

Pittsburgh Steps Walking Tours - East Allegheny (Deushtown)

A Magnificent Rebuild

East Allegheny, also known as Deushtown, was created in 1783 when the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania granted 3,000 acres of land for the creation of Allegheny City. The area experienced significant development in the mid-Nineteenth Century, especially with many German immigrants moving to the area. Numerous businesses were developed along East Ohio Street, a bustling commercial area to this day. The neighborhood was annexed to the City of Pittsburgh in 1907.

Learn more about East Allegheny here

<https://www.pittsburghbeautiful.com/2020/02/13/deushtown/> and here.

<https://deushtown.org/>

While this steps tour does not take you near East Ohio Street and other areas of the neighborhood that make you feel like you are in an historically German neighborhood, they are within short walking distance to where this steps tour ends. It is well worth a leisurely stroll to enjoy the sights and sounds of what most Pittsburghers think of when you say “Dutchtown.”

On this tour you will encounter five staircases with a total of 579 steps. This walk is about 1.2 miles long and should take you less than 45 minutes. The map that accompanies this tour displays the locations of the staircases you will encounter. This tour is current as of April 2024.



**DIE DEUTSCHE EVANG
LUTHERISCHE MATTHAEUS KIRCHE**

Start your tour at the intersection of East North Avenue and Middle Street. I found convenient street parking on East North Avenue.

As you gaze up at the impressive church on the northeast corner of East North Avenue and Middle Street, you are immediately reminded of the German immigrant influence in East Allegheny, for the inscription above the front door of the church reads: DIE DEUTSCHE EVANG. LUTHERISCHE MATTHAEUS KIRCHE SEBAUT A.D. 1877. The congregation was established in 1877 and this edifice was built in 1906. The church currently houses an “annex” of Urban Impact, an organization serving youth on the North Side. Learn more about Urban Impact here. <https://uifpgh.org/>

Across Middle Street you will see another large church building. During my most recent visit to East Allegheny I noticed that this structure, constructed in 1892, was being renovated. A modern-day immigrant working at the site told me the old church building was being renovated to accommodate apartments.

Begin your steps tour by walking north up Middle Street. At the end of Middle Street you will find the Middle Street steps. When you reach the top of the 134-step staircase, turn around and enjoy a captivating view of downtown Pittsburgh. If you are a Pittsburgh City Steps aficionado, the scene may look familiar to you, as it is the view depicted in a painting on the front cover of Bob Regan's landmark book about Pittsburgh's city steps.



From Top of the Middle Street Steps

Bearing right, continue up Middle Street until you see the

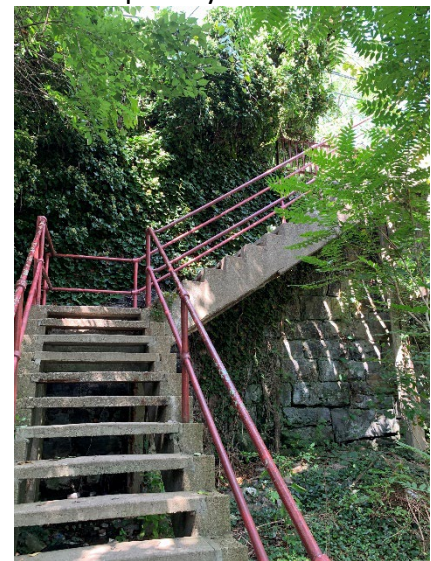


Hemlock Street Steps

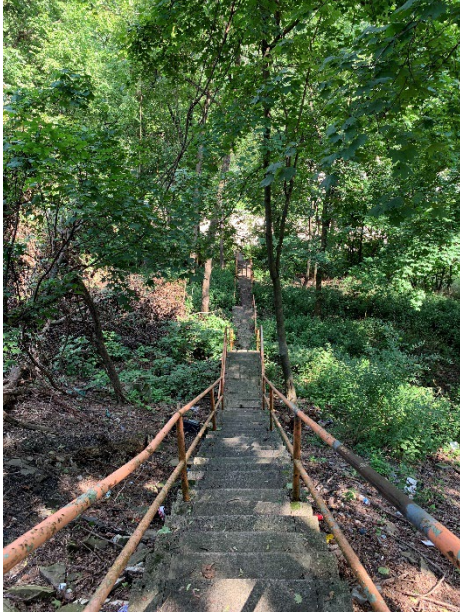
Hemlock Street steps behind buildings on your left. Built in 1949 and comprised of 143 steps, the Hemlock Street steps are 338 feet long, as there is the initial staircase, followed by a long "sidewalk" stretch, followed by steps that descend to James Street. While walking along the "sidewalk" you have a fine view of the original Allegheny General Hospital. You also are looking down on the rooftops of houses, a common occurrence in our hilly city. I couldn't help but start singing a verse of Bob Dylan's "Farewell, Angelina" – "King Kong, little elves, on the rooftops they dance Valentino-type tangos."

Upon descending the final staircase of the Hemlock Street steps you reach James Street, where you will turn right.

At the end of James Street you reach another set of steps. These 66 steps were built in 1948. Climb this staircase to Fountain Street, where you will be turning right. Before doing so, you may notice a set of steps to your left, continuing up the hill. These are in Fineview, so save them for another day. But speaking of Fineview, be sure to enjoy the fine view of our Pittsburgh skyline from the top of the James Street steps.



James Street Steps



Graib Street Steps

Having turned right on Fountain Street, continue to Compromise Street, where you will turn left. You soon find the Graib Street steps on your right. These 123 steps descend through thick woods until they reach Howard Street.

Turn right on Howard Street and continue until you reach East North Avenue, where you will turn left to cross over I-279. When the expressway was constructed, it bifurcated East Allegheny. While the section of East Allegheny that lies west of the highway is what most Pittsburghers think of as Dutchtown, the eastern half of the neighborhood was also Deutschtown back in the day. In fact, German immigrants played a significant role in the development of Troy Hill when they ascended the steep hill leading to the plateau that became Troy Hill. You can learn more about that history when taking my Troy Hill Steps Tour.

After crossing over I-279, turn left on Madison Avenue. As you approach Concord Street you will notice a two-story, beige brick building on the far side of Concord Street. The inscription at the top of the building notes it as the Allegheny Social Hall. "What went on at the social hall?" I wondered. Here's what I found out.

"The Allegheny Social hall was the place to be on Concord Street in Pittsburgh's Dutchtown section of the North Side back in the day when all the Big Bands were touring and there were social events almost every night of the week from Bingo to the basement Bowling Alley to union rally's when there was not dancing."

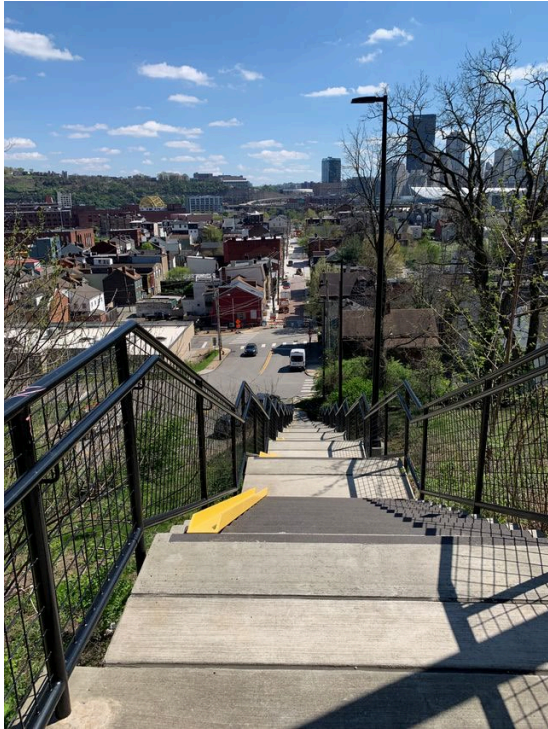


Allegheny Social Hall

But on one particular night, things became quite eventful at the hall! Learn more about that here. <https://darkinvestigations.blogspot.com/2014/11/the-old-allegheny-social-hall-one-night.html>

Continue one more block along Madison Avenue until you reach Vista Street, where you turn right. As you are walking along Vista Street you may notice some old-time comic strip characters

painted on a resident's fence. They reminded me of the long-ago "Nancy" comics in the



newspaper: the tales of Nancy, her Aunt Fritzi, and Nancy's pal Sluggo.

A real treat awaits you at the top of Vista Street. In addition to a fine view, you now get to descend the newly, and magnificently, reconstructed Vista Street steps. Originally built in 1944 and comprised of 98 steps, the steps were rebuilt in 2021 and now number 113. The staircase includes stately railings, a runnel for ease of taking bicycles up and down the steps, and beautiful mosaic artwork on the staircase's lower platform. BRAVO! Learn more about this impressive rebuild here.

<https://www.verylocal.com/steppin-aht-pittsburghs-city-steps/20618/>

At the bottom of the steps Vista Street becomes Chestnut Street. To your left you may notice 10 steps connecting Itin and Concord Streets. These are in Spring Garden, so save them for another day.

New Vista Street Steps

Continue along Chestnut Street until you reach Spring Garden Avenue, where you will turn right. Spring Garden Avenue becomes East North Avenue when it crosses I-279.

You are almost back to your starting point, but you may want to stop at Huszar's on the corner of East North Avenue and East Street. Its unassuming exterior belies the fine Hungarian food you will discover inside. Now, I learned Hungarian over 50 years ago when I was in the Army, but I never had the opportunity to speak the language after leaving the service in 1974. So you can imagine how proud I was when, after ordering an appetizer and a glass of Hungarian wine using the Hungarian pronunciations of the menu items, the owner, a Hungarian immigrant, asked me if I was from Hungary! And if you stop in, and if you like red wine, I recommend the Egri Bikaver. Don't let the English translation – Bull's Blood of Eger – deter you!



Mosaic Artwork on Vista Street Steps

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