne," and "Industrial Center of McKeesport," untitled diagrams, u.d., Business Collection, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh -- Downtown & Business Branch, Pittsburgh, PA (Hereafter abbreviated as CDB).

¹⁷³ Tom Barnes, "RIDC Chief Answers Critics," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, February 22, 1991.

¹⁷⁴ Perlmutter, "RIDC Off Course? Private Firms Charge Unfair Competition."

suburbs of Allegheny County, not merely built upon preexisting development. The RIDC industrial parks, he argued, “were developed at a time when no private developers were interested in the airport locations.”¹⁷⁵ Robinson also objected to Murphy’s allegation that the RIDC parks drew business away “from distressed areas, putting them in places that by any measure are very healthy indeed.”¹⁷⁶ In line with its original mandate, Robinson countered that he could not force companies to go where they did not want to go and that the RIDC did not try to “convince companies to relocate from one county or region in our service area to another.” “If I tried to steer companies into distressed areas,” he declared, “we’d have a lot of spare time on our hands. Companies pretty much know where they want to go.”¹⁷⁷

Conclusion

On a warm September day in 1992, a group of West Virginia state and local officials presided over a groundbreaking for the final phase of US 22, which would for the first time provide uninterrupted four-lane highway access between Steubenville and Pittsburgh. While the Pennsylvania portion of the route opened in 1971, a lack of funds to blast a bypass through hills surrounding Weirton had delayed the project for two decades.¹⁷⁸ West Virginia had a powerful patron in Robert C. Byrd, who became chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee after 1990. Byrd, who had already secured more than \$50 million for a new bridge over the Ohio River connecting Steubenville and Weirton, succeeded in obtaining more than \$40 million from federal coffers to complete

¹⁷⁵ “Minority Report,” in Select Committee on Pennsylvania’s Industrial Development Corporations, *Sharing the Wealth: A Report on Pennsylvania’s Industrial Development Corporations* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania House of Representatives, 1992).

¹⁷⁶ Tom Murphy, “RIDC Industrial Parks Turn into Unfair Competition,” *Pittsburgh Press* (editorial), September 9, 1991, C3.

¹⁷⁷ Barnes, “RIDC Chief Answers Critics,” 7.

¹⁷⁸ On the Pennsylvania portion of the route, known as the William Penn Highway, see Jeffrey J. Kitsko, “US 22: William Penn Highway,” updated April 5, 2006, available from <<http://www.pahighways.com>>.

the project. “A city with a future must have modern, efficient transportation,” Byrd declared of the highway named in his honor.¹⁷⁹

Local leaders in Steubenville and Jefferson County were determined to capitalize on their new highway link to the Airport Corridor. Uniting under a new development group, the Progress Alliance, they sought to transform the image and reality of their community as a polluted, post-industrial wasteland into the newest “Burb of the Burgh.” Through an advertising campaign targeting southwestern Pennsylvania residents and business people, the Progress Alliance emphasized the community’s comparatively low taxes, opportunities for outdoor recreation, culture, and proximity to Pittsburgh, less than 35 miles distant. Indeed, civic boosters proclaimed that during rush hour commuters could actually travel from Steubenville to the booming Airport Corridor in less time than it took to get there from the Golden Triangle.¹⁸⁰

Despite the decline of the socio-economic bonds created by the area’s traditional heavy industry, during the 1990s the relationships between and among Steel Valley communities actually increased in importance. At the beginning of the postwar period, political power, population and employment centered on the river and rail corridors radiating from the regional core in downtown Pittsburgh. As suburban communities gained increasing power in the 1970s and 1980s, the strategy for urban economic development shifted from serving the interests of existing heavy-industrial and other corporate employers to building highways that would connect the declining urban

¹⁷⁹ Robert C. Byrd, *Robert C. Byrd: Child of the Appalachian Coalfields* (Morgantown, WV: West Virginia University Press, 2005), 515.

¹⁸⁰ Dan Fitzpatrick, “Alliance 2000 to Heinz: You’ve Got a Friend in Ohio,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, July 30, 1999; Brendan Sager, “Steubenville’s Alliance 2000 Targets Pittsburgh,” *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, November 20, 1998; “Steubenville: Coal and Steel Town Sees Rebirth, Companies Continue to Join Steubenville’s Traditional Industries,” *Expansion Magazine Online*, January 1, 1998. Retrieved April 6, 2006 from *Expansion Magazine* online: <<http://www.expansionmagazine.com>>.

communities to growth centers in the suburbs. Rural areas suffering from the postwar Appalachian crisis also worked with regional, state and federal agencies to attract potential employers by developing suburban-style industrial parks along major highways. With the success of expressway construction linking smaller communities to national distribution networks as well as the regional core, outlying areas also increasingly emphasized their proximity to Pittsburgh while highlighting quality of life issues associated with small towns and suburbs.

By the 1990s, the suburban growth strategy faced increasing opposition from residents of prosperous suburbs concerned about limiting development as well as urban political leaders angered by the continuing loss of resources and population to more peripheral areas. Thus, Steel Valley residents faced not only an economic crisis brought on by the collapse of the steel industry but also a crisis of community as the successes of some suburban areas stood in stark contrast to the declining river valleys. Some residents and local officials in declining communities looked upon their proximity to this suburban growth as an opportunity to solve their economic problems through inter-regional commuting and better access through highway construction.

From this regional vantage shared by progrowth boosters of the ACCD as well as many local and state officials, the growth of the suburbs would benefit the entire region. For others, the increasing gulf between the declining river valleys and the booming suburbs meant a breakdown of the bonds linking the overall community and a leadership failure on the part of the elite-dominated groups set up to develop the Southwestern Pennsylvania region. Public officials and civic elites faced the difficult dilemma of fostering regional growth while ensuring that the benefits of that growth reached the

increasingly marginalized residents and communities that had depended on the area's traditional industries. These tensions between local and regional interests formed the backdrop for debates over public policy as well as the nature of regional identity throughout the remainder of the decade.

Chapter 7

Communities of Interest: Interpreting Region in a “Post-Industrial” Era

“Gradually, as we walked slowly through the streets, we strained to hear a whole chorus of Wheeling voices.... Crossing 16th Street to the old B&O station, we seemed to pass new immigrants from Slovakia and Romania, each of them clutching a piece of a letter, its ink made to run by the tears of departure from loved ones, seeking out where is Eoff Street, number 218, could you tell me?” This was one of the scenes described by Dr. Richard Rabinowitz, project director for the team developing an interpretive plan under Wheeling’s new designation as an “American Heritage Area.” Nearly 100 years after Valentine Reuther first stepped from his railroad carriage and out into the hustle and bustle of downtown Wheeling, residents and community leaders looked once again to the city’s golden age as a model for revitalizing a downtown devastated by suburbanization and the collapse of the region’s traditional industries.¹ “Wheeling’s past is still read-able, experience-able, recapture-able in a way that the history of many other places are not,” Rabinowitz continued. “For better or worse, the city’s economy did not boom and obliterate the scale of earlier generations of life here [and] upon reflection, we realized that nothing had changed, and that everything had.... When the word gets out that

¹ On the use of “cultural heritage” as a tool for urban and economic development, see Sharon Zukin, *Landscapes of Power: From Detroit to Disney World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 179-216; M. Christine Boyer, “Cities for Sale: Merchandising History at South Street Seaport,” in Michael Sorkin, ed., *Variations of a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992), 181-204; Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (London: Pimlico, 1998); Joseph Heathcote, “Curating the City: Challenges for Historic Preservation in the Twenty-First Century,” *Journal of Planning History* 5, no. 1 (February 2006): 75-83.

Wheeling is a place where people enjoy the rich distinctiveness of their city, then tourists will flock here from places already lost to anonymity.”²

This focus on the Steel Valley’s cultural heritage represented an important break from earlier urban revitalization initiatives as city leaders attempted to visualize and adapt the natural and man-made environment to new forms of production and consumption. Building upon the success of Pittsburgh’s Station Square and other renovated industrial properties, local boosters worked to attract new investment, residents, and visitors through a focus on improving the region’s image and quality of life.³ “If you aren’t shopping and just want to be somewhere, standing on the banks of the Ohio River – there’s a sense of place that is timeless,” explained Charles Flynn, director of the nonprofit corporation coordinating Wheeling’s downtown development. “The real centerpiece of our whole effort is waterfront redevelopment.”⁴ Rehabilitating the region’s rivers was a key test of the commitment to a “post-industrial” vision as local communities had largely abandoned riverfront areas as sites of recreation during the late nineteenth century.⁵ “Everybody was like, don’t touch that water and certainly don’t drink it,” recalled Andrew Wiese, the college student who canoed from Pittsburgh to Wheeling in 1987. “All along the way, the mills were right along the water, [but] for the most part, the towns ... were turned backside to this river. That was surprising.”⁶ The

² Richard Rabinowitz, “Interpreting Wheeling’s Cityscape,” in Lane Frenchman and Associates et al, “Summary of the Wheeling Interpretive Master Plan,” February 1995, i-iv; “Wheeling Site among Heritage Areas,” *Charleston Gazette*, October 6, 1994, 6C.

³ Former Carnegie Mellon University professor Richard Florida makes a strong argument for the use of targeted quality of life improvements for post-industrial economic and urban development. Richard Florida, *Cities and the Creative Class* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

⁴ George Hohmann, “A Downtown Turnaround,” *Charleston Daily Mail*, December 14, 1998, D1.

⁵ On the evolution of the Steel Valley’s rivers, see Edward K. Muller, “River City,” in Joel A. Tarr, ed., *Devastation and Renewal: An Environmental History of Pittsburgh and its Region* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003), 41-63.

⁶ Author’s Interview with Andrew Wiese, January 2006.

Wharf garage, built during the mid-1950s in an effort to solve Wheeling's parking problem, now took up valuable waterfront space and obstructed the view from downtown making it incompatible with the city's new development agenda and a target for demolition in the mid-1990s.⁷ "We've taken down a decrepit garage and put in green space," Flynn declared in 1998. "A year from now, we'll have a riverfront park with an amphitheater where we can host large riverboats and pleasure craft ... festivals, fairs and concerts."⁸

During the late twentieth century, Steel Valley residents, businessmen and political leaders envisioned a regional transformation that was as powerful, difficult and contentious as that carried out by Carnegie, Weir and others a century before. As in the earlier period, regional economic decline rooted in decreasing locational advantages prompted new partnerships that built upon existing resources to reshape the social and physical landscape. New forms of service-sector production including tourism, health care, and research drove investment in cities, suburbs, and rural areas, while environmental regulations and the decline of heavy industry produced dramatic improvements in the region's air and water quality, enabling a wide variety of consumptive activities that also served as potential economic generators.⁹ Unlike the late nineteenth century, the economic and social transformations of the 1990s took place during a period of declining population, while the suburbanization of population and resources presented important challenges as well as opportunities for community

⁷ "Wharf Parking Garage," *Highlights on Community Progress*, April 1956, 1, Vertical File, Ohio County Public Library, Wheeling, WV (Hereafter cited as OCPL).

⁸ Hohmann, "A Downtown Turnaround."

⁹ On the role of environmental improvements in enabling post-industrial redevelopment, see Edward K. Muller and Joel A. Tarr, "The Interaction of Natural and Built Environments," in Tarr, *Devastation and Renewal*, esp. 33-40.

development.¹⁰ Residential decentralization created a metropolitan crisis of sprawl and urban decline, but the large tracts of vacant land left behind allowed neighborhood redevelopment replacing high-rise apartments from the Pittsburgh Renaissance with “New Urbanist” communities of single family homes, garden apartments and pedestrian friendly, landscaped streets “with easy access to the city’s business and commercial districts.”¹¹

Steel Valley communities often sought revitalization through consumption-oriented activities, but civic leaders did not abandon the idea of manufacturing as an economic generator. Industrial employment declined sharply overall during the 1980s, but it remained an important part of the regional economy and many residents remained profoundly ambivalent about the ability of service sector industries to replace high-paying manufacturing jobs. “We are an industrial society which has somehow forgotten that industry is the source of our wealth,” concluded the Allegheny Conference of Community Development (ACCD) in 1993.¹² The abandonment of large tracts of urban land by U.S. Steel, LTV (formerly J&L Steel), and other manufacturers also provided an opportunity for the urban industrial districts first envisioned by David Lawrence and Allegheny Conference on Community Development (ACCD) officials in the late 1940s. Despite the criticism leveled at the Regional Industrial Development Corporation (RIDC) for encouraging suburban development at the expense of urban areas, by the late 1980s the group had already begun redeveloping riverfront industrial sites in Duquesne,

¹⁰ Between 1980 and 2000, the population of the Steel Valley declined by approximately 9 percent. During the same period, Wheeling’s population declined by 27 percent.

¹¹ Chriss Swaney, “New Homes for Downtown,” *New York Times*, June 14, 1991, R12. For a scholarly analysis of New Urbanist redevelopment in Pittsburgh, see Sabina Deitrick and Cliff Ellis, “New Urbanism in the Inner City: A Case Study of Pittsburgh,” *Journal of the American Planning Association* 70, no. 4 (Autumn 2004): 426-442.

¹² Allegheny Conference on Community Development, *Toward a Shared Economic Vision for Pittsburgh and Southwestern Pennsylvania* (Pittsburgh: ACCD, 1993), 5.

McKeesport, and Turtle Creek. The nonprofit Beaver County Corporation for Economic Development (CED) began converting LTV's sprawling Aliquippa Works into a light industrial park in 1992.¹³ By the end of the decade, nearly 30 percent of all new manufacturing jobs in the county came from three CED facilities in Aliquippa, Ambridge, and Harmony.¹⁴

Just as the arrival of the railroads both exacerbated the Steel Valley's locational disadvantages and spurred subsequent heavy industrial development, highway construction interacted with the natural landscape in multiple ways to reshape how residents and communities envisioned themselves in relation to each other and the wider region.¹⁵ While the construction of the Penn-Lincoln Parkway enabled the migration of urban activities to the expanding suburbs, the extension of the route to Steubenville allowed progrowth boosters to recast the declining industrial city as a commuter suburb and assert their position within the region. "If proximity is a measure of being part of the Pittsburgh area, Steubenville has it," declared one local official. "We proudly call ourselves the 'Burb of the Burgh.' Steubenville is just 10 miles from the Post-Gazette Pavilion [formerly Star Lake Amphitheater] and just 30 minutes from Pittsburgh International Airport. How much more 'Pittsburgh area' can a city be than that?"¹⁶ Similarly, the abandonment of railroad rights-of-way signaled declining mill production

¹³ Select Committee on Pennsylvania's Industrial Development Corporations, *Sharing the Wealth: A Report on Pennsylvania's Industrial Development Corporations* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania House of Representatives, 1992); Lynda Guydon Taylor, "Group Signs Agreement to Buy LTV Aliquippa Site," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, February 11, 1992.

¹⁴ Robert A. Rice to David Black, "Letter," March 21, 2000, in Box 4109, File "Beaver County," Records of the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, RG 71, Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg, PA. (Hereafter abbreviated as PA DCED).

¹⁵ On the role of railroad construction on the Steel Valley's economic development, see Harold Livesay, *Andrew Carnegie and the Rise of Big Business* (New York: Harper Collins, 1975), 90-120; Edward Muller, "Industrial Suburbs and the Growth of Metropolitan Pittsburgh 1870-1920," *Journal of Historical Geography* 27, no. 1 (2001): 58-73

¹⁶ William Chesson, "Making the Case for Steubenville," *Pittsburgh Business Times*, December 28, 2001.

and reminded residents of the collapse of streetcar-oriented neighborhoods, but the conversion of rusty tracks to multi-use trails both prompted and reinforced new bonds between and among communities.¹⁷ “I lived in the Mon Valley so I was very familiar with the area around Cedar Creek Park in Westmoreland County where the [new rail-to-trail] goes under I-70,” recalled former resident Eric Bugaile. “In those days before this trail was built ... you walked from town to town and the towns were all separate entities.... There’s so much reference in people’s everyday lives now to the trail that it’s just like another part of the community. I think people feel in those communities now that they are part of something bigger.”¹⁸

Despite the development of a post-industrial vision for the Steel Valley, steel and coal production remained an important component of many local communities. While hospitals were the largest employers in Belmont County, one coal mine still produced five million tons of coal per year, employed 500 workers and had the largest payroll in the area.¹⁹ By the end of the decade, mining was on the upswing again as companies adapted to environmental legislation and the price of coal declined in comparison to other fossil fuels.²⁰ A more accurate picture of regional development during the decade is of an older industrial economy existing side-by-side with new museums, malls and biking trails. “Everybody around here wears a lot of hats, and I see tourism as another hat,” explained Gale Eddy, an auto mechanic who helped form a nonprofit company in 1990 to

¹⁷ In 1990, *Bicycling Magazine* ranked Pittsburgh among the nation’s three worst cities, but by 1999 the region’s reputation had improved so dramatically that it hosted the second International Trails and Greenways Conference. Don Hopey, “Signs of Changing Times: Riverfront Trail Markers Point the Way to Greener Future,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, June 22, 1999, D1.

¹⁸ Author’s Interview with Eric Bugaile, April 2006.

¹⁹ Art Sanda, “Starting with Nothing, Bob Murray Has Built Something,” *Coal Age*, November 1999, 27.

²⁰ Alison Grant, “The Sultan of High-Sulfur: Ohio Coal Mine Owner Sees Battles Easing with Bush in Office,” *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, May 6, 2001; Eric Ayres, “Making Mining a Successful Venture,” *Martins Ferry Times-Leader*, March 9, 2006.

promote canoeing on the Little Muskingum River in the Wayne National Forest (WNF).

“We found farming, oil and gas and timber were compatible. I think there is a place for tourism, too.”²¹ While this relationship could be complementary, the proximity of competing land uses generated tension that occasionally grew into overt conflict.²²

The multiple-use plan for the WNF, with natural resource production balanced by preservation and passive recreational opportunities, generated a long-running debate over how best to manage the region’s resources. “It certainly isn’t possible given the small amount of land we’re talking about,” declared the state conservation chairman of the Sierra Club. “With mining and timbering, it isn’t a question of will those jobs last, but how long, [and] no one wants to camp in a clear-cut.”²³

Steel Valley No More

“Today as in 1910, the local economies of the Region can be summarily described in terms of the metropolitan core, the mill towns along the rivers, the rural mining villages, the hamlets and scattered farmhouses of the agricultural community, and the marketing and administrative centers of the rural hinterland,” reported the *Economic Study of the Pittsburgh Region* in 1963. “But increasingly the farmsteads are deserted; and in the coal towns unemployed miners wait to see if the pits will ever reopen. Along the rivers the mills towns are built around factories half a century old; and some of these factories stand bleak and empty while the furloughed workers worry about their

²¹ Randall Edwards, “The Wayne: Can Economics Coexist with Ecology?” *Columbus Dispatch*, December 19, 1993, 4F.

²² On the complexity of land use management in scenic areas, see Carl Abbott, Sy Adler and Margery Post Abbott, *Planning a New West: The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1997).

²³ Edwards, “The Wayne.”

futures.”²⁴ Between 1960 and 1980, this bleak portrait of the Steel Valley’s declining social and physical infrastructure remained an accurate portrayal of community life in many parts of the region. Limited economic opportunities resulted in a nearly 4 percent drop in the region’s population during a period when the nation grew by a quarter and metropolitan areas increased more than 40 percent.²⁵ Within the region, the older urban centers showed the greatest decline, with Pittsburgh losing nearly 30 percent and Wheeling approximately 19 percent of residents. On the other side of the scale, suburban Butler County grew by 29 percent, though this was a relatively modest rate compared to similarly situated communities in other metropolitan regions. The rural coal mining areas of Harrison and Monroe also showed a small increase, though manufacturing losses in the river valleys offset gains in mining employment in Belmont, Armstrong and Washington. The smaller metropolitan areas of the ORV also fared better than southwestern Pennsylvania during the period, with the former declining at about 60 percent the rate of the latter.²⁶

The economic crisis of the mid-1980s brought decades of gradual stagnation and decline to a crashing crescendo. In the Mon Valley, the number of people employed in the steel industry declined from over 35,000 in 1981 to fewer than 4,000 in 1987.²⁷ While health care, finance and corporate services, education and retail trade cushioned some of this dramatic decline, the growth of the non-manufacturing sectors had only a

²⁴ Ira S. Lowry, *Economic Study of the Pittsburgh Region Volume Two, Portrait of a Region* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press), 33.

²⁵ U.S. Bureau of the Census and Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research, *County and City Data Book* (Ann Arbor, MI: ICPSR, 1947 - 1983); U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 117th ed. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1997).

²⁶ *County and City Data Book*.

²⁷ Between 1982 and 1987, U.S. Steel closed mills and furnaces in Rankin, Duquesne, Clairton, Homestead and McKeesport. LTV Steel (Jones & Laughlin) closed its South Side, Hazelwood and Aliquippa plants in 1985. Wheeling-Pittsburgh closed its Monessen Works in 1986. John P. Hoerr, *And the Wolf Finally Came: The Decline of the American Steel Industry* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1988), 11.

“marginal impact” in alleviating the economic plight of residents in the industrialized river valleys, where population loss and out-migration accelerated, “leaving behind a more dependent, elderly, and difficult to employ population.”²⁸ The passage of revisions to the federal Clean Air Act in 1990 also capped a decade of turmoil in the coal industry, with local mines operating at an increasing disadvantage to low sulfur coal suppliers in other regions.²⁹ Between 1988 and 1996, mining employment remained virtually unchanged in western states but declined by nearly 50 percent in Ohio and Pennsylvania and nearly 30 percent in West Virginia.³⁰ In 1994, Robert Murray, owner of one of the largest mines remaining in the region, said the loss of purchasing orders from a key customer would force him to close his doors the following year. “We’re talking about one of the highest production mines in the world,” Murray proclaimed. “If we can’t make it, no one in Ohio’s coal industry can make it.”³¹

While the Steel Valley declined by an average of 5,832 residents annually between 1960 and 1980, more than 20,000 residents left the region every year during the 1980s. As in the earlier period, the urbanized river valleys suffered disproportionately. Pittsburgh and McKeesport, while containing less than a third of Allegheny’s population,

²⁸ Ralph L. Bangs, Vijai P. Singh, and University Center for Social and Urban Research, *The State of the Region: Economic, Demographic and Social Trends in Southwestern Pennsylvania* (Pittsburgh: UCSUR, 1988), 98.

²⁹ Gary C. Bryner, *Blue Skies, Green Politics : The Clean Air Act of 1990 and Its Implementation*. 2nd ed. (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 1995). The enactment of the Clean Air Act revisions in 1990 was due in part to the retirement of West Virginia Senator Robert Byrd as Senate Majority Leader. Byrd helped block the growing support for the changes, citing cost increases for electrical power and the loss of jobs in the coal producing areas of northern Appalachia, explaining that for years he had “fended off environmental zealots who had pressed for legislation to deal with the so-called ‘acid-rain’ threat, which was being charged with killing lakes and fish throughout the United States.” Robert Byrd, *Robert C. Byrd: Child of the Appalachian Coalfields* (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2005), 462.

³⁰ David McDermott, “Coal Mining in the U.S. West: Price and Employment Trends,” *Monthly Labor Review*, August 1997, 18-23. Losses in West Virginia were partially offset by low-sulfur coal mined in the southern part of the state. Annual coal production in Belmont County dropped by 64.4 percent from 1972 to 1991. Douglas L. Crowell, *History of the Coal Mining Industry in Ohio* (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio Division of Geologic Survey, 1995).

³¹ Scott Powers, “Coal Cutback Could Close Mine,” *Columbus Dispatch*, July 2, 1994.

accounted for more than half of its 7.8 percent population loss during the decade. As a result of the sharp decline in mining employment, rural Harrison, and Monroe, which had seen modest population growth during the 1970s, declined by 12.5 percent. Small gains in communities along the newly completed Allegheny Valley Expressway partially offset losses in Armstrong, while a 34 percent increase in Cranberry residents allowed Butler to grow by just under 4 percent, the only county to gain during the decade.³² The more diversified economy of southwestern Pennsylvania weathered the mining and manufacturing losses of the 1980s better overall than the communities of the ORV, which declined at more than double the rate of metropolitan Pittsburgh. Population loss continued at a slower pace during the 1990s, but the gap between metropolitan core and hinterland widened as the rate of decline shrank to less than 2 percent in southwestern Pennsylvania while remaining above 5 percent for the ORV.

Thousands of Steel Valley residents left the region each year, but the choice was often a difficult one taken after all other options were exhausted. When joblessness in Beaver County reached 23 percent in the mid-1980s, steel worker Kenny Johnston explained that long-term unemployment was something he had never dreamed of before. “Man, I’ve worked since I was sixteen. I’ve tried like hell [to find a job], there’s nothing out there. With one out of every four people looking for work, there’s not much to go around.”³³ Some companies offered workers the opportunity to transfer to other facilities outside the region, while other residents found opportunities in the booming defense,

³² Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, “Total Population by Municipality in Butler County, 1930-2000” and “Total Population by Municipality in Armstrong County, 1930-2000,” compiled May 2003. Retrieved July 25, 2006 from the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, Data Library: <http://www.spcregion.org/data_data.lib.shtml>.

³³ Denny Trombulak, “Steelworkers Lament from Beaver County,” in *Overtime: Punchin’ out with the Mill Hunk Herald, Worker Writer Anthology, 1979-1989* (Homestead: Piece of the Hunk Publishers, 1990), 44-45.

construction and natural resource industries of the south and southwest.³⁴ “The ‘3r’s’ in West Virginia no longer include “Route 2 to Weirton,” and increasing out migration makes the substitution of “Route 77 to North Carolina” more appropriate, explained community historian David Javersak.³⁵ Wheeling residents Dennis and Frances Zane explored another option for work -- casino gambling. In August 1988 the young couple joined a convoy of nearly two hundred locals hired by the Sands Hotel and Casino in Atlantic City, New Jersey. “We’ve got a lot nicer home,” a 15th floor, \$525-a-month apartment with a view of the Atlantic Ocean, “and a new TV,” Dennis reported in December. “And they don’t come and get it like they did at home.”³⁶

The expansion of service sector industries provided some relief for the thousands of residents affected by the closure of the Steel Valley’s mines and mills. Between 1977 and 1997, manufacturing employment declined from 32 percent of all jobs in the region to less than 15 percent.³⁷ While both the relatively low-paying retail and relatively high-paying finance, insurance, and real estate (FIRE) sectors grew slightly, the real increase came in the service sector, which nearly doubled its share of regional employment to approximately 40 percent.³⁸ By the mid-1990s, hospitals, clinics and other health-related workplaces alone accounted for nearly one in nine jobs in the Steel Valley. “We are moving from a labor force called upon to use its muscle to one called upon to use its

³⁴ Tom Beyerlein, “Residents Flee State of Despair - with No Jobs or Hope to Hold Them, the Young Seek a Future Elsewhere,” *Dayton Daily News*, June 22, 1997, 1A; Lawrence Doorley, “Don’t Get Caught in the Florida Trap,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, September 11, 1994, 8; Author’s Interview with Robert Filby, August 2004. Houston, Texas apparently was a particularly appealing destination for many residents.

³⁵ David T. Javersak, *History of Weirton, West Virginia* (Virginia Beach: The Donning Company, 1999), 183.

³⁶ Wayne King, “Lucky Day for the Ohio Valley’s Jobless: New TV’s and Work in Atlantic City,” *New York Times*, December 25, 1988.

³⁷ Overall mining employment declined from approximately 3 percent to less than 1 percent.

³⁸ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *County Business Patterns CDROM* (Washington, DC: Data User Services, 1986-2001). Retrieved July 25, 2006, from the University of Virginia, Geospatial and Statistical Data Center: <<http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections>>.

brains,” declared Richard M. Cyert, president of Carnegie Mellon University (CMU). By the late 1980s, civic boosters pointed to the unemployed industrial workers who successfully “transitioned” to the service sector as symbols of the region’s post-industrial transformation.³⁹

The ability of different portions of the region successfully to make the transition to service sector employment roughly corresponded to the different levels of out-migration. This is perhaps most notable when comparing the Wheeling-Martins Ferry (Belomar) and Steubenville-Weirton (BHJ) areas. While the population of both communities declined by about the same proportion between 1960 and 1990, Belomar’s rate of loss fell to just over half that of BHJ’s during the 1990s. The number of jobs in both areas declined by approximately the same amount between 1977 and 1987, but BHJ continued to fall during the 1990s while Belomar reversed its course and by 1997 had surpassed previous levels. During the period, the manufacturing sector’s share of employment in Belomar fell by more than two-thirds to 8 percent, while mills still accounted for more than 25 percent of employment in the Steubenville-Weirton area despite its loss of more than 10,000 manufacturing jobs.⁴⁰

Obtaining a college education formed the key to securing a good job in the Steel Valley’s new economic system, and the federal government provided increased funding for retraining to workers affected by deindustrialization, foreign trade and environmental regulations.⁴¹ On Christmas Eve in 1981, Larry Prisbylla arrived at U.S. Steel’s Clairton

³⁹ Dale Russakoff, “Brawn Forged into Brain,” *Washington Post*, April 12, 1987, A1, A12;

⁴⁰ *County and City Data Book*; *County Business Patterns*.

⁴¹ Michael J. Landini, *Understanding Federal Training and Employment Programs* (Washington, D.C.: National Commission for Employment Policy, 1995); Mark Uraco, *Interview with Mark Uraco, Coordinator for the Blaw-Knox Retraining Grant*, recorded on May 5, 1995, WAHD. New federal

Works to find a notice posted, “No more work scheduled.” After discovering that the only job he could obtain with a high school diploma was as a dishwasher at less than one-third his previous salary, Prisbylla enrolled in a subsidized nursing program at a local community college while his wife’s job at a local bank paid the family’s bills. “It seemed like all the technical schools were pushing computers, so I picked the health industry,” he explained. “We’ve got all these hospitals [and] it seemed like nursing would give me lots of options.” Upon graduation Prisbylla accepted a position at Mercy Hospital, making a salary similar to what he had in the mill. Because of the rapid growth in the healthcare industry, hospital recruiters were anxious to attract new nurses to their facilities. “They would pump your hand and shove an application into it,” recalled Prisbylla. “What a switch! I told [my wife] I would’ve loved to turn down the first five or six, just to get back at all the people who turned me down, just to see how it felt.”⁴²

Widespread unemployment, structural inequalities, and slow job growth tempered the promise of retraining for service sector jobs. “Education, including of course, computer literacy, must reach everyone and it will have to go all through life. If you stop you become obsolete, you cease to be competitive,” explained CMU economist Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber of the Steel Valley in the post-industrial era. “Constantly updated, educated people, on the other hand, find new jobs as the economy changes.”⁴³ Despite the ability of some workers to adapt to this new economic model, it was a long step from steel workers and coal miners to nurses and secretaries, which involved a transformation of deeply ingrained notions of masculinity as well as expensive and

subsidies for retraining came from the Economic Dislocation and Worker Adjustment Assistance program, the Trade Adjustment Assistance program and Title XI of the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990.

⁴² Russakoff, “Brawn into Brain.”

⁴³ Ibid.

extensive retraining over a period of years.⁴⁴ While federal subsidies covered the costs of education for many residents, this did not solve the issue of supporting a family in the meantime. Larry Prisbylla's wife, Laura, for example, worked as a secretary at Pittsburgh National Bank to provide income while he completed his studies. For those who did not qualify for federal subsidies or did not have a second source of income, day-to-day needs often preempted training for a better position.

While the region experienced strong growth in business and health services, the massive layoffs in manufacturing created an imbalance between job seekers and available positions, even for those who obtained a college degree. One Mellon Bank vice president said that fifty people, at least a third of them ex-steelworkers, applied for every computer technician opening at the bank.⁴⁵ "I think [for] some people [retraining] will help, but not here in the area, because there's no jobs in this valley," explained Butch Walker, who was laid off from a coal-fired power plant in the ORV during the early 1990s. "When I get out of school, the chances of me getting on somewhere making half of what I made before I left is probably slim to no chance. I'm hoping [that in] other areas there are [more opportunities, but] some of these job search places, they want fifty percent of your paycheck for the first year. So you can't afford it. If you go to work for \$10 an hour, you can't afford to live on it."⁴⁶

Racial inequalities also prevented many residents from obtaining new high-paying service sector jobs. During the 1990s, a number of African Americans obtained high

⁴⁴ On the effects of deindustrialization on notions of masculinity and family life, see Phyllis D. Coontz, Judith A. Martin and Edward W. Sites, *Steeltown Fathers: Rearing Children in an Era of Industrial Decline* (Pittsburgh: Rivers Communities Project, 1989); Judith A. Modell and Charlee Brodsky, *A Town without Steel: Envisioning Homestead* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998), 110-156.

⁴⁵ Russakoff, "Brawn into Brain."

⁴⁶ Butch Walker, *Job Retraining and the Clean Air Act*, recorded on May 5, 1995, WAHD.

profile positions in city governments, private industry and on the board of the ACCD.⁴⁷

Local Urban League member Xavier Williams earned a master's degree in business at the University of Pittsburgh and rose to the position of area sales vice president of AT&T.

Williams found hope in his 5-year-old daughter's multiracial playgroup in Cranberry, where his family lived, explaining, "Racism is not something that has to be learned."⁴⁸

Despite the success of many black professionals, the economic position of African Americans and the level of disparity with white residents in the Steel Valley remained worse than in nearly every other large city in the nation. Pittsburgh's unemployment rate fell to 6.9 percent for white men and 4.4 percent for white women during the early 1990s, but it remained at 14.3 percent for black women and nearly 20 percent for black men.⁴⁹

Both black and white college graduates formed a lower percentage of Allegheny County's population than in the nation as a whole, but whites remained twice as likely to hold a degree as blacks. This proportion increased to nearly 3:1 within Pittsburgh itself as middle class white professionals moved into the city replacing an outflow of blue-collar residents.⁵⁰ "It's so sad, but in many ways we've gone backward," explained Speed Fox, who participated in the civil rights protests of the 1950s before becoming

⁴⁷ Laurence Glasco, *The Civil Rights Movement in Pittsburgh: To Make This City "Some Place Special,"* 2001. Retrieved July 25, 2006 from Freedom Corner, the Freedom Corner 2001 Memorial Booklet: <http://www.freedomcorner.org/downloads/glasco.pdf>. These black professionals included: Lloyd McClendon as General Manager of the Pittsburgh Pirates, Oliver Byrd as senior vice-president at Mellon Bank, Milton Washington, George Miles and William Strickland on the ACCD Board, and Mulugetta Birru as executive director of the Pittsburgh URA.

⁴⁸ Ervin Dyer, "Pursuing the Dream – Veterans and Newcomers Work to Fulfill King's Vision," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, January 20, 2003, B5; Marylynne Pitz, "Bush Touts his Record to Blacks," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, July 29, 2003,

⁴⁹ Ralph L. Bangs and J.H. Hong, *Black and White Economic Conditions in the City of Pittsburgh* (Pittsburgh: University Center for Social and Urban Research, 1995); Leon L. Haley and Ralph L. Bangs, "Policies to Improve African American Economic Conditions in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County" in University Center for Social and Urban Research, *The State of the Region Report* (Pittsburgh: UCSUR, 1999), 141-152.

⁵⁰ Gary Rothstein and Tom Barnes, "Brightened Outlook for a Blighted Area," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, December 12, 1993, A1; Joe Smydo, "Rethinking Revitalization," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, November 26, 2000, W1.

executive director of the local NAACP in 1966. “I see no road out for people at the bottom. And that was a large part of the struggle for my generation.”⁵¹

Civic boosters pointed to the promise of professional jobs in hospitals, universities and banks as replacements for manufacturing employment, but low-wage work in malls, restaurants and in other services formed the flip side of the post-industrial economy. Jobs in the lucrative FIRE sector remained less than 7 percent of the total jobs in the Steel Valley, while retail jobs overtook manufacturing in the mid-1980s and increased to more than 20 percent of the regional total by 1997.⁵² The deindustrialized river valleys, such as the Belomar area, where more than one in four jobs was in the retail sector, were particularly dependent on malls as sources of employment.

Conversely, the metropolitan core of Allegheny contained nearly 80 percent of all jobs in the finance, insurance, and real estate sectors. In 1979, workers in the Steel Valley earned a median hourly wage 18 percent higher than the national average. With the decline of heavy industry, the retail sector provided the largest pool of available jobs for residents without college degrees, but average retail wages were only 55 percent of the service sector and 35 percent of FIRE.⁵³ As a result of the decline of traditional industries, real wages in the Steel Valley fell by 13.2 percent between 1979 and 1996.⁵⁴ Educational disparities exacerbated this decline as lower-skilled workers bore the brunt of deindustrialization, while those with advanced degrees increased their earnings. In the state of Pennsylvania, median hourly wages for college graduates grew from 1979 to 1996, while for workers without a degree wages fell and men with no high school degree

⁵¹ Dyer, “Pursuing the Dream.”

⁵² *County Business Patterns*.

⁵³ Average wages are for the nation as a whole.

⁵⁴ Sabina Deitrick, “The Post Industrial Revitalization of Pittsburgh: Myths and Evidence,” *Community Development Journal* 34, no. 1 (1999): 4-12.

suffered a 37.2 percent drop in earnings.⁵⁵

From the mid-1960s and especially during the 1980s, Pittsburgh's progrowth partnership focused its efforts on transforming the Steel Valley into a center for health care, research, and advanced manufacturing. Civic boosters adopted the symbols of the young urban professional and the steelworker-turned-nurse to describe the new "post-industrial" region.⁵⁶ However, this transformation remained both flawed and incomplete, with new employment opportunities more often than not paying lower, and, in the case of the retail sector, dramatically lower wages. The rise in service sector employment also failed to keep pace with the decline in manufacturing, prompting continued out-migration from many parts of the region for much of the 1990s.

Changes in the local economy mirrored larger trends and brought the Steel Valley closer to the national pattern between 1986 and 1994. Nevertheless, regional growth failed to match that of other cities, even in the service sector, as declining population levels lessened internal demand. Those sectors targeted by the Strategy 21 partnership, such as high tech manufacturing and health services, also did not compare favorably with larger employment trends. The loss of large corporate programs prompted a 21.6 percent decline in research and testing jobs even as R&D grew by 18.5 percent in the nation as a whole.⁵⁷

From the middle of the nineteenth century to the end of World War II, the physical, cultural and social landscape of Pittsburgh and its hinterland revolved around the

⁵⁵ Stephen Herzenberg and Howard Wial, *The State of Working Pennsylvania 1997* (Harrisburg: Keystone Research Center, 1997); Howard Wial, "Pulling Apart in Pennsylvania: The Incomes of Pennsylvania Families Since the 1970's," Briefing Paper, March 1998.

⁵⁶ Russakoff, "Brawn into Brain"; Greater Pittsburgh Office of Promotion, "Five Pittsburghs: Discoveries by Some Recent Settlers," 1991.

⁵⁷ Deitrick, "Post-Industrial Pittsburgh," 8; Sabina Deitrick, "Industrial Change in Pittsburgh" in *The State of the Region Report 1999*, 12.

furnaces, mines, and railroad tracks of its heavy industries. Cracks began to show in this framework by the end of the late 1940s, as the railroads switched to more efficient diesel fuel, robbing mines of their largest customers, and then declined precipitously in the face of the automobile. Postwar highway construction helped create a region of contrasts as the urbanized river valleys grew increasingly impoverished and deindustrialized while new commuter suburbs on the ridges supplied flat locations and the workforce for new light industrial and service sector employers.

The collapse of steel and coal during the 1980s marked an end to the unifying framework of heavy industrial production as service sector growth fueled an economic boom in select communities even as other parts of the region staggered under the weight of poverty and unemployment. However, the failure of the post-industrial economy to accommodate large segments of the population meant that a new model for regional development never fully replaced the heavy industrial paradigm. During the 1990s, residents with very different visions of the proper course of regional development fought to reshape the Steel Valley's physical and social landscape.

Mines and Museums

Rural areas in the United States participated to a much greater extent in the nation's economic growth during the 1990s than in the previous decade. Poverty rates declined in more than two-thirds of nonmetropolitan counties from 1989 to 1999, including Harrison and Monroe where the economy improved both overall and in comparison to the state. Population loss also decreased dramatically, although the two counties continued to lose a few dozen residents each year. Continuing population loss despite an improved economic climate also mirrored national trends, where one in every

four nonmetropolitan counties lost population during the decade.⁵⁸

Distance from a metropolitan area, population density, and the level of natural amenities formed three key factors in understanding rural out migration, both overall and in the Steel Valley. This becomes clearer when comparing Harrison and Monroe to the counties of Fayette and Greene on Pittsburgh's metropolitan fringe in southwestern Pennsylvania. Economic decline reversed small gains Greene had posted in the 1970s, but growth in communities along Interstate 79, which connected Morgantown, WV with Pittsburgh, more than offset continued out-migration from some older communities. Fayette's population also increased for the first time since 1940, due in part to growth in communities near Interstate 76, which passed just north of the county. New housing developments near Ohiopyle and Laurel Ridge State Parks also accounted for significant gains, with Wharton, a mountainous township minutes away from a host of attractions, jumping by nearly 23 percent.⁵⁹

During the 1990s, Fayette and Greene benefited from their location astride or near highway links as well as the earlier efforts of Pittsburgh's private-public coalition to preserve open space and develop recreation-oriented infrastructure that resulted in an expanding tourism industry.⁶⁰ The metropolitan fringe in Ohio was also within easy driving distance of several metropolitan areas and had potential opportunities for recreational and cultural tourism. In 1977, Jamboree in the Hills, an outdoor country music festival, debuted in a field near St. Clairsville, showcasing such stars as Merle

⁵⁸ This paragraph and the following paragraph borrows from David A. McGranahan and Calvin L. Beale, "Understanding Rural Population Loss," *Rural America* 17, no. 4 (2002): 2-11.

⁵⁹ On the growth of coal mining in Greene as well as its proximity to the ORV, see "Area Economic Growth Seen," *Martins Ferry Times Leader*, September 18, 1978, 24.

⁶⁰ Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, "Total Population by Municipality in Fayette County, 1930-2000" and "Total Population by Municipality in Greene County, 1930-2000," compiled May 2003. Retrieved July 25, 2006 from the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, Data Library: <http://www.spcregion.org/data_datalib.shtml>.

Haggard, Doc Watson, Johnny Cash and Tammy Wynette. From an initial two-day attendance of about 35,000, the event grew to be one of the top bus tour destinations in the nation and an important component of the local economy.⁶¹

In 1991, The Wilds, a sanctuary for endangered animal species, opened on 10,000 acres of reclaimed strip mine land near Cambridge, just to the west of the area along Interstate 70. Despite the incongruity of building a major park on land that had only recently been an active surface mine, the site's proximity to urban centers and highway accessibility made it an attractive investment for state officials who envisioned it as the centerpiece of a larger recreation development strategy.⁶² "Tourism is a major, major industry in Ohio," declared Nancy Hollister, director of the state's Appalachian development office. "The preserve will exemplify that industry in years to come [and] continues to promote a positive image for southeastern Ohio."⁶³

The twin issues of expanding highway and tourist infrastructure dominated the local economic development agenda in Harrison and Monroe during the 1990s. Poor access and lack of state infrastructure investment limited the ability to capitalize on local assets, even in areas with high levels of natural amenities. In 1989, 45 percent of Monroe businesses listed "the adequacy of highways and roadways" as their most important complaint. Despite thousands of acres of county land preserved as public, open space area and a hilly, scenic location with numerous lakes, streams and rivers, the same survey also found that "recreational opportunities are perceived as limited and

⁶¹ "Jamboree in the Hills," *Washington Post*, July 18, 1977, B3; Tom Kaib, "Going by Bus with the Best of 'Em," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, January 7, 1994, 28.

⁶² Ohio Mid-Eastern Governments Association, "Maximizing the Economic Benefits of an Animal Preservation Center," 1989; "Ohio Budget has \$400,000 for Animal Center," *Cincinnati Post*, July 16, 1991, 7A; John Chalfant, "Aid Budgeted for Tourist Sites," *Akron Beacon Journal*, May 15, 1995, C2.

⁶³ David Jacobs, "Economic Hopes Ride Exotic Animals," *Columbus Dispatch*, October 11, 1993, 4B.

poor.”⁶⁴ Local officials saw the two efforts as complimentary, with an anticipated rise of visitors enabled by highway construction providing increased attendance and funds for recreational sites as well as improving the ability to attract new employers in other sectors. The formation of an Economic Development Council (EDC) in Harrison and the subsequent construction of an industrial park adjacent to Cadiz in the late 1980s did have some success in attracting new industrial employers, but the region still faced important obstacles to attracting new growth, including a lack of skilled workers.⁶⁵ Without these prerequisites, a 1999 study concluded, “more traditional strategies [for economic development] such as business recruiting, enterprise zone development, and high technology development/recruitment may not work.”⁶⁶

The failure to attract new industrial employment prompted some rural residents to look at other economic sectors as a means for helping their communities. “I thought that [attracting new industries to replace the mines] was pie in the sky,” recalled EDC member Nately Ronsheim. “It was [during] the downturn in coal production [which came] because of the high sulfur coal..... So many other places were competing for those factories, too. I suggested that we look at what we already had.” Following a missionary trip to India, Ronsheim became interested in the cottage industry concept for handicraft production. “I had heard, through the women, that there were some very interesting, creative people in the area. But they didn’t have any markets for their products, except for craft shows,” she continued. “They also didn’t have the money to invest in their

⁶⁴ Ellen Hagey, Sally Giese Knight, and George Wilson Morse, “Monroe County’s Business Retention and Expansion Program: 1988 Final Report,” (Columbus, OH: Ohio Cooperative Extension Service, Ohio Dept. of Development, 1989).

⁶⁵ “Application for Cadiz Industrial Park Improvements,” 1991, ODOD, ARC Grant Files, Box 7.

⁶⁶ Scott P. Eder, “Economic Development and Growth Possibility: The Loss of Primary Industry - a Case Study of Harrison County, Ohio” (master’s thesis, University of Toledo, 1999), 2.

work.”⁶⁷

In 1985, Ronsheim founded Harrison Hills Cottage Industries (HHCI) to provide educational, marketing and other support services for local residents to make and distribute quality folk art. In addition to funding from sales revenue, Ronsheim obtained financial support from a consortium of nonprofit and government agencies, including the Corporation for Appalachian Development, the Ohio Arts Council, the ARC and the Presbyterian Church for marketing, supplies and the purchase of computers.⁶⁸ During the early 1990s, the group set up shop in a two-story workshop/retail outlet and eventually included more than sixty artists producing everything from eighteen-dollar wooden animals to eight-hundred-dollar glass bowls.⁶⁹

The creation of HHCI involved a radical re-imagining of the Steel Valley’s social and cultural landscape. During the initial War on Poverty programs in the late 1960s, Appalachia had negative connotations of poverty, backwardness and isolation for many in the Steel Valley. “It was like a black mark on us ... a derogatory thing,” Ronsheim recalled. “People were so insulted by it.”⁷⁰ By the 1990s, residents and officials were more willing to embrace the label as a signal of authenticity during a period when heritage tourism and folk art formed powerful economic development engines in other rural areas.⁷¹ Proponents specifically pointed to West Virginia’s statewide network of

⁶⁷ Rita Price, “There All Along-- Ohio County Discovers Thriving Market for Arts and Crafts,” *Columbus Dispatch*, August 18, 1996, O11; Author’s Interview with Nately Ronsheim, December 2004.

⁶⁸ The Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education, “Entrepreneurship Everywhere: A Guide to Resources and Models for Entrepreneurship Education,” available from http://www.entre-ed.org/_arc/home1.htm; Alexa Smith, “Waste Not Whatnot, Artisans Turn out Mountain Ware to Fight Economic Hard Times,” *Presbyterian News*, November 21, 2003.

⁶⁹ Price, “There All Along”; Smith, “Waste Not Whatnot.”

⁷⁰ Nately Ronsheim Interview.

⁷¹ Clare J. A. Mitchell and Geoffrey Wall, “The Arts And Employment: A Case Study Of The Stratford Fest,” *Growth and Change* 20, no. 4 (Fall 1989), 31; Frank Gardner, “Pots of Money,” *Middle East*, iss. 271 (October 1997): 22-23; “After Coal, Tourists: Remaking Towns,” *The Economist*, June 1, 2002, 32;

handicraft production, distribution and sales revolving around the Tamarack Conference Center, as an example of successful state intervention in promoting “mountain culture.” “I would like to mirror what West Virginia’s done, because they’ve done it so well,” explained state representative Jerry Krupinski, who was active in working with Ohio officials to market local products. “It’s a booming business.”⁷²

The growth of HHCI also mirrored the shift toward women’s work in an increasingly service-driven economy. “A lot of families were, for the first time, without a head of household as the breadwinner,” Ronsheim recalled. “People were looking at ways of making extra money, of supplementing their income.” Cindy Bintz, the wife of an unemployed miner and part-time sheep farmer, was a typical member of the group. Bintz used wool from her sheep to create various items from hooked rugs to sweaters and Santas with wool clothes and beards. “The Santas were selected last year as part of the Ohio Show at the state fair,” Ronsheim said in 1996. “They went on QVC [home shopping channel] and sold 500 in three minutes.”⁷³

Following the success of HHCI, Harrison residents and officials began to look at other possibilities for using cultural heritage as an economic development tool. In 1991, Cadiz launched a downtown revitalization program, while a local nonprofit group built a museum at the home of actor Clark Gable.⁷⁴ “Once the monument was placed there, people would stop and take photos,” recalled Nan Mattern, director of the Clark Gable

Steven L. Van Ausdle, “Changing Times for Rural Prosperity Through Wine, Food, and Art,” *Community College Journal* 75, no. 6 (Jun/Jul 2005):10-15.

⁷² Price, “There All Along.”

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Bob Schultz, “Cadiz Gets Facelift,” *Wheeling News-Register*, September 26, 1993, 1, 23; Cindy Benedicto, “Struggling Ohio Town Trying to Cash in on Clark Gable, Late Movie Star Was Born in Cadiz, Which Is Off Beaten Track and Plagued with High Unemployment,” *Akron Beacon Journal*, March 28, 1993, B3; Jeff Louderback, “Cadiz, Ohio, Proud of Native Son Clark Gable, Museum’s Artifacts Celebrate Film Star,” *Cincinnati Enquirer*, February 11, 2001.

Museum. “We knew we needed something more to recognize him and tell the story of who he was.”⁷⁵ Another program promoted the county’s industrial heritage as a center of the coal mining industry. In 1994, officials opened the Harrison County History of Coal Museum, which included wall panels and exhibits, former miners as tour guides, and a video display of the GEM of Egypt and other mining equipment, in the basement of the local library. “The whole community has gotten into the spirit,” explained Sandra Tate, the museum’s director. “Oh, I think it’s grand,” said miner Charles Busby. “It’s like going to the museum to see the dinosaurs, going in and seeing about the animals and all. Now people can come in here and see how coal mining started.”⁷⁶

An even more ambitious program focused on converting Consolidation Coal’s (CONSOL) enormous Silver Spade shovel into an outdoor museum after it concluded operations. During the mid-1990s, volunteers established a display area south of Cadiz for smaller pieces of equipment and in 2000 a local delegation traveled to Big Brutus, a similar shovel converted to a museum in 1988 that received 40,000 visitors a year despite being in a remote part of southeast Kansas.⁷⁷ “Their setup is in excellent condition, making money and self supporting,” the group reported. “An Ohio site would have at least 25 times the drawing population that they enjoy and be a major tourist and business benefit to Harrison County.”⁷⁸

Monroe also seemed well positioned to take advantage of the booming tourist industry thanks to the thousands of acres of open space in the Wayne National Forest

⁷⁵Louderback, “Cadiz, Ohio, Proud of Native Son Clark Gable.”

⁷⁶ Jim Massie, “Mining Memories--Coal Museum Traces History of Dying Industry,” *Columbus Dispatch*, July 17, 1994, 1F.

⁷⁷ See also, Lisa Whitecotton, “The Silver Spade: Harrison County May Take Over Silver Spade Preservation Efforts,” *Martins Ferry Times Leader*, August 1, 2006, A1; “Silver Spade,” *Martins Ferry Times Leader*, editorial, August 2, 2006.

⁷⁸ “Visit to Big Brutus West Mineral, KS,” September 30, 2000, copy in author’s possession.

(WNF), but the question of how best to utilize the county's natural resources revealed the tension between industrial and post-industrial land use. After an outcry by ranchers and environmentalists halted a Reagan Administration proposal to privatize 10 percent of the national forest system, including more than 30 percent of the WNF, federal officials provided \$14 million to purchase 35,000 additional acres between 1985 and 1993.⁷⁹ By the end of the decade, the forest attracted 689,000 visitors and provided more than \$45.7 million in tourist revenue.⁸⁰

The expanding boundaries of the forest also generated tension as local officials complained of the loss of property tax revenue, particularly for schools.⁸¹ During the mid-1990s, the WNF was caught up in a political battle over the system used to fund Ohio's schools, Congressman Frank Cremeans (R-Gallipolis) blocked federal spending for land purchases in the WNF, declaring "Let the forest service go buy land somewhere else or spend it on the schools and the communities affected by the federal forests. We [don't] need more government-owned trees in southern Ohio."⁸² Spending on the district resumed in 2000 after a bill to revoke Ohio's permission for federal land purchases was defeated in the state senate.⁸³ Ralph Regula, a Republican congressman from northeast

⁷⁹ "Agency Weighing Sale Of 3.2% of Forest System," *New York Times*, March 16, 1983, A16; William E. Schmidt, "Skeptics in West Hear Case for U.S. Land Sales," *New York Times*, March 21, 1983, A12; Myron Struck, "Sale of Surplus Lands A Bust in its First Year," *Washington Post*, October 11, 1983, A13; Bob Downing, "House Clears Funding for Park," *Akron Beacon-Journal*, July 1 1988, C1; Edwards, "The Wayne."

⁸⁰ Randall Edwards, "Debate Intensifies over Forest -- as the Wayne Border Expands, Residents of the Region Say Economic Opportunities Are Dwindling," *Columbus Dispatch*, October 3, 1999, 2D.

⁸¹ While the federal government paid payments in lieu of taxes, federal spending was only a fraction of that paid by a private landowner. In 1995, one rural school district with 34 percent of its boundaries in the WNF, received only 27 cents an acre compared to the \$3.34 an acre tax rate. Roger K. Lowe, "Federal Spending Blocked for District," *Columbus Dispatch*, June 19, 1995, 1B.

⁸² Lowe, "Federal Spending Blocked for District." In 1997, the Ohio Supreme Court invalidated the way the schools in the state were funded, declaring that the state did not provide many of its students with even the most basic educational needs. James Drew, "School Issue to Use Up Most of Lawmakers' Time," *Toledo Blade*, December 31, 1997, 3A.

⁸³ Katherine Rizzo, "Ohio Forest to Lose Land-Buying Limits," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, July 18, 1999, 5B;

Ohio and a strong backer of federal land purchases in the state, welcomed the change in policy, declaring, “I’m trying to think of Ohio and what we’ll need in 50 years. As Ohio becomes more urbanized, all sorts of groups are going to come to the spaces – Boy Scouts and hunters and fishermen. They bring in a lot of revenue.”⁸⁴

The debate over land purchases in the WNF was part of a complex struggle between competing visions of appropriate land use on the metropolitan fringe.⁸⁵ The debate involved both local and national groups and could be roughly characterized as between those who favored allowing parts of the forest to be used for logging, fossil fuel extraction and other industrial purposes and groups who favored largely reserving the forest for hiking, canoeing, and other recreational activities. In 1989, the National Forest Service lost more than \$130,000 on timber sales in the WNF, but logging generated 112 private jobs in the local economy and income of \$4.2 million.⁸⁶ In 1992, environmental groups including the Sierra Club filed suit against the Forest Service arguing that the land use management plan for the WNF placed too much emphasis on the logging practice of clearcutting.⁸⁷

The Supreme Court eventually ruled in the government’s favor, but as the case worked its way through the courts no logging sales were permitted, cutting federal payments in lieu of taxes and the sales revenues on which they were based. “There is a lot of bitterness and anger and suspicion and resentment. This has festered too long,”

Michael Hawthorne, “Bill to Curb Wayne Forest’s Growth Dies in Senate,” *Columbus Dispatch*, November 16, 2000, 1B.

⁸⁴ Edwards, “Debate Intensifies.”

⁸⁵ The debate over public lands in the WNF mirrored those in the more widely publicized debate over the spotted owl on the west coast. See Phillip Shabecoff, “Dispute Flares Over Harvest Of Pristine National Forests,” *New York Times*, January 12, 1985, 1.

⁸⁶ John Dougherty, “Environmentalists Confront Logging Practice,” *Dayton Daily News*, April 24, 1990, 1A.

⁸⁷ Kenneth Arbogast and Thomas M. Koontz, “Social and Economic Assessment for the Wayne National Forest,” January 2004, 21-22.

declared Representative Ted Strickland (D-Lucasville), who subsequently voted to restrict new land purchases in the forest. While many local residents believed industrial and recreational land use could co-exist, the issue of clearcutting brought competing visions of the landscape into sharp contrast. “When I clearcut a field, I re-create it. If you get down on your hands and knees, you’ll see a forest coming up,” timber harvester Richard Harwood declared in 1988. Jerry Svendsen, chairman of the Ohio Chapter of the Sierra Club, decried the practice: “Why should this be done on public land? I object for my taxes to be used to support the timber forest industry. What we have here is a manmade disaster.”⁸⁸

Characterizing the debate over the WNF as simply between loggers and environmentalists overlooks the important economic development claims by both groups. Opponents of forest expansion rightly pointed out that public ownership meant less tax revenue for local communities and that the logging moratorium affected the local economy. However school funding, the issue most widely criticized, was a statewide matter, and the timber industry relied on the WNF for only a small percentage of its annual harvest, which came overwhelmingly from private land.⁸⁹ Conversely, while some groups urged environmental preservation principally on ecological grounds, most forest expansion advocates articulated a position that the growth of the WNF would generate new revenue for local communities through recreational tourism. “If we had 2,000 acres of 200-year-old forest, the money one would take in through recreation uses would far surpass the income from timber harvesting on the same land,” explained the

⁸⁸ Dougherty, “Environmentalists.”

⁸⁹ Ibid.

Sierra Club's Svendson.⁹⁰

Some communities, such as Athens and Nelsonville, did feature a thriving tourist industry, but reaping the benefits of tourism required substantial public and private investment in facilities to accommodate and capture income from visitors. Unlike the National Parks, forestry officials did not invest in lodges, golf courses and other amenities, while Monroe's remote location and lack of highway access meant the entire county lacked even one motel through the end of the decade.⁹¹ Harrison faced a similar dilemma in developing its tourist infrastructure. "We do not have adequate facilities for anybody coming through," explained resident Milton Ronsheim. "We have tried for years to get a national chain to come here, but they haven't seen fit to come our way. We have busses coming through here but we don't have accommodations."⁹²

Unlike Harrison and Monroe, Belmont had excellent highway access and the Ohio Valley Mall featured a wide variety of hotels, restaurants and retail outlets. During the 1990s new opportunities for economic development appeared as the area's low land price, accessibility and "natural" amenities combined to attract new residential and commercial development. In 1994, the state purchased CONSOL's old Egypt Valley mine for use as a wildlife area, prompting the construction of new retirement and vacation homes, largely for residents of nearby metropolitan areas.⁹³ In 1996, a new regional shopping center opened near the Ohio Valley Mall, pushing retail space to more than 2.5 million square feet, retail employment to around nine thousand and sales to over

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Forni Interview; Rizzo, "Purchasing."

⁹² Author's Interview with Milton Ronsheim, December 2004.

⁹³ Darcy Egan, "Strip Mine Turned into Wildlife Refuge," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, January 15, 1995, 11D. Author's Interview with June and Earl Stephens, January 2000. Similar development occurred in Harrison near a system of flood control lakes built in the 1930s. Milton Ronsheim Interview.

\$600 million, making the county one of the nation's highest in per capita retail sales.⁹⁴

Other developments included a \$33 million medium-security prison (1993), Mayflower Vehicle Systems, an advanced technology auto supplier (1993), a \$6 million fitness center at the local branch of Ohio University (1998), and Fox Commerce Park, a \$3 million, 125-acre industrial park in 2000.⁹⁵

Belmont's success in attracting new residents and investment exacerbated simmering tensions between the land use policies of existing industrial employers and the post-industrial economy envisioned by some local officials and residents. The passage of federal regulations in 1978 diminished but did not completely abrogate the problems of surface mining, especially near population centers. The Barnesville Greenbelt was never formally codified into law, but with the decline of mining employment local officials interested in the community's image were increasingly willing to support limits on nearby mining.⁹⁶ In 1987, amid concerns over the effects of nearby mining operations on the city's water supply and physical infrastructure, Barnesville officials supported a petition to have the state department of natural resources declare land around the community unsuitable for mining.⁹⁷ One local company agreed to suspend large-scale operations near the community, but state officials refused to prohibit mining in the area.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ Ed Polli, "Lowe's Open at Ohio Valley Plaza," *Martins Ferry Times Leader*, December 24, 1996; Ed Polli, "New Ohio Valley Plaza Red Lobster Getting High Marks," *Martins Ferry Times Leader*, October 27, 1997.

⁹⁵ Natalie Lestini, "Belmont County Burgeoning: Business Rise Shows Quality Efforts Are Paying Big Dividends," *Wheeling Intelligencer* n.d. 1996; Betty J. Pokas and The Times Leader Staff, eds., *Belmont County Bicentennial, 1801-2001* (Martins Ferry, OH: The Times Leader, 2000).

⁹⁶ On the local possibilities for tourism development, see David Jacobs, "Barnesville Hopes Replicas of Homes Attract Tourists and Bail Out Economy," *Columbus Dispatch*, August 10, 1991, 6C; Jim Massie "Saving the Land – Eleven People Strive to Keep 1,051 Acres Free of Mankind's Abuse," *Columbus Dispatch*, February 9, 1992, 1F; Rita Price, "A Taste of the West," *Columbus Dispatch*, June 22, 1996, 1A.

⁹⁷ Author's Interview with Pat Hunkler, November 2004; "Council Pledges Support to Greenbelt Advocates," *Barnesville Enterprise*, October 21, 1987.

⁹⁸ Girard Krebs, "A Gem in Egypt? Part II," *Mountain Life and Work*, September 1972; "R&F Coal Will Move Dragline," *Barnesville Enterprise*, June 19, 1988.

Barnesville leaders had distanced themselves from the activities of Richard Garrett and other mining opponents in the early 1970s, but in 1997, Barnesville officials and the trustees of the surrounding township formally adopted resolutions for a one-mile greenbelt to “protect the village of Barnesville with a buffer zone between the village and coal mining operations.”⁹⁹ Without zoning provisions, virtually impossible to secure in Barnesville’s rural environment, local officials and advocates struggled to convince state authorities to prohibit mining near the village. In 2002, state natural resources director, Sam Speck again rejected the appeals of local residents and community leaders, declaring, “The Barnesville Greenbelt Plan may clearly state a preference of the community, however it lacks the authority of rule or law and therefore can not be enforced by our agency.”¹⁰⁰

During the 1990s, a small rebound in mining employment due to more efficient longwall mining in underground mines and an upswing in coal sales further clouded Belmont’s post-industrial vision for diversified economic growth. In 1988, a group of Belmont County residents sued to stop longwall mining under their property, citing the potential for property damage due to subsidence, and potential mine subsidence, that forced officials to close Interstate 470 through the county in 1996.¹⁰¹ While the growth of

⁹⁹ “Council Approves Greenbelt Resolution,” *Barnesville Enterprise*, October 22, 1997; *To Protect the Village of Barnesville with a Buffer Zone between the Village and Coal Mining Operations*, Village Resolution #2075, October 22, 1997; “Warren Trustees Pass Greenbelt Resolution,” *Barnesville Enterprise*, October 29, 1997.

¹⁰⁰ Author’s Interview with Leonard Guindon, November 2004; “Village to Appeal Greenbelt Denial,” *Barnesville Enterprise*, May 23, 2002; Sam Speck to Pat Hunkler, “Letter,” September 23, 2002, copy in author’s possession. The coal mining industry historically has had a strong influence over state politics. Jon Craig, “Utilities to Get Tax Credits in 2001,” *Akron Beacon Journal*, July 1, 1999, C7; Margaret NewKirk and Jon Craig, “Coal Loses Clout,” *Akron Beacon Journal*, January 8, 2001, A1.

¹⁰¹ “Township Residents Settle Mining Lawsuit,” *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, August 15, 1991, 1C; Bob Dreitzler, “Sinking Section of I-70 Is Closed,” *Columbus Dispatch*, March 8, 1995; Michael Lafferty, “Interstates Often Cross Abandoned Mines,” *Columbus Dispatch*, March 12, 1995; Scott Powers, “Holes in Earth Close Another Interstate,” *Columbus Dispatch*, September 13, 1996. The interstate closings were from abandoned mines that used older mining methods, which also remained a threat to the surface.

malls, hospitals, tourism, education and light manufacturing diminished the overall importance of coal to the Steel Valley's economy, Ohio Valley Coal Company (OVCC) remained among Belmont county's top employers through the end of the 1990s.¹⁰² The company's 1988 announcement that it would mine under a patch of old-growth forest in the eastern portion of the county used by Ohio University as a research center and nature area launched a series of petitions and lawsuits that lasted throughout the decade and paralleled many of the themes evident in the WNF.¹⁰³ Mining subsidence was also a major limiting factor in attracting the type of high-tech and light manufacturing firms local development officials desired to balance new jobs in healthcare and retailing, which paid less on average than manufacturing employment. During the late 1990s, county development director Don Myers spearheaded assembly and site preparation for a planned industrial park along I-70 west of St. Clairsville. "AEP [electric utility] thought it was the best site this side of Columbus," Myers explained.

We built the thing and it was 95 percent completed and new commissioners came in. They said, 'we just came back from Ohio Valley Coal and [CEO] Bob Murray says that ... he's gonna long-wall it. Anybody that you try to bring in, he's gonna ... call them up and tell them that he's gonna put a longwall mine in and sink their property.... I said, 'Do you think he has that right?' I mean, whatever he destroys, he's gotta fix. Is he going to fix million dollar buildings? Contest this, like they do everywhere else. Coal is our past, it's not our future. I got nowhere. This [industrial park is] our future and all the way to Barnesville [along the interstate] is our future, and if he's gonna longwall all of that, we have no future.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² OVCC was the flagship of Robert E. Murray, one of the largest independent coal operators in the nation, who had purchased the mine in 1988 and installed the more efficient longwall technology. Art Sanda, "Starting with Nothing, Bob Murray Has Built Something," *Coal Age*, November 1999.

¹⁰³ Bob Downing, "Home to Giants – Forest Two Hours from Akron Home to Some of the State's Largest Trees," *Akron Beacon Journal*, June 11, 2006, E10; Zachary Gooch, "ODNR Restricts Mining under Dysart Woods: Both Sides Unhappy with Ruling," *Martins Ferry Times Leader*, December 1, 1998; Mike Lafferty, "Coal-Mining Plans Change for Old-Growth Forest," *Columbus Dispatch*, November 9, 2001; Rita Price, "Rally Opposes Coal Mining near Plot of Virgin Trees," *Columbus Dispatch*, July 20, 1997.

¹⁰⁴ Author's Interview with Donald Myers, July 2004.

Myers explained, that at the time, he was “upset because people were placing a cloud over our title [and] because the commissioners immediately jumped to the conclusion that they did something wrong.”¹⁰⁵ In contrast to Myer’s adamant articulation of a post-industrial vision, statements by Belmont commissioners in January 2002 reveal a lingering hope for balancing competing land uses.

We are trying to reach a happy medium [so] coal jobs can be preserved and new jobs created as well through the new Fox Commerce Industrial Park. There is great potential for good paying jobs, which would allow our youth to stay in the area.... Most here could trace a family member who was involved in coal mining. It is very important to understand that coal has a long rich history in our area.... The problem with long wall mining is in Ohio it is legal ... Until there are changes made, we are fighting an uphill battle.... The northern part of the Industrial park, perhaps thirty acres, won’t be mined, even if the rest is long walled that part will not be. We could develop one third of the park, there have been lost jobs already because of the situation.¹⁰⁶

Between 2000 and 2003, mining employment in Belmont increased by 55 percent with the opening of a new underground mine adjacent to OVCC. In 2004, Fox Commerce Park received its first two tenants, with an employment potential of 20.¹⁰⁷

Mills and Malls

Between 1993 and 1994, an ACCD-sponsored commission of Pittsburgh’s corporate, political and university leaders released a new development agenda for southwestern Pennsylvania, which largely reflected the views of CMU social theorist Richard Florida, that high-performance manufacturing was the key to the region’s

¹⁰⁵ Author’s Interview with Donald Myers, unrecorded, September 2006.

¹⁰⁶ “Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of Belmont County Ohio, St. Clairsville Ohio,” January 30, 2002.

¹⁰⁷ “Belmont County Single Audit for the Year Ended December 31, 2003.”

economic revitalization.¹⁰⁸ The ACCD's strategy to develop high performance manufacturing built upon existing initiatives to link the region's universities with the private sector and focused on diffusing new production and distribution techniques throughout the region's industries.¹⁰⁹ "The dramatic progress of the last year at the Pittsburgh Technology Center is evidence of readiness for real growth in technology companies and jobs," boosters declared. "It is time to develop a strategy to make the Greater Pittsburgh region itself a Technology Park."¹¹⁰

To complement this program of regional transformation, the ACCD advocated a focus on the desires of middle class tourists and young, footloose professionals, what Florida described as the "creative class," for "arts and entertainment ... nightlife and dining [and] riverfront development" especially in the urban river valleys.¹¹¹ "The rivers hold the potential to define this region to the world," boosters declared. "They are the signature piece of the region. Very simply, riverfront development is the vital step between what our region is today and what it seeks to become."¹¹²

The ACCD's development agenda for the 1990s was an outgrowth of concerns that through an overemphasis on the service sector and high-technology, the Strategy 21

¹⁰⁸ Allegheny Conference on Community Development and Carnegie Mellon University, "Toward a Shared Economic Vision for Pittsburgh and Southwestern Pennsylvania," 1993; Lubove, *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh Volume Two*, 255-260; Richard Florida, "Regional Creative Destruction: Production Organization, Globalization, and the Economic Transformation of the Midwest," *Economic Geography* 72, no. 3 (July 1996): 314-334. In developing this agenda, Florida argued that older industrial areas such as Pittsburgh could break out of the "institutional rigidities" of the Fordist system of production through a process of "regional creative destruction" that would produce fundamental changes in "the industrial, organizational, and institutional fabric of those regions."

¹⁰⁹ Sabina Deitrick, "Industrial Change in Pittsburgh," in *The State of the Region Report* (Pittsburgh: University Center for Social and Urban Research, 1999).

¹¹⁰ Working Together Consortium, "The Greater Pittsburgh Region: Working Together to Compete Globally," November 1994.

¹¹¹ Richard L. Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life* (New York: Basic Books, 2002); Richard Florida, *Cities and the Creative Class* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

¹¹² Working Together Consortium, "Working Together," 59.

initiatives of the 1980s did not devote sufficient resources to developing the region's manufacturing base. In 1987, gubernatorial candidate Robert Casey disparaged the Thornburgh administration for what he described as a narrow emphasis on service sector and high-tech employment and disregard for job losses in other sectors. "The concept of targeting resources to 'winners' [has] been distorted by some to mean that the only appropriate thrust for state economic development efforts is high tech industries," Casey declared. "Saving the 'traditional' manufacturing industries can have as high a return on investment of public money as any high tech enterprise."¹¹³ The future governor also argued for state resources to be targeted geographically to the areas hardest hit by the decline in steel production.¹¹⁴

A major component of the Casey administration's program to redevelop the urban river valleys was an expansion of the Ben Franklin Partnership (BFP) to incorporate advanced technology into the existing manufacturing base. His visit to Homestead the day after his inauguration in 1987 heralded a new era of state attention to the region.¹¹⁵ In order to facilitate the transfer of technology, Casey established a series of Industrial Resource Centers funded by the state legislature with \$30 million for three years to provide corporate technical support, customized job training, and to help speed up the transfer of technology from universities to manufacturers.¹¹⁶ On August 24, 1988, Governor Casey again visited the Mon Valley to present a \$1.7 million check for the

¹¹³ Robert Casey and Mark Singel, "You've Got a JOB in Casey Pennsylvania," April 1986.

¹¹⁴ Ibid; "Grant Money from State About to Come to County," *Beaver County Times*, December 19, 1986. Thornburgh also reluctantly adopted this approach late in his second term, including \$95 million for the Renaissance Communities program. In campaign literature Casey dismissed the proposals as "miserly ... excuses not to provide real money."

¹¹⁵ Michael Hirsh, "Casey Listens to Mon Valley Residents," *Butler Eagle*, January 12, 1987, 1.

¹¹⁶ Southwestern Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Centers, "Program Summary," May 11, 1988, in PA Commerce, unprocessed materials, ACCN#2667, Slot Location 16-1601 (Hereafter cited as PSA Christman Files).

Southwestern Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Center (SPIRC), the largest of the state's four IRCs, at the opening of its headquarters in downtown Homestead.¹¹⁷

In his remarks, James Colker, president of the ACCD-affiliated Pittsburgh High Technology Council, which was in charge of running the facility, declared that SPIRC would “bring advanced technology to small and medium sized manufacturing companies to increase manufacturing productivity both for high tech and traditional manufacturers.”¹¹⁸ The Industrial Resource Centers combined with the Ben Franklin Partnership, declared Commerce Secretary and former Pittsburgh Urban Renewal Authority director Ray Christman, would give the state an “unparalleled one-two punch in assisting the development and transfer of new technology in manufacturing.”¹¹⁹

The program to extend the economic growth of Pittsburgh's universities and middle-class suburbs to the urbanized valleys largely focused on converting abandoned riverfront mill sites to planned industrial districts overseen by the Regional Industrial Development Corporation (RIDC). In addition to statewide programs, such as the BFP and the IRCs, the Casey Administration also secured additional funds to help the Mon

¹¹⁷ “Check Presentation SW PA Industrial Resource Center (SPIRC) Bishop Boyle Center, Homestead,” August 24, 1988, PSA Christman Files.

¹¹⁸ “Remarks by James Colker, President of the Pittsburgh High Technology Council at the SPIRC Check Presentation by Governor Casey,” August 24, 1988; David Ranii, “High-tech Council Expanding with Youthful Gusto,” *Pittsburgh Press*, August 21, 1988, D18; Rick Teaff, “SPIRC Blending Manufacturing, High Technology,” *Pittsburgh Business Times*, July 18, 1988, PSA Christman Files.

¹¹⁹ Commonwealth News Bureau, “Press Release Re: SPIRC,” August 24, 1988; Ellen M. Perlmutter, “Higher Aims: City URA Chief Sets Sights on State Goals,” *Pittsburgh Press*, d.u., both in PSA Christman Files. Vince Gagetta, *Southwestern Pennsylvania: Land of Opportunity* (Montgomery, AL: Community Communications, Inc., 1999). Christman's importance in coordinating state and local economic development efforts in southwestern Pennsylvania quickly came into focus. The week he assumed his new post, Volkswagen announced it would close its New Stanton plant idling 2,500 workers. Along with Jay Aldridge, executive director of Penn's Southwest, Christman was widely credited with persuading the Sony Corporation to select the site for a new TV-tube production facility. By the late 1990s, the Sony Technology Center—Pittsburgh employed approximately 3,000 on site and contracted with more than 1,100 local suppliers in the immediate area

and Beaver Valleys make the transition to smaller, more efficient employers.¹²⁰ During the 1980s, the RIDC already had shifted some of its resources from its three major suburban industrial parks to managing a number of urban sites, including three University Development Centers in the Oakland section of Pittsburgh, the CMU's Software Engineering Institute, and the Pittsburgh Technology Center.¹²¹ With the collapse of the steel industry in the mid-1980s, the RIDC agreed to manage the conversion of a number of former mills into sites suitable for small and medium sized businesses, including the 92-acre Westinghouse Plant in East Pittsburgh (1988), the USX's 135-acre National Tube Works in McKeesport, and the 240-acre Duquesne Works acquired in 1990. Rechristened the Keystone Commons, Industrial Center of McKeesport and City Center of Duquesne, the sites became the centerpieces of the state's redevelopment strategy for the Mon Valley.¹²²

By 1992, development officials such as Ray Christman, who left the Casey Administration in 1991 to head a technology-oriented nonprofit group, could point to a "number of successes at old plant sites," such as Keystone Commons, which had attracted about forty companies with a work force of more than four hundred.¹²³ Two year later, the facility had grown to forty-eight tenants and 650 employees, approaching

¹²⁰ Ray Christman to Paul Brophy, "Letter," August 1, 1988; Ray Christman, "Inter-Office Memorandum," October 18, 1988; Ray Christman, to Paul Brophy, "Letter," July 10, 1989, both in PSA Christman Files. Brophy was the former director of the ACCD-backed ACTION-Housing program and the Casey Administration's point man for developing a Mon Valley strategy.

¹²¹ Barbara W. Stack, "Technical Firms Are Hope for Economy," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, July 28, 1982; "High Technology Unit Linked to Universities," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, October 9, 1982; Tom Barnes, "RIDC Chief Answers Critics," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, February 22, 1991. According to President Frank Brooks Robinson, between 1981 and 1991, the organization brought thirty projects into Pittsburgh totaling \$80 million in investment.

¹²² Richard Stouffer, "Big Mill Sites Go Public," *New York Times*, September 18, 1988, 25; "Forging Opportunities for a New Future: Governor Casey's Strategy for Revitalizing the Mon Valley and Southwestern Pennsylvania," December 1989. PSA Christman Papers.

¹²³ Sam Spatter, "Creating Jobs: Old Plant Sites Attract New Manufacturers," *Pittsburgh Press*, March 15, 1992, F7.

the 800 employed at the Westinghouse Plant in its last years. Mixed-use development in the three RIDC parks included a marina with room for 210 boats in McKeesport as well as a wide variety of firms from cookie makers to machine shops. “It’s not like when we had 10,000 to 15,000 employees, naturally, but it’s a start,” Turtle Creek clothier Ben Forman declared. “It upgrades the whole area -- rather than the deterioration you see in [other Mon Valley] communities.”¹²⁴ “Duquesne is a very pleasant place to work,” agreed Eric Hoffman, president of K2T, a robotics firm founded by three CMU faculty members, which leased space in the RIDC’s City Center facility. “Coming here was more appealing than pushing out to the suburbs. You cannot find buildings this big in most places anymore. Also, this is centrally located to where our employees live. There is free parking, a 150-acre playground and wildlife.”¹²⁵

The transformation of hulking mill sites into attractive, modern workplaces involved completely recreating an urban industrial landscape that had formed over the course of a century and that involved negotiating a wide variety of variables from environmental hazards to highway access.¹²⁶ The most important obstacle to brownfield redevelopment during the 1990s was the presence of contamination from decades of industrial production. In Duquesne and McKeesport, RIDC removed 2,200 barrels of oil chemicals and other toxic liquids, disposed of asbestos-lined pipes and tanks, eliminated old PCB-laden electrical transformers, and even dug up an old railroad car. Nevertheless, the cost of meeting environmental regulations created a rift between local developers and

¹²⁴ Eleanor Chute, “Keystone Commons at Five Years,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, April 7, 1994, E1.

¹²⁵ Linda Wilson Fuoco, “Ghost of Past, Future Vision Seen in Tour of Steel Valley,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, July 2, 1997, S1.

¹²⁶ On the issue of highway access into Mon Valley brownfield sites, see Jonathan Barnes, “State Oks Construction of Flyover Ramps,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, July 4, 2001, S6; Don Hammonds, “Almost Everything You Need – Lack of Suitable Land Missing Part of Puzzle for Enterprise Zone Encompassing Braddock, Rankin and North Braddock,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, March 3, 2004, B10.

state officials, whom RIDC president Frank Robinson accused of believing “that industry is evil and [that] everybody is dragging their feet on the cleanup -- which we all want.”¹²⁷ Cleanup costs and the uncertainty of achieving environmental standards also limited private investment, with many local banks and potential tenants opting instead for suburban sites despite significant tax breaks and other incentives designed to lure employers to the riverfronts.¹²⁸ “I would love to have a private interest come down here, buy five acres and build a building,” RIDC president Brooks Robinson explained in 1999 as he surveyed the rubble strewn field that still constituted much of the Duquesne City Center. “It would be great. It’s upsetting me, because ... there’s still a lot of butt-ugly around here.”¹²⁹

Many communities throughout the Steel Valley focused on attracting industry to abandoned brownfield areas, but Wheeling leaders focused on creating a welcoming riverfront as a site for recreation and a backdrop for consumption. “Part of the job of the community at this stage is thinking about how other people will experience this city and whether they will find their time here well spent,” explained local newspaper editor Harry Hamm in his seminal “Wheeling 2000” report released in 1989.¹³⁰ As a board member of the Michael Benedum Foundation, Hamm was involved in the creation of Pittsburgh’s Cultural District and his comments mirrored those of University of Pittsburgh historian Edward Muller, who in 1982 called for the region’s rivers to become “part of our *daily* lives, enhancing the quality of life to the degree which water resources have in many

¹²⁷ Dan Fitzpatrick, “The Mon Valley – Haves and Have Nots with a Mix of Envy and Frustration,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, October 14, 2001, C1.

¹²⁸ Select Committee on Pennsylvania’s Industrial Development Corporations, *Sharing the Wealth: A Report on Pennsylvania’s Industrial Development Corporations* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania House of Representatives, 1992).

¹²⁹ Dan Fitzpatrick, “The Redevelopment of RIDC: Criticism Fading as Nonprofit Broadens Focus, Tackles Mon Valley Makeover,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, August 22, 1999, C1.

¹³⁰ Harry Hamm, “Wheeling 2000,” 1989, OCPL.

other cities.”¹³¹

In arguing for revitalized riverfronts, community leaders pointed to the commercial success of earlier developments, such as Station Square on South Side that combined historical preservation and riverfront development into important economic generators.¹³² The Pittsburgh Cultural Trust began planning a \$512 million office building and theater complex near downtown early in the decade. By the time it opened in December 1999, it formed part of a revitalized cultural and retail district that encompassed fourteen square blocks and included the David Lawrence Convention Center, several hotels, the Heinz Regional History Center, dozens of galleries, shops and restaurants, eight public parks, and five major theaters with more than 1,000 performances each year.¹³³

Wheeling’s success in redeveloping its riverfront and downtown areas was due in part to the backing of a strong public-private partnership between city and state political officials and the non-profit Wheeling National Heritage Area Corporation (WNHAC). Hamm’s “Wheeling 2000” plan presented a comprehensive program of urban and economic development to be phased in over several years and based upon a “heavy reliance on historic sights and events and nostalgia of the good life of yesteryear.” Echoing proponents of neighborhood revitalization in Pittsburgh, the proposal emphasized that rather than “clearance and redevelopment, the plan is to take older neighborhoods that still have whatever shape they were built to have – residential,

¹³¹ Mary Brignano, *Curating the District: How the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust is Transforming the Quality of Urban Life* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Cultural Trust, 2000); Edward K. Muller, “Pittsburgh’s Waterfront Lands: A Final Report on the Combined Meetings of the Eastern, Mid-American, and Ontario Historical Geography Associations,” 1982. For a more recent examination of Muller’s views on riverfront development, see Muller, “River City.”

¹³² Hamm, “Wheeling 2000”; Gwennie Sloan, “Recreation Retail Planned for Riverfront,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Metro ed., August 28, 1997, W6.

¹³³ Brignano, *Curating*.

commercial or industrial – and treat them as urban parks. Areas that once seemed ugly, dull or commonplace on the landscape would become a rich tapestry embroidered from the lives and dreams of earlier generations.”¹³⁴

The implementation of Hamm’s vision benefited from the political patronage of West Virginia Senator Robert C. Byrd, who in 1989 secured federal funding to initiate an National Park Service (NPS) study of the city and regularly added funds for the project to appropriations bills for the Department of the Interior.¹³⁵ Over the next five years, NPS officials cooperated with a local Wheeling National Heritage Area Task Force to develop an overall plan for the community, a program of physical redevelopment, an interpretive master plan, and an oral history database. In 1995, WNHAC incorporated and the following year the city’s first federally-funded attraction, the \$6 million Wheeling Artisan Center, opened a block from the waterfront, featuring exhibits, an arts and crafts retail shop, art gallery, and a privately managed restaurant and brew-pub. Two years later, officials opened the Robert C. Byrd Intermodal Transportation Center, a federally funded parking garage that housed a Visitor’s Center and allowed demolition of the waterfront Wharf Parking Garage to make for the “Heritage Port,” an outdoor amphitheatre that formed the centerpiece of the city’s waterfront development efforts.¹³⁶

Community leaders in the region’s smaller cities also looked to Pittsburgh’s downtown as a model for transforming their own communities. In 1993, nine Beaver County communities announced that they would join together to “do something” about the riverfront. “We want to make it more accessible and encourage private investment,”

¹³⁴ “Wheeling 2000,” Focus (p.2).

¹³⁵ Byrd, *Byrd*, 499, 525, 540-541, 564, 710-711.

¹³⁶ ICON Architects, Inc., *Management Plan for the Wheeling National Heritage Area*, (prepared for the Wheeling National Heritage Area Corporation), May 2004, B1.

said James Palmer, president of the nonprofit group developing the project.

“Development around the riverfront can’t be left to chance.”¹³⁷ Between 1994 and 1997, nearly \$1.9 million in riverfront development was completed in the nine communities, with the local officials receiving \$250,000 annually in matching grant money from the state.¹³⁸ Rochester, which sits at the confluence of the Beaver and Ohio Rivers, purchased most of the riverfront land in the community and zoned the remaining to promote recreation-related development and discourage further industrial development. “Other areas are available for industrial development and the riverfront is better suited to businesses that would attract and serve people who come to use the area for recreation,” explained borough manager Edward Piroli.¹³⁹

The Mon Valley also featured proposals for a federally funded industrial heritage area. In 1988, the same year that USX transferred its former mill sites in McKeesport and Duquesne to the Allegheny County Industrial Authority, it sold the Carrie furnaces and the Homestead Mill site to Cleveland-based Park Corporation for more than \$2.75 million.¹⁴⁰ Over the subsequent decade the site became a hotly contested battleground between the Park Corporation and the non-profit Steel Industry Heritage Corporation (SIHC), which wanted to preserve part of the site as a museum and visitor’s center for the proposed Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area, established by Congress in 1996.¹⁴¹

While the Park Corporation did agree to preserve the landing site as well as the Carrie

¹³⁷ Cathey O’ Donnell, “Community Leaders Launch Plan to Develop Riverfronts,” *Beaver County Times*, May 2, 1993; Sloan, “Recreation.” The nine communities included New Brighton, Fallston, Bridgewater, Rochester Township, Rochester, East Rochester, Beaver, Monaca, and Freedom.

¹³⁸ Ione Morgan, “Many Projects Here Point to a Promising Future,” *Beaver County Times*, May 1, 1997.

¹³⁹ Sloan, “Recreation.”

¹⁴⁰ Stouffer, “Mill Sites.”

¹⁴¹ National Park Service, “America’s Industrial Heritage Project: Southwestern Pennsylvania,” 1989; Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, “Preliminary Report on Steel Historic Site Evaluation to the Steel Heritage Task Force,” 1988; Mon Valley Initiative, “Proposal to the Heinz Endowments and the Pittsburgh Foundation,” 1988.

Furnaces, and allowed the removal of some artifacts for storage, it opposed the heritage park as detrimental to its economic interests. Consequently, the company demolished a number of important artifacts that heritage backers believed essential for preserving the area's history.¹⁴²

During the mid-1990s, an Ohio developer purchased the property and began planning a mixed-use development featuring apartments, restaurants, big box retail stores and office space scattered around the remaining industrial artifacts. "It's like a Christmas present. Until the Waterfront, nothing was going on in Homestead," declared mayor Betty Esper, at the October 1998 groundbreaking ceremony for the project.¹⁴³ While SIHC was not able to acquire the Homestead Site, work continued on the Rivers of Steel Heritage Area. In October 2003, the group dedicated the Bost Building on Eighth Avenue just across the railroad tracks from The Waterfront as the Visitor's Center for the Heritage Area.¹⁴⁴

Rails, Trails, and Automobiles

Despite the decline of the socioeconomic bonds created by the area's traditional heavy industry, during the 1990s the relationships between and among Steel Valley communities actually increased in importance. Local officials increasingly sold

¹⁴² Joseph Crumb, "Residents Favorable to Plans for Mill Site," *Pittsburgh Press*, July 5, 1990; Dan Donovan, "Task Force Plans to Move 200-Ton Mill -- Piece by Piece," *Pittsburgh Press*, December 27, 1990; Christine Vorce, "It's History Now, Homestead Roll Shop Comes Down Despite Museum Plans," *Pittsburgh Press*, June 30, 1990.

¹⁴³ "Homecoming? Homestead Tries to Make a Comeback," *Pittsburgh Business Times*, October 22, 1998; Donna Seiling, "Merging Town and Mall into a New Alloy, Town Center Design Comes to Pittsburgh in Homestead Project," *Pittsburgh Business Times*, October 2, 1998; Suzanne Elliott, "Homestead Set to Benefit from the Promise of Waterfront Development," *Pittsburgh Business Times*, July 15, 2001.

¹⁴⁴ Ethan Lott, "Manufacturing a National Park," *Pittsburgh Business Times*, June 18, 1999; Ethan Lott, "U.S. Steel Homestead Site Nominated for Historic Status," *Pittsburgh Business Times*, August 18, 2000; Linda Wilson Fuocco, "Bost Building Has Its First Official Exhibit," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, April 9, 2003; "Congressman Pushes for SV National Park," *McKeesport Daily News*, July 1, 2003.

themselves to private developers, especially in the retail and service sectors, on the basis of their proximity to population centers. This trend toward increasing regional interconnections enabled a suburban-based strategy for development that built upon the decentralization of the previous decades as well as a radical shift in how residents in outlying areas conceived of themselves in relation to the larger metropolitan region. While local, county and state boundaries remained important, community leaders increasingly looked to their regional neighbors as potential customers, consumers and sources for growth.

The growth of rails-to-trails programs (RTT) provided another opportunity for residents and communities to rethink their relationships with each other. In Pittsburgh, former state representative Thomas Murphy, elected as mayor in 1994, envisioned a system of riverfront trails as the centerpiece of an urban and economic development strategy that would connect neighborhoods and help to create a new, hipper image for the city.¹⁴⁵ In other areas, residents used RTT to articulate new connections with nearby communities. In 1991, McKeesport's Mon/Yough Trail Council (MYTC) began work on the railroad corridor once used to transport Connellsville Coke to Andrew Carnegie's steel mills. "Winding through approximately 40 miles of scenic and wooded areas, the trail will link small communities, parks and other natural areas together," council members explained. "This trail is a vital link in the proposed 315 mile trail extending from Station Square ... to Ohiopyle State Park ... to Washington D.C."¹⁴⁶

Despite the promise of peripheral expansion's driving regional growth envisioned by residents and officials desperate to relieve the unemployment of the mid-1980s,

¹⁴⁵ Rich Lord, "Finishing Trails is a Goal for Mayor," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, September 12, 2005, B1.

¹⁴⁶ Mon/ Yough Trail Council, "Mon/Yough Trail Council Application/Brochure," d.u., Murphy Papers.

publicly subsidized suburban spending produced only mixed results during the subsequent decade. During the 1980s and early 1990s, the ACCD and Pittsburgh's political leaders saw virtually unlimited growth potential in the Airport Corridor, with officials proclaiming that the new Midfield Terminal would create 81,000 new jobs in twenty years.¹⁴⁷ When the Terminal opened in 1992, residential and commercial areas nearby boomed, including the \$8 million Woodfield at Beaver Lakes with homes starting at \$140,000 each; the \$45 million Cherington Corporate Center, which featured six office buildings, two hotels, conference facilities and a golf course; as well as a \$10 million industrial park and a \$2.2 million conversion for Wal-Mart.¹⁴⁸

While the corridor did witness a dramatic growth in retail and related development, a survey by the Airport Area Chamber of Commerce revealed that only a relatively small number of businesses listed proximity to the airport as a leading factor in their decision to move to the area.¹⁴⁹ While some business leaders cited the lack of investment capital available for commercial development following the collapse of real estate prices in cities like Atlanta and Dallas during the 1980s as the reason for this lack of growth, a 1993 study commissioned by the Allegheny County Commissioners also revealed a lack of necessary highway and utility infrastructure serving the area.¹⁵⁰ "People just assumed that alone, the airport was going to be a magnet for growth," said John

¹⁴⁷ Michael Marriott, "Pittsburgh Airport of Future Being Built," *New York Times*, November 12, 1991, A16.

¹⁴⁸ Chriss Swaney, "Housing Grows with Airport," *New York Times*, March 22, 1992; Sandra Fischione Donovan, "Landing Development, Airport Area Waits to Realize the Benefits," *Beaver County Times*, February 6, 1996; "Developers Remake Robinson Township as Retail Mecca," *Pittsburgh Business Times*, September 18, 1995.

¹⁴⁹ Allegheny County Board of Commissioners et al., "Pittsburgh International Airport Area Development: A Strategy for Allegheny County Land," 1993.

¹⁵⁰ Sandra F. Donovan, "Study Identifies Weaknesses," *Beaver County Times*, February 6, 1996.

Thornburgh, President of the Penn's Southwest Association.¹⁵¹ The area's close proximity to the state line of West Virginia, and especially with the completion of the Byrd Expressway in 1993) meant that with only a short drive developers could take advantage of lower business taxes in Weirton and Steubenville.

Proximity to the ORV partly explains why residential construction also lagged behind Cranberry and other areas.¹⁵² "When it comes to homes in the \$200,000 to \$350,000 price range, you can drive another 20 minutes to save \$300 to \$500 a month (in taxes)," explained the owner of a local construction company. "There has been some growth there, but not what you think," added Ron Croushore, CEO of Prudential Preferred Realty. "Lots of people still come from the north and south. The malls and shopping centers are drawing from all over. The traffic has been unbelievable, but the housing has not been ahead of the other parts of the city."¹⁵³

While the Airport Corridor suffered from a variety of obstacles to economic development, the tendency for new ventures to expand ever outward also marred the suburban strategy of peripheral investment.¹⁵⁴ In 1997, the Heinz Endowments funded a study on creating a "sustainable" future and the following year sponsored a series of meetings in conjunction with the President's Council on Sustainable Development in order to "customize principles of sustainable development - such as equity, land and

¹⁵¹ Jim Ritchie, "Quiet Airport Corridor May See Activity," *Greensburg Tribune-Review*, June 6, 1999.

¹⁵² "Heal(Th) of Airport Corridor Property Reflected in Big 50 Hotels Ranking," *Pittsburgh Business Times*, August 18, 2000; "Still Waiting for Takeoff: Why Has Development on County-Owned Land Surrounding Pittsburgh International Airport Been So Slow?" *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, August 27, 2000. In 1999, only Moon Township, out of all Airport Corridor communities, placed in the top ten in the region for the number of building permits issued for housing construction.

¹⁵³ Suzanne Elliott, "Airport Area Balancing Boom, Bust, Home Builders Lag Commercial Developers," *Pittsburgh Business Times*, May 19, 2000.

¹⁵⁴ David Tessitor, "Don't Follow the Yellow Brick Road," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, editorial, June 12, 1994, F1; Larry J. Schweiger, "Smart Growth for Our Town," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, September 6, 1998, E1.

building reuse, and reduced consumption - to local conditions.”¹⁵⁵ These efforts resulted in the creation of Sustainable Pittsburgh, a coalition of local environmental groups, affordable housing advocates, and community planning agencies, which called for “integration of economy, environment, and equity as the foundation for long-term prosperity for southwestern Pennsylvania.”¹⁵⁶

While from the standpoint of Sustainable Pittsburgh, metropolitan sprawl presented an obstacle to maintaining a viable regional community, the completion of the Allegheny and Beaver Valley Expressways during the 1980s and the Robert Byrd Expressway during the early 1990s also allowed older industrial satellite cities from Kittanning in Armstrong County to Steubenville and Wheeling symbolically to refashion themselves into centers of distribution, light industry and residence. In addition to Steubenville’s “Burb of the Burgh” program, Armstrong launched a campaign proclaiming itself, “The Best Thing Next to Pittsburgh.”¹⁵⁷ By the end of the 1990s, Wheeling residents too increasingly saw themselves as part of the Pittsburgh community, and in 2002 local officials convinced internet company ebSource LLC to move its Pittsburgh office to a new location near Wheeling’s riverfront.¹⁵⁸

Washington County provides a number of good examples of these new regional institutions and interactions that flourished beginning in the 1990s. The county’s location

¹⁵⁵ Melisa Crawford et al., “Metropolitan Initiative Forum: Sustainable Development in the Pittsburgh Metropolitan Region Briefing Paper,” August 4, 1997; Don Hopey, “Development Panel Plans for ‘Sustainable’ Future,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, September 30, 1998, B7.

¹⁵⁶ Court Gould, “Dear Creek Crossing Latest Instance of Hodgepodge Development,” editorial, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, September 13, 2000, N3.

¹⁵⁷ Tim Callahan, “The Culture of the City Is Very Close,” *Leader-Times*, February 27, 1995; Tim Callahan, “Major League Sports in the ‘Burg’ Very Near Here,” *Kittanning Leader-Times*, February 27, 1995; Liz White, “Welcome to Our Home,” *Kittanning Leader-Times*, February 27, 1989.

¹⁵⁸ “High-Tech Company Moves Pittsburgh Office to Wheeling,” *Associated Press State and Local Wire*, October 10, 2002; “Mayor Believes Wheeling Can Compete with Pittsburgh, Columbus for Jobs,” *Associated Press State and Regional Wire*, January 17, 2002.

south and east of Allegheny County put it directly in the path of the major routes between Pittsburgh and Steubenville, Weirton and Wheeling. In June 1990, barely a month after West Virginia Governor Gaston Caperton dedicated the new Veteran's Memorial Bridge over the Ohio River, rocker Billy Joel played the first show at a new \$11.5 million amphitheatre in Burgettstown, in the northwestern part of the county near the West Virginia border.¹⁵⁹ "We have a growing community," Burgettstown Council President Richard Alvarez said a few years later. "Pittsburgh is coming to us."¹⁶⁰

Perhaps the most ambitious of these projects was the attempt symbolically to transform Steubenville from a Rust Belt wreck to a suburban boomtown. In 1997, Steubenville was in the throes of a ten-month strike at its remaining Wheeling-Pittsburgh steel mills, with an unemployment rate of 14.6 percent, more than three times that of Allegheny.¹⁶¹ The following year commuters along Route 22, fifteen miles west of Pittsburgh, found a new billboard with the slogan "Discover Pittsburgh's New Suburb ... in Ohio." The billboard was part of an advertising campaign spearheaded by the Progress Alliance, a coalition of local officials and business leaders formed in 1996 to change the city's image and attract investment from its larger neighbor. "It accomplished what we needed to do," explained former Steubenville city manager Gary Dufour. Pennsylvania residents and business leaders "began to think, 'Oh yeah, it isn't that far.'"¹⁶² The campaign marked a radical departure from earlier efforts, which focused on appealing for

¹⁵⁹ Joe Grata, "New Ramps, Extra Police to Tackle Star Lake Traffic," *Pittsburgh Press*, June 10, 1990; David Templeton, "Star Lake Pavilion to Be on Time, Record Rain Fails to Delay Opening," *Pittsburgh Press*, June 3, 1990.

¹⁶⁰ David Templeton, "Two Towns Talk Merger, Proposal to Unite Burgettstown and Smith Has Support of Council President," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, October 6, 1996.

¹⁶¹ Paul R. Flora, "Diverse Economic Base a Key Factor in Reducing Joblessness in Allegheny County, Outlying Areas," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, July 1, 1997, C7; Mike Lafferty, "10-Month Job Action Is Costly; Steel Strike's Legacy: Lost Homes, Hopes," *Columbus Dispatch*, August 14, 1997, 1A.

¹⁶² Author's Interview with Gary Dufour, August 2004.

resources from Ohio's commercial centers.¹⁶³

Steubenville's efforts to remake itself had a number of important victories in the late 1990s, but the desire of the Progress Alliance partnership to increase accessibility to Pittsburgh put its vision of community into conflict with that of Sustainable Pittsburgh and other anti-sprawl organizations. By the time the first billboard went up proclaiming Steubenville to be a "Burb of the Burgh," metropolitan growth had already reached the community with a new upscale residential project built by a Pittsburgh developer and a number of tenants at a new industrial park along US 22.¹⁶⁴ The Progress Alliance had a number of important successes in the late 1990s, including the construction of a major Wal-Mart Distribution Center near Steubenville in 2001.¹⁶⁵

Local officials also anticipated the completion of a nearby portion of the Southern Beltway, known as the Findlay Connector, which had an intersection with Route 22 only eighteen miles from Steubenville.¹⁶⁶ "The Findlay Connector is the single most important highway project for this area," declared Progress Alliance director Tom Bayuzik, who predicted the route would channel metropolitan growth to the west.¹⁶⁷ "With so much going for our region, we must now ditch old-economy delusions of pavement as the only road to prosperity," countered Sustainable Pittsburgh director Cort Gould.¹⁶⁸

As continued highway construction allowed the reformulation of community

¹⁶³ Brendan Sager, "Steubenville's Alliance 2000 Targets Pittsburgh," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, November 20, 1998, D-8.

¹⁶⁴ "Steubenville: Coal and Steel Town Sees Rebirth," *Expansion Magazine Online*, January 1, 1998, available from <http://www.expansionmanagement.com/>.

¹⁶⁵ Jack Lyne, *600-Worker Wal-Mart Center Could Hold Steubenville, Ohio's Entire CBD* (Conway Delta, 2001 [cited 2/12/2006]); available from <<http://www.conway.com/ssinsider/bbdeal/bd011008.htm>>.

¹⁶⁶ Agnello, Joseph, "First Southern Beltway Project Gets Federal Approval," *PA Turnpike Newsletter*, Fall 1998; "Airport Shortcut," *Progress Alliance Newsletter*, Winter 2005-2006.

¹⁶⁷ Paul Giannamore, "Progress Alliance Exec Establishes Ground Rules of Future," *Steubenville Herald-Star*, July 23, 2006, D1.

¹⁶⁸ Cort Gould, "A Plea for Regional Leadership," editorial, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, October 11, 2000, A11.

identity, the recreation of abandoned rail lines into multi-use trails signaled another radical reinterpretation of social relationships between and among Steel Valley neighborhoods.¹⁶⁹ The national decline of the iron horse in the face of competition from the horseless carriage had particularly significant ramifications in the Steel Valley where railroads knitted urban neighborhoods, mining camps, and mill towns into an integrated regional community.¹⁷⁰ While Pennsylvania had 12,000 miles of track in the 1920s, more than any other state, only 6,000 remained in use by late 1990, when Governor Casey signed legislation providing for state coordination in converting rights-of-way to multi-use trails.¹⁷¹ “People will come from all over the county, all over the world to use those kinds of trails,” declared state representative Thomas Murphy (D-North Side), a strong proponent of Pennsylvania’s RTT program.¹⁷²

Federal officials also became more involved in trail planning and creation, especially after passage of the Intermodal Surface Transportation and Equity Act (ISTEA) in December 1991 made rails-to-trails (RTT) projects eligible for \$500 million annually in highway funds.¹⁷³ “We are looking forward to working with you, to communicating with you, and to fulfilling the promise in the National Transportation Policy,” Federal Highway Administrator Thomas D. Larson declared to a group of

¹⁶⁹ For a listing and history of trails in and around Pittsburgh, see Tom Sexton and Patricia Tomes, *Pennsylvania’s Rail-Trails* (Camp Hill, PA: Rails-to-Trails Conservancy Northeast Regional Office, 2005). For an overview of rail-banking and rails-to-trails in the United States, see Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, “Railbanking and Rail-Trails: A Legacy for the Future,” March 2005.

¹⁷⁰ Muller, “Industrial Suburbs.”

¹⁷¹ “Assembly O.K.’s Pine Creek Bill,” *Trailblazing in Pennsylvania* 2, no.2 (Summer 1990), 1; Mike Shoup, “Rails-to-Trails Project Puts Old Railroad Areas Back to Use,” *Pittsburgh Press*, October 21, 1990, F8.

¹⁷² Don Wolf, “Rails-to-Trails Likely on Fast Track, Casey Expected to Sign Bill to Provide Funding,” *Pittsburgh Press*, December 11, 1990, B1

¹⁷³ Federal Highway Administration, “Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities in the Federal-Aid Highway Program,” September 1990; Robert S. Patten et al., “ISTEA and Trails: Merging Transportation Needs and Recreation Values,” Published by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy and American Trails for the 12th National Trails Symposium, Anchorage, Alaska, September 1994.

bicycling enthusiasts, and by 1994 ISTEA provided over \$375 million for bicycling and pedestrian projects.¹⁷⁴

State and federal initiatives mirrored public and private efforts on the local level throughout southwestern Pennsylvania, which emerged as a hotbed of RTT projects due to the extensive network of abandoned lines crisscrossing the area. In the summer of 1989 North Hills dentist Dina Angelici decided that a disused railroad corridor southwest of Pittsburgh would make a great recreational trail and together with his friend Stan Sattinger formed the Montour Trail Council. By the following year, the group had grown to more than 300 members and attracted the support of state and local officials, who contributed nearly \$200,000 of the \$500,000 needed to acquire the 55-mile route which passed through old mining towns and undeveloped woods as well as the RIDC Park-West and the Robinson Towne Center shopping mall.¹⁷⁵ “The Montour Trail Council is probably the preeminent trail council in the state in just a year’s time,” declared Eric Bugaile, former state director of the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC).¹⁷⁶

The rapid expansion of RTT during the 1990s came from a series of new public-private partnerships that advanced a vision of economic and community development through modest physical improvements and a reorientation to neighborhood-level interaction. RTT advocates extended from federal highway officials interested in relieving traffic congestion to community leaders anxious to encourage investment to

¹⁷⁴ Thomas D. Larson, “To the Other Side of the Mountain,” Address to the ProBike 90 Conference, Washington, D.C., September 13, 1990. Murphy Papers. See also, John H. Cushman Jr., “Quietest Of Vehicles Gets a Day In the Sun,” *New York Times*, September 18, 1990, A16.

¹⁷⁵ Joanne Braun, “Montour Trail Dream Coming Closer to Reality,” *Sewickley Herald*, June 6, 1990, 25; Linda Wilson Fuoco, “ ‘Rails to Trails’ Drive Advances,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, September 11, 2001. See also, Stan Sattinger to Tom Murphy, “Letter,” September 27, 1991; Tom Murphy to Arthur A. Davis, “Letter,” April 7, 1992; Montour Trail Council, “Status of the Montour Trail Project as of April 1992.” Murphy Papers.

¹⁷⁶ Ralph Haurwitz, “Hiking, Biking Trail Making Big Strides,” *Pittsburgh Press*, October 23, 1991, B1.

bicycling clubs and railroad buffs.¹⁷⁷ “Who uses the trails? That’s the nice thing, everybody,” explained RTC regional director Tom Sexton. “I remember in Pittsburgh some of those meetings around coffee tables [with] people who thought ‘I’m mainly here for recreation,’ ‘I’m mainly here for transportation,’ ‘I’m mainly here to make our community safe again,’ or ‘I’m mainly here for beautification because the rail trail is a dump now and abandoned. So, they were multi-use pathways.’”¹⁷⁸

Trail construction served as an urban revitalization program reconnecting neighborhoods and communities that had been divided by highway construction or earlier urban renewal while cleaning up what often had become waste disposal sites and weedy lots.¹⁷⁹ “Cities started to deconstruct” because of the massive urban renewal and highway construction programs of the 1950s and 1960s, Sexton continued. “Luckily there were a few places perhaps that forgot to fill in this railroad tunnel and now we can have a rail trail between these two communities. I mean trails are usually tree-lined and planted, [with a positive impact] socially, economically [and] in terms of the beauty of cities and the workability.”¹⁸⁰

When coupled with riverfront development, multi-use trails were urged as an amenity that presented a powerful draw for tourism and other activities that were

¹⁷⁷ Bugaile Interview. A useful overview of the motivations for government investment in RTT is Allegheny County Planning Department, “Allegheny County Greenways,” 1995. On opposition to trail development in southwestern Pennsylvania, see Tom Gibb, “Conversion of Railroad Tracks Pits Trail Advocates Against Landowners,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 23, 1995, B5; “Ice Tea is Not Yet Sweet,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, editorial, A18; Jan Ackerman, “Bicycle Trails or Land Rights,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, B1; Hopey, “Signs.”

¹⁷⁸ Author’s Interview with Tom Sexton, April 2006.

¹⁷⁹ Thomas Murphy to Chris Brandt, “Letter,” January 8, 1991, Murphy Papers.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

accessible to a wide variety of consumers, making then a catalyst for economic growth.¹⁸¹ Tom Murphy (D-North Side) provided strong support for RTT projects on the state level and, in 1991, helped organize Friends of the Riverfront, a nonprofit group promoting riverfront redevelopment in Pittsburgh.¹⁸² Upon becoming the city's mayor in 1994, Murphy made building the twelve mile Three Rivers Heritage Trail (3RH) through the city a cornerstone of his administration.¹⁸³ "The recreation value of our riverfronts is obvious; the economic value for development on adjacent property is equally important and obvious," Murphy declared following the completion of the first two miles of the trail by volunteers on Earth Day in 1991. "If ever there was a place to unfold the history of Pittsburgh, it is along our riverfronts – a 12 mile story of who we are."¹⁸⁴

For trail advocates, RTT was the linchpin connecting a wide variety of urban and economic development projects designed to reverse the continuing flight of jobs and population from the city. Murphy explained, "It is all there waiting for a metamorphose - - the old railroad trestle ... the new Carnegie Science Center ... Station Square ... through South Side Park to the LTV site and along Carson Street to Sandcastle." City officials especially targeted trail development to enhancing Pittsburgh's reputation among young, middle class professionals, what urban theorist Richard Florida called the "creative class." During the 1990s, the Steel City evolved from a community where

¹⁸¹ Carmen J. Lee, "Riverside Path for Hiking and Cycling Proposed," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, December 6, 1990, 1, 6; Allegheny County, "Greenways"; Don Hopey, "Bike Trail Rolls \$14 Million into Local Economies," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, February 23, 1999.

¹⁸² "Assembly O.K.'s Pine Creek Bill"; Tom Murphy to Raymond L. Reaves, "Letter," June 30, 1992. Murphy Papers. John Stephen, "Compliments to Our Friends," editorial, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, February 26, 1994, D2. On the formation of Friends of the Riverfront, see Lubove, *Twentieth Century Volume Two*, 205-207.

¹⁸³ Ralph Haurwitz, "Riverside Hiking, Bike Trail Proposed for City," *Pittsburgh Press*, December 6, 1990, C1; R. Todd Erkel, "Three Rivers, One Trail: A Continuous Greenway from Herr's Island to Homestead Should be the Goal of Any Riverfront-Development Strategy," editorial, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, May 22, 1994, E1; Patricia Lowry, "Bringing Back the Riverfront," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, January 28, 1995, B1.

¹⁸⁴ Tom Murphy, "Essay," d.u. Murphy Papers.

“even a Pittsburgh Steeler wouldn’t feel safe riding downtown” to the nation’s “premier rail trail hub.”¹⁸⁵

In 1999, the city hosted the second International Trails and Greenways Conference partly because organizers felt Pittsburgh could serve “as an example to other older industrial communities [in] using [RTT] to attract and hold on to young people who are not only looking for good jobs, but also for something to do after 5 p.m.”¹⁸⁶ By 2005, the Murphy administration had spent \$7 million in local, state and federal funds on increasing trail length from two to eighteen miles and installing signs and interpretive markers focused on the region’s industrial history. “If you want to do these types of project, you have to put your money where your mouth is,” Murphy explained. “The cities that are hot to live and work in are cities with amenities like” RTT.¹⁸⁷

Despite increased attention to attracting and retaining young professionals, the transformative vision of community espoused by Murphy and other trail advocates had only limited effect in stemming the flow of out-migration, creating new jobs and reversing popular notions of the city as a stodgy company town.¹⁸⁸ In 1993, CMU urban planner Richard Florida coauthored the ACCD’s development strategy that focused on fostering advanced manufacturing, but when the internet search company Lycos, a CMU spinoff, left the region for Boston, his emphasis shifted to fostering an urban environment amenable to the “talented, knowledgeable, creative people driving the post-industrial

¹⁸⁵ Scott Martin, “The 10 Best Cities for Cycling (Plus a Few Others You Should Only Drive Through),” *Bicycling* 31, no. 3 (April 1990): 60-103; Don Hopey, “World Meeting on Rails-to-Trails Projects Set Here,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, A10. In 1990, *Bicycling Magazine* ranked the city among the nation’s worst for bicycle riding.

¹⁸⁶ Hopey, “Signs.”

¹⁸⁷ Rich Lord, “Finishing City Trails.”

¹⁸⁸ Dave Rossman, “Most Livable, Most Leavable Scattered Abroad: The Pittsburgh Migration,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, December 28, 2004, A1; George Miles et al., “Forum: Bridging Pittsburgh’s Image Gap,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, January 26, 2003; Dan Fitzpatrick and Corilyn Shropshire, “Allegheny Conference Oversees Efforts to Recast Pittsburgh’s Image,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, November 27, 2005.

economy.”¹⁸⁹ The conventional wisdom guiding “regional development for the past two decades has been that companies, firms and industries diverse regional innovation and growth,” Florida explained. “In reality, people were ... not slavishly following jobs to places. Instead, it appeared that highly educated individuals were drawn to places that were inclusive and diverse.”¹⁹⁰

While detractors dismissed Florida as a “rock star” with an inflated ego and his conclusions as “economic snake oil,” municipalities from Denver to Detroit embraced Florida’s theory that attracting this “creative class” depended on fostering the “3T”s of economic development: Technology, Talent, and Tolerance.”¹⁹¹ In Michigan, for example, state officials reallocated \$30 million from the suburbs to urban areas as part of a “cool cities” initiative.¹⁹² Back in Pittsburgh, Florida praised Mayor Murphy for trail building and other efforts but criticized local boosters for a “cultural inertia” that left them “seemingly unaware of the demographic changes that have made young people, singles, new immigrants, and gays critical to the emerging social fabric.”¹⁹³ While various groups worked to foster downtown activities from the theatre district to the music scene, in 2002 *Forbes* magazine still ranked the community near the bottom of its list of the best cities for singles based, in part, on a livability index developed by Florida

¹⁸⁹ Mary Carole McCauley, “Sparkle and Gravitas – ‘Creative Class’ Urban Planner with Local Ties Wows Them at Lectures, but Not Everyone is Impressed,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, August 15, 2004, D1.

¹⁹⁰ Richard Florida, *Cities and the Creative Class* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 27, 33.

¹⁹¹ McCauley, “Gravitas”; Florida, *Cities*, 37; See also, Bryan Dean, “Cool Cities Officials Visit Civic Leaders,” *Daily Oklahoman*, April 8, 2005, 7A; Akweli Parker and Jane M. Von Bergen, “A City’s Creative Quotient - Trying to Retain City’s Creative Sector,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 19, 2006, E1

¹⁹² Rick Haglund, “Wanted: Cool Cities - Study Suggests it Could Happen in Michigan,” *Flint Journal*, March 3, 2003, A1; Rick Haglund, “Granholtz Puts a New Emphasis on ‘Cool Cities’,” *Grand Rapids Press*, May 25, 2003, A17; Thomas Bray, “Here is What’s Uncool About ‘Cool Cities,’” editorial, *Detroit News*, April 28, 2004, 9A; Sarah Karush, “For Some, Detroit is the Cool Place to be - Improvements have Helped Start a Small Migration into the Long-Suffering City,” *Grand Rapids Press*, May 23, 2004, A25.

¹⁹³ Richard Florida, “The Rise of the Creative Class,” *Washington Monthly*, May 2002. Retrieved from <<http://washingtonmonthly.com>>: July 31, 2006.

himself.¹⁹⁴

This bifurcated vision of the city in the 21st century extended to biking in the city, an issue closely associated with Florida's creative class. "A bicycle-friendly city is a more forward-thinking city, with a more open and a more natural lifestyle," explained CMU graduate student Christian Reed. "When I first came here, I was gung-ho to ride in this city," Reed continued. "They've got parks, I thought, so I'll be able to mountain bike here. Turned out that the trails are far [apart] and disconnected."¹⁹⁵ Estimates placed the number of city residents who rode their bikes to work at fewer than one hundred. To raise awareness of bicycling issues, a group calling itself "Critical Mass" began staging monthly rides downtown during rush hour, despite objections from municipal authorities. "I came to love Pittsburgh through cycling, and have chosen to stay here because of it, though I am often frustrated with the obstacles," declared Critical Mass participant Devon Yates, a 24-year old mechanical engineer, who was arrested in April 2003 on charges of obstructing public passage. "We were not blocking traffic," she protested. "We are traffic."¹⁹⁶

Conclusion

In May 1995, Butch Walker was interviewed for the Wheeling Area Historical Database (WAHD), an oral history project connected to the city's aspirations for a new heritage area. While most WAHD interviewees were older residents of the Ohio Valley who spoke of vanished ethnic neighborhoods, customs from the Old World, or Wheeling's booming "Wide Open" days, Walker spoke of the mounting unemployment

¹⁹⁴ David Dukceovich, "Pittsburgh is a Pit for Singles," *Forbes.com*, June 6, 2002 and "Steel City Blues," *Forbes.com*, June 5, 2003. Retrieved July 31, 2006; Samantha Bennett, "Pittsburgh Won't Attract Fresh Faces with Stale Thinking," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, S3.

¹⁹⁵ Tatyana Margolin, "Can Pittsburgh Learn to Love Bikes?" *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, May 18, 2003.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

and diminished prospects facing many of the region's younger residents. "I used to work for Ohio Edison [Power] Company down at Dilles Bottom," he explained. "We walked into work one day. They handed us a nice little thing that says we're all done. There was a hundred of us went out the gate that day." That day, Walker went from a high-paying union job making \$17.35 an hour, thus fulfilling the goal of most Steel Valley men, to \$295 a week in unemployment compensation. "Yeah, there was some people that are severely depressed," Walker explained of the despair accompanying this loss of income and prestige. One guy I know has "three kids at home. They're all teenagers, you know, which is real expensive, and he just, he was done for. There was no way he could make his house payment and make his car payment, you know, and take care of three kids."¹⁹⁷

Butch Walker's story does not end with the decline of heavy industry, however, and at the time of his interview, he was using federal retraining funds to take classes at Belmont Technical College, itself a product of earlier investment by the Appalachian Regional Commission. While acknowledging the stark decisions faced by many of his friends and former colleagues, this educational improvement allowed Walker to convey a cautious optimism about his future prospects. "If I put in an application [for a computer technician job] now, they're going to kind of look at it and ... pitch it in the garbage," explained. "I'm hoping that with the two-year degree ... they will look at it and say, "[maybe] we ought to bring him in, interview him, you know, see if he knows anything." And, hopefully, I can end up getting a decent job that way."¹⁹⁸

Since 1995, Walker's prospects have gradually improved, as he built a part-time job repairing computers in to a successful small business building and maintaining

¹⁹⁷ Walker, *Job Retraining and the Clean Air Act*.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

electronics and providing network security for local companies. “I don’t have any full time employees right now” he explained in a September 2006 interview. “But, it’s enough to provide a living for myself.”¹⁹⁹ The story of the Steel Valley during the 1990s, is about how, in facing the decline of heavy industry, the region’s inhabitants attempted to rework the raw materials of their surroundings and the resources of state and federal government into new and meaningful relationships with each other and with the physical environment. The collapse of steel and coal marked an end to the unifying framework of heavy industrial production as service sector growth fueled an economic boom in select communities even as other parts of the region staggered under the weight of poverty and unemployment. Deindustrialization particularly affected the ORV, where policy failures in highway construction and industrial diversification left communities both highly dependent on a narrow range of employers and isolated from centers of economic growth.

Even in the metropolitan core, however, race, class, and gender distinctions blocked full access to high-paying jobs that increasingly required a college education. For residents, such as Butch Walker and Larry Prisbylla, the chance to further their education resulted in very tangible benefits, but the decline of high-paying manufacturing jobs left many workers either to seek low-paid work in the retail sector or to leave the area entirely. The failure of the post-industrial economy to accommodate large segments of the population meant that a new model for regional development never fully replaced the heavy industrial paradigm. A rebound in the region’s coal industry during the late 1990s also raised questions about the linear model of industrial decline, suggesting the need for a more contingent approach to understanding local economic development.

¹⁹⁹ Author’s Phone Interview with Butch Walker, September 2006; <http://www.iscnetwork.com/aboutus/>

The new highway connections between the ORV and the Steel City as well as within metropolitan Pittsburgh also allowed residents throughout the region to envision their communities once more as important components of an integrated, post-industrial metropolis. Perhaps nothing symbolized the aspirations of the struggling, deindustrialized river valleys as the August 2004 grand opening of a 575,000 square-foot Cabela's retail store and distribution center on a 110-acre site east of Wheeling. "I really believe we have the chance now to create an ideal city," Wheeling mayor Nick Spacharane said of the new facility, which local officials envisioned as a complement to ongoing efforts with the Wheeling National Heritage Area downtown.²⁰⁰ Just across the Pennsylvania state line, Washington County officials, too, looked to the growth of regional tourism and retail outlets such as Cabela's as a key to the future. "We talk regionalism, but only give it lip service," declared local marketing guru Tom Rooney, whose vision for the county included a NASCAR speedway and another music venue.²⁰¹

In the end, the future of the Steel Valley may well depend upon the ability of residents and community leaders to meld the most enduring aspects of the region's industrial heritage with a "diversified, high-tech economy that emphasizes knowledge and research over sweat and brawn."²⁰² This project, however, faces important obstacles, including the frequent incompatibility between landscapes of production and consumption. Indeed, retaining the idealized appearance of the industrial past often depends upon the cessation of industrial operations in the present, most notably in

²⁰⁰ George Hohmann, "What's Next for Wheeling?" *Charleston Daily Mail*, July 15, 2003; "Cabela's Planning to Build Mega-Store in East Rutherford, New Jersey," News Release, October 5, 2004.

²⁰¹ David Templeton, "Plan is to Promote Regional Visits, Rooney Touts Ways to Bring People In, Retain Rural Character," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, November 20, 2005, W1.

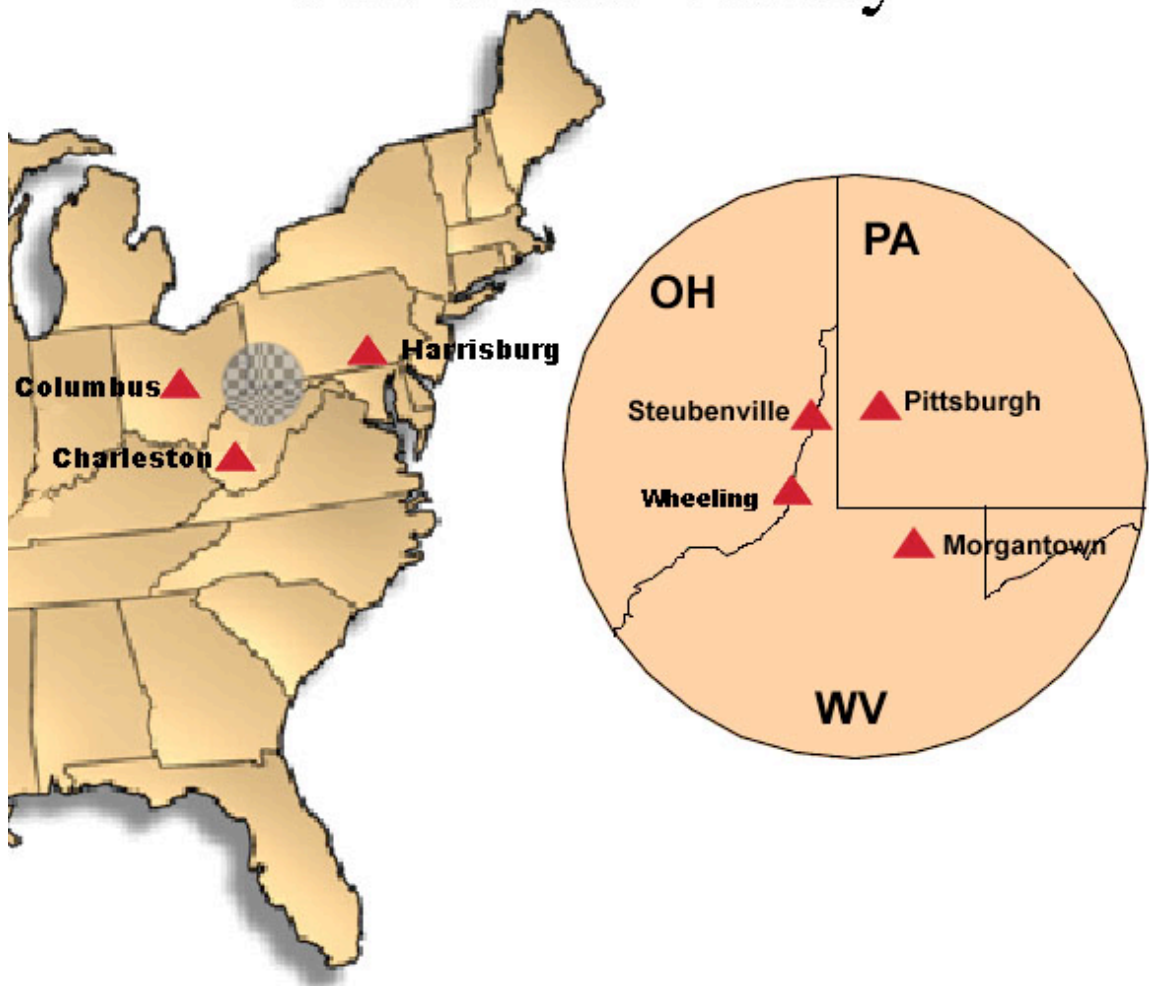
²⁰² Fitzpatrick, "Stuck with Steel."

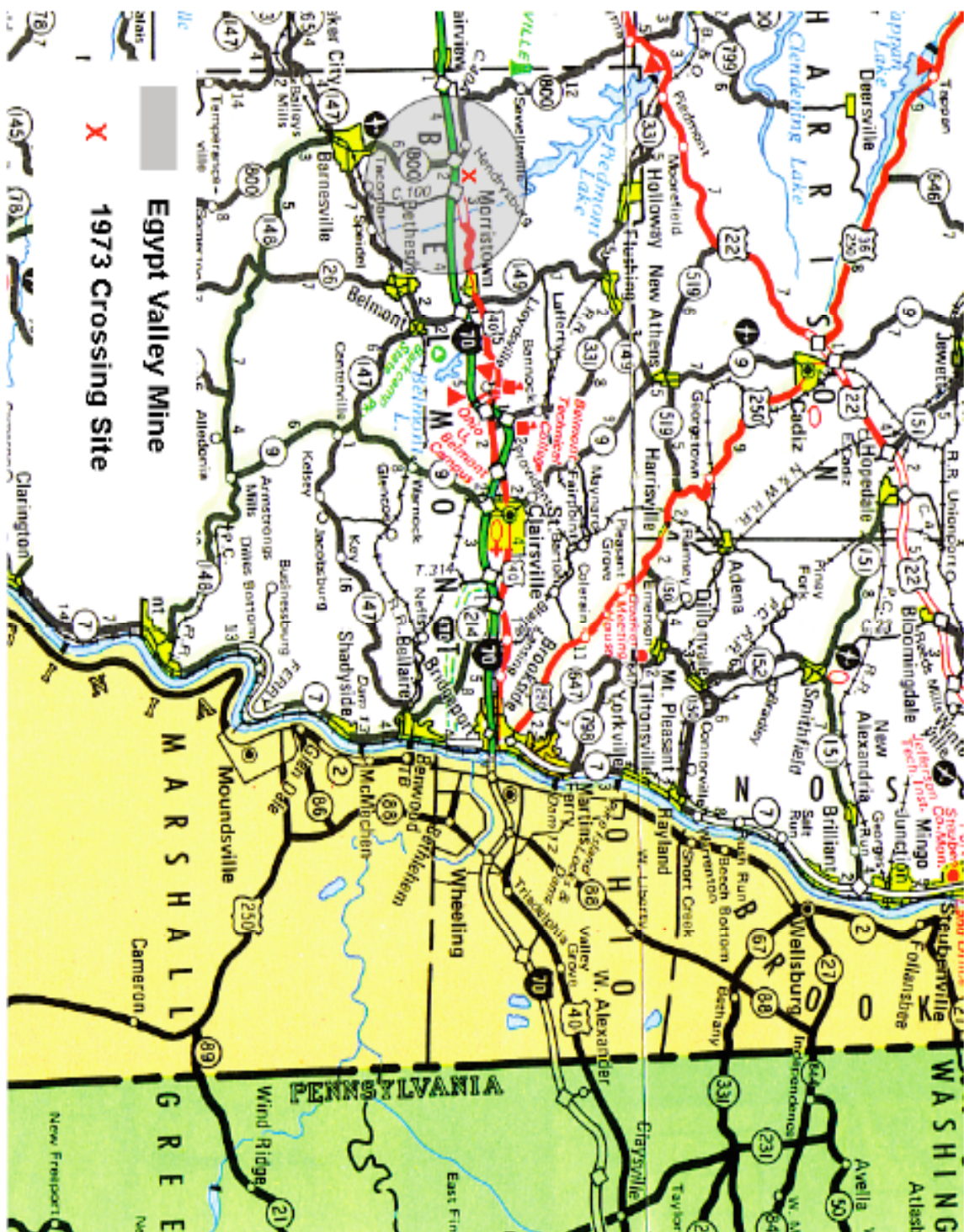
riverfront and rails-to-trails redevelopment. Regional development also remains tightly connected to the ability of public-private partnerships to mobilize local, state and national resources behind projects seen as benefiting the greater good. It remains to be seen whether projects of regional significance in the twenty-first century, like the Pittsburgh Renaissance of the 1950s, can muster sufficient community support, especially for projects that could be interpreted as further benefiting outlying areas at the expense of the river valleys.

Appendix

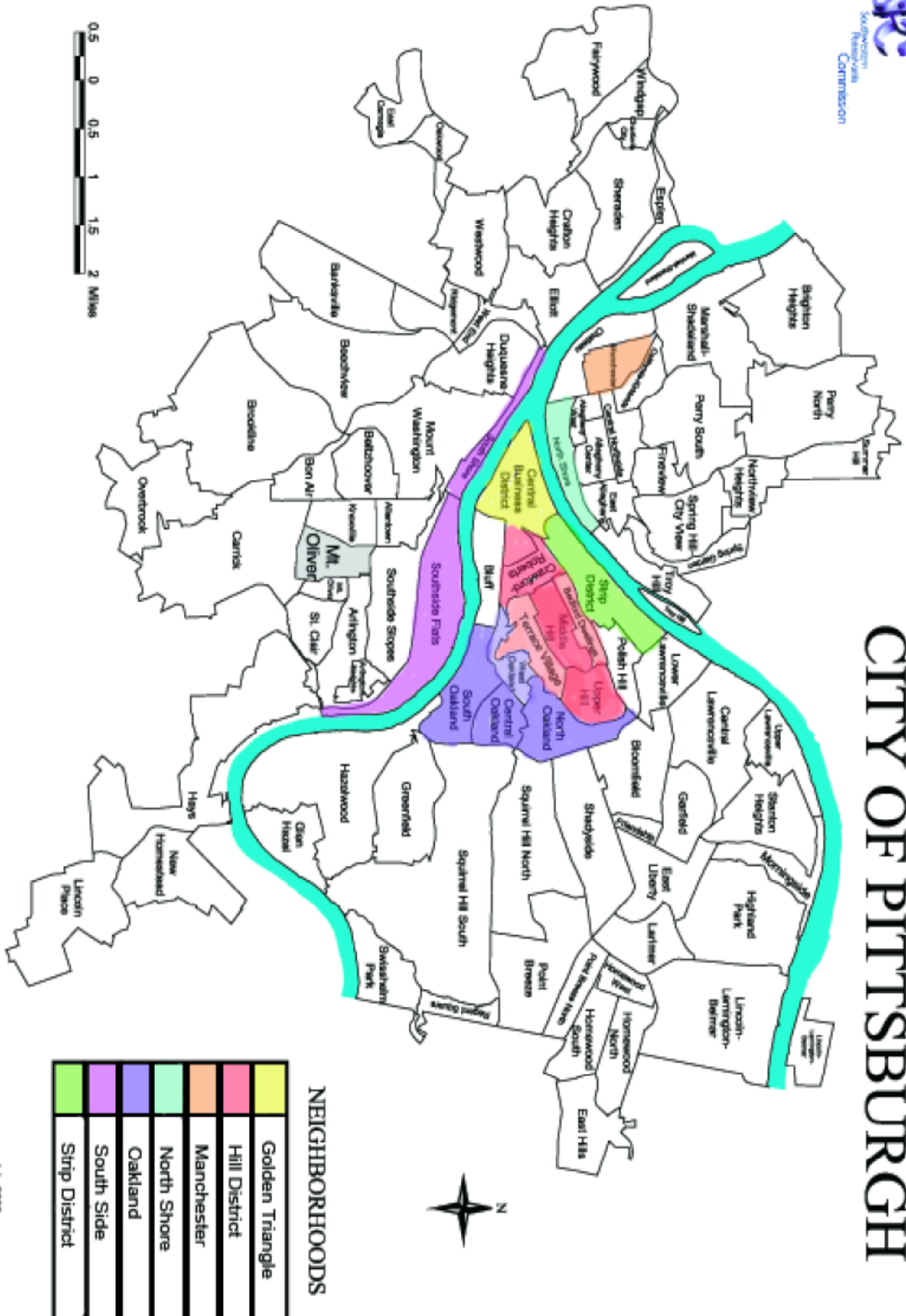
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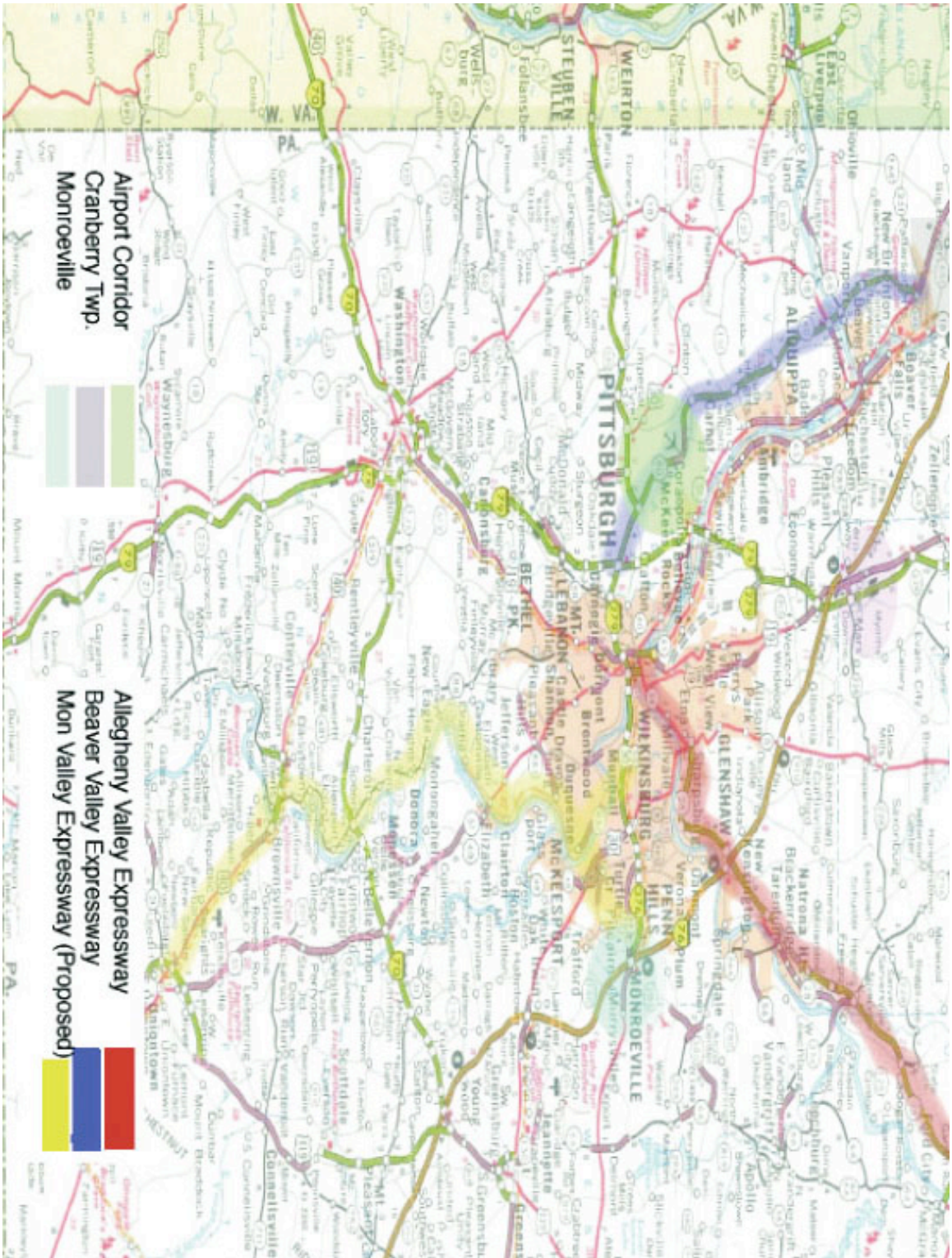
The Steel Valley





CITY OF PITTSBURGH





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Columbus Citizen-Journal

Columbus Dispatch

Dayton Daily News

Dayton Journal Herald

Denver Post

Greensburg Tribune-Review

Kittanning Leader-Times

Los Angeles Times

Martins Ferry Daily Times

Martins Ferry Times Leader

McKeesport Daily News

Monroe County Spirit of Democracy

National Observer

New York Times

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