

Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation

NEWS FOR MEMBERS - NUMBER THIRTEEN
JUNE 1969

WALKING TOUR OF TROY HILL Sunday, July 13

Our first summer Sunday afternoon walking tour has been set for July 13th at 2:00 p.m.. We will explore Troy Hill above North Side. Mr. Van Trump described the area in Landmark Architecture of Allegheny County as follows:

Troy Hill, with its ancient mythological name, is one of those isolated Pittsburgh hilltop communities that has managed to retain something of its nineteenth century Tuetonic character despite the passage of years. "Progress" has notably passed it by, possibly because there was never any reason for progress coming there. Its narrow streets lined with low Victorian houses seem to dream remotely on their lofty ridge between the wide valley of the Allegheny and the sharp ravine of East Street.

During the course of the afternoon we will explore a number of buildings and byways, experience the dramatic views of the city, and place one of our historic landmark plaques on the Shrine of St. Anthony. The walk will terminate with a kaffee klatsch given by the Christian Mothers of the Most Holy Name Jesus Church. There will be no charge for members but non-members will be charged \$2.50 each. Reservations are limited; please return the form on page four of this newsletter immediately if you plan to attend.

We will meet in front of the Ober-Guehl house (see photo on page 146 of LAAC) at 1501 Lowrie Street. Follow East Ohio Street east from North Side, turn left up Troy Hill Road (opposite Heinz plant) and you will see the house at the top of the hill.



In appropriate ceremonies, the Foundation recently designated the Duquesne Incline a historic landmark. A plaque was unveiled at both the top and the bottom stations and Messrs. Arensberg and Van Trump spoke briefly for the Foundation and Stanton Belfour, Director, commented on the history and value of Pittsburgh's inclines. Lloyd INCLINE F. Engle, Jr., Chairman of the PLAQUE Board of the Duquesne Incline accepted the plaques on behalf of the Society. In addition to declaring the incline a historic landmark, they note that it was designed by an engineer, Samuel Diescher in 1871 for Kirk Bigham and Associates. Shown in the photo is Mr. Arensberg, Mrs. & Mr. David Miller, & Mr. Engle.

Our campaign to establish a museum of local history at the North Side Post Office has elicited about \$40,000 from the general public and the smaller private foundations. One person donated \$15,000, Gulf Oil and Westinghouse Electric Corporations have both contributed, the United Steelworkers of America added \$1,000, the Calhoun, Bitner, Pittsburgh Foundation, and

Fisher Charitable Trusts have all made pledges from \$200 to MUSEUM \$10,000, and letters have arrived at the office every day containing from \$1 to \$100. CAMPAIGN

In an effort to both publicize our museum campaign and enliven the abandoned post office building, students from the Ivy School of Art recently painted colorful designs and fund raising slogans on the boarded windows. The students, carrying banners and museum posters walked in a procession from their school at Third Avenue and Market Street, through Market Square, across Liberty Avenue over the Sixth Street Bridge, to the



post office in Allegheny Center. The painting took approximately three hours to complete and about 25 students participated. Both daily newspapers published photos of the project and the television channels covered it.



On 12 June the American Institute of Interior Designers, Pennsylvania West Chapter, sponsored a reception that was held in the post office building. We placed many of our artifacts on exhibit with the aid of our volunteers. As Connie Kienzle wrote afterwards in the Pittsburgh Press, "Until you've sipped champagne in the old North Side Post Office, you haven't really tasted the stuff. The setting was perfect. Lovely blue peeling paint, great-looking bird's eye maple arches, a few exquisite pieces of furniture from the Pittsburgh that was in the 1800's, and a three piece orchestra playing the old songs." About 400 members and guests attended, and the drive was given further impetus. It is now scheduled to conclude in September.



"TOUCH NOT THE LANDMARK"

One of the last of two surviving Greek Revival structures in downtown Pittsburgh, the Smithfield Methodist Church, has recently bitten the dust, and now a gaping hole surrounded by the familiar board fence proclaims the advent of a new high-rise and the omnipotence of Mammon. Once this plain brick structure was known as "Brimstone Corner" because its preachers inveighed against the snares and vanities of this world. Now that the destruction of the ministers' old temple has been accomplished, where are the ghosts of those once powerful clerical voices?

Certainly the voice of the Foundation must be raised to lament the passing of this sturdy building, so representative of an earlier and simpler Pittsburgh. The first Methodist group in this city was formed in 1788, their first church was built on First Avenue in 1810, the second on the present site in 1818, and the structure just demolished followed in 1848. A signature stone bearing that date was placed in the center of the triangular front gable; we hope that it has been preserved as a memento of the now vanished past.

In form it was the standard nineteenth century brick hall church on a high basement and it presented very forcefully the simple Greek Revival gabled temple shape of the 1830's and 1840's.

Although twice we wrote to the officials of the Methodist Church here, we received not even an acknowledgement of our offers to help study the possibility of retaining at least the facade of the building.

It is ironic that the Triangle Building of 1884, which stands cater-corner to the site of the demolished church, has not only been saved from destruction but very agreeably restored by an enlightened real estate firm. Here the secular rather than the religious arm has been much more effective in the cause of preservation. - J. D. Van T.

A transportation center; a combination restaurant, cab stand, and museum; and an entranceway to the new Penn Park development were the winning entries in a competition among Carnegie-Mellon freshmen architectural students to find an adaptive use for the Rotunda of the Pennsylvania Station. The competition was sponsored by the Foundation to find a new use for the structure and therefore save it from being razed by the Penn Central Railroad for Penn Park. The winning entries are being displayed publicly and will be shown to the railroad.

We are trying to locate tenants for the Hahn Building on South Side. This large terra cotta structure has been vacated, and it is a key building on Carson Street for our Birmingham program. The owner, a member of PHLF, will restore it to suit new lessees.... The National Trust for Historic

Preservation has asked to hold a conference in Pittsburgh next year to study PHLF work particularly in community renewal.
NEWS
BRIEFS Demolished for a parking lot is the Fourth Avenue Hotel, a Victorian structure that stood at the corner of Fourth Avenue and Market Streets downtown.... The modernization of the old McCann Building on Stanwix Street is now about complete; the Tudorized terra cotta detailing from the 1930's that formed the cornice and a frieze around the structure between the first and second stories has been removed entirely.... At the request of the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh we have just completed extensive studies of houses in the Hill District and Manchester that call for their restoration under the Model Cities program. Federal funding is now being sought.

Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation
900 Benedum-Trees Building
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15222

Please make _____ reservations for the Troy Hill Walking Tour.

No charge for members.

Non-members: \$2.50 My check for non-member reservations is enclosed.

Please list names of all attendees below.

PITTSBURGH HISTORY &
LANDMARKS FOUNDATION
900 BENEDUM-TREES BUILDING
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