
The Allegheny City Society **REPORTER DISPATCH**

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Dedication of the Martha Graham Marker

Martha Graham was born on May 11, 1894 in Allegheny City on what is now Brighton Place and spent her formative years there until the family moved to California when she was a teenager.

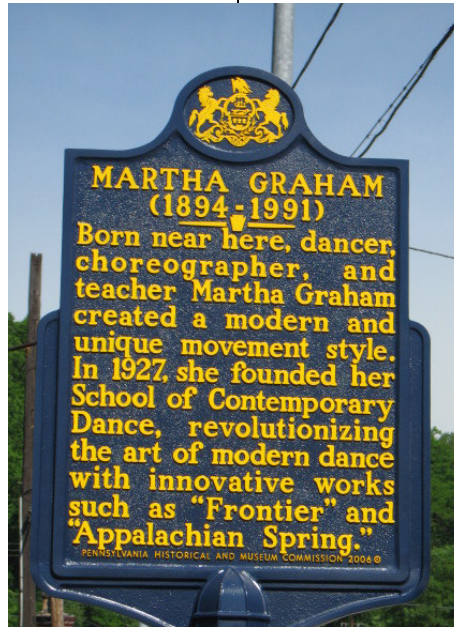
The Allegheny City Society honored her with a historical marker erected at the intersection of California Avenue and Brighton Road, just down the street from the location of her birthplace.

After the unveiling the celebration moved to the National Association of Letter Carriers Hall where Dr. Joyce Henry of Ursinus College gave a presentation about the career of Martha Graham. Dr. Henry's presentation was sponsored by the Pennsylvania Humanity Council.

The presentation included scenes from a DVD (available from Amazon.com) that showcased Martha's amazing dancing talents. Over 60 years old at the time, she danced the featured role in *Appalachian Spring* which was the result of a collaboration between her and composer Aaron Copland.

Assisting in the unveiling was State Senator Jim Furlo, a long-time supporter of the Allegheny City Society

"This celebration is part of a series of events to let a broader public know about Allegheny City," said John Canning, a Board of Directors member of the Allegheny City Society. "And the more you read the biographies of Martha Graham, clearly she was influenced significantly by her family and her family's experiences while living here."



Canning worked in cooperation with ACS board member David Grinnell, chief archivist at the Heinz History Center, who wrote the application for the Graham marker and submitted it to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

"I think it's important to erect historical markers to promote community pride in neighborhoods like Allegheny City. You never know how it will inspire a child who lives there."

ACS Members Honored at NSLC Dinner

Two past board members and one current board member of the Allegheny City Society were honored by their respective neighborhoods. Tom and Maureen Uhler were selected by Observatory Hill and Michael Shealey was selected by Allegheny West as Neighbors of the Year. They received their awards at the annual Northside Conference dinner on May 22nd held at the Greek Orthodox Church on North Avenue.



Mary Cassatt Scholarship Award Winners

The annual Mary Cassatt scholarships were presented this May to three exceptional North Side students:

- Ieshia Bailey, Grade 11, Brashear High School;
- Heather Gale, Grade 12, Carrick High School; and Grade 12, CAPA;
- Chris Landolina, Grade 12, CAPA.

Watson Chapel Restored

Riverview Park's 114 year-old Chapel Shelter, renovated over the past 2½ years, was rededicated on June 7th during Riverview Park Heritage Day.

The Chapel Grove building originally served as the Watson Memorial Presbyterian Church located at the corner of Riverview and Perrysville Avenue. The building was named after large land owner of the area Samuel Watson. Riverview and Watson Presbyterian churches combined and the new congregation in 1894 built a new church building. The Chapel was purchased by the City and moved to its location in Riverview Park. It served as a picnic shelter for many church gatherings and was very popular. A porch was added to the Chapel on all four sides, with dormers on three sides and an obelisk-shaped steeple in one corner while in the Park. Unfortunately, many of the Chapel shelter's interesting elements were removed in 1954 when the building was "modernized". The Chapel was threatened with demolition a few years ago due to termite infestation.

The renovation project process was started in 2002 and plans were to have the project done by 2004. The project lasted a little longer and the finished building is well worth the wait. The dormers and steeple were replicated and the old concrete porch floor replaced with a wooden porch. A new roof and windows to match the historic design were added and the building is heated for year round use.

This project was funded by the Regional Asset district, the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and the City of Pittsburgh. (A photo taken by Janet Gunter is on the back cover of this newsletter.)

"This is an example of good things happening to the North Side. Our parks are the most democratic spaces in this city," said Darlene Harris, Pittsburgh City Council member.

Mama T . . . Lifetime Hostess

Below is an article written by Leonard Thompson for the Pittsburgh's Family Magazine section, *The Pittsburgh Press*, Sunday, July 31, 1955. Inset on the top of the page was an image of the Denny Mansion with the following caption: "Denny Mansion once used as background for the movie, 'Valley of Decision.'"

Where Ridge Avenue meets Brighton Road is the old Denny home, built in 1896 by Harmar Denny. The lady who has been hostess to thousands of Pittsburgh women still practices the hospitality she has been offering so freely for 35 years.

Mrs. Sarah Seitz Tomlinson, one of Pittsburgh's first home economists, today is proprietress of a restaurant in a former North Side mansion. She was a pioneer in the field of home service work in Pittsburgh, and founder of the Home Arts Studio she conducted for 20 years in a downtown department store. The people who work for her call her "Mama T."

It's the end of midday mealtime and Mrs. Tomlinson, in the mansion's high – ceiling, carpeted hallway, is sitting behind a cash register placed on a small black table. Through the wide doorway to her right, a few late diners are still at tables in the two dining rooms of the old mansion. Overhead, the stained glass windows on the stair landing diffuse a melancholy light down the stairs.

In the privacy and quiet of the front room Mama T. finds a table beside the leaded glass windows that overlook Ridge Avenue. The room itself is a nostalgic reminder of an era that will never return and of a graciousness of living that has passed away. Framed and paneled in natural red cherry, this was the Denny library and the leather covered ceiling is painted with the Denny coat-of-arms.

Mama T touches the yellow rose in the glass vase on the table as she begins to talk about her career: "No one has lived a lovelier, fuller life than I have.

"Saxonburg Boulevard goes right through the cornfield of the farm where I was born in Shaler Township," Mama T. begins, and then tells about her education in Etna public schools and her home economics studies in Boston. In 1915 she married Thurman Tomlinson.

"He was an electrical engineer with a fine future...but he died after just six years of marriage—before he was 29 years old. If he had any faults I never new them," she says. "It was a crushing blow and I was bitter for a while..."

In 1922, with the Duquesne Light Co., she pioneered in home service directing in Pittsburgh. Those were the days that mother still used a flat-iron and a

washboard, and the ice was delivered every day. With truckloads of appliances and equipment, Mrs. Tomlinson visited women's organizations all over the city, introducing them to the new wonders of electrical appliances ... electric irons, washing machines, stoves.

In 1924, the Electric League sponsored the first of Pittsburgh's all-electric homes, and Mrs. Tomlinson was in charge of showing them to the public. But the novelty of the Venetian blinds caused the most comment.

Radio teas at a furniture store formerly on Penn Avenue, were the next of Sarah Tomlinson's ventures. Three times a week during 1928 and 1929, about 150 women would meet for bridge and refreshments. At each meeting, an officer of one of the local clubs would make a radio report of her club's activities.

For 20 years, in a Downtown store, Sarah Tomlinson operated the Home Art Studio which she founded in 1933. The Studio conducted cooking schools, gave instructions in food preparation and preserving and demonstrated uses for new food products. Mama T estimates that the Studio entertained an average of 40,000 women a year.

"My work with the home service, the cooking school, introducing new appliances, my work in food—it's been such a great pleasure to render service in whatever way I can," Mama T says.

In 1943, Mrs. Tomlinson rented the Denny mansion. She speaks highly of the quality of her food and her fine clientele. But she says not a word to indicate she's aware of her reputation for charity...how often she's suffered a loss in her catering business to give a bride the kind of reception she wants... how often she's helped someone in need.

Mama T gathered her savings in 1948 for a \$3655 down payment on the Denny home. When she was unable to raise the balance on time, the city council ruled it was illegal to return her down payment. But if Mama T ever was resentful, it doesn't show now. She leases the home now and says, "This house belongs to God, and I work for the people who help me here.

The old Denny estate is quiet now, except for the tinkling of silverware being washed in the kitchen. Mama T, with her arms on the table and her hands

clasped before her, turns from admiring the sun-splashed trees outside the window. "You know," she says, "it takes us a long time to appreciate the things we should have learned to appreciate a long time ago...I was born on a farm and I hope to go back to one some day...just a little farm with a brook and the music of the water falling..."

A family of early dinner guests arrives to interrupt the conversation. In a few moments, when no waitress appeared in the dining room, Mama T arose and walked into the hallway. Sarah Tomlinson, lifetime hostess, had found another Pittsburgh family in need of her service.

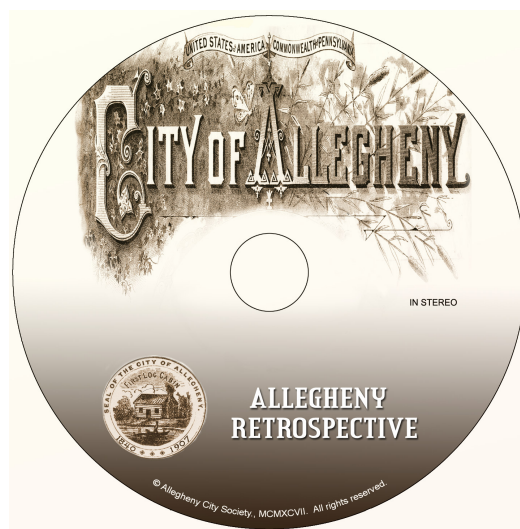
"Catherine!" she called. "Catherine...where are the menus, please?"

Allegheny City DVD Available

"Allegheny Retrospective," the 10-minute documentary short which premiered at the Allegheny City Society's Annexation Commemoration on December 7, 2007, is finally available on DVD!

Tom Roberts, Allegheny's own musical historian and composer, composed, arranged, conducted and performed a new soundtrack, complete with his solo piano rendition of "The Allegheny Rag." Tom assembled a small ensemble of local musicians to record all new music, and the resulting soundtrack is touchingly evocative of the era of old Allegheny.

Enjoy this work in time for Pittsburgh's 250th anniversary. Available for just \$5.00 plus \$2.50 for postage and handling through our website, <http://www.alleghenycity.org/store.html>





ACS Annual Meeting Held in April

The ACS annual meeting was held on April 24th at the Christian Missionary Alliance Church. Christine Davis gave an interesting presentation about her archeological efforts throughout the Northside.

Meg Cheever, President & CEO, Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, and Christina Schmidlapp, former Project Director of the East Common Pilot Project each received our W.H. Rimmel award. ACS Board of Directors member David McMunn received the President's award.

Frank Kownocki was elected to a three-year term on the ACS Board.

Tour of Frick's New Exhibit

Join the Allegheny City Society on August 9th at 10:00am for a Saturday tour of the new exhibit "Pittsburgh Panorama" at the Frick Art Museum in Point Breeze. Meet fellow history enthusiasts in the Frick parking lot. We will discuss some of the maps and the various locations shown on this unique collection of area maps. Admission to the Frick is free but donations are encouraged. After the tour we can go to lunch in one of the local restaurants to talk and discuss Allegheny history.

Come join us.

Allegheny City Is Reborn



CHARTERED – Nearly two hundred men and women who were either born or resided in Allegheny prior to 1907 gathered in the assignment room of Common Pleas Court yesterday afternoon to witness the granting of a charter to the Allegheny City Society. The society plans to assist in preserving the landmarks, parks and traditions of old Allegheny. Mrs. Mary Bowser, secretary, and Frank A. Ogilvie, president, watch as Judge Harry Montgomery signs the charter.

From the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* March 18, 1958

Happy Birthday Allegheny City Society. Fifty Years and still growing



The wedding reception of Shirley Jean Huss to Lt. Anthony John Brueckner held at Tomlinson Hall 811 Ridge Avenue on February 7, 1953. Notice the lady fourth from left. She is Mary Wohleber (the groom's sister) with her husband Alan. (We saw her last week – she still looks good.)



Wedding reception in Tomlinson Hall for Vera Ann Kennedy and Alex Dyubinski on January 22, 1948 (relative of Board Member Tom Ohrman).

The Denny Mansion (Tomlinson Hall) was torn down in the 1960's to make room for the Community of College of Allegheny County.



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