

# REPORTER DISPATCH

Journal of Old Allegheny History and Lore

## WHO WAS MAX KLEIN?

Question raised by flag at Jumonville Christian Camp  
by Ruth McCartan

It sat in an old aluminum display case, an American flag all folded up as it would be following a flag ceremony. You would not have noticed it among all the other dusty artifacts contained in this one room history museum on a mountain top of the Chestnut Ridge. The informational card tucked up under the flag, barely visible were the words "Given by Max Klein GAR Post 128, Allegheny City June 8, 1893."

What was an old American flag from a citizen of Allegheny City doing at the Jumonville, Christian Camp and Retreat Center in Hopwood Pennsylvania?

From 1875 to 1908 this spot, once Dunbar's Camp from Braddock's defeat fame, was the location of one of the Pennsylvania Soldier's Orphan Schools called the Uniontown School. The military-like orphan schools provided institutional care, maintenance and schooling for children of Civil War soldiers who were either killed during the war or could no longer provide for them. Boys and girls were both enrolled and became wards of the State until the age of 16. Further research brought to light that the GAR (the Grand Army of the Republic) was a veterans fraternal organization composed of men who had fought for the Union during the Civil War and had as part of its mission the support of widows and orphans of fellow soldiers. The various GAR posts of southwestern Pennsylvania enthusiastically assisted the Uniontown Orphan school, often bringing the children into Pittsburgh and Allegheny for Memorial Day activities. Post 128 of the GAR was named after Lt. James M. Lysle and met at 114 Federal Street every Thursday. This post took Lt. Lyle's name because of his connection with Allegheny City. Lyles enlisted in the 63 Pa. Regiment August 1861 at the age of 29. This regiment was recruited by fellow Allegheny City citizen, Alexander Hays. The poor lieutenant was killed seven months after his March 1862 enlistment while on reconnaissance duty outside of

Alexandria Virginia. His body was returned home and buried in Union Dale Cemetery.

But who was Max Klein? The Pennsylvania Veteran Records held no information on a Max Klein. Finally after a few local checks in the standard Allegheny City reference books the mystery was solved. Mr. Klein was listed in the *Industries and Wealth of Pittsburgh and Environs of 1890*. He was born in

Bavaria, Germany in 1843, came to the United States

in 1859 settling in Cincinnati, Ohio then moving to

Vicksburg, Mississippi six months later. As stated

in *Pittsburgers: Sketched in Prose and Verse* Klein

remained in Vicksburg until the start of the

Civil War and "came up the Mississippi on

the steamer 'Emma' which was the last vessel to pass through the blockade." After

stopping in Keokuk, Iowa, he enlisted in

Company F, First Iowa Cavalry as a private having only been in the United States a year

and a half. This three year Union Cavalry

unit was like the cavalry of the Confederacy

– you had to provide your own horse and

equipment. The First Iowa Cavalry served

mainly in the western theater with service in

the Battle of Prairie Grove December 1862 in

northwest Arkansas. He reenlisted in the field

and was promoted to Lieutenant and transferred to

duty in Texas during reconstruction. He was discharged out of

Austin, Texas after serving under General George Armstrong

Custer in the Seventh Cavalry in 1866.

Returning to Keokuk, he married Henrietta Stern and

moved in 1870 to the Pittsburgh area. After a few years learning

the retail and wholesale liquor business he opened "Max Klein,

Distiller and Importer" on Wood Street. Early in the 1880s he

moved his business to 82 Federal Street, a four-story building

opposite the Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne and Chicago Railroad

depot. The warehouse for the business was at the corner of

Sandusky and Lacock St. where he distilled "Klein's Silver Age

Pure Rye" and housed his superb selection of the finest vintage

wines from France, Germany and Italy – and all kinds of cor-

dials and liqueurs. Klein was the sole producer and distributor

of the "Silver Age" label which stated it never was sold until it

*continued*



was at least seven years old and contained not a drop of fusel oil. Fusel oil is the mixture of volatile, oily liquids produced in small amounts during alcoholic fermentation. *The Pennsylvania Historical Review* published in 1886 declared that “considering its excellent quality it is the cheapest whiskey in the market.” An 1891 Freeport, Pennsylvania newspaper carried an advertisement informing its readers that “Silver Age” and “Duquesne” brands (both Klein’s products) of pure rye whiskey are recommended by physicians as the best invigorator in the world.” It also stated “these whiskies are used exclusively in the leading hospitals.” Silver Age was selling for \$1 a full quart.

The Klein family lived on Fremont, later moving to Beech Avenue. Mrs. Klein donated to the Guskys Jewish Orphanage in the North End of Allegheny. In 1898 Max became the Vice President of the Concordia Club, founded in 1874 by a group of mainly German-American Reformed Jews. The purpose of the club was to promote social and literary entertainment among its members. The Klein family used the Club for their daughter’s wedding reception. Rodef Shalom was the family’s religious home which they supported and where they were very involved. *The Jewish Criterion*, a Jewish weekly newspaper published in the interest of Reformed Judaism, told that Mr. Max Klein was elected guardian of Sar Shalem, which was a lodge of the Independent Order of B’nai B’rith in 1903.

Max Klein was also involved with GAR Post 128 being chosen to be the “Commander of the Day” for the military procession

celebrating Grand Army Day in Pittsburgh and Allegheny in 1886. Many of his GAR comrades address him as “Major,” an honorific given to him out of respect for his lengthy service in the war and his work in the organization. Some other members of his post were Hugh S. Fleming, elected multiple years to be the Mayor of Allegheny City and Thomas G. Sample, a superintendent of Public Printing of Pennsylvania. On October 20, 1907 Max Klein suddenly died of apoplexy (stroke) at his home on South Atlantic Avenue at the age 67. West View Cemetery on Cemetery Lane is the final resting place of the Klein family.

Now all the pieces are known: the school was for Civil War orphans, the GAR Post 128 was from Allegheny City and named for another fallen Allegheny citizen, Max Klein was in the liquor business and gave of his time and money to support the school. Records giving an explanation of why the flag was presented to the Uniontown Orphan School at Jumonville have not been found. It must have been important they saved the flag these 123 years.

#### REFERENCES

- Burgoyne, Arthur G., *All Sorts of Pittsburgers*, 1892
- Jewish Criterion*, Oct. 20, 1907
- Industries and Wealth of Pittsburgh and Allegheny*, 1890
- The Pennsylvania Historical Review*, 1886



#### CAPA Aspiring Artists are ACS 2016 Cassatt Awardees

For many years ACS has joined with the Manchester Craftsman’s Guild in honoring local high school artists for their creative works. Those of us who attend this annual exhibition and awards event, held at the Guild’s wonderful facility in Manchester, are regularly “blown away” by the wide range of art on display. As a way to remember and honor Allegheny City native Mary Cassatt, one the nation’s greatest painters and printmakers, we always present a monetary award to two students from the Pittsburgh Public Schools. This year’s awardees; Hanna Wells and Rosalee Williams. Both of these extremely talented students attend Pittsburgh CAPA. Their works were extraordinary and the Society is always happy to encourage this interest in the visual arts.



## SPOTLIGHTING THE HEARTLAND

An Allegheny City Society Program and Tour  
by John Canning

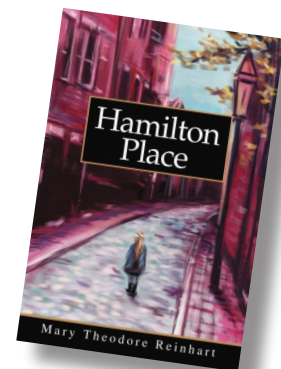
Preserving and interpreting the history of North Side neighborhoods, events, and personalities is at the core of the Society's mission. In past years we produced tours of communities that are not often in the media spotlight. This Spring, with support from the Buhl Foundation through the Sprout Fund, the Society developed and carried out programs and tours focusing on five communities in the "Heartland" of the North Side. In keeping with the Buhl's three major areas of attention, we focused on the Quality of Place in these five heartland neighborhoods. Many ACS Board members and community leaders helped fashion and participate in these programs.

On Saturday, June 4th about sixty folks took a tour of the Calbride and Marshall/Shadeland neighborhoods. Three weeks later, on June 25th, another 60 folks toured the communities of the Charles Street Valley, Perry Hilltop, and Fineview. Both groups participated a lunch in between the morning and afternoon tours to share their thoughts about the history and future of these "Heartland" communities.

One lasting feature of the program was the crafting of a booklet, *Spotlight on the Heartland*. Copies of the booklet can be purchased from the Society website. Many thanks to all ACS folks who helped in the preparation and implementation of this Heartland event. And, most important, many thanks to the residents of these communities who joined the tour and shared their thoughts in the discussions



Photograph of Hamilton Place in 1937 at the corner of North Charles looking toward the intersection of Kenn Avenue (above) and a view of Hamilton Place in the 1960s (below left). Hamilton Place was a short street that ran off of North Charles Street just below the intersection with Kenn, near what is now 2560 & 62 North Charles.



🔍 In the process of researching materials for this project a fascinating piece of neighborhood history appeared at the Gandys' Allegheny City Historic Gallery. Its title: *Hamilton Place*, Author: Mary Theodore Rinehart (2002) – an exciting find. Copies of this work are available from Amazon.

## OLD ALLEGHENY ROWS

Legacy of demolition created an “urban prairie”  
by Ruth McCartan

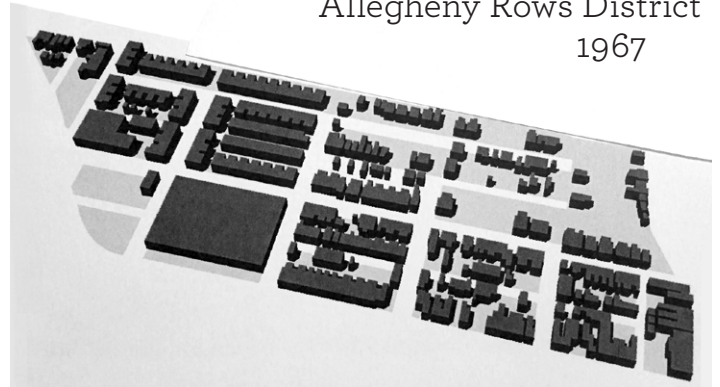
When you are researching for a historical tour you always seem to learn something new and interesting. That was the case with the Allegheny City Society’s first Heartland Tour on June 4, 2016 highlighting the neighborhood of California Kirkbride.

The Old Allegheny Rows Historic District was awarded this prestigious designation and placed on the National Register in 1984. The documents were written by Patricia A. McLaughlin and Charles Uhl who worked for Tom Mistick and Sons. The “Old Allegheny Rows” are what most people today know as Cal-Bride Place on the North Side. The descriptive section of the document states that there are 348 structures in the historic district bounded on the east by Brighton Road, the south Mero Way on the north by Union Dale Cemetery and the west by Marquis and California Avenue. The variations of row house stylings included Richardsonian Romanesque, Italianate and Victorian vernacular.

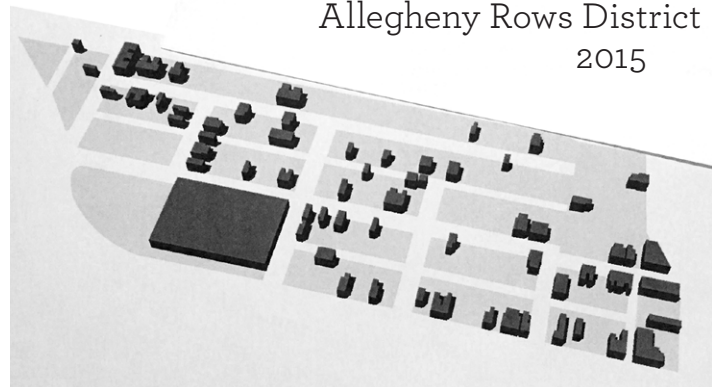
Three significant structures are mentioned. The first is the New Brighton Theater, now the offices of the local Postal Workers union at the corner of Brighton Place and California Avenue. This art deco styled building was the starting point of the Heartland Tour. The second featured buildings were a row of four attached Richardson Romanesque houses with the addresses of 936, 938, 949, 942 California Avenue, across from the central mail facility of the United States Post Office in Pittsburgh (see below). These upscale row houses were constructed to shelter America’s new urban middle class. Financed by Francis J. Torrance in 1888, one of Allegheny’s most notable businessmen and humanitarians. Torrance was the president of the Standard Manufacturing Company which later became the internationally known producer of plumbing fixtures the American Standard Company. Unfortunately, these California Avenue row houses were torn down a few years ago after decades of being vacant and neglected by preservationists. The



Allegheny Rows District  
1967



Allegheny Rows District  
2015



site is now a large vacant lot. The third listing of noteworthy structures mentioned in the report and news too many was the row houses called “Hollywood Place.” A development to include 300–400, four-to-six-room row houses built on speculation by Herbert Duy in 1892. The Hollywood plan featured more elaborate row houses on Kirkbride and Morris Streets formerly known as Kirkpatrick and Morrison Streets. The row houses on the alleys were a little less detailed. Only a third of the houses were built, due to the economic reverses faced by Duy. Only 14 structures, the largest and the more ornate survivors were mentioned in the National Register nomination, out of the 137 Duy built. The authors of the nomination stated “The houses were done in a Victorian vernacular style with sheet metal architectural detailing, and porches on the larger buildings made from standard pieces of millwork.”

Many of the current residents currently living in the old Hollywood Place don’t even know they are living in Hollywood Place. Of the 348 houses mentioned in the National Register report over half are gone. Recently some of the houses on Morris Street were renovated respecting the architectural elements contained in the buildings. These rental units are successfully managed by the North Side Coalition for Fair Housing.

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Urban planners in the 1980s and '90s pushed for reducing the housing density found in many areas of the city. Old, neglected and derelict properties should be torn down. Many had been sitting boarded up for years making them beyond being financially viable for renovation. At first it was one or two buildings coming down creating a few gaps in the streetscape. But the gaps grew larger and the residents started to leave creating even more vacant properties. "Demolition creates the gradual erosion of a neighborhood until it is no longer a viable neighborhood," says Jonathan Denson of *Urban Prairie in Pittsburgh*. Vacant streets and Belgian block alleys are all that remain. The vast destruction of so many structures in Cal-Bride has created a new phenomenon called the "urban prairie." A term used to describe a vacant urban land that has been reverted to green space. The National Historic designation did not afford much protection against demolition for Old Allegheny Rows.

The demolition ball hit the lower California Kirkbride neighborhood hard. People need houses to live in with reduced housing stock this area's population decreased from 6,000 in 1940 to 761 in 2015 – the lowest of all North Side neighborhoods. Population density is needed to support local stores and businesses. City services and mass transit options require demographics, if they are not there the services are taken away or dramatically reduced. The California Kirkbride neighborhood because of the vast destruction of the housing stock became an urban prairie which caused it to become a "food desert." Forcing residents to use the Rite Aid and Family Dollar as their family's grocery store.

Large blocks of flat land Cal-Bride Place await housing development. Houses and homesteaders are needed to reverse the growth of this urban prairie. Let's hope they arrive soon.

## REFERENCES

Denson, Jonathon. 2011. *Urban Prairie in Pittsburgh: A Photo Case Study*. *Discovering Historic Pittsburgh: Preservation & Photography*. August 16.

National Register nomination document, 1984, prepared by Patricia A. McLaughlin and Charles Uhl, Tom Mistick & Sons Inc., Old Allegheny Rows Historic District, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, Washington D.C.

*California Kirkbride, Designing with Community in Mind*, The Pittsburgh Studio-Northside (sic). Volume One: California-Kirkbride/Manchester, Professor: Ken Tamminga, Fall 2015 supported by the Buhl Foundation and The Penn State Center for Engaging Pittsburgh, outreach and extension.

## ACS 2016 ANNUAL MEETING

Enjoyable evening at the James Street Gastropub  
by David McMunn

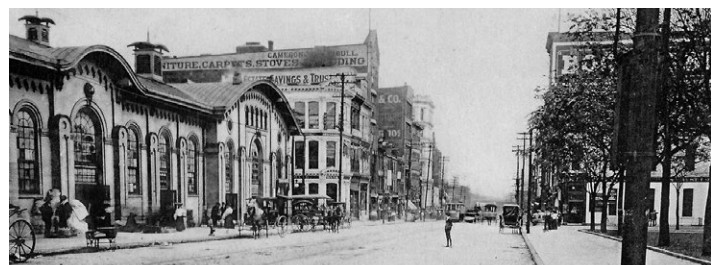
The Allegheny City Society held its annual meeting on Wednesday, April 27, 2016 at the James Street Gastropub and Speakeasy, 422 Foreland Street, Deutschtown. Following friendly chatter around cocktails, guests found their seats and were treated to a delicious buffet dinner of Chicken Toscano with artichokes and plum tomatoes, roast beef, red skin potatoes, roasted mixed vegetables, tossed salad and dinner rolls. Quite a nice spread!

Following dinner, a brief business meeting was held according to our Bylaws with the re-election of Directors, statement of financial position, a look back over the past business year for the organization, as well as a look ahead to some great events and activities planned for the 2016–2017 calendar year. The *William M. Rimmell Award* was given out to the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation for their long-time support and participation in the historic preservation of aspects of the former Allegheny City, and in the successful redevelopment of the North Side. Eight guests from that organization attended the evening's meeting and dinner. Accepting the award on behalf of the PH&LF organization was Ms. Louise Sturgess, executive director.

The business meeting was followed by guest speaker Mr. Edward Vidunas who spoke about the "The Breweries in Allegheny City Past and Present." Ed maintains a website about all the breweries past and present that have been a part of our culture here in Greater Pittsburgh. (Visit [www.PittsburghBrewers.com](http://www.PittsburghBrewers.com)) Following Ed's talk, representatives from the new breweries that are coming on line here on the North Side shared samples of their brews. Participating in the evening's beer and whiskey tasting were Allegheny City Brewing Company, War Streets Brewery, Penn Brewery and Wigle Whiskey Distillers.

It was hard to say good night after a fun-filled evening meeting and reacquainting ourselves with a great membership and great things happening in Pittsburgh's North Side!

Next year's annual meeting will take place on Wednesday, April 26, 2017. See you there!



## RESTORATION OF MONUMENTS

Thanks to City Parks and the McGinley Foundation  
by David McMunn

The monuments in the West Park of the Allegheny Commons finally received some much-needed restoration and rehabilitation from the City of Pittsburgh Department of Public Works, City Parks Division. The Graciano Company, the city-hired contractors who oversaw all this restoration work to the monuments, is to be commended for their fine restoration work!

The Thomas A. Armstrong Statue (1889) and the George Washington Statue (1891) were repaired for missing stone detail. Thomas has his fingers, toes and nose back again! The eagle and other features of have been restored on George Washington and his horse.

Most significant is the restoration of the statue of *Fame* atop the Allegheny County Civil War Monument (1871). In July 2008, a lightning strike to the statue exploded the right side of Fame's head and sent a myriad of stone pieces showering down around the monument's base.



Sculptor Wayne D. Ferree of Tuckhannock, Pennsylvania recreated Fame's head from the bust line to the top of her head. He also restored the head of the American eagle holding a shield of the Seal of Allegheny County that is located at the base of the pedestal. The contractors repointed some of the stone in the pedestal and sealed the mortar joints before removing the scaffolding that enshrouded the monument for a month between June and July.

In the late 1990s the Allegheny City Society contracted Mariani-Richards Company of Pittsburgh to lift the Massillon stone tablets imbedded in the sidewalk in front of the monument, build a stone retaining wall and pea gravel sidewalk across the front of the monument's base, clean and repoint the 50-foot stone shaft upon which the statue is resting.

Stop by West Park in the Allegheny Commons on Pittsburgh's North Side to view the wonderful improvements to these beloved historic statues from Allegheny City's history. "Thank you" to all City of Pittsburgh workers that made this project a wish come true for all of us! And a very special thanks to the McGinley Foundation for the very generous donation so that this monument project was more than just a few quick repairs, but complete!





## THE BRIGHTON ROAD THEATERS

Exploring the history of the New Brighton Theater  
by David McMunn

The Allegheny City – North Side neighborhoods were no strangers to arts and entertainment. Despite our being known as a bastion for Presbyterianism with its disregard for “profane” in the arts, by the time of World War II, the North Side had witnessed many successful palaces of entertainment – Vaudeville, Silent Film and the Talkies – especially along its main business corridors of Federal Street, East Ohio Street, and Beaver Avenue. We even boasted a Drive-In theater, one of only two in the city limits!

According to my count right now, I have identified 34 movie houses and a drive-in theater that were once located on Pittsburgh’s North Side. Recently, the Allegheny City Society hosted a tour of the California-Kirkbride, Marshall-Shadeland-Woods Run, Charles Street Valley, Perry Hilltop and Fineview neighborhoods. Tucked along tight streets were houses, businesses, churches and movie theaters. A few of theaters are still standing. Most, however, have been “dark” for many, many years.

During this tour we saw the locations of The McClure Theater, The Paramount Theater, The Plaza Theater, The Brighton Theater and The New Brighton Theater.

An earlier Brighton Theater was at 1810 Brighton Road, circa 1917. It must have been gone by 1928. Mr. Charles Mathews was the music director at this theater and then at the New Brighton Theater when it opened until his death. This theater had leased storefronts on each side of the movie entrance including the Brighton Restaurant and another business visible in the photograph.

The New Brighton Theater building at 1739–1743 Brighton Road housed the New Brighton Theater that opened in



November 1928. The capacity was listed in different sources as 700 and 750, both probably rounded off numbers. The New Brighton Theater had leased storefronts on the first floor and rented spaces on the second and third floors.

Both theaters were owned and operated by Harry Fleishman as a family-owned business for many years until the new theater closed in the 1960s. The New Brighton Theater still stands today. It is a gem of Art Deco architecture complete with the rosettes, waves and zigzag detail in the terracotta glazed tile of the façade. Look for the two elephant heads with their extended trunks trailing down the corners of the building – a true amusement for the kids back in the theater’s heyday!

The New Brighton Theater Building boasted a 10-lane bowling alley on the third floor as well as a billiard parlor. At least one rental apartment was located on the second floor.

Folks recall a dance studio opened on the third floor in the late 1940s in the building before the Brighton Theater closed around 1960. (The theater was listed in the 1960 *Yellow Pages* at 1739 Brighton Road, Telephone: FAirfax 1-6628.)

Before becoming a union meeting hall for Branch 84 of the National Association of Letter Carriers in 1982, it had been used for warehouse storage by the Frame Electric Company.



Thanks to Cinema Treasures for much of this information. Visit [www.cinematreasures.org/theaters](http://www.cinematreasures.org/theaters) for more information on many former North Side theaters.

## REMEMBERING JOHN ALAN MAKAR by John Canning

A few years back, the Allegheny City Society was organizing a “trolley tour” following the route of the old Harmony Line. At a quick stop in a tract of 1950s houses in Cranberry, John Makar took us to the yard of one of these houses and, pointing at a spot in the midst of the branches of a giant hemlock tree showed us one of the original posts of the Harmony Line. John Makar’s mind was almost encyclopedic when it came to local history.

This past Spring, John Makar, an active and loyal member of the ACS Board of Directors, died of a sudden heart attack.

John lived all of his life in the Presston section of McKees Rocks. He was not only an active member of the Allegheny City Society, but he was also greatly committed to the history of McKees Rocks and Stowe. John had an avid interest in and great knowledge about the history of these communities. He was also equally involved in his home parish: St. Mary’s Ukrainian Orthodox Church in “the Rocks.” John’s knowledge, interest, research ability, and participation in the Society’s events will be greatly missed.



John Makar with the Allegheny City Society Board at its annual retreat in February of this year. John stands fourth from the left.



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