

# REPORTER DISPATCH

The Journal of Old Allegheny History and Lore - Volume 2 No. 3

## Walking Tour of Union Dale Cemetery

Society members and guests spent an June afternoon walking the shaded boulevards of the first rural-landscaped cemetery in Allegheny City, Mount Union Cemetery.

Incorporated in 1846 by members of the First Associated Reformed Presbyterian Church of

Allegheny, currently First Allegheny Presbyterian Church on Union Place. Mount Union Cemetery was a daring idea for the time when people were normally buried in small church graveyards. The Victorian's believed in honoring their lost loved ones with frequent visitation and remembrances. This required the grave be in close proximity to the living family. However, Allegheny City's growing industrialization and corresponding population increase, necessitated a dynamic departure from the norm.

Mount Union Cemetery, now Division 1 of Union Dale Cemetery, is the final resting place of many of the early prominent Scotch-Irish residents of beautiful Allegheny City. Discover the history represented in the beautifully carved monuments of Mount Union Cemetery.

Some noteworthy families of an earlier era can be found in this section of the cemetery:

- ☼ John Arbuckle, a machinist, who went into partnership with Charles Avery to establish the Arbuckle and Avery Cotton Mill. The company was later purchased by a group of investors who renamed the business the Eagle Cotton Mill.

- ☼ The Rev. John Pressley, the beloved pastor of the First Associated Reformed Church of Allegheny. Pressley Ridge School and North Side's Pressley Street are named after him.

- ☼ Francis Torrance Sr. was one of the founders of Standard Sanitary Manufacturing Company that would later become the American Radiator and Standard Sanitary Corporation that manufactured plumbing fixtures. Today this company is known only as American Standard.

- ☼ George Vincent and his daughter C. Jane Vincent can also be found resting here. C. Jane Vincent was the first female doctor in Allegheny City and George was one of the founders of Westminister College. (See article this issue)

- ☼ The Smith family were owners of La Belle Steel, which later became Crucible Steel. Jane and Matilda, two members of this family endowed the Geology Department of the University of Pittsburgh.



Ruth McCartan tour organizer talks about the history of Union Dale Cemetery at the start of the tour



All of these families and many others have plots in Mount Union Cemetery overlooking their beloved City. War veterans, preachers, doctors, business leaders, workers, mothers, babies and even a giant, rest in this sea of markers.

## Society Events...

Since the last newsletter, the Allegheny City Society has sponsored a number of events and activities. In **early March**, Barry Paris, Pittsburgh Post Gazette film critic, talked to an overflow crowd of 121 on his interviews with Marsha Davenport. The talk was followed by a showing of the film version of *The Valley of Decision*.

In **April** at the Annual Meeting, John Burt, Esq, a speaker from the Pennsylvania Humanities Council discussed *The Freedom Trail in Western Pennsylvania, The Underground Railroad*.

On **May 2** the Society sponsored a lecture about Victorian Baseball. The talk was held in the Pittsburgh Pirates board room. After the talk the group proceeded to the picnic area of Three Rivers Stadium and ate hot dogs, baked beans, fruit salad and a variety of other picnic foods while enjoying the Pittsburgh Pirates play the Los Angeles Dodgers.

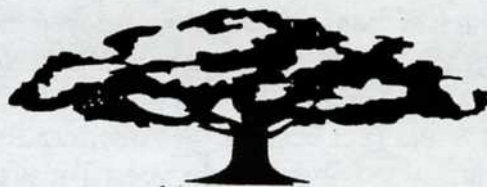
At the end of **June** the Society held a tour of Division 1 of Union Dale Cemetery. The group visited the graves of a number of the founders, movers and shakers of Allegheny City, including the last Mayor Charles Kirshner.

Vice President, John Lyon and Treasurer, Ruth McCartan conducted several talks during the Spring. They journeyed to Sharon PA, to talk about the history of Allegheny City to the College Club. The Westmoreland Civil War Round Table visited the North Side in May and toured the West Commons and watched a slide presentation at the Carnegie Regional Branch of Carnegie Library. In June it was back on the road for our lecturers. This time the stop was Greensburg and the Westmoreland County Archeological Society. Mr. Lyon gave on a talk on the early history of Allegheny City and the impact of the canals on the growth of industry. A number of those attending the lecture had participated in the digging of the Veogtly Church graveyard that occurred during the construction of I-279.

## Allegheny Commons Visitor's Guide Released

Did you know that West Park originally contained two lakes? We didn't until I saw a copy of the Visitor's Guide to the Allegheny Commons that was recently released by The Garden Club of Allegheny County. Highlighted are the exceptional trees and history of this 80 acre park on Pittsburgh's North Side. The guide is one component of a \$180,000.00 multi-year project of the GCAC to restore and label the park's trees, document its history, and make recommendations for its continued restoration.

The Visitors Guide includes a map of the entire park, a walking tour of 21 species of the park's trees, and information about the park's design and changes over time. The guide was designed by Agnew Moyer Smith, Inc. and printed on recycled paper by Hoechstetter Printing





Company of Pittsburgh.

As part of the project, the park's approximately 800 trees have been inventoried, pruned and fertilized by the arborists George Pegher, Inc., and a study of the park's history that located its original plan of 1868 was prepared by the firm of Brown, Carlisle & Associates. Identification labels have been installed on many of the trees. Still to come are recommendations for tree maintenance and replanting.

The park was designed in 1868 by the New York firm of Grant & Mitchell to replace the public grazing areas or commons that surrounded the center of Allegheny City with a more attractive and sanitary public park. Today, Allegheny Commons is Pittsburgh's oldest park and is a City Historic District.

Despite lack of regular care over the years and considerable deterioration within the park as a whole, over fifty species of trees exist in Allegheny Commons. Some individual specimens probably date back to the park's creation in the 1860's.

North Side residents have supported the park in various ways over the years-nominating it as a City Historic District, holding walking tours, planting memorial trees, organizing an annual Pumpkinfest for children, surveying the trees and securing several grants for tree pruning and planting.

The GCAC's involvement began with a \$90,000 grant from the Richard King Mellon Foundation in December, 1994, which it matched over the next year with funding from several local foundations, institutions and individuals. The City of Pittsburgh and professional arborists also donated a total of \$11,000 in professional services. The Allegheny Commons Committee-composed of members of the GCAC, the North Side Community and the City of Pittsburgh-has overseen the project.

### Upcoming events....

#### Mark your calendars for these upcoming Allegheny City Society Events....

Saturday September 12 from 12 Noon to 4:00 PM - **The Second Annual Show and Tell Exhibit.** - Third Floor of the Carnegie Library. Free and open to the public. Bring your Allegheny City or North Side collectibles and swap stories with other collectors or curious onlookers. Last year over 100 people showed up to reminiscence about the North Side. This year there will be a continuous showing of Allegheny City and North Side slides as well as the WQED Channel 13 Pittsburgh History Series video by Rick Sebak, *The North Side Story*.

Sunday October 4 from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM

**October 4<sup>th</sup> - A Trolley tour of "Davisville"** - the former 11th Ward of Allegheny City sponsored in cooperation with the Brighton Heights Citizen's Federation. Trolleys will leave from Risen Lord Church, St. Francis Site, California Avenue at Antrium Street every 20 minutes from 1:00 to 3:40. Each trolley tour will last 1 hour and be preceded by a 20 minute historic overview of Brighton Heights as it was a century ago. The cost of the tour is \$10 and reservations are required. Please call the Allegheny City Society at 322-8807 for information or make reservations.

**November 15<sup>th</sup> - Sunday - 2:00 PM** Calvary United Methodist Church **The Third Annual Rimmel Award** and Special North Side Story program. This year's Awardee is Rick Sebak who has promised a special screening of material not used in *The North Side Story* for this free event.



## News...

At a hearing before Judge McGregor in June, the Society's attorney Patricia Blais was granted custody of the artifacts and records of the Society that were recovered in May. The purpose was to conduct an inventory of the 57 boxes and determine what actually was recovered. This inventory is currently being conducted and should be completed by mid August. Then a report will be made to Judge McGregor. Expect more on this in the Fall newsletter.

## The Beloved Physician ...

By Ruth McCartan

*This article is a continuation of from the Spring Allegheny City Society Reporter Dispatch that outlines the life of Dr. C. Jane Vincent - the First Allegheny City female physician...*

The Fourth United Presbyterian Church on Montgomery Street, now the site of Mercy Providence Hospital, was the Vincent family's chosen worship site.

In 1879 Reverend Dr. Fulton, the Fourth's pastor, was approached by a dying member of the church who pleaded for her fatherless children to be raised in a Christian home. The difficulties encountered in quickly placing the children, prompted the pastor to discern the need for a church sponsored orphanage. He called for the Presbyterian women of Pittsburgh and Allegheny to help solve this



The orphanage that was located at the corner of Monterey and Jacksonia - Picture from the United Presbyterian Banner

desperate problem. He wrote, "How does God intend His orphan children to be cared for? The ravens could not be expected to bring them food; Manna could not be expected to fall from heaven; the State could not be asked to provide for them."

As a result of this call, the United Presbyterian Women's Association was formed at a meeting of church women in 1880. Two years following the formation of the Women's Association the United Presbyterian orphanage was founded. After two possible locations were rejected, a plot was purchased at West Jefferson (Jacksonia) and Monterey Streets. The two-story house on the property was easily converted to meet the Association's requirements. The need for an orphanage became so great that in only two years a front building was added. The orphanage then consisted of 21 large-airy rooms and two bathrooms. By 1884 the number of orphans was 70.



The *United Presbyterian*, a church newspaper stated, "The home was maintained by voluntary donations with an Annual Entertainment, where donated fancy items were sold at well below market price and a \$.50 cent dinner that was well worth the donation. No "grab bag or lottery sold." Dr. Vincent, who started donating her medical services to the orphanage along with 4 other local physicians. became a member of the United Presbyterian Women's Association and one of its guiding spirits. The North Side site for the orphanage served until the donation of the Flower estate in 1929 in Butler County and the facility was moved out of the city. The institution is now called the Mars Home for Youth.

From the beginning, orphans of all faiths were admitted. Also destitute families' children were received. Parents who worked paid according to their ability. The Women's Association wanted the children to be treated as if they lived in a loving home. Residents did not wear a uniform and attended the local public school.

According to the laws of the 1800's, children who contacted a contagious disease would have to remain at home and not attend school. All other children of the family, even though healthy, were forced to stay home also. One can imagine the effects of this requirement on an orphanage of about 70 children. The idea for the hospital came from this need to remove the sick child from the orphanage so the others would not be effected and could attend school.

The start of the new year of 1889 brought with it the dedication of the United Presbyterian Memorial Hospital for Children. It was located on the terraced hillside of the Orphanage's property fronting on Roberts Street. The tenets of the Presbyterian faith are seen with the hospital's requirements that "No person will be employed about the hospital addicted to the taste of liquor, and all employees must attend church every Sunday."

The Hospital contained three wards with a total bed capacity of 13. The orphanage now had its contagious disease ward but from the day the doors opened all Allegheny City children who were sick would be treated if there was an available bed.

Both the Hospital and Orphans Home were maintained with voluntary donations and annual fund raisers. *The United Presbyterian* said, "Of 85 patients treated in 1892 only a dozen could pay and that being only in part. The furniture, furnishings and medical equipment for the hospital was donated by benefactors "in loving remembrance." An example of the type of gifts donated to the hospital was a rolling chair donated by a grieving mother from Iowa. The plaque on the chair read "In memory of my lost dear one."

Dr. Jane Vincent was the president of the hospital board of managers, and was responsible for running and maintaining the hospital with only voluntary money available. Another demanding title she carried was that of staff physician and with the help of a few other doctors, the hospital was visited every day and often more frequently. Surgical procedures performed at the hospital regularly had more than one physician in attendance. The only gratuity given to Dr. Vincent and the other doctors for their medical work was a grateful thank you from a sick child.

In the first six years of the hospital's existence 412 patients were admitted with only 9 deaths. Because of the demand for decent medical treatment for women the Memorial Hospital began to admit neighboring women for care. In 1905 the hospital changed its name to Columbia. The hospital was moved to a new neighborhood in the East End of Pittsburgh at Penn and Trent Aves. The location was on the land of another Women's Association project the United

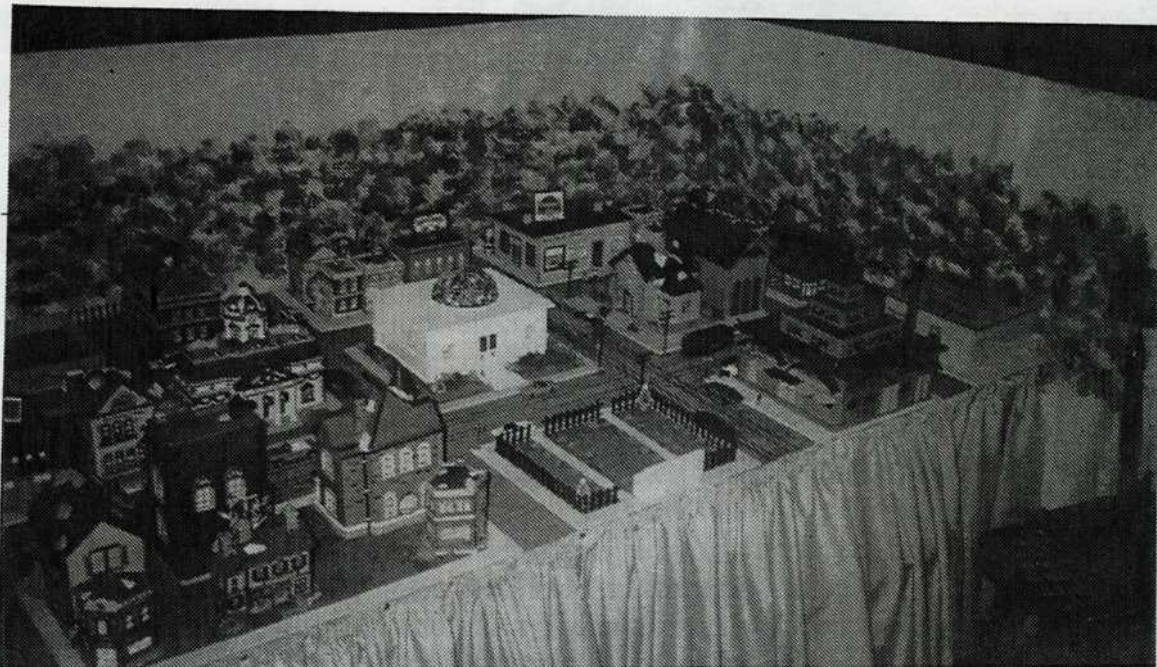


Presbyterian Old People's Home. Dr. Jane Vincent having died in 1902 and the founder and dedicated physician for the struggling early hospital was not forgotten with the name change. An operating room was dedicated to her memory.

Columbia Hospital joined with the Forbes Health System in 1970's.

*The writer would like to thank Dr. Steve Peitzman, Univeristy Historian of Allegheny University of the Health Sciences and Dr. H. Dewey Dewitt, College Archivist of Westminister College for help in research relating to Dr. C. Jane Vincent.*

In January the Society received a letter from Joan Phillips from Fairview Heights, Illinois. Enclosed with the letter were several pictures of her North Side "layout" that she displayed under her Christmas Tree. Last year she decided to keep it up all year round. Pictured below is one view that has the Market House, Buhl Planetarium Sun Drug Store, Post Office, and Ober Park with it's fountain. The buildings are plastic, ceramic and wood made by Ms. Phillips. Joan also wants to come back and attend one of our tours. Hurry home!!



*If you have any North Side or Allegheny City memories  
you would like to share, please call us at 322-8807  
or write us at P. O. Box 7644, Pittsburgh, PA 15214*



# ALLEGHENY CITY SOCIETY

Documenting and Preserving the History of  
Allegheny City & Pittsburgh's North Side



3 Upcoming Events

Sept. 12      Saturday 12 - 4

**SHOW & TELL EXHIBIT**

Carnegie Library - Allegheny Center Branch

3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Hall - Open & Free to the Public

Post Office Box 7644  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania  
15214

(412) 322-8807  
Facsimile: (412) 322-5761

E-Mail: [acs@trfn.cipgh.org](mailto:acs@trfn.cipgh.org)  
Web Site:  
<http://trfn.cipgh.org/acs/>

October 4<sup>th</sup>      Sunday      1 - 3      \$ 10.00 donation

## TROLLEY TOUR OF HISTORIC BRIGHTON HEIGHTS *Former 11<sup>th</sup> Ward of Allegheny City*

Co sponsored by the Allegheny City Society  
&  
Brighton Heights Civic Federation

\*Trolleys leave St. Francis Church (California & Antrim) every 20 mins.  
Each tour will last one hour and will preceded by a 20 minute  
historical overview of Brighton Heights. (\*not a real trolley)

**Space is limited - Advance Reservations are Required**

At the conclusion of each tour will be an opportunity to view an  
exhibit of memorabilia from the Woods Run Settlement House

November 15<sup>th</sup>      Sunday      Time 2:00 PM

## Presentation of "Rimmel Award" & Special "North Side Story" Historical Program

Guest of Honor - Mr. Rick Sebak

Calvary United Methodist Church - Beech Ave. at Allegheny Ave.

Free and Open to the Public



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