

Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation

NEWS FOR MEMBERS - NUMBER 17
JANUARY - FEBRUARY 1970

SECOND NATIONAL AWARD GIVEN TO PHLF

The American Association for State and Local History at its recent national convention awarded to us a Certificate of Commendation. It reads:

"To the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation
for renewing urban communities as well as
architecturally significant buildings".

This citation was given primarily for our work in the Mexican War Streets, Manchester, and South Side. It indicates the new direction that we have helped to give to the preservation movement nationally and to urban planning locally to utilize restoration as a means to renewing civic pride, thereby saving neighborhoods and their residents as well as the buildings.

This is our second national award from this organization which is dedicated to advancing knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of localized history in the United States and Canada. In 1966 we received one for "the vigor of our preservation programs."

URBAN REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF PITTSBURGH APPOINTS PHLF TO CARRY OUT PRESERVATION STUDIES

In a precedent setting contract the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh has appointed us to examine the buildings of the Manchester area of the North Side and provide a comprehensive stylistic analysis of each one and classify each as to architectural value. We are also providing renderings of how representative structures could be restored, worksheets detailing the exact items needed for restoration, and a photographic essay that delineates the visual significance of these structures.

Since the inception of our organization we have tried to persuade URA to preserve as much of Manchester's excellent architecture as possible. Unfortunately much of it has deteriorated and even been demolished since then. But hundreds of structures still remain that should be preserved.

URA fortunately is going to attempt a preservation program and feels that we are best able to provide the needed information. In the past we have done studies for URA in the Hill District and Manchester but never have we had a bona fide contract under which we drew compensation for our time and expenses. Completion date is March and members of the staff have been devoting a great many hours to the work.

The Foundation's efforts to preserve the Rotunda of the Pennsylvania Railroad station have been recognized by Ada Louise Huxtable, architectural critic of the New York Times. In the December 21, 1969 edition of the Times she writes:

N.Y. TIMES FOR THE ROTUNDA

The Rotunda is a grace note; one of those civilizing structures rich in cultural references, profligate with expensively gratuitous (by today's faulty standards) qualities of architectural art. It does not present the imperial-size preservation problems of the huge terminals.

The developers of Penn Park are evidently leery of history and art. No one has figured a predictable return on the environmental enrichment of a landmark or officially acknowledged historical and esthetic value.

It has been made quite clear the the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation will not only have to sell the railroad on the benefits of saving the Rotunda, but is also expected to come up with an airtight solution for its preservation. Evidently the combined resources of the Penn Central and the architect's office are not up to the job. Translate: they do not want to do it. Nor will the enormously expensive construction package, representing huge allotments of funds, include anything for the Rotunda. One thing that has not changed from the business practices of the Imperial Age is the public-be-damned.

You have been reading in the newsletter about our attempts to save the Burtner House, one of the finest extant stone houses in Allegheny County. Built in 1821, it was located in Harrison Township. (It is described in LAAC on page 196.) It has been threatened by a highway interchange for some months and despite intensive efforts on the part of the Department of Highways, the Director of the Allegheny County Department of Parks, Mr. George Kelly, the Harrison Township commissioners, and PHLF, the house has been demolished. We understand that the County Commissioners were willing to go so far as to pay the cost of moving the building but no funds could be found for its restoration. It is extremely disheartening that such a magnificent house, one which the county commissioners were willing to place in a public park, could not be saved. We did make a good photographic record of the structure and retrieved mantels and other items from the house.

BURTNER HOUSE

Because of the variety and breadth of our programs, other cities and other organizations are beginning to call upon our organization for counsel in historic and urban planning. For that reason we have established a consultation service in which we offer the knowledge and experience of our staff to civic organizations, planning agencies, private corporations, and governmental agencies on a fee basis. Since it was offered, the service already has been called upon by Mobile, Alabama; Huntington, Wheeling, and Sistersville, West Virginia; and Brownsville, Pennsylvania. Also we provided consulting services to the Brush Creek Church, Meadowcroft Village, the Historic Savannah Foundation, Bingham Company, E. W. Bliss Company, and Gulf and Mobil Oil Corporations.

CONSULTING FOR OTHER CITIES

The Birmingham restoration program on the South Side has begun to gain momentum and a number of homes and commercial buildings have been restored or painted during the past few months. Several of them are pictured below. Also, the Birmingham Corporation has been formed to purchase and restore BIRMINGHAM properties throughout the South Side. The corporation has offered to purchase the South Side Market House, completely restore it as a Market House, and rent it to vendors of exotic and nationality foods as well as for farmers' market stalls. In the spring, PPG Industries supplied us with 2,000 copies of a specially designed paint chart provided by the Pittsburgh AIA and it has been given to property owners who have requested it.



General meeting - March 19, 1970, dining room of Eastminster United Presbyterian Church, Highland Avenue and Station Street, East Liberty. Entrance on Harvard Street. Parking off Penn Circle North, behind Gulf station and on Harvard Street, off North Highland Mall.

LANDMARKS ASSOCIATES

PRINTS

George Nama, owner of Antique Graphics in Shadyside has donated a number of reprints of two early Pittsburgh scenes, c. 1840-1850, that we are now selling. Pittsburgh and Allegheny, and Pittsburgh From the Northwest. Both prints show the downtown area and the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers. They are suitable for framing and make excellent gifts. Mr. Nama has also donated a rare book, Pittsburgh and Allegheny, an 1855 map of the Pittsburgh area, a lithograph of the court house, and a Rawsthorne Gravure. We appreciate his generosity and look forward to displaying these items in our new museum.

 Enclosed is a check for _____. Send prints indicated below. Make checks payable to:

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

Name _____

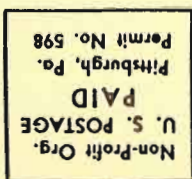
Address _____

_____ print(s) of Pittsburgh & Allegheny @\$5 (black & white)	
	@\$10 (color)
_____ print(s) of Pittsburgh from Northwest @\$5 (black & white)	
	@\$10 (color)
Total	_____
6% Sales Tax	_____
Total amount enclosed	_____

See page 4.

to meet.

Landmarks Associates



PITTSBURGH HISTORY & LANDMARKS FOUNDATION
 900 BENEDUM-TREES BUILDING
 PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA 15222

