DEUTSCHTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT
WALKING TOUR

By Nicholas Kyriazi

This self-guided walking tour of Deutschtown, a City, State, and National Historic District, will highlight some of the most significant buildings and historical information to better link us with our past and to increase our appreciation for our architectural heritage.

Deutschtown (or East Allegheny) was an eastern expansion of the City of Allegheny, the area within the Commons, now Allegheny Center. The central business district of Allegheny contained the Market House, Carnegie Library, the Post Office, City Hall, the Boggs and Buhl department store, and many other commercial buildings as well as private homes. The Carnegie Library/Music Hall was the prototype for the Oakland facility. Until the 1850s, the area east of Allegheny City proper was largely farm land. Deutschtown, as we now know it, was developed from 1850 to 1920 as Allegheny City spread beyond the Commons and the land was subdivided into residential lots for the ever-growing, mostly German, and then Croatian, population. East Ohio Street became a bustling business district with movie houses, banks, and clothing and food stores. Housing was built for a wide range of incomes, some large (9-14 rooms), some medium (6-8 rooms) and some small (4-5 rooms).

In 1907, the City of Allegheny was forcibly annexed by the City of Pittsburgh. Also around this time, the streetcar lines were built, resulting in a significant migration of the middle and upper classes to the new communities of Avalon, Ben Avon, and Sewickley, to the North, and to Shadyside, East Liberty, and Highland Park to the East. The streetcar suburbs were further from the industrial air pollution of Pittsburgh and Allegheny. This began a slow decline in the wealth and resources of Allegheny City, including Deutschtown. By the 1960s, with most of the housing over a hundred years old, Allegheny City was barely hanging on. Some people maintained their old family houses, but most fled the City to the suburbs (with roads, utilities, and mortgages subsidized by the government) and either divided up their houses as low-rent apartments or sold them to lower-income people who could not afford to renovate or even maintain them. In the early 1960s, the center of Allegheny was demolished and replaced by Allegheny Center except for the Post Office, Buhl Planetarium, and the Carnegie Library/Music Hall. The demolition of the Market house is especially lamented by those who knew it. As unfortunate as this was, at least Allegheny Center contained housing, retail stores, offices, and entertainment, all the things required for a city, with parking hidden underneath. It remains a pedestrian oasis.

Begin at the Hampton Battery, a Civil War Memorial in the East Commons, near the intersection of Cedar Avenue and Lockhart Street. This statue was one of the first memorials erected in the Commons, in 1871. It was built to honor a Civil War artillery unit. It was restored in 2004 by the Allegheny City Society.
The Commons was originally used as pasture for livestock but in the 1840s and 50s, it became the site of squatters’ dwellings. Beginning in 1867, however, the City created a formal park which was completed in 1876. The framework remains with us today. There are plans in place to restore the Commons to its original design and a pilot project has begun in the section from the Hampton Battery to Cedar Avenue with new path paving, trees, and path lights.

Walk north along the center walk and then NE to the corner of Cedar Avenue and East Ohio Street. In the 700 block of Cedar Avenue can be seen the contrast of houses built before and after the Commons went from pasture land to a formal park. The short, simple houses were built prior to the conversion; the taller, more elaborate houses were built after. The houses at 726-8 Cedar were built in the 1840s. 726 was always residential but 728 housed a grocery store and a funeral home at various times in its existence. At the time of this writing, the East Allegheny Community Council is in the process of obtaining the double-house from Duquesne Light Company which purchased them in order to obtain the garage in the rear for use as a coolant-crossover facility for a long power line connecting Neville Island with a substation in Lawrenceville. The garage was demolished and the new facility was built to resemble a Victorian-era carriage house. It was designed by Bob Baumbach, a neighborhood architect.

Now walk North along Cedar Avenue toward Allegheny General Hospital and, in the 800 and 900 blocks, you will see the largest and most architecturally significant houses in the Deutschtown Historic District. The following photo is half of a stereograph of the Grand Army Review, a parade in the 800 block of Cedar Avenue, 11 September 1894.
Most are 3-storey brick structures in the Queen Anne style of the 1890s, many with porches or bays to take advantage of the view of the Allegheny Commons. The house at 810 Cedar, the left half of a double house, was vacant for about a decade before being bought and restored by the East Allegheny Community Council (EACC) in 2002. It and its rear alley house are heated by a geo-thermal heat pump with pipes buried under the parking lot of the restaurant at the corner of James and Foreland Streets.

The house at 910 Cedar was built in 1886 for Anthony and Mary Kennedy on land leased from Mary Schenley who owned all the land north of Avery Street to Fineview. Mr. Kennedy was an oil broker at the time the house was built. The second owners, Charles and Sophia Hanna, who bought the house in 1901, were the grandparents of Howard W. Hanna Jr., who founded Howard Hanna Real Estate Services in 1955. Charles Hanna operated a shoe store at 700 East Ohio Street between 1895 and 1920. The house is not purely any one style. Its facade has design elements of Second Empire,
Queen Anne, and Richardsonian Romanesque. Some have noticed similarity to the Wheeler’s Paint Store at 500 East Ohio Street.

At the north end of Cedar Avenue is Allegheny General Hospital which opened originally in two adjacent brick houses on Stockton Avenue in 1886. The white brick and terra cotta landmark building fronting on East North Avenue was opened in 1936 and is now used as offices. The new, silver building, behind the older tower, contains 777 beds. The hospital employs 4,500.

Below is an old post card showing the fountain in East Commons right across the street from Allegheny General Hospital, at the corner of Cedar Avenue and North Avenue.

![East Park Fountain, corner Cedar Avenue and North Avenue, from a post card printed by I. Robbins & Son, Pittsburgh, PA, circa 1919](image)

At East North Avenue, turn right, heading east, away from the Commons. The neighborhood has always included a variety of land uses, mostly residential, but also businesses such as food stores. In the 1870s, a lumber yard occupied the land bounded by Cedar Avenue, Tripoli Street, Moravian Way and North Avenue. In the 1890s, the present houses were built.

The houses on East North Avenue at 415, on your right, and at 508, 510, 512, and 518, on your left, were all restored by EACC beginning in 2001. The triplet at 508-12 were built in 1874 by Henry Swindell, a partner in the firm W&H Swindell which built furnaces for iron and steel mills, and glass factories, in Pittsburgh and other cities. The company was located on Esplanade Street which occupied part of the present site of Allegheny General Hospital. Henry Swindell also lived on Esplanade Street and rented the three houses on North Avenue to tenants. From 1881-89, the house at 512 was occupied by James Brown who was the Allegheny City Controller. He became the
Pittsburgh Deputy Controller when Pittsburgh annexed Allegheny in 1907. At some point, Henry’s son, Harry J. Swindell, and his wife Mary, moved into 510 East North Avenue, remaining in the family until Mary died in 1970.

The house at 520 was built in 1859 by Henry and Margaret Charles in the early Italianate style with some lingering Greek Revival influences. Henry Charles was a self-employed carpenter with a shop near the center of Allegheny City. On 16 July 1849, he dropped a cigar in his shop, starting a fire. Allegheny City firemen were then on strike and refused to extinguish the blaze which spread to adjoining blocks and destroyed the recently constructed First Presbyterian Church. The fire caused $75,000 in damage before it was extinguished by Allegheny City residents. The controversy caused by the fire resulted in sweeping changes within the fire department.

The large, yellow-brick building in the 500 block, on the south side of the street, was built in 1898 as the Third Ward Public School and ended its life as a school as Latimer Middle School. It is now The School House, market-rate apartments, renovated in 1985.

Continue walking east on North Avenue to Middle Street. On the north side of North Avenue are the brick Gothic Revival St. Matthew Lutheran Church of 1906 on the NE corner of Middle at North Avenue, and the 1892 Romanesque St. Mark’s Church, on the NW corner. Middle St., north of North Avenue, is paved in Belgian block, a type of hard stone used as ballast on ships returning from Europe after carrying food to the troops during WW1. The material was later quarried in Ligonier.

At Middle Street, turn right, heading south. The house at 1008 Middle (on the left in the picture below) was restored by EACC beginning in 2001 and the new houses at 1000, 1002, and 1004 were built by EACC at the same time.
Continue walking south on Middle Street after crossing Tripoli Street. The three new houses at 912-916 Middle Street (the three houses on the left in the picture below) were built in 1996 by EACC. They replaced two double houses containing mill workers' flats which were deemed structurally unsound and demolished. 910 Middle was restored by EACC at the same time.
The building at the North-East corner of Middle and Suismon Streets was originally a horse-shoeing shop for John Schmittdiel. It was restored by a local resident and restoration architect, Bob Baumbach.
**Turn right at Suismon Street.** At Suismon Street are found Max's Allegheny Tavern (1889), built as the Farmer's and Drover's Hotel; a Catholic church, Our Lady, Queen of Peace (around 1910); and on the SE corner, a building originally a cigar factory, now converted to medical offices.

**Walk west on Suismon Street.** On the south side of the street remains a nearly intact block of late-Victorian houses. At 525 Suismon is a new house behind an old façade, a project of the EACC begun in 2001.

**Turn right on James Street, heading north.** On the left at 907 James Street is a house restored for the EACC by the Pittsburgh Housing Development Corporation (PHDC), a branch of the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh, in 2005. At 921-925 James Street are three new houses in a late-Victorian style, built by a private developer (October Development), designed by architect Bob Baumbach.

**Turn left on Tripoli Street, heading west.** The houses at 420, 422, and 424 Tripoli Street were restored by the EACC in 2001. The house at 414 Tripoli was restored for the EACC by PHDC in 2005. The house at 413 Tripoli was restored by October Development in 2009.

**Turn left on Cedar Avenue, heading south.**

**Turn left on Suismon Street, heading east.** The house at 414 Suismon, at the corner of Moravian way, was built new in 2001 by the EACC, on the foundation of an old...
house that was structurally unsound. The house at 416 Suismon was restored for the EACC by PHDC in 2005.

**Turn right at James Street and proceed south, towards downtown.** At Foreland Street is a building that was originally the German Savings Bank of 1885. Many residents of the Northside remember this building as the site of Wiegand’s Seafood Restaurant with the "underwater" Aquamarine Room in the basement. On the SW corner is a double-house apartment building (circa 1910) restored in 1991 as four, market-rate apartments. Before the restoration, the buildings were rooming houses, one of which had suffered a fire. Notice the new entrance canopies and art glass in the front doors.

The three east-west streets north of East Ohio - Foreland, Suismon and Tripoli - were given those names at the time the City of Allegheny was annexed to Pittsburgh in 1907. They were originally numbered First, Second, and Third which conflicted with Pittsburgh street names; however, the new names kept the first letter of their original names.

**Proceed on James Street to East Ohio Street.** This is the commercial core of East Allegheny. It thrived as a retail center because of its key position on the principal road connecting the center of Allegheny City with the industrial towns north along the Allegheny river. Most of the buildings today date from the boom period of the 1890s. Note the restored or renovated facades at 403 (The Park House), 404, 408/410, 415 (the Hollander building), 421, 518-528, 521 and 523, 529 and 531, 607 and 619 as you proceed east on East Ohio Street. Some of them have been restored more accurately than others. The buildings at 517 and 519 are new, built by Bruce Klein of Bernie’s Photo Center. Photo Antiquities at 531 is the largest photography museum in the country and one of the largest in the world.

The building at 528 was erected in 1903 by David Lytle Clark, inventor of the Clark Bar. His father operated a grocery store on this site around 1875. In the mid-1880s, David Clark began his own candy manufacturing business here, employing one candy-maker with Clark selling the product store-to-store. By 1890, the business had outgrown this location and he relocated it to McKeesport where his family had a dairy. In 1897, however, his mother and a sister returned to East Ohio Street as dress and gown makers until 1908. During that period, the present building was constructed at a cost of $12,000.

**At the end of the 600 block of East Ohio Street, turn south on Nash Street and then west on Avery Street.** East of this corner was Avery College, the first African-American institution of higher education in the United States, built by Charles Avery (born in 1784 in Westchester County, NY, and died in 1858 in Allegheny, PA). It was founded in 1849 as the Allegheny Institute and Mission Church to provide a classical education for negro youths including study in Latin, Greek, mathematics and the sciences. In 1858, the institution became Avery College. Charles Avery was a wealthy businessman dealing in textiles, pharmaceuticals and copper mining and has a large memorial statue marking his grave in the Allegheny Cemetery in Lawrenceville. He lived in a large estate bounded by Avery Street, Nash Street, the railroad, and Madison Avenue.
On this street lived many merchants who owned businesses on East Ohio Street. Most of the houses were built in the 1860s and 1870s in the Italianate style, with decorative window hoods and large box gutters with decorative brackets underneath. On the NW corner is a house that, at one time, included Gum’s Meat Market, with the owner living above the store.
At 612 and 614 Avery are two new houses built in 1996 by the EACC in the late victorian style on a vacant lot that once contained housing. Across the street, 617 and 619 were built in 1878 for Matthias Gaus and Peter Loeffler, business partners of the firm Gaus and Loeffler which manufactured and sold furniture in the building at 618 East Ohio Street.

The house at 615 was built in 1862 by Conrad and Pauline Schaefer. Conrad Schaefer, born in Wurtemburg, Germany, in 1828, was a blacksmith, saddlesmith, and shoemaker. The couple had four children living with them in this five-room house.

At 529, built in 1891, lived Charles Ober, co-owner of the F.L. Ober and Brother Brewery on Vinial St. in East Deutschtown. Next door to that brewery was the Eberhardt and Ober brewery, owned by John Ober, another brother, and Charles Eberhardt. That building now houses the Brewery Innovation Center, where Penn Pilsner is made today. 533 and 535 Avery Street, built in 1927, are on the site of Mr. Ober's stables.

John Helm commissioned contractor John Heck to build the house at 530 Avery in 1898. He was a partner in the firm Daum and Helm, a hardware store in the 500 block of East Ohio Street.

517 Avery was built in 1873 by Christian Zies who owned a shoe store at 521 and 523 East Ohio Street, now Bernie's Photo Center, and was on the Board of Directors of Workingman's Savings Bank and Trust Co., at the corner of East Ohio St. and Madison Avenue. The house was later rented to David Hollander who built the Hollander Building at 415 East Ohio Street in 1888 for his men's clothing store, now housing the
offices of the East Allegheny Community Council. This house was restored between 1979-1991 by the author, while living in it.

![517 Avery Street, photo by N. Kyriazi](image)

The new houses at 520-526 Avery were built in 1993 by EACC on the site of four, large, apartment buildings (12 rooms each) that burned in 1990. The houses at 508 and 510 Avery were restored in 1989 by the North Side Civic Development Corporation at the request of EACC.

**Turn left at the end of Avery on Cedar Avenue.** The new houses on the south side of Avery, on Cedar and continuing on Lockhart Street comprise Deutschtown Square. They were built in 1984 as single-family, owner-occupied houses by the Gessner/Koloskee partnership as a project of the EACC. Originally on this site were seven, Federal-style houses on Cedar, all owned by George A. Kelly, a pharmaceutical manufacturer, and, behind them, the Fourth Ward Public School of the City of Allegheny, next to the vacant St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church.
**Turn left on Lockhart Street.** The large, stone house at the SE corner of Cedar and Lockhart, now Sperling’s Funeral Home, is in the Richardsonian Romanesque style, characterized by its heavy stone elements and windows with transoms above, separated by thick, stone lintels. It was the home of the Andrew L. Robinson family. Mr. Robinson died before his family, including his wife, their children, spouses and grandchildren, occupied the house in 1895. Andrew Robinson was a first cousin, once-removed, of General William Robinson, the first mayor of the City of Allegheny. Andrew Robinson’s widow, Susan Pentland Robinson, as a young girl was the next-door neighbor of Stephen Foster and he dedicated his first published song, "Open Thy Lattice, Love", to her in 1844. Past this house, at 415-423 Lockhart, is a row of five houses that possess a wealth of architectural detail, two of which have been restored as single-family houses.

At 500 Lockhart is a vacant church that was originally St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church, built in the Gothic revival style. (The current owner intended to renovate the church and school building behind it as market-rate apartments but has now decided that such a conversion would not be economically feasible.) It is available for purchase. The tower once had a steeple nearly as tall as the tower which made a greater impression than it presently does. The steeple combined with the twin onion domes, now gone, of St. Mary's Church at the far end of Lockhart must have given the street a dramatic appearance.
At 506 Lockhart is a house built in 1889 for Andrew Lyle, Jr. and his wife, Ada. Mr. Lyle was a salesman at the time for the firm Lyle and McCance which sold carriage hardware at 622 Liberty Avenue, downtown Pittsburgh. His uncle, George Lyle, who lived at 512 Lockhart, was a partner in the firm. Andrew’s parents, Andrew Lyle, Sr. and his wife Bettie, both Irish immigrants, lived at 508 Lockhart. Andrew, Sr., was a shipping clerk at Penn Cotton Mills on River Avenue, one of the largest manufacturers in Allegheny City.

The apartment building at 526 Lockhart was built in 1891 for Joseph Lautner on the site of an older house in which Mr. Lautner lived with his wife and four children. When they moved to Liverpool Street in Manchester in 1889, they had the house demolished and the present three-unit apartment building erected, along with the double house behind it at 537-9 Avery Street. Mr. Lautner owned and operated a hardware store in the 700 block of East Ohio Street, demolished for the Parkway North. The apartment building was restored between 2005 and 2008 by the author.

George and Louisa Klingelhofer had the house at 603 Lockhart built in 1859. George, a tinner, was born in Rosenthal, Hesse Damstadt, Germany and Louisa was born in Saxony, Germany.

The house at 607 Lockhart was built by the congregation of St. Mary’s Church, further down Lockhart, in 1888 and used until 1938 as a “Frater house” for the Marianist Brothers who taught at St. Mary’s school (see photo below) which stood across Nash Street to the east of the church building. The Frater house was restored in 1990 by Ed and Mary Ann Graf who restored St. Mary’s Church and its priory, further down the street, as the Grand Hall and the Priory, a City Inn. They made the Frater house their residence and built the new garage, at 605 Lockhart, as an annex.

The houses at 609 and 611 were built in 1851. Ed and Mary Ann Graf restored 609 and EACC restored 611. The Graf’s also restored the houses at 608 and 610. EACC restored the houses at 606 and 612. The house at 608 Lockhart was built in 1858 by Frantz and
Anna Moeckel, immigrants from Saxony, Germany. The couple had nine children, three of whom - Albert, Gustave, and Oliver - formed Moeckel Brothers in 1890 which sold bicycles on East Ohio Street at Cedar Avenue.

At the end of Lockhart, on the south side, is St. Mary’s German Catholic Church, built in 1854, and has been restored as a reception hall for medium-size (350-550) gatherings. Its new name is Pittsburgh’s Grand Hall at the Priory. It was erected at a time of strong anti-Catholic feelings and was built with only the small, high, lunette windows on the front and sides and a rooftop skylight. The front entry vestibule was added in 1900 and the present, stained-glass windows on the sides were added in 1911.

Before the Parkway North was built, Avery, Lockhart and Pressley Streets continued east to Chestnut Street at the Heinz plant. Fifteen hundred fine houses, churches and businesses were demolished for the benefit of North Hills commuters.

**Turn right on Nash Street and right again on Pressley Street.** After you pass the back of St. Mary’s Church on the north side of the street, you come to the Priory of St. Mary’s Church, built in 1888 to house the parish priests, brothers and visiting Benedictine monks. In 1986, it became The Priory, A City Inn, a 24-room, European-style hotel. Feel free to inspect the public spaces of the Priory: the sitting room and library with its safe, the dining room, and the kitchen (from the 1930s), and the courtyard. If you ask at the front desk, you may be able to see a room or two if they are not occupied. Next door is a new addition to the Priory built in 2010 on the site of an apartment building which burned in 2009. The addition was designed in the Italianate style by local architect Bob Baumbach.

On the south side of Pressley now stands the Pressley Highrise for the elderly. The south side of Pressley has historically been the site of institutions such as the ‘Home For
the Friendless’, ‘Home for the Aged Poor’, ‘Little Sisters of the Poor’ and the stables and storage facility for Boggs and Buhl department store.

Further east of these facilities were very large houses again attesting to the diverse mix of uses in the area. The small houses in the 500 block of Pressley all appear to have been built before the Civil War as their architecture is in the simple Greek Revival style of that period. Where Lockhart Tire Co. is now was a cracker factory. The houses at 416, 418, and 420 Pressley were purchased by EACC which restored the exteriors and then sold them to people who restored the interiors on their own.

The house at 416 is the oldest documented house in Deutschtown. It was built in 1836 as a modest, two-storey house in the Greek Revival style. The first owner was Robert Cooper, a bookbinder, born in Pennsylvania in 1813. In 1844, Robert Cooper sold it to John Williams, also a bookbinder, who owned the house until 1850. Mr. Williams had the house enlarged to three and a half storeys and nine rooms, in the Italianate style. The interior has woodwork, mantles, and doors of both styles. He sold it in 1850 to Edmund Burke and Thomas Barnes, business partners in the firm Burke and Barnes as a home for Mr. Burke and his family. Messrs. Burke and Barnes were safe manufacturers, located in Pittsburgh on Second Avenue. Edmund Burke lived at 416 Pressley Street with his wife and eleven children until 1872 when he moved to West Wheatfield Township in Indiana County. Edmund Burke remained a business partner in the firm Burke and Barnes until he died in 1873, after which the company was renamed Barnes Safe and Lock Company. In the sitting room of the Priory can be found a safe made by this company.

The house at 418 Pressley was built in 1892 by John and Jennie Degelman, replacing a smaller clapboard house which burned in 1891 that may have been a twin of the house at
416. John Degelman owned a store in Pittsburgh that sold gloves, hosiery, underwear, and other such items.

The house at 420 Pressley was built in 1887 for Frederick Bussman, a prominent painter, vocalist, and vocal instructor in Pittsburgh during the last third of the 19th century. He lived in the house with his mother, Sophia, and his sister and her husband, Bertha and Frank Bauer.

**Turn right at the end of Pressley Street onto Cedar Avenue.** The Elks building at the corner of Pressley and Cedar was originally built with a different facade. In fact, a different organization - Post 88 of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), a Civil War veterans group - built the structure. The GAR was a very powerful political influence after the Civil War until the early decades of the 20th century. The Elks, however, has occupied the building for most of its life and also created and maintained a fountain, sculpture, and flower beds in the East Commons, directly across the street.
At 404 Cedar is a condominium project of the EACC renovated by the Gessner/Koloskee Partnership in 1986. It had become a rooming house before a fatal fire occurred there in 1985. The house was originally the home of the grandparents of George S. Kaufman, the playwright and director of more than 40 Broadway plays including 'The Man Who Came To Dinner' and 'George Washington Slept Here' (staged recently by the Pittsburgh Public Theater).

Cross Cedar Avenue at Lockhart Street to the Hampton Battery, the starting point. We hope you have enjoyed this self-guided walking tour. If you are interested in restoring one of our houses as a single-family, owner-occupied dwelling, we would be happy to assist you. Please call the East Allegheny Community Council at 321-1204.

Thanks to Ellis Schmidlapp, Landmarks Design Associates, who created the idea and wrote the first drafts of this tour, and to Carol Peterson of Lawrenceville who researched histories for 24 of our houses so far, from which much of the historical information presented in this tour was derived.