

Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation

NEWS FOR MEMBERS - NUMBER TEN
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NEW BOOK FUNDED BY PITTSBURGH FOUNDATION

Through the generosity of the Melissa S. McKee Carnahan Trust of the Pittsburgh Foundation we have been able to join Carnegie Institute in publishing a study of the architecture of the great building housing the Institute and the early days of it.

Mr. Van Trump published a series of articles on this structure several years ago in Carnegie Magazine, and they will be included in revised form in the book. Mr. James M. Walton, the president of the Institute, will provide additional material. The grant of \$5,000 covers costs of editing, writing, design, and printing the volume which will be published in both hardbound and paperback form. This will be the second in our series of full-length books on local buildings.

The restoration of the Neill Log House (built c. 1787) in Schenley Park is about to begin. One of the major problems for us is to ascertain exactly what kind of furniture might originally have been used in this house and then locate samples. The Junior League of Pittsburgh has joined us in this effort and has established a committee to conduct research on the subject and has also granted up to \$1,500 for the cost of the furniture. The Pittsburgh Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution signified its willingness to try to locate some of this furniture for us. This is the second project in which the Junior League has worked with us; the first was the development of a lecture on Pittsburgh history that the ladies delivered to all the fifth grade classes in the Pittsburgh public schools and which they are now turning into an audio-visual resource that will be available to school children at Fort Pitt Museum.

It is a singular moment when we can say that an urban plan has been changed at our suggestion and that a building can be saved. However, just such is the case with the North Side Post Office. After being told that there was no possibility of saving it a year ago, we went to work with a campaign of persuasion, and recently the plans were changed for Allegheny Center, and the building was offered to us for rental or for sale by the owner, the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh. We would like to establish a museum of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County history in this structure and completely restore the building. A brochure outlining our aspirations is included with this newsletter, and we will be pleased to send copies to any persons that you think might be interested in donating to this effort to revitalize and recapture our past. The museum would also serve as a home for our organization and contain a private reading room for members, and we hope that they will look upon the facility as one that they can use and take a large measure of satisfaction in being part of. At the same time we want the museum to function within the community at large as a focal point, a visual symbol of the rich and robust past that has been Pittsburgh's.

An exhibition "A Heritage of Dreams: The History of the Architecture and Master Planning of the University of Pittsburgh, 1787-1969," co-sponsored by the University and the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation will be opened to the public on Monday, January 20 in the Frick Fine Arts Building of the University. The exhibition will trace in photographs,

EXHIBIT paintings, prints, and drawings the highlights of the entire building history of the University from its humble log OF PITT house beginning in 1787 to today's vast and ever expanding ARCHITECTURE campus. Pitt, except for one brief sojourn in suburban Allegheny, has always been an urban university, and the present show will attempt to display the physical aspects, the sites and buildings that figured forth the dream of higher education in Western Pennsylvania. The exhibition will also feature the new master plan for the present and future campus of the University as designed by the Pittsburgh architectural firm of Deeter-Ritchey-Sippel. The idea for the exhibit was developed by our organization, and much of the work was carried out by Theodore Bowman, the member of our board representing the University. The exhibition will be on view through Friday, February 14. Gallery hours Tuesday through Saturday, 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.; Sunday, 2:00 to 5:00 p.m.; closed Mondays.



The Burtner house in Harrison Township, which is one of the finest and largest early Western Pennsylvania stone houses still extant, might be demolished. The Pennsylvania Department of Highways recently announced that it would be razed for a temporary right-of-way. We are working now with the Highways Department to find an alternative route. The house was built by Philip Burtner and his wife, born Anna Negley.

At our dinner held for the visiting members of the Philadelphia and Washington, D. C. Chapters of the Society of Architectural Historians we had an excellent turnout and an evening of great pleasure. Mr. Van Trump spoke briefly but with deep emotion about the architecture of our city, and afterwards many members of the SAH commended us for the SAH DINNER reception and hospitality. On the following day we gave them a bus tour of some of the highlights of our architecture and bade them goodbye with a promise to return their visit in the near future. We would like to know if our members would be interested in undertaking an expedition to Philadelphia to see the very fine work that has been done there in restoration. We could provide a bus or we could simply proceed individually and meet in the city at a given time and spend a day or a week-end there. Would you make your wishes known to the office?

On a bright fall day we served as host to a conference for some of the attendees at the American Institute of Planners' National Convention that was being held here in Pittsburgh. We had planned to receive perhaps 20 or 30 planners and give them an orientation program at the Fort Pitt Museum and then take them on a bus trip to show them our restoration programs on North Side, terminating with a reception at PLANNERS our house at 1233 Resaca Place. To our amazement 115 planners HOSTED came to the session--we had standing room only--and they returned our amazement when they saw the large scope of our programs. No preservation organization in America has undertaken the kind of community renewal programs that we have in North Side and in Birmingham (South Side), and after the session we were beset with many questions about our activities. To see so many planners from throughout the country interested in our work was extremely rewarding.