

Clearing Through the Smoke and Smog: The Beginning of the Pittsburgh Renaissance

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Overview

This curriculum unit, *Clearing Through the Smoke and Smog: The Beginning of the Pittsburgh Renaissance*, is designed to promote the city of Pittsburgh and its grand history in the steel industry by introducing high school students to a city they are unfamiliar with during a time period that has some familiarity. Except for events and demonstrations during the Civil Rights Movement, students learn very little about what took place here.

Students will be presented with a sample of the steel industry and a variety of examples of revitalization occurring in the city during the 1950's and 60s as well as the problems that national developments posed on the city. Students will examine national and local issues and then compare that to what was happening at home with parents/grandparents and other relatives. When they are able to make a direct connection to circumstances that may have formerly been thought of as happening to someone else in another time, students will be more receptive to the lessons within this unit.

The activities in this unit, which will span a period of approximately three to four weeks, will consist of a considerable amount of history as well as writing. For some variety, research and technology will be infused. Using block scheduling (80 minute classes), the activities in this unit can be completed in less than half the time of regular class periods. These lessons can also be broken up to fit with a particular time period being studied in a history class or particular literary period.

Rationale

Students need to know the history of the city in which they live. All of the current tall buildings, sports stadiums and arenas, and highways are things that go unappreciated. These things have always been there for today's high school students. Living in a city full of smoke and smog is inconceivable. It's hard to imagine that Pittsburgh was ever different from what it is now, especially because there are almost no remnants of the smoke and smog.

A renaissance is defined as a rebirth or renewal. Pittsburgh began to renew itself in the 1940's from a smoky, clogged city to a clean, modern one, though even today some people remember it as it was 60 years ago. Because the city is currently undergoing another renaissance, it's important that students understand what Pittsburgh was before its initial rebirth.

After World War II, when Pittsburgh's industries churned out so much of this country's war supplies, the city was a mess. Some days the streetlights would be on at noon because of the smoke and dirt from the factories. Railroad yards covered much ground right beside the downtown area. Traffic and parking were becoming increasingly impossible.

In 1943, political, business, and community leaders formed the famous Allegheny Conference on Community Development. This group studied the problems—and solutions—of Pittsburgh as well as Allegheny County and the surrounding Beaver, Westmoreland, and Washington Counties. Mostly under their direction, great changes were made in the area that changed the face of Pittsburgh and gave it the nickname of the Renaissance City.

Smoke and traffic control measures were put into place in the region. A limited access highway was built into and through the city to the suburbs. The snarl and smoke of the railroad yards were replaced with Point State Park, where the three rivers meet. A new office building development known as Gateway Center was built to help revitalize the downtown. A civic auditorium was built for concerts and sports events. Many other changes were made in lighting, housing, and sanitation that helped clean up the dirt and grime that had covered much of Pittsburgh for so long. Soon, Pittsburgh was a showcase for what other cities could do to improve themselves and the lives of their citizens.

Places of Interest

Point State Park is a delightful 36-acre park located downtown where the tributary rivers join to form the Ohio. At its apex is a large fountain that forces a column of water 150 feet in the air. The base of the fountain is 200 feet in

diameter. You can also see the Fort Pitt Museum and Blockhouse, the site where a famous battle was fought and from which control of the three rivers was maintained in colonial times, first by the French and later by the English.

The *U.S. Steel Building* is a 64-story office building, the tallest structure between New York and Chicago. It is constructed of a special type of steel, "Corten" steel, developed by U.S. Steel. It is not painted and was intended to rust to a tough, brown finish and then stop rusting.

The *Mellon Bank Building* is a 41-floor building, across William Penn Place from the Union Trust Building. It later became Three Mellon Bank Center; in the 1950's, this was built as the U.S. Steel/Mellon Bank Building, when an annex to Kaufmann's Department Store was scheduled to replace the Carnegie Building (previous home of U.S. Steel Corporation; was located just below the Frick Building, on Fifth Avenue).

The *Alcoa Building* is a prime example of aluminum in architectural use. Its 30 stories are sheathed in stamped aluminum panels; its window sashes and frames, heating and ventilation ducts, water piping and complete wiring system are made of aluminum. The building was completed in 1951.

The *State Office Building* has 16 floors and cost \$10,000,000 to build. It was completed in 1957.

The *Hilton Hotel* at the Point is 22 stories high and cost \$15,000,000 to build and furnish. The hotel was completed in 1959.

Mellon Square Park, was dedicated to the memory of Andrew W. and Richard B. Mellon was built with funds supported by three Mellon family foundations and cost over \$4,500,000. Under the park is a multi-level parking garage for 900 cars. The park was completed in 1955.

Companies of Interest

U.S. Steel

Steel crazy after all these years, Pittsburgh-based United States Steel (U.S. Steel, formerly USX-U.S. Steel Group) is the nation's #2 integrated steelmaker (behind Mittal Steel USA). With mills in Alabama, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and the Slovak Republic, U.S. Steel produces sheet and semi-finished steel, tubular and plate steel, and tin products. The company's customers are primarily in the automotive, construction, petrochemical, and steel service center industries. In addition, U.S. Steel offers

services such as mineral resource management, real estate development, and engineering and consulting.

H.J. Heinz

Commonly known as just Heinz, famous for its “57 Varieties” slogan, was founded in 1869 by Henry John Heinz in Sharpsburg, Pennsylvania. Heinz, then 25 years old, began by delivering processed condiments to local grocers by horse-drawn wagon. The company’s first product was horseradish, followed by pickles, sauerkraut, and vinegar. The company was initially named the Anchor Pickle and Vinegar Works, and was run by Heinz and partner L. C. Noble. The name changed to Heinz, Noble & Company in 1872 when E. J. Noble joined on and the company relocated to nearby Pittsburgh. After a banking panic forced him into bankruptcy in 1875, Heinz restarted his business with the help of his brother John and his cousin Frederick, and in the following year they introduced what would become its most well-known product: tomato ketchup. The new company was known as F. & J. Heinz until 1888, when Henry bought controlling interest from his brother and gave the business its current name. Today Heinz markets more than 5,700 varieties in over 200 countries and territories and is listed in Fortune 500.

PPG Industries

Founded in 1883 as Pittsburgh Plate Glass, it was the first commercially successful plate glass company in the United States. They now produce aircraft, automotive, flat glass, coatings, specialty chemicals, and fiberglass products.

Alcoa

The world’s leading aluminum company, Alcoa produced its first aluminum in 1888 as the Pittsburgh Reduction Company, a small plant in what is now Pittsburgh’s Strip District. Alcoa is a Fortune 500 company.

Jones & Laughlin

Benjamin Franklin Jones came to Pittsburgh in 1843. He worked for a private canal line, became the manager and in 1847 a partner in the company. Seeing the emerging importance of iron, Jones sold his interest in the canal business to invest in iron making. By 1850, he had formed American Iron Works which was located on the south bank of the Monongahela River at Birmingham. Pittsburgh banker James Laughlin purchased a large portion of the business and became junior partner in 1854.

The operation quickly expanded to both sides of the river, and in 1860, the Eliza furnaces were erected on the north shore. Over the years, J&L Steel expanded further, ultimately running out of room to grow and opening another location in Aliquippa. Jones and Laughlin Steel continued to expand and thrive until its peak during World War II.

The Men Leading the Renaissance

Financier and banker *Richard K. Mellon* (1899-1970) was one of the richest men in the United States in the 1960's. He was the last great leader of the Pittsburgh-based Mellon financial dynasty. Mellon used his status and wealth to help lead the city's famed renaissance.

David L. Lawrence was born into a working class Irish-Catholic family in the Golden Triangle neighborhood of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. At the time, Pittsburgh was considered a Republican bastion with Democrats holding wide support only in the lower class and among recent immigrants. Lawrence began a Democratic party movement that would one day come to dominate city politics. In 1945, he was elected mayor of Pittsburgh by a narrow margin. Lawrence had developed a seven point program for Pittsburgh during his first days in office making him one of the first civic leaders to implement a dedicated urban renewal plan. His most famous partnership was with Richard K. Mellon, chairman of one of the largest banks in America and a staunch Republican. Despite their political differences, Mellon and Lawrence were both interested in the revival of Pittsburgh and both were early environmentalists. This partnership drove what came to be called the "Renaissance" (later Renaissance I) of Pittsburgh.

After an unprecedented four terms as mayor of Pittsburgh, Democrats drafted Lawrence to run for governor in 1958. During his four year term as governor, he passed anti-discrimination legislation, environmental protection laws, expanded Pennsylvania's library system, passed Pennsylvania's fair housing law, and advocated historical preservation. Lawrence died in November 1966. The David L. Lawrence Convention Center in Pittsburgh and the David Lawrence Hall and Lawrence Towers at the University of Pittsburgh were named in his honor.

H.J. Heinz II was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on October 11, 1844. He began his business career by grating horseradish roots in his basement and selling it in glass jars door-to-door, along with surplus vegetables from the family's garden. His first factory was opened in Sharpsburg in 1869 with a friend, L. Clarence Noble, and named it Heinz and Noble. It went bankrupt in 1875, due to a surplus of crops that year.

In 1876, he sold his first bottle of his famous ketchup after enlisting his brother and cousin to form F&J Heinz. The company became the H. J. Heinz Co. in 1888. In 1890 they developed the familiar keystone logo, for its home state of Pennsylvania, the octagonal shape, and screw cap for the ketchup bottle.

Heinz died on May 14, 1919, leaving his family to carry on the family traditions. Today, the H. J. Heinz Company is a worldwide company, encompassing the brand names of Heinz, Star-Kist, Ore-Ida, Weight Watchers, and many others.

Park H. Martin was born in Allegheny County in the borough of Bellevue. A registered professional engineer, he directed his own engineering business for more than twenty years in the Pittsburgh area. In 1933 Park Martin became chief engineer and assistant director, Allegheny County Department of Public Works, and 1935, planning engineer, and later director of the Department of Planning. Until 1946, Park Martin planned and directed many of the major improvements in Allegheny County, including the Greater Pittsburgh Airport and the Penn-Lincoln Parkway.

In 1945, Martin became executive director of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, serving until his retirement in 1958. In 1955, he received an outstanding achievement award from the Pittsburgh Newspaper Guild. Park Martin died in 1972.

Writers and Artists of Interest

Perry Como

One of the most popular vocalists between the end of World War II and the rise of rock & roll in the mid-'50s, Perry Como perfected the post-big band approach to pop music by lending his own irresistible laidback singing -- influenced by Bing Crosby and Russ Columbo -- to the popular hits of the day on radio, TV, and LP. His early traditional crooner style and later, his relaxed focus on novelty material both were heavily indebted to Bing Crosby, though Como's appeal during the early '50s was virtually unrivalled. Born in 1912 in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, Como was working as a singing barber in his hometown when he began touring with local bandleader Freddie Carlone at the age of 21. By the mid-'30s, he got his big break with Ted Weems & His Orchestra, who headed a popular radio show named Beat the Band. After the orchestra broke up in 1942, Como hosted a regional CBS radio show later called Supper Club. The show's success gained him a contract with RCA Victor Records by 1943, and he also began working in Hollywood with Something for the Boys.

Perry Como's real big break came with the 1945 film A Song to Remember. His rendition of "Till the End of Time" spent ten weeks at the top of the charts and became the biggest hit of the year. Como's dreamy baritone worked especially well on ballads, such as the additional 1945-47 number one hits "Prisoner of Love," "Surrender" and "Chi-Baba, Chi-Baba (My Bambino Go to Sleep)." Hired by NBC for another radio show in 1948, Como crossed over to the emerging medium of television that same year with the Chesterfield Supper Club. The show quickly took off, and eventually earned him four Emmy Awards. In the mid-'50s, Como began to indulge in light novelty fare, the titles often comprising nonsense words – "Bibbidi-Bobbidi-Do," "Hoop-Dee-Do," "Pa-Paya Mama" and "Hot Diggity (Dog Ziggity Boom)." Though he often disliked the songs, they frequently became huge hits and made his reputation as one of the singers who defined the style of music later known as middle-of-the-road pop.

Como's breezy songs had worked well at the beginning of the decade, but his appeal began to wane towards the end of the 1950's, with the emergence of rock & roll and the wave of teen idols. His last number one hit, "Catch a Falling Star," came in 1958. Como was much less visible during the 1960s, but returned in 1970 with his first live show in over two decades, and a world tour followed; a single ("It's Impossible") even made the Top Ten in late 1970. Como continued to record LPs and occasional television specials while making scattered appearances during the 1970's and '80s. On May 12, 2001 Perry Como died in his sleep at his home in Florida.

Rachel Carson

Rachel Carson, writer, scientist, and ecologist, grew up simply in the rural river town of Springdale, Pennsylvania. Her mother bequeathed to her a life-long love of nature and the living world that Rachel expressed first as a writer and later as a student of marine biology. Carson graduated from Pennsylvania College for Women (now Chatham College) in 1929, studied at the Woods Hole Marine Biological Laboratory, and received her MA in zoology from Johns Hopkins University in 1932.

She was hired by the U.S. Bureau of Fisheries to write radio scripts during the Depression and supplemented her income writing feature articles on natural history for the *Baltimore Sun*. She began a fifteen-year career in the federal service as a scientist and editor in 1936 and rose to become chief of all publications for the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. She wrote pamphlets on conservation and natural resources and edited scientific articles, but in her free time turned her government research into lyric prose, first as an article "Undersea" (1937, for the *Atlantic Monthly*), and then in a book, *Under the Sea-Wind* (1941). In 1952 she published her prize-winning study of the ocean, *The Sea*

Around Us, which was followed by *The Edge of the Sea* in 1955. These books constituted a biography of the ocean and made Carson famous as a naturalist and science writer with the public. Carson resigned from government service in 1952 to devote herself to writing.

She wrote several other articles designed to teach people about the wonder and beauty of the living world, including “Help Your Child to Wonder,” (1956) and “Our Ever-Changing Shore” (1957), and planned another book on the ecology of life. Embedded within all of Carson’s writing was the view that human beings were but one part of nature distinguished primarily by their power to alter it, in some cases irreversibly.

Disturbed by the profligate use of synthetic chemical pesticides after World War II, Carson reluctantly changed her focus in order to warn the public about the long term effects of misusing pesticides. In *Silent Spring* (1962) she challenged the practices of agricultural scientists and the government, and called for a change in the way humankind viewed the natural world.

Carson was attacked by the chemical industry and some in government as an alarmist, but courageously spoke out to remind us that we are a vulnerable part of the natural world subject to the same damage as the rest of the ecosystem. Testifying before Congress in 1963, Carson called for new policies to protect human health and the environment.

Rachel Carson died in 1964 after a long battle against cancer. Her witness for the beauty and integrity of life continues to inspire new generations to protect the living world and all its creatures.

Gene Kelly

Gene Kelly was born August 23, 1912 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. While he did not attain his childhood dream of becoming a professional baseball player, his graceful athletic dancing style, charismatic screen persona, and charming singing voice have enchanted generations of moviegoers. His most famous role was Singin’ In The Rain, arguably the most popular musical movie of all time. He also served as co-director on the film.

His dance partners have included Cyd Charisse, Debbie Reynolds, Donald O’Connor, Fred Astaire, Frank Sinatra, and Jerry the cartoon mouse. His innovative, acrobatic routines often involved dangerous feats which he performed himself, such as dancing on and through a just-framed building and swinging on a rope from a pirate ship.

Kelly's numerous awards and achievements include the American Film Institute Lifetime Achievement Award in 1985, induction into the Theater Hall of Fame in 1992, and the National Medal of Freedom from President Clinton in 1994.

Andy Warhol

Andy was born in 1928 in Pittsburgh as the son of Slovak immigrants. His original name was Andrew Warhola. His father was a construction worker and died in an accident when Andy was 13 years old.

Andy showed an early talent in drawing and painting. After high school he studied commercial art at the Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh. Warhol graduated in 1949 and went to New York where he worked as an illustrator for magazines like Vogue and Harpar's Bazaar and for commercial advertising. He soon became one of New York's most sought of and successful commercial illustrators.

The Pop Icon: In 1952 Andy Warhol had his first one-man show exhibition at the Hugo Gallery in New York. In 1956 he had an important group exhibition at the renowned Museum of Modern Art.

In the sixties, Warhol started painting daily objects of mass production like Campbell Soup cans and Coke bottles. Soon he became a famous figure in the New York art scene. From 1962 on he started making silkscreen prints of famous personalities like Marilyn Monroe or Elizabeth Taylor.

The Factory: The pop artist not only depicted mass products but he also wanted to mass produce his own works of pop art. Consequently he founded The Factory in 1962. It was an art studio where he employed in a rather chaotic way "art workers" to mass produce mainly prints and posters but also other items like shoes designed by the artist. The first location of the Factory was in 231 E. 47th Street, 5th Floor (between 1st & 2nd Ave).

Warhol's favorite printmaking technique was silkscreen. It came closest to his idea of proliferation of art. Apart from being an Art Producing Machine, the Factory served as a filmmaking studio. Warhol made over 300 experimental underground films - most rather bizarre and some rather pornographic. His first one was called Sleep and showed nothing else but a man sleeping over six hours.

Nearly Murdered: In July of 1968, the pop artist was shot two to three times in the chest by a woman named Valerie Solanis. Warhol was seriously wounded and only narrowly escaped death. Valerie Solanis had worked occasionally for the

artist in the Factory. Solanis had founded a group named SCUM (Society for Cutting Up Men) where she was its sole member. When Valerie Solanis was arrested the day after, her words were “He had too much control over my life.”

Warhol never recovered completely from his wounds and had to wear a bandage around his waist for the rest of his life.

Andy Warhol Art in the Seventies: After this assassination attempt the pop artist made a radical turn in his process of producing art. The philosopher of art mass production now spent most of his time making individual portraits of the rich and affluent of his time like Mick Jagger, Michael Jackson or Brigitte Bardot.

Warhol’s activities became more and more entrepreneurial. He started the magazine *Interview* and even a night-club. In 1974, the Factory was moved to 860 Broadway. In 1975 Warhol published THE philosophy of Andy Warhol. In this book he describes what art is:

“Making money is art, and working is art and good business is the best art.”

A Bizarre Personality: Warhol was a homosexual with a slightly bizarre personality. In the fifties he dyed his hair straw-blond. Later he replaced his real hair with blond and silver-grey wigs.

The pop artist loved cats, and images of them can be found on quite a few of his art works. One of Andy’s friends described him as a true workaholic. Warhol was obsessed by the ambition to become famous and wealthy. And he knew he could achieve the American dream only by hard work.

In his last years Warhol promoted other artists like Keith Haring or Robert Mapplethorpe.

Andy Warhol died February 22, 1987 from complications after a gall bladder operation. More than 2000 people attended the memorial mass at St. Patrick’s Cathedral. The pop art icon Warhol was also a religious man - a little known fact.

Two years later, in May 1994 the Andy Warhol Museum opened in his home town, Pittsburgh.

Billy Eckstine

Billy Eckstine’s smooth baritone and distinctive vibrato broke down barriers throughout the 1940’s, first as leader of the original bop big-band, then as the first

romantic black male in popular music. An influence looming large in the cultural development of soul and R&B singers from Sam Cooke to Prince, Eckstine was able to play it straight on his pop hits “Prisoner of Love,” “My Foolish Heart” and “I Apologize.” Born in Pittsburgh but raised in Washington, D.C., Eckstine began singing at the age of seven and entered many amateur talent shows. He had also planned on a football career, though after breaking his collar bone he made music his focus. After working his way west to Chicago during the late ‘30s, Eckstine was hired by Earl Hines to join his Grand Terrace Orchestra in 1939. Though white bands of the era featured males singing straightahead romantic ballads, black bands were forced to stick to novelty or blues vocal numbers until the advent of Eckstine and Herb Jeffries (from Duke Ellington's Orchestra).

Though several of Eckstine’s first hits with Hines were novelties like “Jelly, Jelly” and “The Jitney Man,” he also recorded several straightahead songs, including the hit “Stormy Monday.” By 1943, he gained a trio of stellar bandmates—Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, and Sarah Vaughan. After forming his own big band that year, he hired all three and gradually recruited still more modernist figures and future stars: Wardell Gray, Dexter Gordon, Miles Davis, Kenny Dorham, Fats Navarro, and Art Blakey as well as arrangers Tadd Dameron and Gil Fuller. The Billy Eckstine Orchestra was the first bop big-band, and its leader reflected bop innovations by stretching his vocal harmonics into his normal ballads. Despite the group’s modernist slant, Eckstine hit the charts often during the mid-‘40s, with Top Ten entries including “A Cottage for Sale” and “Prisoner of Love.” On the group’s frequent European and American tours, Eckstine also played trumpet, valve trombone and guitar.

Though he was forced to give up the band in 1947 (Gillespie formed his own bop big-band that same year), Eckstine made the transition to string-filled balladry with ease. He recorded more than a dozen hits during the late ‘40s, including “My Foolish Heart” and “I Apologize.” He was also quite popular in Britain, hitting the Top Ten there twice during the ‘50s—“No One But You” and “Gigi”—as well as several duet entries with Sarah Vaughan. Eckstine returned to his jazz roots occasionally as well, recording with Vaughan, Count Basie, and Quincy Jones for separate LPs, and the 1960 live LP *No Cover, No Minimum* featured him taking a few trumpet solos as well. He recorded several albums for Mercury and Roulette during the early ‘60s (his son Ed was the president of Mercury), and he appeared on Motown for a few standards albums during the mid-‘60s. After recording very sparingly during the ‘70s, Eckstine made his last recording (*Billy Eckstine Sings with Benny Carter*) in 1986. He died of a heart attack in 1993.

Billy Strayhorn

An extravagantly gifted composer, arranger and pianist—some considered him a genius—Billy Strayhorn toiled throughout most of his maturity in the gaudy shadow of his employer, collaborator and friend, Duke Ellington. Only in the last decade has Strayhorn's profile been lifted to a level approaching that of Ellington, where diligent searching of the Strayhorn archives (mainly by David Hajdu, author of the excellent Strayhorn bio Lush Life) revealed that Strayhorn's contribution to the Ellington legacy was far more extensive and complex than once thought. There are several instances where Strayhorn compositions were registered as Ellington/Strayhorn pieces ("Day Dream," "Something to Live For"), where collaborations between the two were listed only under Duke's name ("Satin Doll," "Sugar Hill Penthouse," "C-Jam Blues"), where Strayhorn pieces were copyrighted under Ellington's name or no name at all. Even tunes that were listed as Strayhorn's alone have suffered; the proverbial man on the street is likely to tell you that "Take the 'A' Train"—perhaps Strayhorn's most famous tune—is a Duke Ellington song.

Still, among musicians and jazz fans, Strayhorn is renowned for acknowledged classics like "Lotus Blossom," "Lush Life," "Rain Check," "A Flower Is a Lovesome Thing" and "Mid-Riff." While tailored for the Ellington idiom, Strayhorn's pieces often have their own bittersweet flavor, and his larger works have coherent, classically influenced designs quite apart from those of Ellington. Strayhorn was alternately content with and frustrated by his second-fiddle status, and he was also one of the few openly gay figures in jazz, which probably added more stress to his life.

Classical music was Strayhorn's first and lifelong musical love. He started out as a child prodigy, gravitating to Victrolas as a child, working odd jobs in order to buy a used upright piano while in grade school. He studied harmony and piano in high school, writing the music for a professional musical, Fantastic Rhythm, at 19. But the realities of a black man trying to make it in the then-lily-white classical world, plus exposure to pianists like Art Tatum and Teddy Wilson, led Strayhorn toward jazz; he gigged around Pittsburgh with a combo called the Mad Hatters. Through a friend of a friend, Strayhorn gained an introduction to Duke Ellington when the latter's band stopped in Pittsburgh in 1938. After hearing Strayhorn play, Ellington immediately gave him an assignment, and in January 1939, Strayhorn moved to New York to join Ellington as an arranger, composer, occasional pianist and collaborator without so much as any kind of contract or verbal agreement. "I don't have any position for you," Ellington allegedly said. "You'll do whatever you feel like doing."

A 1940-41 dispute with ASCAP that kept Ellington's compositions off the radio

gave Strayhorn his big chance to contribute several tunes to the Ellington bandbook, among them “After All,” “Chelsea Bridge,” “Johnny Come Lately” and “Passion Flower.” Over the years, Strayhorn would collaborate (and be given credit) with Ellington in many of his large-scale suites, like “Such Sweet Thunder,” “A Drum Is a Woman,” “The Perfume Suite” and “The Far East Suite,” as well as musicals like “Jump For Joy” and “Saturday Laughter” and the score for the film Anatomy of a Murder. Beginning in the 1950’s, Strayhorn also took on some projects on his own away from Ellington, including a few solo albums, revues for a New York society called the Copasetics, theatre collaborations with Luther Henderson, and songs for his friend Lena Horne. In 1964, Strayhorn was diagnosed with cancer of the esophagus, aggravated by years of smoking and drinking, and he submitted his last composition, “Blood Count,” to the Ellington band while in the hospital. Shortly after Strayhorn’s death in May 1967, Ellington recorded one of his finest albums and the best introduction to Strayhorn’s work, “And His Mother Called Him Bill” (RCA), in memory of his friend.

Robinson Jeffers

Robinson Jeffers was born John Robinson Jeffers in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the son of the Reverend Dr. William Hamilton Jeffers and Annie Robinson Tuttle. A professor of Old Testament literature and exegesis and a reserved, reclusive person, Dr. Jeffers initiated his son’s education at home by tutoring him in Greek, Latin, and Presbyterian doctrine. The Jeffers family traveled frequently to Europe, where Robinson attended boarding schools in Leipzig, Vevey, Lausanne, Geneva, and Zurich. In 1902 Robinson Jeffers entered the University of Western Pennsylvania (now the University of Pittsburgh) as a sophomore, with a mastery of French, German, Greek, and Latin. When the family moved to Los Angeles the next year, Jeffers matriculated as a junior at Occidental College, from which he was graduated in 1905. Jeffers immediately entered graduate school as a student of literature at the University of Southern California. In the spring of 1906 he was back in Switzerland at the University of Zurich, taking courses in philosophy and literature. Returning to USC in September 1907, he was admitted to the medical school, but in 1910, without completing his academic program at USC, Jeffers entered the University of Washington to study forestry for a year.

Jeffers met Una Call Kuster in 1906; she was three years older than he and married to a prominent Los Angeles attorney. In each other, Jeffers and Kuster found intellectual and emotional stimulation and compatibility that drew them powerfully together. At length, Kuster obtained a divorce and married Jeffers in August 1913. A year later the couple moved to Carmel, where, except for occasional trips to Europe and New Mexico, they spent the rest of their lives. In 1916 they became the parents of twin sons (a daughter born earlier did not survive infancy), and Jeffers began to build a stone cottage for his family. Later he added

the famous forty-foot stone tower, the emblem of “Tor House” (as they called their home). Both structures--the house and the tower overlooking Carmel Bay and facing Point Lobos—figured significantly in Jeffers’s life and poetry.

As an undergraduate and graduate student Jeffers had regularly contributed poems to various student publications. By 1911 he had written a number of generic love poems to Kuster and other women, and in 1912 he privately published some of these and other works in *Flagons and Apples*, to be followed by another collection, the commercially published *Californians* (1916). With the publication of *Tamar and Other Poems* (1924), however, Jeffers turned from the derivative versifying of his first volumes to themes and presentation that quickly won him an enthusiastic audience. The intensity of the long narratives he then began to write contrasted strikingly not only with his earlier work, but also with the works of other poets. In the introduction he wrote for Random House’s reissue (1935) of *Roan Stallion, Tamar and Other Poems*, Jeffers described briefly his misgivings about the direction and advance of the poetry of the 1920’s. Without originality, he said, a poet was “only a verse-writer.” Some of his contemporaries were pursuing originality by “going farther and farther along the way that perhaps Mallarmé’s aging dream had shown them, divorcing poetry from reason and ideas, bringing it nearer to music.” But, he demurred, “It seemed to me that Mallarmé and his followers, renouncing intelligibility in order to concentrate on the music of poetry, had turned off the road into a narrowing lane.... ideas had gone, now meter had gone, imagery would have to go; then recognizable emotions would have to go.” To make an advance, to contribute to poetry, Jeffers affirmed, would require “emotions or ideas, or a point of view, or even mere rhythms, that had not occurred to [his contemporaries].” To this plan to be “original”—which also meant, it should be noted, to recover the former vigor of poetry and to keep poetry related to reality—Jeffers brought enormous learning in literature, religion, philosophy, languages, myth, and the sciences.

Initially, *Tamar and Other Poems* received no acclaim, but when East Coast reviewers discovered the work and began to compare Jeffers to Greek tragedians, Boni & Liveright reissued an expanded edition as *Roan Stallion, Tamar and Other Poems* (1925). In these works, Jeffers began to articulate themes that contributed to what he later identified as Inhumanism. Mankind was too self-centered, he complained, and too indifferent to the “astonishing beauty of things.” The metaphors of incest in “Tamar” and in subsequent poems symbolized mankind’s inability to “uncenter” itself. “Humanity is the mold to break out of” announces the narrator of “Roan Stallion.” However, California, the heroine of this poem, discovers that she cannot achieve the intimate identification with the deity of nature she yearns for. Jeffers’s longest and most ambitious narrative, *The Women at Point Sur* (1927), startled many of his readers. Heavily loaded with Nietzschean philosophy and other ideological cargo, it nearly capsized, but Jeffers

was surprised that many readers of the poem insisted on focusing on what they perceived to be its sensational elements, instead of on the philosophical statement he meant to be of greater significance. Nevertheless, the balance of the 1920's and the early 1930s were especially productive for Jeffers, and his reputation was secure. In *Cawdor and Other Poems* (1928), *Dear Judas and Other Poems* (1929), *Descent to the Dead, Poems Written in Ireland and Great Britain* (1931), *Thurso's Landing* (1932), and *Give Your Heart to the Hawks* (1933), Jeffers continued to explore the questions of how human beings could find their proper relationship (free of human egocentrism) with the divinity of the beauty of things. These poems, set in the Big Sur region (except *Dear Judas* and *Descent to the Dead*), enabled Jeffers to pursue his belief that the natural splendor of the area demanded tragedy: the greater the beauty, the greater the demand. Several of the poems are, indeed, tragedies, a few of them having evident Euripidean antecedents. As Euripides had, Jeffers began to focus more on his own characters' psychologies and on social realities than on the mythic. The human dilemmas of Phaedra, Hippolytus, and Medea fascinated Jeffers, as is clearly evident in his works.

If the narratives in *Solstice and Other Poems* (1935), *Such Counsels You Gave to Me and Other Poems* (1937), and *Be Angry at the Sun* (1941) sounded fatigued and strident, most of the lyrical poems sustained the fine elevation of their predecessors. Random House's *The Selected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers* (1938), however, was warmly received and remained the central Jeffers text until after the Robinson Jeffers Centennial (1987), when the Stanford University Press began to publish the multivolume scholarly edition of *The Collected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers*. Jeffers's adaptation of Euripides' *Medea* (1946), written for Dame Judith Anderson, was a great success when it was produced in New York in 1947. Two of Jeffers's most interesting and problematic narratives—"The Love and the Hate" and "The Inhumanist"—were at the center of *The Double Axe and Other Poems* (1948), which appeared with a disclaimer from the publisher. Many of Jeffers's references to current events and political figures (for example, Pearl Harbor, Teheran, Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Franklin D. Roosevelt) highlighted his isolationism and raised questions about his patriotism. In the preface to *The Double Axe*, Jeffers explicitly described "a philosophical attitude" he named Inhumanism, which had been implicit in his work since "Tamar"—certainly since "Roan Stallion." Inhumanism called for a shifting of emphasis and significance from man to notman; the rejection of human solipsism and recognition of the transhuman magnificence.... This manner of thought and feeling is neither misanthropic nor pessimist.... It offers a reasonable detachment as rule of conduct, instead of love, hate and envy.... it provides magnificence for the religious instinct, and satisfies our need to admire greatness and rejoice in beauty.

Soon thereafter, Jeffers's beloved Una fell ill with cancer and died in 1950. She had played many roles for him: lover, wife, muse, protectress, and his ears and eyes to the social world he shunned. Jeffers's last volume, *Hungerfield and Other Poems* (1954), contains a moving eulogy to Una, who, for him, may have come closest to embodying Inhumanism. Jeffers died in Carmel; a posthumous collection, *The Beginning and the End and Other Poems*, appeared in 1963.

By the time of his death, Jeffers had lost most of his popular audience, and within two decades his works had virtually disappeared from anthologies and his name from classrooms, even as his works were being translated for avid readers in Eastern European countries. However, burgeoning projects by Jeffers scholars and the revising, in the late 1980's, of the canon of American literature reestablished Jeffers as an important figure in American literature and Modernism, who sought, like Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, and Wallace Stevens, to redefine the role of poetry in the human experience and to identify the authentic relationship of the human experience to the world at large and to God but, perhaps unlike them (Jeffers would affirm), also to preserve the reality beyond the poem.

August Wilson

August Wilson is the author of *Jitney*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *Fences*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *The Piano Lesson*, *Two Trains Running*, *Seven Guitars*, and *King Hedley II*. These works explore the heritage and experience of African-Americans, decade-by-decade, over the course of the twentieth century. His plays have been produced at regional theaters across the country and all over the world, as well as on Broadway. Mr. Wilson's work has garnered many awards including Pulitzer Prizes for *Fences* (1987) and for *The Piano Lesson* (1990); a Tony Award for *Fences*; Great Britain's Olivier Award for *Jitney*; as well as seven New York Drama Critics Circle Awards for *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *Fences*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *The Piano Lesson*, *Two Trains Running*, *Seven Guitars*, and *Jitney*. Additionally, the cast recording of *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* received a 1985 Grammy Award, and Mr. Wilson received a 1995 Emmy Award nomination for his screenplay adaptation of *The Piano Lesson*. Mr. Wilson's early works include the one-act plays *The Janitor*, *Recycle*, *The Coldest Day of the Year*, *Malcolm X*, *The Homecoming* and the musical satire *Black Bart and the Sacred Hills*.

Mr. Wilson has received many fellowships and awards, including Rockefeller and Guggenheim Fellowships in Playwriting, the Whiting Writers Award, was awarded a 1999 National Humanities Medal by the President of the United States, and has received numerous honorary degrees from colleges and universities, as well as the only high school diploma ever issued by the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. He is an alumnus of New Dramatists, a member of the American

Academy of Arts and Sciences, and in 1995 he was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Mr. Wilson was born and raised in the Hill District of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and currently makes his home in Seattle, Washington. He is the father of two daughters, Sakina Ansari and Azula Carmen Wilson, and is married to costume designer Constanza Romero.

Objectives

Through this curriculum unit, students will be able to gain information about the city in which they live, and for some, have lived all their lives. Students will be able to appreciate the history of their city, nation, as well as their families by engaging in numerous activities. Students will be able to identify with and appreciate the city of Pittsburgh.

Strategies

Because all students don't learn from the same styles, I have incorporated many strategies into this curriculum unit. There are videos I've acquired to assist in learning about this time period as well as books, photographic essays and internet sources.

By making the activities in this unit rich in history and English, students will meet many of the PA Student Learning Standards. Students will also employ cooperative learning skills and interviewing techniques to gather information. Students will prepare and present an oral report at the end of the unit. These presentations will enhance students' confidence and communication skills as well as increase their pride in their hometown.

Classroom Activities

Students will create a scrapbook of materials for this Pittsburgh in the 50s unit. The scrapbook will contain the following pieces:

1. *Cover*. Students will be responsible for a creative cover to house the materials in their scrapbooks. The cover will include the name of the student, a title and at least one photo or drawing of something that represents Pittsburgh in the 1950's.
2. *Interview*. With a group, students will draft a list of questions and interview a person (family member, teacher, etc.) who was in Pittsburgh during the 1950's. From these questions, students will draft a Q&A session similar to what they might find in a magazine.

3. *Friendly Letter*. Using books from the school library as well as internet resources, students will find someone who lived in Pittsburgh during the 50s who they think is interesting and take on his persona. This individual can be a family member or another person, but he/she will have been a real adult person in Pittsburgh. As this person, students will create a friendly letter. This letter will be written to another person, preferably a family member or famous person living in another city. The friendly letter will contain information about a specific event that took place in Pittsburgh during the 1950's.
4. *Friendly Letter*². Students will also write a friendly letter response to the person they've become from the recipient of the first letter. This response will contain information about a specific event that took place outside of Pittsburgh during the same time period. The details of this letter and the first will be factual, except that the people composing the letters did not necessarily participate in the events.
5. *Article*. Students will write a newspaper article about an important event that happened to the person they've become in Pittsburgh during the time period. The event need not be one that would have been nationally or locally newsworthy; however, it must be a real event. The article will be written in third person point of view and will include factual information.
6. *Poem*. Students will write a poem that focuses on a significant event. The poem may be written using any style and must use at least one of the following literary devices: alliteration, consonance, assonance or onomatopoeia. Students must also tell what style of poem they've chosen.
7. *Journal*. Students will write at least five journal entries as the Pittsburgh person they've become. These entries can span throughout the entire decade or for only a month, however, they must include specific facts, names of places and events that took place in Pittsburgh in the 1950's. These events need not have happened to their person, but must be real facts.
8. *Works Cited*. Students will produce a works cited page with at least three (3) entries. Works Cited should be centered not underlined and not in quotes. The entries must be in alphabetical order and follow the correct format.
9. *Oral Presentation*. Students will prepare and present an oral report on their scrapbooks. This report will be a narrative that takes the audience through the process that the student experienced acquiring all of the pieces of the scrapbook.

The people and places of interest in the Rationale section of this unit can be used to help the students adopt a persona for the scrapbook project as well as give them some frame of reference. The short list of Pittsburgh people should be extended and adapted to the students' liking.

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Stuggles in Steel. Prod. Tony Buba. Braddock Films, 1996.

Web Sites

Bridges and Tunnels of Allegheny County of Pittsburgh, PA
<http://pghbridges.com/pittsburghE/0588-4475/hotmetal.htm>

Carson, Rachel
<http://www.curriculumunits.com/Adventure/pa.authors/carson.bio.htm>

Como, Perry
<http://www.mp3.com/perry-como/artists/2573/biography.html>

Eckstine, Billy
<http://www.mp3.com/billy-eckstine/artists/5514/biography.html>

Heinz II, H.J.

<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/4547/heinz.html>

Kelly, Gene

<http://linex.com/~la/stars/kelly.html>

Lawrence, David L.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_L._Lawrence

Mellon, Richard King

<http://www.bookrags.com/biography-richard-king-mellon/>

Pittsburgh Companies

<http://pittsburgh.about.com/cs/businesscompanies/>

Strayhorn, Billy

<http://www.mp3.com/billy-strayhorn/artists/106915/biography.html>

University of Pittsburgh Archives Service Center

<http://www.library.pitt.edu/guides/archives/finding-aids/ais7116.htm>

Warhol, Andy

http://www.artelino.com/articles/andy_warhol.asp

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Ashworth, Ralph. Greetings from Pittsburgh: A Picture Postcard History. New York: Vestal Press, 2000. A postcard view of the history of the city of Pittsburgh.

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Appendix A

Content Standards

Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening

1. All students use effective research and information management skills, including locating primary and secondary sources of information with traditional and emerging library technologies.
2. All students read and use a variety of methods to make sense of various kinds of complex texts.
3. All students respond orally and in writing to information and ideas gained by reading narrative and informational texts and use the information and ideas to make decisions and solve problems.
4. All students write for a variety of purposes, including to narrate, inform and persuade, in all subject areas.
5. All students analyze and make critical judgments about all forms of communication, separating fact from opinion, recognizing propaganda, stereotypes and statements of bias, recognizing inconsistencies and judging the validity of evidence.
6. All students exchange information orally, including understanding and giving spoken instructions, asking and answering questions appropriately, and promoting effective group communications.
7. All students listen to and understand complex oral messages and identify their purpose, structure and use.
8. All students compose and make oral presentations for each academic area of study that are designed to persuade, inform or describe.
10. All students communicate appropriately in business, work and other applied situations.

Arts and Humanities

1. All students describe the meanings they find in various works from the visual and performing arts and literature on the basis of aesthetic understanding of the art form.
2. All students evaluate and respond critically to works from the visual and performing arts and literature of various individuals and cultures, showing that they understand important features of the works.
3. All students relate various works from the visual and performing arts and literature to the historical and cultural context within which they were created.
4. All students produce, perform or exhibit their work in the visual arts, music, dance or theater, and describe the meanings their work has for them.

Citizenship

1. All students demonstrate an understanding of major events, cultures, groups and individuals in the historical development of Pennsylvania, the United States and other nations, and describe the patterns of historical development.
3. All students describe the development and operations of economic, political, legal and governmental systems in the United States, assess their own relationships to those systems, and compare them to those in other nations.
4. All students examine and evaluate problems facing citizens in their communities, state, nation and world by incorporating concepts and methods of inquiry of the various social sciences.
5. All students develop and defend a position on current issues, confronting the United States and other nations, conducting research, analyzing alternatives, organizing evidence and arguments, and making oral presentations.
7. All students demonstrate their skills of communicating, negotiating and cooperating with others.
8. All students demonstrate that they can work effectively with others.
9. All students demonstrate an understanding of the history and nature of prejudice and relate their knowledge to current issues facing communities, the United States and other nations.

Science and Technology

9. All students demonstrate basic computer literacy, including word processing, software applications, and the ability to access the global information infrastructure, using current technology.