

The Quarterly Journal of Old Allegheny History and Lore - Volume 1 No. 2

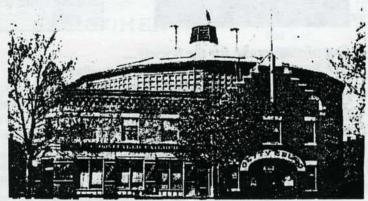
A Cyclorama of Gettysburg Comes to Allegheny City

Before big screen TV and laser light shows, our forefathers of the 1880's, had a unique entertainment venue in the form of a panorama. A panorama consisted of long, painted strips of canvas ranging from 300 to 3,000 feet, wrapped around two upright spindles which were slowly unrolled before an audience.

A permanent panorama was called a cyclorama. Since it was permanent, it forced the spectator to walk around the canvas adhered to the walls instead of standing still and watching the canvas move. This art form started around the early 1790's and served as an educational tool along with being entertainment for the viewer.

Every cyclorama required a special building to house it and a large nearby population to keep coming and paying to view the painting. A narrator, called a delineator described the action for the patrons with sound and lighting effects for realism. Famous battle scenes and views of faraway location panoramas had been playing the Pittsburgh area for years before the Civil War.

The Civil War was the first war that had the technology to capture the horror and death of the battlefield for the civilian. The camera brought the war and it's chaos "up close and personal" for the first time. However, the equipment was



The Allegheny City Clyclorama - From a post card reproduction

not available to enlarge the photograph images from about the size of an 8 by 10. This was the job for the panoramic artist to give the viewer the big picture.

The most famous of all Continued on Page 3



From the President...

Dear Members and Friends... 1995 brought us a renewed spirit and vitality as we focused on our mission to document, preserve and interpret the history of Allegheny City and the North Side. Part of this spirit was reflected in our inaugural issue of The Allegheny City Reporter Dispatch and the formation of new partnerships and alliances with the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation, P.H.A.S.E. (Perry Hilltop Association for Successful Enterprise), the Community College of Allegheny County and St. Peter School that enriched and extended our sense of historic community.

Service and educational programs continued in 1995 and included the successful Brashear Tour in October and the Society's popular historic displays and exhibits at Byers Hall during the annual Allegheny West Victorian House Tour, St. Peter School Old Allegheny Christmas Celebration at the The Grand Hall of the Priory and the Observatory Hill House Tour at Riverview Presbyterian Church.

In addition, members volunteered their services for the United Way Day of Caring and other community projects, wrote articles of historic interest that were featured in the North Side community newspaper, *The Northside Chronicle* and answered over two-hundred telephone and written requests for information and referrals about the history, architecture, geography, streets and programs of the North Side past and present. In short, 1995 was a successful year!

Please join us at our annual members meeting on April 25, 1996 in the new Student Activities Building, Allegheny Campus of the Community College of Allegheny County.

Lois Henderson Yoedt.

President

ANNUAL MEETING
APRIL 25, 1996
CCAC CAMPUS
STUDENT ACTIVITIES
BUILDING
7:00 PM

Original Alleghenian Retires.....

Superior Court Judge Harry Montgomery has retired for the last time after having three retirement parties thrown for him in the last 20 years.

Montgomery was born in Allegheny City in 1901 where his father owned a retail paint and wallpaper store. After passing the bar in 1924 he spent the next 20 years in a private law practice.

Montgomery was elected as a judge to county court in 1944. He was elected to the Court of Common Pleas and then was elected to Superior court in 1962.

"He's one of the consummate judges in Pennsylvania" said Superior Court Judge William F. Cercone of Pittsburgh.

The incorporation papers of the Allegheny City Society were signed in his chambers in 1957. Judge Montgomery has been an honorary member of the Society since its reformation in 1992.

Out of state praise for the Society....

A letter from Mr Robert Smith of North Carolina:

Please enroll my wife, Helen and I, as afamily member. We were married in the 8 th U.P. Church Dec. 20, 1952. I grew up in that church and we both enjoyed its history printed in your Fall '95 issue of the Quarterly Journal. It was sent to us by a friend.

M. Hatch writes: Thank You so much for sending the Reporter-Dispatch. It had been 50 years since I was in Pittsburgh.

I could hardly believe how much it has changed. I was so happy when I found places I remembered - like Allegheny High School. I confess I became a little frustrated when I couldn't find Eighth U. P. church, where I was married in 1943. Your article about the church was interesting and informative. Please accept a small token in support of the Allegheny City Society and the work you do.

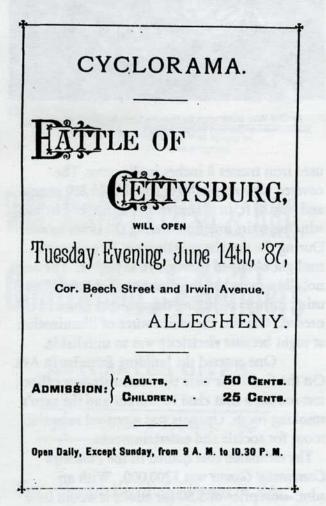


Cyclorama ... From Page 1

cyclorama depictions for the American audience was the great infantry charge that climaxed the battle of Gettysburg. "The High Water Mark of the Confederacy," Longstreet's Charge, or as it became known, Pickett's Charge, had a great interest for the public. Allegheny City was no exception.

P.F. Rothermel's painting of the battle had been seen by a large audience when it was shown here in 1872. (This painting commissioned by the state of Pennsylvania is still on display at the State Museum of Art in Harrisburg.)

The event that started the proliferation of panoramas in the United States was the opening of Paul Philippoteaux Chicago Gettysburg Cyclorama in October 22, 1883. Charles L.



Front Page of the Program for the Cyclorama

Willoughby, was the person who induced Philippoteaux to produce the Gettysburg cyclorama. Willoughby obtained his wealth in the clothing business in Chicago and went on from there to bigger investment opportunities.

After he was commissioned to create the painting, Philippoteaux came to the United States and went on to Gettysburg. He had landscape photographs taken and walked the battlefield. Then he even interviewed veterans of the famed charge. Returning to Paris the artist and his assistants created in two years the premier cyclorama painting.

The financial success of the Chicago exhibit had the promoters paying the artist to do three other versions for display in other cities.

Allegheny City's Cyclorama

The Alleghenian on May 28, 1887 reported "eighth-tenths of the stockholders (in the Pittsburgh Cyclorama, ed.) are residents of Allegheny and Pittsburgh and the balance from Chicago and San Francisco". Evidence points to Mr. Charles Willoughby being the Chicago investor in the Pittsburgh Cyclorama Co.

The local incorporators, except Major Slage are not listed in the press clipping of the day; but they must have decided that this Cyclorama was going to have a local flavor. General Alexander Hays (see biography in this issue ed.) was not shown in any of the other Cycloramas and General Sweitzer who was at the opening is not even listed in The Encyclopedia of the Civil War, an authoritative source on the men and events of the war.

Why was a cyclorama painting studio in Englewood Illinois commissioned to do the Allegheny Cyclorama? This piece of information is lost to us, but maybe Philippoteaux was tired of painting the battle he had already painted four times and wanted to move on.

Artists of the firm of Pierpoint and Gross in Englewood II. were not famous Parisians, but were struggling painters who needed to make a few dollars. Maybe Willoughby saw a way to cut his initial investment by hiring unknowns?

One of the painters in the team was Albert G. Reinhart, a Pittsburgher, and helped paint the Allegheny Cyclorama. Reinhart painted the life-size figure of General Alexander Hays on his war horse in front of his brigade.

The official opening night was on June, 14, 1887 for Allegheny City's Battle of Gettysburg Cyclorama. The descriptive pamphlet which was on sale for a nickel at the Cyclorama explained how the painting had been produced: "The preparatory work of gathering data, surveying the field of battle, photographing and artist studies takes 10 men three months. Then there is the necessary drawing and sketching which consumes two months more. After the survey and sketching is finished the painting of the large picture is commenced and requires four months of rapid work".

The Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette in June 14, 1887 reported that "Major Slage and General J. B. Sweitzer both of whom fought on the July 3, 1863 on Gettysburg's field were present to point out to the visitors the familiar but bloody landmarks."

Pickett's Charge was depicted on the huge canvas and the spectator couldn't determine where the foreground of the painting started or stopped. A soldier's body would be painted and the body next to him would be a wax dummy. Caissons and fence posts would be in the painting and merge into the foreground. Knapsacks, canteens, muskets and artificial body fragments littered the floor.

There was even a shallow brook with running water.

The delineator described the sequence of events of the battle illuminating the section he was discussing. The "going into valley of the shadow of death," that was this charge, was made real with the sounds of cannons firing, rifle shots and the moaning of dying soldiers.

The canvas was 50 by 400 ft. and a special building was constructed in Allegheny at the corner of Irwin (now Brighton Rd.) and Beech Ave. to house it. (The present site of ARC of Pittsburgh).

The building was completely round and



An Civil War illustration by Thomas Nast for Decoration Day "Divided We've Fallen, United We'll Stand"

used iron trusses 8 inches in diameter. The covered viewing platform could hold 250 people and was 30 ft. in diameter. It was reached by two winding stairs one for entering the other to exit. During the day the painting was lit only with sunlight obtained through 16 skylights. The areas not illuminated by the direct sunlight would be lit using mirrors reflecting the sunlight where needed. Gas was the mail source of illumination at night because electricity was so unreliable.

One entered the building from Irwin Ave. On the first floor were the administrative offices, rest-rooms, a first class restaurant and the men's smoking room. Upstairs was a general reception room for socials and entertainments.

The estimated cost quoted in the *Pittsburgh* Commercial Gazette was \$200,000. With an admission price of \$.50 for adults it would have required over 800,000 visitors to cover the initial investment.

The battle field entertainment was in operation for the 25th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg but after the anniversary, the attendance began to fall off. When the Cyclorama closed in 1888, it had been in operation a total of a little less than 2 years.

According to an article by William Rimmel dated Aug. 29, 1959: "One story has it that sections of the battle were given to the various veteran's organizations who participated in the battle". Another is it was sold to an art dealer in California. The fate of the local cyclorama is a mystery along with what happened to the various other cyclorama paintings with one exception now on display in Gettysburg.

No mystery to the fate of the circular building. It was torn down in the 1920's after it had been a church, dance hall, ice cream shop, and roller skating rink.

The cyclorama craze lasted into the 1890's but live theater performances and the advent of the moving picture were the final nails in the coffin of the large circular painted canvas craze called the cyclorama.

Below are several ads that appeared in the Cyclorama program

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CARE PACKAGES

Two orphaned brothers who had been raised by their aunt and uncle Emanuel Stoler, Jr., on their farm near Pittsburgh, enlisted in the Northern Army. The brothers, Michael and Add (Adam, ed) Bright, wrote home frequently and often a topic was the contents of care packages or boxes which they had received.

"I received my box last Thursday and I tell you I enjoyed a Good mess of bread and butter hugely. Bread and apple butter have not tasted half so good to me for the last twenty years."

"If convenient send me a little butter and a can of apple butter. If you have any apples put me in two or three, for I have not seen an apple for a year. Send me some cand (canned ed.) fruit and anything that is good to eat and send me a plug of tobacco and a hundred tobys (long, thin cigars).

A. S. Bright

The Bright brothers would love this recipe,

APPLE BUTTER

4 qts. apples, washed but not peeled

2 qts. water

1 1/2 qts. apple cider

1 1/2 lbs. sugar

1 tsp. allspice

1 tsp. cinnamon

1 tsp. cloves

Slice the apples into small pieces and cover with the water.

Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and cook until soft. Press the apples through a sieve to remove the skins and seeds. Bring the cider to a boil, add apple pulp and sugar, reduce heat and cook until thickened, stirring constantly to prevent scorching. Add the spices and cook 20 minutes more. Fill three sterilized quart jars and seal.

Taken from the book Mrs. Billy Yank's Receipt Book, Cooking on the Home Front 1861-1865) by Patricia B. Mitchell

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A short biography of Major General Alexander Hay fallen Civil War hero and resident of Allegheny City.

Hay's father, Samuel, was from Ireland immigrating in 1795. He fought with the Pennsylvania Militia during the War of 1812.

Born in Franklin Pennsylvania in 1819, Alexander graduated from The Military Academy at West Point in 1844. Among his classmates were Sam Grant and Winfield Scott Hancock. All three served together in the war with Mexico in 1846. Hays fought on the fields of Palo Alto and Reseca de la Palma and was breveted to higher rank for gallantry.

Hays left the army for civilian life in 1848. One year later he would join in the Gold Rush to California, returning in

1851. Upon his return he worked as a civil engineer for the City of Allegheny. The battle names and leaders from the Mexican War were given, under his direction, to streets in the area north of the Commons in the city. This area first was called "New Mexico" and thanks to Hay's using these names the area is known today as the "Mexican War Streets.

In December 1860, Alexander Hays sided with the Pittsburgh civilians who blocked the actions of then Secretary of War John B. Floyd to send armaments south from the Allegheny Arsenal. It was suspected the weapons would find their way into the hands of Southern sympathizers and arm the secessionist state militias.

With the firing on Fort Sumter, Hays volunteered for duty enlisting in the Union army. He was recommissioned and was soon elected captain of his unit the "City Guards".

He distinguished himself at the battles of Yorktown, Williamsburg, Seven Pines, Malvern



General Alexander Hays print from The People's Monthly June 1971

Hill and Second Bull Run. He rapidly rose in rank and was promoted as a result of his actions during these battles finally reaching the rank of

General.

On June 28, 1863 he was given command of the 3rd Div. 2 Corps. (Hancock's Corp. and Hay's former classmate). While this division contained no Pennsylvania troops, Ohio and New Jersey men fought gallantly and helped save the union that third day of July at Gettysburg.

As was common in this American Civil War men fought for and against people they knew, General Hays was no exception. With his

men near Ziegler's Grove on the Gettysburg battlefield he engaged in a life and death battle with former comrades and classmates. These included Lewis Armstead and James Kemper with whom he had served in the Mexican War and fellow West Point classmates George Pickett, A. P. Hill and Richard Garnett.

During Pickett's famous charge, Hays had two horses shot out from under him. His men captured 20 battle flags, 1,500 prisoners and 2,500 muskets. There is a lithograph from Harpers Weekly now on display at the Cyclorama building at Gettysburg showing General Hays riding his horse in front of his men after the battle dragging some captured battle flags along in the dirt. He is shouting "This is for Harpers Ferry and Fredericksburg."

In May 1864 during the Battle of the Wilderness General Hays was killed by a shot in the head.

General U.S. Grant upon visiting Hay's grave



remarked, "With him it was come boys, not go." Secretary of War, Edwin M. Stanton wrote, "He fell, just as every patriot soldier should fall, at the head of his column, cheering and sustaining it against an overwhelming force of the enemy".

General Hays was survived by his wife, Ann McFadden Hays (daughter of James McFadden a prominent jeweler) and seven children. He is buried in Allegheny Cemetery.

Had he survived, Hays could have found himself in an excellent position. His best friend became a two-term president and Grant was noted for giving old friends good government positions and jobs during his White House years.

ALLEGHENY CIVIL WAR TID-BITS

- The sculptor Peter Charles Reniers was the artist who designed and created both the Soldiers monument and the grave monument of General Alexander Hays.

 Confederates captured during John Morgan's raid into Ohio in 1863 were incarcerated in the Old Western Pennsylvania Prison, now the location of the National Aviary. A plaque was dedicated by the United Daughters of the Confederacy in 1930's.

 The Hampton Battery monument found in the East
- Commons (across the street from the Elks Club on Cedar Avenue) is the only Civil War marker to a fighting unit that was in Allegheny City.
- Two earthen defenses were built in Allegheny City during the scare that Robert E. Lee's troops would invade in the summer 1863. The locations were at the present site of the Pressley Ridge school on Marshall Ave. and the Hospital Linen Service on Marvista St. in the Brighton Heights area.
- wife, Mary Copley, when he purchased her dead brother's ring which she had donated to the Sanitary Fair. Thaw gave the ring back to her. One of their sons, Harry Thaw would shoot Stanford White because of his jealousy over an affair between White and Thaw's wife Evelyn Nesbitt. (Note: the affair was carried on before Nesbitt married Thaw). The story of this love triangle would later be made into a movie called The Girl in the Red Velvet Swing.

Members in the News

- O Pittsburgh History and Landmarks, North Side Awardee's for renovation work were PHASE (Perry Hilltop Association for Successful Enterprises) for The Button Factory on Perrysville Ave. and Joedda Sampson for her work on 838 Lincoln Ave. the former home of Joseph Horne.
- O John Lyon, newly elected board member was also elected secretary of the North Side Public Safety Council.
- Renovation of the **Brashear Factory** in Perry Hilltop has started, hopefully by Spring the new tenants will move in.

COMMUNITY CALANDER

- March 28
 Allegheny River clean-up sponsored by The Friends of the Riverfront. 10:00 am Meet at River Safety Center or River Avenue by Riverside Commons. Help restore the trail that was washed away by the January floods.
- May 3 Pittsburgh Marathon
- May 12 Fineview Step-A-Thon (Racers make thier way up rigorous city steps to scale the hillside of Fineview and then continue the race through the neighborhood.
- May 17 Northside Leadership Annual Dinner - Holy Trinity Greek Church, North Avenue

Watch for news of the Allegheny West Vintage Clothing Sale in early Summer.



The Soldier's Monument - A Brief History

Almost immediately after the Civil War, veteran's groups, politicians and others sought to honor those who fought for the Union forces. Allegheny City was no different.

At a meeting of the Board of Trade in August 1865, William H. Gormley, A. M. Brown, Frank Sellers, John Watt, Issac Jones, James P. Tanner and General A. L. Peterson discussed the possibility of building such a monument "in memory of those who lay down their lives in the battles for the union.

Wounded war veterans were asked to raise money and quickly gathered \$1,500 dollars for the monument. A free site was offered in Allegheny Cemetery. However, the drive and money raising stalled but the memorial was not forgotten.

During the Soldier's Convention of Allegheny County in 1865, a proposal was made to erect a monument to honor the 4,000 Allegheny County soldiers and sailors who died during the War Between the States. Some of the ladies who had decorated City Hall for the convention were asked to form a Monument Association. This group raised \$25,000 by sponsoring a fair.

As a result of this fund raising effort, the Allegheny County Monument Association was formed with Mrs. Samuel McKee elected president. The Association was incorporated by an act of Assembly and approved on April 10, 1869.

A building committee was organized that included General A. L Peterson, Colonel W. B. Cook, B. Preston, John Chislett and C. M. Johns. Out of several designs submitted the committee chose one by E. Morganroth. Bids were received from all over the United States that ranged from \$27,765 to \$75,000. The low bid of C. Miller of Pittsburgh was selected.

The original plan called for a monument that was seventy-two feet high. However, the Building Committee modified the plan increasing the height to eighty-five feet and filling the

interior with solid cut stone, instead of brick

Allegheny Cemetery again offered a site. This time so did Allegheny City. Their proposed location would be on Seminary Ridge (above Ridge Avenue overlooking the Allegheny River).

Allegheny City's Park Commissioners were not just being generous. In fact they



The Soldier's Monument From People's Monthly June 1871

were trying to do something with a problem tract of land they had inherited.

For years Seminary Ridge had been known as Hog Back Hill before being acquired by Western Theological Seminary. The Seminary had hoped to terrace and build on the hill but when their plans failed they deeded the to site to Allegheny City. The City's plans to turn the area into a park had floundered and the area had become overgrown and was a place for "ruffians and others as a gathering place and for unlawful uses."

Both sides lobbied hard for their proposed site. To sweeten the pot Allegheny City offered \$5,000 for the monument if the Seminary Hill site was chosen. The Ladies Committee favored Allegheny Cemetery. The resulting fight had to be resolved by a county-wide public vote in the general election of 1869.

The Allegheny City location won by a 4 - 1 margin.

The cornerstone was laid by the Monument Association president Mrs. Samuel McKee.

On Memorial Day 1871 with the commanding general of the Union forces at Gettysburg, Gen. George Meade and Pennsylvania Gov. Geary in attendance, a 60-gun salute marked the beginning of the monument's dedication ceremony. Also, as part of the festivities, Seminary Ridge's name was officially changed to Monument Hill.

The monument was made of Massillon stone.
There was a door in the base which lead to a stairway that climbed 40 ft to a balcony that provided a splendid view of Allegheny City and downtown Pittsburgh.

On the base surrounding the balcony were four figures 6 ft 6 inches tall representing the four arms of the service: artillery, cavalry, infantry and the navy. Each figure was six feet six inches in height. Above the balcony was a shaft topped with an eleven and one-half foot statue of Fame.

The battles of Gettysburg, Vicksburg, Antietam and Appomattox were inscribed on the monument.

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One Square from Gettysburg Cyclorama.

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FINE CIGARS.

At first the Soldier's Monument attracted a large number of visitors to Allegheny City. However, over the years both the memorial and surrounding park were neglected and the area vandalized. Veteran's groups pushed to have the monument refurbished and moved to a spot where it could be maintained. \$33,000 was appropriated for the removal and redesign of the monument.

In 1929 the memorial was dismantled. A new site was selected overlooking Lake Elizabeth in West Park. A new base was created and all that remains of the original is the spire and statue of Fame. The newly refurbished monument was dedicated in 1931.

What happened to Monument Hill? An athletic field was built for Allegheny High School. Today the hilltop is a parking lot.

Thanks To Those Who Contibuted to This Issue:

Editor: John Lyon

Ruth McCartan
Steve Pietzak
Lois Yoedt
Photo on Page 1
From a Post Card owned by
Pat Shaughnessy



If you want more information about Allegheny City and the Civil War, the Allegheny Regional Branch of Carnegie Library has a weatlh of information in books and on michrofische.

Listed below are some of the resources available:

Civil War or War of the Rebellion Bibliography --- Feb. 1996

by Steve Pietzak

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh - Allegheny Regional Branch

BOOKS:

War of the Rebellion: a Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (GPO: 1880-1901) in 70 Volumes

Civil War in America (1923) by Walter Shotwell

The Civil War in Song and Dance (1889) by Frank Moore

Regimental Losses in the American Civil War, 1861-1865.

PENNSYLVANIA-REGIMENTAL HISTORIES:

History of Pennsylvania Volunteers, 1861-1865...(5 vol.set) by Samuel P. Bates *973.7 B

History of the 18th Regiment Infantry, "Duquesne Greys," organized 1831... National Guard of Pennsylvania. (1901) *974.886 P6892

History of the "Bucktails," Kane Rifle Regiment of the Pennsylvania Reserve Corps (13th Pennsylvania Reserves, 42nd of the line)....(1906) -973.7 T38

History of the Forty-fifth (45th) Regiment Pennsylvania Veteran Volunteer Infantry, 1861-1865....(1912) -973.7 AL 1

The Story of the Forty-eighth (48th); a record of the Campaigns of the Forty-Eighth Regiment Pennsylvania Veteran Volunteer Infantry...(1908)

-973.7 G73

The Campaigns of the Fifty-Second (52nd) Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, first known as "The Luzerne Regiment"...(1911) -973.7 M85

History of the Seventy-Eighth (78th) Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry...(1905) -973.7 G352

History of the Eighty-fifth (85th) regiment Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, 1861-1865...(Casey's Division) (1915) -973.7 D55-2 The Logan Guards of Lewistown, PA-Our 1st defenders of 1861....
r973.7448 J1c

Second Brigade of the Pennsylvania Reserves at Antietam; Report & Ceremonies....(1908) -973.7 An8

MAGAZINES:

Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography *974.8 P38-O

v.1, 1877-v.90, 1970

Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine (by the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania)
*q974.88 W56 v.1, 1918-v. 71, 1988

Pennsylvania Heritage v.8, 1982-present

Pittsburgh History (formerly under Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania) v.72, 1989—present

Pennsylvania History v.1, 1934- v.41, 1974

DIRECTORIES:

Pittsburgh City Directories (1859 to 1865) (MF)

NEWSPAPERS (1860 to 1865): Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (MF)

Pittsburgh Chronicle (MF)

Pittsburgh Dispatch (MF)

Pittsburgh Post (MF)

Pittsburgh Daily Commercial (MF)

Allegheny Times (1865) (MF)

INDEXES:

Poole's Index for 1860 to 1865

MF = On Microfilm
-- = being reclassified

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ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE

APRIL 25, 1996 -7:00 PM

CCAC - Allegheny Campus Student Activities Building

Elizabeth Smith Brown Will Speak on the history of the Allegheny Commons and development of its landscape scheme form public grazing ground to Victorian Park to neighborhood recreation center.

Admission: Members Free

Others \$10.00

For More Information call 322-8807

THE ALLEGHENY CITY SOCIETY 801 UNION AVENUE PITTSBURGH, PA 15212 (412) 322-8807