

Allen Dieterich-Ward. *Beyond Rust: Metropolitan Pittsburgh and the Fate of Industrial America.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016. 360 pp. \$37.95, cloth, ISBN 978-0-8122-4767-1.

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Pittsburgh is not Homestead, nor is it Weirton, Wheeling, or Steubenville; yet “Pittsburgh” often stands in as an umbrella term for a broader twelve-county region that includes parts of West Virginia and Ohio. As Allen Dieterich-Ward demonstrates in *Beyond Rust: Metropolitan Pittsburgh and the Fate of Industrial America*, the fabled recovery of Pittsburgh was not shared throughout the region and the measures that successfully eased Pittsburgh’s transition to a postindustrial economy could not easily be replicated and applied within the greater metropolitan, tri-state area. Dieterich-Ward argues that politically different state agendas, weaker regional leadership, and competing local interests prevented the formation of effective cross-county or state coalitions while Pittsburgh was able to leverage its political and economic power to further its municipal reform program known as the “Pittsburgh Renaissance.” In identifying the differences between the metals and extraction-dependent periphery and the economically diverse city, Dieterich-Ward sets up a clear comparison between the city and region without muting distinctions within the region. He intends *Beyond Rust* to expand the discussion of urban renewal on a regional level, identifying parallel processes between urban redevelopments and rural construction projects in the second half of the twentieth century. He ar-

gues that as the Pittsburgh Renaissance expanded in the 1960s and 1970s, while facing more internal and external opposition, a new regional planning formulation emerged in the 1980s and 1990s that allowed some areas to strengthen their economic ties to Pittsburgh while redevelopment within the city concentrated on more adaptive reuse and historic preservation. The successes and failures of the Pittsburgh Renaissance and its regional imitators illuminate the limitations of “neoliberal urbanism” both within and beyond the city (p. 9). Dieterich-Ward effectively proves his point that the differences between the city and surrounding region prevented the replication of urban redevelopment programs, and that differences within the region led to divergent paths of recovery with varying degrees of stability and success.

Dieterich-Ward divides the book into three chronological sections. Part 1, “The Steel Valley,” examines the development of the region and the influence of the Pittsburgh Renaissance on the region, beginning with the end of the nineteenth century through the 1940s. Part 2, “A Region of Contrasts,” identifies ways in which the positive effects of the Pittsburgh Renaissance did not spread through the rest of the Steel Valley, examining the 1950s through the 1980s. Part 3, “Post-Industrial Pittsburgh,” traces competing visions of economic redevelopment and lingering efforts to

reindustrialize from the 1990s through the 2000s. Beginning with the late nineteenth-/early twentieth-century expansion of industry in the region, he shows the unique strands of developments that created distinct social and cultural identities despite proximity within the region, thus leading to future complications a century later.

The Pittsburgh Renaissance organized immediately after World War II, as local business and political leaders in Pittsburgh expressed concerns over the city's dependence on steel and lack of new industrial investment despite the war production boom. Significantly, while Pittsburgh elites recognized the precarious position the city would be in if it did not take deliberate action to diversify, city residents enjoyed the benefits of postwar production and prosperity in relative ignorance of the city's broader economic woes. The early Renaissance projects of the late 1940s and early 1950s, smoke controls, flood controls, and new Downtown office buildings, did not signal distress but "modernization." Smoke and air pollution, for example, had long been a feature of the industrial city that signified economic prosperity while simultaneously contributing to illness. Renaissance leaders attacked smoke as a first step in a broader Renaissance agenda to improve the overall quality of life within the city, anticipating that such improvements would lead to additional investment. Although leaders of the Renaissance were actively trying to remake the city to be more attractive than, and competitive with, its larger regional neighbors (especially Cleveland), to secure a more diverse industrial and corporate base, the Pittsburgh Renaissance operated from a position of power, not vulnerability--a significant difference from attempts to create a regional renaissance.

Chapter 1, "Building the Region," provides a foundation for why the Pittsburgh Renaissance seemed to create a usable template for other cities seeking economic growth. Control over the river-based transportation systems of the nineteenth

century led to competition between regions and states, forming distinct and lasting rivalries. Geographic, climate, and market variations fueled regional development along divergent but interconnected paths between Pittsburgh, Wheeling, and Steubenville. The growth of the Carnegie Steel empire and subsequent demands for new extractive methods and materials changed interregional relationships and essentially created a "Steel Valley," in which the region served Pittsburgh. Wheeling and Steubenville developed their own unique industrial roles, but Carnegie's Pittsburgh and affiliated interests dominated the region. While Pittsburgh became the industrial superstar, the other cities benefited from and contributed to Pittsburgh's success, creating an impression of shared status. The significant differences in scale of operations between Pittsburgh and its regional neighbors meant that although Wheeling and Steubenville shared Pittsburgh's industrial and economic identities, they did not share in its social or cultural institutions or secondary economies, nor did the other cities have equivalent populations. The Pittsburgh Renaissance plan to build a coalition of public and private interests, popular support for civic improvements, and enough political and economic capital to command respect at state and national levels seemed like an easy enough formula to replicate, especially in towns that fancied themselves no less important than Pittsburgh to their respective industries and rural peripheries.

Replicating Pittsburgh's success turned out to be more complicated than its imitators assumed, due to Pittsburgh's unique position in the midcentury industrial landscape. Although Pittsburgh's industrial and technological peak came at the turn of the century, it remained an important industrial city during World War II. Pittsburgh's economic and political leaders held the attention of powerful national and corporate audiences. David Lawrence, mayor of Pittsburgh from 1946 to 1959 and co-creator of the Pittsburgh Renaissance, was not just a popular local politician but was *the*

Democratic boss of Allegheny County. He could mobilize political support far beyond the city limits and carried his influence to the state level even before he became governor in 1959. While every city may have elites, not every city had the Mellon family, whose fortune today exceeds that of the Rockefellers and Kennedys combined.[1] Having Richard King Mellon committed to the cause of Pittsburgh's transition from Smoky City to desirable metropolis was no panacea, but neither could others replicate his influence on a smaller scale in the Steel Valley. The Renaissance goals were specific to Pittsburgh's industry and the will of its core participants; those goals were not shared throughout the region. Although the Renaissance leaders saw Pittsburgh's infamous air pollution as detrimental to the city's economic health, political leaders in Wheeling and Steubenville resisted local and national pollution regulations for decades, believing that such regulations would limit economic growth. Dieterich-Ward opens chapter 3, "The Pittsburgh Story," by describing the deadly "Donora Smog" in 1948, in which a cold air system trapped toxic smoke over the Monongahela valley town for five days, killing twenty people. The Pittsburgh Renaissance depended on reducing air pollution in Pittsburgh that contributed to a \$250 million decline in city real estate assessments and jeopardized future investment in the city. By the time of the Donora Smog in 1948, Pittsburgh had enacted smoke control measures that effectively transformed the city and protected it from similar conditions, thus raising the city's esteem in the eyes of potential corporate investors. However, the very companies that viewed Pittsburgh's improved air quality as essential for further investment in the city continued to profit from the continued pollution emitted by mill towns like Donora. In Pittsburgh, environmental regulations were a necessary foundation of economic improvement, but political leaders in the regional periphery feared any interference with, or regulation of, local industries.

Distance and optimism may have softened the edges of the Renaissance's near-misses in the eyes of regional imitators. Enforcement of smoke controls was a crucial first step in the entire Renaissance agenda--outside investors would not contribute to the redevelopment efforts without smoke controls in place--but this created a primary election battle for Lawrence that nearly unseated him, despite his status as Democratic boss. Even though he faced an electoral threat, Lawrence remained confident enough in his position not to shy away from unpopular programs. However, a less secure politician, with fewer connections, may not have been so willing to legislate against his voting base. Additionally, not every Renaissance program was successful. Chapter 7, "No Development beyond This Point," chronicles the mounting opposition to large-scale neighborhood demolition and redevelopment beginning in the mid-to-late 1960s. As the Renaissance expanded beyond the downtown business district and into residential neighborhoods, the previously imperious planners faced mounting opposition from displaced residents who were increasingly able to interrupt developments by mobilizing community-based organizations. Historic preservationists also organized to oppose commercial projects that threatened historically significant or unique buildings. Even when planners were able to complete large-scale projects, they did not necessarily produce desirable results. The Allegheny Center Mall failed to anchor a larger redevelopment of the North Side; and while the Civic Arena opened with its dramatic retractable roof, the rest of the proposed Center for the Arts complex did not, in part due to neighborhood opposition aroused by the Civic Arena project's failure to provide the promised affordable housing or long-term skilled employment for residents that originally had won their support of the project.[2] The project left nine acres of cleared but undeveloped property in the middle of Downtown Pittsburgh and a legacy of mistrust in its wake.

Chapter 5, “We’re Appalachia, But We Don’t Need to Be,” best exemplifies the competing ideas of rural land use in the Renaissance era. While these options are extreme, they represent two divergent paths taken during the 1960s. One created a state park in the Laurel Highlands region (about an hour southeast of Pittsburgh) while the other, Barnesville, Ohio, expanded mining operations with the use of a new, twelve-storey mining shovel, one of the largest in the nation. These two opposing examples make clear the conflict in regional economic growth: tie the local future to Pittsburgh with the hopes of shifting to a recreational and tourism-based economy while restoring and preserving the natural landscape; or use new technology to extract resources from the earth to provide local jobs, while further degrading the environment. Dieterich-Ward effectively presents the complicated decision-making processes and local social and cultural influences each community faced. He writes, “in neither case was land use change a straightforward narrative of environmental decline or a simple story of enlightened conservation” (p. 148). Each option makes irrevocable choices for residents, without any guarantees of future success or stability.

In part 3, Dieterich-Ward examines changing ideas of redevelopment within Pittsburgh and between Pittsburgh and the region. Broadly, both the city and the region faced conflict over the pursuit of a redevelopment that would eclipse the possibility of reindustrialization. As new iterations of Pittsburgh Renaissance planners sought a more sensitive approach to redevelopment by incorporating adaptive reuse rather than large-scale demolition, the conversion of former industrial sites signaled a permanent shift away from industrial redevelopment. Regional cities faced a choice between capitalizing on new highway connections to reimagine themselves as dependent suburbs of Pittsburgh, sacrificing an independent identity, or attempting to preserve and expand the dominant industry at the cost of environmental stability. The development opportunities based on

highway connections elevated some areas, while further depressing and isolating others. A modest resurgence of coal mining through longwall and surface mining threatened to literally destroy the very regions most economically dependent on mining. However, the promise of reindustrialization was extremely attractive to areas bound by a generations-old industrial identity. As Pittsburgh began to develop a more sophisticated relationship with its industrial past and its nearest neighbors, through historic preservation and heritage tourism, the truth of the uneven and inconsistent regional postindustrial economic recovery became obscured by sites like Station Square and The Waterfront at Homestead, and completely hidden by PNC Park and Heinz Field.

Pittsburgh’s recovery from the collapse of American steel manufacturing and transition to the “eds and meds” technology, healthcare, and service economy has been well-discussed. But one need not travel far outside of the city to see that this “transition” is at best incomplete, and at worst complete myth. The regional economy still depends heavily on extractive industries that pose significant environmental threats. The “recovery” of Pittsburgh did not extend far beyond the borders of the city, and even within Pittsburgh the legendary recovery does not hold up to intense scrutiny. Pittsburgh’s postindustrial transition left it with 40 percent of its land tax exempt due to nonprofit real estate ownership and continued state distressed status since 2003 (pp. 288-289). Pittsburgh may look like an exemplary postindustrial success story, but beyond the surface of its polished downtown, and beyond the urban core, lies a more complex tale.

Dieterich-Ward provides a nuanced and clear interpretation of the region that has been lacking from Pittsburgh scholarship for decades. This study of the formation of distinct regional identities allows readers to see ways in which social and cultural ties influence and conflict with economic choices. Dieterich-Ward effectively shows

the limitations of Pittsburgh's influence over the region and illuminates an aspect of deindustrialization scholarship often left in the shadows: the precariousness and fragility of preserving an industrial economy in a postindustrial world. *Beyond Rust* will resonate with Pittsburgh scholars, urban/suburban historians, and urban planners without question, but the importance of better understanding the political and economic interests of rural industrial workers after November 2016 will make this book required reading for a broader audience.

Notes

[1]. Abraham Brown, "175 Years Later, the Mellons Have Never been Richer. How'd They Do It?," *Forbes*, July 21, 2014, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/abrambrown/2014/07/08/175-years-later-the-mellons-have-never-been-richer-howd-they-do-it/#54d944b07489>, accessed June 3, 2017.

[2]. The Allegheny Center Mall had lost most of its retail tenants by the 1990s and recently reopened as an office complex called Nova Place, renovated by Faros Properties. Mark Belko, "Developer Plans to Turn North Side's Allegheny Center Into Technology Hub," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, May 21, 2015, <http://www.post-gazette.com/local/city/2015/05/21/Developer-to-turn-Allegheny-Center-into-a-technology-hub/stories/201505210194>, accessed June 3, 2017; "Photos: The Old Allegheny Center Mall in Pittsburgh is Now Nova Place," *WTAE Action News*, February 14, 2017, <http://www.wtae.com/article/photos-the-old-allegheny-center-mall-in-pittsburgh-is-now-nova-place/8800386>, accessed June 3, 2017.

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