

NEWS  
FOR  
MEMBERS



# The Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation

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This is the first in a series of informal newsletters for members. Through them the officers and staff will report to you on local preservation events and issues, and we will describe some of our own work and progress.

Two of our major goals in launching this organization are already being realized. First is our survey of all of the architecture of the County and the publication of a registry of the significant buildings and areas. Mr. Van Trump and Mr. Ziegler have driven over 3000 miles (and they feel they've walked as many as well) through the area and have gathered notes on hundreds of buildings. Next in order is sifting out the best ones and researching them. Assisted by the survey committee, they have also marked city maps for neighborhoods that deserve preservation. A grant of \$30,000 from the A. W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust supports the work.

Our second aspiration called for an educational program for young people. We are pleased to report that we have worked out a lecture program for all fifth grade classes in the Pittsburgh school system. The real brunt of the work falls on the Junior League, whose members will produce the lecture and deliver it during the next year. The School Board and officials could not be more responsive; the next challenge is the youngsters themselves. Among the materials to be used will be some of the 1000 slides we've collected in the survey.

Despite the profound and extensive public interest in preserving it and the hard work of our staff, the North Side Market House was demolished last fall. We did make a photographic and written record of it, and when funds are available, we will publish the material. We also saved two of the animal heads and a wooden fruit basket that hung on the exterior of the building. Allegheny Center will install four more of the cast-iron heads on the new market building.

The Risher springhouse, built in 1830, in Hays, was razed to make parking room for two trucks. Happening on the empty plot of ground a few weeks after the desecration, Messrs. Van Trump and Ziegler rescued the cornerstone. You may remember it appeared in Charles Stotz' Early Architecture in Western Pennsylvania.



Avery College on the North Side, built in 1860, is a Greek Revival building important in the history of the Negro in this city. Together with many fine houses in the Avery-Lockhart Street area, it will be destroyed for the new East Street-North Side expressway. This ravage will include much of the German Section of North Side. The road cuts through the residential area near the Heinz plant.

Whether Emmanuel Church (H. H. Richardson, 1885) will survive the projected Allegheny and North Avenue roadways is still questionable. We are fighting hard for this, the most significant church building in the city.

Through a grant we do hope to save some of the ornaments from the Fourth Avenue Post Office, downtown, soon to succumb to a parking garage. It is our grandest municipal structure (other than the Courthouse) in the city.

Our first membership campaign has brought us fifty new members already, and we've just begun. . . . Through a book loan from Mr. Van Trump we have started a good architectural library at the office. . . . In the past few months the officers and staff have lectured to over a dozen organizations and each talk elicited memberships. . . . Our spring tour this year will be a bus trip to see the new restorations at Old Economy. . . . The old Brierly brick farm house in West Mifflin is in danger of demolition. A citizens group has organized to save it. . . . We have taken action to save the sculptures on the Manchester Bridge. A report will follow.

Our first preservation planning study was released late last year. It was the product of six months of intensive study of a row of houses in the 1300-1335 block of Liverpool Street on the North Side. We interviewed the residents, research the history of the area, described the architectural and environmental value of the block, and assessed what the costs would be for rehabilitation. This is our pilot project in persuading the planning authorities of the care to consider rehabilitation as a means to renewal rather than demolition. The agencies all worked with us cooperatively, but most rewarding has been the enthusiastic praise that has come in from throughout the English speaking world. The study is unique, and many planners and preservationists seem to be interested in applying it to their own areas. Such notables as Wolf Von Eckardt, John Betjeman, Ada Louise Huxtable, George McCue, Alan Gowans, Henry Hope Reed, Sibyl Monholy-Nagy wrote us of their admiration. A leader in renewal, Pittsburgh perhaps can also set the pace in preservation. Copies of some of the letters are available on request to the office.

Two of our next projects involve us in direct preservation. First, we are preparing a preservation code to go to City Council. This ordinance will call for blanket protection for certain areas of the city, most notably parts of the North Side, South Side, and Lawrenceville. Modelled after the new codes in Philadelphia, Boston, and Providence, it will disallow changes to be made to existing properties or demolition of them without the approval of proper authorities. Restoration will be the aim of the code.

Second, we are planning to begin purchasing properties and restore them ourselves. We want to demonstrate how this process might work, its usefulness, and our own commitment to restoration. We will establish a revolving fund from which we will pay for the houses and into which we will put all accrued in resale. The final plans are being formulated right now and an announcement will soon be made outlining the project.