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*Devastation and Renewal* offers readers a look into the dark legacy of Pittsburgh's industrial past and the attempts to clean up the city and its surroundings. The book contains ten essays presented at "Pittsburgh's Environment: A Historical Perspective," which was held at the Senator John Heinz Pittsburgh Regional History Center in September of 2000. The resulting book serves as an environmental biography of Pittsburgh that fuses environmental and urban history, a hallmark of Joel Tarr's previous works.[1] Modeled after such pioneering works as Andrew Hurley's *Common Fields: An Environmental History of St. Louis*, Craig Colten's *Transforming New Orleans and Its Environments: Centuries of Change*, and Char Miller's *On The Border: An Environmental History of San Antonio*, *Devastation and Renewal* is a valuable addition to this growing field of literature.

Edward K. Muller and Joel A. Tarr discuss the interaction between the natural and built environments in the first essay, contending that "the construction of an industrial city on a complex natural site produced a landscape that encapsulated inherent conflicts and tensions over issues of environmental quality and ecological protection" (p. 12). To further this argument, Muller and Tarr detail the process of landscape change caused by Pittsburgh's industrial focus. Their arguments concerning transportation and sewage are especially well done as the authors tie in geography as well as engineering.

Edward K. Muller, Joel A. Tarr, Terry F. Yosie, and Nicholas Casner contribute fitting essays on water pollution. Muller explores the relationship between the population of city and rivers, while Tarr, Yosie, and Casner examine sewage, water pollution, and water quality. Tarr and Yosie's essay not only discusses water supply and sewage but also reveals how Pittsburgh came to be a regional city as environmental issues entered the political arena (p. 84). Casner provides a particularly interesting discussion of acid mine drainage and its contamination of the regional water supply, highlighting the problems of abandoned mines and the conflict between money and the environment.

Air pollution is thoroughly covered by the contributions of Angela Gugliotta, Lynn Page Sny-
Sherie R. Mershon, and Joel A. Tarr. Gugliotta's work fuses social and environmental history, exploring the changing attitudes toward air pollution in Pittsburgh. In addition, she carefully traces the reason why the city committed itself to the pursuit of industry as well as the social attitudes this course fostered. Snyder's exploration of the 1948 Donora air pollution disaster illustrates the harm to public health caused by unchecked and unregulated industrial growth, and how public health officials increasingly used science to advance the cause of environmental responsibility. In their essay, Mershon and Tarr also present the evolution of social ideas concerning smoke, but unlike Gugliotta, they assert that technology had an important role in reducing smoke emissions.

Andrew S. McElwaine's study of slag dumping in Nine Mile Run tells how the politically powerless failed to end slag dumping near their homes, despite their valiant attempts to stop it. The essay also provides environmental and urban historians with essential information on the parks movement, suburbanization, and development of former waste sites.

Samuel P. Hayes's analysis of the evolution of Pittsburgh's "environmental culture" offers readers a personal account drawn from his forty years of experience as a "participant observer" (p. 194). His understanding of the development and activities of this movement provides a valuable addition to the work not usually found in other environmental histories.

Despite the wide range of subjects presented within the volume, five common themes run throughout the work: 1) the conflict between environmental responsibility and economic prosperity, 2) the slow process of changing societal beliefs and values, 3) the conflict between the people, industry, and the government, 4) ignorance (sometimes supposed) of the long-term effects of environmentally irresponsible behaviors, and 5) the evolution of the environmentalist movement in Pittsburgh. Of these five, the process of changing societal beliefs and values is the most thoroughly explored, giving the work the added appeal and depth of social history. The best example of this is Mershon and Tarr's essay concerning smoke and how people's ideas changed over time.

While the book is an original and interesting piece of scholarship, it does have some faults. The largest of these is its fixation on air and water pollution. While Pittsburgh's industries gave the city the reputation of being a "smoky, dismal city, at her best" (p. 3), and pumped an unfathomable amount of pollutants into the three rivers surrounding the city, the contamination of the soil it seems underrepresented in Devastation and Renewal. This is understandable, considering Pittsburgh's smoky industrial legacy of river transportation and steel production, but the predominant concern with air and water pollution detracts from its coverage of soil contamination. Furthermore, a thorough discussion of clean up efforts in the greater Pittsburgh area would have been a welcome addition to the volume. While specific instances are mentioned, such as mine sealing and brownfields projects, an overall account of cleaning up after decades of environmental irresponsibility would have helped to show the scope of change the region has made. As a topical collection of essays, Devastation and Renewal also lacks a broad overview of Pittsburgh's tragic environmental past and the efforts to atone for its sins. While the book does not pretend to be such a volume, this is important to note for new scholars searching for research topics.

Devastation and Renewal has many strengths and much to offer both academic and popular audiences. All of the contributors are to be commended on the depth and originality of their research, as much of it was drawn from primary source materials. While the book makes a noticeable contribution to environmental history, it also makes a mighty contribution to the history of Pittsburgh and its surrounding region. Perhaps the book itself will play a role in the continued en-
environmental renewal of the area by encouraging others to maintain the city's renewal after years of abuse.

Note


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