Book Reviews

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A retired reporter for the Tribune Review has authored a biography of famed Pittsburgh priest Father James Cox (1886-1951). The pastor of St. Patrick Parish in the Strip District, who created a shantytown around his church, was the voice of the poor and jobless during the Great Depression. Cox led one of the first mass marches – 25,000 unemployed who were dubbed Cox’s Army – on the nation’s capital in 1932, confronting President Herbert Hoover in a White House meeting. Cox later ran for president on the Jobless Party ticket. His humanitarian reputation was sullied after he was charged with mail fraud for running a rigged fundraising contest.


An emeritus professor of history at Manhattanville College has authored the definitive biography of Constantine Bohachevsky (1884-1961), who was appointed in 1924 as the first bishop of Ukrainian Catholics in the United States. Based upon recently opened archives in Italy, Ukraine, and the United States, the author traces the Ukrainian rite’s history in Europe as a prelude to detailing the massive Ukrainian immigration to the United States and the developing ecclesiastical life in the New World. The new bishop’s strong leadership overcame a multitude of challenges and resulted in a network of parishes that included a number in Western Pennsylvania. In 1954, Bohachevsky was named the first metropolitan archbishop of his see in Philadelphia.


This is the first history of St. Bernard Parish in Mt. Lebanon since Father Thomas Wilson published his architectural history of the church in 1995 and marks the centenary of the “Cathedral of the South Hills.” Roddy is a journalist and parishioner. This volume is a popular account of the parish, its pastors, and its school.


Des Moines, Iowa is approximately 800 miles from Pittsburgh, yet the Catholic history of the two sees is joined through the work of several priests who served in both jurisdictions. The newly published centennial history of the Diocese of Des Moines highlights the importance of Father John Francis Brazill (1827-1885), a priest of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, whose desire for missionary work took him to Iowa, where he was instrumental in the development of two dioceses in that state. This volume also highlights the role of another Pittsburgh priest, Bishop Ralph Hayes (1884-1970), who served as bishop of Davenport, from which territory the Diocese of Des Moines was created. The author of this exceptionally well-written history is a famed Jesuit professor of history at Marquette University.


The latest publication by Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation (PHLF) is a lavishly illustrated guidebook to Pittsburgh’s Downtown architecture. Some 180 photographs illustrate 48 sites and districts, including St. Mary of the Point Church, designed by architect William P. Hutchins and constructed in 1936. The history of the Union Trust Building notes the legend of its rooftop “chapel” stemming from the property’s previous use as St. Paul Cathedral. The text is drawn from major PHLF works published over the years. This volume updates the 2011 guidebook, Whirlwind Walk: Architecture and Urban Spaces in Downtown Pittsburgh.


Pittsburgh was the initial foundation of the Passionists in the New World. One of the order’s most famous priests was Father Fabian Flynn (1905-1973), who served as a U.S. Army chaplain in World War II, took part in the invasions of Sicily and Normandy, acted as confessor to Nazi war criminals during the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, and assisted Hungarian revolutionaries in Budapest. As an official of Catholic Relief Services, Flynn helped refugees during the Cold War. This biography encompasses the complex political, economic and social history of Europe in the struggle against Fascism and Communism. The author is an associate professor of history at the University of Scranton.


This intriguing story of the search for the bones of St. Peter, first bishop of Rome, begins with the story of a Pittsburgh priest, Monsignor Walter S. Carroll. A native of Holy Rosary Parish in Homewood and one of three priest-brothers (Bishop Howard Carroll of Altoona-Johnstown and Archbishop Coleman F. Carroll of Miami), the young priest served both Monsignor Giovanni Montini (the future Pope Paul VI) and Pope Pius XII. Walter Carroll was entrusted with the delicate task of soliciting funds from a wealthy Texas oilman, George Strake, for a search for the long-lost burial place and bones of the Apostle Peter below St. Peter’s Basilica. The author’s recounting of the decades-long search and its key players makes for an absorbing read. The author is an attorney and noted author.


A prolific Jesuit historian, 90-year-old John O’Malley, has produced a study of the bitter controversy over papal infallibility at the First Vatican Council (1869-1870). This work addresses the role of Pittsburgh Bishop Michael Domenec who opposed such a decree on the basis that it “would be a great obstacle to conversions in the United States and spell disaster there.” Despite fears of a schism, the Council promulgated the decree Pastor Aeternus on papal primacy and infallibility. The church became more pope-centered; in the terminology of that period, it became ultramontane. The author is a native of the Steubenville, Ohio area.

Matteo Binasco (Kathleen S. Cummings, ed.), Roman Sources for the History of American Catholicism 1763-1939 (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2018), hardcover, table of...
contents, notes, bibliography, index, 196 pp.

This comprehensive reference volume is the product of an idea expressed at a 2014 seminar in Rome, hosted by the University of Notre Dame's Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism – the need for a guide to the 59 principal archives and libraries in the Eternal City that hold the greatest potential for researchers studying American Catholic history. The author researched and wrote this book during his tenure as the Cushwa Center's postdoctoral fellow in Rome from 2014 to 2017. Detailed profiles describe each Roman repository. The volume's introduction reviews the relationship between the Holy See and the Catholic Church in America since the Treaty of Paris of 1763. This work confirms that Roman sources are crucial to understanding this shared history. Pittsburgh's first bishop, Michael O'Connor, figures prominently in the presentation of Roman archival sources.


Black Pittsburgh is known as the setting for August Wilson's famed plays about noble but doomed working-class folks. But the Pittsburgh black community once rivaled the larger black worlds of New York and Chicago. It was the center of a black Renaissance in culture, music, sports, business, and journalism. The former managing editor of CNN Worldwide presents in this work the masterfully told stories of black men and women in the midst of the city's thick soot and smog days. Catholicism – in the form of Holy Trinity School, Central Catholic High School, and Catholic Charities – is embedded in this story of a world unknown to most Pittsburghers.


Archbishop John Hughes is acknowledged to be one of the most significant, controversial, and effective prelates that the American Catholic Church has ever seen. Originally a priest of the then-Diocease of Philadelphia, he was assigned to Western Pennsylvania to do missionary work in the 1820s. This well-researched and provocative biography astutely analyzes Hughes's life in the political, social, and ecclesiastical context of his times. While the archbishop was feisty, this work is a fair appraisal of a determined ecclesiastic who was labeled “Dagger John” by his enemies. This a richly informative and wide-ranging examination of not only the leader of Catholic famine immigrants and the builder of St. Patrick's Cathedral, but also of nineteenth century American Catholic life.


Through photographs, the art director for Pittsburgh Magazine has documented the Steel City's forgotten industrial and community sites where “beauty in decay” still exists. Churches built by devout Eastern European immigrants in the 19th and early 20th centuries appear among the many visual reminders of how Pittsburgh earned its name as the “Steel City.” The lens is focused on dark forgotten buildings where haunting beauty still exists.


This eumenical presentation of the lives and work of “clergywomen” in several Christian denominations and nondenominational churches includes a long chapter on the Ladies of Bethany, a Dutch order of sisters who were invited to Pittsburgh by Bishop John Wright in the early 1960s. The women established The Vineyard at North View Heights public housing project on Pittsburgh's North Side. After the project became 99% black, the sisters concluded that black leadership was warranted. The six sisters then established The Ark and The Dove ecumenical retreat center in the North Hills. Some sisters became involved with various ministries in metropolitan Pittsburgh. The sisters candidly acknowledged that religious communities would likely assume a different model in the future. Of the two Ladies of Bethany interviewed for their chapter in this volume, Michelle Van Voorst died on July 13, 2018 at age 96. Only Monique Dietz, I.B., survives locally; the order numbers only 24 worldwide. The author is a professor emerita at Virginia Tech.


St. Anthony’s Chapel in Pittsburgh’s Troy Hill neighborhood contains one of the world's largest collections of relics. The author of this work tells the stories of twenty of the saints whose relics rest in the chapel. Mike Aquilina provides the Foreword.


The title of this volume comes from Father Jean-Pierre Medaille, S.J., who brought together the first Sisters of St. Joseph in LePuy, France in 1650. Jeanne (Mother St. John) Fontbonne reestablished the congregation in 1807 after the bloodletting of the French Revolution. The order arrived in the United States in 1836 at Carondolet, Missouri. Sister Agnes Spencer entered the Diocese of Erie in 1860, assuming direction of St. Ann's Academy in Corsica (Jefferson County). Sisters Austin Kean (a native of Loretto), Hortense Tello and Xavier Phelan entered the Diocese of Pittsburgh in 1869, establishing a convent in Ebensburg (Cambria County) and opening Mount Gallitzin Seminary for boys just five days after their arrival. In 1901, the sisters relocated to Baden (Beaver County), where they constructed a new motherhouse and Mt. Gallitzin Academy. This volume traces growth of the order 1836-1920. A planned second volume will present the unsung contributions of women religious in the United States from 1912 onward, with a particular focus on the Sisters of St. Joseph. The author is a Sister of St. Joseph from Denver who holds a Ph.D. in Historical Theology from St. Louis University.


The Church actively recruited tens of thousands of young women into religious orders primarily to serve as teachers. This volume focuses on the recruitment methods, persuasion tactics, school settings, suitability of girls, and the role of parents. The stages of religious formation are examined. The numbers grew steadily, peaking in 1965, the same year that Catholic school enrollment reached a pinnacle. The author's use of archival records, memoirs, oral history and religious publications provides a window into the little-known aspects of American convent life in the mid-twentieth century. Included are passages dealing with several local orders of women religious: Sisters of St. Joseph of Baden, Sisters of the Humility of Mary, Sisters of Mercy, School Sisters of Notre Dame, and Sisters of St. Francis of Millvale. Duquesne University and some local Catholic personages appear. Succinctly, this work is built around a quotation of Sister Mary Isabel Concannon, C.S.J.: “Let every teacher in every grade be a vocation recruiter.”
This sesquicentennial history of the Diocese of Rochester, New York, is done in the classic tradition of the French publisher—thoroughly researched text and lavish illustrations. For Western Pennsylvania, this volume presents the current state of the several parish churches in the Rochester diocese that were designed by famed Pittsburgh architect John Theodore Comès a century ago. Appropriately, this volume is dedicated to Father Robert F. McNamara, the recently deceased historian of the Rochester diocese, whose earlier histories documented the importance of Comès to the architectural development of the Rochester diocese.

Five years of intensive preparatory work preceded publication of this history commemorating the 150th anniversary of establishment of the Diocese of Green Bay, Wisconsin (1868). While that see city is perhaps best known to Pittsburghers for its professional football team (the Packers), Catholics recall that Bishop David A. Zubik served as 11th bishop of Green Bay before his return to Western Pennsylvania as 12th and current bishop of Pittsburgh. The diocesan story, episcopal biographies, and history of parishes, religious orders and institutions make this volume a delightful introduction to Catholic life in northeastern Wisconsin.

This recent addition to Arcadia’s Images of America series traces the immigration of Poles to Pittsburgh and surrounding areas in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and the remnants of that heritage today. The book is built on the four pillars of Polish life: home, church, fraternal organizations, and Polish newspapers. Polish Hill (Polski Góra) is a focal point of local Polish history. The work concludes with an examination of Pittsburgh Polonia today.

The Klan of the 1920s was a national phenomenon, with Pennsylvania being a particular center of the group’s activities. The KKK terrorized Catholics, Jews, immigrants, and blacks. This volume recounts the infamous KKK march and accompanying riot in Carnegie (Allegheny County) that targeted a heavily Catholic multi-ethnic community, where thousands turned out to resist the marchers. The author, a history professor at NYU, explains how and why the KKK roared to social and political power in the post-World War I period. In her recounting of that history, she offers some chilling comparisons to the present day.

This is the latest edition of a classic work by the founder of the International Poetry Forum and professor emeritus at Duquesne University. The author, in a series of essays, presents the soul of the city of Pittsburgh and its people. The work includes commentary on the demolition of the famed St. Peter the Apostle (Italian) Church in the Lower Hill District at the inception of the city’s urban renewal program, and the efforts of Epiphany’s pastor to ensure that his church did not succumb to the wrecker’s ball. This is an entertaining memoir.

Contrary to the prevailing view that mandatory Protestant Scripture studies and Protestant schools explain American literacy, a professor emerita at the University of Louisville has written convincingly that Catholic women were important educators of American women through convent academies and schools with developed pedagogical curricula. Pittsburgh’s long-forgotten Poor Clares and the Sisters of Charity were among these early pioneers. The detailed chronology of early convent schools is of particular value in evidencing the geographical scope of educational work by women religious in the early nineteenth century.

This is the fifth edition of the author’s examination of American ecclesiastical architecture. It contains an alphabetical listing of architects, artists, and artisans during the 60-year period beginning in 1860. Biographical sketches complement photographs and images. Churches included are not limited to Western Pennsylvania. The towers of St. Augustine Church in Lawrenceville are displayed on the book’s cover. The author is a Pittsburgh area resident and maintains a website at http://www.josephsibbelofny.com.

During World War II, some 51,000 Italian prisoners of war were sent to the United States, with more than 1,200 of them housed at the Letterkenny Army Depot near Chambersburg in Franklin County, Pennsylvania. After Italy changed sides in the war, they experienced more freedom than German POWs, and received support from Italian-Americans in Pennsylvania especially those in Western Pennsylvania. The individual stories of POWs, captors, and American supporters provide a glimpse of wartime life that is only now being told some 70 years after conclusion of the war.

This is the story of a young woman from Butler—baptized at St. Paul Church and schooled at St. Peter School by the Millvale Franciscans—who at age 17 entered the Ursulines on Long Island, New York. This book candidly presents the author’s evolution toward independence. Her increasing awareness of the order’s constraints led to her departure from the convent. The author’s retrospective examination has not answered the “why” for her actions with respect to her religious vocation. After leaving the convent, the author married and became a teacher and writer. Her stories and plays for children have become popular on Amazon.com.

This is the biography of Polish-born artist Jan Henryk de Rosen (1891-1982), famed for his execution of murals in St. Bernard Church in Mt. Lebanon. Recruited by the pastor, Father Joseph Lonergan, de Rosen’s murals were done in durable wax tempera (a mixture of pigment and beeswax liquefied by Dutch beer). A convert to Calvinism, de Rosen’s ancestors were Jews who had converted to Catholicism. He painted the private chapel of Pope Pius XI at Castel
Gandolfo. Trapped in the U.S. at the beginning of World War II, the painter became professor of church art at Catholic University of America. Among his works are the great mosaic of Christ in Majesty in the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., and the largest mosaic in the world at the Cathedral Basilica in St. Louis, Missouri. Locally, his works included the crypt of St. Vincent Archabbey Basilica in Latrobe, St. Genevieve Church in Canonsburg, Blessed Sacrament Chapel in Sacred Heart Church in Shadyside, and Holy Family Church in Lawrenceville. After the closing of Holy Family, the great mural Poland Ever Faithful was moved to the National Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa in Doylestown, Pennsylvania.


Catholic Relief Services was formed in 1943 to address the refugee crisis during World War II. The organization's history and success owe much to two Pittsburghers, Vatican diplomat Monsignor Walter S. Carroll and his brother Monsignor Howard Carroll, who was then assistant general secretary of the National Catholic Welfare Conference (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, today). Included in this volume is the story of Walter Carroll's near death experience with Italian partisans who mistook his motorcar for that of "escaping fascist politicians."


This is the story of a Pittsburgher who grew up in Homewood, attended Catholic elementary school, became an aspirant at Mount Alvernia with the Sisters of St. Francis of Millvale, entered the Sisters of St. Joseph of Baden, and became an elementary school teacher. She left in 1968 and subsequently entered the Nashville Road Church of Christ in Hendersonville, Tennessee. Howe authored several Protestant texts (including a refutation of the Baltimore Catechism) and appeared in numerous television and radio interviews in Europe, Africa, and Asia preaching "gospel truth." She died in February 2016 at age 80. The facts in her autobiography have been altered for evangelical purposes: the Franciscan period is dismissed given the lack of a photograph of her in that order's religious garb; the years of St. Joseph service were 1953-1969, not 1949-1968. An informed Catholic reader will easily detect other errors.

Francis W. Kervick, *Patrick Charles Keely, Architect: A Record of His Life and Work* (South Bend, IN, 1953), softcover, footnotes, appendices, illus., 68 pp.

This slender work, unavailable for decades, has been reprinted. The subject is a native of County Tipperary, Ireland, who immigrated to the United States and became the most prolific architect of Catholic churches and institutions in American history. Some 16 cathedrals and approximately 700 churches and buildings are attributed to him. St. Peter Cathedral in Erie and Immaculate Conception Church in Brookville (Jefferson County) are among Keely's memorials in Western Pennsylvania. The author was a professor of architecture at the University of Notre Dame. A definitive biography of Keely has yet to be written, and a complete listing of his hundreds of ecclesiastical buildings has yet to be compiled. Regrettably, too many of Keely's Gothic churches have been destroyed by fire, closed, or demolished.


This long-forgotten work is worthy of note. Authored by Father Thomas Bryson while he was chaplain at Mt. Gallitzin Academy in Baden, this is a boys' novel in the vein of the famed *Tom Brown's School Days* of the late 19th century. Bryson was a teacher and particularly interested in the educational development of Catholic youth, given the expansion of parish and boarding schools and academies in the early 20th century. Explored in this volume are the pangs of separation from family, peer pressure (bullying in today's terminology), and adult responsibilities. Bryson's clear intent was to inspire in young readers a lifelong love of literature and reading. He was a prolific writer and contributor to the *Pittsburgh Catholic*, served as ecclesiastical superior of the Sisters of St. Joseph, diocesan director of the Holy Name Society, member of both the diocesan Board of Examiners and the Music Commission, and earned a doctorate in philosophy. After 15 years at Baden, Bryson was assigned to found St. Bernard Parish in Mt. Lebanon in 1919, where he initiated construction of the huge parish complex. He died in March 1943. The book was initially marketed at a mere .85 cents; today, the same volume commands a $50 price!

**ARTICLES**


This article analyzes the efforts of Pittsburgh native Coleman F. Carroll, first bishop and first archbishop of Miami (1958-1977), to desegregate Catholic parishes and schools in south Florida during his 19-year administration. Carroll's initiatives stood in stark contrast to the inaction of two other bishops with jurisdiction in Florida, who viewed desegregation as a Communist plot. Yet the result was the elimination of vibrant black Catholic parishes and the departure of black parishioners to other denominations given both white resistance by natives and transplanted Northerners and developing black cultural identity. Carroll's work laid the groundwork for the subsequent integration of hundreds of thousands of Cuban refugees, many of whom were black or of mixed race.


Franciscan Father Charles Bonaventure Maguire was a native of County Tyrone (in the Diocese of Clogher), Ireland, who became a missionary in Western Pennsylvania and served as pastor of St. Patrick Church in Pittsburgh. Noted Irish Franciscan historian Father Anselm Faulkner located previously unknown correspondence of Maguire, and published the material in the historical journal of the Diocese of Clogher. A biography of Maguire accompanies the published letters, which are among the earliest records of Catholic Western Pennsylvania. The entire series may be viewed through JSTOR digital library at [https://www.jstor.org/journal/clogrec](https://www.jstor.org/journal/clogrec).