

The Bicentennial City

1968-1982

by Stephanie G. Wolf

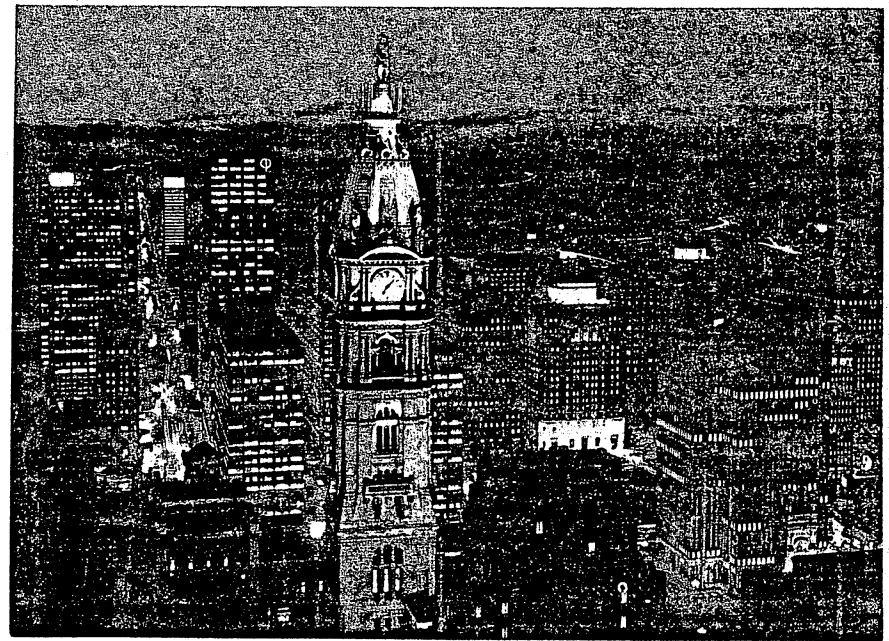
... much of that spirit is alive and well today . . . in ways and manners which may not have been invented by the Bicentennial experience, but which gained confidence through it. The city looks better, it feels better to walk its streets.

— Philadelphia Inquirer¹

To invoke the spirit of the 1970s is to conjure up a kaleidoscope of media-generated images: the "Watergate era," the "me generation," the "energy-crisis," loss of confidence, failure of credibility, alternative lifestyles, radical-chic, backlash, stagflation, unemployment. Hovering over the opening of the decade loomed the Vietnam War; over its closing, the Moral Majority. It began with a belief that established government controlled national policy, but that popular protest could significantly alter the directions of social and political life. It ended with a rejection of political participation and a perception that the establishment was irrelevant or impotent in the face of gigantic and insoluble problems. "Doing one's own thing" (another 1970s slogan) and caring only about those issues that had a direct effect on one's own life seemed preferable to dealing with worries and problems over which one had no control. Social goals of importance to the proper ordering of a society as a whole were impossible: if there was not enough money or concern to go around, why should it be expended on inadequate schools for other people's children, for example, while the houses in one's own neighborhood were deteriorating? And who had the right to set the priorities for the use of limited resources and make the final judgment on social needs? The liberal establishment had assumed that right since the early 1930s. Its members, well educated and often well heeled, articulated the goals, planned the methods of achieving them, implemented the plans, and evaluated the results. They represented an ideology and philosophy about the good of a community in which the individual was an abstract concept, part of an American melting pot in which ethnic, racial, class, or regional background had little significance. Richard Nixon had argued in the 1960s that there was a "silent majority" in the country that did not necessarily agree with the

choice of social goals made by the liberal establishment. It was a group that when it was heard, Nixon and others thought, would speak in chorus for conservatism.

During the 1970s, perhaps with the aid of mechanisms developed by the broadcast media—talk shows on radio; debates, exposés, and interviews with private citizens on local television—the voices of the previously inarticulate began to be heard. What they had to say in part confirmed the notion of the "silent majority"—but in part did not. They did not identify first and foremost with a homogenized concept of an American but with their ethnic, racial, economic, and religious roots. But it was not a wide vision of any ideology they favored—either conservative or liberal—but improvement, or at least in the narrower expectations of the 1970s, maintenance of what they had already attained. They were violently antagonistic to the advancement of others at what they perceived to be their own expense. In the 1980s this realization would come to be associated with single-issue politics and pressure brought by small groups through new and creative uses of the political system. For the 1970s it remained largely a question of keeping what they had out of the clutches of an establishment in whose goals they were no longer willing to acquiesce, and of gaining control of their own lives and those of their children.



Philadelphia at night (1978). The view is toward the west, with Market Street at the left.

Other trends, functional rather than conceptual, were making vast changes in the face of America and on its power structure. These were largely demographic, and involved the movement of population and economic vitality from their traditional base in the Northeast to the South and West. Regional factionalism resulting from the changing balance played as large a part in the distrust of the old establishment as the ideological shifts already mentioned. Of course neither of these trends, material or philosophic, sprang up full-blown in the 1970s. Historical periodization is at its best arbitrary and at its worst deceptive; what appears as the product of one decade has its most significant roots and developments in earlier times. It is a basic fact that American populations have been moving westward since the first settlers arrived on these shores. The significance of a trend surfaces at the point at which it plays a primary role in the way people live and behave, and for this century it may be fair to characterize the 1970s as the decade when the great cities of the Northeast not only lost their power over national events but also over small but vocal factions and over government within their own boundaries. Philadelphia is almost a model of the working out of these changing national patterns; it is the *dramatis personae* and the particular events that make the history of Philadelphia unique.

I

If it were possible to take a huge group photograph of all the people who lived in Philadelphia and its surrounding area in 1982, and to contrast it with a similar photograph taken twenty, fifty, or a hundred years ago, one could get an immediate visual image of the primary changes that have taken place and on which all of the other changes rest. Since such a photograph is impossible even with the most modern sophisticated techniques, it is necessary to take the more tedious path of description in words and figures and letting the picture emerge as a mental image.

The overall figures for Philadelphia's population are well known, as are the general trends that they represent.² From a center, not insignificant in its time, of about 13,000 inhabitants in the mid-1740s, Philadelphia's population had surpassed all other cities in the revolutionary colonies by 1776 and stood at about 33,000. Despite a growth rate that remained about the same, it dropped to second place behind New York City by the end of the eighteenth century, a position that had psychological as well as physical implications. The first half of the nineteenth century with its emerging industrialization created enormous immigration into Philadelphia from both the surrounding countryside and abroad, and saw the fastest growth the city would ever undergo: by 1850 there were over 400,000 residents, eight persons crowding into the picture where only one had stood before. By 1880 the population had doubled again to 850,000, although the landscape in the photograph was also enlarged by a consolidation of the city with its surrounding county, establishing the geographic boundaries of present-day Philadelphia.³ The city's population had topped one million by 1900, and despite a setback parallel to

national trends during the 1930s depression, there were over two million people resident by 1950.

It was at this point that a twentieth-century historical phenomenon caught up with the cities of the Northeast in general, Philadelphia in particular. The trend began slowly at first and was not noticed by city planners, whose grandiose ideas were based on the economic and physical expansion of the past plotted upward on the graphs of the future. Certainly the baby boom of the late 1940s and 1950s helped to blind the planners to the plight that was about to overtake northeastern cities. Budgets and building programs were geared to rising expectations of populations, incomes, and tax base. But the very roads and transportation systems the planners were working to improve would place many of the people and much of the wealth on which the cities had to depend beyond their own inflexible political boundaries, out in the suburbs where land was cheaper, taxes lower, and free parking plentiful. During the 1950s Philadelphia lost 5 percent of its population and during the 1960s another 3 percent. While still the fourth-largest city in the United States, an enormous loss of more than 13 percent was registered in the decade between 1970 and 1980, dropping the total from just under two million to less than 1.7 million inhabitants. The thirty years since the highpoint of 1950 had seen nearly 400,000 people leave town, almost the same number that had constituted the entire population of the city at the time of its greatest growth back in 1850.

Moreover as an imaginary photograph of Philadelphia would show, this change in population was not merely one of numbers, but one of composition as well. Philadelphia, often called the most northern of the southern cities, had always had a substantial number of black citizens compared to the rest of the North. While the black population of other northern cities never made up more than 2 percent of their numbers before 1920, it remained consistently over 5 percent in Philadelphia through the early twentieth century, standing at about 11 percent in 1930. There was little change in the next decade, but during and following World War II, as a result of the demand for labor of any kind, the percentages rose sharply—by 5 percent in the decades of the 1940s and the 1950s, by 10 percent in the 1960s. Fewer opportunities during the 1970s slowed the rate at which the black population of the city grew in relation to whites, 5 percent for the decade according to the 1980 census figures. This meant that about 37 out of every 100 people in Philadelphia were black in 1980. At least another four were Asiatic or Spanish-speaking, four times the number that would have been present merely ten years before.

The visual image is less successful in illustrating the differences existing among the white faces smiling or frowning into that figurative camera. Ethnic and religious diversity had always characterized Philadelphia's population, but self-conscious political participation by different ethnic and religious groups became increasingly important during the 1970s. As one author has pointed out, in the bicentennial year Philadelphia's government was led by an Italian mayor, an Irish police commissioner, a Jewish president of the city

Council, and a Polish leader of the Democratic party.⁴

The loss of population in Philadelphia did not take place evenly throughout the city between 1970 and 1980. In the very center of Philadelphia the numbers have remained approximately the same although the composition has changed considerably. Those sections in most serious distress from deteriorating housing, insufficient services, and poor economic conditions are the oldest areas clustering immediately around center city. North Philadelphia, Kensington, West Philadelphia, and South Philadelphia lost from 15 percent to 30 percent of their population during the 1970s. There was a more moderate decline, ranging from 4 percent to 14 percent in other areas, with the exception of the far northeast which actually registered a gain of 6 percent (along with gains in a small portion of the southeast—the Eastwick development—and in a small part of center city—between Walnut and Spruce Streets, Broad Street and the Schuylkill). In many ways the far northeast is a part of Philadelphia's political picture only by historical accident. Its actual development much more closely resembles the suburbs, and it still contains large amounts of open land on which construction has continued to take place.

Every photograph is limited by the arbitrary frame imposed by the photographer: what is left out may distort the scene that would have emerged if a wide-angle lens had only been used. Nowhere is this more true than in trying to visualize Philadelphia in 1982 without looking beyond the political boundaries laid down almost 130 years ago. The huge urban centers of late twentieth-century America have been transformed by the post-World War II growth of their suburbs, turning the whole northeast corner of the country into a vast megalopolis of almost continuous urbanization. To study cities in their proper perspective population experts and sociologists examine the data for an entire region—the Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA). This procedure enables them not only to look at cities themselves but to compare and contrast their changes with their surrounding counties, which originally grew as adjuncts of cities but have begun in recent years more and more to assume the real economic, political, and numerical power of their regions while the city's function has become more symbolic, less actual.

Philadelphia's SMSA includes, in addition to the city itself, the four Pennsylvania counties of Bucks, Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery, and the three New Jersey counties of Burlington, Camden, and Gloucester. The SMSA remained in 1980, as it had been in 1970 and 1960, the fourth-largest such area in the United States. Like the projectors and planners for the city, however, those for the suburban counties for a time made the mistake of assuming that the temporary population boom of the 1950s was a permanent explosion. They could not, of course, predict worldwide events like the energy crisis and cultural changes in lifestyle, which in more recent years have had such drastic economic and demographic repercussions on the northeastern region as a whole.

At the start of 1970 the suburban counties could still look back on a decade of tremendous growth; the population of the SMSA, excluding the city itself, had increased by a whopping 23 percent to a total of over 2.25 million. greater

than that of Philadelphia and much of it at the expense of the urban center. While the city had lost only 54,000 people in the preceding decade thanks to a high nonwhite birth rate, over 200,000 mostly white residents had "fled" to the neighboring suburbs to avoid urban problems, explicitly defined as more people, less money, and growing crime. As early as New Year's Day of 1970 the suburban section of the *Bulletin* carried a story that residents of the nearer suburbs were worried that the coming decade of the 1970s would see Philadelphia's problems following them out of the city, and these problems were defined as air pollution, abandoned houses, overcrowded schools, racial tensions, and inadequate transportation, health, and social services.⁵

Many of the expressed reasons for preferring life in the suburbs seem to be an elaborate code for racial attitudes, and it is hard to escape the conclusion that racism played a heavy role in the movement out of Philadelphia. People who have left the city will discuss the "black problem" in oral interviews, although for the record they will usually substitute some euphemism or mention issues in which the race question is implicit although unstated, such as "the quality of the schools." The horrified reaction by suburbanites to Richardson Dilworth's earlier suggestion that city and outlying schools be merged was partly an expression of these attitudes. The white nature of the migration is evident in the figures which show that as late as 1978 black people made up only 7.4 percent of the population in the SMSA, excluding Philadelphia but including the heavily black cities of Chester and Camden.

Worries about the other city ills that might evolve in the suburbs from simple overdevelopment seemed to surface but rarely as yet in the early 1970s. Enthusiastic population projections for Montgomery and Bucks Counties saw increases of 25 percent and 34 percent respectively during the 1970s. The actuality proved far different and must make one wary about predicting future trends: Montgomery County's growth was an almost imperceptible 2.5 percent while Bucks County increased a healthy 15 percent, but nothing like the earlier expectations. The suburban area as a whole slowed from its rapid pace in the 1960s to a mere 5 percent gain in population during the decade from 1970 to 1980, and in fact registered a very small decline (less than 1 percent) in the final year for which statistics are available (1979–1980). This slowdown of course is part of the larger national trend of population movement that signifies an end to the hegemony of the Northeast and the heyday of its cities and suburbs. When Philadelphia's losses are taken into account the total SMSA picture was 3 percent smaller in 1980 than it had been in 1970, standing at about 3.75 million inhabitants. The two major satellite urban areas of Camden and the city of Chester reproduced on a smaller scale all the difficulties experienced by Philadelphia, while the more rural and more affluent areas developed their own brands of rising crime rates, juvenile delinquency, drug abuse, school strikes, and economic dislocation, often without institutional facilities capable of coping. The rise of the national environmental movement of the 1970s caused many suburban communities to reevaluate their attitudes toward unchecked growth and development.

On the other hand growth of the suburbs has slowed down and stabilized

in those counties closest to Philadelphia, while continued high growth has taken place in the more distant counties like Bucks and Chester. These areas are less affected by deteriorating conditions in the city, and perhaps less worried about being absorbed by its institutions. Active antagonism to the old center seemed less an attitude in the 1970s than did indifference. Local newspapers, museums, colleges, concerts, and parks may lack the "panache" of big-city "culture," but their presence during the 1970s contributed to a sense of community in which the urban niceties could be had close to home and parking. The one area in which regional identification with Philadelphia still seems to run high is in relation to its professional athletic teams: the hockey Flyers, the baseball Phillies, and the football Eagles all receive enthusiastic support and create huge traffic jams on the roads and bridges leading into the city when they play at home. Only the basketball 76ers have failed to capture the suburban imagination, and basketball in Philadelphia, as across the nation, has acquired the reputation of being a "black" sport.

II

The most readily observed difference in Philadelphia during the 1970s that was in part both caused and affected by the population changes just discussed is a fundamental change in its economic structure. In this realm too, long-term trends and national influences must be remembered as the context in which local developments have taken place.

The Frank L. Rizzo administration of 1972-1980 was particularly sensitive to the necessity for economic revitalization in Philadelphia, and its leaders believed that the only way in which this could be accomplished was by continued communication and closer cooperation between the city and private business. There was a constant stream of information about city resources and opportunities made available in forms particularly useful to potential business investors. There was even an attempt made in the mid-1970s to update printed economic statistics on a twice-yearly basis through the office of the city economist. Then in 1979 the Philadelphia City Planning Commission issued a paper on *Issues for the 1980's*, setting priorities for the future decade based on assessments of the ways in which the 1970s had differed from earlier expectations and predictions.⁶ The situation as it had developed appeared bleak.

The structural changes in the national economy since 1951 that resulted in a smaller share of private-sector employment for manufacturing enterprises hit Philadelphia particularly hard; from the early nineteenth century industry had been the backbone of Philadelphia's economy. Worse still, the drop in Philadelphia was even steeper than that in the nation at large: while the proportion of America's work force involved in manufacturing between 1951 and 1977 fell from 43 percent to 29 percent, the city started higher and contracted further, from 46 percent down to 24 percent in the same period of time. Philadelphia's problem was twofold: it involved the physical problems endemic to most old cities—deterioration of buildings, outmoded building

designs, inadequate truck access, lack of worker amenities, and lack of expansion space; but it also rested on a lack of available capital for investment in expanding and upgrading these facilities, or for constructing new ones. Despite the development of fifteen industrial parks within the city and particularly in its outlying regions, occupancy rates were low. By 1980 over 100,000 jobs in manufacturing had been lost, 44 percent of the 215,000 opportunities that had existed in 1970. Suburban communities that had been wary of industrial development in the 1960s, perhaps through fear of attracting the "wrong kind of people," had changed their policies by 1980. They realized the advantage it was to their tax bases to have successful industries located within their borders, providing jobs for their residents and customers for their shopping malls. Industrial development also eliminated the need for their residents to pay high commuting costs in time and fuel, or the city wage tax which had risen to over 4 percent. While the most aggressive pursuit of industry by Philadelphia's suburbs could not reverse the trends in which manufacturing jobs were declining across the nation and those that survived were leaving the Northeast, the loss of this kind of employment was held to only 6.5 percent in the Philadelphia suburbs during the 1970s.⁷

Of course, mental snapshots of people running machines, large or small, in a variety of settings, do not begin to cover the job choices available in the modern world in the complex urban environment. As old as civilization itself is the necessity to build structures in which people live and work, so the construction industry has always provided employment, as has the field of transportation, another basic necessity for interdependent society. Essential jobs in the technological twentieth century are also found in the distribution of communication and utility services. Trade—wholesale and retail—provides another cornerstone of urban development, and in association with modernization, finance, government, and service industries have all grown enormously to provide for increasing populations and the complexities of their lives and dealings. All of these areas provide job opportunities, although the work they offer is more and more likely to be dependent on specific skills and technical training. But a city like Philadelphia, where the proportion of people who acquire an education above the minimum legal requirement is only half the national average and less than half the average of its own suburbs, is at a great disadvantage in making use of these options. Consequently there are many thousands of unemployed persons looking for work, up from 5 percent in 1970 to around 8 percent in 1982.

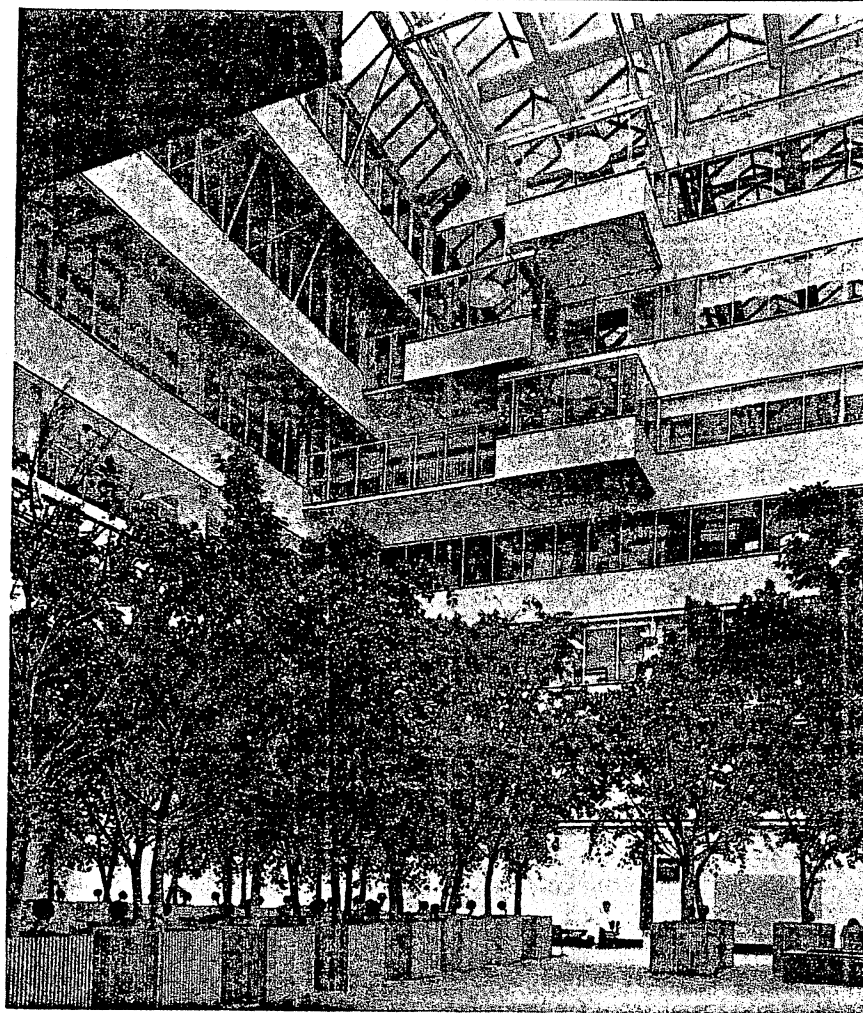
Where job opportunities have risen sharply in Philadelphia's suburbs during the decade of the 1970s in every field but industry, only the service area has shown a steady, if modest, rise in the city itself throughout the same period. However, some of the gloomiest forebodings about the city made by authors who assessed the situation at the time of the 1976 Bicentennial have not come to pass. Although the total number of jobs is smaller in 1980 than it was in 1970, the effects of the recession of 1974-1975 which were more drastic in Philadelphia than in the country as a whole have begun to recede. Since

1977 the decline in numbers of jobs in most fields has flattened out. With their own peculiar use of the double negative, city financial experts forecast that "negative employment growth rates in employment levels will stabilize by mid-decade."⁸

A comeback in the construction industry has contributed not only to the actual improvement, but to a psychological feeling that the pulse of the city is quickening. Nothing gives onlookers a sense of continued life within a community quite like the sight of new metal skeletons rising against the sky, the inconvenience of perilous walkways around construction sites, and traffic jams caused by slow-moving pieces of huge construction equipment blocking the narrow streets. When all of this is accompanied by flying dust and dirt and the incessant noise of jackhammers, it is clear that things must be improving! Much of the money involved in expanding construction, which doubled in 1978 over 1977 and had doubled again by 1980, went into three private office buildings in center city, the Franklintown development just north of center city and the renovation of the Bellevue-Stratford Hotel, four major hospital projects, the center-city commuter tunnel, and a variety of public improvements. Government, medical, and educational institutions accounted for about 60 percent of this revitalization; residential and commercial activity provided another 18 percent or more each; and as might be expected in view of the grim manufacturing picture, only 3 percent of the \$635.5 million invested in Philadelphia construction projects represented new industrial building.

Retail business in Philadelphia suffered the most during the 1970s, sales rising only 1.2 percent from 1974 to 1980 within the city, while they increased 90 percent for the SMSA, excluding Philadelphia, during the same years. In terms of billions of dollars, area residents spent about \$4 billion in the city and over three times that much—\$13.7 billion—in the huge regional malls that have come to blanket the suburban area. Movement in this direction began in the late 1950s when the large department stores began to open suburban branches near newly built developments. By the 1960s the merchants and developers were no longer waiting to see where housing would be located, but were leading the way, trusting in their special mix of department stores, supermarkets, family restaurants, movie theaters, and specialty shops focused on the growing market of the baby-boom generation to attract customers from a wide area and in fact encourage the building of housing nearby. Lack of any but the most rudimentary community public spaces and activities in many of the outlying suburbs turned the suburban mall into a kind of village green where it never rained, and where people could windowshop, watch the passing parade, and admire the greenery and fountains while resting on the benches which were usually provided. In competing with each other malls also began to offer entertainments; Santa Claus and his toy village, circus acts, traveling zoos, all aimed at potential customers of every generation.⁹

In many ways the city cannot compete. It is impossible to provide the easy access and parking that help to make the suburban malls so popular, nor can



Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Thirty-fourth Street and Civic Center Boulevard, opened 1974, designed by Harbeson, Hough, Livingston, and Larson and William J. Amenta. The building is the fourth for the hospital, which was founded in 1855.

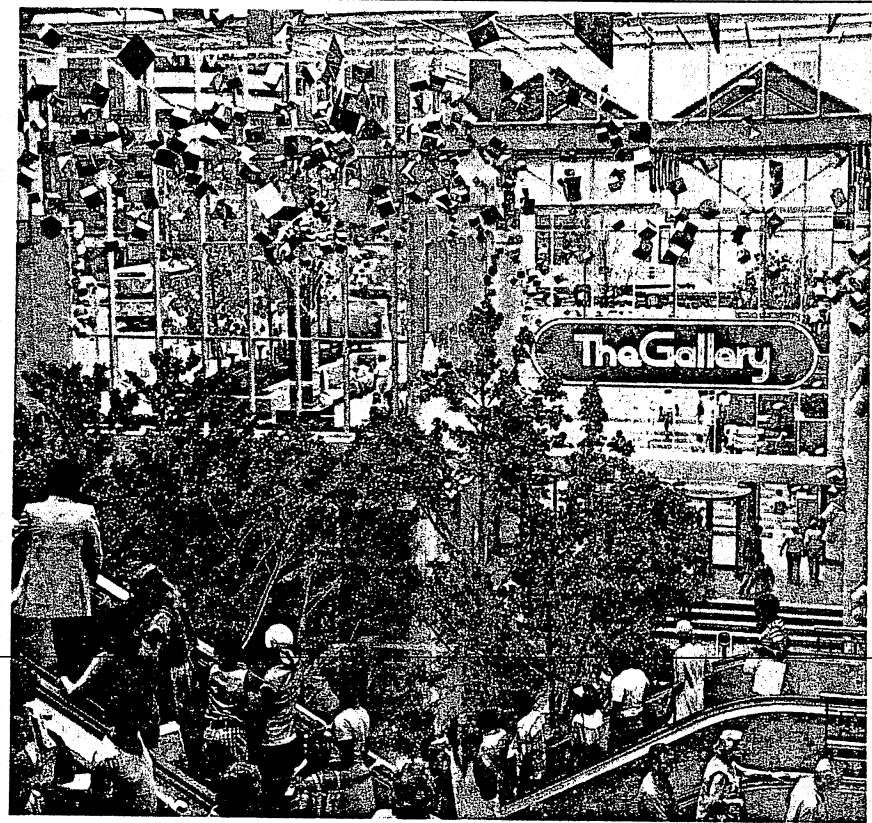
CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF PHILADELPHIA

the population of Philadelphia, with its significantly lower income ranges, spend anything like the money available to suburban residents. The last decade, however, has seen a variety of efforts to promote retail business in Philadelphia, both as part of center-city revitalization by the establishment and by local merchants in one or another of the many residential neighborhoods that form almost self-contained units within the sprawling borders of

the city. Two projects in particular, undertaken during the 1970s, emphasized the pitfalls and possibilities of large-scale, aggressive attempts to attract shoppers back to center city.

Chestnut Street had a long and distinguished reputation as one of the best shopping areas in the city—branches of exclusive New York stores and specialty shops in an area surrounded by offices employing suburban commuters with money to spend. As part of the overall Bicentennial planning it was decided that this carriage-trade street would make an excellent downtown mall: the roadway would be narrowed, allowing only special nonpolluting buses carrying shoppers and tourists from Ninth to Eighteenth Streets, providing easy access to the most important of Philadelphia's historic sites at one end and high-class shopping at the other. New wide brick sidewalks, trees, artistically designed lighting, and places to rest would provide the aesthetic and practical amenities for strollers. Nevertheless many of the merchants were opposed from the beginning: their businesses would suffer severe losses during the building phase, the traffic and parking problems would discourage special shopping trips by suburbanites, there was not enough nearby residential business to draw on, and office workers really shopped only from noon to 2:00 P.M., not enough time from which to make a healthy profit. Yet the city more or less forced the issue and the mall was constructed. Even before it became operational in the late 1970s many of the better establishments had fled, to be replaced by fast-food restaurants, pinball arcades, and cheap shops catering more to the blacks in easy subway or bus access than the whites in the Society Hill and Rittenhouse Square districts. A cutback in municipal services left piles of litter, and by 1980 the failure of the project was visible in dreary, deserted night scenes which encouraged crime and discouraged business. As a partial remedy for the blight it had helped cause, the city again allowed automobile traffic at night.

On the other hand the Gallery I complex, completed in 1976–1977 with a combination of city, federal, and private investment, has been a commercial success of huge proportions, with average annual sales of \$230 per square foot, making it one of the most financially productive shopping malls in the country. The first major retail facility to be constructed in the center of Philadelphia since a new Strawbridge & Clothier department store was built in 1931, the Gallery was carefully planned as part of the Market Street East development, envisioned many years earlier by city planner Edmund Bacon, which included improved transportation facilities and upgrading of offices and other buildings in the area. The complex itself was developed by the Rouse Company, which had successful national experience in such ventures. At a cost of \$100 million the urban mall followed the traditional pattern of its suburban predecessors—a covered space, anchored by two major department stores—the existing Strawbridge & Clothier building and a new Gimbels—and including 125 other smaller specialty shops and restaurants. The usual open spaces, greenery, and strolling areas acquired individuality and architectural interest from a multilevel design suited to the urban nature of the location.



Gallery I, Market Street at Ninth, developed by the Rouse Company, 1976.

PHILADELPHIA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

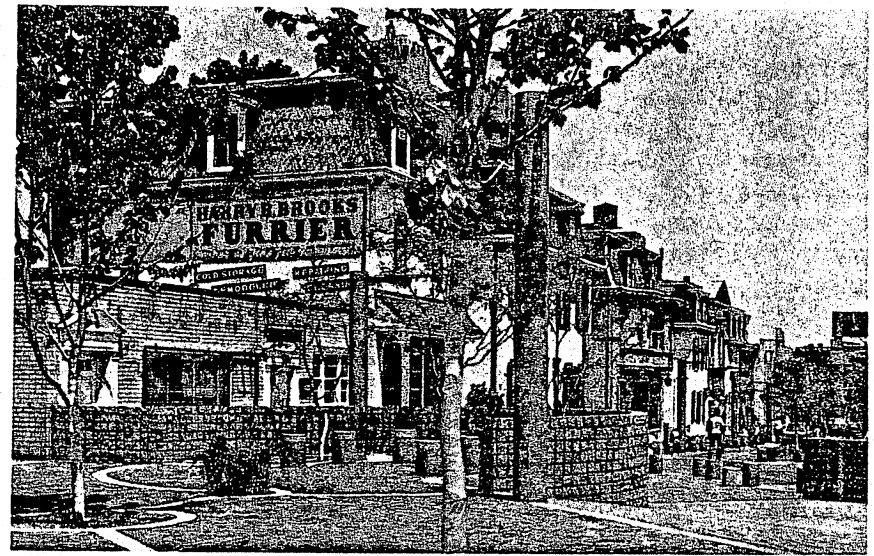
Crowds of customers and observers lent an atmosphere of excitement and busy activity, and the businesses catered to the kinds of Philadelphia consumers who could logically be expected to shop there. Further extension of Market Street East development in the 1980s calls for the addition of a Gallery II, undertaken by the same company, and including another department store and three new office towers. This was all tied to Philadelphia's largest construction project, the underground linkage of the old Reading and Pennsylvania Railroads with a new station at Eleventh and Market Streets.

Major undertakings on the retail scene do not adequately describe the trend of Philadelphia business during the 1970s. While small ventures may not have great influence on the huge dollar figures that make up the statistical charts of general economic developments, their proliferation is characteristic of life on a more individualized, less mass-produced scale, which has emerged as a feature of the decade. Thinking "small" is part of the general breakdown

of the conception of America as a large, monolithic culture and is reflected in the business life of Philadelphia. As of 1980 there were only twenty-two employers in the city who provided jobs for 2000 or more workers, and of these only sixteen were strictly in the private sector, four of them in the retail market.¹⁰ Instead of the growth of the giants, the 1970s saw the increase of small stores, sometimes franchised by large corporations, but often individual enterprises, their owners banding together in neighborhood associations to ensure the maintenance or improvement of the environment in which they operated.

The most elementary of the small entrepreneurs were street vendors who, following the generations-old tradition of chestnut and pretzel sellers on Philadelphia street corners, offered a colorful profusion of merchandise from fresh fruit and hot dogs to hats, bags, and costume jewelry. They annoyed established merchants by blocking the sidewalks and perhaps by furnishing cut-rate competition without the worries of overhead. Media focus, and therefore public awareness and government response to the street vendors, peaked in the mid-1970s. Articles in all of the newspapers and in *Philadelphia Magazine* both stimulated letters from the public and reported attempts to pass ordinances restricting their activities, with related court actions on both sides. Racial and class overtones surrounded the issue of the street vendors—as they did almost every aspect of civic life in Philadelphia during the 1970s.

Small shopping areas associated with specific neighborhoods within the city also sought to keep the local shoppers at home and to attract outsiders as well. Those located in areas where the residents had higher income levels or where tourists could naturally be expected to congregate were the most successful. A strong businessmen's association, a vigorous community organization, and an excellent neighborhood newspaper in the prestigious Chestnut Hill section, for example, swinging into action well before the 1970s, countered the threat of nearby suburban malls with the use of several strategies. They forced through the acquisition of land for several conveniently located, jointly owned parking lots free to those who patronized the shops; the retailers engaged in a beautification project of tree planting, building repair, and shop-window display; and a land-use committee maintained strict control over the type and quality of the stores moving into the community. Aided no doubt by the fact that many of the most important Philadelphia politicians on the local, state, and national scene lived in the immediate vicinity, Chestnut Hill received public financial support for repairing its main street with hand-set Belgian paving blocks. This allowed the area to maintain the old-fashioned ambience of its original cobblestones—disintegrated finally beyond repair—as well as to improve the quality of its roadway at a time when many sections of the city suffered from axle-breaking potholes and other deteriorating street problems for which funds were not forthcoming. Association events—the Santa Claus parade, window decoration competitions, open-air sales of season's end merchandise—assumed the nature of community celebrations. The businessmen's association aimed at a specific carriage-trade market, indicated



Maplewood Mall, Germantown, opened 1974. This neighborhood project of shops and offices was accomplished by the combined efforts of the Rizzo administration, the Redevelopment Authority, the City Planning Commission, and the Germantown Businessmen's Association.

PHILADELPHIA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION



New Market, Head House Square (Second Street), 1980. The shopping and restaurant complex combining eighteenth-century structures with contemporary architecture and graphics opened in 1975.

NEWMARKET

by the tone and placement of its ads for "the extraordinary shops of Chestnut Hill" on the local classical music radio station.

Other shopping areas such as Society Hill or the South Street Renaissance in the tourist-oriented section of center city began later and had different problems to face in identifying their markets, but have also created individualized areas of strong local character. Long-established shopping districts with distinctive personalities, including the Italian Market on South Ninth Street, the Reading Terminal Market, jewelers' row on Sansom Street, and antiques row on Pine Street, continued to prove that sheer urban size could provide an opportunity not available in the suburban malls.

III

This focus on the plans and operations of the private-business sector has an old-fashioned ring to it, for if, as one author has expressed it, the eighteenth century was characterized by "nationalist optimism and confidence in science [and the nineteenth century by] faith in commerce and industry,"¹¹ the twentieth century must be thought of as the time when public belief rested in the ability of governmental systems to direct and implement society's progress. In looking at the history of the period from 1968 to 1982, however, it becomes clear that this reliance on government to produce progress, and in fact faith in "progress" itself as a concept, are exactly what has disappeared. The older, progressive attitude generally assumed a continual increase of government funding for constantly improving services that would make urban living ever more civilized and humane. As a corollary this attitude also accepted government decisions and control as the most efficient, objective way to accomplish desired ends. A certain amount of dishonesty and venality was expected, although they could be counted on to stir indignation and a cry for reform. The reform itself when it came, as it did to Philadelphia in the 1950s, was intended to "clean up the mess" so that the city government and the institutions it controlled would work better.

High hopes for better transportation facilities and services were entertained, for example, when the old, private Philadelphia Transportation Company was taken over by the publicly controlled Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) in 1968. Sale negotiations and attendant court battles over price had lasted for five years, and when the PTC, the largest transit company in the United States still in private hands, finally wound up its affairs on December 31, 1969, the *Bulletin* provided its obituary. In an article that expressed the feeling of the time and its reliance on government to protect the interests of the citizens at large, the *Bulletin* stated: "For years critics said [the PTC's] facilities were less than ideal because its first loyalty was to its shareholders, who wanted a profit, rather than to the public, which wanted convenient, comfortable transportation." When the city government in 1979 looked back on a decade of public control, however, it admitted that "the quality of the service on the system is . . . unacceptably low. This is manifested by buses which break down during their runs, subway

stations which are dark, dank and dirty, transit cars which are noisy, uncomfortable and covered by graffiti . . . and commuter trains which are habitually behind schedule." The task facing Philadelphia in the 1980s "is to improve the quality of service on its transportation network to a level which satisfies the expectation of its citizens."¹²

Little by little in most areas of municipal management the 1970s witnessed an erosion of the long-held basic belief in the ability of public-sector technocrats, intellectuals, and politicians to cope with the massive problems of the twentieth-century city. The national failure of government credibility is often considered a legacy of the Watergate scandals, but American faith in public solutions to social problems had survived scandals before. Exposés of corruption, local or national, form the backbone of media reporting in every decade, whether the administration is billed as independently reform or politically dependent. The Vietnam War may have played a more immediate role in creating the new frame of mind: it had a measurable end, and that end was failure. Both sides, those who wanted to win and those who wanted to get out, could agree on that. Once there was a general recognition that failure was possible, that government money and government planning might be incapable of a successful solution to problems, there were plenty of problems that could be measured by the same yardstick and judged with the same result.

In Philadelphia there was an abundance of difficulties, far beyond the power of City Hall to control, based on world economics and changing social patterns. The numbers were all bad: public assistance recipients increased from around 200,000 in 1970 to almost 340,000 in 1980, even more dramatic as a factor of the city's population—from 10 percent to 20 percent of the total; the illegitimate birth rate climbed from 21 percent of all births in 1970 to 36 percent in 1976; in 1979-1980 alone murders rose by 13 percent in Philadelphia and robberies by 8 percent, compared to national increases of 7 percent and 8 percent respectively. Even if Philadelphia's citizens did not expect the city government to solve these problems, at the beginning of the 1970s they expected it at least to make things better. Here too the established political solutions were tried and found wanting. As other urban Americans seemed to be doing, Philadelphians lowered their expectations and turned inward to seek their own answers. People took karate lessons and bought guns; private organizations formed to counsel women who had been raped and provide legal services for poor and minority citizens. Emphasis early in the decade on increased police protection in the subways was turned by 1980 to an acceptance of the Guardian Angels, a branch of a New York group of youths with no official status but a private commitment to the public cause of improving the personal safety of subway riders. Some called them vigilantes, some saw grave dangers to the political and social process in their barely regulated assumption of civic power, but the general response—including that of City Hall—seemed to be to give them a chance.

Both in physical and human geography, lines of cleavage had long existed among the citizens of Philadelphia. The myth of the melting pot and the ideal

of equal opportunity had obscured these differences during the years when establishment ideologies and policies controlled city life. The differences began to surface as Americans rediscovered their ethnic roots and as shifting economic patterns within neighborhoods brought widely disparate groups into close contact. The most visible, if not the most statistically significant of these changes was "gentrification," and as with any historical development the seeds were planted well before the time in which the name was coined, or its impact felt. Foresighted upper-middle-class Philadelphians, tired of the long commute from the suburbs and eager to be closer to the cultural excitement of the city, had begun to renovate individual houses in the Society Hill area of center city in the mid-1950s. As the federal government continued its massive job of restoring the national monuments in the area, real estate values rose and the movement gathered momentum. City Hall recognized the economic potential of this revitalization, and public agencies worked with private groups to change a slum into solid tax-paying homes. The private Old Philadelphia Development Corporation sold many of the houses that were restored, but the city's Redevelopment Authority also provided property, while the City Planning Commission and the Philadelphia Historical Commission worked on overall planning and provided the historical information needed for proper restoration. By 1976, according to the Historic American Buildings Survey, a program of the National Park Service, almost 800 individual houses had been restored, 200 new houses had been built to harmonize aesthetically with other buildings in the area, and three thirty-story high-rise apartment buildings—Society Hill Towers, designed by I.M. Pei—had risen to "serve not only as focal points in Society Hill in relation to its primary historic sites and open spaces but also in relation to the rest of downtown Philadelphia and its traffic flow."¹³

When the trickle of returning "gentry" into center city became a flood, Society Hill served as a model not only for other cities but for other neighborhoods in Philadelphia as well. Those who could not afford the soaring real estate values of the already successful area (often younger people with traditional backgrounds but more bohemian lifestyles) began "gentrifying" Queen Village south of South Street, the Fairmount section near the Art Museum, and the streets around Rittenhouse Square which maintained their long-settled affluent population of apartment dwellers.

Old-style reformers and planners assumed that the economic and social goals achieved in center city met with the approval of all the city's citizens. The newly refurbished areas, however, had not for the most part been previously uninhabited. The people who had lived in them had sometimes been there for decades and had established close-knit relationships. They formed enclaves, small and large, of working-class ethnics—Irish, Polish, German, Italian, Russian, Lithuanian, Greek, and a host of others—inhabiting an intricate mosaic of neighborhoods which had always seemed secure because largely ignored, except at election time. They were extremely resentful of being forced out by "improvements" like expressways and institutional ex-

pansions, or by real estate values they could no longer afford. They were as suspicious of newcomers as any rural village inhabitants, and were far from willing to consider the abstract good of Philadelphia as a fair exchange for their long-established communities.¹⁴ Intellectuals disenchanted with the failure of establishment goals and programs, and sensitive to what they saw essentially as a class struggle between the power structure and working people, lent support to "the articulation of the values of neighborhood, community or parish as essential to the arguments against certain forms of 'outside' intervention."¹⁵ In truth the problem did not belong to white ethnic groups alone; black neighborhoods were dislocated by the same factors of gentrification and institutional expansion of the city's hospitals and universities.

The disaffected Philadelphia residents, both black and white, were also confronted by a threat to their communities that was far more frightening. It was unfortunate to be forced to take a profit on one's property, if one really wanted to remain where one was. For working-class people, however, destruction of the value of one's home, often representing a family's whole capital investment, was disastrous. This was the prospect that faced many Philadelphia neighborhoods as large numbers of immigrants—blacks from the South, Puerto Ricans, and other Spanish-speaking newcomers, Asian refugees—arrived in the 1950s and 1960s. Most of the immigrants were of economic and cultural milieus as foreign to Philadelphia blacks as they were to the white ethnic communities, and black residents fought their intrusion with the same sentiments and for the same reasons that white inhabitants complained, sold out, and left.

Dispassionate analysis might show that the conflict was really one in which lower-middle-class neighborhoods, black and white, were being squeezed from both above and below, but the lines of the battle—and a real battle it became during the 1970s—were drawn on the basis of race. A simplistic viewpoint among white Philadelphians failed to distinguish the varieties of black communities, forcing blacks to define themselves by race foremost and ignoring or suppressing cultural differences among blacks. Once this was simply seen as a black/white issue, strange combinations of unlikely allies and even stranger combinations of incompatible goals controlled the political life of Philadelphia throughout the 1970s. Among other things the white liberal establishment was left without a power base.

Many militant groups operated outside the formal political process entirely. Domination of Philadelphia by the Democratic party had become almost total, and within the party the machine excluded much of the old liberal/black coalition on which its strength was formerly based, as well as the smaller interest groups that had begun to characterize Philadelphia political life.¹⁶ As in the rest of the country, participation in the political process as measured by registration and voting statistics declined continuously, although other avenues for political expression and action multiplied. Using the local media, which are always hungry for controversial local news to spice up front pages and broadcast time, special interest groups for civic causes, labor and

business organizations, and social issues can engage in confrontational activities and make provocative statements to rally the public and effect municipal action. Most of these groups, most of their ideologies, are not powerful enough to create policy, but they do have the strength, in the face of a government without a strong set of positive goals and objectives of its own, to stop things from happening—government by veto, it might be called. This is particularly true when money is as extremely tight as it had become in the 1970s, when easy federal and state assistance was no longer forthcoming and when City Hall had to order and choose among its priorities rather than create a shopping list as it could in more expansive economic conditions.

Black exercise of political voting power, vocal and determined during the 1960s, achieved a limited success. It was reflected in city hiring policies and in moneys (often acquired from special project funds of the federal government) for setting up new authorities to deal with special problems like housing and neighborhood medical facilities. There was even an attempt to make the outside Police Review Board an effective agent against police abuse of citizens, widely admitted to be racially motivated. In 1958 Mayor Dilworth had created the board to "consider citizens' complaints against the police when the charge involved brutality, false arrest, discrimination based upon race, religion, or national origin, or other wrongful conduct of police personnel toward citizens."¹⁷ Throughout the following decade the board limped along, underfunded and underpublicized, facing constant opposition from the Fraternal Order of Police. After years of litigation, a final decision upholding the board was issued by the Supreme Court during Mayor Tate's administration, but by then the political climate of Philadelphia as well as of the country at large had changed considerably, and the mayor decided not to reactivate the board. While citizens' suits against the Police Department succeeded in the earlier 1970s, these were reversed by the Supreme Court, and the attempts by various civic organizations during the decade to force reform of the department from within met with little success until the advent of Mayor William J. Green's administration in 1980. For the most part citizen complaints against the police, when plotted on the map of Philadelphia, overlay almost exactly the map of racial distribution in the city.

I V

The disruptive and occasionally violent nature of black protest during the activist years of the 1960s produced an equally strong white response. Fear of crime—usually defined as black—united many ethnic groups, often across traditional class and party lines. In this context Frank L. Rizzo was elected mayor in 1971 and again in 1975. As police commissioner during the tumultuous years of the 1960s Rizzo had received much of the credit for "keeping the lid on," so that Philadelphia avoided the worst of the violence that had broken out in other cities like Los Angeles and Washington. Rizzo was also antipathetic to young radicals, white as well as black, homosexuals, and other nonconformists, as were white traditionalists including both bankers and

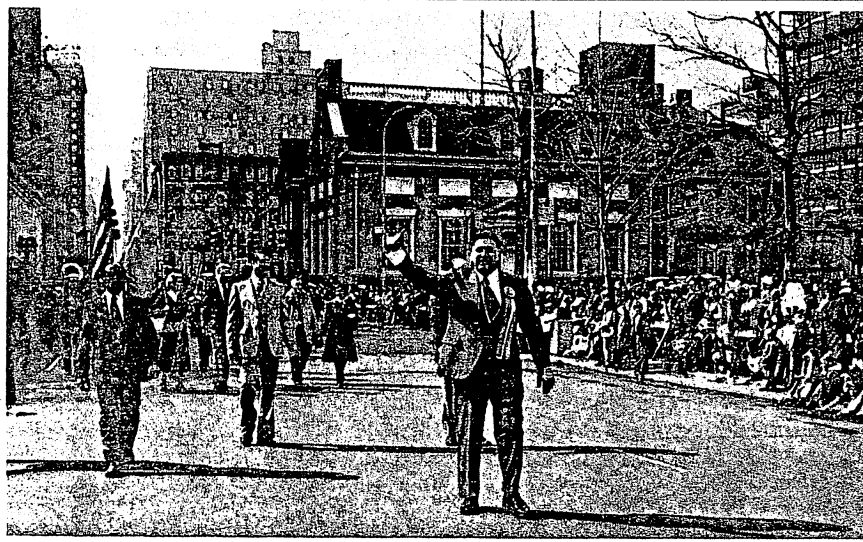
In a total reversal of the ideals that had directed city policy since the early 1950s, government was regarded by Rizzo and his supporters primarily as an institution for providing citizens with protection and only secondarily as an instrument for the delivery of social services. While close attention was paid to the maintenance of the police and fire departments during the 1970s, limited funds and escalating municipal union demands caused personnel to be sharply reduced in other areas of city administration—up to 50 percent in some cases—in the Departments of Welfare and Recreation, the Fairmount Park Commission, the City Planning Commission, the Committee on Human Relations, the Free Library, and the Streets Department. Street cleaning stopped on a regular basis in 1975, as did much road repair. Instead of maintaining the roads, the city tried to shift the responsibility by erecting signs advising residents "This is a STATE HIGHWAY. For repairs call 255-1415."¹⁸ The state, however, had enough troubles of its own, and the result was an almost shocking deterioration of Philadelphia's street system. On the other hand the Rizzo administration was generally good to cultural institutions; for the first time the Library Company, the Historical Society, and other such groups received a city grant.

Visible decay in the material environment during the decade did nothing to improve the "quality of life" in Philadelphia, and contributed to an atmosphere in which the human environment exhibited less of civility, more shrill rhetoric and physical self-expression. Rizzo's frequent outspoken comments, voicing sentiments previously unthinkable among responsible government officials, couched in imagery of physical intimidation, set a tone for many of the actions and reactions that dominated Philadelphia life in the 1970s. While the mayor's methods and style offended and repelled many liberals and intellectuals, they had great appeal to others as a kind of populism of the urban North.

The events of the Philadelphia controversy over the radical black cult known as MOVE, which played out its tragic dénouement in the 1970s, formed merely one, though probably the best publicized, of the many acts in this drama. MOVE had begun in 1972 as the Community Action Movement, an antiurban, back-to-nature group which espoused the goal of African lifestyle and expressed hostility toward modern technology and research. All of its members, even those few who were white, adopted the surname "Africa." They were obtrusive not only in their vocal objections to all established authority but also in their manner of living "in harmony with nature." Many of their neighbors, both black and white, saw MOVE's rejection of normal standards of living as promoting rats, filth, disease, child neglect, and neighborhood deterioration. Verbal abuse, physical intimidation, and rumors of a weapons arsenal at the MOVE headquarters on Thirty-third Street in the Powelton section of West Philadelphia increased the atmosphere of tension and anxiety. From an escalation of jailings of MOVE members, hunger strikes, weapons collections, neighborhood protests, eviction notices, and police surveillance, to the storming and destruction of the MOVE headquarters and the death of a police officer in 1978, the crisis was covered by a press

that took sides pro and con along with the public and the city administration. The almost anticlimactic final act, including both the trials of MOVE members for murder and the investigation of the police involved, illustrated the climate of the end of the 1970s, much as the birth of MOVE had been indicative of the decade's beginning.

For many who lived in Philadelphia during the 1970s, their mental image of the decade will always be fixed by television scenes of angry people waving picket signs, shouting epithets at each other, and even engaging in physical combat. A strong state law prohibiting strikes by public employees, which had been passed in 1947, was liberalized in 1970 and set the stage for many of the disturbances that followed. With increasing regularity throughout the decade municipal employees, particularly teachers and transportation workers, sought to improve their benefits in the face of rising inflation, from municipal budgets teetering on the edge of bankruptcy. City services were frequently paralyzed. Huge protest rallies around City Hall held by supporters of these special-interest groups created that new 1970s phenomenon, "grid lock" traffic on center-city streets. Shouting matches became fist fights on the floor of the city Council, and civility declined another notch. Ordinary citizens also engaged in fights and rock-and bottle-throwing melees about equally directed at the police and at each other, often with racial overtones. Those occasions that were serious enough to be designated "riots" usually began at some small personal level and lacked the ideological content of the protests and demonstrations of the 1960s.



Mayor Frank L. Rizzo, parade on Chestnut Street below Sixth (1976). A corner of the Robm and Haas Building, completed in 1964, appears at the right.

PHILADELPHIA DEPARTMENT OF RECORDS, ARCHIVES DIVISION

Frank Rizzo, as mayor of Philadelphia, a troubled city in a troubled time, did not inspire neutral or objective response. His strong, partisan feelings and his expressions of them provoked unreasoned loyalty on one side, violent opposition on the other. The loyalty triumphed over scandals, increased taxes, lie-detector tests, and national derision, and elected him to a second term. The opposition used lawsuits, the press, and intraparty warfare in its attempt to loosen his control. In the spring and summer of 1976 a petition to recall the mayor was circulated under provisions of the Home Rule Charter. While more than the required 145,448 signatures (25 percent of the votes cast in the previous mayoralty election) were collected, technical political maneuvering through the courts prevented the vote from taking place. When Rizzo decided to run a third time in 1979 it was necessary to change the Home Rule Charter, which limited the mayor to two consecutive terms. The battle was fought ostensibly on ideological grounds, "charter reform" against "no change," but the hidden agenda was whether or not Rizzo would be reelected, for there were few who doubted that this would be the result of a change in the rule. The change in the charter was in fact defeated by a majority of two to one. In the ensuing 1979 election campaign William J. Green, Jr., became the Democratic nominee and therefore inevitably mayor of Philadelphia. The election left unanswered, however, the question of whether the voters had responded to the stated or hidden agenda. Were they rejecting Frank Rizzo and signaling the end of a political phenomenon of the 1970s? Or were they making a statement that belief in government tradition was still strong, and the machinery was not to be tampered with for the sake of a single election or a single individual?

V

The 1970s was not merely the decade of race awareness, Rizzo, and gentrification. It was also, in Philadelphia, as in the nation at large, the decade of the 200th birthday of the United States. The life and death of Philadelphia's Bicentennial celebration illustrate in a neatly self-contained form the way in which municipal paralysis could develop in a city where sharp factions indulged in government by veto.¹⁹

Mindful of the problems encountered by the great Centennial Exhibition of 1876 because planning began only four years before the event, and noting that the National Park Service had been restoring the Independence National Historic Park since 1951, a group of citizens had formed the Bicentennial Celebration Committee as early as 1964. In December of 1965 Mayor Tate appointed a committee of nineteen "representative citizens" to study and evaluate their plans. The group included some of the best known names in Philadelphia, leaders of business and industry and publishers of the major newspapers, all men at the height of their careers and known for participation in civic affairs. Ethnicity and race were represented by the president of the Italian American Cultural Society and by a black judge of the United States District Court. The committee was to make the decision on how the 200th

birthday of the country was to be celebrated, but in so doing it was expected to "invite expressions from the community as to the kind of observance it would be most appropriate for Philadelphia to undertake and provide a forum for interested citizens and organizations to present their views."²⁰

A year and a half later the group was reorganized as the 1976 Bicentennial Corporation. While some of the original members were still involved, there also were more City Hall people included: the executive director of the City Planning Commission, the president of the city Council, the mayor, the city finance director, the city representative and director of commerce, along with representatives of the Old Philadelphia Development Corporation and the Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation, and the international representative of the United Steel Workers of America. Although the chairman announced boldly that Philadelphia would absolutely have a celebration in 1976 to mark the 200th anniversary of the nation's independence, it was clear that no agreement could be reached on the form of the celebration. Some clung to the traditional major exposition and world's fair located on a single site, but others favored instead a series of celebrations and conventions. By August 1967, \$135,000 of the city's money had already been spent with no particular results.

In true 1960s fashion a "counter group" of prominent Young Philadelphians, as they were called, proposed that the fair grounds be built over the Thirtieth Street Station at a cost of \$1.2 billion, the permanent structure to pay for itself eventually in taxes. Membership in this group was both larger and more diverse than the city-backed corporation, and it tended to reflect the rising ambitious establishment of the future: its lawyers and businessmen were still forging their careers; its government people were middle echelon, and more of them were involved in the delivery of human services; its news people included the broadcast media; and there were members of the arts and design communities, of the universities, and even a psychiatrist. The Young Philadelphians suggested use of the theme "The Permanent Revolution," while other, more local or narrowly defined, groups entered the controversy, presenting plans to involve the whole city and turn it into a vast renewal project. All the ideas were expensive, based on the expectation that the Congress would agree that the national birthday should be celebrated in Philadelphia where it had all started, and that therefore most of the needed development money would be federal. If their backers had reread the history of the Centennial perhaps they would have known better. Boston too had competed in Washington for the right to the Bicentennial, but prudently withdrew in mid-1969 when it became obvious that the idea (as well as the money) would be sunk in the morass of national politics. Philadelphia continued to chase the elusive pot of national gold until 1972 when the Nixon administration decided against a single-site celebration and adopted a scattered-site plan. Philadelphia's eventual share of the federal funds was a modest \$50 million.

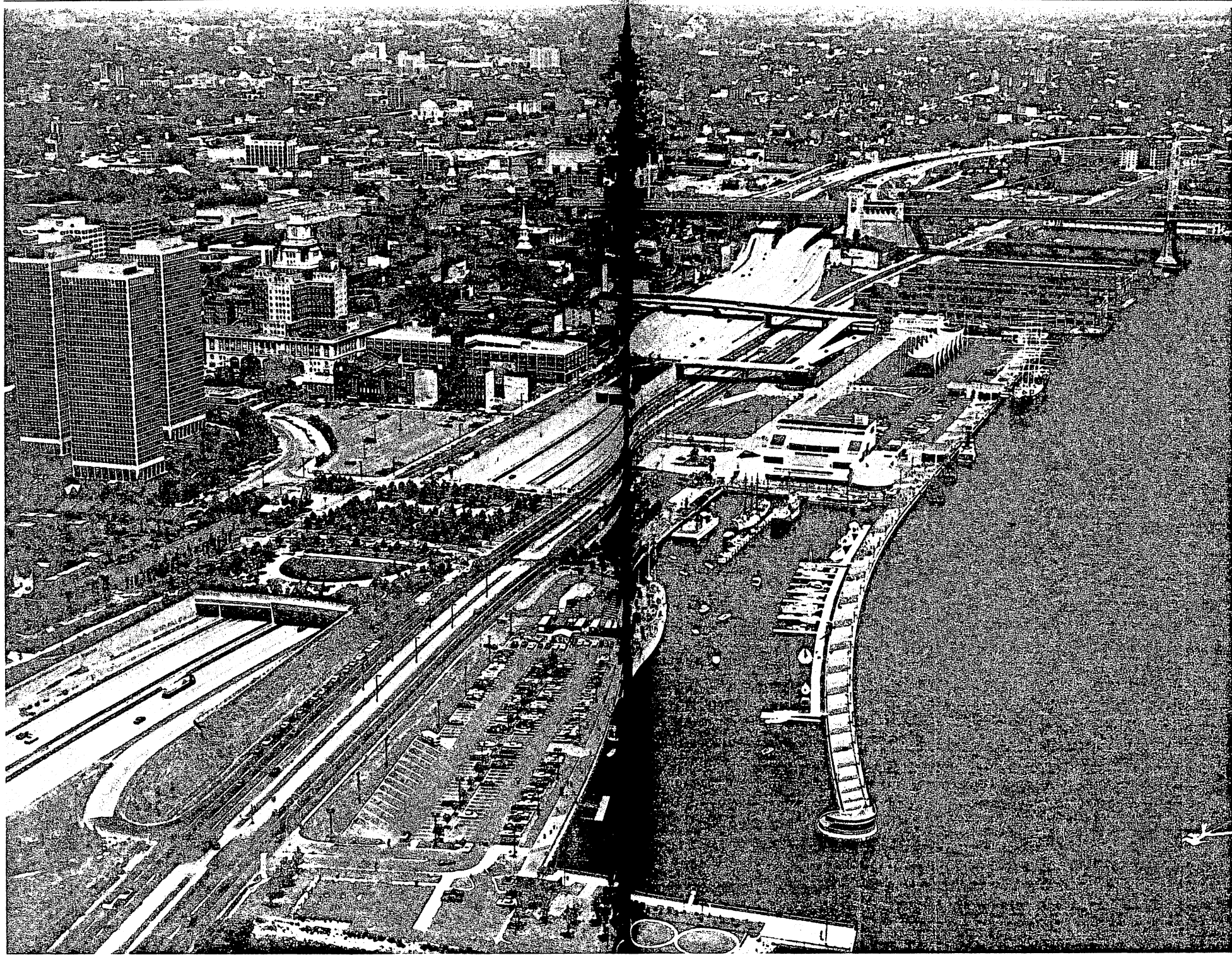
The problem was of course ideological as well as functional. The late 1960s were a bad time nationally and locally to plan expensive panegyrics to the

American dream. Leaders of the "new" black community threatened to disrupt the plans if they were not given jobs in the organization: black membership on the board of the Bicentennial Corporation rose to six, including three blacks and one Puerto Rican who were regarded as activists, but the corporation had hired no black staff members. Nor was this the only dispute that arose to indicate minority disaffection with establishment goals. The corporation was called "lily white" and a "bigot organization" by the citywide Black Community Council, while other black activists questioned the propriety of holding a national birthday before tackling such problems as education and housing. A city Council member of Polish background accused the corporation of excluding Polish-American activists. Since another member of the Polish community was in fact a member of the corporation, this complaint accented the complex divisions between local community leaders and accepted members of the political structure.

In the ensuing years plan after plan was expensively plotted and discarded, the idea of Thirtieth Street Station or Fairmount Park returning every now and then like a symphonic refrain. State, county, and municipal governments dragged their feet about contributing funds until they were sure that the federal government was going to come through. Businessmen worried that they would get stuck with the bill, and community action leaders continued to object to spending money on window dressing while the city rotted away underneath. By the time the newly elected mayor, Frank Rizzo, reorganized the planning and implementation unit in its final form as Philadelphia '76, \$3 million had already been spent and, as an editorial in the *Daily News* put it, "The price of baloney comes high. . . . Philadelphians are weary of Bicen [sic] talk (and bills) and no specifics. . . . This, remember, is a city that doesn't have enough money to keep its kids in school. If the Bicen planners expect to survive, we suggest that they come up with something more than high-sounding phrases."²¹

Much of the facelifting, however, while billed as part of the Bicentennial, was actually done with funds slated for general improvements to Philadelphia without reference to the celebration. They became part of the plan because their completion coincided with the dates of the celebration. They included the final five-year, \$30-million stage of the restoration of Independence National Historic Park by the federal government, including Franklin Court, the Liberty Bell pavilion, the Visitor's Center, the restored First and Second Banks of the United States, and the Old City Tavern; the Art Museum with \$8 million in new improvements; and the Penn's Landing area from Market

OVERLEAF: *Aerial view of Penn's Landing and Route 1-95 (Skyphotos, 1981). Society Hill Towers rise at the left near Dock Street which covers Dock Creek where, traditionally, William Penn disembarked at the Blue Anchor Tavern (Front Street at Dock Creek) in October 1682.*



to South Streets along the Delaware River, where \$12 million in public improvements provided a walkway along the river, a boat basin to serve as a home for historic ships, and a landscaped "world sculpture garden."

Municipal projects expressly undertaken for the Bicentennial reflected the ideology of the 1970s both in their conception and in their eventual failure to attract popular support. All were oriented toward the "people" approach to the American experience, in sharp contrast to the 1876 Centennial with its stress on technology and nationalism, its explicit faith in progress. The Living History Center, a huge modern building on Independence Mall, was designed to serve as a museum of contemporary Philadelphia and as the centerpiece of the city's Bicentennial effort. An impressive, highly professional film costing over \$2 million was produced to tell the Philadelphia story, and was shown in the central space of the center on a giant 100-foot screen at regular intervals daily, but a lack of other exhibits or attractions left the Living History Center without any public appeal. It closed soon after the Bicentennial and the building became an enormous white elephant, feeding on the city budget until it was sold to the educational television station, Channel 12, and its sister radio outlet, WUHY. The "Design for Fun" exhibit at the Civic Center was never intended for permanence despite its \$2-million price tag, but it accurately reflected a 1970s approach to life, with its focus on the average American's pursuit of leisure. The other two municipal endeavors were indicative of the deep split that weakened Philadelphia from top to bottom. One was a Black History Museum (later the Afro-American Historical and Cultural Center) and the other was a Mummers' Museum, honoring one of the oldest, best known attractions in Philadelphia—the New Year's Day Mummers Parade—but seen by many citizens as a bastion of white exclusiveness, partly because participants were almost exclusively white and also because of the heated controversy that had arisen in 1964 over the use of blackface in the parade.

In the end the planners created what they called a "scaled-down" celebration. The director of Philadelphia '76, political survivor William L. Rafsky, wanted to "give the city the appearance of being exciting—of being a city of fun." Critics expressed reaction to the plans in a much less flattering way: "what Dilworth envisioned as a monument to the twentieth century renaissance, Frank Rizzo has reduced to a giant ward picnic."²² Ward picnic or not, Philadelphia '76 presented the city as a performance. The emphasis was on entertainment, with many different parts of the city serving as a backdrop. The summer before the celebration actually took place a kind of dress rehearsal for "the big bash" was held along the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. It was for this Philadelphia Festival '75 that the colorful banners of the nations of the world were first raised along the Parkway. There were an Art Caravan, ethnic foods, a children's amusement park, the sounds of music from "Bach to bluegrass," open-air dancing and theater. Much of the activity was sponsored by the cultural institutions that border the Parkway, but Bicentennial '76 cooperated with the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance and firmly established the idea of entertainment as the key to success.



Liberty Bell Pavilion, Independence Mall. The bell was moved from the hall to the mall on January 1, 1976.

INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK COLLECTION

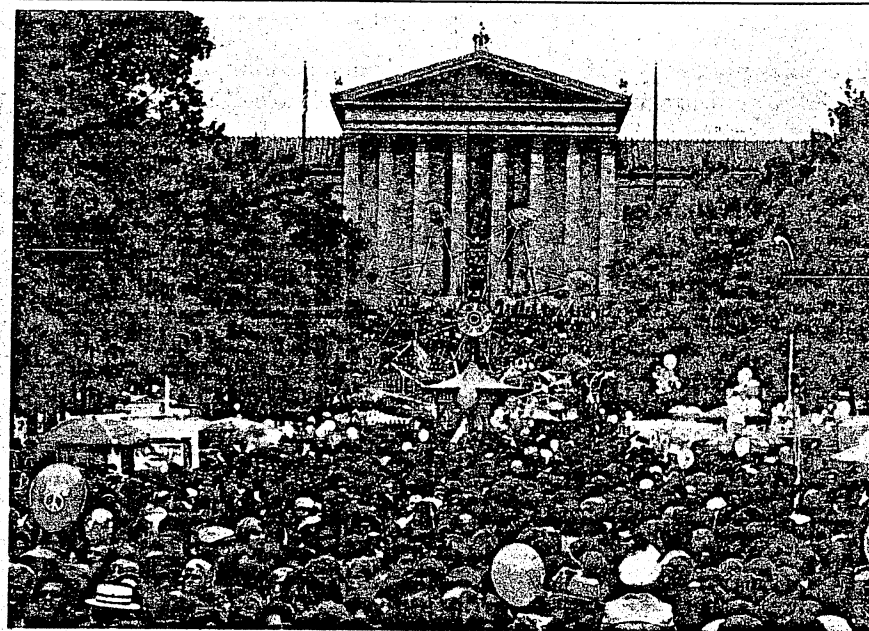
The events of the Bicentennial Year began at midnight on New Year's Eve with a formal ceremony in which the Liberty Bell was moved out of Independence Hall to its new home on the Mall. January 1 saw a balloon ascension from the square, as well as the traditional Mummers' Parade which featured a Bicentennial theme. Throughout the rest of the year, every week, almost every day had its special event, and the patriotic motif was visually extended to the smallest details; even many fire hydrants were painted red, white, and blue. The celebration itself drew mixed reviews. The usual charges of corruption, favoritism, and ineptitude were leveled at Bicentennial '76. There were fears about the inadequacy of facilities—hotel space, public toilets, parking, and transportation—for the twenty million expected tourists. When fewer than half that number actually visited the city, there were complaints, often from the same sources, that money had been wasted on overpreparation. Some of the entertainments, such as the play *1776* presented every night in

a huge tent on Independence Mall, were poorly attended and lost money or closed early. Others, like big-band concerts on the Art Museum steps, were highly successful and were extended. Despite a tragic conclusion to the summer in the outbreak of "Legionnaires' Disease" among visiting American Legion conventioners, the *Inquirer*, looking back a year later, judged the Bicentennial a success. It noted, "much of that spirit is alive and well today . . . in ways and manners which may not have been invented by the Bicentennial experience, but which gained confidence through it. The city looks better, it feels better to walk its streets."²³

One permanent legacy of the Bicentennial does indeed seem to be an improved image and atmosphere in the city. The cultural institutions and private businesses of Philadelphia have continued to stress public entertainment and activity. Since the Bicentennial the list of public events taking place around the city has grown longer and longer and reflects the diversity of Philadelphia's neighborhoods and its people. There have been Polish fairs, Lithuanian days, German dances, and a street fair and parade put on by the South Street Renaissance. In Society Hill the old Second Street market shelters a flea market on weekend days during the summer, while classical music groups (many of the players students from one of the music academies in Philadelphia) entertain on the sidewalk just beyond, as do mimes and musicians. Other concerts take place regularly at Penn's Landing. The restaurant renaissance that began in the early 1970s as a response to gentrification has continued to boom, giving Philadelphia a new reputation as a good place to dine out. On Olde City Day each of the eateries of the Front and Chestnut Streets area sets up a table on the sidewalk and offers its wares to passersby. Super Sunday, an annual one-day festival on the Parkway, continues to attract huge crowds annually, and to publicize the cultural institutions that sponsor it.

The new image of Philadelphia had made an even greater impression beyond the local area. The August *New York Times* devoted a lead article in its Sunday Travel Section to the fun that could be had where once it was only pretzels, the Liberty Bell, and rolled-up sidewalks.²⁴ The steps of the Art Museum have become a strong visual image of Philadelphia for the whole country through a climactic scene in the internationally popular moving picture *Rocky*, as have City Hall, the Italian Market, and the distinctive quality of the red-brick row houses. Since nothing succeeds like success, winning (or almost-winning) sports teams have led to a new phrase—the "City of Champions": the Philadelphia Flyers, led by center Bobby Clarke and goalie Bernie Parent, won the National Hockey League's Stanley Cup—the first expansion team to do so—in 1974 and 1975; the Phillies, after winning the National League Eastern Division championships in 1976, 1977, and 1978, at last captured their third league pennant and their first World Series championship in 1980 on the strong left arm of pitcher Steve Carlton and the home-run power—and all-around skills—of perhaps the best baseball player of his era, Mike Schmidt.

No quantity of cultural band-aids can cure the very real problems that



Super Sunday at the Eakins Oval at the Art Museum end of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway (September 9, 1980).

PHILADELPHIA BULLETIN



Phillies Fans celebrate the 1980 World Series victory.

PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES

- Dilworth and Shedd were set in motion by the unglamorous previous superintendent, C. Taylor Whittier, and board member Elizabeth Greenfield, including nondiscrimination actions, early childhood education, and concentration of full-time teachers in black schools. The big change came in 1965-1966 when federal funds under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act became available (interview of Dennis Clark with Ezra Staples, former school official, June 4, 1981). For a view of school problems from the neighborhood level, see Peter Binzen, *Whitetown, U.S.A.* (New York: Random House, 1970).
31. Graham Finney, a planner who worked for the school district in the 1960s, saw the key problem of sustaining school reforms affected by two lines of policy he termed "short-sighted," the attempt to "do too much too soon," and the failure of not "heeding ethnic and labor forces that are crucial in the school system" (Graham Finney, interview, Jan. 1, 1978, Walter M. Phillips, Sr., Oral History Collection, p. 16). For ethnic competition among school district personnel, see Murray Friedman and Daniel Elazar, *Moving Up: Ethnic Succession in America* (Philadelphia: American Jewish Committee, 1976). The disruption in the schools in the 1960s is chronicled by Henry Resnick, *Turning on the System: War in the Philadelphia Public Schools* (New York: Pantheon, 1970).
 32. Thomas J. Donaghy, *Philadelphia's Finest: A History of Catholic Education in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, 1692-1970* (Philadelphia: American Catholic Historical Society, 1972).
 33. "A Guide to the Establishment of the Community College of Philadelphia," Philadelphia Commission on Higher Education, Jan. 1964, and Allen Bonnell, "Master Plan for the New Campus," 1968 (both in the office of the President, Official Records of the Community College of Philadelphia).
 34. Martin Meyerson et al., *Gladly Learn and Gladly Teach: Franklin and His Successors at the University of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978).
 35. John Rhoads, "Temple University Campus Planning Report," Temple University, May 1969; Herman Niebuhr, "A Program for North Philadelphians," mimeo, Center for Community Studies, Temple University, 1961.
 36. Valerie Sue Halverson Pace, "Society Hill, Philadelphia: Historic Preservation and Urban Renewal in Washington Square East" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1976). A visual record of changes in the cityscape is contained in Edwin Wolf 2nd, *Philadelphia: Portrait of an American City* (Harrisburg: Stackpole Books, 1975), pp. 320-36. See also Nancy Love, "Paradise Lost," *Philadelphia Magazine* 59 no. 7 (July 1968): 72.
 37. "Annenberg," *Philadelphia Magazine* 60, no. 4 (May 1969): 64.
 38. Rena Corman, *Air Pollution Primer* (Philadelphia: American Lung Association, 1969).
 39. A critique of the emphasis on downtown development was presented by Paul Levy and Dennis McGrath, "Selective Resurgence: Corporate Strategy for the Urban Northeast," Institute for Civic Values, Philadelphia, 1980. See also Muller, Meyer, and Cybriwsky, *Philadelphia: A Study of Conflicts and Social Cleavages*, pp. 35-64. A broad view of metropolitan problems by key figures in the

reform effort is presented in Stephen B. Sweeney, *Metropolitan Analysis* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1958).

40. Cyril Bahr Roseman, "Public-Private Co-operation and Negotiation in Downtown Redevelopment: A Study in the Decision Process in Philadelphia" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1963). Roseman believed the complexity of the planning process at times resulted in haphazard output. Another view is given by Cynthia Pushaw, "Urban Renewal in Philadelphia, 1942-1980: The Program, the Process, the Proposals" (Honors thesis, Bryn Mawr College, April 21, 1980). Graham Finney, who served on the City Planning Commission, believed that recommendations for the Community Renewal Program stressing the social dimensions of planning were rarely accepted by the commission (Graham Finney, interview, Jan. 11, 1978, Walter M. Phillips, Sr., Oral History Collection, p. 4).
41. Bertram Zumeta, in Newman, ed., "The Politics of Utopia."
42. Conrad Weiler found the base of political authority in the city during and after the reform to be "tenuous and unstable," and prey to "manipulation of ethnic and ideological symbols," its direction "largely determined by national events" (Weiler, *Philadelphia: Neighborhood Authority and Urban Crisis*, pp. 211-12). Another observer found the effect of the reform years to be "superficial," with politics not much changed (J. R. Fink, "Reform in Philadelphia: 1946-51" [Ph.D. dissertation, Rutgers University, 1971], p. 231). Former city Council Pres. Paul D'Ortona, responding to the question of "Who subverted reform in Philadelphia?" said, "The people themselves. The voters of Philadelphia broke it down." He criticized the lack of voter participation (Paul D'Ortona, interview, May 17, 1977, Walter M. Phillips, Sr., Oral History Collection, p. 5). Decreasing voter participation is detailed in Peter McGrath, "Bicentennial Philadelphia: A Quaking City," in Dennis Clark, ed., *Philadelphia 1776-2076: A Three Hundred Year View* (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1975), pp. 69-100.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Study of recent Philadelphia history must be undertaken through archival research, since there are not as yet many secondary sources and books relating to the period following World War II. The *Bulletin Almanac*, published until 1976 by the *Evening Bulletin*, provides a brief summary of annual events. The Archives of the City of Philadelphia has available papers and records of the executive branch of city government and of the city Council and the courts. The library of the City Planning Commission and the records of the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority and the Philadelphia Housing Authority provide detailed information on major physical changes in the city. The Urban Archives of the Paley Library at Temple University contain an excellent collection of personal recollections and agency records pertaining to this period. *Philadelphia Magazine* has numerous articles after 1960 dealing with city affairs, as do the metropolitan and local community newspapers, and such ethnic papers as the *Philadelphia Tribune*.

Studies of particular community networks and situations can be reviewed with great profit, including the research reports of the Bureau of Municipal Research, the Pennsylvania Economy League, and the Philadelphia Council for Community Advancement. The studies and reports of the Fels Institute for Local and State Government and the Community Leadership Seminar provide background on problems of city administration and civic organization. Demographic and economic data in the files of the Chamber of Commerce of Philadelphia and the files of a wide array of institutions is generally accessible.

Dr. Henry Klein in his doctoral dissertation at Temple University, "The Network of Community Organization Leadership" (1964), gives a helpful profile of the power elite of the city. Recollections of city changes are contained in unpublished memoirs of the Hon. James H. J. Tate, former mayor, and such energetic citizens as Frank Delaney, former director of the Germantown Commu-

nity Council, but these are privately circulated at this point.

The extraordinary photographic collections of the Urban Archives of the Paley Library at Temple University and at the Library Company of Philadelphia and the newsfilms of local television stations are a great visual treasury, as is the slide collection of the Philadelphia Cultural Consortium.

Federal and state archives contain a massive amount of material, for the period was one of swift expansion of programs of all kinds at those governmental levels. Although United States Bureau of the Census materials have been placed on computers, there is no guide to the vast compilations of data dealing with the city that is even minimally adequate. The Center for Philadelphia Studies of the School of Public and Urban Policy at the University of Pennsylvania was launched in the 1970s to provide a continuing vehicle for study of the city with modern methodology.

THE BICENTENNIAL CITY, 1968-1982

1. Editorial, *Inquirer*, July 4, 1977.
2. The statistics for this section were figured on data compiled from several sources. Some general information can be obtained from the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), which has tables for the years 1950-1968, taken from the reports of the United States Bureau of the Census. The 1980 *Yearbook of the Britannica* is also useful. Other sources consulted include *Preliminary Reports, 1980 Census of Population and Housing* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census), for Pennsylvania and New Jersey; *Philadelphia Statistical Data '77* (Philadelphia: City of Philadelphia Department of Finance, Office of the City Economist); *Tract Group Profile* (Philadelphia: City Planning Commission, July and Nov. 1977); *Technical Information Paper: 1980 Census, Special Population Summary for Philadelphia Census Tracts* (rev. ed.); Philadelphia: City Planning Commission, June 1981). Printed statistics for earlier periods can be found in Dennis Clark, ed., *Philadelphia 1776-2076: A Three Hundred Year View* (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1975), and Peter O. Muller, Kenneth C. Meyer, and Roman A. Cybriwsky, *Metropolitan Philadelphia: A Study of Conflicts and Social Cleavages* (Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger, 1976).
3. Several good maps illustrating population and its movement within the city can be found in the *Technical Information Paper, 1980 Census*.
4. Muller et al., *Metropolitan Philadelphia*, p. 12.
5. *Bulletin*, Jan. 1, 1970, suburban section.
6. *Philadelphia Statistical Data* states in its forward: "originally conceived to serve as a source of basic statistical information on the economy of Philadelphia, and was intended for use primarily by the business community. . . . Our experience has demonstrated that the demand of the business sector for localized data transcends traditional economic interest in employment, transportation, systems, taxation, and the like. . . . the treatment accorded subjects included . . . has

also been amended . . . better to meet the requirements of business research." See also *Issues for the 1980's* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia City Planning Commission, 1979), esp. pp. 7-8, which also deals with economic developments.

7. These and most of the statistics which follow are based on "Preliminary Financial Statement for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1980," City of Philadelphia, May 1981, typescript in files of the City Planning Commission. This report includes much data for all of 1980.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 1-3.
9. For a good description of suburban mall development see Muller et al., *Metropolitan Philadelphia*, p. 49ff.
10. "Preliminary Financial Statement," p. 1-4, Table 1-3, lists the largest nongovernment employers in Philadelphia in 1980, based on figures supplied by the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce. The largest by far is the University of Pennsylvania, with 12,500 paid personnel. Bell of Pennsylvania with 8695 is next, and the others over 5000 include Temple University; SEPTA; Sears, Roebuck, & Co.; the Budd Co.; and Philadelphia Electric. The overall list has twenty-four employers, with the smallest at 1755 employees; six of these are in education or delivery of public services, four are retailers, eight in production of goods, and six in money and finance.
11. Clark, *Philadelphia, 1776-2076*, "Philadelphia 1876: Celebration and Illusion," p. 51.
12. *Bulletin*, Jan. 1, 1970, p. 20; *Issues for the 1980's*, p. 20.
13. Richard Webster, *Philadelphia Preserved: Catalog of the Historic American Buildings Survey* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1976), p. 8. This is an important book that not only presents complete coverage of identified historic buildings in Philadelphia, some of which have long since disappeared, but also provides an excellent historical overview of the significant neighborhoods.
14. For the ethnic background of Philadelphia neighborhoods, see Caroline Colab, *Immigrant Destinations* (Philadelphia: Temple University

- Press, 1977). and Muller et al., *Metropolitan Philadelphia*, esp. Part I.
15. Letter from Paul R. Levy to the Advisory Committee of the Institute for the Study of Civic Values (late fall, 1977), author's personal files.
 16. A good discussion of the political process in contemporary Philadelphia is found in Peter A. McGrath, "Bicentennial Philadelphia: A Quaking City," *Philadelphia 1776-2076*, pp. 74-81.
 17. Memorandum, Oct. 25, 1977, from J. T. Kirkman on the "History of External Efforts to Curb Police Abuse in Philadelphia," *Inquirer* Library File, "Phila- Govt- Police Dept Advisory Board, 1970- "
 18. These signs are still posted in various parts of the city, although a new streets policy was initiated by the Green administration.
 19. Information on the Bicentennial is mostly drawn from news sources, including the *Inquirer*, the *Bulletin*, the *Daily News*, and *Philadelphia Magazine*.
 20. *Inquirer*, Dec. 1, 1965.
 21. *Daily News*, Editorial, "The Invisible Bicen [sic]," Aug. 25, 1972.
 22. Don Haskins and Fred Hamilton, "New Bicen [sic] Deadline Is Set," *Daily News*, Oct. 25, 1972; Mike Mallowe, "How They Blew the Bicentennial," *Philadelphia Magazine* 66, no. 6 (June 1975): 116.
 23. Editorial, *Inquirer*, July 4, 1977.
 24. Steven V. Roberts, "A foot in Philadelphia on a Car-less Weekend," *New York Times*, sect. 10, "Travel," May 27, 1979.

INDEX

Page numbers in *italics* refer to illustrations.

- Abbott, Clara Barnes, 632-33
 Abernethy, Lloyd M., 524-65
 abolition movement, 294-97, 354-55, 386-91, 392, 393
 Academy of Music, 345, 382, 383, 451, 452, 459, 493, 516, 541, 563, 577, 632, 639, 653, 689, 690
 Academy of Natural Sciences, 242, 420, 447-48
 Adam, Robert, 175
 Adams, Abigail, 155, 178, 179, 744
 Adams, Henry, 436
 Adams, John, 120, 122, 132-33, 169, 190, 194, 197, 198, 203, 221, 744
 Adams, John Quincy, 259, 302
 Adams, Samuel, 152
 Adet, Pierre, 193, 194
 AFL-CIO, 654, 665
 Agnew, D. Hayes, 321, 447
 Agnew, John, 277
 agriculture, 3, 4, 5, 18, 24, 25, 37, 38, 200, 208-9, 259-60, 265, 428, 430
 airports, 647, 696-97
 Alexander, Raymond Pace, 615-16, 681
 Alexander, Sadie T. M., 592
 Alison, Francis, 84, 85, 101
 Allen, James, 141
 Allen, Nehemiah, 21
 Allen, Richard, 187, 254
 Allen, William, 52, 63, 64, 75, 81, 83, 84, 97, 100, 103, 104, 109, 131
 Alms House, 44, 61, 83, 105, 186, 282, 446, 741, 742
 Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railroad Employees (AASERE), 548-50
 America First Committee, 636, 639
 American Anti-Slavery Society, 294, 354
 American Company, 91, 92, 192
 American Daily Advertiser, 249, 300
 American Federation of Labor (AFL), 339, 495, 548, 619, 642, 643
 American Magazine, 66, 86-87
 American Medical Association, 243, 315, 319, 320
 American party (Know-Nothing party), 350, 369, 384, 388
 American Philosophical Society, 55, 98, 149-50, 161, 173, 173, 174, 175, 191, 240, 241-42, 257, 331, 690, 742
 American Protestant Association, 356-57
 American Republican Association, 357
 American Revolution, 39, 55, 58, 86, 108, 109-54, 201, 453, 738
 Philadelphia captured and occupied by British in, 133-43
 Americans for Democratic Action (A.D.A.), 651-52, 661, 666
 American Steamship Company, 430, 432, 483
 American Weekly Mercury, 65-66, 67
 Ames, Fisher, 170
 amusement parks, 517-18, 534
 Anderson, Add B., 680
 Andrew, James, 226
 Andrews, Jedediah, 48
 Anglicans, 2, 31, 34, 49, 55, 83, 89, 101, 146, 167-68
 Quakers vs., 28, 84, 100
 Annenberg, Moses and Walter, 630, 691
 Anschutz, Thomas, 504
 Anthony, Susan B., 434