

# REPORTER DISPATCH

Journal of Old Allegheny History and Lore

## SITES OF FORTIFICATION ON TOUR

Visiting the remains of the 1863 fortifications

by Ruth McCartan

On June 13, 1863 the people of Pittsburgh and Allegheny read in the Pittsburgh Daily Evening Gazette: “It is not necessary that a rebel cavalry should be seen on the hills surrounding our city, or occupying Morgantown to demonstrate an ‘emergency’ to intelligent and prudent men.” Those who attended the two bus tours that the Society gave on June 22, learned of the fear of attack and what the hard working people of the cities built to protect themselves in the summer of 1863.

The 150th anniversary of this momentous event, the feared invasion of the area by Confederate troops, was commemorated with a visit to the five redoubts constructed in Allegheny City. Factories, shops and schools were closed so the workers could start digging the defensive ring around the cities. Remnants of the earthen fortifications have been lost to the growth of the city, but on a high elevation on Spring Hill, the outer parapet wall of Fort Childs, later called Fort Reynolds, remains. A piece of Civil War history right here on the North Side of Pittsburgh.

Gary Augustine, a Civil War historian presented an overview of the Battle of Gettysburg (July 1–3 1863), helping all to understand the reason the work on the fortifications was stopped. Allegheny City was still apprehensive with John Hunt Morgan’s Raid happening in Ohio, but the defenses were built and the city was ready. Morgan was stopped in eastern Ohio and the only Rebel cavalry to come to Allegheny was in the form of Rebel prisoners for the Western Penitentiary.



The tours and events that the Society conducts require the work of many members, so a special thank-you to Amelia Gehron, John Canning and David Grinnell.

Riverview United Presbyterian Church was the location for meeting and bus boarding. Tour goers were served a superb lunch in the church’s community room, catered by Sue Bruder. A special thanks to the church for their help.

The Society was grateful for the superior driving skills of the tour-bus driver, Donae Sloan. She took us in a large school bus everywhere we wanted to go — and some places a bus has never been.

## CHURCH BUILDING DEMOLISHED

The Church of St. Nicholas, the oldest Croatian Catholic Mission (1894) in North America, was demolished over the weekend in January 2013. By Monday, the church was down and the Grotto soon followed. Negotiations had been going on for years to save the church and right up to December the talks seemed promising. A bid from the Urban Redevelopment Authority for \$300,000 was rejected by the Roman Catholic Dioceses, and in a few days the final demolition was begun. The next time you drive on Route 28 remember a landmark was lost and a heritage weakened.





## DOO DAH DAYS

Doo Dah Days, held in Allegheny Cemetery, celebrates the life of Stephen Foster. Staffing a table at the event is a yearly outreach project of the Society. Foster grew up in Allegheny City and his father was mayor, which gives us a great connection.

Foster's music was played as we told people about the Society and all we do. If you love the songs of Foster, considered the first popular composer in the United States, try to attend next year.

## A FORGOTTEN HERO

Civil War officer buried in Troy Hill Cemetery

by Martha Berg

Who now remembers that the first Pittsburgh officer killed in the Civil War is buried in Rodef Shalom's Troy Hill Cemetery? Recently I found in the Rodef Shalom Archives, an old photocopy, barely legible now, of an 1862 newspaper clipping about the funeral of Captain Jacob Brunn, and I was intrigued enough to do some further research. I found out that Jacob Brunn was an accomplished linguist, having learned several languages during his seven years in the Prussian Army. He sometimes served as an interpreter for the Allegheny County courts, though he was listed as a salesman in an 1857 city directory.

Brunn volunteered for the Union Army in May, 1861; because the quota for Pennsylvania recruits was already filled, the company he led, the Friend Rifles, was assigned to New York's Excelsior Brigade under General Daniel E. Sickles. The Friend Rifles led the attack in the Battle of Williamsburg, Virginia, on May 5, 1862, and Captain Brunn was killed instantly. His death brought the full reality of the war home to Pittsburgh, where he was given a hero's funeral on May 26. The cortege departed from the home of Brunn's father-in-law, Major Daniel Fickieson, who is listed as an inn-keeper in the 1850 census. The pallbearers were



members of Brunn's company who had been taken prisoner by the Confederates in the Battle of Williamsburg and released in time to honor their Captain. The military escort included the Park Zouaves, the Hambright Rifles, and the Excelsior Brass Band, which played "General Lyon's Dead March."



According to the *Dispatch*, the cortege "proceeded to the Israelitish Cemetery on Troy Hill. It was composed of many of our leading citizens without regard to creed or nationality. At the grave Prof. Josiah Cohen delivered a truly impressive address, and a prayer in Hebrew was also given."

At that time the Troy Hill Cemetery (now owned by Rodef Shalom) was operated by the independent Bes Almon Cemetery Association, the earliest Jewish organization in Pittsburgh. In order to be buried there, families had to be members of the Association. Brunn was not a member, but he had apparently made known his wish to be buried there, and the Society accordingly made an exception, taking upon itself the expenses and arrangements for Captain Brunn's burial. I visited his grave and found a replacement stone which gives his birth date as 1828 and the incorrect death date of 1861. A new American flag decorates the grave. The Soldiers and Sailors Memorial in Oakland displays a bust of Captain Brunn, donated by the National Council of Jewish Women to honor his memory and the wartime service of Pittsburgh's Jewish community.

# STREET LIGHTING IN ALLEGHENY

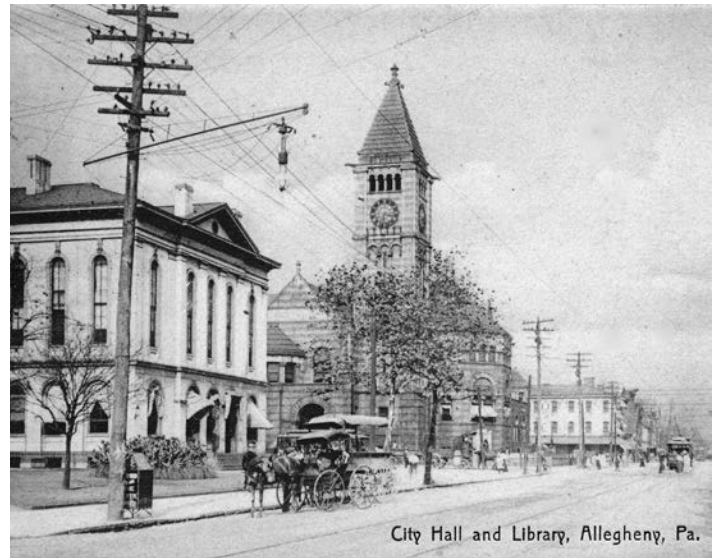
Over 1300 carbon-arc lamps light the city

by Michael Shealey

The earliest of Allegheny City street lights, the mast-arm carbon arc light, is shown in front of City Hall in the photo on the right. The lights were hung on extended arms—masts—over the street below. The lights were attached to the arms with wire rigging that allowed the lights to be drawn back to the pole for servicing and then extended out again across the mast arm for use.

Carbon arc lights worked by using alternating current to create an electrical arc between two precisely positioned carbon electrodes. The arc itself created some light, but the burning of the carbon elements generated most of the light for the lamp. These *carbons*, as they were called, required frequent trimming and replacement after a very short service life. The earliest carbon arc lights used as street lights in Allegheny required carbons to be trimmed every two to three nights of usage to maintain the proper gap for the arc. At most, carbons could burn about 80 hours before replacement was required.

In 1900, Allegheny City was reported to have 1,314 carbon arc street lights in service. Assuming that each light would need to be serviced at least twice a week and also assuming a 7-day workweek to maintain the lights; about 370 lights would have to be serviced each day. The maintenance for each light



POSTCARD DETAIL showing carbon-arc streetlight near City Hall

would require a workman to climb a ladder placed against the pole, pull the light back to the pole for servicing, extend the light back into position, climb down and then start again.

The carbon arc lamps did have the advantage of producing, with relatively little current, a brilliant white light much closer to natural light than later incandescent lamps. This light quality encouraged the continued use of carbon arc lighting for applications requiring intense, near-natural lighting including theatrical lighting, film projection and movie making.

# LAST OF THE ALLEGHENIANS

Clara Wenzelburger celebrates her 107th birthday

by John Canning

On July 6, several members of the Allegheny City Society drove to Meadville to celebrate the 107th birthday of Clara Wenzelburger. We think that Clara is perhaps the last Alleghenian. She was eager to share with us some of her life's experiences.

On the 6th of July in 1907, Johann Frederick Wenzelburger and his wife Anna Christina Knecht Wenzelburger had a



LAPISH ROAD AREA in Allegheny City's Eleventh Ward, c1902

baby girl, Clara Margaret, at their home on "Goat Hill" in Allegheny City's 11th Ward (the section of the present 27th Ward off of Lapish Road). Clara's father, an immigrant from Wurttemberg, was a skilled carpenter working for the Pressed Steel Car Company. Her mother, born to immigrants from Alsace, grew up in Allegheny City.

Clara had four siblings and the family moved from the North Side to McKees Rock, shortly after her birth, so that her father could be closer to his work at the massive Pressed Steel Car plant at Presston. She recalled regular visits to Knecht family relatives in Manchester, where her mother played the "pump organ" at the German Evangelical Protestant Church on Juniata Street. Throughout most of the 20th century Clara worked at the Joseph Horne Department Store, where she eventually became the head of the needlework and notions department.

When asked what she thought enabled her to live such a health and happy 107 years she replied that most of her family lived long lives, but she thought, laughingly, that having never married was the real key to her longevity. We were happy to place an Allegheny City flag on Clara's cake reminding her and us that she may indeed be the "Last of the Alleghenians."



## PENNSYLVANIA'S CIVIL WAR

Heinz History Center's new exhibition

by Emilia S. Boehm

Enthusiasts of the Civil War and Western Pennsylvania history will not want to miss the Heinz History Center's new exhibition, *Pennsylvania's Civil War*. As a key part of Pennsylvania Civil War 150, the state-wide focus on the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, this exhibition "helps bring to life the personal stories of those impacted during the four-year war, including soldiers, women, African Americans, and children. The exhibit features more than 150 artifacts, including items on loan from the Smithsonian Institution, the State Museum of Pennsylvania, and the National Civil War Museum, along with rare archival images, six life-like museum figures, and immersive settings. Many of the exhibit's artifacts are selected from the History Center's collection, as well as from private collectors, including noted Civil War author Kenneth Turner."

Connections to Allegheny City are found throughout the exhibition. Of particular interest is the non-commissioned officer's sword of Alleghenian John Adams Gilleland (1841–1897). Gilleland, who left his position as a dry goods

store clerk in Allegheny to enlist in the 123rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, saw action at the battles of Antietam, Fredericksburg, and Chancellorsville. Honorably discharged, he re-enlisted in the 193rd Pennsylvania Infantry in 1864, and after serving his time and receiving another honorable discharge, he returned to Allegheny, where he organized a group that mustered in as Company D of the 77th Pennsylvania Volunteers. After the war, Gilleland returned to Allegheny and married Annetta Dunlap, the daughter of prominent Allegheny businessman and civic leader Captain Hance Dunlap. Gilleland served as Postmaster of Allegheny from 1890 to 1894 and is buried in Union Dale Cemetery.

*Pennsylvania's Civil War* is on view through January 5, 2014. For more information, visit [www.heinzhistorycenter.org](http://www.heinzhistorycenter.org) and [www.pacivilwar150.com](http://www.pacivilwar150.com).



## TWO CASSATT AWARDEES

Society gives awards at annual arts exhibition

by John Canning

For the past several years the Allegheny City Society has made two awards to visual arts students from the Pittsburgh Public Schools whose works were part of the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild Invitational Arts Exhibition. These *Mary Cassatt* awardees, selected by a jury of artists and art educators, represent the Society's commitment to the long tradition of creativity from Allegheny City and the North Side.

This year, the Cassatt awards were given to two exceptional high school students. Elif Kizilkaya, a junior at CAPA created a stunning self-portrait titled *An Artist at Heart*. Latia Tucker, a senior at CAPA and a student of North Side artist/teacher Shannon Pultz, produced two stunning works. Kudos to both of these two extraordinary young women. The Society is happy to support the arts education programs in the Pittsburgh school system.



## ADVERTISING COIN DISCOVERED

Unique hotel advertising features baseball schedule

by Emilia S. Boehm

A recently unearthed advertising coin represents a fascinating piece of North Side history. With the aid of a metal detector, Don Revell found the coin on the lower North Side. One side of the coin reads: “Compliments of/ the Northern/ 209-211 East Ohio St./ North Side/ William McLuckie/ Prop./ Reasonable Rates/ First Class Bar/ Attached.” The reverse reads: “Pittsburgh Federal League/ At Home/ 1914,” and also lists the 1914 home schedule for the Pittsburgh Rebels baseball team.

Research has revealed that the Northern was a hotel, boarding house and saloon located on East Ohio Street between Sandusky Street and Union Avenue, two blocks east of the Allegheny Market House. (The properties were razed when Allegheny Center was built.) The bar’s proprietor, William McLuckie (b. 1874), grew up in Lonaconing, Maryland, one of several children born to Scottish immigrants George and Agnes McLuckie. By 1900, the McLuckie family had moved to Allegheny’s Third Ward. William McLuckie is listed as living at 215 Ohio Street in the 1910 Federal Census. He and his wife Theresa (b. 1872) had three sons: Valentine (b. 1895), Thomas (b. 1903) and William (b. 1906).

The Pittsburgh Rebels belonged to the Federal League, a professional baseball league that existed for only the 1914 and 1915 seasons. (The Federal League is considered the last independent major league to seriously compete with the established National and American Leagues.) The Rebels played their home games at Exposition Park, which had been vacated by the Pirates with the 1909 opening of Forbes Field.



*Images courtesy Don Revell &  
Research courtesy Don Lancaster*

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## VISIT TO ARCHEOLOGICAL DISPLAY

Did you ever wonder what happened to all the artifacts dug up during the various archeological excavations done in Allegheny City and Pittsburgh in the recent years? After extensive research by the great historical minds of the Society we have discovered many are on display on the different floors of the new Fairmont Hotel at the corner of Fifth and Market in downtown Pittsburgh.

The cities’ emerging middle class is reflected in the objects removed from the various wells used for household water or from privies. The wells created a large dangerous hole in the backyard which were commonly filled in with discards after they were no longer needed. Discarded objects that tell us about the everyday life of the people who lived here over 100 years ago. Tortoiseshell combs, ladies shoes, hand-painted

porcelain dolls and caches of whiskey and wine bottles were unearthed. One object discovered with an Allegheny connection is a three-pane lithophane, (thin, translucent porcelain panes that appear 3 dimensional when backlit) which once decorated the windows of Knox Botanical and Seed Store. Knox was a commission merchant in downtown Pittsburgh, he brokered farm products to retail merchants from his office in the wholesale district. Hugh and Catherine Knox erected a brick Italianate house in 1866–1867 at 844 North Lincoln in present day Allegheny West.

This October, the Society will conduct a tour of the Fairmont and hopes to have Christine Davis, of the local archaeological firm Christine Davis Consultants, who directed many of the excavations, tell us about the objects she unearthed. Watch the newsletter and our website for the tour date and time.

# NEW LIFE FOR HOUSE ON CEDAR

Well-known urban landmark to become B&B

If you regularly walk or drive by the corner of Cedar and West North Avenue, near Allegheny General Hospital, you have grown used to seeing a vacant, three-story town house – one that was obviously very beautiful in its day. Well, after 30 years of being an eyesore at this prominent location, the town house is getting a new lease on life.

This impressive house at 1010 Cedar Avenue was built in the 1880s by a young couple in their 30s. Since the 1980s, it's been boarded up and growing more unsightly by the year. Some one hundred thirty years after the original couple decided to build here, along comes two physicians who want to reinvest in this historic neighborhood. Doctors Justin and Keili Mistovich are undertaking the transformation of this historic structure into a Bed and Breakfast. With funding from the Northside Community Development Fund, the bed and breakfast will be open for guests in the fall.

Dr Justin Mistovich stated at the groundbreaking, "We'd like to restore the building back to how it would be if you were walking through the neighborhood in the glory days of Allegheny City."



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