

Eastern North Stories presents a series of cherished tales surrounding the rich history of this neighborhood as remembered by those who have lived here, past and present. Walk with us and experience the history, opportunities, and community that we call Eastern North.



# WELCOME! ¡BIENVENIDOS!



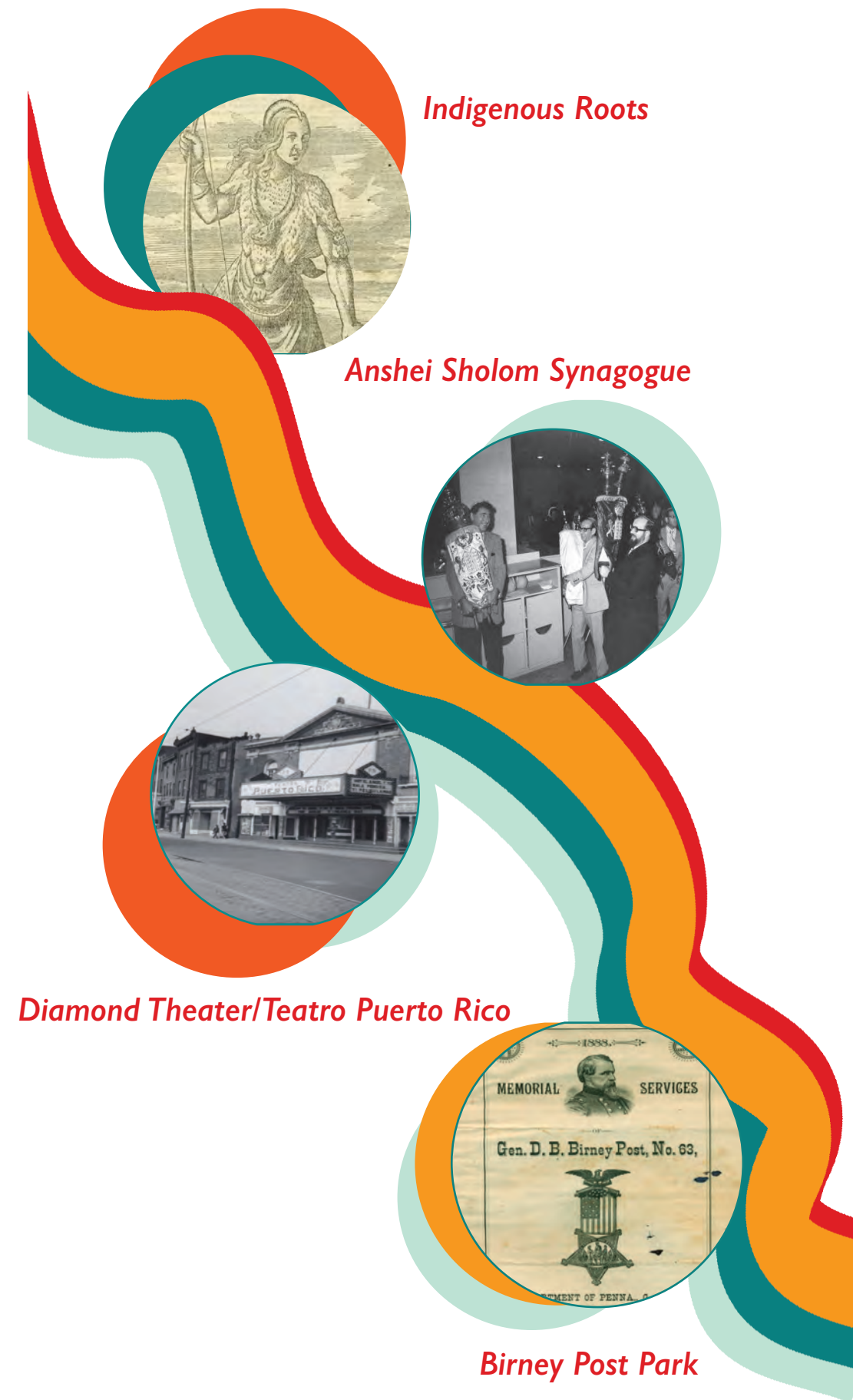
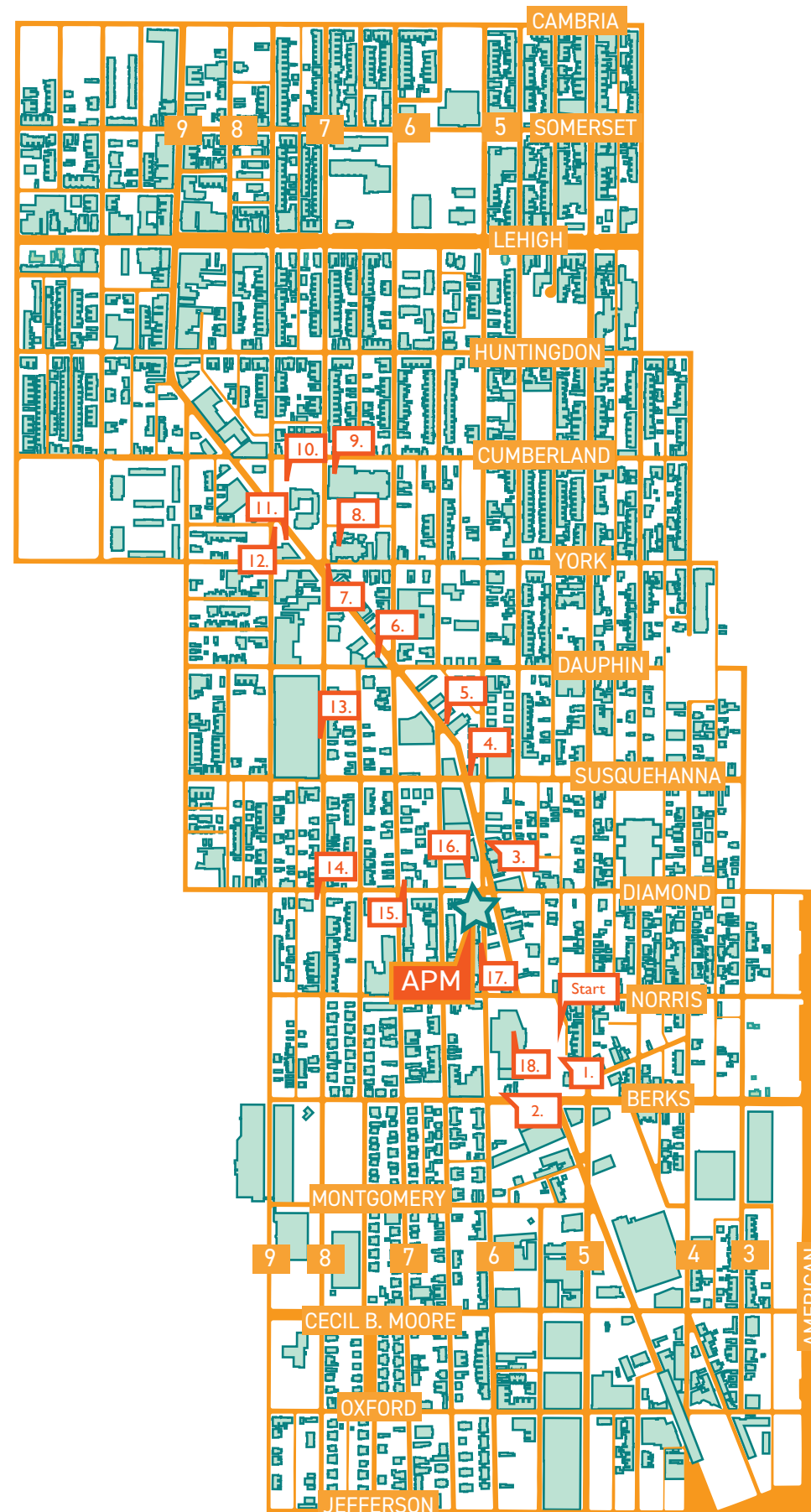
Prepared by Community Development Workshop 2022, Tyler School of Art + Architecture, Temple University in partnership with Asociacion Puertorriquenos en Marcha.



# TOUR LOCATIONS:

1. Indigenous Roots
2. Anshei Sholom Synagogue
3. Diamond Theatre/Teatro Puetro Rico
4. Birney Post Park
5. Hogar De Esperanza
6. Ile Ife Museum
7. Danny Boyle/Vandergrift Park
8. Saint Edward the Confessor Church
9. John Hartranft Elementary School
10. Veterans' Memorial Playground
11. Blazin' Flavorz/Viola Theater
12. Washington Hotel
13. Philadelphia Transportation Co.
14. 8th and Diamond Playground
15. The U School
16. Jazz Mural
17. Jardins de Boriquen
18. Cousin's Supermarket

# WALKING TOUR MAP:





# EASTERN NORTH STORIES

## INDIGENOUS ROOTS



The land on which this neighborhood was built is the ancestral land of the Lenape nation. Cohocksink Creek (Cuweuháckink in Lenni-Lenape, meaning pine lands) was once a stream and tributary to the Delaware River (Lenapewihítuk, meaning 'the largest river in this part of the country'). The Cohocksink Creek flowed eastward from the Strawberry Mansion area, traversed this neighborhood flowing southeast from the intersection of York and

Broad flowing to the Delaware River. The creek was partially buried at 6th and Montgomery east and eventually fully buried to make way for urban development. Present day Germantown Avenue also has Indigenous origins as a Lenape path.

Do you know of other Lenape heritage areas in the neighborhood?



# EASTERN NORTH STORIES

## ANSHEI SHOLOM SYNAGOGUE



Rabbi Boris Berkowitz established the Anshei Sholom synagogue (1924 Germantown Ave) in 1910 and it operated until 1972. The synagogue followed Ashkenazi rites and served the largely Eastern European Jewish population in Eastern North.

Research shows that the site was used as a tailoring business in 1903. A deed from 1916

indicated that the property was transferred by Amanda L Coulston to Congregation Anshei Sholom.

Did you know that there was a large Eastern European population in the neighborhood in the early 1900s?





# EASTERN NORTH STORIES

## DIAMOND THEATER/TEATRO PUERTO RICO



Situated on the site of a former tenement house for German Immigrants, the movie theater opened its doors in 1920 as the Cohocksink Theater (named after the Cohocksink Creek that ran through the neighborhood). The theater was designed by architect David Supowitz as a single screen, 927 seat auditorium. In 1937, the Cohocksink Theater was sold, purchased, and renamed the

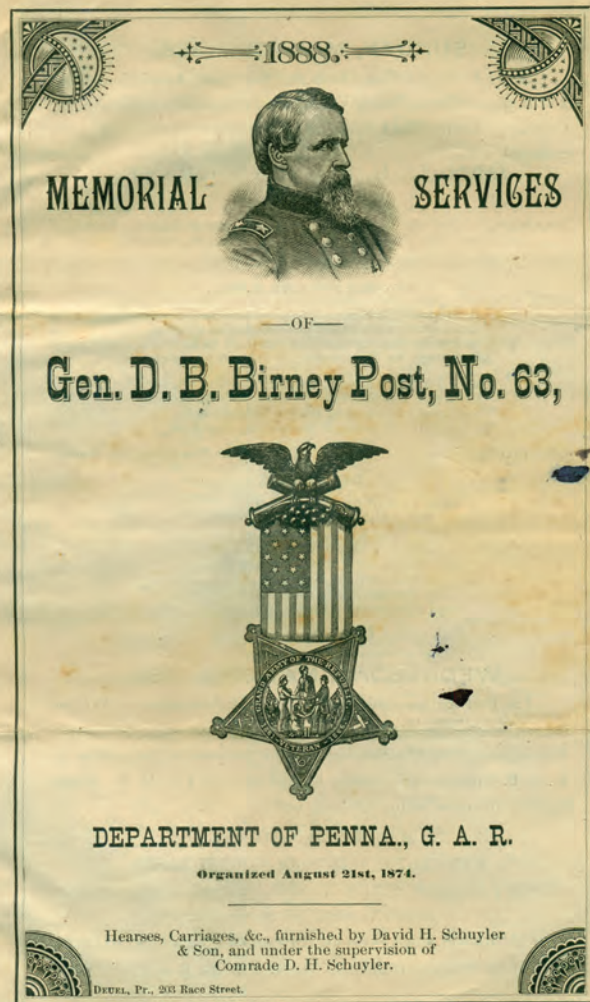
Diamond Theater.

When the neighborhood demographics began to shift, the Diamond Theater was renamed Teatro Puerto Rico in 1960. Teatro Puerto Rico served as a communal space for a growing Puerto Rican population.



# EASTERN NORTH STORIES

## BIRNEY POST PARK



General David Bell Birney (1825-1864) was a Union General in the Civil War. Born in Huntsville, Alabama to an abolitionist father. Birney went to law school in Massachusetts and became a lawyer in Philadelphia, studying military information until he became a volunteer officer. He slowly rose in rank and became a Major General, fighting at the Battle of Gettysburg. He continued his military career until he fell ill with Typhoid Fever.

In recognition of his accomplishments, General Birney Post #63 was built in 1888. Reverend Russell H. Conwell led the memorial service. In 1908, this small park was named after General Birney. While rumors suggest that General Birney was buried here, he was laid to rest at the Woodlands Cemetery.

What ideas do you have on how to improve the park and remember General Birney?





# EASTERN NORTH STORIES

## HOGAR DE ESPERANZA

In 1996, Asociacion Puertorriquenos en Marcha (APM) developed Hogar de Esperanza. At this time, it was extremely difficult for those diagnosed with HIV and AIDS to secure housing, so APM decided to provide affordable and accessible homes for those fighting the disease. Today, the building continues to provide a safe place for residents and family members facing homelessness or fighting HIV and AIDS. APM and its partners also offer case management services for residents.

Located at 2203 Germantown Ave, Hogar de Esperanza is an apartment building

including 20 units. During its 20 plus years of operation, it has consistently provided homes for at least 20 residents at a time. Turnover rates remain low, which speaks to the stability and comfort these units have provided to the community. As of 2021 APM has secured a loan to assist with repairs to the apartment building to ensure it is able to provide accessible housing for the future of the community.



# EASTERN NORTH STORIES

## Ile Ife Museum/National Bank



Edward T. Tyson, a north Philadelphia developer, established the newest branch of the Northern National Bank in 1893 after operating out of his mansion for 3 years. The building was designed by architect Walter D. Smedley and was noted for its use of terra-cotta, and its Romanesque Revival style. For about 50 years, Northern National Bank was the only bank located in this section of North Philadelphia and ceased operations in 1971.

In 1972, the building was donated to Arthur Lee Hall (1934-2000) and his organization, Ile Ife (meaning House of Love in Yoruba) Museum/Black Humanitarian Center. Ile Ife displayed African art, artifacts, and hosted

African music and dance performances. Ile Ife identified itself as the first “African-American history museum in Pennsylvania.” Hall invited Lily Yeh, a Chinese artist, to transform the vacant lots with sculptures and murals. Subsequently, in 1988, Hall entrusted Lily Yeh with Ile Ife. While the spirit of Ile Ife lives on through the work of the Village of Arts and Humanities, established by Yeh, this iconic building was torn down in 1997.





# EASTERN NORTH STORIES

## DANNY BOYLE/VANDERGRIFT PARK



Established as a park in 1910, it is uncertain why the park was named “Vandergrift” in June of 1920. Being that this neighborhood was predominantly German, it is likely that the park was named after a community resident named Vandergrift.

On February 4, 1991, Daniel Robert Boyle, a 21-year-old

police officer was killed in the line of duty at 8th and Germantown Ave after stopping a stolen vehicle. Boyle was only an officer for seven months. The park was renamed “Danny Boyle” to honor the fallen officer.



# EASTERN NORTH STORIES

## ST. EDWARD THE CONFESSOR CHURCH



Originally an Episcopal church, the Roman Catholic St. Edward the Confessor was established in 1865 to serve the growing Catholic immigrant community. The current church was built in the early 1900s, replacing the existing structure. Renowned architect George Ashdown Audsley designed the building as a testament to the medieval Romanesque revival. Under the leadership of Father Edward Hawkes, St. Edward the Confessor established a parochial school under its own direction and several other Catholic schools in North Philadelphia.

The Archdiocese closed St. Edward as a parish in 1993. In 1995, anti-homeless

activists used the church to stage a months-long sit-in to advocate for “housing-for-all” and used the church as a temporary shelter for those experiencing homelessness. These demonstrations happened again as recently as 2020. The church is currently owned by a private developer and plans for the building are uncertain.

**What would you like to see the developer do with this building?**





# EASTERN NORTH STORIES

## HARTRANFT SCHOOL



Named after historic advocate for education John F. Hartranft, this school is one of the oldest in the country. Hartranft opened in 1891 as a simple red brick schoolhouse with 13 classrooms. It was located near 7th and York Streets. The school remained open until 1964 when a coal gas leak put 5 teachers and 78 students in the hospital. As a result, the reopened at its current location near 7th and Cumberland.

The school now boasts a variety of clubs and sports including the dance team, volleyball, and art club. As with many schools in Philadelphia, it is

understaffed and the lack of nurses in the school was brought to the attention of the media following a medical incident in 2018.

In 2016 the School District of Philadelphia highlighted John F. Hartranft along with 10 other schools for an intervention using their “system of great schools” model. It is unclear what direct results came from this.

