



Historic Route Series

Throughout the last 19 years we have varied our StepTrek routes to allow for exploration of all the areas of our neighborhood and steps. This summer, we are releasing a variety of these historic routes where you can safely take an urban hike in our neighborhood, at your leisure.

#StepTrek



Historic Route Series

2015 Gold Route

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1. Start under the Mission St. Bridge at the StepTrek Marketplace and registration in South Side Park. Leave the registration area and head down St. 21st St. to Josephine St. Black Route joins here.

* **South Side Park**—Efforts are under way to reclaim this 64-acre park that extends from Josephine St. below to the heights of the Slopes. In this hillside of mostly woods are ball fields and trails. Section by section, volunteers are working to make the green space more accessible by removing invasive knotweed and vines that choke the park. The South Side Slopes Neighborhood Association (SSSNA) partnered with the South Side Local Development Co. (SSLDC) on a comprehensive study and plan for the park that was funded by the Community Design Center of Pittsburgh. The plan is an example of how the South Side community collaborates to maintain and improve neighborhood assets.

2. S. 21st St.—Cross Josephine St. and keep to left side of S. 21st. The miniature maples trees on the railroad side of the street are some of the 54 planted in spring 2003 by the Pittsburgh Shade Tree Commission in conjunction with the SSSNA, who advocated for their planting and recruited tree stewards. Cross beneath the railroad overpass. Immediately on your right is The Brew House artists' residency. Continue down S. 21st St. to Mary St.

* **The Brew House**—The Brew House Association is a non-profit organization established in 1991 to provide a supportive environment for artists to live and work. It took over the former Duquesne Beer brewery which was founded in 1899 and operated at this location until its dissolution in 1972. Since the late 1970's, the Brew House has rented living and studio space to artists. In 1995, it developed an exhibition hall, Space 101, and a performance theater. Over the years it has collaborated with Quantum Theatre, Black Sheep Puppet Festival, and Pittsburgh Opera. The renovation under way will add 76 apartments, ten artist studios, a community workshop/maker space, a community kitchen and gallery.

3. Mary St.—Make a left. Continue past UPMC Mercy South Side. At S. 19th and Mary is the former St. Matthew Church, which was consolidated into Prince of Peace Parish. The church and rectory are partially converted into condo units. Cross S. 18th St. The fire station is to your right.

* **Fire Safety on the Slopes**—A fire destroyed three Slopes' homes on Memorial Day weekend 1997. Alarmed by the inability of a standard city fire truck to negotiate the neighborhood's narrow streets and sharp turns, a group of residents joined forces to create the South Side Slopes Neighborhood Association. Organized around the issue of fire safety, they gathered data and made the case for a smaller fire truck with a tighter turning base. The city adopted the new design, and now a number of smaller, more-able fire trucks serve hillside neighborhoods throughout Pittsburgh.

4. S. 18th St.—Continue up S. 18th on the right side and cross under the railroad bridge. This underpass is one of seven that cuts beneath the railroad along the base of the Slopes. In a joint project between the SSLDC, SSSNA and the city, all of the underpasses were fitted with lights in 2004 and several sidewalks were replaced. Continue to the steps at the bend and begin to climb!

5. S. 18th St. Steps—Though it is daylight, by night these steps glow with LED light fixtures installed in 2012. Their illumination provides helpful lighting and serve as beacons to highlight and celebrate the neighborhood's steps. The project was made possible with a major grant from Duquesne Light's "Power of Light" program and state funding. Climb the 140 steps to Pius St.

6. Pius St.—Turn left. Walk to Yard Way Steps beside 128 Pius. Turn right.

7. Yard Way Steps—Most of the steps on Yard Way date back to 1944 and number 317 in total. They are the longest set of stairs on this side of the slopes. These 13 steps were rebuilt in time for the first StepTrek in April 2000. In addition to providing a fascinating tour of this hillside neighborhood, the StepTrek encourages the city to make repairs to existing stairways for public safety. The first cross street you come to is Gregory St.

8. Gregory St.—Make right. Walk to its end at 2 Gregory. Across on the right is a fire hydrant and utility pole. Pius St. steps are to the right.

9. Pius St. Steps—Descend 21 steps to Pius St.

10. Pius St.—Make left and keep left along Pius. The former convent at 66 Pius Street, on the left, is now a condominium complex. The building was once part of St. Michael's Parish.

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* **St. Michael's Parish**—At 44 Pius is the former St. Michael's Madchen Schule, which for many years was home to the Veronica's Veil playhouse. The theatre hosted a series of plays throughout the year but was most famous for its Passion play, Veronica's Veil. Performed each spring during Lent, it was said to be the longest running play in American community theatre. These buildings were all a part of St. Michael's Parish. The complex on the left right includes the Burning Bush, which offers a retreat center for quiet meditation in overnight rooms.

* **St. Michael Church** and the Cholera Plague of 1849—The influence of the church is strong in the Slopes. St. Michael Church was started in a house in 1848 where the church front now stands. The main church was designed by Charles Bartberger of Stuttgart, Germany, and built between 1855 and 1860 on land donated by German immigrants. The surrounding land reminded them of the Rhine River valley. The building's style is Rhineland Romanesque Rival similar to rural Bavarian churches. It has a gothic spire. In 1849, a deadly cholera plague hit Pittsburgh. The parish could not find enough burial places for deceased members. Parishioners prayed to St. Roch and vowed to keep a day holy if the plague would cease. It did. Another plague hit the South Side in 1853 but no members of St. Michael died. Cholera Day is still observed each August in Prince of Peace Parish on the South Side. The church was closed through a consolidation within the parish, and St. Michael has been redeveloped into condominiums.

11. St. Michael Street Steps—Just past the church, at the left corner of Pius & Brosville St., are the St. Michael Street steps. Climb the 150 steps to Hackstown St. The last seven steps are wooden.

12. Hackstown St.—Make a right onto Hackstown St. Across the street and down 15 yards are the St. Thomas St. steps.

13. Saint Thomas St. Steps—These next 78 steps continue up to St. Joseph's Way.

14. St. Joseph Way—At the top of the steps, turn right. The 10th St. Bridge is visible to the right between houses. Continue the short distance to where the street ends. Ahead is Mt. Washington. Descend 77 steps to Brosville St.

15. Brosville St.—Make a left on Brosville. Keep left on the grass which rises to the Brosville- Monastery Welcome Garden.

* **Brosville-Monastery Welcome Garden**—Terraced into the hillside, this quiet green space has a fabricated canvas of COR-TEN steel plate installed against a curved retaining wall. The scrim replicates a section of the Slopes neighborhood from a figure ground drawing, which shows building footprints, streets and steps. Created by SSSNA board member and architect Peter Kreuthmeier, the project was funded as part of a state Elm Street project and dedicated in 2007. It is one of six gardens maintained by SSSNA members. Awards: Award for Architectural Excellence, Citation of Merit, AIA Penna., 2010; Jury Award, Society for Environmental Graphic Design, 2010; Award of Excellence in Architectural Detail, AIA, Pittsburgh Chapter, 2009; and Townie Award for Public Space Improvements, Penna. Downtown Center, 2009.

16. Monastery St.—Make a left and climb the 20 steps on the right side. The steps and sidewalk were built in a few years ago to replace a larger set of steps. Midway, you'll descend 3 steps and climb 16 more to St. Thomas St.

17. St. Thomas St.—Turn right and walk up 22 steps on right side of sidewalk to the first break in the guardrail. You will turn around by crossing the street and walking up concrete ramp in front of 72 St. Thomas St. Take in the spectacular view of downtown! Descend 35 steps to Monastery St.

18. Monastery St. cont'd.—Make right and ascend 15 steps on the right side that were built as part of the project on the street's lower section. Ahead is St. Paul of the Cross Monastery.

* **St. Paul of the Cross Monastery**—Paul Francis Daneo (1694–1776) founded the Passionists order in Italy. Known as the barefoot missionaries, the Passionists vowed to live a life of prayer, poverty, penance and solitude. Bishop Michael O'Connor, the first bishop of Pittsburgh, invited the order over in 1852. The first retreat in the New World was held here in 1855. Designed by the architect Charles Bartberger, who also designed St. Michael Church, the church was completed in 1859 in the midst of an 11 acre compound chosen for its serenity, natural beauty and seclusion. The architectural style is Romanesque. The interior rose window is a copy of one in Reims, Germany. The church is open for quiet visitation. On the riverside of the building are views of the Mon and Ohio Rivers and Station Square. Return to St. Martin St.

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19. Monastery Ave.—The water station and rest stop is across the street in the parking lot. When ready, turn away from the river and head down Monastery Ave. and turn right onto St. Martin St.

20. St. Martin St.—Ascend St. Martin. Pass Lehrman Way. Cross St. Thomas St. and make left.

21. St. Thomas St.—Keep right. Climb 16 steps as you walk to East Warrington Ave.

22. E. Warrington Ave.—Make right. The first several houses on the right are similarly designed with peaked roofs and a porch and entrance on the right side. Ascend the sidewalk and 4 steps to Mt. Oliver St.

*** Mt. Oliver Incline**—On the left, at E. Warrington Ave. and Mt. Oliver St., is a brick building painted white with a decorative cornice. It is the former control room, engine and gear house for the Mt. Oliver Incline. The funicular was designed in 1871 by the Prussian engineer John Endres and his daughter Caroline Endres. Its track was 1600 feet long and gained 377 feet of elevation. It ran from the corner of Freyburg and S. 12th Streets in the flats to this corner. The fare in the early days was three cents. Operated by cables connected to steam engines, the cars each sat 18 and were equipped with a stove for cold days. It was closed July 6, 1951.

23. Mt. Oliver St.—Make a left. Follow Mt. Oliver Street to where it joins Amanda St. Continue forward on Mt. Oliver St. Make a right onto Loyal Way. This set of steps leads into the neighborhood of Allentown.

24. Loyal Way—Keep to left side of street and ascend the hill. Climb 52 steps to hill crest. Cross to right side and descend 10 steps to Arlington Ave.

25. Arlington Ave.—Make a left. Walk one block to Freeland St. Congratulations! You've walked from the South Side Flats to the top of the South Side Slopes, an elevation nearly equivalent to climbing from Station Square to Mt. Washington.

26. Freeland St.—Make a left. Descend the 62 steps on the left side to Amanda St. Ahead is St. Michael's Cemetery, which lies along S. 18th St.

27. Amanda St.—Turn right. Keep right and ascend a total of 19 steps back to Arlington Ave.

28. Arlington Ave.—Make left. Follow Arlington to S. 18 St.

29. S. 18th St.—Cross street to Johnno's Art Studio.

*** Johnno's Art Studio**—In recent years, Johnno's paintings have been highly visible. His portrait of President George H. W. Bush hangs in his Presidential Library. Johnno's work was featured on the TV show "Will & Grace" and hung in the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio. He designed original art for the 2006 and 2008 StepTrek. A new artist proof by Johnno is a prized print in the StepTrek raffle. Raffle tickets for the print are two for \$1 inside the studio.

30. St. 18th St.—From Johnno's studio, descend along the right side of S. 18th St. to Quarry St., which is opposite the large, colorful South Side mural. Along the way you'll pass St. Michael's Cemetery. Go ahead. Walk in. Enjoy the quiet and the views.

*** Mural on 18th Street**—Rich Bach was selected from a group of artists for this joint project between the SSSNA and the SSLDC. Nearly everyone on the Slopes has a retaining wall. They are a function of the steep terrain and the residents' desire to make the most use of their land. A state grant in 2004 turned this retaining wall into a work of art. The timeline begins on the left with a blacksmith in the 1850s when South Side existed as a separate town called Birmingham. The mural depicts the varied character of South Side, its love of music and athletics, hard-work and fun. The mural's religious aspects as well as its portrayal of the evolution in the type and style of local businesses show the changeless yet changing nature of the neighborhood.

31. Quarry St.—Take a right. Continue to street's end and Quarry St. Steps.

32. Quarry St. Steps—Descend the 32 steps.

33. Lower Quarry St.—At the bottom of the steps turn left, where you again pick up Quarry St. Continue walking forward and join Gable St.

34. Gable St.—Follow to end and make left onto St. Patrick St.

35. St. Patrick St.—Descend St. Patrick. Continue past Saber Way and ascend toward S. 18th St. Take the last five steps on left to S. 18th St.

36. S. 18th St.—Cross street to the steps opposite.

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37. St. Paul St. Steps—Ascend the 82 steps to St. Paul St. Notice the brick garden wall to the far left. It is part of the St. Paul of the Cross Monastery and Retreat Center. The wall appears to be the original one that shielded the enclave from the outside world. The garden features the Stations of the Cross which can be seen through the metal fencing opposite the steps.

38. St. Paul St.—At top of steps, turn right. Follow St. Paul to Yard Way. Welcome to Billy Buck Hill!

* **Billy Buck Hill**—Founded by Germans, its homes—like many on the South Side — have passed through generations of families. The name Billy Buck comes from goats once kept in the yard of a local store.

Bordered by cliffs and rugged terrain, the area is accessible by steps and a single street. According to the Post-Gazette, there have been a couple of famous mishaps here. Once a milk truck flipped over while making deliveries on its hilly streets. Another time, a horse and wagon, hauling waste from neighborhood outhouses, tumbled over the hillside.

39. Yard Way—Make a left on Yard Way and walk to Shamokin St. View uptown, Oakland and Greenfield across the river. The South Side Works, on the site of the former LTV site, sits to the bottom right. The Yard Way steps, built in 1944, contain a total of 317 steps, and extend down to Pius St. Cross Shamokin and descend 63 steps to Winter's Playground at Huron St. A series of parklets dot the hillside. If you complete both routes, you will pass three of them. Descend last 52 steps to Baldauf St.

40. Baldauf St.—Turn right and continue to the end of the street. Notice the houses on the left sit below grade, a feature of building on a steeply sloped hillside. The lower sidewalk is their only point of access. Just past 1929 Baldauf, on the left, is a set of steps. Descend the 10 steps to Oporto St. Steps.

41. Oporto St. Steps—Across South Side Park to your right lies another area of the Slopes neighborhood. The church with the baroque steeple is St. Josaphat's. Begin descending the 115 steps to Roscoe St. Immediately below is the site of a former brick yard that was active in the Slopes until the 1950s when the homes were built.

42. Roscoe St.—Make right and walk 20 yards to Oporto St.

43. Oporto St.—Keep right to descend 26 steps to Gregory St. Continue down Oporto to Pius St.

44. Pius St.—Make right. UU BU 6, a restaurant at 78-80 Pius, opened in the former location of Workingmen's Beneficial Union #6, a fraternal organization. Continue east on Pius St. to the stoplight at S.18th Street. Cross S. 18th Street to Mission St.

45. Mission St.—Behind the bus shelter on S. 18th and Missions St. is a set of stairs. To reach the staging area, descend the 102 steps to South Side Park.

SOUTH SIDE
S L O P E S
NEIGHBORHOOD
ASSOCIATION

#StepTrek

Save the Date!



Oct 1-7, 2020

In our 20th year of the Pittsburgh StepTrek, the South Side Slopes Neighborhood Association intends to support our community and region with an outdoor, family friendly, socially distanced, and safe event that will help people to get out and explore our neighborhood. We understand the implications of our current situation with the pandemic and financial fallout that has accompanied it. Our intent is to produce an enjoyable experience in our neighborhood, while keeping our distance from each other.

StepTrek.org