

THE ALLEGHENY CITY SOCIETY REPORTER DISPATCH

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PITTSBURGH SANITARY FAIR

Commemorating the 150th Anniversary
by Ruth McCartan

After three long and devastating years of civil war the citizens of Western Pennsylvania had become numb to the needs of the soldier fighting on the battlefields of Virginia and Tennessee to preserve the Union. Donations were falling off much was needed for soldier relief, but where was the money to come from to care for the sick and wounded? A few bold ladies had tried what they called a "Sanitary Fair" in Chicago and Cleveland and had raised money to give to the cause of the wounded soldier. It was a major endeavour. Could the local women with the help of their fathers, husbands and neighbors stage an event such as this in Pittsburgh and Allegheny. These Fairs, what we would today call a fund raising bazaar, required people give time, money and some personal possessions to raise money for the purchase of medical supplies to treat the wounded and the sick. The Pittsburgh Fair ran for two weeks in early June 1864 and was open during the day and into the evening. The ladies of the local area could be very proud: they raised more money per capita than any other city in the nation. The Allegheny City Society honored the memory of the Fair organizers, the citizens and local civil war soldiers with a one-day event held at the Unitarian Church on North Avenue on June 14.





The free program featured a variety of “first person” actors portraying notable citizens of Pittsburgh and Allegheny. A Town Hall meeting was staged with Len Barcousky playing Mayor Alexander, who gave a concise summary of the time period and the history of the Sanitary Fair movement. Tom Wilson introduced us to Rev. Colonel John B. Clark, the pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church and Colonel of the 123 Penna. Infantry. Karen Hochberg was Mrs. Pauline Frank who was a leader in Jewish relief during the Civil War. Willy Gandy became Rev. Benjamin Tanner, an African American church leader who disrupted the meeting to plead for soldier relief and freeing of the slaves in the South. Joanne Shelby-Klein portrayed Rachael McFadden, the President of the Ladies Relief Committee of the Sanitary Fair. Miss McFadden worked tirelessly for a successful Fair. It was because of her dedication to the cause of soldier relief that the Fair was even attempted. Ruth McCartan acquainted us with Colonel Mrs. James Hull a recent widow, mother of two and Sandusky street resident. Even Sgt. George Gissinger (portrayed by Sgt. John Kovach, US Army Reserves)—who would later become an Allegheny Commons policeman—made a personal appearance.



Following a rousing singing of the Battle Cry of Freedom attendees progressed to the old Allegheny County Civil War Soldiers Monument in the Commons and laid a wreath to honor the fallen 4,000 from the County. The beautiful day was capped off with hot dogs and Lemon Blend as all good ACS events are.

A special thanks goes to Council Women Darlene Harris who made the event possible, she is a true lover of Allegheny and North Side history.



MARTHA MARTIN O'MOORE

Remembering a neighbor, inspiration and friend

by Patricia M. O'Hare

In the 1950s, my family lived next door to Mrs. O'Moore (b.1896) and her son, Donald. I was about 14, and we waved hello, but she was really my mother's friend. She was the secretary of the Allegheny City Society at that time, and I heard them speak about the Society, and the fact that our houses at 1726, 1728 and 1730 Buena Vista Street were built by Mayor Wyman of Allegheny in 1890 for his three daughters.



Occasionally, she walked with us to St. Peter's Church. She was a school nurse. She had married Patrick O'Moore and they had two sons, Patrick and Donald. Her son Patrick had passed away as a young man. It was a pain that she felt deeply, but her faith sustained her. In his 20s, Donald, too died in an accident. Two of her sisters took her to live with them and I saw her very rarely after that. I married and had three sons. Mother asked me to write to Mrs. O'Moore, saying she didn't have the patience for correspondence. I am so glad that I agreed. It was a pleasure to write to her, since she had such an upbeat view on the world.

When she moved to the Little Sisters of the Poor on Benton Avenue, I took her shopping and my three-year-old son Patrick sat between us on the front seat. She brushed his blond curls with her hand and softly said "hello Patrick." That moment was not lost on me.

After we moved to Tucson, Arizona, I visited her on my trips back to Pittsburgh, but the last visit was the most memorable. We were glad to see each other, and we spent the entire afternoon reminiscing and laughing. Looking back, she must have known this would be our last meeting, for she gave me Mary Roberts Rinehart's autobiography. She knew I was an

aspiring writer and That I enjoyed Mary's mysteries. How I treasured it!

Upon returning home I received a letter written by a volunteer at the Home, saying the Martha had fallen and was in a wheelchair. She dictated a few lines, mostly to thank me for visiting and that she would always remember how much we laughed that day. When I called to see if she had received the flowers I'd sent her, I was told that she had passed away.

Martha's love of Allegheny City rubbed off on me. She made me appreciate the Mexican War Streets, West Park, St. Peter's Church, the Post Office, the Library, the Market House, Buhl Park—all of these were part of my life before. But now I realized that they were all part of Allegheny City. How beautiful it must have been!



So our neighbor became my dear friend, and each time I go back, I stop and pay my respects to Donald and Patrick and to Martha O'Moore, a lovely woman who was full of joy.

Martha O'Moore was one of the original incorporators of The Allegheny City Society and it's first secretary. Thank You for sharing your recollections, Patricia from Huachuca City, Arizona. If you have any memories you would like to share with the Society send it to our mailing address or e-mail it. Love to hear from you.

HISTORIC ST. PETER'S CHURCH

Reflecting on the history of the building and parish

by John Canning

Folks passing by St. Peter's Church on West Ohio Street have probably taken note of the scaffolding, the recently cleaned and pointed stone exterior, and the "thermometer sign" indicating support for the restoration of this very historic North Side church.

Mary Wohleber, an ardent Allegheny City advocate and historian, often reminded us that, for few years in the late 19th century (1876-1889), St. Peter's church was the pro-cathedral of the Diocese of Allegheny under the leadership of Bishop Michael Domenec.

The parish itself was established 1848 for those members of St. Paul's Cathedral in Pittsburgh who lived in Allegheny City. In the same year the parish of St. Mary's parish in "Historic Deutschtown" was created for the German speaking members of St. Philomena's parish in the Strip District. Most of the members of St. Peter's were of families with origins in Ireland. While the liturgy at both churches was in Latin, the secular language at St. Peter's was in English while at St. Mary's it was mostly in German.



Bob Donaldson/Post-Gazette

St. Peter's original site was at the southeast corner of Anderson and North Canal street. A church building, dedicated in 1850, as well as a school, rectory and convent were

also established nearby the church. In 1868 land at the corner of Sherman Avenue and West Ohio street was purchased and in July of 1875 an impressive new church building, which was soon to become the cathedral of the new diocese of Allegheny was dedicated by Bishop Domenec. Sadly, much of this church building was destroyed by fire in November of 1886.

A new church rose from the remains of the old and was dedicated with great pomp and liturgical ceremony in April of 1888. (By that year the Diocese of Allegheny had been reunited with that of Pittsburgh.) It is this building that is in the process

of a massive restoration process. The present day parish includes communities of the North Side that were formerly parts of the St. Mary's (German), St. Cyprian's (Polish), and St. Joseph's in Manchester (German) parishes. The parish also includes a worship site at Our Lady Queen of Peace (Italian) parish in East Allegheny.

Clearly the history of these parishes and that of thousands of Allegheny City/North Side families, who worshiped and attended school there are an important part of Allegheny City's story. The Allegheny City Society is excited and supportive of the restoration efforts underway at historic St. Peter's Church.

CASSATT SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

Early Spring brought the All City Art Show to the Manchester Craftsman Guild. This exhibition showcases outstanding student work from the City schools. The Mary Cassatt Scholarship was awarded to two students from CAPA: Perry Murray, senior, for the oil portrait titled *Reyghan*, and Kelli Clark for a black-and-white ink entitled *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*.

ROBERT MAURICE TRIMBLE TOUR

Examining the life & work of an Allegheny architect

by Donald Zeilman

On Saturday, October 25, the Allegheny City Society—in conjunction with the Ben Avon Area Historical Association—will sponsor a tour and exploration of the work of notable local architect, Robert Maurice Trimble.

R. Maurice (pronounced in the English style as “Morris”) Trimble was born in the Sixth Ward of Allegheny City in 1871, son of builder John H. Trimble. The Trimble family was prominent in Allegheny City business and politics. R. Maurice was educated in Allegheny and then associated with his father in the general contracting business until 1892, when he began the study of architecture with Frederick J. Osterling. He worked with Osterling as a draftsman until 1898, when he opened his own architectural office.

His local work includes commercial buildings, high schools, churches, hospitals, and residences. In later years, he built a house in Ben Avon, where he and his wife raised their family.

Trimble not only produced numerous buildings in the greater Pittsburgh area, but enjoyed some national attention. He served on the Committee on Design of President Hoover’s Housing Conference and designed a series of United States foreign consulates in, among other places, Shanghai, China and Calcutta, India. Trimble wrote frequently for *The Charette*, the journal of the Pittsburgh Architectural Club. He was very



involved with the local architectural community and the local AIA chapter.

The tour on October 25 will focus on significant North Side buildings designed by Trimble and will include interesting background information on Trimble’s life and family.

The program will commence at Allegheny Unitarian Universalist Church at 9:00 AM with a presentation on Trimble, followed by visits to buildings in the central North Side by tour bus. Lunch will be provided. Following lunch, the tour bus will take the group to additional sites, and the tour will end back at the YMCA on West North Avenue at about three o’clock.

Final details, including the cost, will be provided through the Allegheny City Society website, and in a mailing to members of both sponsoring groups. Please mark your calendars for this interesting and informative tour that will highlight local history and architecture.

Next Spring, we are also planning a “Part II” with a tour that will focus on the Ben Avon area work of Trimble and his contributions to that community.

ACS ANNUAL MEETING

Rimmell Award honors Rooney and Peterson

by David McMunn

The Allegheny City Society held its dinner and annual meeting on Wednesday, April 16, 2014 at Bistro To Go Restaurant on Pittsburgh’s North Side. Following a delicious dinner, the business portion of the evening included the re-election of board members and the re-appointment of the present officers: Ruth McCartan, president; John Canning, vice president; David Grinnell, Secretary; and Amelia Gehron, Treasurer. This year there was no historical program, per se, but The William M. Rimmell Award was presented to Dan Rooney and Carol Peterson who authored the 2013 book *Allegheny City: A History of Pittsburgh’s North Side*.

William M. Rimmel (1897–1988), a lifelong resident of the North Side, was best known for the series of columns he wrote about life in Allegheny City for *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. These columns earned him the President’s Golden Quill Award in 1980 from the Pittsburgh Press Club.

If any member is interested in serving on the Board of Directors of the Allegheny City Society, please direct your interest to one of the officers through the Society’s mailing address. Your participation in the future of this great organization is very much appreciated!

Watch our newsletters and web site for news, happenings, and upcoming events that recall Allegheny City and report on today’s North Side of the City of Pittsburgh.

Enjoy your autumn!



During the Pittsburgh Sanitary Fair 150th Commemoration, wreaths were placed at the first Allegheny County Civil War Soldiers Monument to honor the fallen 4,000 from Allegheny County.

