

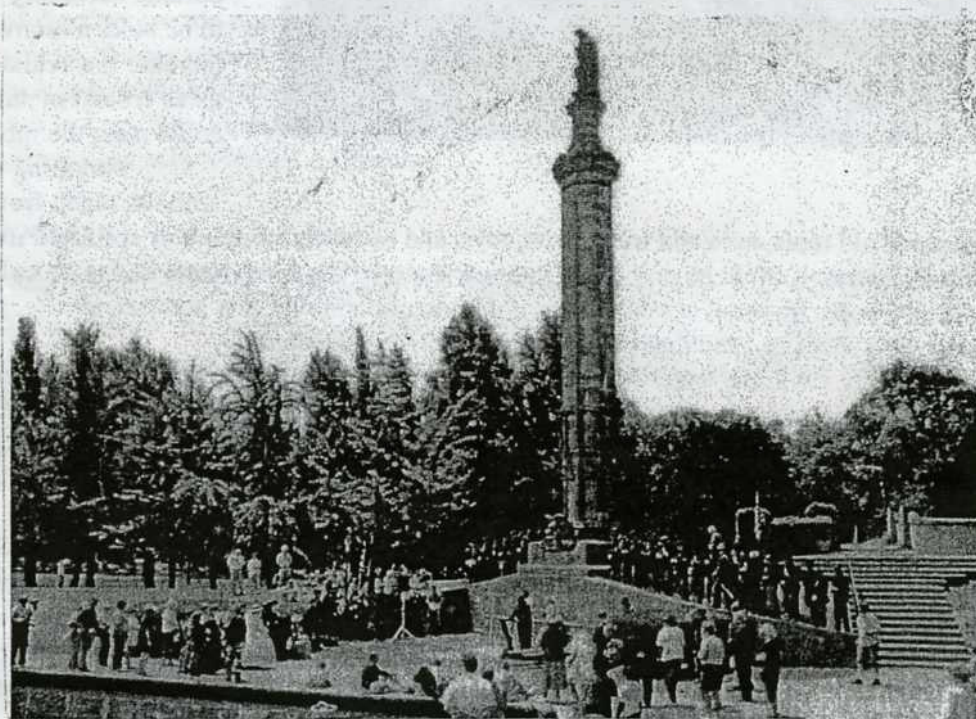
The Allegheny City Society **REPORTER DISPATCH**

The Journal of Old Allegheny History and Lore - Fall 2001

Civil War Soldier's Fair 2001

The Third Annual Pittsburgh Civil War Soldier's Fair was held on June 24, 2001. Funding from National City Bank, Pennsylvania Humanities Council, Parkvale Bank, and Pittsburgh Firefighters Local No.1 made the event possible. We also want to thank our volunteer committee for their help in making the Fair a success.

In addition to the re-enactors, vendors and exhibitors, Generals Ulysses S. Grant, Robert E. Lee and George Pickett and Frederick Douglass were in attendance. The highlight of the day was a march by the troops, both Union and Confederate to the Soldier's Monument on Lake Elizabeth. At the monument State Representative William Robinson spoke about the black troops and their role in the Civil War. The speech was followed by the playing of taps, rifle salute and the release of white doves by the National Aviary.



Re-enactors line both sides of the Soldier's Monument for a wreath-laying ceremony during the Soldier's Fair on June 24th

When the Park Wasn't Quite So Pretty By Jack Kerr

If you've taken the time lately to stroll through West Park in the early morning, you've probably enjoyed the peace and quiet that surrounds the large pond that we call "Lake Elizabeth." Every now and then as you walk across one of the arched footbridges, you may find a transient duck or two. it's a very pleasant scene indeed.

But there was a time during the years of World War II that the views around Lake Elizabeth

weren't nearly so pastoral. As a matter of fact, they were downright stark and ugly. The reason, as everyone called it back then --"the war effort".

America was caught very much off-guard in 1941 and was thrust into the war in a poor state of preparedness. As a result, the Nation was forced into a crash program to manufacture the hundreds of thousands of items necessary to equip the armed forces. Guns, tanks and planes alone required millions of tons of steel aluminum and other essential metals. Since these metals were all in short supply at then existing manufacturing rates, it became necessary for "scrap drives" to be held, nationwide, to help increase the available amounts of these crucial metals until production could meet the monumental demand.



Anything that you could do without, made from these metals

--pots, pans, old tools, auto and truck parts, toys, and so much more -- was collected in massive quantities. Before it could be processed into war materiel the scrap metal had to be collected and stored. Boy Scout troops, fraternal organizations, clubs, neighborhoods, just about everyone, pitched in to make these drives a success... and that brings us back to Lake Elizabeth.

In early 1942, the water was drained from the pond and a very large "bowl" remained. And for the next few years, ton upon ton of scrap metal came and went from this site. Since Pittsburgh was a major producer of both steel and aluminum much of this scrap went directly to local mills and foundries. But until the scrap was trucked to these mills, it accumulated in huge piles, so that Lake Elizabeth, at that time looked very much like one of today's salvage yards.

When I mentioned to my wife, Carole, who is also a native North Sider from Buena Vista Street, that I was preparing this brief article, she dug deep into her old family album and found the photo which accompanies this story. It was taken by her grandfather, William Harrington, when she was about 10 or 11 years old, She is standing, along with her younger brother, Bill Reed, in front of a huge collection of pots and pans on the Lake Elizabeth location . A simple notation is hand printed on the back of the photo, "Scrap Metal Drive - 2nd World War."

Did you know ?

- Walter P. Chrysler, who later founded the auto company named for him, lived in the Pittsburgh suburb of Bellevue when he managed a locomotive works on Pittsburgh's North side in the early 1900's.
- The original town of Allegheny was laid out in 1788, and had been intended by the state to become the county seat. But slow development resulted in Pittsburgh assuming that role. Allegheny Town became a borough in 1828 and in 1840 a third class city.
- The first listing in the City Directory for a wire works at 10-12 Federal St. was Burgin & Wilson, owners John E. Burgin and F. E. Wilson in 1880. In 1881 Mr. Wilson left and a Mr. Hoehn joined the company forcing a name change Burgin & Hoehn.

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1882 found no listing of any wire works at this location. Wilson and Hoehn was listed in 1883 and in 1884 only F. E. Wilson was involved in the company with the final name change Allegheny Wire Works. Hard to build strong name recognition for your business with yearly name changes. Display ads from 1881 and 1883 featured wrought iron fencing and roof-cresting as leading their product line. By 1887 Allegheny Wire Works was not listed in the City Directory.

The Official Allegheny City Flag

Helen M. Meister, a 13 year old who lived at 41 Summitt Ave.(Spring Garden Area) and attended the thirteen ward school had her flag design selected as the official flag of the Allegheny on June 1907. Six months later, after a lengthy legal battle the city was absorbed by Pittsburgh, and lost forever.

Miss Meister's design was selected by a distinguished jury of citizens, including Professor John Brashear, Judge John D. Shaler and Joseph A. O'Neill. The winning flag design was composed of three bars running the length of the flag, the top one being red, with the name "Allegheny" in large white letters, the second one white with blue stars and in the center of this bar a small log cabin, surrounded by green trees, the lower bar is blue with the date "1840" in white figures. Fifty dollars was awarded to Miss Meister, second place went to Leah Van Fossen of 838 Ridge Ave. she received a ten dollar gold piece. The prizes for the contest were given by Charles A. Painter.

Please Mark your Calendar

☞ **"Bitter April", the 2nd Annual Civil War Seminar for Monument Preservation**, will be held at the Babcock Meeting Center in the North Hills on Saturday, April 6, 2002. Invited speakers are distinguished authors and historians, Bud Robertson, Bill Lazenby, Chris Calkins, and Ron Wilson, who will discuss the days leading up the surrender at Appomattox.

The first seminar raised over \$ 2,000 to repair and protect the Civil War Soldier's monument located in the historic Allegheny Commons (West Park).

☞ **Annual Meeting - April 11, 2002 at Allegheny General Hospital**

Soldier's Monument Restoration.

Since the first Civil War Soldier's Fair the Society has raised over \$10,000 toward the monument restoration. However, we are estimating about \$90,000 will be needed to both clean, repoint and landscape the monument. Checks have been received for as much as \$100 and one envelope arrived with name or return address just a \$5.00 bill and the note "this all I can afford." Another example is the following letter from De Vere Boul from Florida:

"I hope you can read my writing. I am 90 years old now but I know West Park. I went in the park when I was a kid and they had row boats in the lake. I was born on North Canal Street, moved to West View in 1918 and left the area in 1966. My grandmother worked at the old North Side police station and my dad worked at the old market house and my mother worked at Boggs and Buhl. I knew all the old timers on the North Side but I guess it has changed. Glad to help."

Ed note: enclosed with the note was a check for \$10.00 for the monument restoration.

The Allegheny City Society
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Special Sale - The Society has a number of reprinted booklets from our recent tours for sale. The booklets are \$6.00 each including shipping and handling. They are:

Along the Towpath the River Road - A Historical Sketch of Duquesne Borough, The Eighth Ward of Allegheny City - published in 2000, Copyright John Canning

Davisville to Brighton Heights, A Trip Through Time published in 1998, Copyright John Canning

Heimat in Allegheny, Troy Hill (Homeland in Allegheny) - published in 1998, Copywrite John Canning

The Czech Community of Allegheny City - published in 2001, Copyright John Canning

And for \$8.00 ---

When I Look Back and Think, by Susan Cooper Walker as told to Catherine S. Barker (privately printed in 1943 in Maryville, Tennessee The book covers personal recollections of Susan Walker whose parents came to the Pittsburgh area in 1831 The family moved to Davisville (now Brighton Heights in the 1850's)