

Society News

New Allegheny City Society Gift Idea

The Allegheny City Society's 1st ever commemorative coffee mug was unveiled at the Allegheny West Christmas House Tour in December. The 12 oz. white ceramic mug features images of the Allegheny Carnegie Public Library and the Seal of the City of Allegheny in black. The cost of the mug is \$ 7.00 including shipping and handling.

Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Allegheny City Society will be held on Wednesday, April 26 at The Penn Brewery on Troy Hill Road. Before the meeting the Society will sponsor a buffet dinner featuring the finest in German food. The buffet will begin at 6:00 p.m. Cost for the buffet is \$17.00 including tax and gratuity.

A short business meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m. This will be followed by the presentation of the Rimmel Award to *Pittsburgh Post Gazette* writer Patricia Lowrey. Following the Rimmel Award John Canning will talk on The Germans of Allegheny City. The meeting and talk are free and open to the public. However, reservations are required for the buffet dinner. Call the Society at (412) 322-8807 to make a reservation.

Paris in the 1890's

The Frick Art Museum featured Allegheny's own Mary Cassatt in their winter exhibit of post-impressionist prints. Ms. Cassatt is featured with some of the stars of the period such as Toulouse-Lautrec, Pissarro, Degas, Van Gogh and Gauguin. The over 100 works of art are from the permanent collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

At the turn of the last century print making was just starting to blossom. Lithography's large press runs allowed the creation of affordable work for the growing mass market. "The Letter" (1890-1891) is the featured Cassatt work of the exhibit. Mary Cassatt born in Allegheny City never spent much time in the area after she started her career, beginning with her art studies in Philadelphia.

The Arbuckle Family Fortune: Cotton, Coffee, Sugar

by Ruth McCartan

Historians have been very kind to one member of the Arbuckle family, John Arbuckle the III, the owner of the first company to prepackage roasted coffee. "Ariosa" produced by Arbuckle Brothers Co. of New York, has the title of the coffee that *Won the West* and every few years, the John Arbuckle story is retold. When the story is told not much of the early history of the family is ever mentioned. For many the family history begins when John arrives in New York City in the 1870's. But the Arbuckle story begins in Allegheny City in the early 1830's.

Allegheny Town was a country village in the 1820's with a population of 792 with 85 houses. The Hope Cotton Mill was established in 1826 and the first in the town to process cotton. The next year The Juanita Rolling Mill began iron production. Transportation had just gotten easier with the completion of the Pennsylvania Canal from Leechburg to Allegheny. With the Canal reaching Allegheny Town in 1829 the residents of the growing town built their first Market House. Allegheny Town industries were growing and demanding workers.

It is not known when the Arbuckle family arrived in Allegheny Town from Glasgow, Scotland. John Arbuckle Sr. the patriarch (the coffee monarch's grandfather) of the American family and his two sons Thomas (father of John III) and John Jr. (uncle) by 1830 were working as mechanics at the Hope Cotton Mill located on the corner of East Lacock and Hope Streets.

Thomas Arbuckle had received training as a machinist in Scotland and his coming to Allegheny Town was probably planned to take advantage of the growing industry here. The book *The Story of Old Allegheny City* tells how the Arbuckle family while working in the basement of the Hope Cotton Mill secretly designed and built the machinery needed for their first cotton mill. When Hope's management discovered what the family was doing they were all fired.

In 1832 the Arbuckle and Avery Cotton Mill was in business. The location of the mill was on Sandusky Street, north of the Allegheny river. Thomas Arbuckle's business partner besides his father was Charles Avery. The Arbuckle family ran and managed the mill while Avery presumably traveled to the South buying cotton to be shipped to Allegheny. These cotton buying trips may have been the inspiration for Charles Avery abolitionists' beliefs. Cotton Production was made possible by Negro slaves and Charles Avery and the Arbuckle family grew rich from the manufacture of cotton materials.

By 1837 there were three cotton factories in Allegheny Town employing 600 workers that processing 4,300 bales of cotton. The cotton mills produced cotton yarn, candle wick, batting, carpet chain and wrapping yarn.

The cotton business in Allegheny was greatly effected by national economic fluctuations and competition from New England mills.

Thomas Arbuckle sold his shares in Arbuckle and Avery in 1846 and retired to a farm on the Ohio River. With new investors Josiah King and Issac Pennock, Arbuckle and Avery became Eagle Cotton Mills. Their slogan "Cotton is King" said it all.

The 1840's was a period of increased immigration, the mills and mines needed workers. Dangerous and dirty employment could be found in Allegheny City industries. Working conditions were severe in all factories of the period. The 13-hour work day was the norm in the cotton business. Andrew Carnegie wrote of how when arriving in Allegheny City in 1848 at the age of 14 he worked as a bobbin boy, eating breakfast in the dark, arriving at the mill before dawn and toiling until after dark. The cotton factory where he worked, The Anchor Cotton Mill, was owned by the Thomas Arbuckle.

In 1848 Arbuckle had come out of retirement and purchased shares in the Anchor mill located on West Robinson at Balkan. In the census of 1850 it was reported that Thomas Arbuckle owned property worth \$50,000.

In 1851 at the age of 46, Thomas died leaving a wife and two sons Charles and John III. Charles was 17 and John III only 12 when their father Thomas died. John III attended public school at the 1st ward school located at the corner of School and Rebecca Streets.

John Arbuckle III born in 1839 (this is the coffee monarch) was the same age as Henry Phipps and Henry M. Oliver boyhood friends of Andrew Carnegie. In a town as compact as Allegheny City these four must have known each other. Even though John III was born in America, the common Scottish heritage would have brought the children together.



ARBUCKLES & AVERY,
Pittsburgh.

The Thomas Arbuckle family lived in the same block as their cotton mill. As was the pattern of child-rearing in the mid 1840's the Arbuckle children most surely help in the mill after school and on week-ends. Working with his hands, learning how the machinery worked would help John later in life to patent machinery for the coffee industry.

Charles, the older of the two Arbuckle brothers, attended Jefferson College in Canonsburg, Pa. The cotton industry was not for him he became involved in the wholesale grocery business with his uncle Duncan McDonald in 1858. Their business, McDonald and Arbuckle, was located at 242 Liberty Avenue in downtown Pittsburgh.

John with a strong love of learning how machinery worked and an inventive nature was probable not far from the cotton mill shop floor. He entered Jefferson College in 1856 but the academic life was not suited to him he left and returned home to Allegheny. In 1859 he married Ms. Mary Kerr, the daughter of a former mayor of Pittsburgh Dr. William Kerr.

A year later he joined his brother and uncle in the wholesale grocery business.

The Civil War ruined the cotton business for the owners and workers of Allegheny City. The raw cotton vital to production could not be shipped from the South. Allegheny's cotton industry was just another war casualty. During the Confederate invasion scare of 1862 John Arbuckle joined the 15 Militia Regiment, a unit called to organize by Governor Curtin, as he believed invasion was immanent. John served in Co. B as a private. The state of danger was over in 10 days and the unit was discharged.

Once again in July 1863 John joined a Independent Calvary Battalion this time serving for 6 months. Neither of these units received military training or ever left the county. The citizen soldiers in these type of units were only to fight if their region was ever invaded.

Thomas's father and John's III grandfather and name-sake John Sr., was involved in the cotton business until his death in 1861. He is buried in Union Dale cemetery Division 1 with his wife Margaret. In the City Directory of 1860 he is listed as a cotton manufacture with the Eagle Cotton Mill.

The Arbuckle brothers followed the business disciplines of the day until their uncle Duncan McDonald retired from the wholesale grocery business in 1865. The business name changed to Arbuckles and Co. and so did their business policies. Quick sales, small profits and offering the greatest possible discounts to cash buyers was the order of the day. Profits and customers increased. Another policy of Arbuckles and Co. was the selling of no adulterated spices and coffee. They claimed to be the only house in the country that follow this mandate.

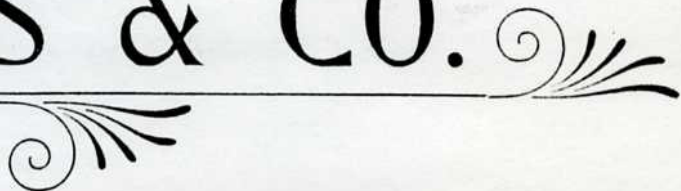
According to the Allegheny County Centennial booklet Charles was the senior partner, conservative, possessing all the qualifications of the shrewd financier who looks carefully after all financial affairs of the firm. John was practical, prudent, ingenious and a tireless worker.

In the 1860's coffee was sold "green", by the raw bean and the home-maker would roast it at home. The home roasting process was tricky. Using a hot skillet the coffee beans were constantly stirred until they reached a dark brown. If one bean was burnt the favor of the coffee was adversely effected. Roasted coffee quickly got stale and many a bad cup of coffee was consumed.

In 1868 John Arbuckle came up with a process that would solve every coffee drinkers worst nightmare, rancid and burnt tasting coffee. John Arbuckle and a coffee drinking nation would never be the same.

Part 2 will discuss the Arbuckle's Coffee kingdom and the war with the sugar trust. Watch for it in the Spring Allegheny City Society newsletter.

ARBUCKLES & CO.



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*The Allegheny City Society's
Annual Meeting*

Wednesday, April 26th, 2000

*Penn Brewery
Troy Hill Road*

German Buffet Dinner Served at 6:00 p.m..

\$17.00 per person including tax and gratuity

Free Program Following Dinner at 7:00 p.m.

Rimmel Award Presentation

The Germans of Allegheny City - by John Canning

Reservations for dinner only call (412) 322-8807