

THE ALLEGHENY CITY SOCIETY

Spring 2019 | Number 77

REPORTER DISPATCH

Journal of Old Allegheny History and Lore

The Year in Review 2018

Another banner year for the Society

Ruth McCartan, President

A light snow is falling, and glancing up from my computer screen I can't help but look back on 2018 as another banner year for the Society. I hope you got to join us on one of our tours or events this year. Adventurous plans for 2018 were discussed and planned at the Board Retreat in January. Winter 2018 had a soft start with a few public conversations at Mrs. Arnold's Tea about life in old Allegheny. The Annual meeting in April started the year off with a bang in the home of Col. Thomas Armstrong built in the 1830s. The Manchester Historical Society received the William Rimmel award for its dedication to saving and preserving the Armstrong House. Plans were rapidly changed mid-year with the closing of West Ohio St./Western Ave. Help was needed to encourage foot traffic to keep a North Side icon in business, Gus's Ice Ball Cart. The Society teamed up with the City of Pittsburgh and North Side Leadership Conference to hold events in the Commons. "Tuesdays in the Groves with Gus" got started in early July running until August with short history talks with subject heading such as Archie's Arboretum, Rev. Benjamin Tanner, Ethel Hagler, Joe Harris, Civil War training with the final event a discussion of "Who Owns the Commons." People purchased an ice ball or popcorn and then walked over to hear a bit of history. A special thanks all the speakers who made this series a success. Along with sponsoring and staffing the Grove talks, the Society conducted a July East Spring Hill walk featuring the Lutheran Orphanage Asylum and newly opened Spring Hill Brewery and Rescue Street farms. August produced a Woods Run walk centered on the former Western Penitentiary. Friends of Riverview Park asked the Society to give several walking tours of the Park during Riverview Park Day September 8. Heavy rain kept many attendees from venturing out so the Society did the tour again

in October. A bus trip to Greensburg in November for a tour of the Westmoreland Art museum focusing on artists with an Allegheny connection featured a trip into the vault to see drawings of Frederick Demmler and Mary Cassatt. Demmler was raised in Manchester and was killed during the last days of fighting in World War I. Former board members, David McMunn and Dennis Bell (now Greensburg residents) hosted lunch at their new home. Hoping to have one more walking tour before the winter weather set in, a November tour was given highlighting the Commons and the Mexican War Streets neighborhood. In December, Society board members had a book table at the Allegheny West House tour. That closed out 2018. A generous grant from the Buhl Foundation helped underwrite the work featured in this article. Three new board members joined this year: Charles & Sarah Schneider and Mark Tomlinson.

Watch for 2019 events on our website and social media platforms. See you at the Annual Meeting at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary!



The walking tour in November highlighted Allegheny Commons and the Mexican War Streets neighborhood. President, Ruth McCartan leads a discussion at a tour stop.

The Lady, The Vineyard, The Heights

Kathleen M. Washy

Within days after her arrival in Pittsburgh from the Netherlands in December 1963, Miss Monique Dietz attended the dedication of a new building to house *The Vineyard*, which was a community center in Northview Heights.

Dietz, a member of the Ladies of Bethany, joined four other Ladies who already were established within this North Side community to celebrate the opening of The Vineyard. From that point in 1963 until 1971, this center would be the focus of her ministry work to this Pittsburgh neighborhood.

At the time of Dietz's arrival, the project in Northview Heights was in its infancy. Originally part of Reserve Township, this area had been annexed by the city of Pittsburgh in 1931. By the end of the 1950s, the city's Housing Authority turned to this relatively uninhabited land as a location to erect public housing. Completed in 1962, Northview Heights consisted of two 10-story buildings, seven 3-story walkups and 516 row houses, in an area isolated from surrounding residential areas. The first residents were displaced by redevelopment programs at Allegheny Center and Chateau Street West. With the establishment of this new housing and the resulting population shift, Bishop John Wright, Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh, added the area "across the bridge" to the parish boundaries of Annunciation Church. This increase of parish population also came with an increase of parish services. Recognizing the impact, Annunciation pastor Father Edwin Heyl requested advice from Wright on how to effectively serve this new community. Concurrently, Wright received a request from an order of women religious, asking if the members could be of service to the diocese. These were the Ladies of Bethany, a community with roots in the Netherlands, and they were seeking to establish a presence in the United States similar to their presence in Austria, Rome, Israel, and Montreal.

Originating in 1919 in post-World War I Netherlands, the Ladies of Bethany initially were established as a lay movement focused on creating unity in society and promoting ecumenical hospitality. In 1932, the Roman Catholic Church recognized the Ladies as a religious order. With their origins firmly in the laity, the Ladies from the start were different than other congregations of women religious. The Ladies dressed in secular clothes instead of religious habits, and used "Miss" instead of "Sister" in front of their names. Recognizing the complementary nature



of the Ladies and Annunciation parish, Wright matched them up, resulting with the first two Ladies, Jacinta Van Winkel and Eleanor Gerritsen, coming to Pittsburgh in 1962.

After these two established their presence, several more Ladies were sent from the Netherlands, including Miss Monique Dietz. Born in The Hague in 1933, Dietz and her family lived through the Nazi invasion and occupation of their country from 1940 to 1945. During her years at university in the 1950s, Dietz came to know the Ladies of Bethany, and it was upon completion of her college degree that she formally joined the order in 1956. In the years following, Dietz served her ministry in Europe until she was given the assignment in Pittsburgh.

When Dietz arrived in Pittsburgh in 1963, Van Winkel and Gerritsen, along with two other Ladies of Bethany, were established in a 100-year-old farm house that the diocese had purchased at 101 Hazlett Street, located at the edge of Northview Heights. Initially, the farmhouse served both as home to the Ladies and as an activity center for the community. As with



Children from the neighborhood climbing a downed tree at The Vineyard, 1964

similar neighborhood houses that the order established in other countries, the Ladies decided to assign a name to their farmhouse—The Vineyard.

Functioning as part of Annunciation parish, the Ladies' assignment was to provide religious education to Catholic children in Northview Heights who did not attend Catholic school. The agreement between the Ladies and the diocese was that if they fulfilled this assignment, they would also be able to carry out their mission of reaching out to those outside of the Catholic Church. They used the basement of the farmhouse version of The Vineyard to hold their programs and services.

Before too long, the realization set in that the farmhouse was too small and that expansion was needed for The Vineyard. In 1963, the new community center was built, taking on the name, The Vineyard. This new building included not only an auditorium but also a library because Wright was concerned that the children have books available to them. At the December 8 dedication, one of the speakers was Methodist minister Rev. Mr. John Garvin from the Bethany House, another community center that had been established to serve the needs of the Heights; subsequently, there was often collaboration between the two ministries.

Over the years, a total of ten Ladies ministered at the Vineyard, filling many roles: counseling was provided, courses such as financial management were offered, and activities were coordinated. Dietz took on the organization of the center's religious education program, for which, at one time there were about 500 Catholic children enrolled and 60 teachers. Soon thereafter, families of non-Catholic children started asking for their own religious education program. Dietz also oversaw adult education and discussion groups. Some of her favorite memories were of the children ringing the doorbell and asking for the Ladies to "come out and play." The Ladies also worked with young assistants from St. Benedict Academy, Carlow College, and St. Paul's Seminary, who would volunteer with the ministry. During the second half of the 1960s, there was a shift in the population in the Heights. When the Heights was first established in 1962, blacks were a minority; by 1970, the majority of the residents were black. For Dietz and the other Ladies of Bethany, with their roots in Europe, they had the experience of not seeing race. After the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. and subsequent disturbances, the Ladies continued their ministry in the Heights. In 1971, they reassessed the community's needs and determined that the needs of the Heights had changed. With the understanding that the residents were better able to address their own needs, the Ladies asked to turn the center over to the Heights.

At the beginning of 1972, the Ladies of Bethany ended their work at The Vineyard. With the departure of the Ladies,



The Ladies of Bethany in the Vineyard, 1965

Top Row: Louise Giesen, Monique Dietz;
Second Row: Marie Therese Batenburg, Ellie Van Leyn, Eleanor Gerritsen;
Bottom Row: Michele Van Voorst, Jacinta Van Winkel

The Vineyard was renamed the Ernest T. Williams, Jr. Memorial Center, in honor of Williams who had been fatally shot by a city policeman in a case of mistaken identity the previous summer. In December 1972, the Heights honored nine Ladies as a dinner, thanking them for their ministry. For the years following, the diocese acted on the Ladies' recommendation to continue to provide financial support to the Williams Center until 1979, when the Center's board decided to become independent of the diocese.

While The Vineyard was the fruit of what brought Dietz and the Ladies of Bethany to Pittsburgh, they realized when it was time to move on to other places where their ministry was needed. For Dietz, her first eight years in the United States centered on this section of the North Side. She, along with the other Ladies of Bethany, went on to do ministry in so many places, but they always would remember those years at The Vineyard as ones of making a difference.

Special thanks to Kathleen M. Washy, archivist for the Sisters of St. Joseph of Baden, for the article and photographs.

Lafayette in Alleghenytown

Visits friends here in 1825

Tom Wilson

Marie-Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de Lafayette is familiar to us all for his help with the founding of the United States during the American Revolution. Somewhat lesser known is that he paid a personal visit to Alleghenytown on the afternoon of Tuesday, May 31st, 1825 to reunite with some old friends.

Henry Preble was an American merchant who was doing business in France in the early 1800s. During the War of 1812, he outfitted several privateers to help in the naval war against Britain. He lived outside of Paris with daughters Anica and Harriet. They were students in the celebrated school of Madame Campan, at Draveil, alongside many of the daughters of the French aristocracy. Lafayette would often visit Draveil and became acquainted with the sisters there.

Anica married Thomas Barlow in 1817 and returned to the United States, first living outside Washington D.C., then moving to Allegheny in the 1820s. Allegheny was rather sparsely settled at that time; there were only a few homes away from the town center. According to one account, there was the original frame Presbyterian church, the houses of Benjamin Page, Reverend Joseph Stockton and the Barlow house, each surrounded by extensive grounds.



Anica Preble Barlow's rendering of their house at the foot of Hogback Hill (later Monument Hill) in Allegheny circa 1825

President Madison had invited Lafayette to return to the United States in 1824. His plan was to only visit the original 13 states, but his welcome was so spectacularly warm, the visit stretched out to all the then-21 states and continued well into 1825. Everywhere he went he was toasted, feted, paraded and celebrated. He arrived in Pittsburgh on May 30th and ventured across the river to Allegheny to enjoy a delightful picnic lunch with his friends. Neighbor Benjamin Page's youngest daughter, Martha Harding Page remembered:

"About a dozen of the neighboring children, dressed in white with pink sashes and wreaths of roses on our heads, received him at the gate. I remember a tall man stooping to kiss each one of us on our foreheads; then took the Madam by her hands and kissed her on each cheek."

Besides Martha Harding Page, one of the young girls of the greeting committee was Katherine Kelso Johnston, who went on to become Katherine Cassatt, mother of Mary Cassatt. It is said that her love of art and all things French, was instilled in her by her teacher, Anica Preble, and was perhaps one of the reasons that the Cassatt family moved to Paris. We can be sure that it helped Alleghenian Mary Cassatt rise to the highest ranks of the French Impressionist school of art.

Lafayette left Pittsburgh June 1st. In a letter to sister Harriet in Paris, Anica wrote that as he pulled away with his entourage, it looked like a funeral.

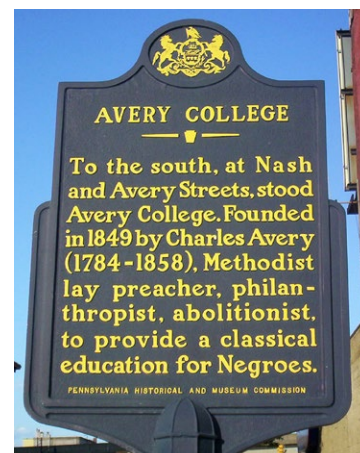
Black History Tour

Highlights people and places in Allegheny City

Ruth McCartan

If you joined us on our first African-American Allegheny City Walking Tour you know the weather was cold and very windy. But we caught a break and it didn't snow until after the walk. The highlight of the walk was standing in the exact location of Avery Institute and learning of its extraordinary faculty and graduates. Men such as Henry Highland Garrett, Thomas Morris Chester, and Martin Freeman.

A hidden Allegheny City African-American hero is Lafayette Massy, a man of color, born in Virginia who migrated to Allegheny in the 1840s. After serving in the Union army as a sergeant in the United States Colored Troops. Working as a whitewasher he took full advantage of the freedom offered him to purchase various properties in Allegheny City before his death. Massy honored Charles Avery, the founder of the Institute by naming his first son Avery. Remember not all African-American history is found on the Hill or Homewood, Allegheny City has a long and illustrious history just not as well known. The Society is trying to change this perception by offering local walking tours on this subject in the future.



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

Tuesday, 16 April 2019

6:45pm gathering – Program begins at 7:15pm – Light snacks will be served

The Byzantine Catholic Seminary of Saints Cyril and Methodius

3605 Perrysville Avenue, Observatory Hill, North Side

(Free parking behind the seminary)

Program: The Story of “The Bridges of Allegheny” by Todd Wilson PE

(His book will be available for sale at the event)

Please RSVP by calling (412) 766-5670 by April 12

ACS Annual Meeting

Todd Wilson will present “The Bridges of Pittsburgh”

John Canning

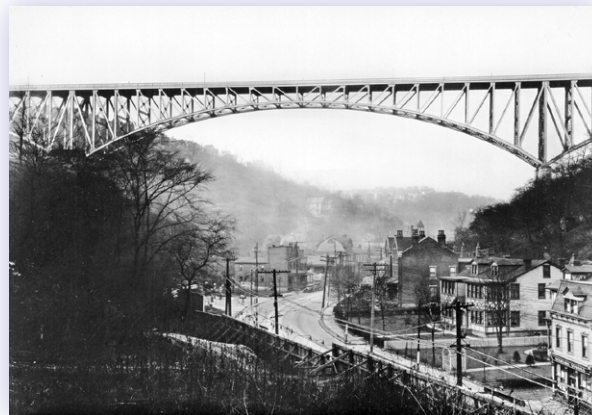
The Allegheny City Society’s Annual Meeting will be on Tuesday, April 16 at 7 PM. This year the meeting will be held at the Saints Cyril and Methodius Byzantine Catholic Seminary at the corner of Perrysville and Riverview Avenues in the Observatory Hill community. This site has had a significant institutional role in the history of the North Side. The agenda for the meeting will be the election of ACS board members, the annual review of the Society’s finances, and our program: The Story of “The Bridges of Allegheny” by Todd Wilson PE.

From its earliest days the leaders and residents of Allegheny City and Pittsburgh as well, were confronted with the problems posed by the rivers, valleys, and hilly terrain that had to be solved as the communities expanded from frontier villages to a major urban industrial center. Wilson’s work, *Pittsburgh Bridges*, (published as part of Arcadia’s Images of America series) describes the social, political, and technological forces at work in the 19th and 20th centuries leading to the development of so many

bridges of various designs and functions connecting neighborhood to neighborhood, as well as the two cities of Allegheny and Pittsburgh, to regional and national markets. Wilson’s work deals with the designs of bridges that: take canal boats across the Allegheny River; withstand the weight of electric trolleys, accommodate the impact of railroad systems moving people and goods in and out of the region, and, of course, meet the needs of the automobile. Wilson even deals with some of the small footbridges tying one section of a neighborhood to another.

Wilson’s program will focus on the bridges of the North Side. There is a great piece of technological and social history related to our many bridges. Presently, the impact of bridges, e.g., the one over the railroad at Brighton and North Avenues, as well as the “one that isn’t there any more” that spanned

the Woods Run Valley connecting Brighton Heights to Riverview Park, remain important issues to many North Side residents. Our program this year is as much about the past as the present. All members and friends are encouraged to attend this meeting. As always fine snacks and beverages will be provided with support from a free-will offering following the program.



A view looking North to the East Street Bridge



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Union Dale Cemetery

Sarah Schneider

How many times have you driven by the large, tree-covered cemetery at the corner of Brighton and Marshall Road on the North Side? Did you know that it was established in what was once the rural outlands of Allegheny City? Incorporated as a city in 1840, there were 15,000 residents in Allegheny by 1846.

First Associate Reformed Church created the Mount Union Cemetery on 10 acres. Then another cemetery, Hilldale, was established right across the street. Both were a pleasant buggy ride often taken on a Sunday afternoon. It was a custom to visit cemeteries to get away from crowded streets and industrial areas.



By 1846, the two were combined into the 96-acre Union Dale of today. For more than 150 years historic notables have been buried in its natural setting. You can also find many other families and individuals in its rolling acres, plus Civil War veterans and other veterans from that time on. So many stories to be told!

Check the *Summer Reporter Dispatch*, the ACS website, and Facebook for information about the walking tour of Union Dale later this Fall. We'll share some of those stories as we stroll through two of its three divisions!