

Tour Of Duquesne Boro (Allegheny City's Eighth Ward) To Be Held October 29

On October 29, 2000 the Allegheny City Society will present a tour *Along the Tow Path and River Road - A Trolley Tour of Duquesne Boro*. The tour will begin and end at the Sarah Heinz House and include Washington's Landing (Herr's Island) and both St. Nicholas Churches (Millvale and East Ohio Street).

This area along East Ohio Street was once known as Mala Jaska and was the center of the Croatian community in Allegheny City and Pittsburgh. From that Croatian community grew the two St. Nicholas Churches. The East Ohio Street church currently faces an uncertain future. The Parish recommended the building be demolished for the widening of East Ohio Street. And now the fate of the building is in the hands of the Diocese of Pittsburgh. Recently the building was nominated as an Historic Structure.

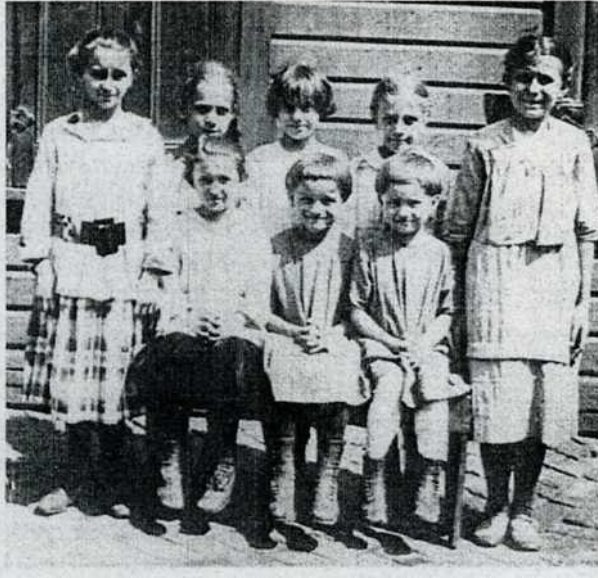
The Millvale Church is already a historic landmark and is well-known for its magnificent murals by Yugoslav painter Maximilian Vanka. The murals were painted in the late 1930's and depict the Croatian experience.

The Sarah Heinz House is celebrating its 100th Anniversary this year and Washington's Landing has been reborn as a residential community and office park.

Tours are by reservation only and will leave the Sarah Heinz House every twenty minutes starting at 12:00 noon until 3:00 p.m. The cost is \$15.00 for non-Allegheny City Society members and \$12.00 for members of the Allegheny City Society. Reservations are required call 322-3974.

St. Nicholas Church

For over a century St. Nicholas Church



Home adjacent to the railroad in Mala Jaska c 1915

on E. Ohio Street has welcomed parishioners and friends to come pray, worship, celebrate and help one another. Now the congregation and church's prospects are uncertain future. On September 9th Father Gabriel Badurina, pastor of the parish, recommended to Bishop Donald Werhl the church building on East Ohio Street be sold to the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT). If this action is approved by Bishop Donald Wuerl, the

building would be demolished to widen a stretch of E. Ohio Street between the H. J. Heinz Plant and the 31st Street Bridge.

A 12-member task force made up of the parish pastoral council, finance council, parish staff, a diocesan representative and pastors of the two neighboring parishes were split almost evenly between relocation and sale. They met six times starting in March, 2000 in order to respond to PennDOT's request to state a preference about the future of St. Nicholas church on East Ohio Street - to relocate the church or sell it as plans for the construction of a new highway to go forward. The vote was six for relocation, five for sale, and one that could support either, but preferred relocation.

A survey of all registered parishioners indicated that most were in favor of selling the building. Of the 713 surveys returned from 1,250 distributed, 53% opposed moving the building, versus 38% in favor. Fifty-six percent said moving the building would not be fiscally responsible and 58% percent said the unity of the parish would be strengthened if the entire parish worshiped in one church building.

Some members of the congregation disapprove of the decision. They favor moving the church building to a spot near Troy Hill Road

and Vinial Street. Penn-DOT has offered to do this for nothing. But opponents of the move state there is not enough money to keep the church going.

Members of the parish, Peter J. Karlovich, John Sestric and Mrs. Joann Aftnas were joined by Preservation Pittsburgh's John Murdoch in nominating the building as a city historic structure. A preliminary determination hearing was scheduled before the City's Historic Review Commission on October 4, 2000. If this nomination is successful it would require the Historic Review Commission to

approve any exterior changes or demolition. The church is significant because it is the first Croatian Church in America and the role it played in the history of the Croatian people and culture. **What is that role and history?**

In the second half of the 19th Century a large number of Croatians began to immigrate to America. They were seeking to escape the economic hardships of their homeland. Over the next four decades thousands of Croatians came to work and live in Allegheny City.

These new residents became the tanners, open-hearth workers, cannery, food preparers and worked on the railroads. However, it was difficult for the Croatian people to make the transition from the old way of life to the new. The immigrants were predominantly peasants. They lived in regions of Croatia where there was one faith, one nationality and one language.

In Allegheny City there were many religious denominations, many nationalities and many customs unfamiliar to the Croatians.

Leaders in the Croatian community were concerned the people were in danger of neglecting church obligations. Not because of lack of faith, but as a result of the failure to adjust to new customs. Many of the first immigrants were married men with children in Croatia. They came to first establish a household and send for their families.

The number of Croatians in Allegheny City soon increased rapidly as the families joined their fathers and husbands. The leaders of the community realized that immediate action be taken to organize a parish that would keep alive the spiritual values of the people, nurture their Catholic faith, and help preserve the Croatian language and their customs.

Joseph Marohnic, a newspaper editor, sent a letter to Bishop J. J. Strossmayer in Croatia asking for assistance in the organization of the Croatian parish and priest from the homeland.

The Bishop agreed and sent Rev. Dobroslav Josip Bozic. He arrived on August 11, 1894. On August 12th he celebrated Mass in the basement of St. Paul's Cathedral (which was then located in downtown Pittsburgh).

Just one month after that initial Mass the parish officers met and completed negotiations for the purchase of church property. The site chosen had a building which could be converted into a church. The purchase price was \$8,500. In addition another \$900 was appropriated for remodeling. It was decided to name the parish St. Nicholas, the Traveler. The new church was dedicated on January 27, 1895. The parish celebrated with a parade that began at the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad station in downtown Pittsburgh and progressing through Allegheny City. The final stage of the parade was through "Mala Jaska" in the heart of the Croatian community to 1546 E. Ohio the new location of the new church. St. Nicholas rapidly became the center of Croatian activities throughout Allegheny County.

The third pastor of the church assumed his duties on December 26, 1898. At this time there was a movement among the parishioners to purchase a larger church because the tiny church could not accommodate their needs.

Three proposals were considered: 1) a new church to be constructed in the Bennett Mills area (Millvale) 2) enlarge the church at its present location and 3) construct a new church, a Croatian Cathedral. On November 2, 1899 a meeting was held to decide the issue. The majority in attendance favored option one, building a new church in Millvale. Some members, called a second meeting on December 2, 1899. They felt those who voted in November did not represent a majority of parishioners. They argued that moving the church to Bennett Mills would deprive the Croatians residing in Allegheny City of their parish. When the vote was taken the majority at this meeting favored building a new church in Allegheny City.

Those parishioners who favored the relocation to Bennett proceeded with their plans and a second St. Nicholas Church was established.



In 1900 negotiations were completed on June 6, 1900 and property was purchased at 1326 E. Ohio Street where the St. Nicholas R. C. Church and rectory would be built. Architect, Frederick Sauer was commissioned to draw the design. The building contract for \$19,000 was awarded to Robert McCain. The cornerstone was laid on September 16, 1900. Postponement in construction caused by a severe winter delayed the opening and blessing of the current building until September 8, 1901.

Written by John Lyon *Information on the History of St. Nicholas was taken from the 100th Anniversary Booklet - August 1994*

Two Possible Scenarios for St. Nicholas Church:

Sale of the church:

In a sale of the church, PennDot would acquire the building after the sacred objects are removed and an historic assessment of the site is made. All proceeds of the sale would go to the parish. The complex includes the rectory, convent, garage and church social hall, which is in the basement of the church

Relocation of the church

PennDot would only move the church onto a new foundation at a site opposite the Penn Brewery. During such a move, Route 28 would have to be closed for at least five days and an additional five to seven houses would have to be demolished to make room for the church parking lot. Because St. Nicholas Parish would be responsible for maintaining the church building and land at the new location, the diocese had a panel of financial advisors conduct an initial analysis which showed that an endowment of approx. \$2 million dollars would be required to provide for capital maintenance and improvements over the long term.

Society News

The Allegheny City Society has received a \$5,000 grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development. The grant was received with the help of State Representative William Robinson and will be used for planning on the restoration of the Soldier's Monument in West Park. To date the Society through its sponsorship of the Pittsburgh Civil War Soldier's Fair has raised over \$3,700.00 of the estimated \$40,000 needed to restore this monument.

If you wish to help restore this important piece of Allegheny City history and the only public monument to Civil War soldiers in Allegheny County send your check to: Allegheny City Society Monument Fund, P. O. Box 100255, Pittsburgh, PA 15233-0255.

Pittsburgh Wool Program at the History Center

On Sunday, November 5th the Pittsburgh Wool Program will open at the Senator John Heinz Regional History Center. From 1:00 p.m. until 3:00 p.m. the focus will be on the Pittsburgh Wool Company featuring the first public screening of a video documenting the history of the Wool Company. Also planned is a lecture on Pittsburgh's wool pulling industry and a discussion of items of archaeological significance that were found at the site of the Wool Company. This is the public's first chance to re-visit a unique and now extinct, cornerstone industry of Allegheny City. The program is free with admission to the History Center.

The Society activities for 2001

February*	Tour the John Heinz History Center including the J. Heinz Exhibit and tour of the Library and research facility
March*	Talk on the Thaw Family
April 7	Civil War Seminar - The Babcock, Babcock Blvd North Hills 8:00 a.m. 3:30 p.m.
April 25	Annual Meeting
May*	Talk on the Thaw Family - Northland Library, North Hills
June 24	Third Annual Pittsburgh Civil War Soldier's Fair West Park
August*	Cemetery Tour Division Two Union Dale Cemetery Date
	*Dates and times to be announced

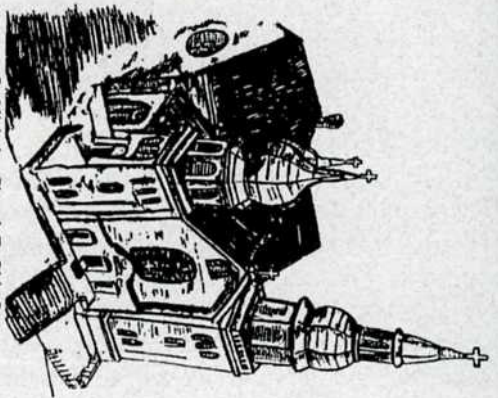
The Society is working with the Pittsburgh Pirates to hold a lecture " In, Under, and Around PNC Park" that will include a tour of the new ballpark as well as a talk about the Robinson Family home, Recreation and Exposition Parks. Tentative date September 2001

**Antique Show and Sale
Calvary United Methodist Church
February 3 and 4, 2001**

The Allegheny City Society
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The Allegheny City Society Presents



St. Nicholas Church E. Ohio St.

**Along the Tow Path and River Road
A Trolley Tour of Duquesne Borough**
(The Eighth Ward of Allegheny City)

**October 29, 2000
From 12:00 noon until 3:00 p.m.**

Join the Allegheny City Society as we tour the Sarah Heinz House, Washington's Landing (Herr's Island) and both St. Nicholas Churches (Millvale and E. Ohio Street) in the area known to the Croatian community as Mala Jaska

*Trolleys leave the Sarah Heinz House
every twenty minutes starting at
12:00 noon until 3:00 p.m.*

Cost

**Allegheny City Society Members \$12.00
Non Members \$15.00**

Reservations are required Call (412) 322-3974