



HISTORICAL HAPPENINGS

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The U.S. Marine Hospital

By Jim Wudarczyk and Tom Powers



Photo by Tom Powers

The Marine Hospital Service was created during President John Adams' administration to provide for disabled seamen. This led to the establishment of several hospitals at sea and river ports throughout the United States. Pittsburgh is so far inland that many people forget that the Ohio/Mississippi River system gives it access to the sea. So, since its earliest days, Pittsburgh has always been a port town.

The history of the United States Marine Hospital in Lawrenceville can be traced to October 15, 1902, when a commission was appointed to examine various sites offered for a merchant marine hospital. This commission finally recommended the transfer to the Treasury Department of about 6.5 acres of the old Arsenal Reservation at 40th Street and Penn Avenue as a site for the hospital. An act of Congress transferred the property in March of 1903; however, it was not until May 7, 1904, that Secretary of War William H. Taft actually consummated the transfer of the property.

Interest in such maritime medical facilities in



Today, this is Building No. 1 of the Clack Health Center, but originally it was the United States Marine Hospital, which opened its doors on October 22, 1910, on the grounds of the former Allegheny Arsenal.

Pittsburgh went back to March 3, 1837, when a board of Army medical officers was designated by the Secretary of War to select and recommend locations for marine hospitals. The earliest recommendation for the site was to be Wheeling, West Virginia, but for some reason Pittsburgh was chosen instead. Land was purchased in 1842 along the Ohio River below Allegheny City. Although building of the facility began in 1845, a problem with the appropriation of funds interrupted work until 1849. Completion of the project took place in 1851.

In 1875, this property was sold. The building had become dilapidated and industrial development, with its noise and air pollution in the near proximity of the hospital, made the facility unfit for medical purposes.

The Marine Hospital faced a series of problems.

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United States Marine Hospital (1910-1949)

Arsenal Health Center (1950-1959, City of Pittsburgh; 1959-1979, Allegheny County)

Frank B. Clack Health Center (1979 to present)

Building No. 1 — The United States Marine Hospital building was opened October 22, 1910. It originally served as a hospital for afflicted members of U.S. Merchant Marine and U.S. Coast Guard. Today, building No. 1 contains Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) offices for food safety, a clinic for testing tuberculosis, a pharmacy, and storage.

Building No. 2 — Built circa 1840, this former gunpowder magazine for the Allegheny Arsenal serves as the carpenter's shop for the Clack Health Center. (See box on page 3.) It may be Allegheny County's oldest municipal building.

Building No. 3 — This was the former residence for the Marine Hospital's officer in charge. It was built in 1933 as part of a four-building expansion of the Marine Hospital. Today, it serves as the offices of the 3 Rivers Wet Weather program, a nonprofit environmental organization created in 1998 to support 82 Allegheny County municipalities and the City of Pittsburgh in addressing the region's wet weather overflow problem.

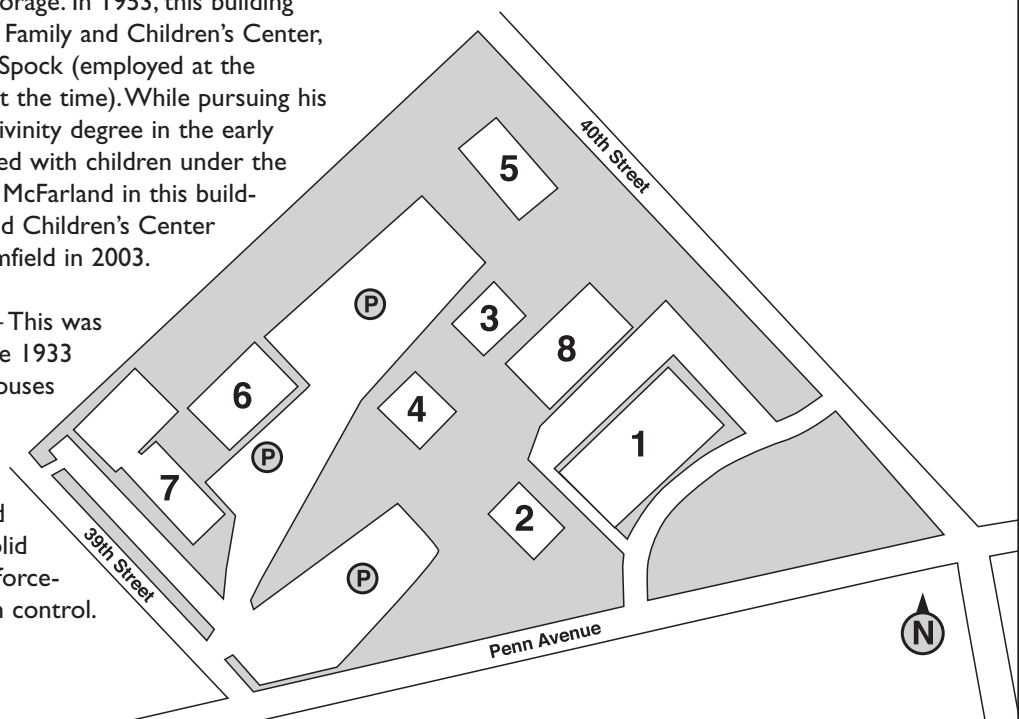
Building No. 4 — Part of the 1933 expansion, this was originally the junior officer's quarters. Today, the building is used for storage. In 1953, this building was home to the Arsenal Family and Children's Center, founded by Dr. Benjamin Spock (employed at the University of Pittsburgh at the time). While pursuing his studies for a Master of Divinity degree in the early 1960s, Fred Rogers worked with children under the direction of Dr. Margaret McFarland in this building. The Arsenal Family and Children's Center moved to offices in Bloomfield in 2003.

Building No. 5 — This was the nurse's quarters in the 1933 expansion. Currently, it houses offices for Allegheny County's plumbing inspection and certification, water inspection and certification, recycling, solid waste inspections and enforcement, and water pollution control.

Building No. 6 — Originally a gunpowder magazine for the Allegheny Arsenal, this solid brick structure was built in 1858. Its thick, barrel-vaulted ceiling is testament to its original usage. Today, it contains ACHD offices and storage.

Building No. 7 — The fourth structure from the 1933 expansion of the Marine Hospital was built to house hospital attendants (males). An additional wing was added in the early 1970s. The Allegheny County Health Department Air Quality Program is currently in this building. The Air Quality Program is responsible for protecting the public's health by regulating air pollutants within Allegheny County, enforcing federal pollution standards, and permitting industrial sources of air pollution.

Building No. 8 — The newest building in the Clack Health Center is the Public Health Laboratory, which opened in 2009. This modern facility provides public health testing services for the residents of Allegheny and surrounding counties. The laboratory is certified in all areas of testing and provides support to the Health Department's Immunization Program, Sexually Transmitted Disease Program, Environmental Health and the Food and Water Protection programs.



Marine Hospital

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Although the sale price of the former facility was \$57,544.57, and a new site was purchased for \$30,000, the Comptroller of the Treasury ruled that the sale revenues could not be used for construction purposes. Congress was petitioned for the necessary funds, but only \$7,000 was appropriated in 1881; hence, the building was never constructed. Due to various problems with the original marine hospital, Mercy Hospital, located where it is today in Pittsburgh's Uptown neighborhood, was chosen in 1875 to care for most service patients. Other patients were cared for under contract with the Pittsburgh Infirmary, while an outpatient office was rented at Sixth and Smithfield Streets. In 1884, the contract care of service patients at Mercy Hospital was 94 cents a day.

In 1891, a fire destroyed the Germania Bank building at Wood and Diamond Streets, where outpatient services were at the time. Those outpatient offices were moved to the old Federal Building on Smithfield Street.

In 1902, the Marine Hospital Service was renamed the "Public Health and Marine-Hospital Service." This reflected a change in the scope of duties to include domestic and foreign quarantine and other national public health functions. By 1912, the service name was simplified to just "Public Health Service."

When the Arsenal lands along Penn Avenue were established for the purposes of a Marine Hospital, Congress appropriated \$125,000. Secretary of the Treasury Leslie M. Shaw delayed the building of the hospital, however, on the argument that a Marine Hospital was not needed in Pittsburgh. By August 20, 1908, the differences were resolved and bids were opened. A contract for the building was awarded at \$91,188. The cornerstone was laid on December 16, 1908.

The new hospital was opened on October 22, 1910. Four patients were transferred from Mercy Hospital. Beginning on August 1, 1915, the Marine Hospital served as a research laboratory for the investigation of occupational diseases. During this period, the patients were moved to Saint Francis Hospital. The Marine Hospital reopened for treating service personnel on November 1, 1916. In 1933, an expansion of the hospital took place. Four new buildings were added, the nurse's quarters, attendant's quarters, a junior officer's building and a residence for the officer in charge.

On September 9, 1949, the 73-bed institution closed its doors. The Public Health Service (PHS) was now under the umbrella of the Federal Security Administration and economics were the reason given for the closure. All merchant seamen, members of the Coast Guard, and others whose medical care for which the PHS was responsible were then to be sent to non-Federal hospitals for emergency treatment. Other patients seeking treatment for chronic illnesses were referred to other marine hospitals.

After the closure, the Marine Hospital facilities were

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Blast Walls



The Clack Health Center's Building No. 2 is an unassuming structure on the outside. However the inside of what just might be Allegheny County's oldest municipal structure is a different story. This building first appears on area maps as early as 1852, but maybe it's a bit older than that. It was probably built circa 1840, just after the U.S. government purchased the 6.5 acres upon which Building No. 2 sits from Mr. Alba Fisk (namesake of Fisk Street) in 1831.

Its original purpose was to store gunpowder for the Allegheny Arsenal. Similar to other gunpowder magazine buildings of the period, it has thick brick walls and a vaulted brick ceiling. Building No. 6 also served the Arsenal by storing gunpowder. It was built a little later in 1858. Building No. 6 also contains thick, brick walls and a vaulted ceiling. The ceilings were no doubt constructed this way to suppress the roof from blowing off and flinging shrapnel all over the grounds. As shown below, Building No. 2 serves today as a maintenance shop area. And it's a very well-protected shop for the maintenance workers.



Photos by Tom Powers

Doo Dah Days 2015

Our tenth annual Doo Dah Days, aka Stephen Foster Music and Heritage Festival, enjoyed a beautiful day this past July 11th. All those who attended the festival were treated to a diverse and talented collection of four musical acts who did the memory of Stephen Foster proud.

This was the first year we were missing the hosting services of Dan Simkins, who retired as LHS president in 2014. However, Dan was still present this year, running the always-popular photo booth.

The Allegheny Cemetery staff were gracious and helpful as always, and our vendors helped make the event worth staying around for. In addition to the Deli on Butler (shown below), the Pittsburgh Taco Truck, Griffon Tea, and Hawaiian Avalanche Ice all provided invaluable service.

We would also like to thank Tim Neff, who managed the docents on Molly's Trolleys, and all the exhibitors who brought history to life with their displays.



You can't have a good festival unless there's something good to eat. The folks at the Deli on Butler (4034 Butler Street) have been providing for us for years.



This was the first year for the new Doo Dah Days host and LHS president Tom Powers, who took over from the man who hosted the first nine festivals, Dan Simkins.



Drummer Jim Smith proudly presents Prof. Guibert and the 1913 Blue & Gray Reunion Band. This reenactor brass band really set the tone for a bright summer day in the park. It's the kind of band Stephen Foster arranged music for.



AppalAsia blended Appalachian string music with Chinese music for a unique musical experience. From left to right are Jason Rafalak, bass; Jeff Berman, mountain dulcimer; Mimi Jong, erhu; and Sue Powers on the banjo.



Doo Dah Days stalwarts (they've done all of them) Home Front combine great costumes and virtuosity like no one else. From left to right are Greg Adams, Chuck Krepley, Tom Crytzer, and Nancy Conway.



New to the festival are the Bay Chamber Players, led by violinist Gil Bigenho (center). This nine-piece orchestra closed out the festival with a full, expressive sound that you would expect to hear in a 19th century ballroom.



Lavinia, of Prof. Styles Miracle Elixir Side Show, gets everyone's attention with a fire-eating demonstration.

Marine Hospital

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offered to the City of Pittsburgh, which repurposed the buildings as the "Arsenal Health Center." In the summer of 1951, working in conjunction with the University of Pittsburgh's Western Psychiatric Institute, a "Well Baby Clinic" was proposed for the Arsenal Health Center (AHC). This action brought to Pittsburgh Dr. Benjamin Spock to head the program.

Dr. Spock, at the time renowned for his 1946 publication of "Baby and Child Care," was lured away from the Mayo Clinic to take on this project. During his tenure at what became the Arsenal Nursery School and later the Arsenal Family and Children's Center, Dr. Spock brought in as a consultant Erik H. Erikson, a developmental psychologist famous for coining the phrase "identity crisis."

By 1955, Benjamin Spock had moved on to Case Western Reserve University, but soon after, another well-regarded children's celebrity worked at the Arsenal Health Center: Fred Rogers.

In 1954, Rogers began working at WQED in Pittsburgh as a writer/performer on "The Children's Corner" program. While at WQED, Rogers was attending the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, pursuing a Master of Divinity degree. Rogers requested permission to work with children in fulfillment of his required counseling class. His advisor made the stipulation that he work with Dr. Margaret McFarland, then director of the Arsenal Family and Children's Center, located in the AHC's Building No. 4.

After his ordination as a Presbyterian minister in 1963, Fred Rogers elected to continue working in television. However, as a result of those studies and his frequent meetings with Dr. McFarland, the two continued a professional relationship that spanned three decades.

The AHC was renamed the Frank B. Clack Health Center in 1979 to honor its former director who resigned earlier that year because of ill health. Clack, a veterinarian, spent 22 years at the AHC, the last nine as its director. Frank Clack passed away the following year from heart and kidney conditions at age 54.

The Arsenal Family and Children's Center moved out of Building No. 4 in 2003 and reopened in its new home at 336 South Aiken Avenue in Pittsburgh. The school continues to operate today as a private nonprofit institution governed by a board of trustees.

The old Marine Hospital, now known as the Clack Health Center, is today a part of the Allegheny County Health Department and it's charged with monitoring the health status and identifying public health problems within the county. Its newest structure, Building No. 8, a modern testing laboratory that opened in 2009, shows a commitment by the county to adapting the former Marine Hospital to the needs of the 21st century. ❖

Sources

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"Marine Hospital Closes Doors After September 9," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, September 7, 1949, p. 5.

"County Honors Ex-Director by Renaming Health Offices," *Pittsburgh Press*, June 15, 1979, p. A-7.

"Ex-County Health Chief Dies," *Pittsburgh Press*, March 13, 1980, p. C-5.

Lawrence Jacob Friedman, *Identity's Architect: A Biography of Erik H. Erikson*, Boston: Harvard University Press, 1999.



At right is Building No. 6, a former gunpowder magazine, now used as office space. Behind it is Building No. 7, one of four buildings added to the Marine Hospital in 1933. It now houses the county's Air Quality Program.

2015 Lecture Series

Lectures take place on the third Wednesday of the month in Carnegie Library at 279 Fisk Street in Lawrenceville. Starting time is 6:30 p.m. For more information, contact us at our **NEW** e-mail address: **Foster15201@gmail.com**.

October 21, 2015

The Donora Smog Disaster

During the week before Halloween in 1948, a severe temperature inversion had settled over the river valley at Donora, PA. Visibility was as limited as anyone could remember, plus many people were having difficulty breathing. The effluent from the mill that was typically carried away by prevailing wind currents reached the ceiling of the inversion and fell back to earth in the stagnant atmosphere. Thousands were ill, hundreds needed medical attention, and soon twenty-seven were dead. Speaker Brian Charlton is the curator and archivist of the Donora Smog Museum and Historical Society.

November 18, 2015

Living History: American Frontier Life

Charles McCormick will appear as a Scots-Irish frontiersman from Western Pennsylvania. Through stories and artifacts, he will recount the times and trials of life during the French and Indian War era up until the War of 1812. Frontier life was understandably hard, and it's good to reflect from the comfort of 21st century life just how much we owe to those who came before.

January 20, 2016

Doo Dah Days Revisited

After ten years of presenting our signature Stephen Foster celebration, Doo Dah Days, the Lawrenceville Historical Society will give a retrospective of the event. We'll screen our 2010 video, produced and directed by John Kirch, in anticipation of our next decade of performances. We'll also display photos and recount stories of past festivals as well as explain the origins of the Doo Dah Days festival.

LHS News

The Tenth Annual Doo Dah Days

Thanks to everyone who helped make our tenth annual Doo Dah Days a success this past July 11th. The Allegheny Cemetery staff, the docents, the exhibitors, the performers, the vendors, and the LHS members who volunteered their time all contributed to another successful festival. Next year, we hope to collaborate with the City of Pittsburgh in the 200th anniversary of the incorporation of the city on July 9, 2016.

Bike Pittsburgh's 11th Annual BikeFest Tours "Scandalous" Pittsburghers in Allegheny Cemetery

On Sunday, August 23rd, a pleaton of cyclists toured Allegheny Cemetery led by LHS members Dan Simkins and Brian Mendelssohn. The theme of this bike tour led the participants to the final resting places of Pittsburghers with skeletons in their closets. Among the graves visited were those of Christopher Magee (political boss), David Hostetter (patent medicine manufacturer), Gus Greenlee (numbers kingpin), as well as three of the most controversial mayors in Pittsburgh history: Joseph Barker, Charles Kline, and William McNair. In addition to Dan and Brian, our docents were Tom Powers, and Jim and Jude Wudarczyk.

LHS Election for Board Members and Committee Chairs on October 21

At the September 16th lecture, ballots were handed out for LHS members to vote for LHS board and committee chair candidates for the 2015-16 term. Ballots are also included in this newsletter mailing. Once filled in, you can mail the ballots to the Arsenal Station post office box, or bring them to the October 21st meeting, where they will be gathered and tabulated. Note that there are several committee chairs open and write-in candidates are encouraged. There will be blank ballots available for members at the October 21st lecture.

Thanks to Our Business Members

Allegheny Cemetery

4734 Butler Street
Pittsburgh PA 15201-2999
Phone: 412-682-1624
www.alleghenycemetery.com

D'Alessandro Funeral Home

4522 Butler Street
Pittsburgh PA 15201
Phone: 412-682-6500
www.dalessandrolt.com

Paddy Cake Bakery

4763 Liberty Avenue
Pittsburgh PA 15224
Phone: 412-621-4477
www.paddycakebakery.org

Pittsburgh Banjo Club

P.O. Box 101025
Pittsburgh PA 15237
Phone: 412-364-4739
thepittsburghbanjoclub.com





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