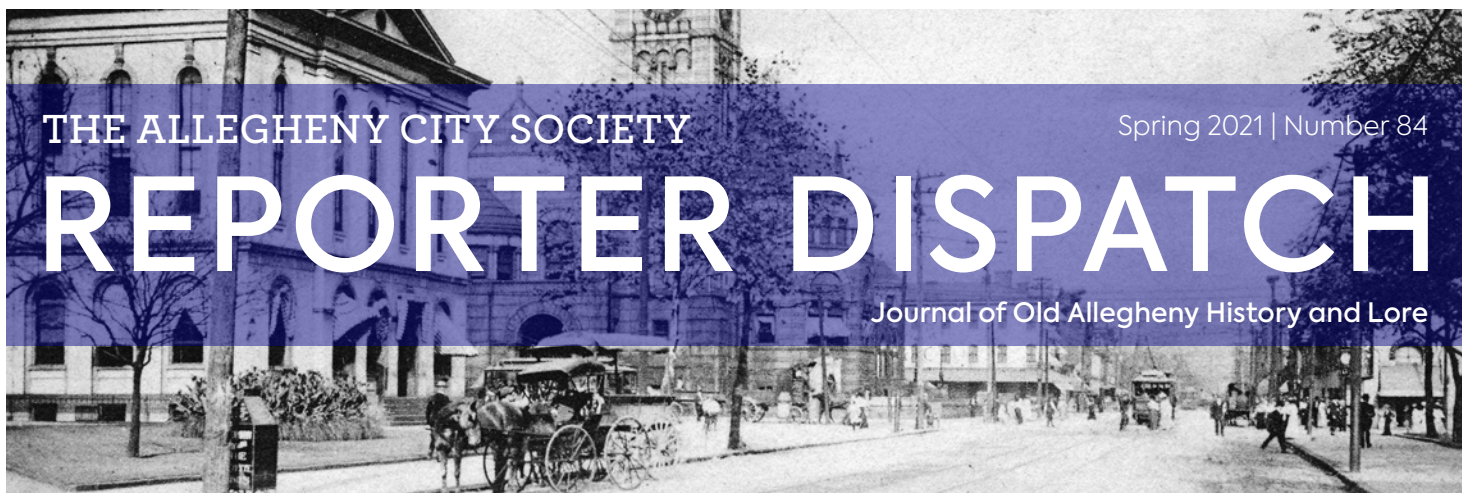


# REPORTER DISPATCH

Journal of Old Allegheny History and Lore



## Union Dale Cemetery – 175 Years of Caring Service

David Grinnell

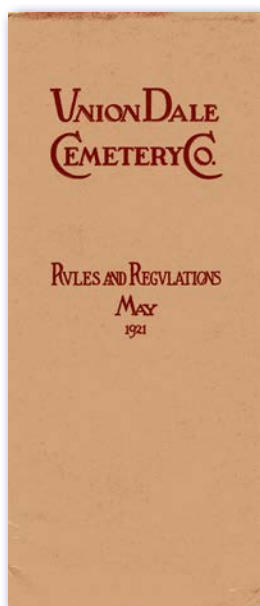
SIGN POSTS OF THE PAST surround everyone, if you just take the time to notice. The names of our streets and neighborhoods often reflect the rich heritage of the people who have come before us – it's a way of remembering. But perhaps one of the most visible sources for remembering the lives of those that shaped our community happens when we walk through the grounds of a cemetery. Filled with markers and monuments of all shapes, sizes, and symbols we can learn a lot about the lives of the dead. This is very true for those of us in the Allegheny City Society; after all, the organization has led numerous tours through the last two decades through the largest cemetery on the North Side, Union Dale Cemetery. Through the microcosm of Union Dale the story of the neighborhoods, the business and industry, education, religion, military service, service institutions, professions, civil service, and so much more help us to see the lives of former Alleghenians, Northsiders, and the people who have shaped our urban landscape.

One hundred and seventy-five years ago, on April 14, 1846, members of Allegheny's First Associate Reformed Church (later called the First United Presbyterian Church) incorporated ten acres of land, just outside the city limits and created Mount Union Cemetery. The original four wards of Allegheny became more densely populated and the small burial grounds within its neighborhoods became overcrowded and insufficient to meet the needs of the growing city. A cemetery beyond the city limits, along the pathways that led to the rural and hilly areas to the

north, would provide a convenient place to set a large, planned, and landscaped cemetery that would reflect and respect the dignity of changing mourning practices. Over the next twenty years, the incorporators would expand the cemetery holdings by purchasing parcels of adjacent land. Names associated with those early incorporators can be seen, inscribed on monuments in today's Division 1 of Union Dale – Lysle, Fairman, Herron, McCutcheon, and others.

By April of 1857, another group of Alleghenians made the decision to establish a non-sectarian cemetery and ultimately created Hilldale Cemetery across the "New Brighton Road" from Mount Union (now Division 2). However, within a decade, the incorporators of the two cemeteries recognized the value of merging their operations together and functioning as a single cemetery. Thus, in April, 1869 they joined together under the name Union Dale Cemetery Company. Landscaping and management improvements would accelerate under this new structure. Reflecting ponds, fountains, pathways, and new flower beds would be added to create an environment of both pleasure and contemplation. Lot owners were encouraged to create individualize spaces that would promote artistic beauty and provide for a comfortable place to visit and pay tribute to their loved ones.

As space was needed in the city, the small burial grounds around the city were then removed up the hill to the new cemeteries. A close reading to Judge John E. Parke's Historical *Gleanings and Recollections* (1886) indicates that the



continued

original burial ground in the Commons at the foot of Monument Hill and the second burial ground, also in the Commons, near Stockton and Sherman Avenues were both relocated, first to the burial ground of First Presbyterian Church of Allegheny located at “out-lot No. 251,” which was ultimately removed to Mount Union Cemetery. Additionally, Allegheny’s First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) had a burial ground at Jacksonia near Arch Street, which was removed after the Civil War to the then Hilldale Cemetery. Thus, the disappearance of several original burial site were now included in the growing grounds of Union Dale.

The beautifully situated office building at Union Dale is the only highly visible building on the grounds today and sits just inside the gate of Division 2 on Brighton Road. This 1930’s building includes a newly restored chapel or reception room that reflects the long traditions of dignity that Union Dale managers have been entrusted by generations of families from the North Side. But, there have been stunning structures that have dotted the landscape of Union Dale’s grounds through its history. Office and residential buildings sat near the entrances of both Division 1 and Division 3 at various times. These spaces were designed to not only to greet visitors and lot owners to the cemetery, but were also residential spaces where the cemetery superintendents and other staff members once resided. But the days of having permanent staff living on site has long passed.

One of the key individuals contributing to the success of Union Dale’s enduring enterprise was long-time superinten-

dent, Sydney Youden (1858–1961). Youden, a native of London, England immigrated to the United States in 1891 and was a horticulturalist. He was in charge of all the horticultural exhibits during the Columbian Exhibition in Chicago. Following the closing of the World’s Fair in 1893, he came to Pittsburgh to work in the Department of Parks. In 1902, Youden was hired by Union Dale as its superintendent until his death in 1961. Under Youden’s leadership the reputation of the cemetery grew in stature. He was president of both the Pennsylvania Cemetery Association and the Western Pennsylvania Cemetery Association. The existing walk ways, drive ways, and the many flowering tree and shrubs are a credit to his vision for the beautiful landscape.

Today, Union Dale is led by a team of staff members who care deeply about the heritage they have been entrusted with. Ronald Deiger and Frank Nagode and their team have welcomed the Allegheny City Society to Union Dale on many occasions and are kind and generous with their time and assistance with locating the many gems, hidden stories, and beautiful surroundings that continue to celebrate the rich history of our corner of this amazing city and connect with “A History worth Remembering.”

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Sources include: John E. Parke, *Historical Gleanings and Recollections of Seventy Years* (1886); Pittsburgh Post-Gazette Archives: various newspapers; Union Dale Cemetery Co., *Rules and Regulations, 1921*; and the Union Dale Cemetery website at | [www.uniondalecemetery.org](http://www.uniondalecemetery.org) |



View from inside the gate of Division 1 looking back toward Brighton Road. The entrance fountain and former office building are in the foreground. The entrance to Division 2 is across the road.



*Pittsburg Dispatch. (Pittsburg Pa.) from Chronicling America:  
Historic American Newspapers. Library of Congress.*

## ASTRONOMY HIS FAD

A Pittsburger Who Has Put A Small Fortune  
in an Observatory.

## PHOTOGRAPHS THE MOON

And Is Getting Ready to Take Shots  
at the Stars and Planets.

## HE SAYS THE SCIENCE IS SIMPLE,

And Offers His Services for the Instruction of  
the Public.

## HIS HOME A REAL MECCA OF LEARNING

Imagine an octagon room some 30 feet in diameter, with a vaulted revolving roof, through an open panel of which the night winds rush fitfully, and above which the few scattered stars shine in a sullen, half hearted way!

About the low walls if polished cherry wood are hung pictures of scientific value, and the soft light of the student lamp falls through its green-tinted shade in rich and harmonious furnishings. The many books and portfolios scattered about, the mysterious glittering instruments and, above all, the great telescope in the center of the apartment, proclaim it the workroom of an astronomer, and such it is – the private observatory of Mr. Henry Berger, of Observatory Hill, Allegheny.

A peculiar fad for a rich man it is, the study of astronomy, and building of an observatory that has cost him a small fortune. The observatory is the only of the sort in this section of the country. There are those that prefer the Berger telescope to that of the Allegheny Observatory. Fauth & Co., of Washington, D.C., erected it, and it was 14 months in building. The objective glass and a number of other accessories were supplied by John A. Brashear, so well known in astronomical circles.

## LOVES HIS TELESCOPE AND MICROSCOPE

It is between two and three years since the observatory was completed, and Mr. Berger and his wife with great zest devoted themselves to the study of the heavens after business hours, and one may with almost absolute certainty find that gentleman either with his microscope or telescope or in his photographic dark room. His microscope is considered by experts one of the finest in the world, its magnifying power arranging from 25 to 20,000 diameters. The instrument is supplied with complete binocular and monocular attachments, mechanical stage cam-

era lucida and drawing table attachment, Abbe condensers, full set of Spencer's objectives and eye pieces, microtome, filer micrometer, photographic attachments, etc.; in fact all that is required to make the highest grade of microscopic investigations.

When the telescope was ready for use Mr. Berger determined that as soon as he familiarized himself with the heavenly bodies the Pittsburg and Allegheny public should have such and opportunity to study astronomy as it had never had before. For it is only since Prof. Keeler came to the Allegheny Observatory that the people have been permitted to use that instrument. When the sky is particularly interesting Mr. Berger sends invitations to his friends to come and spend an evening with the stars. If they are especially privileged, they are allowed a peep through his microscope at the squirming animalcules, beautiful diatoms and curious vegetable cells he has to show.

## A NIGHT WITH THE STARS.

The other evening such a party enjoyed Mr. and Mrs. Berger's hospitality. The stars had all evening been coquetting with the clouds, and when at last a brisk breeze took the matter in hand and whisked the vapors out of sight there were still a few stars that withdrew themselves poutingly behind the thin white mist that skirted the horizon. Mars was marching across the sky with a pallor upon his ruddy countenance that suggested that the warlike planet was suffering from a temporary attack of panic.

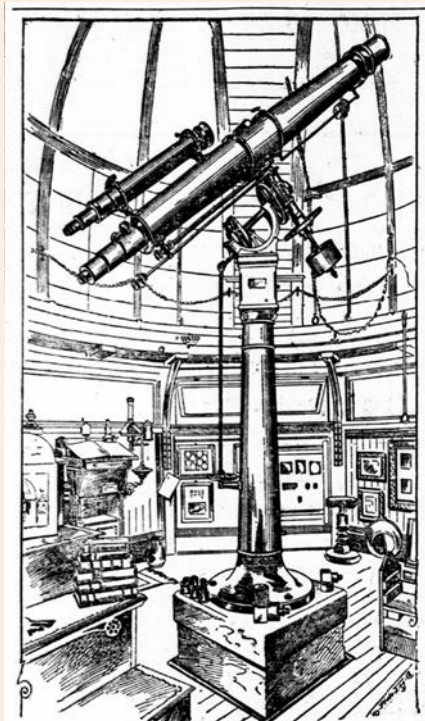
Mr. Berger said the sky was not as good as might be but "would do." And swung the great telescope into position. Mars was easily sighted. Some of the visitors had worked up quite an enthusiasm by reciting Longfellow's lines about "the red planet Mars." The owner of the first eye applied to the telescope was anything but "resolute and calm" as she sighted that body placidly balancing his snow spot on the crown of his head.

"Why, it isn't red at all," exclaimed the investigator, whose eye was scouring the heavens for something answering to the poet's sanguinary description.

"It's orange," ejaculated a second, who had expected a hue matching her cherry-colored ribbons.

"It is always that color. You will find it red compared with the other planets," explained Mr. Berger who, with great patience, was endeavoring to enlighten a third visitor in regard to the mechanism of the astronomical clock that tick-ticked sociably in the center of the telescope and kept it moving with the planet. Visitor number three was highly elated over her supposed discovery of the canals, but much subdued when informed that they could not be sighted save by the keenest eye and most practiced eye.

**Astronomy His Fad continues in the next issue of *The Reporter Dispatch* | No 85.**



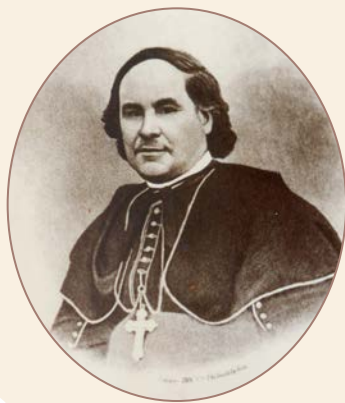
PART OF AN INTERIOR VIEW OF THE BERGER  
ASTRONOMICAL OBSERVATORY

# St. Ann Parish Millvale – Its Brief History in the Diocese of Allegheny

Dennis N. Ranalli

## Two Roman Catholic Dioceses in One County

Western Pennsylvania during the mid-19th Century was a developing region with an increasing Catholic population. Expanding needs led to the creation of a new episcopal see in Pennsylvania. The Diocese of Pittsburgh was established on August 11, 1843 as a suffragan of the Metropolitan Archdiocese of Philadelphia. The Right Rev. Michael J. O'Connor, DD served as its first bishop for seventeen years until 1860, when he resigned to join the Jesuits. O'Connor was succeeded by the Right Rev. Michael Domenec, CM, DD as the second Bishop of Pittsburgh; he served in this capacity for fifteen years until 1875. As the Western Pennsylvania region continued to progress, the Catholic population in Allegheny County and surrounding communities grew along with it. One such evolving local municipality, Allegheny City was located on the north shore of the Allegheny River across from Pittsburgh – the area now known as the North Side. The growing number of Catholic families in Allegheny City and surrounding areas led to a second episcopal see created in Western Pennsylvania. The Diocese of Allegheny was formed on January 11, 1876 from territory sectioned off from the Diocese of Pittsburgh. Dedicated in July of 1875, the existing St. Peter's Church (Allegheny) was designated as the cathedral for the new diocese.



The Right Reverend Michael Domenec the second Bishop of Pittsburgh (1860-1875) was appointed the first Bishop of the Diocese of Allegheny (1876-1877).  
*Diocese of Pittsburgh Archives*

Similar to its predecessor, the Diocese of Allegheny was a suffragan of the Metropolitan Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Bishop Domenec, who at that time was serving as the second bishop of Pittsburgh, was subsequently named the first ordinary for the Diocese of Allegheny. Eighteen months after this new assignment Bishop Domenec resigned on July 29, 1877 and returned to his native Spain where he succumbed to pneumonia in January 1878.



In 1886 fire gutted St. Peter's Cathedral leaving only the exterior walls and tower. *Diocese of Pittsburgh Archives*

The Right Rev. John Tuigg, DD, then serving as the third bishop of Pittsburgh, was appointed concurrently in 1877 as Apostolic Administrator *sede vacante* for the Diocese of Allegheny. In November 1886 a fire gutted St. Peter's Cathedral. The cathedral was rebuilt using the original drawings as a guide, and rededicated in April of 1888. The Diocese of Allegheny, in existence for only thirteen years was suppressed on July 1, 1889 and its territory reunited with the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

## One Catholic Parish in Two Dioceses

Meanwhile, during the nine years from its inception in 1843 until 1852, Bishop O'Connor in the Diocese of Pittsburgh came to realize the increasing need for more Catholic parishes in his diocese. So, in 1852 he established St. Mary Parish located in Sharpsburg. Nestled along the Allegheny River about four miles up-river from downtown Pittsburgh, was a verdant valley surrounded by rolling wooded hills. What became known as the Borough of Millvale was then the site of the Sample Farm as well as the Allegheny Poor Farm.

Catholics residing in this developing Millvale community began to attend Mass in the new Sharpsburg parish about three miles away and continued to do so until the 1870s. With the opening in 1870 of the Forty-Third Street Bridge spanning the Allegheny River, Millvale Catholics now had a second option to attend services just across the river at another St. Mary Church; this one on Forty-sixth Street in Lawrenceville.



The ongoing influx into the valley of workers seeking employment at the Graff, Bennett, & Company Mill contributed to steady population growth and business development in Millvale. A majority of the Catholic families residing there were of German ancestry. Soon Millvale Catholic families became eager to build a church of their own. By 1873 the Diocese of Pittsburgh recognized the practicality of building a Roman Catholic church in Millvale; thus, Bishop Domenec purchased a plot of land from the Allegheny Poor Farm consisting of seven lots at a cost \$6,075.

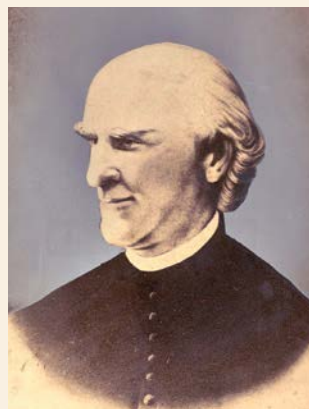
The bishop appointed the pastor at St. Mary Church, Lawrenceville, the Rev. Andrew Patrick Gibbs to supervise the construction of the first wood-framed St. Ann Church on Lincoln Avenue. The building was completed in eight months and Fr. Gibbs celebrated the first Mass in Millvale on January 6, 1874. By September 24, 1874 the cornerstone had been placed and on May 2, 1875, the Mother Church of Millvale, St Ann, was dedicated by Bishop Domenec.

Following its dedication, the new church experienced a series of rapid administrative changes. At the time of its dedication in 1875, St Ann Church Millvale was within the boundaries of the Diocese of Pittsburgh and initially was designated as a mission church of St. Mary Parish, Lawrenceville, under the administration of Fr. Gibbs. But during the following year of 1876, the new Diocese of Allegheny was established and responsibility for St. Ann Church Millvale was, for a short time, shifted to the Diocese of Allegheny as a mission church of Most Holy Name of Jesus Parish, Troy Hill. Rev. Suitbert Mollinger, pastor at Most Holy Name ministered to the congregants at St. Ann for less than one year until October 8, 1876.

Fr. Mollinger had been appointed first pastor at Most Holy Name in 1868 and was the primary sponsor for erecting St. Anthony Chapel and the acquisition of religious relics from



The first wood-framed St Ann Church, The Mother Church of Millvale, was built in 1874 and dedicated by Bishop Michael Domenec in 1875. *Diocese of Pittsburgh Archives*



Rev. Andrew Patrick Gibbs pastor at St. Mary Church, Lawrenceville oversaw the construction of St. Ann Church, a mission church under his administration until 1876. *Diocese of Pittsburgh Archives*



The Reverend Suitbert Mollinger pastor at Most Holy Name Parish Troy Hill, ministered during 1876 to the mission church at St. Ann for less than one year. *Courtesy, St. Anthony Chapel*

around the world. Fr. Mollinger died on June 15, 1892, two days after the dedication of the chapel.

In yet a third administrative shift during 1876, St. Ann Church was transferred back into the Diocese of Pittsburgh and at that point officially became recognized as a parish. The responsibility for staffing the parish in Millvale was assigned by the bishop to the Holy Ghost Fathers (CSSp, Congregation of the Holy Spirit, also known as Spiritans). A few years later on October 1, 1878, this small band of Spiritans founded what is now known as Duquesne University.

When the Spiritans took over responsibility in 1876 for St. Ann Millvale, the parish was composed of 75 German-speaking families and 30 English-speaking families. The first Spiritan pastor of the new parish was Rev. James Richert CSSp who fortunately spoke both languages fluently.

## Epilogue

For well over a century a litany of priests from The Congregation of the Holy Spirit ministered continuously at St. Ann and the broader Millvale community. The Spiritan priests remained steadfast in honoring their commitment through the decline of St. Ann Parish Millvale – a decline that resulted from multiple factors-until its eventual suppression by the Diocese of Pittsburgh on May 27, 1994.

*Dr. Ranalli is Professor Emeritus, University of Pittsburgh and a 1964 NCHS alumnus. Most recently his publications have appeared in the Western Pennsylvania History Magazine.*



Allegheny City Society  
PO Box 100255  
Pittsburgh PA 15233-0255

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

Wednesday, April 21, 2021, 7:00-8:30 PM

The 2021 ACS Annual Meeting will be held online via Zoom.  
Dr. Daniel Holland, the 2021 Recipient of the William Rimmel Award,  
will speak on the Manchester Neighborhood.

Please RSVP by e-mail at [acsannualmeeting@gmail.com](mailto:acsannualmeeting@gmail.com) by April 16  
An invitation and link to the Zoom video conference will be sent to you.

Daniel Holland, PhD is currently teaching at Duquesne University. Many of you will recognize his name as the founder of the Young Preservationist Association in Pittsburgh. He received his PhD in history from the University of Pittsburgh in 2019. His dissertation was entitled, *Communities of Resistance: How Ordinary People Developed Creative Responses to Marginalization in Lyon and Pittsburgh, 1980-2010*.

Over the last several years he has written articles and given presentations for the Pennsylvania Historical Association that focus on the Manchester Neighborhood and how community leaders forged a consistent vision during urban renewal. For the 2021 Annual Meeting, Dan will provide us with a peak into his research and findings about this vibrant North Side neighborhood.