

half of the nineteenth century none had more profound effects on American art and taste than the preparations made in Philadelphia to celebrate the completion of one hundred years of American independence."¹⁹⁵

Yet it was not European but Oriental and particularly Japanese art that made the most lasting impression. An anonymous account in the *Atlantic Monthly* found the Japanese exhibit making everything else look "common-place, almost vulgar. . . . The Japanese seem to possess the secret which the modern pre-Raphaelites have striven for without success, the union of detail and effect. . . . The commonest object of pottery or cotton-stuff for daily use has a merit of design or color which it does not owe to oddity alone. . . ."¹⁹⁶

The Japanese had at first seemed figures of fun, when they puzzled Philadelphians by sending the materials for two prefabricated buildings—a species of efficiency the Americans themselves had scarcely begun to explore—and Japanese workmen to assemble them. It was at least equally puzzling that the workmen had no idea of how to use American building equipment—because they had never before seen a wheelbarrow, they carried it instead of pushing it—yet managed to put their buildings together. Of the finished Japanese structures, opinion soon changed from scoffing at them as oversized corncribs to accepting the praise of Richard Morris Hunt, as one of America's leading architects, of the "graceful lines of roofs and porches, the perfect tile work, and the rich ornamental carving, altogether offering a capital and most improving study to the careless and slipshod joiners of the Western world."¹⁹⁷ Opinion of the displays inside, especially the silks and porcelains, even more quickly reached a favorable verdict. The Centennial was perhaps the most important single source of the lasting American fascination with Oriental art.

For six months Philadelphia was host to a cosmopolitan stream of visitors from all over the American continent and from abroad. Among the inhabitants of the city, these visitors stimulated native curiosity and kindness, and from all of them something could be learned. Philadelphians could again observe southerners as other than enemies, and become acquainted with fellow citizens of the United States from as far away as 3000 miles.

Over and above the economic benefits Philadelphia had acquired a sense of accomplishment, a conviction that its citizens could achieve results, that the city was no longer just a stop on the way to New York. "Strong local sympathy" from citizens, from Mayor Stokley, and from other municipal officials, wrote the director-general, was among the reasons for the success of the Exposition. For some glorious months Philadelphia might look upon itself as the "principal city in the United States."¹⁹⁸ Before the event the *Press* had hoped that "The Centennial is to ring the death knell of that non-enterprising, fearing-to-dare spirit which has so long ruled us."¹⁹⁹ The Centennial was altogether a lesson of self-respect for the city; it showed its present greatness and its potentialities.²⁰⁰ It must have caused many Philadelphians pride to read the *Chicago Tribune* report of May 1, 1876, that staid old Philadelphia was gone, and that the city was "as cosmopolitan as Paris and as lively as Chicago."²⁰¹

The Iron Age 1876-1905

by Nathaniel Burt and Wallace E. Davies

Anyone can be a shopkeeper, but a merchant is as much different as . . . a Rocky Mountain eagle from a mouse.

— JOHN WANAMAKER

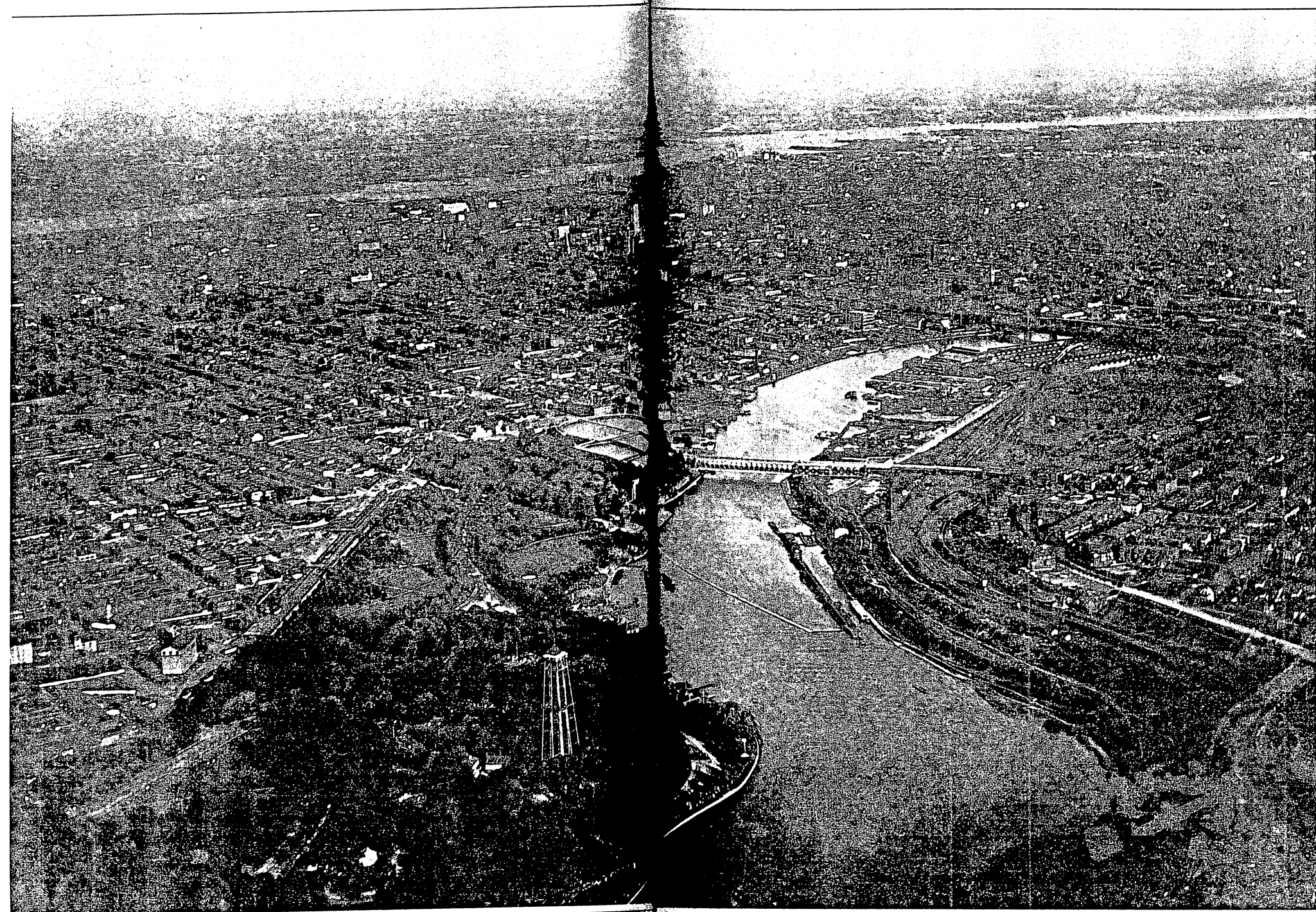
Above all, the Quaker City lacks that discriminating enthusiasm for her own children . . . which enables more zealous towns to rend the skies with shrill paeans of applause. . . . If mistaking of geese for swans produces sad confusion . . . the mistaking of swans for geese may also be a serious error. The birds either languish or fly away to keener air.

— AGNES REPPLIER¹

The period from the Civil War into the new century saw the transformation of Philadelphia into an industrial giant. Pennsylvania in general established itself as the Midlands or the Ruhr of America, the center of heavy industry, of iron and steel, coal and oil, America's foundry. Philadelphia became its Liverpool-Birmingham or perhaps Essen-Düsseldorf, chief port for the foundry, nerve center of transportation, producer of finished goods of an enormous variety but particularly of steam engines and steamships. The impact of this explosion of industry and technology almost obliterated Penn's green country town, the red-brick cultural capital, in a smog of steam and smoke, of endless gridirons of workers' housing, of railroads and factories, freight yards and warehouses. It was Philadelphia's Iron Age.

With the opening of the great Centennial Exposition of 1876 the city reemerged nationally. No longer the center of politics, religion, intellect, arts and letters, even of finance and commerce, Philadelphia presented itself as

OVERLEAF: *Aerial view of Philadelphia, photographed from a balloon by W. N. Jennings (1893). Lemon Hill Tower, the Fairmount reservoir, and the unfinished tower of City Hall are key reference points in this view of the city between the Schuylkill and Delaware Rivers looking to the southeast.*



Technology—Queen of the Engine. Let New York handle the finances and set the fashions, let Boston cling to its fading reputation as schoolmarm of the nation. Philadelphia was warming to business, albeit in a still slightly Quakerish subdued Philadelphia fashion. Domestic bliss and material comfort, those ultimate goals of middle-class Victorians, from the miles of row houses to the craggy new castles along the Main Line—this is what Philadelphia settled for. What it wanted, and what it got.

In the process Philadelphia's character crystallized, her society stabilized, her curiosity atrophied. Not the discovery of electricity or prison reform, but being a "city of homes," spawning associations and institutions and clubs, wallowing in contentment, conformity, and conversatism—these were now Philadelphia's chief interests. Politics became a necessary nuisance, to be left to self-paid professionals, despite constant abortive and bothersome reforms. Arts and letters were to be pleasantly inoffensive decorations of opulence. Science, medicine, engineering, the more practical professions, were enormously respected and dominated the mind of the city. Imagination and innovation were suspect. Safe and sound, prosperous and potbellied, this was the image Philadelphia liked to present, what Philadelphia now stood for.

This period was the culmination of that particular sort of Philadelphianism; yet in fact a new climax of the city's fortunes, a crest of a wave almost exactly corresponding to the climax of a century before. For almost in spite of itself this was perhaps Philadelphia's proudest period in just those areas in which it tried least hard. It was during this period that Philadelphia's greatest painter worked, that its only fictional classic was written, and that many other creative or performing talents emerged, some to stay, many more to leave and flourish elsewhere.

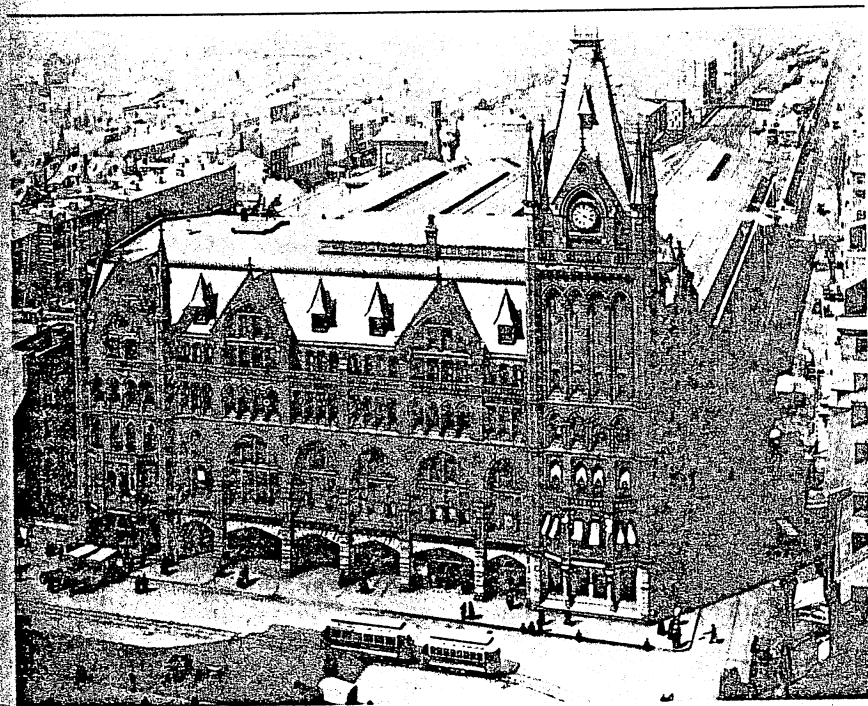
I

The basis, the root of all this was "business." The chief actors on the scene were businessmen—but businessmen with a difference. Unlike newer centers, Philadelphia did not totally glorify either business or businessmen. There were more important things. The holy professions of law and medicine, for instance, were much more respectable. Old money was much better than new money, blood counted as much as or more than accomplishment. Nonetheless, making money was certainly very important, and business unquestionably a good thing.

At the center and root of business, and most characteristic of this Iron Age, were those activities concerned with the basic trinity of iron and steel, railroads, and coal. This was the tripod on which the city's nineteenth-century industrial reputation and a large share of its prosperity rested. If there were to be any single symbol of Philadelphia during this period it would be a steam locomotive: an idol whose temple was, eventually, Broad Street Station, whose priests, wreathed in the incense of steam and soot, ranged from workers at the Baldwin Works or brakemen on the railroads to those almost sacred beings, the directors and presidents, particularly those of *The Railroad*, the Pennsylvania Railroad.

The Railroad was king. It was not only the most important single enterprise of the city, it also became and remained long afterward the single largest corporation in the country. Long after its great days the Pennsylvania Railroad held position as number one.² Its greatest days, however, were under the three presidents Thomas A. Scott (president 1874–1880), George B. Roberts (1880–1897), and Alexander J. Cassatt (1899–1906). (There was a brief interregnum, 1897–1899, of short-lived Frank Thomson, who died in office.) Under these men and their innumerable expert assistants, engineering, financial, and legal, the Railroad battled the nefarious manipulations of New York; battled the competition from the South represented by the Baltimore and Ohio; battled the octopus of Standard Oil; crept westward and southward and northward to Chicago, Washington, and New York; grew, consolidated, jockeyed, bargained, as deviously as any of its competitors, until by 1900 it was the keystone of the Keystone State. Philadelphia was its heart.

The Railroad's complicated history of engineering feats and improve-



Pennsylvania Railroad Depot (Broad Street Station), Broad at Filbert, designed by Wilson Bros. & Co. (1882, photograph taken in 1889). The elevated tracks, stretching west on Market Street, soon became known as Philadelphia's "Chinese Wall." The station was demolished in 1954 as part of the urban renewal project that became the Penn Center complex and John F. Kennedy Boulevard.

ments, of mergers and consolidations, of rebates and politics and labor troubles is too specialized for a brief survey. Bit by bit it extended its rule over the then-richest section of the country, that center belt delimited southward by the Potomac and the Ohio Rivers, westward by the Mississippi. To the north always breathed the fiery dragon of the New York Central and its allies on Wall Street. Pennsylvania and New York fought over the way west and over the control of Pennsylvania's coal and oil. Some of these battles the Railroad lost; but its greatest victory, its final establishment on the island of Manhattan itself, was signalled by the building of the Pennsylvania Station on Seventh Avenue. This was essentially the triumph of Cassatt. The foundation for this success, the true high tide of Philadelphia's prosperity, was laid by his predecessors.

Thomas A. Scott, one of eleven children of a western Pennsylvania tavern keeper, got into transportation as a toll collector on turnpikes. He learned railroading from J. Edgar Thomson, his predecessor as president, and turned the Railroad from a state into a national affair. Scott was not Philadelphian, though as president he moved to the city and died there.

George B. Roberts, however, was indigenous. Born in Pencoyd, one of the most ancient and honorable Quaker homesteads of the so-called Welsh Barony on what is now City Line, he was, also unlike Scott, an educated man and a trained engineer. Whereas Scott's presidency was marked by labor troubles, mostly in the west of the state, and abortive expansionist efforts (Scott at one time controlled the Union Pacific before being ousted by Jay Gould),¹ Roberts was a consolidator and centralizer. His monument was Broad Street Station, opened in 1882 west of City Hall right at the hub of Philadelphia, and connected to the former West Philadelphia terminal by a blockwide massive stone viaduct nicknamed the Chinese Wall. The station itself, a medieval castle of red brick, enlarged and made taller and fancier in 1892-1893 by Philadelphia's foremost architect of the period, Frank Furness, was the fitting symbol of the Railroad's local power. The arched glass shed into which trains arrived was the largest in the world. By 1894, 530 trains carrying 60,000 people were arriving and departing each day. Fittingly, the tracks dead-ended at Philadelphia's old Centre Square.⁴

Roberts was a small-boned, cautious, mustached man, deeply religious (Episcopalian, no longer Quaker), quietly cultivated. Cassatt was large, handsome, sporting, expansive, fashionable. He too was from the barbarous West, but not the son of a tavern keeper. His father had been the well-to-do mayor of Allegheny City, suburb of Pittsburgh, but the family had moved to Philadelphia. Alexander had been educated in Germany and like Roberts was an engineering graduate of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. There was a shadow in mid-career. Like Roberts, Cassatt was a protégé of Scott, and by 1880 first vice-president. He may have expected to succeed Scott. When Roberts became president instead, he resigned and spent seventeen years in elegant exile on the Main Line raising horses, racing, coaching, and keeping his hand busy in railroad affairs. As Roberts represented the centering of the

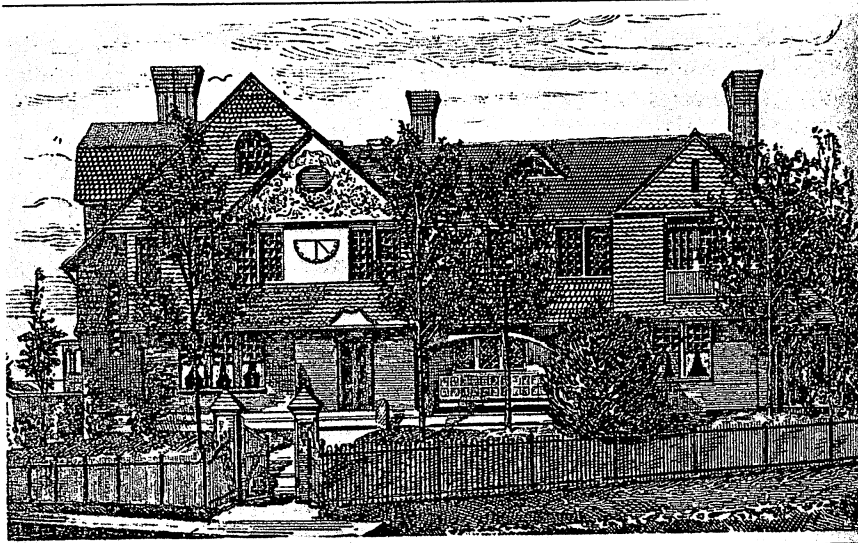
railroad in Philadelphia, so Cassatt represented its final expansion outward. As Broad Street Station illustrated Roberts's pulling inward, so the great Baths of Caracalla on Seventh Avenue in New York represented Cassatt's pushing outward. The tunnel under the Hudson River was in its day the most gigantic and daring engineering exploit of its kind. When the station in New York opened in 1910 it was dedicated to Cassatt. He, like Moses, never lived to see the promised land; but his monument stood for a generation as the Railroad's and Philadelphia's pride. Yet slowly and continuously thereafter, the Railroad's destiny was traveling on the downgrade.⁵

I I

The most immediate permanent impact of the Railroad upon Philadelphia was the creation of the Main Line. Suburbanization had begun long before, but it was George Roberts who really opened his native West to commuters. Stations along the main line of the railroad westward were rechristened, from the edge of the consolidated city to distant Paoli. "Old Maids Never Wed and Have Babies Period"—Overbrook, Merion, Narberth, Wynnewood, Ardmore, Haverford, Bryn Mawr, and, after others, Paoli at the end of the suburban circle—these names consciously reflected Roberts's own Welsh heritage. To some originally Welsh names like Merion and Haverford, new ones were added, obliterating rustic West Haverford, Elm, and Morgan's Corner. "Gothic" stations were built, and executives of the Railroad were expected to settle near them, which they did. Even rival Chestnut Hill owed its prosperity to the Railroad. Henry Houston, an officer of it, developed his great land holdings there as a model suburb. Unlike New York, where much of the earlier suburban movement was middle class, Philadelphia's suburbia was engineered from the top. The rich deserted city streets, even the sacred precincts around Rittenhouse Square, for a paradise of "country living" within comparatively few railroad minutes of City Hall. Gradually, anyone who could afford it followed suit.⁶

The other local railroad was the Reading; but its history was less fortunate than that of the Pennsylvania, and eventually after bankruptcies it became controlled by New Yorkers. Its reason for existence was coal. Coal of course was not mined in Philadelphia or its suburbs, but its mining and shipping was originally in the hands of Philadelphians, and much of the city's wealth was derived from it. By 1900 Philadelphia was exporting 447,000 tons of anthracite a year.⁷

The two most memorable characters associated with the Reading were its presidents Franklin B. Gowen and George T. Baer. Unlike the confident careers of Roberts and Cassatt, the careers of Gowen and Baer were attended by violence and unpleasant notoriety. Gowen, son of an Irish immigrant, was not an engineer. He got into railroads by means of the law. He made his reputation as the man who brought about the destruction of the Molly Maguires. After a famous trial in 1875 with Gowen as prosecutor, twenty reputed Mollys were convicted, ten were hanged. In 1870 Gowen had been made



The Anglecot, Evergreen and Prospect Avenues, designed by Wilson Eyre, Jr. (1858–1944), c. 1885, in S. F. Hotchkiss's Ancient & Modern Germantown, Mount Airy and Chestnut Hill (Philadelphia: P. W. Ziegler, 1889). The number of suburban houses conveniently located near the Pennsylvania Railroad's Main Line and the Reading lines to Germantown, Chestnut Hill, and Jenkintown grew rapidly in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. This building and its carriage house have recently been converted to multiple residences.

PRIVATE COLLECTION

president of the Reading, whereupon he soon ruined the company by overinvesting in coal lands and being caught short in the depression of the 1870s. The company went bankrupt in 1880. Gowen resigned, and in 1889 shot himself.⁸

The Reading, though always busy carrying coal to Philadelphia, went into a long period of receiverships and eventually came under the influence of J. P. Morgan. Morgan returned the road to solvency and installed as president in 1901 George F. Baer, a lawyer and newspaperman from the city of Reading. Next year occurred the great and first successful strike of the United Mine Workers. Baer represented Morgan, and in the course of negotiations wrote to a gentleman in Wilkes-Barre saying: "The rights and interests of the laboring man will be protected and cared for . . . by the Christian men [to] whom God . . . has given control of the property interests of the country." This statement leaked to the press and probably did more for labor than the strike. Theodore Roosevelt stepped in with his big stick and forced a settlement in favor of the strikers.⁹ Meanwhile the Reading Terminal of 1893 on Market Street was nearly as grand and impressive as Broad Street Station, but it was as much a symbol of Philadelphia defeat as Pennsylvania Station in New York was of Philadelphia victory, for control of the Reading rested in



Graver's Lane Station, Reading Railroad, Chestnut Hill, finished 1883 (photograph c. 1883), designed by Frank Furness (1839–1912). The station, now part of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority system, has been restored to its original profile.

CHESTNUT HILL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The third of the city's great passenger terminals, that of the Baltimore and Ohio along the Schuylkill at Chestnut Street, built in 1886, was mainly distinguished as being one of the more characteristic works of Frank Furness. Like so many of his larger creations, it too has been destroyed. It also represented the threat of a rival, but in this case an unsuccessful one. The Baltimore and Ohio suffered a mortal blow when Roberts acquired the main line southward, the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore, snatching it from the B. & O. and others, and thus connecting Washington and New York with Pennsylvania Railroad through tracks.¹¹

Philadelphia and its railroads were consumers and transporters of iron and steel, not producers; but the city was a center for the production of objects made from iron and steel. Of the manufacturers, two in particular were famous during the Iron Age: Baldwin's and Cramp's. Turning out three times as many locomotives as any other concern in the world (1500 a year by 1902), shipping them all over—South America, Russia, Palestine, Australia, Japan—the Baldwin Works was one of the wonders of the world and one of Philadelphia's industrial glories.¹² Equal in prestige and productivity was the William Cramp and Sons Ship and Engine Building Company. It made the Delaware into "the American Clyde," and from the days of the clipper ship through the First World War supplied the world not only with merchant ships but warships.

The genius of founder William (1807–1879), his sons, especially Charles

the works, helped the Cramp shipyards to survive the traumatic shift from sails and wood to steam and iron and emerge triumphant. By 1902 the works extended for fifty acres along the river in Kensington. Champion transatlantic passenger steamers like the record-breaking *St. Louis* and *St. Paul*, famous battleships like the U.S.S. *Maine*, famous yachts such as J. P. Morgan's *Corsair*—all were launched from the Cramp shipyards. In the late 1880s Cramp received a \$13-million contract from the United States government, the largest up to then awarded to one company, for warships. Cramp like Baldwin had an international reputation, and supplied Russia, Turkey, and Japan with warships; Charles Cramp was decorated by the czar. The Railroad, Baldwin, and Cramp formed the cornerstone of Philadelphia's Iron Age.¹³

There were numberless other Philadelphia manufacturers in the field of iron and steel. Iron rolling mills made bar iron, ship plates, horseshoes, nails, and shoe machinery. The Kensington Iron and Steel Works was the largest such. Car wheels and ship propellers came from iron foundries that were said to produce one-third of the country's manufactured iron.¹⁴ By the turn of the century William Sellers and Company, the leading foundry, was making and exporting machine tools, cranes, power hammers, locomotive turntables.¹⁵ I. P. Morris, Towne & Co. in Port Richmond turned out boilers and engine works. Hoopes and Townsend made nuts, bolts, and rivets. Ice cream freezers, cast-iron building fronts, meters, pipes, elevators, sewing machines, and bath tubs (wooden tubs were banned by city ordinance in 1904) poured from smoke-belching factories along the industrial edges of the city, mostly along its two rivers.¹⁶

These iron and steel producers not only ringed the city itself, but intruded into the hinterland.

Of all the iron and steel works mostly owned or capitalized by Philadelphians, the most important was the Bethlehem Iron Company in the ancient Moravian center of Bethlehem, north of Philadelphia. This was the brainchild of that remarkable Philadelphian of birth, talents, and enterprise Joseph Wharton, who founded a Saucon Iron Company in 1857 which turned into the Bethlehem Iron Company in 1861 and finally in 1899 became the Bethlehem Steel Company. Wharton's fortune was actually made in nickel; for years he had an American monopoly in the production of refined nickel. More than any other single person he was the representative Man of Iron of this period of the city's life. He was a member of one of the oldest and most distinguished families of Quaker origin in the city, a man of learning, taste, and talents. He wrote poetry, collected art, sat on boards, interested himself in chemistry, geology, mineralogy, metallurgy, and became one of the richest men in the city—and one of the most individualistically philanthropic. His chief surviving beneficences are the Quaker Swarthmore College, one of America's early coeducational institutions, of which he was president of the Board of Managers for a quarter of a century, and the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Finance and Commerce, first of its kind in the country and still one of the best.¹⁷

Two great depressions in the 1870s and 1890s marred this onward and upward expansion. Yet Philadelphia, though suffering, suffered less than other great industrial centers. One reason was that Philadelphia did *not* depend on the complex of iron, railroad, and coal for its sole support. It was the diffused diversity of the city's economy, its mixture of big plants and small, almost home industries, that kept the balance. This had been true of the eighteenth century with its multiple crafts and diversity of commerce. It remained true of the city in the nineteenth and even into the twentieth century.

During this period Philadelphia manufactured banjos, brooms, and buttons.¹⁸ There were companies making wagons and carriages, wheelbarrows and watch cases (the Keystone Watch Company was the largest in the world),¹⁹ cordage (Edwin H. Fitler and Company was especially important), glue, and electrical equipment. The Atwater Kent Manufacturing Company began making telephones and voltmeters as early as 1902; Morris E. Leeds from 1899 made precise electrical measuring instruments and became Leeds and Northrup in 1903. Factories turned out paper boxes and cigar boxes, parasols and umbrellas, "Fretz Foldwell Umbrellas" for example. Plumbing suppliers prospered; of Haines, Jones and Cadbury's excellent water closets nothing can be written, since "it would be useless to describe their working as their merits can only be appreciated after having seen them in actual use."²⁰

A major industry of minor units was cigar making, carried on by small firms—490 of them in 1882—each employing only a few workers, many of them the recently immigrant Russian Jews of the 1890s. Bayuk cigars and the products of the Bobrow brothers eventually grew into major enterprises. In 1895 two Greek immigrants, Constantine and Stephen Stephano, started making cigarettes under the brand name Ramases. At first supplied only to the trade of hotels and restaurants, Ramases soon acquired a national reputation as a quality Turkish cigarette, mainly from their use by Philadelphia soldiers in the Spanish-American War.²¹ Beers with German names such as Schmidt flourished up the Schuylkill;²² ice creams like Bassett's and Breyers, and candies like Whitman's became nationally known.²³ The S. S. White Dental Company made false teeth and dental instruments, and pioneered with the first self-cleaning cuspidor.²⁴ Fels-Naptha soap soon became a household word, and manufacturer Joseph Fels one of the city's prominent philanthropists.²⁵ Above all it was during this period that the drug companies like Powers, Weightman & Rosengarten flourished,²⁶ an industry that today occupies much the same place in the city's economy that Cramp's or Baldwin's did a century ago.

However, it was not coal, iron, or railroads but textiles that continued to rank first among the city's enterprises, not only in the amount of capital invested but in number of establishments and employees. As of 1904, 19 percent of the city's 7100 manufacturers were textile plants, and they employed 35 percent of the city's 229,000 workers. Philadelphia produced more textiles than any other American city, and was also the world's largest and

most diversified textile center.²⁷ Yet none of the factories was famous in the way that Baldwin's and Cramp's were, and no great families, like the Lawrences in Massachusetts, were associated with the industry. Within the industry wool dominated; one-fifth of all domestic and imported wool in the country was consumed by such Kensington plants as the Keystone Knitting Mills.²⁸ Kensington in fact became a sort of textile enclave, inhabited by English emigrant weavers who organized cricket teams that played with those of gentlemen from the Main Line.²⁹ But there were mills all over the city. W. H. Horstmann and Company manufactured silk hosiery.³⁰ Cotton was milled in Manayunk.³¹ John B. Stetson made big felt hats for westerners while J. H. Fenton made tall silk hats for easterners.³²

Carpets were Philadelphia's pride, and John Bromley and Sons, again in Kensington, was the oldest carpet manufacturer in the city. The James Dobson Carpet Mills at the Falls of Schuylkill (once a famous beauty spot and resort of budding eighteenth-century poets and painters) boasted 362 looms and 1435 employees.³³ Fringes and upholstery coverings, lace curtains and tapestries, eiderdown cloth and horse blankets all came from Philadelphia.³⁴

Sugar and oil: these two seemingly rather uncharacteristic commodities also founded Philadelphia fortunes. But the history of their establishment in the city was attended by difficulties of various kinds. Like so many industries of that time both these succumbed to national monopolies. Originally Philadelphia was second only to New York as a refiner of sugar. Of local refineries the most important was that of Harrison, Frazier and Company, by 1887 one of only three still in operation in Philadelphia as a result of low profit margin and cutthroat competition.³⁵ The head of the company was Charles Custis Harrison, who like Joseph Wharton represented old money refurbishing itself with new money.³⁶ Harrison's grandfather John was the first manufacturing chemist in the United States, and a very successful one. Harrison money sifted into sugar in the next generation. But grandson Charles and his brothers, along with the whole Philadelphia sugar business, were engulfed by a former partner of the Harrisons, the New Yorker Theodore Havemeyer. In 1887 Havemeyer began to form the Sugar Trust that in 1891 was incorporated as the American Sugar Refining Company. By 1892 Havemeyer had bought all the Philadelphia refineries.

Like Wharton, Charles Harrison devoted his later years to education. He became one of the more famous provosts (presidents) of the University of Pennsylvania. He concentrated on raising money and expanding the plant, the faculty, and the student body. His particular passion was for the University Museum and its archeological activities; everyone forgot about sugar, a somewhat sore subject in Philadelphia by then, and thought of Harrison only as one of the fathers of Philadelphia archeology.³⁷

Oil refining in Philadelphia suffered similarly and succumbed earlier to, of course, Standard Oil. The Atlantic Refining Company at Point Breeze had been absorbed in 1874. Others, some owned by William L. Elkins the future traction king, were taken over in 1880.³⁸ Oil was one of the Port of Philadel-

phia's important exports. Since Pennsylvania was then the oil state, it was only natural that this should be so. In 1891 the city was still exporting 35 percent of all the petroleum shipped from the United States, and the Pennsylvania Railroad tanked oil to the Point Breeze refineries from which it was shipped all over the world. (In 1901, when oil was used more for lighting than for fuel, nearly half the world's illuminating fluid was shipped from Atlantic's Point Breeze plant.)³⁹ But relations between John D. Rockefeller and the Railroad were not happy. Standard's ties were with New York, bypassing Philadelphia. The Railroad created an Empire Transportation Company in defiance of Rockefeller and in 1877 planned to build a large local refinery. Rockefeller cut off oil shipments to the city, and the Railroad had to give up.⁴⁰ In the end New York got 65 percent of all Standard's oil traffic and Philadelphia and Baltimore had to share the rest. However, Standard's Atlantic plant survived and flourished, and was the city's principal oil business.⁴¹

III

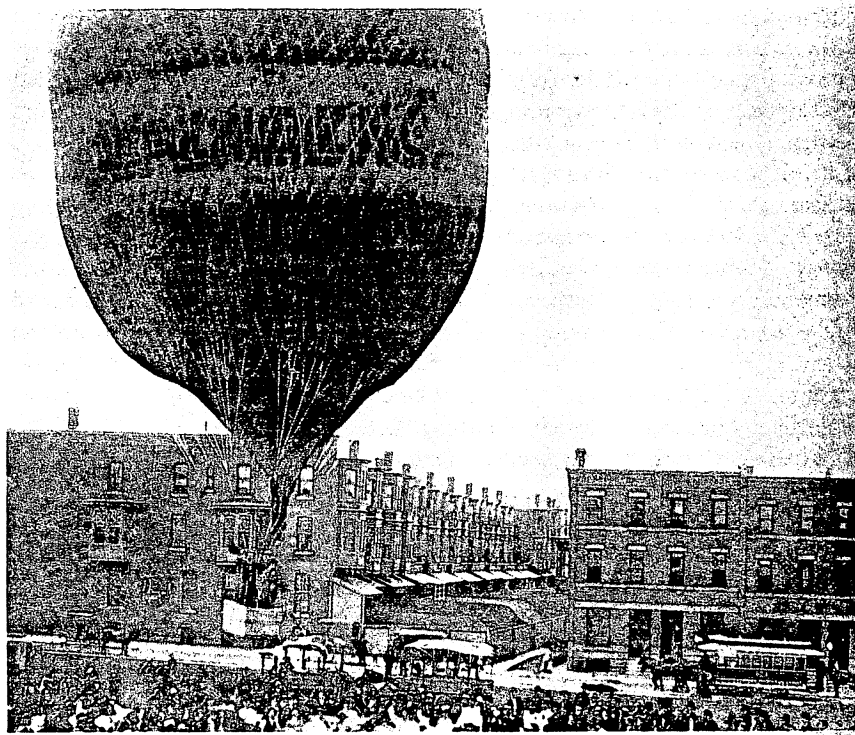
First seaport of the colonies during the eighteenth century, Philadelphia remained second only to New York in the late nineteenth. By the end of that century there were five miles of continuous wharves along the Delaware and four along the Schuylkill.⁴² Imports, valued in 1901 at \$67 million, included West Indian molasses, tropical fruit, wool from England, glassware from Germany, coffee from Rotterdam, iron from Scandinavia.⁴³ Exports were primarily coal, which Philadelphia practically monopolized even as late as 1900, and oil.⁴⁴ Grain was also exported, though always to a lesser extent than from New York and Baltimore.⁴⁵ There was a considerable amount of local tonnage—coastwise shipping, fishing craft, and excursion boats. Transatlantic steamers still left Philadelphia for Liverpool and Antwerp, under the control of the International Navigation Company, which bought the American Steamship Company and the Red Star Line.⁴⁶ Seafaring stores lined Front Street along the Delaware. Yet no city was less seafaring or seemed less like a great port than late-nineteenth-century Philadelphia. Perhaps its sheer physical extent back into the hinterland, as opposed to New York's insular water-surrounded concentration, and the fact that the city was in fact a long distance from the real ocean, diluted any salty atmosphere.⁴⁷

Philadelphia in fact remained in area the largest city in the United States. By 1904 its 129 square miles supported some 300,000 families, many of them living in modestly comfortable small houses within walking distance of their work.⁴⁸ It was more a collection of almost separate villages—Kensington, Frankford, Manayunk—than the consolidated metropolis it was officially and politically supposed to be. Each neighborhood jealously guarded its special character, ethnic coloration, political integrity.⁴⁹ Each had its business district, the Italian street markets and Jewish shops in South Philadelphia, the local commercial areas on Girard or Ridge or Columbia Avenue to the north. As the population expanded the physical detachment of most of these various neighborhoods tended to decrease (though local pride and xenophobia pre-

vails to this day), and the city became one gigantic fabric woven together by extended streets and above all by improved transportation.⁵⁰

It was the network of street railways that more and more permitted workers to commute to jobs beyond walking distance from their homes and shoppers to patronize other than local stores. By 1880 Philadelphia led all American cities in the length of its horse-car lines—some 264 miles of track—and in 1885 these lines carried 117 million passengers. Gradually cable cars, in the 1880s and 1890s, and then electric trolleys, beginning in December 1892, took the place of horses; the last horse-car lines ran in 1897.⁵¹

Two men in particular played a leading role in this development and became, in the not always edifying process, two of the city's and the country's richest men. Peter Arrell Brown Widener began his career as a butcher boy in his brother's meat shop. William Lukens Elkins started as a clerk in a grocery store. Widener prospered in meat, Elkins in groceries. Widener also became involved in local Philadelphia politics. A fortunate contract to supply mutton to Union forces around Philadelphia during the Civil War gave him



The Independence, ascending from a park or vacant lot in North Philadelphia (1891). A "Model Philadelphia House," similar to the new row houses in this neighborhood, was exhibited at Chicago's Columbian Exposition in 1893.

LIBRARY COMPANY OF PHILADELPHIA

a nucleus of capital, to which his padded salary as city treasurer added. He began to invest in Philadelphia traction companies.

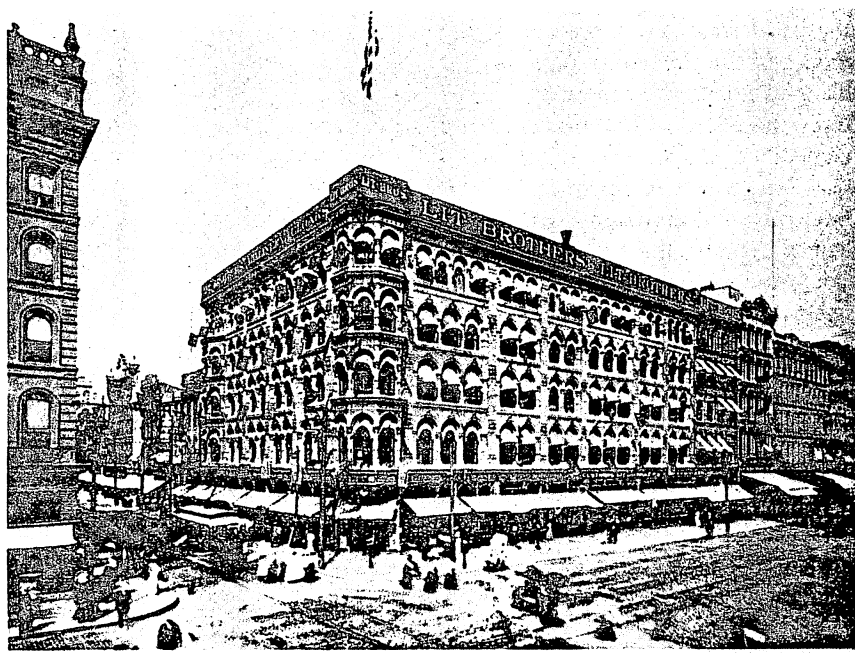
As Widener had prospered as owner of a chain of meat stores, so Elkins prospered as a grocer, building the city's first large refrigerator to store his fruit. When Pennsylvania oil was discovered, Elkins invested in storage plants and refineries, and by 1875 was a partner in Standard Oil. The first gasoline made was the product of one of these Elkins refineries. In the 1870s he also began to show interest in street railways and formed his association with Widener.

Together they bought up smaller companies, and by 1883 had effected a consolidation of all the lines in the city, first as the Philadelphia Traction Company, then as the Union Traction Company, and finally as the Philadelphia Rapid Transit Company. They expanded into other cities, helping Thomas Fortune Ryan and William C. Whitney in New York with capital and advice. They were conspicuously present in Chicago and involved in Pittsburgh and Baltimore. By the time Widener died he was probably the richest man in the city, Elkins perhaps the second.⁵²

As a result of the amalgamation, electrification, and expansion toward the suburbs of street railways, and of course with the already extant suburban services of the Pennsylvania and Reading, it was possible for most Philadelphians to get to the center of the city easily for business and for shopping. Stores, hotels, business offices clustered about City Hall like filings to a magnet, and during this period most of the first skyscrapers, great hotels, and great department stores of the city were built. Lit by electricity (Chestnut Street was so illuminated as early as 1881)⁵³ and gas (the United Gas Improvement Company, the U.G.I., formed in 1882 with the backing of Widener, Elkins, and others, and the constant favor of City Hall, became the country's largest public utility),⁵⁴ and even linked by telephone (as early as 1878 the Bell Telephone Company opened its first exchange),⁵⁵ the concentration of business around City Hall became the focus for the city's transportation facilities. Broad Street Station, City Hall, John Wanamaker's department store all next to each other demonstrated Philadelphia's turn-of-the-century power—financial, political, and mercantile.

The latest Wanamaker's building, begun in 1902, was designed by Daniel H. Burnham of Chicago in the newfangled skyscraper style; as such it suggested the passing of the role of Second City to the westward, from Philadelphia to upstart Chicago. John Wanamaker himself remained one of the city's most conspicuous citizens. His combination of self-advertising publicity, religious conviction, political do-goodism, and making money tended to cause other Philadelphians both to admire and to snicker. Though he was sincere, there was a certain incompatibility among his various roles. He had been a secretary of the YMCA as a youth and had thought of a career as a clergyman. He became a merchant instead, and he always thought of merchandising as a sort of holy vocation. "Anyone can be a shopkeeper," he pronounced, "but a merchant is as much different as . . . a Rocky Mountain eagle from a

mouse.”⁵⁶ The famous bronze eagle in the center of the grand concourse of the store, for years a favorite meeting place for shoppers, proclaims this faith. His political career reached a climax when he first became postmaster general under Pres. Benjamin Harrison and then ran for nomination for the United States Senate as an antimachine Republican in 1897. He was defeated by the combined forces of evil represented by bosses Matthew S. Quay and Boies Penrose. Wanamaker died not a senator but a multimillionaire, his store unchallenged as the greatest of its kind in the city, and one of the greatest in the nation.⁵⁷ There were, however, other important department stores, most of them farther east on Market Street. Of these, Strawbridge & Clothier, founded and patronized by Quakers and other substantial Philadelphians, was the most respectable. Gimbel Brothers at Eighth and Market was one of the earliest important merchandising efforts of that family, whose early success began in Philadelphia in 1865, but who like so many other Philadelphians eventually flowered in New York.⁵⁸ Gimbels’ across-the-street neighbor, Lit Brothers, occupying a whole block of by-now historic cast-iron- and pottery-fronted

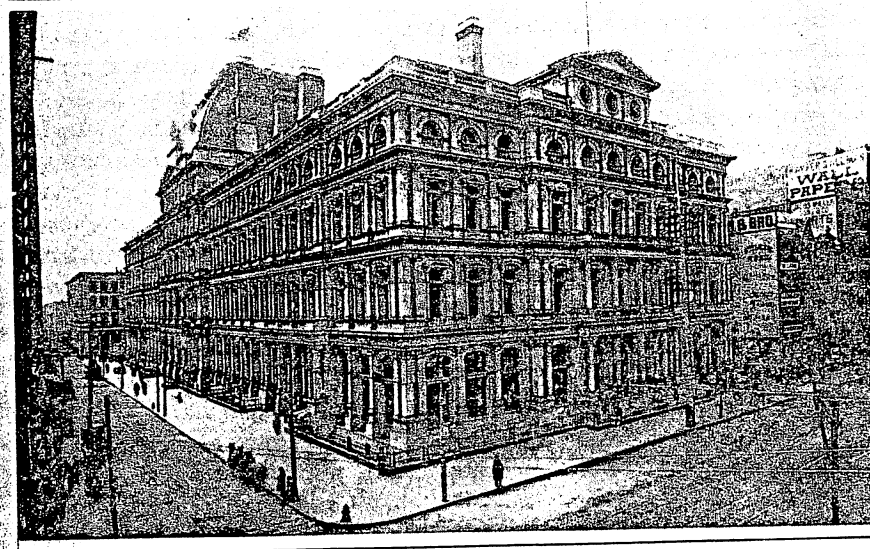


Lit Brothers Department Store, Eighth and Market Streets, main section designed in 1893 by Collins and Autenrieth (photograph c. 1898). The Lits complex, now empty, which incorporated several older mercantile buildings on Market Street, extended to Seventh Street at the right. A corner of the Strawbridge & Clothier store appears at the left.

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buildings, also prospered; today Lits is out of business, its cast-iron fronts threatened with demolition. The other great stores still remain in business.

The greatest and for years most fashionable hotel of the city, the Bellevue-Stratford, built in a mansarded style much like that of City Hall, opened in 1904.⁵⁹ Other skyscrapers, always kept just below the height of Calder’s statue of William Penn on top of City Hall tower, pushed up roundabout. The John F. Betz Building of 1891, on the northeast corner of Broad and Chestnut, now replaced by the Philadelphia National Bank, was the first of them. The Land Title Building of 1898 and 1902 on the southwest corner, the Real Estate Trust Building of 1905 on the southeast corner, and many others followed.⁶⁰ As skyscrapers go, however, Philadelphia’s lack the soar and flamboyance of those of New York and Chicago. Philadelphia moved into modern times with care, not to say trepidation. For a city with such a distinguished architectural tradition, its first modern business buildings were on the whole undistinguished.



United States Post Office and Federal Building, designed by Alfred B. Mullett (1834–1893), Ninth and Market (photograph c. 1895). The massive building opened in 1884 and was replaced in 1935.

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IV

Working in these mills, settling in these neighborhoods, riding these trolley cars, and as they made money, patronizing these stores, banks, and hotels—and almost all and always voting Republican—was a population rapidly changing from predominantly Protestant North European stock to one

increasingly Roman Catholic and variegated in ethnic background. The city's industrial growth naturally stimulated a steady growth in population: 1880—847,170; 1890—1,046,964; 1900—1,293,647.⁶¹

Nevertheless, Philadelphia still had a relatively small foreign-born population compared to other large American cities. Its 200,000 foreign-born in 1880 constituted only 24 percent of the total population, whereas in New York and Chicago they were 40 percent; in 1900 the percentage was even lower.⁶² Although the makeup of this population was becoming more diversified, the "Old Immigration"—English, Irish, and Germans—was still predominant as the nineteenth century closed, a fact frequently commented on. One British writer, for example, noted that in Philadelphia one found "the purest Anglo-Saxon citizen body among all the large centers" in the nation.⁶³

Many of the English who came to Philadelphia in these years continued to be absorbed as expert weavers into the textile industries of the northeastern sections of the city. Kensington was called "Little England."⁶⁴ German immigrants were readily assimilated into existing German settlements scattered throughout the city. Industrious and skilled, they often became independent businessmen, from watchmakers and gunsmiths to bakers and brewers. Their numbers were large enough to support at least three German-language newspapers.⁶⁵

The largest foreign-born group in Philadelphia in this period remained the Irish, constituting half the city's foreign-born population in 1880 and one-third of it in 1900. Newcomers joined so many second- and third-generation Irish that in many ways Philadelphia was an Irish city, surpassed only by Boston and Providence. Philadelphia offered the Irish immigrants greater job opportunities than Boston, a lower death rate, and a higher standard of living with more housing, schools, and churches. Wherever the Irish settled they established churches until the Roman Catholic church became the largest religious group in the city. They favored large families. A French priest visiting Philadelphia in 1904 found 475,000 Catholics, an increase of more than a third in twenty years. As it was elsewhere in the United States, the Catholic church after the death of Archbishop Wood came to be Irish-dominated, a domination under which Polish and Italian Catholics became increasingly restive.⁶⁶

Benefiting from a period of urban growth, the Irish were heavily involved in the construction industry as bricklayers, hod carriers, and bridge and railroad builders. Some rose to become powerful "contractor bosses" who effectively utilized Irish building skills, often through useful but corrupt political manipulation.⁶⁷ Politics also opened up opportunities for jobs as policemen, firemen, and watchmen. More of a stereotype was the Irish saloon-keeper, and of course the Irish cook and maid, whom Ethel Barrymore remembered so well in the home of her grandmother, Mrs. John Drew, on North Fifth Street.⁶⁸

Gradually, as the century ended, the "Old Immigration" from Great Britain and northern Europe was supplanted by a "New Immigration" from

Russia, eastern Europe, and Italy. For many of these Philadelphia, unlike New York, was just a port of entry and a way station;⁶⁹ but some groups settled. Of these the Jews were the largest. In the late nineteenth century this community's upper class were German Jews who about 1880 began moving to the section around North Broad Street between Spring Garden Street and Columbia Avenue. By 1895 they had built on Broad Street not only two fine synagogues, Keneseth Israel and Rodeph Shalom, but their stylish Mercantile Club as well.⁷⁰

In 1881 there were perhaps 5000 Jews in Philadelphia, including a small colony of eastern European Jews, largely from Poland and Lithuania, in "Jerusalem" in the Port Richmond industrial area. The Port Richmond Jews kept to themselves, were strictly Orthodox, with their own synagogue, and made their living for the most part as peddlers, rag pickers, and hucksters.⁷¹ But the pogroms in Russia in 1881 began a tide of Jewish immigration that flowed into the next century. Early in 1882, 225 Russian Jews arrived aboard the Cramp steamer *Illinois* at the Christian Street wharf near Old Swedes' Church. It was the first such group to come directly to Philadelphia from abroad, and they were given a citywide welcome. Although some 2000 Jewish immigrants came to the city in 1882, these first arrivals were the largest single group for several years.⁷² Since most of them were indigent, the United Hebrew Charities had to strain to meet their needs. In 1884 the Association of Jewish Immigrants was formed to give further assistance by locating relatives, finding jobs, and arranging temporary housing. In 1901 all the Jewish health and welfare agencies, hard pressed by the needs of the flood of immigrants, joined to form a united fundraising body, the Federation of Jewish Charities, with Jacob Gimbel as its first president.⁷³

Most of the more than 40,000 Jewish immigrants who came through the Port of Philadelphia between 1881 and 1891 stayed in the city. While some went to "Jerusalem" in Port Richmond, others remained where they landed, and by 1894 the Jewish population of South Philadelphia had increased from about 300 to 30,000, most of them living in the river wards south of Spruce Street. Here they began to displace the long-settled black residents. The more well-to-do moved into the mansions of old Philadelphia families who had gone west to Rittenhouse Square. By 1905 there were about 100,000 Jews in the city, 70,000 of them Russian (compared to 286 in 1880); and of these, 55,000 lived in the southern wards, Philadelphia's "East Side."⁷⁴

Unlike most immigrants of the period the Jews did not work in heavy industry, but in smaller businesses involving hand crafts—cigar factories, tailoring, and the garment trades; also in small neighborhood shops. South Street in particular became a sort of Jewish bazaar, with its housefront stores and Hebrew signs.⁷⁵ Adjustment for the newcomers into the already established Jewish community was not easy. The existing synagogues were Americanized, with a ritual quite different from that of the Russians. They had also adopted reforms repugnant to Orthodox traditions. New synagogues grew up around Fifth and Lombard, some of them in abandoned Christian churches

and most of them Orthodox. By 1895 there were no fewer than forty-five of them in a half square mile south of Spruce Street.⁷⁶ Newspapers in "the Jargon—*Juedisch Deutsch*" were founded and served the immigrant groups more effectively than the Establishment-oriented English-language weekly *Jewish Exponent*, begun in 1887.⁷⁷

Between 1870 and 1900 Philadelphia's Italian population increased sixfold, from about 300 to almost 18,000. By 1910 it had jumped dramatically to 77,000. Before 1909 few Italians entered the city through the port of Philadelphia, but rather came down from New York where thousands arrived yearly.⁷⁸ They were usually young unskilled laborers from southern Italy and Sicily who, unlike the Jews, came to America as temporary residents intending to earn enough money to improve their status at home.⁷⁹ Through New York employment firms, railroad agents, and *padroni* connected with contractors and politicians, the Italians found construction jobs in Philadelphia with the Pennsylvania and Reading Railroads and on the city's public works. They became street cleaners, trash collectors, stevedores, and laborers in the sugar, cement, and oil industries along the Delaware waterfront, and masons everywhere homes were built.⁸⁰

For the most part the Italians settled in South Philadelphia, where many remain to this day. The earliest center was St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi at



On South Street, photograph by Gilliame and Stratton Syndicate (c. 1895). Many Russian Jewish immigrants made band-wrapped cigars. At the end of the century, South Street was the center of a thriving Jewish business community.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Seventh and what is now Montrose (until 1897 Marriott), founded in 1851 as the first Italian Catholic church in the United States.⁸¹ Italians then moved westward toward the closer suburbs—Overbrook, Manayunk, Germantown. The Philadelphia political machine tended to organize them, displacing the system of *padroni*. As a result, instead of depending on the *padroni* for board and lodging⁸² Italians, like other Philadelphians, rented or bought houses of their own. Many of them worked in these homes as tailors and finishers, or on the streets roundabout in the familiar roles of bootblacks, organ grinders, and fruit vendors. Their great market, then as now, extended along Ninth Street north and south of Christian.⁸³

Other immigrant groups had less impact. A small Hungarian settlement worked in factories or became well known as makers of shoes and riding boots. Many incoming Poles merely passed through the city on their way to the coal and steel areas in the west of the state, giving Pennsylvania the largest Polish population in the country.⁸⁴ Those who did stay worked primarily in heavy industry—oil and sugar refineries, iron works like Pencoyd and Midvale.⁸⁵ The Christian Poles were predominantly Roman Catholic and as early as 1882 had established a parish of their own in the Northern Liberties, and in 1891 one in South Philadelphia.⁸⁶

But of all the city's immigrant groups, the most consistent incoming flow was the result not of foreign but internal immigrations. Philadelphia's foreign-born population was small compared with other cities', but its black population was the largest of any northern urban center. Only the southward cities of Baltimore, Washington, and New Orleans had larger black populations.⁸⁷ By 1890 this population was close to 40,000, 4 percent of the city's total and a 24 percent increase over 1880. By 1900 the number had risen 60 percent to more than 62,000 and made up 5 percent of the total.⁸⁸ Between 1876 and 1896 some 15,000 blacks arrived to join the 25,000 already there.⁸⁹

In 1896 W. E. B. DuBois was brought to Philadelphia by the University of Pennsylvania to study the city's blacks. His book *The Philadelphia Negro* was a pioneer in sociological and environmental research and is today a classic.⁹⁰

DuBois found that most blacks lived in center city and had for many years. The heaviest concentration was in the Seventh Ward (Spruce to South, Seventh to the Schuylkill), where they were about 40 percent of the population and lived near the white families for whom they were domestic servants. This ward provided both high and low aspects of black life. The more prosperous Negroes, perhaps 3000, lived on Lombard Street west of Eighth and on Rodman and Addison Streets. They comprised an aristocracy of wealth and education that was not recognized by or even known to the whites. They tended to be alienated from their own people for whom they provided little or no leadership. They were largely Philadelphia-born, many of them descendants of freedmen of the past century.

The southeastern part of the Seventh Ward, on Lombard and South Streets, together with the Thirtieth Ward next to it, formed Philadelphia's

first black ghetto, with the worst black slum in the city at Seventh and Lombard. Conditions had been exacerbated by the influx of Russian Jewish immigrants into the Fifth Ward, from which they steadily pushed the blacks west. In 1891, for example, the James Forten School on Sixth Street north of Lombard had equal numbers of black and Jewish students; in 1899 the number of blacks had dropped to 13 percent.⁹¹

During these years too Negroes were also to be found in Germantown and West Philadelphia, again living in the small streets near the wealthy homes where they worked. The almost fourfold increase of blacks in West Philadelphia between 1870 and 1900 was a harbinger of the future.⁹²

The Philadelphia Negro of the late nineteenth century had few opportunities to better himself economically. Not only did the new industrialization require skills he did not possess, but he was forced to compete with white immigrants even for those jobs he could fill. Moreover there remained a strong racial prejudice in the city which expressed itself in a variety of ways. When the Republican National Convention was held in Philadelphia in 1900, black delegates were barred from hotels. Many whites refused to rent to blacks. There was prejudice in employment selection even of qualified blacks, and whites frequently refused to work with Negroes. Because blacks were not admitted to labor unions, a League of Colored Mechanics in 1897 tried to promote them in trades.⁹³

The vast majority of black males were manual laborers, filling the ever-present need for cheap, unskilled labor—stevedores, street and sewer cleaners, trash collectors, livery men and bootblacks, porters and waiters. In 1890 only a little more than 1 percent of the black population was employed in the major industries of the city. Frederick W. Taylor, the champion of “scientific labor,” was unusual when he hired 200 blacks to work with his white “gangs” at Midvale Steel in 1896.⁹⁴

Negro women, who outnumbered the men, were virtually limited to domestic service and sewing; however, none of them was to be found in the sweatshops of the garment trade. Men also filled many domestic service jobs, and in 1880, 20 percent of adult Philadelphia blacks were domestics; this number increased to one-third by 1896, and they constituted one-fourth of all domestic servants. But as was happening in so many employment areas, in this traditional black occupation white immigrants were displacing them as coachmen, butlers, and nursemaids.⁹⁵

A few blacks, however, were able to pull themselves out of this economic pit. By 1896 there were some 300 black-owned businesses in the city, mostly catering firms, restaurants, and barbershops. Christopher J. Perry founded the *Philadelphia Tribune*, a newspaper for blacks, in 1884. Walter P. Hall was one of the wealthiest blacks in 1892, making his money in the wholesale poultry business and using it lavishly through churches and welfare organizations. Two of the four black undertakers were women.⁹⁶

Professionally, the black community had fifteen “reputable” physicians and three dentists in 1896, but only two out of their ten lawyers were successful. There were about forty teachers and more than sixty ministers. About 1



Franklin Court in 1912, after its improvement by the Octavia Hill Association, a housing reform group founded in 1896 by members of the Women's Civic Club. Standing with the family in front of the project are a representative from the association and a rent collector.

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY, URBAN ARCHIVES

percent of the blacks were clerical, semiprofessional, or “responsible” workers. In 1896 there were sixty black policemen, working in or near black areas. It was Mayor Samuel G. King who in 1881 appointed the first Negro policeman, over great opposition. Although blacks had no equal chance for a job at Strawbridge & Clothier or Wanamaker's in 1888, a decade later the black postmaster and postal employees at Wanamaker's were highly successful in running the city's second-largest substation.⁹⁷

To ease their existence, Philadelphia Negroes joined beneficial and mutual-aid societies and “secret” or fraternal organizations, paralleling similar groups in the white community. The Odd Fellows were perhaps the most influential of the fraternal societies: in October 1886, 2500 black Odd Fellows paraded in the city and then enjoyed a ball at the Academy of Music. The Freemasons too were active, celebrating the centennial of black Masonry in 1884. In May 1889 an exhibition illustrating black progress in industry and the arts was held in Horticultural Hall.⁹⁸

The principal organizing and stabilizing body among the blacks remained the church. The church was the center of social life and amusements and a communication center. Each congregation formed its own circle, some being neighborhood-bound, some class-conscious or work-oriented. In 1885 there were twenty-five black churches and missions in the city, but with the migration of Negroes from the South their number more than doubled to fifty-five in 1897. The Methodists had the greatest number of communicants, followed by the Baptists, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians, and "springing up and dying a host of little noisy missions which represent the older and more demonstrative worship." In the 1890s the Catholic church, because of its "comparative lack of discrimination," made many converts among the blacks, enough in fact that in January 1892 Philadelphia was host to the third black Catholic congress of the United States.⁹⁹

The new immigration, so predominantly Catholic and Jewish, brought to a close the "Protestant consensus" under which the nation had developed since its founding. In Philadelphia the most venerable of the Protestant denominations was the Society of Friends, but by 1880 less than 1 percent of the Quaker City's population was Quaker. Their numbers continued to decline in the last decades of the century until by 1900 there were only 16,000 Friends in the Orthodox and much larger Hicksite Yearly Meetings, and most of these lived outside the city. The plain dress and plain speech of the Quakers had all but disappeared by this time, and although many in the two branches of the Society still regarded each other with "holy abhorrence," a gradual easing of the separation was beginning to be felt. More important perhaps were the divisions within the two groups as they sought to reconcile their Disciplines to "worldly" challenges on all sides.¹⁰⁰

One of Henry James's impressions of Philadelphia about 1906 was the persistent presence of Quaker "drab," but he also noted a "bestitching of the drab with pink and green and silver." More and more, wealthy Quakers were being caught up in the social world of the largely Episcopalian aristocracy of Old Philadelphians. Although most of this "Quaker-turned-Anglican gentry" retained nominal affiliation with the Society of Friends, other Quakers, as they had since colonial days, left their Discipline for the Episcopalian and Presbyterian churches.¹⁰¹

V

It might be expected that the sudden influx of immigrants would produce the same effect apparent in all other American big cities—overcrowding, exploitation, slums, labor troubles, political corruption, and party realignments. All these things did indeed appear in Philadelphia, but curiously mitigated in some areas and curiously distorted in others.

Perhaps the most important single factor in creating the differences remained architecture. That is, instead of being a city of jammed-together multifamily tenements packed with renters, Philadelphia was still a city of endlessly repeated small row houses, most of them one-family dwellings, many of them owner occupied. As of 1891 a Philadelphian who earned \$25 a

week was considered a potential homeowner. Few workers were actually paid that much money, but of course more than one person in a family was usually employed.

Baldwin Locomotive workers in 1882 earned \$605 a year; the average iron and steel wage was \$500. Textile workers earned an average of \$350 or less in establishments using child labor. Women, 26 percent of the work force in 1900, earned less than men.¹⁰² Income did not increase greatly by the turn of the century, and an eight-hour day was a rarity. Some employers, like Strawbridge & Clothier and John B. Stetson, provided amenities—lunchrooms, building and loan associations. John Wanamaker introduced profit sharing in 1887.¹⁰³ But it was generally believed that home ownership remained one of the principal reasons for the comparative lack of labor agitation in Philadelphia in this period. Widespread resistance to trade unionism by employers was certainly another. Even many Quakers, so conscious of the needs of the poor, saw organized labor as "an anarchic bomb."¹⁰⁴

Nonetheless there were efforts, often sporadic and ineffective, to organize. Textile and garment workers joined socialist unions. In the 1890s the Knights of Labor attracted members among cigar makers, brewers, and trolley-car conductors; but the founding of the American Federation of Labor, organized by craft unions, brought to an end the influence of the Knights.¹⁰⁵

For the most part Philadelphia was spared the violent labor troubles of this agitated period.¹⁰⁶ But the city did have its quota of strikes—by shoemakers, steamfitters, longshoremen, machinists. In 1895 at the height of the Christmas season the Amalgamated Association of Street Railway Employees paralyzed the newly consolidated Union Traction Company. There was some rioting and damage to trolley cars during the week of the strike. In the end there was a slight increase in wages and a limitation of the working day to twelve hours.¹⁰⁷

It was not until 1903 that Philadelphia experienced its first major strike. That summer some 100,000 textile workers, always among the worst paid members of the city's labor force, shut down the industry with their demand for a fifty-five-hour week. The strike failed, but did bring to public notice one of the most deplorable aspects of the industry, child labor. Among the strikers, 10,000 of them were children, many only ten years old. Parades and protests raised the issue, but it still was many years before effective laws were passed and enforced against the exploitation of children.¹⁰⁸

And the "city of homes" also included specimens of the worst kind. Whereas the labor force of North Philadelphia was early unionized and conscious of rights and problems, South Philadelphia remained a sort of urban backwater. Unionism failed to develop there, and it remained an area of squalid slums and unskilled workers. These slums were not tenements but narrow alleys and dark courtyards of tiny three-story houses known as Trinity—"Father, Son, and Holy Ghost"—houses, one room to a floor. Jammed together, the houses had little light or air, lacked sewerage and adequate water supply, smelt of humanity and decay. Sweatshops occupied the upper floors

of the Jewish neighborhoods; in the overcrowded Italian sections chickens were often kept in bedrooms and goats in the cellar.¹⁰⁹

For all this misery Philadelphia still had less of a concentrated slum problem than other big cities. On the other hand what there was was ignored by a complacent public.¹¹⁰ Nonetheless special groups made special efforts, and by 1878 there were more than 800 active charitable organizations, many of them addressing these problems. A centralizing Society for Organizing Charity was founded in 1879,¹¹¹ and in the same period the settlement movement began in a rather haphazard fashion.¹¹² Religious groups spearheaded the movement, including Quakers in Kensington and Episcopalians in South Philadelphia.¹¹³ One of the more effective such philanthropies was the housing program inspired by the London reforms of Octavia Hill. Theodore Starr, Hannah Fox, and Helen Parrish began in the 1880s to build or restore houses to rent cheaply, mostly to poor blacks. An Octavia Hill Association was founded in 1896 by members of the women's Civic Club, and not only provided houses but agitated for housing legislation, with eventual success.¹¹⁴

Some of the problems of Philadelphia's living conditions were basically political. Sewage disposal, water supply, road and street construction, paving, and upkeep were all lamentably inadequate, and attempts at improvement usually turned into excuses for corrupt contracts and padded payrolls. No respectable person would drink the city water, which came from the polluted Schuylkill, and everyone who could bought spring water from private companies.¹¹⁵ The typhoid fever death rate was the highest of the major cities, three times that of New York after the turn of the century.¹¹⁶ Joseph Wharton hoped to supply the city with good water from the aquifer under the vast pine-barren acreages he owned and set aside in South Jersey. Utilization of the upper Delaware and other sources was urged. Instead the city Councils had other ideas. Expensive new pumping stations and reservoirs, resulting in juicy plums for favorite contractors and perquisites for councilmen, were preferred, ineffective though they might be.¹¹⁷ For example, cholera and typhoid epidemics in 1891 and 1899 caused agitation for an improved system of water filtration. The result was a \$12-million dollar loan and a sand-filtered water system the contract for which was awarded to the brother of a Select Council member. According to the reformer Rudolph Blankenburg, "Such a piece of costly and useless hydraulic construction . . . could not be duplicated in the wide universe."¹¹⁸

V I

In most cities of the nation during this period city governments tended to be split between the two great parties. In the North the Republican party usually represented "decent government"—and money. The Democratic party represented "machine politics"—and the disadvantaged. The familiar pattern of Irish politicians in Boston battling the Brahmins, or the conflicts between gentlemen reformers like Theodore Roosevelt and Tammany in New York was paralleled in Philadelphia to be sure, but with one major and

crucial difference. Philadelphia was in effect a one-party town. Both "decent citizens" and "grafters" were Republicans. Thus a Republican nomination was usually an election, and most battles had to be fought in the murky areas of the primaries, where bosses were most effective.

Resident Democrats did exist at the bottom and the top of the social pyramid. The river wards, overwhelmingly working class, inhabited by Irish and Germans, remained loyally Democratic.¹¹⁹ The very best Old Philadelphia families—Cadwaladers, Biddles, Ingersolls—also remained quixotically Democratic, largely based on sympathy for the prewar South and its states' rights attitudes, and also from a taste for independence and scorning of middle-class taboos.¹²⁰ Democrats managed to elect Robert E. Pattison as reform city controller of Philadelphia in 1877; he was reelected as a result of his exposés of corruption printed in newspapers in 1880, and then went on to become governor of Pennsylvania in 1883 and again in 1891.¹²¹

Meanwhile decent citizens formed committees, temporarily elected honest officials, made laws. A typical example involved a new city charter. Drafted by three of the city's most prominent reformers and civic leaders, John C. Bullitt, E. Dunbar Lockwood, and the famous historian and publisher Henry C. Lea, and backed by one of the city's endless series of reform groups, the Committee of One Hundred, the charter's chief emphasis was on giving power to the mayor, streamlining the city departments by reducing them from twenty-five to nine, and then putting them under the direct supervision of the mayor. The charter was drawn up in 1882, but local boss James McManes saw to it that it was buried in committee in 1883. There it might have stayed, except that state boss Matthew S. Quay recognized that the charter could be a powerful weapon against Philadelphia boss McManes in the perennial struggle between state and city chieftains for control of Pennsylvania. With the help of Boies Penrose, a Philadelphian but then in Harrisburg as Quay's chief lieutenant, the charter bill passed the state legislature in 1885 and took effect in the city in 1887.¹²² The end result was not that of a new order, as everyone hoped in 1887, but a victory of Quay over McManes.

It was through this fight that Quay's henchman David Martin took over in Philadelphia from the defeated McManes¹²³—and that Boies Penrose, who began as a reformist champion of the charter, saw what was really happening and decided, since he couldn't lick 'em, to join 'em, becoming himself the most corrupt and devious of bosses. As a later henchman of Quay's, Isaac Durham, said, "We took that charter and went right on with our business."¹²⁴

Nevertheless two good mayors were elected—the "reign of the Edwins"—Edwin H. Fitler, cordage manufacturer, serving from 1887 to 1891, and succeeding him Edwin S. Stuart, owner of Leary's bookstore, one of Philadelphia's landmarks.¹²⁵ But the Panic of 1893 (allegedly brought about by those Democrats) in the middle of Stuart's mayoralty helped the bosses back to power. It was "business as usual" again.¹²⁶

Among the bosses, however, the election of 1895 proved crucial. New

Philadelphia boss Martin used the occasion to try to declare his independence from Quay. Quay backed Penrose for mayor. Martin backed a nonentity named Charles Warwick. Warwick won the primary (largely thanks to a publicized photograph of Penrose coming out of a brothel), and then defeated reform Democrat Pattison, but it was a Pyrrhic victory. Quay ousted Martin as his representative and replaced him with Iz Durham.¹²⁷ After Quay's death in 1904 Penrose, by then perennial United States senator, took his place and dominated the city's, the state's, and to some extent the nation's politics until he died in 1921.

Penrose was very much a Philadelphian, a member of one of the city's oldest, richest, and most distinguished colonial families. A brilliant graduate of Harvard in 1881, he began as a lawyer. His reforming ardor having been cooled by the politics surrounding the 1887 charter, he cynically allied himself with Quay, whom he succeeded, and to the end of his days followed Quay's example. A gargantuan eater, a cynical lecher, like Quay a master of intrigue, he played politics the way others played chess: not for personal profit, since he was a man of inherited wealth, but for the pleasure of winning.¹²⁸

VII

Not only were physical aspects of the city's life dependent on and tarnished by the contented corruption of the city's government—streets and sewers, water supplies, police and fire departments—but even its intellectual life was touched at the roots. That is, free public education was a function of the city, and here too “business as usual” and reform alternated. At the turn of the century some 3500 teachers (200 of them men) were instructing 153,000 students in the city public schools.¹²⁹ The system of operation opened the doors to corruption since the schools came under the jurisdiction of the district school boards which were dominated by ward bosses. These boards appointed teachers and principals not on the basis of merit but of pull, often exacting pay for positions and promotions as well as “voluntary contributions” for political campaigns. Salaries were lower in Philadelphia than in any other large city in the country. Men were paid more than women, upper grades more than lower; married women as teachers were discriminated against. Schools were overcrowded, rundown, unsanitary. Funds were chronically inadequate and teachers themselves often had to help buy textbooks.¹³⁰

Reforms, desperately needed, paralleled the reforms in city government, though eventually with more permanent success. The establishment of a central school board in 1883 and the appointment of the first woman member of the Philadelphia Board of Education in 1886, Anna Hallowell, were steps in the direction of honesty and sanity. Finally in 1905, after twenty years of effort, a Public School Reorganization Act was passed and the system was freed of the incubus of the wardheelers' corrupt control.¹³¹

Part of the battle for school reform involved compulsory school attendance. This of course attacked the ancient abuse of child labor, and was op-

posed not merely by employers but by many working-class parents who depended on their children for family support. Here it was not the Republicans but the Democrats who were most strongly against the various reform measures, and a series of bills in the legislature were defeated or vetoed by the reformer Governor Pattison. Nonetheless a child-labor bill was passed in 1893 and compulsory school attendance voted in 1895.¹³²

The jewel of the system remained Central High School, devoted to the education of specially selected boys of superior intelligence. Many of the prominent figures of Philadelphia life then as now were graduates, notably the painter Thomas Eakins and the lawyer and art collector John G. Johnson.¹³³ Meanwhile private education grew and flourished, and there were almost as many parochial schools and private schools in the city as public ones. Catholics generally sent their children to parochial schools, the well-to-do to the various town or suburban private schools. Notre Dame Academy on Rittenhouse Square and Eden Hall in Torresdale were the fashionable Catholic girls' schools, Delancey School and Episcopal Academy the Protestant boys' schools in the city. Various suburban schools founded during this time, notably Chestnut Hill Academy for boys in 1895 and Springside School (Chestnut Hill, 1879) and Shipley School (Main Line, 1894) for girls were indications of the trend of the prosperous away from the city. Eventually older schools such as Penn Charter, Episcopal Academy, and the Agnes Irwin School also moved out of town.¹³⁴

The most important such educational move, however, had been that of the University of Pennsylvania to West Philadelphia in 1872. It was after this move and during this post-Exposition period that the university was converted from a parochial academy for the more conservative Old Philadelphians, totally dominated by its famous schools of law and medicine, into a modern city university.

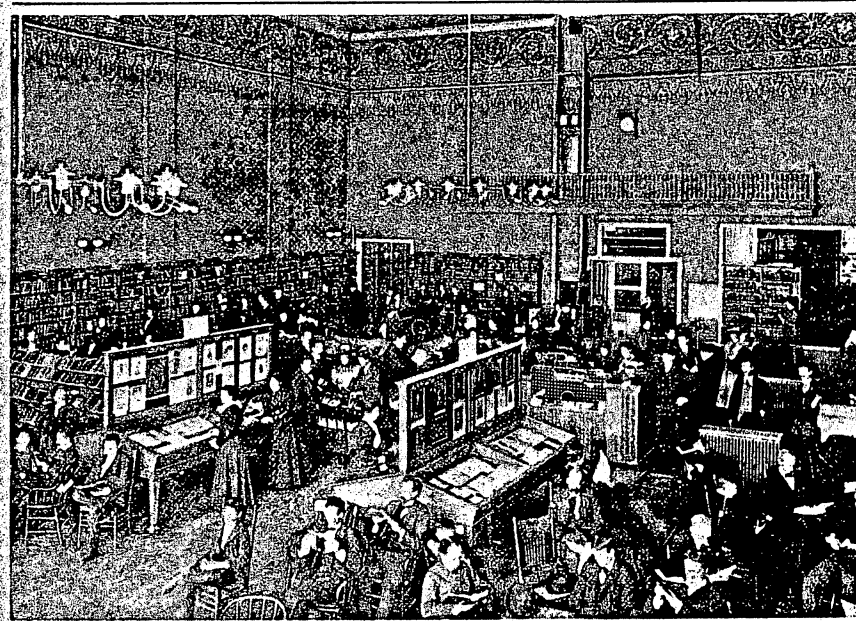
Somewhat paralleling the history of the Railroad, three important leaders transformed a rather patchwork institution into a great national one. Rather like Thompson of the railroad, Charles J. Stillé, professor of English and a literary dilettante of ancient Delaware Valley Swedish descent, as provost supervised the move west and began the process of growth and reorganization. He himself, however, felt that he was a failure. Battling with the entrenched and conservative Board of Trustees, which still held even disciplinary power over undergraduates, he resigned discouraged in 1880. He was succeeded by Dr. William Pepper, already a famous practitioner and teacher of medicine, and it was Provost Pepper who during his fourteen years of incumbency realized Stillé's plans.¹³⁵

William Pepper was a member of a family of German origin whose ancestor Johan Heinrich Pfeffer had come to the country in 1769 and whose grandfather George had established the family fortune. William graduated from the university in 1862 and then two years later from the medical school, still the most prestigious in the country. He taught at the university, where he served in several capacities until his death, as well as serving on the staff

of various local hospitals. He was the chief founder of the University Hospital in 1874, a project new to the country at that time—a teaching hospital associated with a university medical school, in which the faculty acted as the staff. Though continuing his active medical career, he accepted the position of provost of the university when Stillé resigned. As one of the city's most important doctors in an age when Philadelphia was considered the first medical city in the country, and as a Pepper, William had few of the problems with the trustees that plagued Stillé. The university burgeoned in every direction. Financially and educationally soundly established, the campus decorated by a new library, chemistry building, and gymnasium, the curriculum modernized, gifts pouring in (including a bequest of \$60,000 from Uncle George Pepper), the university approached the twentieth century rebuilt and revitalized. Perhaps the emphasis seemed more on things than thoughts, on new buildings and departments rather than on purely academic distinctions—a process that was emphasized under the administration of Pepper's successor Charles Custis Harrison. But by the time Pepper resigned in 1894, worn out with his double career as college president and doctor, the university had been restored to its ancient prerevolutionary eminence as one of the country's prestigious universities.¹³⁶

While this process of academic blossoming was taking place at the University of Pennsylvania, Temple University was founded by the efforts of one man, that extraordinary Yankee with the golden tongue Russell H. Conwell. Born poor in rural Massachusetts, he was a soldier in the Civil War. His war experiences had converted him from adolescent atheism to exuberant Christianity. In 1879 he was called to the Baptist ministry, and the following year came to take over a moribund Grace Baptist Church in North Philadelphia. In ten years, largely on the basis of his popularity as a preacher and lecturer, he had converted the church into the vast Baptist Temple, seating some 3000 persons. In the church basement he began a night school for workingmen which gradually emerged as a full-fledged university, bearing the name of Temple and chartered in 1888. To this institution Conwell donated the enormous earnings he made from over 6000 speaking engagements for his lecture "Acres of Diamonds." This set piece of uplift, which combined spirituality with money-making in the best vein of the Protestant Ethic, was one of the phenomenal successes of the turn of the century, and on its success was founded one of the city's most dynamic educational institutions, intended as a "workingman's university."¹³⁷

The Drexel Institute, founded in 1891–1892 by financier Anthony J. Drexel, also was aimed specifically at the education of working-class youth of both sexes in the areas of technical expertise.¹³⁸ In the suburbs, Bryn Mawr College was founded in 1880 as a bequest of Friend Joseph W. Taylor. Intended as a college for women to match and balance the older Quaker college Haverford, for men, it rose above sectarianism particularly under its second president, M. Carey Thomas. From 1894 to 1922 Thomas set uncompromising intellectual standards and gave determined support to women's rights and the cause of world peace.¹³⁹



Circulation Room of the Free Library of Philadelphia, 1221–1227 Chestnut Street (photograph c. 1900).

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA

But of all the institutions of the Iron Age none has had a more far-reaching effect on the city's educational development than the Free Library. Though Philadelphia was the earliest of American cities to encourage libraries, they had always been private ones, supported by shareholders, and though open to all, they were not the equivalent of the modern public library. A bequest by George Pepper of some \$250,000 led to the founding of the Free Library of Philadelphia in 1891, belatedly in comparison with other cities. Under the guidance of his nephew Provost William Pepper, this library soon established itself as a vital adjunct of the city's educational life. Branches, the creation of Andrew Carnegie's bounty, were built. The library attracted many other gifts, notably a million-dollar one from P. A. B. Widener, whose home at Broad and Girard for years housed a collection of incunabula and a branch library, as well as retaining all his gold fixtures in the bathrooms.¹⁴⁰

VIII

Along with the founding of the Free Library, one of the most notable institutions to emerge after the Centennial was the museum of art in 1877. It was a direct outgrowth of the Exposition, a rather random and leftover collection gathered in Memorial Hall. At first conceived of as a museum of industrial art, bequests by the Wiltach and Bloomfield Moore families gave it a nucleus of paintings. These, surrounded by a vast assortment of bric-a-brac

and casts, were the beginnings of the present great collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art.¹⁴¹

Much more prestigious at this time, however, was the venerable Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. The period from 1876 till about 1910 was the high point of its national prestige. Not only was it famous as an art school, it also maintained an annual series of exhibits of American art second to none in the country. Every artist of importance showed there, and the Academy with its schools and exhibits made Philadelphia one of the more important artistic centers of the United States for half a century after the Civil War.¹⁴²

This institutional flowering—novelties like the Art Museum and the Free Library, the revitalization of the University of Pennsylvania and the Pennsylvania Academy—was paralleled in Philadelphia by an artistic flowering. In painting, architecture, and literature especially it was one of the city's finest periods and produced some of Philadelphia's finest artists. Some of these talents stayed and worked in the city, some went away to flourish elsewhere. But whether they stayed or left, Philadelphia didn't seem to care.

One might think, given this intellectual and esthetic ferment, that an atmosphere like that of the Italian Renaissance or the Flowering of New England might have prevailed. Not at all. The evidence to the contrary is overwhelming. Agnes Repplier, essayist, grande dame of Philadelphia letters, summed up the situation as of 1898 with sardonic wit in her *Philadelphia, The Place and the People*:

Above all, the Quaker City lacks that discriminating enthusiasm for her own children . . . which enables more zealous towns to rend the skies with shrill paeans of applause. . . . Philadelphia is . . . "more than usual calm" when her sons and daughters win distinction in any field. She takes the matter quietly. . . . If mistaking of geese for swans produces sad confusion . . . the mistaking of swans for geese may also be a dangerous error. The birds either languish or fly away to keener air. Yet . . . the sharp discipline of quiet neglect is healthier for a worker than that loud local praise which wakes no echo from the wider world.¹⁴³

The careers of three of the more important Philadelphia swans of this period offer illustrative contrasts. Six artists have been traditionally considered to be the most important American painters of this period after the Civil War: the nativists Thomas Eakins, Winslow Homer, and Albert Pinkham Ryder, and the expatriates Mary Cassatt, James McNeill Whistler, and John Singer Sargent. Of these, three were Philadelphians. Of them all, Eakins was the only one who stayed, studied, painted, lived, and died where he was born. He dominated the Academy, and hence art in the city, from 1876 until he was dismissed in 1886. He made of the Academy one of the leading teaching centers of the American art world. Neglected in Philadelphia, and indeed everywhere else, during most of his lifetime, his career may be one of the city's shames. On the other hand it must also be considered one of its greatest glories. In American history there has seldom been any important artist whose entire active career was so molded and colored by one specific locality. No better example can be found of the salutary, if painful, "discipline of quiet neglect."

Mary Cassatt represents equally clearly the flight to "keener air."¹⁴⁴ She was not as completely a Philadelphian as Eakins. She was born in Pittsburgh, but her family settled in Philadelphia when she was young and became totally identified, especially in the person of her brother Alexander, president of the Railroad. Mary studied at the Academy in the 1860s, but did not find herself as an artist until she moved permanently to France in 1873 and came under the influence of Edgar Degas. She and Berthe Morisot were the only two women prominently identified with the Impressionist movement. She was the only native of the United States to be so importantly identified. Her work, her artistic frame of reference, is entirely French. As an artist she was Parisian. As a person she remained American. Her technique may have been modeled after Degas, but her subject matter was basically Philadelphian: feminine Philadelphia, in total contrast to the overwhelming masculinity of Eakins. Though she lived in Paris, or outside it, most of her social life there was spent exclusively in a narrow circle of an imported family and of American friends. In a curious way she was as much circumscribed by the ambience of her native, or native-adopted, city as was Eakins. Of her portraits, it is those of her family and her Philadelphia friends or patrons that remain most typical.

The third of the six with Philadelphia connections was John Singer Sargent. Though born in Florence, a student in Paris, and a resident of England, who practiced his trade of portraiture in America largely in Boston and New York, he was nonetheless a Philadelphian by background. His mother, born Mary Newbold Singer, was completely Philadelphian. Her connection with the Newbolds gave her a claim to local social distinction. John's father Fitzwilliam, though of an established family of Gloucester, Massachusetts, moved to Philadelphia as a boy and was educated entirely in Pennsylvania. He graduated from the Medical School of the University of Pennsylvania in 1843 and set up successfully as a practitioner in Philadelphia. He was well on his way to professional success when the death of a first child drove him and his wife abroad in 1854. She was the artistic one; it was from her that John learned the rudiments of painting. It is an especially Philadelphian art that made him famous, fashionable portraiture, absolutely in the tradition of Gilbert Stuart and Thomas Sully. The splendors of Gainsborough and Lawrence became obsolete in Victorian England. In Philadelphia, the Philadelphia of Sargent's mother and father, the tradition flourished up to the Civil War. Sargent revived this tradition. He even identified himself with Philadelphia by citing the city (quite improperly) as his birthplace when he first exhibited in the Paris Salon.¹⁴⁵

A painter neglected by his city, one who left for good, and one who never in fact lived there at all make an odd trio on which to base a claim for glory. There were, however, many other practitioners of painting in or from the city during the period from the Centennial to the new century, though none of them achieved the same national prominence, then or later. Cecilia Beaux was, much more than any other prominent painter of the time, a born Old Philadelphian. Along with Mary Cassatt she represents the emergence in America during this period of hundreds of talented women painters who exhibited at

the Academy Annuals and had successful careers. Few of these seem to have survived as reputations. Of them all Cassatt and Beaux are the most highly thought of now. Like Cassatt she seemed to be at her best when painting members of her own family, but she had a very successful career as a professional portraitist. Eventually, like so many other Philadelphia painters, she moved to New York where the commissions were. But it is her Philadelphia works, full of life, light, vigor, and style, that are her best claim to present-day recognition.

When Eakins was forced to resign from the Academy, his tradition was carried on by his successor and former assistant, Thomas Anschutz. He was not a Philadelphian by birth and training, coming there via Kentucky and New York, but he certainly adopted the style of his master, if never able to achieve his force and grandeur. His fame as a teacher remains greater than his fame as an artist. Very different, but equally non-Philadelphian in origin, were the charming if mild semi-Impressionist Robert Vonnoh and the fashionable dazzler William Merritt Chase, both of whom also taught at the Academy, and helped make it, after its revitalization by Eakins, one of the most important art schools in this period.

More native to Philadelphia were the Afro-American Henry Osawa Tanner, pupil and friend of Eakins, who left to live in Paris as a painter of religious subjects, and Thomas Moran,¹⁴⁶ flamboyant landscapist.

Tanner at his best achieved something of the sober emotional quality of his teacher, especially in a few striking genre scenes of fellow blacks. He is now considered the best nineteenth-century painter of his race.

Moran, whose landscapes were first of the wilds of the Wissahickon, went on to make a reputation as a painter of the Far West, and along with Albert Bierstadt is now a favorite nineteenth-century landscapist of collectors of western Americana (a Moran was sold to a westerner in 1980 for over \$600,000). He was, however, very much a Philadelphian, though born in England and dying in California. His family were weavers, typical examples of the kind of English immigrants who went into the textile works of Kensington's "Little England." Not so typical was the precocious talent shown by the four Moran brothers, Thomas, Edward (a marine artist of Turner-esque vitality), Peter (who specialized in animals), and John (one of Philadelphia's pioneer realistic photographers). Thomas, Edward, and John are all being "rediscovered." Peter has a rather unenviable distinction: it was his picture *The Return of the Herd* that was hung in place of Eakins's *The Gross Clinic* when that picture was removed from the artistic to the medical section of the Great Exposition of 1876.¹⁴⁷ Thomas Moran studied with his brother Edward and began to specialize in renderings of the American wilderness. He was a typical later member of the somewhat misnamed "Hudson River School"—celebrators of the majesty of God's American Country. He achieved instant fame and fortune by being the first artist to paint the Yellowstone. His colorful and faithful pictures of geysers and canyons were a decisive factor in the creation of the nation's first national park in 1872. Though Moran roamed the West and

settled in a studio in East Hampton, Long Island, near Chase, his family kept their connections with Philadelphia. They and their children and their in-laws the Nimmos and Ferisses in several generations made up a family group, active in the arts and based on Philadelphia, exceeded in numbers only by the Peales.¹⁴⁸

Far less prominent during their lifetimes yet far more essentially indigenous were the members of a school of trompe l'oeil still life that flourished, successfully but obscurely, in or around the city at this time. This group of painters, who derived their tradition directly from the precise, humble school of still life, America's first, originated by James Peale, produced after the Civil War various artists who specialized in a somewhat more elaborate vein. Theirs was an art of visual trickery, objects hung against, or seemingly pasted or tacked to boards, simple objects piled on tables, all so lifelike that naïve patrons were filled with awe and delight at being fooled. These artists were ignored by true art lovers, but bought by simple folk and hung in bars. William Harnett, John F. Peto, J. D. Chalfant of Wilmington, and George Cope of West Chester were only brought to life again in mid-twentieth century.¹⁴⁹

Expatriates like the Haseltines and Harrisons began in Philadelphia. William, James, and Herbert Haseltine made Rome their center, Alexander and L. Birge Harrison were respected in France. And there were many other painters, also distinguished in their day, then forgotten, now being brought to life—and all Philadelphians: Charles Fussell and William Trost Richards, landscapists; William Sartain and his sister Emily, William Furness, brother of Frank and Horace Howard, all portraitists; Xanthus Smith, a marine artist, and his sister Mary who did chickens; and many, many others.

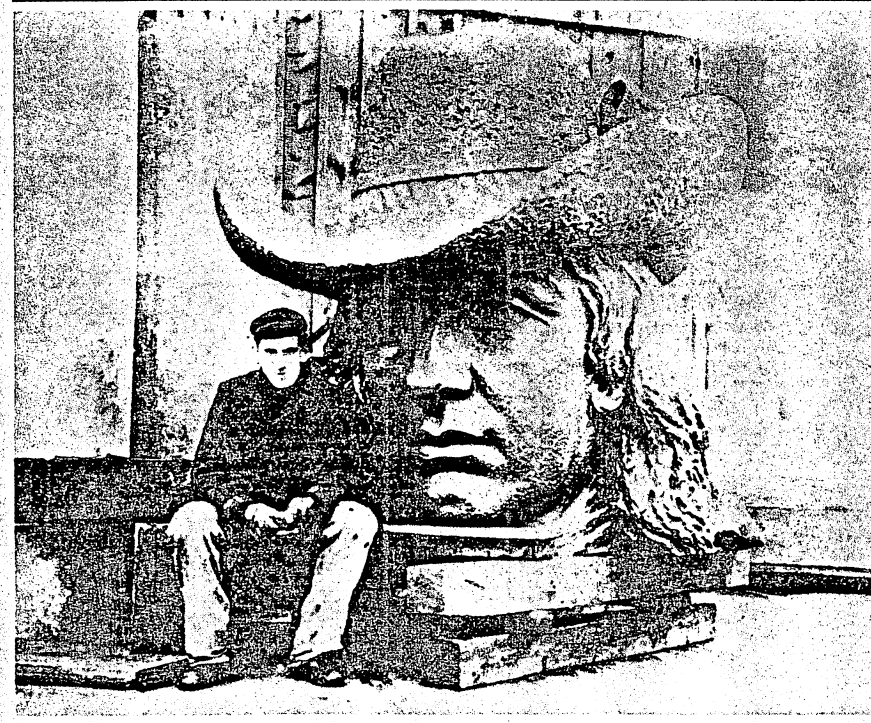
Much more famous during their lives were the Philadelphia illustrators. Two friends, Arthur B. Frost and Edwin A. Abbey,¹⁵⁰ studied together at the Academy, then went on to demonstrate again the split between nativist and expatriate that also divides Eakins and Sargent. Frost came to represent everything homespun and indigenous, the preferred illustrator of *Brer Rabbit*. Abbey settled in England and was beloved for his sensitive and archaistic designs for volumes of English classics—the poems of Herrick, Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer*. The illustrator-lithographer Joseph Pennell¹⁵¹ also settled in England and became a bosom friend of Whistler (his wife Elizabeth Robins Pennell wrote the authorized Whistler biography). Above all Howard Pyle, native of Wilmington, Delaware, but with many Philadelphia connections, and his pupils, notably Newell Convers Wyeth and Maxfield Parrish,¹⁵² became and remain among the most popular illustrators in the American tradition. Pyle and Wyeth were founders of the still-flourishing Brandywine School, south of Philadelphia.

None of the Philadelphia sculptors of the period achieved more than a local reputation. But Alexander Sterling Calder survives as much because of family as because of personal fame. He was the second in what is by now the most celebrated dynasty of sculptors in America. The first of the line, Alexander Milne Calder, emigrated from Scotland in 1868 and became a part

of the "Scotch Mafia" that dominated the building of City Hall—architect John J. McArthur, mason and contractor William Struthers, and sculptor Calder. The kind of closed-corporation ethnic control of construction projects characteristic later on of the Irish and then of Italians seemed to have been during the nineteenth century in Philadelphia a prerogative of Scots. Calder designed the statuary and carving that crawls all over the bulk of Philadelphia's civic mammoth, crowned by his massive memorial to William Penn, the great statue that to this day dominates the city on the top of its tower, still by common consent if not actual law the highest thing in town. Alexander II, his son, was a more tasteful and imaginative artist, trained at the Academy and in Paris in the Beaux Arts tradition, whose chief memorial in Philadelphia is the graceful and conspicuous Swann Memorial Fountain in Logan Circle in the middle of that pseudo-Champs-Élysées, the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. Since the Art Museum at the far end of it is conspicuously decorated by huge abstracts by grandson Alexander III, it is now possible to take in with one sweeping glance all three generations of Calders—at City Hall, Logan Circle, Art Museum. Though Alexander I was born in Scotland, Alexander II lived much of his life away from the city, and Alexander III is definitely a product of Paris in the 1920s, the family roots are unquestionably Philadelphian.¹⁵³

City Hall, on which the first Calder lavished his talents, is par excellence the monument to Philadelphia's Iron Age. Its construction, graft ridden and endlessly delayed, began in 1871 and was not complete until 1894.¹⁵⁴ From the beginning it was considered an insult to Philadelphia taste. Agnes Repplier lets herself go, as of 1898: "Its only claim to distinction should be the marvelous manner in which it combines bulk with sterling insignificance . . . squalid paltriness . . . decorations . . . mediocre or painfully grotesque."¹⁵⁵ For years people of discrimination continued to deplore it, and there was even talk of tearing it down. Sanity, or inertia (often equivalent) prevailed. Now it dominates the grandest of Philadelphia's vistas, Broad and Market Streets, the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, with craggy grandeur. It perfectly expresses the tastes of the industrial and political masters of the Iron Age, and stands to memorialize during the tricentenary the vast industrial might of the city's bicentenary, the age of Cramp and Baldwin, of Quay and Penrose.

Philadelphia's most imaginative architect of the period was Frank Furness.¹⁵⁶ Some of his greater monuments, notably the Broad Street and B.&O. stations, are gone. The lucky preservation of the "new" 1876 Academy of the Fine Arts building, where Eakins began his teaching, the "new" library at the University of Pennsylvania, one of the proudest additions of the Pepper regime, and the First Unitarian Church, where his father was minister, have managed to secure his reputation in modern times. But nearly everything else has vanished. His reputation rests largely on a laying-on of hands: he taught Louis Sullivan, Louis Sullivan taught Frank Lloyd Wright. But the Academy building, beautifully renovated for the 1976 Bicentennial under director Richard Boyle, gives a vivid picture of the riotously innovative fancy of this now



One of fourteen sections of the statue of William Penn awaiting assembly in the courtyard of City Hall, November 1892.

PHILADELPHIA DEPARTMENT OF RECORDS, ARCHIVES DIVISION

(and most recently) famous of Philadelphia's late-nineteenth-century architects. Even twenty years ago he and City Hall were both still in the architectural doghouse.

More respectable during a slightly later turn of the century were the works of the firm of Walter Cope and John Stewardson,¹⁵⁷ who introduced into the life of the universities of the area the refined and archeological "collegiate Gothic" that set the tone of campus building at the University of Pennsylvania, Bryn Mawr, and above all Princeton, for the next half century. Far more than City Hall or Furness, this nostalgic, sensitively historical, dream-world-and-old-world architecture expressed true anglophile "Philadelphia taste" of this time. Now as much despised as City Hall used to be, this style remains at its best an unreproducible example of esthetically delightful nonfunctionalism and extravagance of craftsmanship that the world can no longer seem to afford. It is as characteristic of the more graceful aspects of life in Philadelphia's Iron Age—and its turning away from all aspects of iron—as the craggy magnificence of City Hall expresses its cruder, material aspects.

Pupils of Furness, pupils of Eakins and Anschutz, went on to dominate

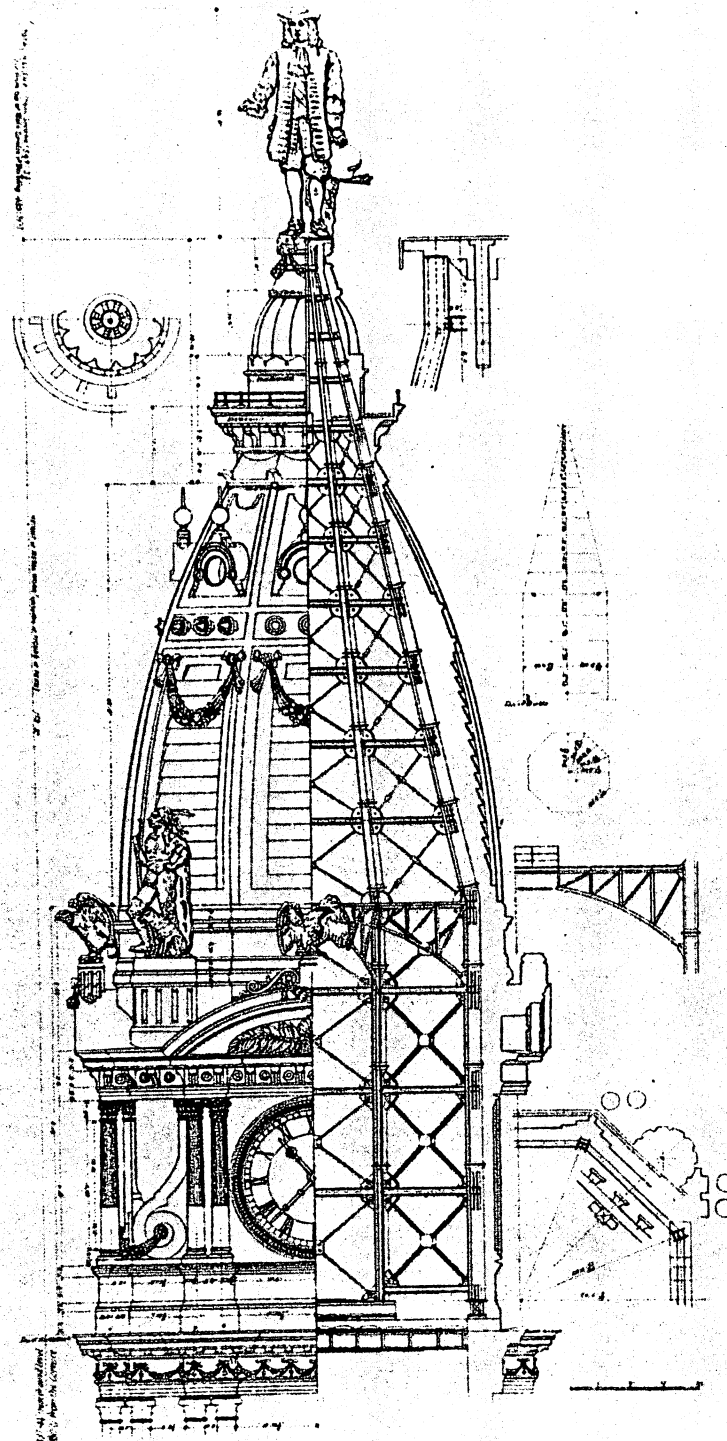


William Penn, sculpture by Alexander Milne Calder (1847–1923), cast in bronze by the Tacony Iron and Metal Works (1892). Born in Scotland, Calder had studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts under Thomas Eakins. Hired in 1873 to design and execute the sculptural program for City Hall, his final piece in the project—the twenty-six-ton statue of William Penn holding the charter of Pennsylvania—was raised to the top of the tower in 1894 after a two-year display in the courtyard.

PHILADELPHIA DEPARTMENT OF RECORDS, ARCHIVES DIVISION

ON THE FACING PAGE: Sectional drawing of the clock tower of City Hall. The statue of William Penn is thirty-six feet, eight inches tall. The statue of the Indian below is twenty-four feet tall.

PHILADELPHIA DEPARTMENT OF RECORDS, ARCHIVES DIVISION





Philadelphia City Hall, Centre (Penn) Square, site preparation and construction 1870-1901, designed by John McArthur, Jr. (1823-1890), photograph 1899. The view, looking toward the southwest, includes corners of the United States Mint at the left and the Pennsylvania Railroad Station at the right.

FREE LIBRARY OF PHILADELPHIA

art and architecture in America, but in another time and in other places. Sullivan's imagination in the Midwest, the eventual triumphs of the painters of the Eight in New York—the talents of five of whom, Robert Henri, John Sloan, William Glackens, George Luks, and Everett Shinn were incubated in Philadelphia and in the Academy—had Philadelphia roots but bloomed elsewhere.¹⁵⁸

X

After the death of Whitman, Philadelphia produced or sheltered no iconoclastic Eakins of the word. Philadelphia literature of the time was characterized by accepted writers who were damned forever, it would seem, by one short two-syllable word—"genteel."

This period was probably Philadelphia's climax as a literary center, but its leading writers were unquestionably genteel. Overshadowed by booming New York and decaying Boston, Philadelphia still housed its most important resident writers and its best known and at the same time most indigenous group of talents. Whitman, Boker, Furness, Lea, Mitchell, Repplier, and Wister are names that have (often just) managed to survive. Most of them were friends or acquaintances, though their lives span three distinct generations. They were all in one way or another famous in their day, and famous in Philadelphia.

The high point of this Philadelphia flowering came in the 1880s. It was in 1881 that Walt Whitman, resident in Camden, New Jersey, across the Delaware since 1873, first became really nationally famous and successful—and first really became Philadelphian.¹⁵⁹ A new edition of *Leaves of Grass* was "banned in Boston." Censors there disapproved of it so his timid publishers Osgood and Company discontinued publication. In a blaze of notoriety the publication was transferred to Philadelphia, eventually under the imprint of D. McKay, and by 1882 the Philadelphia publishers sold out 3000 copies of the new edition in one day. From then on until his death in 1892 Whitman was a celebrity, and though his scandalous reputation in Boston horrified most Philadelphians, important individuals in Philadelphia knew him and even befriended him.

George Boker, very much a Philadelphian and his almost exact contemporary,¹⁶⁰ was not one of these friends. They knew of each other, but probably never met. Like Whitman, Boker was essentially a product of the 1850s, but his reputation was also made in the 1880s. In 1882 his poetic drama *Francesca da Rimini* was, like *Leaves of Grass*, an important success. First produced in 1855, it was revived by the famous tragedian Lawrence Barrett and remained a staple of his repertoire until his death in 1891.¹⁶¹ It was then revived again in 1901-1902 by Otis Skinner (whose acting career had begun in Philadelphia in the late 1870s). Skinner had played the juvenile lead in Barrett's revival.¹⁶² This resurrection of a thirty-year-old play, like the censorship of Whitman's thirty-year-old book of poetry, established Boker's reputation. His other poetic dramas, his nearly 400 sonnets, his ballads and once-famous Civil War poems still remain largely unknown. But as a total

contrast and equal counterweight to Whitman—the conservative to Whitman's radical—he still looms as a powerful if still only dimly visible figure in American literary history.

A mutual friend of both Whitman and Boker was the Shakespearean scholar Horace Howard Furness,¹⁶³ brother of architect Frank. It was Furness with his sweetness of nature, wit, love of good conversation (despite the impediment of his ear trumpet), and hospitality at his country house Linden-shade who provided the center and cement of the Philadelphia literary group. Whitman referred to him as “friendly,” not only personally but professionally—one of the few who were both.¹⁶⁴ Other Philadelphians of the group mixed admiration of the poetry with criticisms of the poet.

Dr. Silas Wier Mitchell¹⁶⁵ also knew everyone in the world of letters, not to mention medicine and society in general. He was the son of a physician with literary tastes, and his real profession was medicine. He was especially famous as a neurologist, and is usually considered one of the American pioneers in the treatment of nervous and psychological disturbances. After he was fifty he took up the career of writing with even more success and profit, and from 1885 when his first long novel *In War Time* appeared—another Philadelphia event of the 1880s—until his last book in 1913, *Westways*, he established himself as one of the country's most popular and esteemed writers of fiction. He was particularly famous for his series of historical novels about Philadelphia, carefully researched, vastly appealing to readers in that time of renewed interest in things colonial. *Hugh Wynne* of 1897 and *The Red City* of 1907, dealing with the eighteenth century in Philadelphia, particularly entranced the public. Nowadays his more psychological *Constance Trescott* and his novelistic essays *Characteristics* (1891) and *Dr. North and His Friends* (1900) seem more alive, particularly the latter two as pictures of the intellectual concerns of the Mitchell-Furness circle and its medical and scientific friendships with people like the world-famous naturalist Joseph Leidy. Mitchell also knew Whitman. Mitchell thought Whitman a monster of egoism and a “poetic tramp.”¹⁶⁶ Whitman thought Mitchell blighted by worldliness. They disliked each other's poetry but liked each other personally.¹⁶⁷ Of all the Philadelphia group, the curse of “genteel” has fallen most heavily on Mitchell.

When Henry Charles Lea¹⁶⁸ found the strains of being simultaneously an active publisher, an earnest scholar, and a busy city reformer too much for him, his old friend Dr. Mitchell prescribed a regimen that he followed meticulously the rest of his life, enabling him to keep working into his eighties. He inherited the publishing firm that still bears his name, Lea and Febiger, from his forebears, the Leas (who were Quaker) and the Careys (the first of whom, Mathew, was Catholic). He devoted himself very early to the business, which had evolved from being the foremost general American trade book house of the earlier nineteenth century into a house specializing in medical publications.¹⁶⁹ His role in city affairs as a member of the Committee of One Hundred and an author of the city charter has already been mentioned. He also began to emerge as one of the country's most profound scientific historians.

From his first book in 1866, *Superstitions*, until his last in 1908, *The Inquisition in the Spanish Dependencies*, his works reflected his delvings in depth into the area where religion and law crossed and mingled, usually to their mutual detriment. Again a product of the 1880s, the three-volume *History of the Inquisition in the Middle Ages* first established his national reputation as the foremost expert in this area, and one of the few who, balancing perhaps his Quaker and Catholic inheritances, managed to remain objective in an area where objectivity would seem almost impossible. He insisted on letting the facts, as deduced from contemporary sources, speak for themselves. He became president of the American Historical Association in 1904 and remains the principal authority in his field.

Obviously neither Furness nor Lea has been or ever will be exactly popular. Mitchell's appeal was enormous, but does not seem enduring. The fourth charter member of this group was Agnes Repplier. Furness was her best male friend, Mitchell one of her oldest and best acquaintances.¹⁷⁰ Enormously popular too, and respected in her special field, the witty, reminiscent essay, her appeal would seem to be, and indeed should be, perennial. She belonged, however, to a culture and period of magazines, genteel as could be, like the *Atlantic Monthly* in Boston, *Scribner's*, *Harper's*, and the *Century* in New York, and *Lippincott's* in Philadelphia, that catered to people of literary tastes and general culture who liked to read about something besides current events. With the disappearance of this kind of magazine and reader, the Repplier sort of essay on lesser woman novelists of the eighteenth century, on tea, and on cats, for all their wit, erudition, and caustically keen observations on human nature, has disappeared too.

No one represented this aspect of American culture better than this plain, direct, commonsensical, appallingly well-read Philadelphia spinster. Fertilized by the enthusiasm of still-bookish Boston and tours of Europe, she yet remained, for all her criticisms, a permanent fixture in Philadelphia. She too took a somewhat dim view of her friend Furness's friend Whitman; but she admired him in spots as a poet, and was agreeably surprised when he spoke so well and so humanly at the Contemporary Club.¹⁷¹ This organization was one of her favorites and a leading sponsor of thought in the city. Her other friend Henry James did not do as well. When he spoke to the club, no one could hear his mumbling, and the evening was saved only by Repplier's introductory remarks.¹⁷² Eakins offered to paint her, but she refused. Made mortally ashamed of her homeliness by her sadistic mother, she could not bear to have her “character” revealed and recorded by the painter.¹⁷³

Owen Wister¹⁷⁴ came in on the end of this group, as Boker and Whitman had at the beginning. He inherited the friendship of Furness and Mitchell. When, like Lea, the strains of his life were also too much for him—his frustrated desire to be a serious musical composer against his mother's supercilious intellectual condescension and his father's Philistine insistence that he be a lawyer—it was Dr. Mitchell who recommended the cure: a trip west. This again was in the fertile 1880s. He went to Wyoming in 1885 and the rest

is literary history. In 1902, just after Mitchell had published *Circumstances* in 1901, Repplier *The Fireside Spinx* (cats) in the same year, Lea *The Moriscos* and Furness his edition of *Twelfth Night*, Wister's *The Virginian*; a *Horseman of the Plains* hit the bestseller list. The book created one of America's most durable myths. Along with his friends the artist Frederic Remington, whom he met in Wyoming,¹⁷⁵ and the writer-politician Theodore Roosevelt, whom he met at Harvard, Wister in *The Virginian* converted the American cowboy into a romantic hero. Too genteel for modern tastes in its handling of the rather paper-doll romance with a priggish New England schoolmarm (though this was part of the thrill for readers of the period), the book's authenticity in sketching western character and conversation has seldom been equalled in vividness and accuracy. Like *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Gone with the Wind*, it is a classic without benefit of professor—along with the *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* the only such classic to come out of Philadelphia so far. (It is also, incidentally, the only novel to be personally edited by a president of the United States while in office. Roosevelt censored a passage as being too brutal, and the passage was altered.)¹⁷⁶

This genteel literature was supported by those magazines of which Lippincott's was the Philadelphia representative. At this time the publishing company of that very Philadelphian name was at its height of success and reputation, taking the place of the earlier Carey and Lea, before it turned medical, as a general trade publisher. Less genteel perhaps but respectable enough and phenomenally popular were the magazines of the Curtis Publishing Company that rose during this period to dominate the field of the popular magazine for half a century, eventually from the Curtis Building on Independence Square. First of the fleet was the *Ladies' Home Journal* of 1883, with Mrs. Curtis, known professionally as Louisa Knapp, as editor. In 1889 a brash Dutch immigrant, Edward W. Bok, became editor, and by somewhat the same combination of piety and push that characterized John Wanamaker he made it the leading woman's magazine of the country.¹⁷⁷ A favorite of the time, Sarah Tyson Rorer, "Queen of Cookery," whose Philadelphia cookbook of 1886 became a standard and whose prolific writings were gospel to American housewives of the period, joined the staff of the *Journal* in 1897. The *Journal's* advice on clothes, food, house decoration, manners, and morals influenced the entire middle-class female populace of the United States.¹⁷⁸ The male population was soon equally influenced by the *Saturday Evening Post*, which Curtis bought in 1897 and which under the dynamic leadership of editor George Horace Lorimer from 1899 on became as powerful and influential as its older sister. The *Post's* success was based on its enticing fiction and its colorful advertising. The magazine, traced back to a semimythical foundation by Benjamin Franklin, was at the point of expiration when Curtis bought it. By 1903 its circulation had risen to 500,000, a triumphal progress that was finally halted by the advent of television after World War II.¹⁷⁹

X

It was as a seedbed of actors and actresses that Philadelphia was most famous in the world of the theater at this time. The Chestnut Street, Walnut Street, and Arch Street Theatres supplied the city with drama during the nineteenth century, and kept actors and managers busy there until the gradual lure of Broadway took them up north. Joseph Jefferson, the greatest American comic actor of the nineteenth century, had been born in Philadelphia of a family associated with the Chestnut Street Theatre for three generations. But the association of the Drew-Barrymores with the Arch Street was longer lasting and even more famous. When Lionel (1878), Ethel (1879), and John (1887) Barrymore were born in Philadelphia, children of the rascalion English charmer Maurice Barrymore and his equally charming wife, born Georgiana Drew, the Drews were on their way to becoming nearly as notable in America as the Kembles had been in England. Louisa Lane Drew was the center of the family, the grandmother in whose house the younger Barrymores grew up, the indefatigable manager of the Arch Street and unrivaled interpreter of Mrs. Malaprop in *The Rivals*, often playing in it opposite her old friend Jefferson. Born in England, she had come to America in 1827, and after a long stage career and her third marriage in 1850 to Irish comedian John Drew, she began her association with theater management. By 1861 she was sole manager of the Arch Street. She became a tremendous personage as Grand Old Lady of the American stage. In Philadelphia she managed to defy the conventions of the day which placed actresses only one step above harlots, and became a respected social figure. Her son John Drew, educated to be a perfect Philadelphia gentleman, with no intention of going on the stage, casually strolled into a part in his mother's theater in 1873. *Cool as a Cucumber* was the play, and so was John. His mother blasted him for not taking the stage seriously, and forced him to really work at being a comedian. In 1875 he was ready to go to New York, where from 1879 on, first as a member of the Daly company, he established himself as the essence of the swell—cool as a cucumber, nonchalantly charming, impeccably dressed—a role that he also played in real life, "adept in sports, a sartorial model, a punctilious gentleman." In other words a credit to his Philadelphia education. He went on to stardom on two continents, as well as to membership in the best clubs; he was third president, after Marylander Edwin Booth and Philadelphian Joseph Jefferson, of the prestigious Players Club in New York.¹⁸⁰

His sister Georgiana, also carefully educated, went to New York as well. She and her husband left their children with Louisa while on tour. Her promising career was cut short by death, while Maurice, never a star, went on to become perpetual leading man to a series of notable actresses. Among them was the Polish Mme. Modjeska, for whom he wrote a Polish play called *Nadjezda*. The play was not overly successful, but was stolen by Sardou to make a vehicle for Bernhardt called *Tosca*. So there is a tenuous bond between Philadelphia, Puccini, and grand opera—one of two such bonds in fact,

because *Madama Butterfly* was based on a short story by Philadelphian John Luther Long.¹⁸¹

As for the Barrymores, their careers were played out on the stages and sets of Broadway and Hollywood. Ethel, when she returned to Philadelphia on tour, liked to say in her wonderful throaty voice at her curtain calls, "It's good to be home!"¹⁸²

Opera, not orchestral music, dominated the musical life of the city during this period. Nonetheless it was in 1900 that the Philadelphia Orchestra began its comparatively belated existence. It was a descendant of smaller orchestras, notably a Germania which had disbanded in 1895 and a Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra (1893–1900). More significant was the Thunder Orchestra, named not so much for its sound as for the conductor Henry G. Thunder, who played a leading role in the city's musical life at the end of the century.¹⁸³ In 1899 the German Fritz Scheel, who had conducted successful summer concerts at Woodside Park, was induced to stay on with promises that a true symphony orchestra would be formed for him. This came into being in 1900, made up mostly of players from the Germania and the Thunder, and played its first concert under Scheel in the Academy of Music on November 16, 1900. A splendid board was built, wealthy people like Alexander Cassatt and Peter Widener were involved, and gradually the orchestra established itself as a civic monument. But it was not until the later days of Stokowski and Ormandy that it built up a truly national reputation, though it played out of town as early as 1902.¹⁸⁴

Meanwhile opera reached a peak of prosperity and popularity it was never to know again, and the riches of opera in Philadelphia seem astounding opposed to the comparative poverty of today. From 1885 on the Metropolitan began its visits to the Academy of Music, which during more than a decade between 1891 and 1903 occurred weekly during the season. Besides this a local company survived for eight seasons (1888–1896) at its own grand opera house on North Broad. This was the so-called National Opera Company of Gustav Hinrichs, who presented the American premières of *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci*, among others, and all told some 1800 nights of opera during its years of operation.

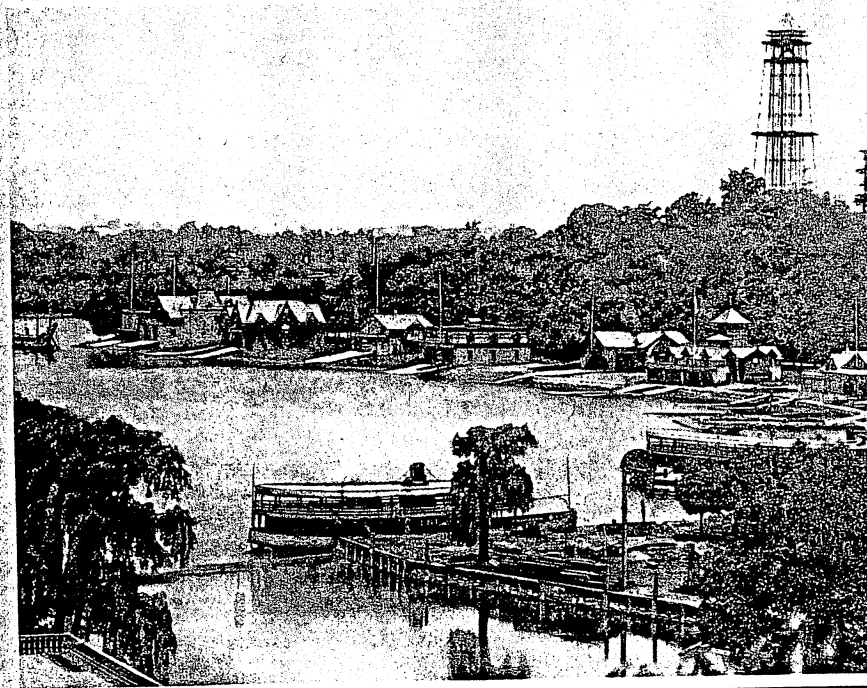
Light opera had its public too, and local composers and companies and orchestras (like that of Mark Hassler) had their day. None, however, seems to have left any permanent trace.¹⁸⁵ The amateur Savoy company began in 1901 to present annual performances of Gilbert and Sullivan, the first of many such American companies to do so.¹⁸⁶

X

It was a period when more indigenous and less high-toned amusements also flourished. The paintings of Eakins present a world of masculine sport more smiling than his portraits—bird shooting in the river marshes, sailing on the Delaware, boxing matches in smoke-filled halls, above all rowing on the Schuylkill. This was the time when this very Philadelphian sport began

to establish itself among all classes, but particularly at the University of Pennsylvania. The line of boathouses belonging to various rowing clubs still fringes the river, below the acropolis of the Art Museum, with Victorian charm. Some of the clubs were those of gentlemen, others were not.¹⁸⁷

This reach of the Schuylkill was part of Fairmount Park, and the park was, particularly in this period after the Centennial and before the automobile, the city's playground. Excursion boats, visible in the background of Eakins's rowing pictures,¹⁸⁸ went up the Schuylkill; there were endless bosky nooks for pedestrian picnics, and miles of carriage drives, where four-in-hands like that of Fairman Rogers, patron of Eakins, could bowl along, and where ladies in Victorias could loll as they drove under their parasols, nodding to passing acquaintances.¹⁸⁹ In the winter there was iceskating, and in 1887 William Singerly, editor of the *Philadelphia Record*, provided funds for a public 2200-foot toboggan slide.¹⁹⁰ In summer there were sacred music concerts, and great crowds came out to watch the fireworks on the Fourth of July from the Girard Avenue Bridge.¹⁹¹ In 1896 Fairmount Park trolleys began to wander through seven miles of parkland, and took passengers to Woodside Park, an amuse-



Boat clubs and excursion boats above the Fairmount dam on the Schuylkill River (c. 1875). The observatory was called Lemon Hill Tower.

ment center opened in 1897 on the western edge of Fairmount.¹⁹² Even automobiles, as early as 1899, were gingerly permitted, though such “horseless pleasure vehicles” were not to frighten the real horses.¹⁹³ Another novelty, but not in the park, were the motion pictures. By 1895 at Keith’s Bijou, Philadelphia saw its first projected movies.¹⁹⁴



In 1898 Sigmund Lubin, an optician, began using his “Life Motion Picture Machines and Films” on the roof of the Dime Museum at Ninth and Arch. A year later he built this motion picture theater, one of the first in the United States, on the midway at the National Export Exposition on the west banks of the Schuylkill.

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Another famous amusement park, out to the northwest, was Willow Grove, created by Widener and the Union Traction Company as part of the effort to build up trolley traffic to that part of the suburbs. It had a ferris wheel and a scenic railway, but above all wonderful concerts, eventually by bands such as Sousa’s and orchestras such as Walter Damrosch’s.¹⁹⁵ Bicycles of course were ubiquitous, and the “wheelmen” by 1887 had organized, in typically Philadelphian fashion, into five clubs. The first meeting of the League of American Wheelmen gathered 400 strong in 1883 to inaugurate a new

Gentlemen’s Driving Park in Fairmount. Next year a race between a wheelman and a trotter was a draw. The horse won the first race, the bicycle the second. At the height of the bicycle craze in 1897 professional races were held on a board track at Willow Grove, and 1,314,000 cycles entered Fairmount Park during that year alone.¹⁹⁶

By the mid-1890s Philadelphia was known as the “best baseball city in the world.” Until the demise of the American Association in 1891 the city had two major-league clubs, the Athletics, in the American Association from its beginning in 1882, and the Phillies. The Phillies were newcomers, a National League team that had moved from Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1883. The Philadelphia Baseball Park at Broad and Huntington was considered the best place to play. In 1901 the Athletics reappeared as members of a new American League. Next year baseball excitement in the city ran high, culminating on September 29 in a great night parade down Broad Street to welcome home the A’s, along with one of Philadelphia’s great citizens, their manager Cornelius McGillicuddy—Connie Mack—with the league pennant. The Athletics won the pennant again in 1905, but lost their first World Series (the second of the kind ever played) to the New York Giants. The Phillies also seemed on the verge of a championship in 1901, but most of their best players deserted to join the American League. The great Napoleon Lajoie, jumping from the Phillies to the A’s, was enjoined by a Pennsylvania court against playing for the new league; thereupon Philadelphia lost him altogether when Connie Mack traded him to Cleveland, and to avoid the court’s jurisdiction he simply did not play when his club visited Philadelphia. The Athletics went on to become one of the American League’s dominant teams for the next generation, but the Phillies, after their players’ defection, lapsed into a half century of almost unbroken futility.¹⁹⁷

More special during this period was Philadelphian interest in cricket. Not only was it played, but it was also watched. A meeting on the lawns between English millhands from Kensington, collegians from Haverford, and anglo-philie gentlemen resulted in an enthusiasm that brought teams from England and sent Philadelphians there to compete. Philadelphia was the only city in America (Staten Island near New York was another, though lesser center) where British and colonial teams could find a real challenge. Various cricket clubs—Germantown, Belmont, Philadelphia, and Merion—established themselves as active promoters of this sport. In the great days of cricket a match like that between the Gentlemen of Philadelphia and the Gentlemen of England might bring out as many as 20,000 spectators.¹⁹⁸

When lawn tennis ousted cricket at the turn of the century, it too became something of a Philadelphia specialty, and from the old cricket clubs emerged national champions like R. Norris Williams and William T. Tilden II.¹⁹⁹ This all took place under the seals, blazers, boaters, and caps of the clubs, the membership of which was duplicated by the roster of the social clubs in town. The best of these town clubs, like the Philadelphia and the Union League, had been founded a good while before, but the Rittenhouse (1888) quickly took

its place as what contemporaries called a "junior ultra-swell" organization despite its original unfortunate name of the Social Art Club.²⁰⁰ Many clubs of special interests were founded at the same time. There were the literary Contemporary Club of 1886, beloved by Agnes Repplier, or the Franklin Inn founded by S. Wier Mitchell in 1902, the Penn Club (1875), or the Browning Society (1894). There were art clubs such as the Sketch Club (1889) and the Art Club (1887). Journalists had their Pen and Pencil (1891) and whist players could join a Hamilton Club (1887). The Manufacturers Club (1887) appealed to businessmen, the Racquet Club (1889) to the well-born athlete. Besides these there were innumerable sporting clubs, fox hunts, ethnic clubs like the German singing societies, patriotic societies, and clubs for such special interests as the Geographical Society of 1897.²⁰¹

Most of these clubs were for men, but part of the rising stir of women's rights expressed itself in the formation not only of women's colleges like Bryn Mawr but of women's clubs. Of these the Acorn (1889) was and remains the most elect, a feminine counterpart of the Philadelphia Club.²⁰² The New Century (1877), the first women's club founded in Philadelphia, was more active in causes. It was organized to provide women "a forum for the discussion of their interests," and under its founder and first president Sarah C. F. Hallowell the club outgrew its first quarters and built a new clubhouse at Twelfth and Sansom whose architect was the Philadelphia professional Minerva Parker Nichols. The club had a special interest in working women, holding evening classes for them in dressmaking and typesetting, and playing hostess to an Association of Working Women's Societies founded in 1891 which grew to a membership of 4000. Many of the women leaders of the city in the arts (like Emily Sartain, head of the School of Design for Women and an old friend of Eakins) or politics (like Lucretia Blankenburg, woman's suffrage leader and the wife of reform mayor Rudolph) belonged to it.²⁰³ However, Sara Yorke Stevenson, archeologist, lecturer at the university in 1894, and member of the Philosophical Society, was president not of the New Century but of the Acorn Club for twenty-five years.²⁰⁴

X I

This proliferation of clubs, old and new, city and country, male and female, was one visible evidence of the cohesive group consciousness, the basically conformist atmosphere that pervaded the city. Philadelphians liked to express themselves not as individuals but in groups: members of something—clubs, teams, societies, families. All these gatherings had their special character and quality, and most of them were subtly graded as to social position and superiority or inferiority. The boat clubs along the Schuylkill had their pecking order; clubs with ethnic or religious flavor like the august Catholic Philopatrian Literary Society or the Jewish Mercantile Club or the black Pyramid Club lent the same kind of distinction to their members, within their special groups, as the Rittenhouse or the Acorn, for all their newness, did to members of "good society."²⁰⁵ But in general above and beyond anything in Philadelphia was that same good society. Battered and shaken during the

earlier half of the century by the rise of Jackson and the fall of Biddle, the crashing advent of industrialism, the disruptions of the Civil War, this society despite the two great depressions regrouped itself in the postwar period, refreshed itself financially at the fountains of industry, and began a slow but sure process of both solidification and absorption that made of the Philadelphia upper class one of the most varied yet cohesive such groups in the country. While New York was being swamped by floods of gold and its mores and manners corrupted by the extravagances of pushing parvenus, while Boston society was becoming increasingly rigid and beleaguered in a city taken over by the despised Irish, the Philadelphians managed to have their cake and eat it too. Socially nowhere were standards supposedly more exorbitantly high, distinctions more carefully made; and yet nowhere was absorption going on at a more steady pace. Since, unlike Boston and New York during the Revolution, or the South during the Civil War, the Philadelphia upper class was never dispossessed or fractured, it could claim a seamless, uninterrupted web of prosperous continuity from the earliest days of the city's founding. At the same time it was always various. Some of the best names like Pepper and Wister were German. Jewish names like Hays or Etting or Phillips or Rosengarten were socially integrated (and religiously absorbed). There were the French Bories and Swedish Stillés and Mortons, the West Indian Danish Markoes, the Catholic Irish Meades and Careys, and of course the bedrock of Welsh and Scots and Scots-Irish and English names.

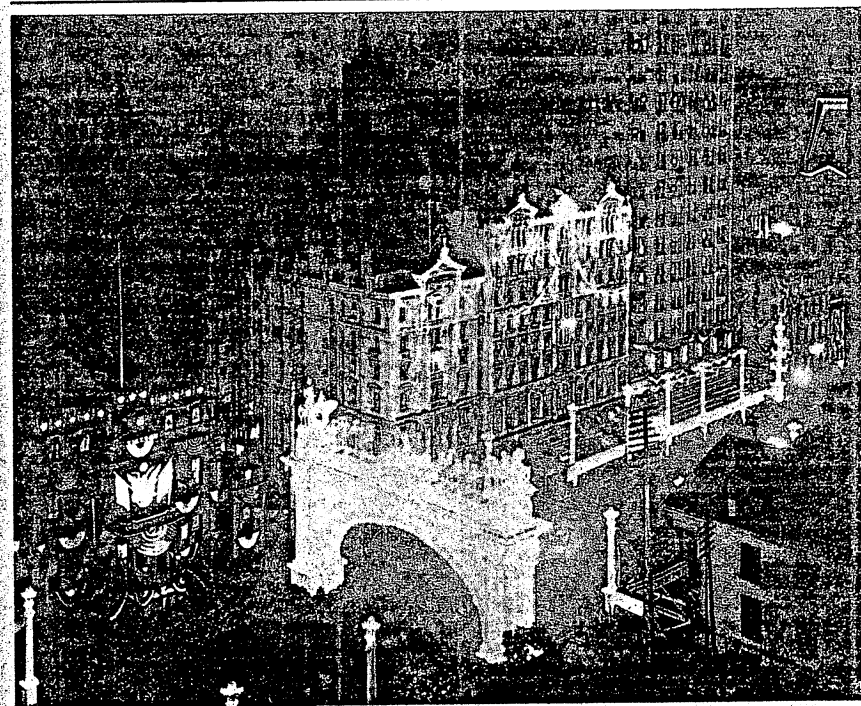
Segregation and inclusion were both expressed by that multitude of clubs. Not everyone could obviously belong to any one club, and equally obviously some clubs were bound to be thought "better" than others. But on the other hand there were clubs for nearly everyone. Old Philadelphians did not parade down Broad Street in the Mummers Parade, but thousands of South Philadelphians did—and every single one of them belonged to a club. The parades became official in 1901. The Mummers had been strutting unofficially for many years, but had become so numerous and well organized that the city had to recognize them. In 1901 the prizes amounted to \$1725. The Elkton Association took first prize in the fancy division; the White Caps took the comic prize.²⁰⁶

At another end of the social scale, the Philadelphia Assemblies, at which few Mummers danced, became established in this period as a social ultimate. Begun in 1748, the dances languished in the Jacksonian Era, as the remarks of diarist Sidney George Fisher about sporadic "revivals" make clear. But up to and after 1904 when the Assembly began to hold its dances in the opulent golden ballroom of the new Bellevue-Stratford, when Joseph Widener, son of Peter, was heartbroken because he and his daughter were not asked to it, when couples stayed together because they could not go to the Assembly if they were divorced, when newspapers devoted columns of lush description to the toilettes of those who did go (though reporters were not among those invited), nothing in Philadelphia had become as characteristic, as distinguished, above all as exclusive. But by no means all the names were eighteenth century or even early nineteenth century. Eventually Gowers of the Reading, Scotts

and Cassatts of the Railroad, the Drexels and the Harrisons, all of mid-nineteenth-century vintage or later, twirled with longer established Peppers, Wisters, and Newbolds, as well as the inevitable Biddles and Cadwaladers. Girls of new fortune married boys of old fortune (admission was always through the male line), and then the better bred kin of these girls seeped in. It was a perfectly continuous process, but never one that changed the basic Old Philadelphian character of the occasion—which was that of a family party where nearly everyone was slightly related or connected to everyone else and they had all grown up together.²⁰⁷

The yachts and private trains and winter castles and summer “cottages” of the Philadelphia rich were just as expensive as those of New York. But they were usually in a quieter key, avoiding the curse of “parvenu ostentation,” hidden away on the Main Line or Northeast Harbor in Maine rather than flaunting themselves as on Fifth Avenue or in Newport. Something like the Farmers Club, originally an organization of twelve landed gentlemen who dined each other in rotation at the full of the moon and talked crops, developed in this period into an extravaganza for which directors of the Railroad sent their private trains to bring dozens of New York guests back to the Main Line. Yet it was an extravaganza about which nobody except those involved knew, of which the public never heard.²⁰⁸ For despite all this wallowing in the luxury of yachts and private trains, this was still a careful world. It paid strict attention to the laws of conformity and convention. Codes of dress and manners and mores, even of sexual morals. Great license was permitted both ladies and gentlemen, everyone had “affairs”; but woe to the person who got caught, who “scared the horses.” “Proper” was never, never the proper word for this rich, easygoing, in some ways tolerant world, but “discreet” most certainly was. Cool as a cucumber to anyone they did not know, cordial as a May day to anyone they did, the people of this Philadelphia believed above all in appearances.

Never before or afterward was the position of this upper class more secure or its influence more pervasive. If the 10,000 ten-year-old strikers of the textile workers union or the inhabitants of the “Father, Son, and Holy Ghost” houses did not dance at the Assemblies, or if Messrs. Martin and Durham did not make the Philadelphia Club, there were hundreds of thousands of middle-class Philadelphians at the level of the Reppliers or the Eakinses who looked forward to a better life and saw friends and relations who had attained it. It was not a great empty gap that yawned between rich and poor. It was a vast, spongy, interwoven social medium of infinite gradations. Held together by shared Victorian conventions and the universal solvent of the Republican party, the city as a whole, heart in home, ignored politics, ate good food, and resorted to Fairmount Park, whether on foot, by bicycle, or in a coach-and-four. For all its enormous variety and vitality, the Philadelphia of the period clung to its row-house, morally cautious, materially comfortable homogeneity. Visitors, whether they thought it drably monotonous or cosily consanguinous—or both, like Henry James—were always struck by this emphasis



The great arch of the Court of Honor on Broad Street at Sansom was electrically illuminated on October 27, 1898, for the Peace Jubilee celebrating the American victory in the short war with Spain. The Union League was prominently festooned and lighted for the occasion.

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on uniformity. Nowhere were the rich richer or the poor poorer, but nowhere did they all more seem to be striving toward the same ends: a respectable family, nestled in a respectable house at least as decorously comfortable as the neighbors', whether the house had three or thirty rooms.

The dull finish, the conformity of Philadelphia, oppressive to eager spirits, consoling to staid ones, was somewhat deceptive. The gravy-covered stolidity of the city was pierced by Eakins's scalpel and lit by the architectural fancy of Furness. Cricket and coaching, opera and baseball, the Annuals of the Academy of the Fine Arts, the excitement over archeology at the university, the Mummies Parades and the Assemblies brightened the massive digestive processes of industry and the dreary spoliations of politics with grace notes of amusement, solace, and charm. Philadelphia certainly was never before or afterward so typically, almost obsessively Philadelphian as during the Iron Age. In its own cluttered, obscured, smoke-shrouded way, this was one of Philadelphia's greatest periods.

- (New York: Macmillan and Information Concepts Incorporated, 1969), pp. 9-10, 176-77; David Quentin Voigt, *American Baseball: From Gentleman's Sport to Commissioner System* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966), pp. 35-40.
159. McClure, *Old Time Notes*, 2:244, 246, 247.
 160. *Ibid.*, p. 247.
 161. *Ibid.*, p. 249.
 162. *Fisher Diary*, pp. 508-9 (Feb. 1, 1866).
 163. Gondos, "Cultural Climate," p. 170. See Thomas Willing Balch, *The Philadelphia Assemblies* (Philadelphia: Allen, Lane and Scott, 1916). On *Dangerous Ground: or Agatha's Friendship* (Philadelphia: Porter & Coates, 1876), a novel by a Philadelphian, Clara (Jessup) Bloomfield Moore, describes an Assembly of the time.
 164. Gondos, "Cultural Climate," p. 171.
 165. *Ibid.*, pp. 172-73.
 166. McClure, *Old Time Notes*, 2:247-48; *Public Ledger*, Nov. 30, Dec. 2, 4, 5, 1871; *Inquirer*, Dec. 4, 5, 1871.
 167. William Randel, "John Lewis Reports the Centennial," *PMHB* 79 (July 1955): 367; Dee Brown, *The Year of the Century: 1876* (New York: Scribner's, 1966), pp. 7-9; *Times*, Jan. 1, 1876; *Press*, Jan. 3, 1876; *Inquirer*, Jan. 3, 1876; *Evening Telegraph*, Jan. 1, 1876.
 168. Gondos, "Cultural Climate," pp. 2-4.
 169. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
 170. *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 6; *Report of the Director General, U.S. International Exhibition, 1876* (9 vols.; Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1880), 1:4, 5. (This first volume has the reports of various bureau chiefs that reported to the director general, and is hereafter cited as *U.S.I.E. Report of Director General*. A tenth volume, *Report of the Board on Behalf of U. S. Executive Departments at the International Exhibition held at Philadelphia, 1876*, was issued in 1884.) *Ibid.*, 1:16, 17; *ibid.*, *Reports of Officers of Centennial Commission, U. S. International Exhibition*, vol. 2, includes the Journal of the Final Session of the Centennial Commission, dated Philadelphia, Jan. 15, 1879, pp. 152-53; Regulations, etc., p. 5, National Archives, Record Group 43, E573; Westcott, *Guide*, p. 373; Dorsey Gardner, *Grounds and Buildings of the Centennial Exhibition* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1878), which also appears as vol. 9 of *U.S.I.E. Report of Director General*, p. 16. The Conference Committee Report, 1873, Subcommittee Report on Fourth of July Celebration and ceremony of transfer of control of exhibition lands to the Centennial Commission from the commissioners of Fairmount Park, along with other primary records, is in the Archives of the City and County of Philadelphia, Record Group 230.11.
 171. *U.S.I.E. Report of Director General*, 1:25, 26.
 172. *Ibid.*, p. 6; *Times*, Jan. 5, 1876; *Inquirer*, March 1, 1876.
 173. *U.S.I.E. Report of Director General*, 1:30-32. The original plans submitted in the summer of 1873 were exhibited in the large lecture rooms of the old buildings of the University of Pennsylvania at Ninth and Chestnut. Demolition of the university buildings was delayed for this purpose (*ibid.*, p. 30n). See also Tatum, *Penn's Great Town*, pp. 103-7; Brown, *Year of the Century*, p. 115. White et al., *Philadelphia Architecture*, p. 31, states that the competition was for a combination permanent art gallery and temporary exhibit

- building, a plan soon recognized as unworkable. On the site and cost, see *U.S.I.E. Report of Director General*, Report of the Chief of the Bureau of Installation (Henry Pettit), 1:111.
174. Maass, in *The Glorious Enterprise*, has recalled Schwarzmann to historical attention.
175. White et al., *Philadelphia Architecture*, p. 32, as well as Maass, *The Glorious Enterprise*, esp. p. 94.
176. *U.S.I.E. Report of Director General*, 1:32. The number of buildings varies according to the authority: Gardner gives 249 as the total; *Public Ledger*, May 8, 1876, gives 190.
177. *Press*, Dec. 18, 20, 1875, Jan. 25, 1876; *Inquirer*, Dec. 22, 1875; Brown, *Year of the Century*, p. 6.
178. *U.S.I.E. Report of Director General*, 1:22-23; Report of the Chief of the Bureau of Installation, *ibid.*, p. 53.
179. Brown, *Year of the Century*, pp. 113-15; *Sunday Dispatch*, May 14, 1876; *Press*, May 11, 12, 1876; *Times*, May 10, 1876.
180. Brown, *Year of the Century*, p. 116.
181. *Ibid.*, pp. 116, 117, 121-29; Howard Mumford Jones, *The Age of Energy: Varieties of American Experience, 1865-1915* (New York: Viking, 1971), pp. 139-43. Emperor Dom Pedro endeared himself to Philadelphians: he was intelligent and friendly, and visited the Centennial several times during the early months. On July 2, 1876, the *Sunday Dispatch* noted that his "shirt collars wilt just as do those of ordinary mortals."
182. Brown, *Year of the Century*, p. 131n, quoting *Harper's Weekly*, July 15, 1876, p. 579.
183. Gondos, "Cultural Climate," quoting *Inquirer*, July 21, 1876.
184. *U.S.I.E. Report of Director General*, 1:661, 664.
185. Gondos, "Cultural Climate," pp. 287-88; John Maass, "When the New World Dazzled the Old," *American Heritage* 27, pt. 4 (June 1976): 25-26; *U.S.I.E. Report of Director General*, Report of the Chief of the Bureau of Admissions, 1:439. For a description of the exposition during the hottest part of the summer, see William H. Grew, "Centennial Notes," *PMHB* 100 (July 1976): 406-13.
186. *U.S.I.E. Report of Director General*, 1:114, 15; *ibid.*, Report of the Chief of the Bureau of Transportation, pp. 359-62. On prices, see Brown, *Year of the Century*, pp. 133-34; *Press*, May 17, 1876. On the wooden buildings, see *ibid.*, June 29, 1875; *Evening Telegraph*, Feb. 25, 1875; *Inquirer*, July 2, 8, 1875. On hotels, see *Sunday Tribune*, Aug. 8, 1875; *Evening Bulletin*, Sept. 10, 1876.
187. Randel, "John Lewis Reports," pp. 369-72; Gondos, "Cultural Climate," pp. 282-83.
188. *Times*, Sept. 19, 1876; *Sunday Times*, May 14, 1876; Gondos, "Cultural Climate," pp. 181-82.
189. *U.S.I.E. Report of Director General*, Report of the Chief of the Bureau of Transportation, 1:342-46; Brown, *Year of the Century*, pp. 115, 133; Maass, "When the New World Dazzled the Old," p. 79; *North American*, Oct. 17, 1876.
190. *U.S.I.E. Report of Director General*, Report of the Chief of the Bureau of Transportation, 1:349, 355; *ibid.*, Report of the Chief of the Bureau of Engineering, p. 239; Brown, *Year of the Century*, pp. 114, 132.

191. *U.S.I.E. Report of Director General*, Report of the Chief of the Bureau of Protection, 1:680-88, 693, 694, 696; also *ibid.*, Report of the Chief of the Bureau of Admissions, p. 441.
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193. *U.S.I.E. Report of Director General*, Report of the Chief of the Bureau of Art, 1:144, 145.
194. Maass, "When the New World Dazzled the Old," pp. 25-27, 76-79, is especially good on the impressions made on visitors, especially

foreign visitors; see p. 77 for Reuleaux and Hitler.

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197. Maass, "When the New World Dazzled the Old," p. 27.
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88. Id., "Polish Communities of Philadelphia," pp. 19, 222, 223, 250, 328, 385; id., "The Immigrant and the City," p. 220.
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90. DuBois, *Philadelphia Negro*, pp. ix, xv, xvi, xviii, xxv, xxx, xxxii, 58, 60-61, 316-18; Allen F. Davis, *Spearheads for Reform: The Social Settlements and the Progressive Movement, 1890-1914* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 96; Burt, *Perennial Philadelphians*, p. 564. The focus of DuBois's study is on the Seventh Ward, but information used in this discussion relates to the city as a whole.
91. DuBois, *Philadelphia Negro*, pp. xxxiv, 58; Sutherland, "Housing the Poor in the City of Homes," pp. 180-81; id., "Origins of Philadelphia's Octavia Hill Association," p. 27; Dinwiddie, *Housing Conditions in Philadelphia*, p. 3; Bernheimer, ed., *The Russian Jew in the United States*, p. 205. Blacks in the Thirtieth Ward, just south of the Seventh, increased from 6 percent to 20 percent in the decade 1890-1900 (DuBois, *Philadelphia Negro*, p. xxxi).
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93. DuBois, *Philadelphia Negro*, pp. 45, 322-23, 327, 329-30, 333, 339, 348; *Sunday Bulletin*, Dec. 6, 1970; College Settlements Association, *Eighth Annual Report, 1896-1897* (Cambridge, Mass.: College Settlements Association, 1897), p. 26.
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