

The Allegheny City Society

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Simon Drum

Carpenter, soldier and twice mayor of Allegheny

by Ruth McCartan

During the four-year Civil War Commemoration the *Allegheny City Reporter Dispatch* will run a series of features which will showcase individuals and their lives, the contributions and the heroes, the industry, the sacrifice and the charity of the City. The first person to be highlighted is Simon Drum, carpenter, soldier and twice mayor of Allegheny City.

Drum was born into a farming family in Westmoreland County in 1824. His family moved to Ohio, in 1835 to Wheeling and then finally settled in Allegheny in 1840. Apprenticed into the carpentry business with the firm of Brown and Carathus, Drum acquired a trade that would serve him most of his life. In 1846 he married Elizabeth Workman. By 1852, he was operating his own carpentry shop at the corner of Cedar and Avery Streets. Tragedy struck that year as his shop together with all his implements of trade were destroyed by fire. The financial disaster forced him to leave the area for a year and move to Indianapolis. Upon returning he commence once again to start up his carpentry business.

He was elected to the Allegheny City Common Council from the Third Ward in the years 1856, 1857, 1858, and 1859. Elected mayor for the first time in 1861, he had the honor of welcoming president-elect Abraham Lincoln to Allegheny City in February of that year. Drum was the leader of the Allegheny Committee that traveled to Steubenville to brief the Lincoln entourage on the welcoming plans for the twin cities. On April 16, with the firing on Fort Sumter, the War Between the States began, and Mayor Drum presided over the Committee of Public Safety for Allegheny City.

With the escalation of the war and the call for more troops by President Lincoln in July 1862 Mayor Drum at the age of 36 with 5 children resigned and enlisted in the 123 Pennsylvania Infantry regiment. The 123rd was a nine-month unit, recruited mostly from Allegheny County and commanded by Reverend John B. Clark, pastor of the Second United Presbyterian Church of Allegheny. Reverend Clark called for all "Christian Patriots" to enlist and serve in a moral unit.



Simon Drum's house on Perrysville Avenue

Drum recruited and served as the company commander of Company C later designated Company H of the 123rd. Professor Wilson of Western Theological Seminary presented the company a "splendid set of colors" before their leaving for the war. The regiment became part of Third Division, Fifth Corps, Army of the Potomac when arriving in Washington City in August. The 123rd's major engagement was the assault on Marye's Heights during the Battle of Fredericksburg on December 13, 1862. The 123rd lost 134 officers and men in the unsuccessful assault on the Heights.

Mustered out with the regiment in May 1863, Drum returned home and got back to his life as a politician, business owner and family man. Upon his return from war he was elected to the Allegheny Common Council in 1863 and elected President of the Common council in 1865. While serving on Council he opened a hardware store on East Ohio Street

Drum was elected to the Select Council in 1866 and in 1868. During these years Drum and his family move to the growing and affluent northern area of the city on the Perrysville Plank Road at Ridgewood. Reflecting on Drum's life in the building trades the house is a wooden clapboard structure. The house is still standing and is now part of Robinson's Funeral Home on Perrysville Avenue. While building his own plan-

ning mill he was elected Mayor for the second time serving until 1869. Serving on the Allegheny Parks Commission he helped selected Grant and Mitchell, the landscape architects that redesigned the Commons land into a Victorian park. In 1873 he recommenced the hardware trade with his son doing business as *S. Drum & Son, 158 Federal Street, General Hardware* continuing until 1876.

Drum gave up the hardware business to become one of the seven directors of Franklin Savings Bank located at 171 Federal Street. The president of the bank was an Allegheny City Council colleague George Riddle. Serving only three years as a bank director, he became involved in the insurance industry first as a general agent for the Ben Franklin Insurance Co. and later establishing his own agency Simon Drum Insurance at 37 Diamond Street. The City Directory of 1886 stated the Drum Agency provided “low rates and liberally drawn policies” and the Allegheny County Pennsylvania Illustrated printed “of the many insurance agents in Allegheny none stand higher in public confidence than Mr. Simon Drum.” While building his insurance career Drum did not give up his public service serving on Select and Common Councils from the 1870s through the 1890s. He had the honor of serving on the Allegheny County Centennial Committee in 1888. Retir-

Become a Friend of the Commons

The Allegheny Commons is an integral part of the history of Allegheny City. This wonderful parkland, the oldest in Pittsburgh, continues to be a cultural and environmental treasure. From our beginnings, the Allegheny City Society has recognized our role in preserving the Commons and telling its story. Please read about how each one of us, along with many other folks on the North Side can support the restoration of this amazing feature of Allegheny City’s heritage. The ACS Board of Directors is encouraging our members to support the \$1 million challenge grant offered by the Colcom Foundation.

If you can, help us rise to Colcom’s challenge. A special raffle of a basket of Allegheny City/North Side memorabilia will be held at the Society’s Annual Meeting to support this particular fund raising initiative.



ing from public life in 1893, at the age of 69 having serving for 37 years, Drum finished his career serving on the public safety committee.

“Suddenly on Saturday May 23, 1896 at the age of 71 Simon Drum, former mayor and long time Allegheny City Councilman who organized Company H of the 123rd Pennsylvania Infantry died at this home 71 Taylor Ave. He is survived by his wife and 7 children.” So read the *Commercial Gazette* a few days later. An Allegheny City giant had passed—public servant, soldier, mayor and businessman.

Sources

Sauers, Richard A., *Advance the Colors, Pennsylvania Civil War Battle Flags.*

Lang, Scott B., *The 123rd Pennsylvania at Marye’s Heights, Fredericksburg, Va.*

Parke, John E. Judge, *Historical Gleanings and Recollections of Seventy Years*



Simon Drum’s grave site in Highwood Cemetery

Northeast Common Challenge Grant

The Allegheny Commons Initiative seeks the support of the North Side community as the second phase of park restoration begins. The \$2.2 million Northeast Common project will be undertaken in phases, beginning with the area along Cedar Avenue between East Ohio and Tripoli Streets. The project will restore paths, plant trees, add lighting and pedestrian amenities. To better accommodate the Farmers Market, the lawns will be reinforced and electrical access provided.

The restoration of the historic Northeast Fountain and the promenade along North Avenue to Federal Street is next up. To support that project, the Colcom Foundation has issued a challenge grant—for every dollar pledged, they will contribute another dollar, up to \$100,000. As an example, the Mexican War Streets Society’s 2011 contribution of \$5,000 will leverage \$5,000 more from the Colcom Foundation.

Individuals and business are invited to contribute at any level by going to www.alleghenyccommons.org and making a donation to the project through the Northside Leadership Conference. Please help maximize the grant by making a tax-deductible donation, But hurry, Colcom’s offer expires on May 31, 2011.

Lincoln Tour a Great Success

Group follows Lincoln's carriage route in Allegheny and Pittsburgh

February 12, 2011 was a sunny but breezy winter Saturday when over 75 attendees joined in the Allegheny City Society's program commemorating the 150th anniversary of President -Elect Lincoln's visit to Allegheny and Pittsburgh. The tour and tour program were designed to follow as closely as possible the route Lincoln took after his arrival in Allegheny City on February 14, 1861, and his departure from the same train station the next day.

At several points in the bus tour Ruth McCartan, Martha Berg and John Canning spoke at significant sites along the route. The two major points of historic importance were the site of the Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne, and Chicago R.R. Station that was on Federal Street in Allegheny, and the Monongahela House, where Lincoln's group stayed, in Pittsburgh. The afternoon tour group included a local Lincoln re-enactor.

Following a delicious lunch at Calvary Methodist Church, Society Board member David Grinnell spoke on the role of the Methodist Bishop, Matthew Simpson, who became a friend of Lincoln's. Grinnell's talk was followed by a very informative talk by Gary Augustine, a local Civil War scholar. Augustine explained the importance of Allegheny County in Lincoln's election to the Presidency in November 1860.

Both tour groups were filled to capacity and there was a waiting list of over 40 folks. Copies of the tour program are still available for \$5. There were several requests to repeat the tour sometime in the future. The Allegheny City Society Program Committee will consider this for next year.



The old Fort Wayne Railroad station on Federal Street where Lincoln arrived on 14 February 1861



Ruth McCartan, Allegheny City Society president, describing the tense times in the nation in the days leading up to Lincoln's Inauguration.



ACS member Martha Berg, great-great-granddaughter of Daisy Davis Willson who was at the old Fort Wayne Railroad station when Lincoln arrived in 1861. Martha read from her ancestor's diary of the event. "Abe" is standing with Martha.

The Conflict Begins

The divisions between the North and the South reached a breaking point with the election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860. In early 1861, several Southern states left the Union to form their own Confederation of States. These Confederate states seized federal properties in their states. Fort Sumter in the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina (the first state to leave the Union) was still under control of the federal government.

For months the bitter standoff in the harbor dominated the newspapers. Why were the Washington politicians not doing something about these treasonous acts? Did the southern states have the right to leave the Union? These questions became meaningless at 4:30 AM Friday April 12, 1861 with the bombardment of the Fort from the Confederate batteries on shore.

What were the local papers saying about the firing and subsequent fall of Fort Sumter. *The Pittsburg Daily Dispatch*, published every morning for one cent had the largest circulation in Western Pennsylvania. It was published by J. Heron Foster and Reese C. Fleeson. The *Dispatch* had supported Lincoln in the last election and was proud of its backing of the Republican Party. The *Dispatch* received telegrams from reporters of the "Associated Press" as did most newspapers in the area to report the war news.

The Dispatch

Pittsburg, Saturday, April 13.

THE WAR HAS COMMENCED! - After months of preparation, the traitors encamped about Charleston commenced on Friday morning, April 12th, cannonading Fort Sumter, over which the Star Spangled Banner has proudly floated defiance to treason for the past three months. The news will send a thrill of horror through every patriot breast, followed by a determination to rally to the support of the old banner, and sustain the national government in suppressing treason, with the same alacrity which characterized our fathers in resisting oppression in 1776.

At the time we write nothing certain was had as to the result - but the responsibility is now so plainly upon the heads of the rebels that we have no fear but the government will be sustained by the people until treason is utterly crushed out. May God protect the right.

The Dispatch

Pittsburg, Sunday, April 14.

THE WAR NEWS

Owing to the intense excitement in our community, consequent on the inauguration of civil war, we deem it necessary to furnish our readers this morning, with the latest news from Fort Sumter. We have not been required to issue on Sunday since the Mexican war and trust it may be long ere we are again called upon to do so.

The news of the attack on Sumter by the confederate forces was not regarded with that horror with which civil war is usually regarded from the fact that a collision was long expected looked upon as a necessity and regarded as far better preferable to the uncertainty of a year of bickering, to be followed by a more bitter and protracted warfare. The rumors and reports of its surrender to the enemy, received last night, sickened many a patriotic heart-but only nerved them to the determination to suppress treason at any expense of blood and treasure- and so far as this community is concerned although here and there a traitor exists amongst us, there will be no lack of men or money to aid the National Government, which has earned the respect of all good men for its determination to sustain the Constitution and enforce the laws.

LATEST FROM THE SEAT OF WAR

Charleston, April 13, Fort Sumter is undoubtedly on fire. The flames are raging. Major Anderson has thrown out a raft, loaded with men who are passing up buckets of water to extinguish the flames. The fort is hardly discernible for the smoke. The men on the raft are now the objects of fire from Morris Island. With good glasses the balls can be seen skipping the water and striking the unprotected raft.

PM: The bombardment has ceased. Major Anderson has drawn down the stars and stripes and now displays a flag of truce.

Latest: - the federal flag was hauled down by Anderson and a white one unfurled Charleston, via Augusta Ga. April 13, Fort Sumter has surrendered. The Confederate flag now floats over the walls.

News of the surrender spread rapidly across the nation. In the South, most people celebrated. Northerners were more subdued but certain of a quick relatively painless victory.

You are cordially invited to the Annual Meeting of *The Allegheny City Society*

Wednesday, April 27, 2011—Dinner 6:00 pm & Program 7:00 pm
Bistro to Go & Bistro Soul, 417 East Ohio Street, North Side

Come find out what's new in *your* Allegheny City Society! An all-inclusive buffet with down-home cooking from Bistro Soul will be provided at a cost of \$25 per person.

On the program, there is a multi-media presentation entitled *Manchester, The Phoenix of the North Side*. The William Rimmell Award will also be presented. Parking is available on East Ohio Street and Cedar Avenue—metered spaces are free after 6:00 PM. Please complete the response form below to make a reservation.



Name

Phone

E-mail

..... Yes! I will be there for dinner and program

..... No! I cannot attend. Keep me posted on other events

..... I am attending the program only

Please enclose a check for \$25.00 to cover the cost of the buffet dinner, and mail to:
ALLEGHENY CITY SOCIETY, PO BOX 100255, PITTSBURGH, PA 15233

Mail your response to the Society by April 21

For more information, call 412 364-6132

Civil War Trip to Meadville

Day-long trip to Civil War sites on April 16

Before John Brown made some history at Harper's Ferry he was a farmer, post master and employer of 15 people. No, it wasn't in Virginia or Connecticut but right here in Western Pennsylvania in the small town of New Richmond only 11 miles from Meadville, Pennsylvania. Join us on April 16 for a visit to the John Brown Tannery site and museum. Walking up the hill from the tannery we will encounter the graves of Dianthe Brown, John's first wife and mother of sons martyred to end slavery. If that isn't enough excitement for you we will visit Allegheny College to learn about the student unit from the college and view their original flag. Flags and flag bearers dominate Meadville's Civil War history, so we will stop at the city's Diamond Park to see the monument to their valiant heroism. Stopping at the Crawford County Historical Society we will get to observe an original map drawn by Alexander Hays done while a student at Allegheny College. Then on to Greendale Cemetery to visit a few hero graves, including two with the Medal of Honor. Not to forget the ladies who stayed home and collected supplies for the war effort we will learn of Hannah Moore, who worn herself out helping the boys of Meadville.

The planning committee is still working on a few specifics for the trip, but we have the lunch location already pinned down: the *Market Grille* at Meadville's Market House. Built in 1870, the market house is Pennsylvania's oldest continuously operated market structure—it still offers fresh local produce and artisan crafts. We will order from their down-home country menu.

Car pools will start from the Eat-n-Park parking lot in Wexford at 8:00 AM. The cost will be \$10 per person, not including lunch. Hope you can join us for the day, we should be finished by 4:30-5:00.

For those who want to keep having historical fun, join us for dinner at the historic Victorian *Riverside Inn* on the banks of French Creek in Cambridge Springs.

So we know how many to plan for, send your name and money to: Joann Siriano, 223 10th Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15215
Questions? e-mail Ruth at: theruths03@yahoo.com

return service requested

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