

Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation

NEWS FOR MEMBERS
NUMBER 19 - APRIL 1970

THE RESTORATION FUND A REPORT

In December 1966 the Sarah Mellon Scaife Foundation, with a grant of \$100,000 established our Restoration Fund to purchase and restore houses of architectural worth in various areas of Allegheny County. We immediately established a restoration program in the Mexican War Streets area of North Side and in Manchester. In the former we try to rent and sell houses to persons and families of various income levels and to induce others to do the same. In Manchester we are working with the Urban Redevelopment Authority to restore the entire area with minimal dislocation. Both programs are unique in the United States. We reported to our members on our progress in The Five Year Report, mailed several months ago. Members are restoring about a dozen houses along with nine that we own. Since then several major events have occurred as described in this newsletter.

A. W. MELLON EDUCATIONAL & CHARITABLE TRUST GIVES \$50,000 TO THE RESTORATION FUND

The trustees of the A. W. Mellon Educational & Charitable Trust have allocated a grant of \$50,000, to our Restoration Fund based on a proposal we submitted in 1969 reviewing our goals in restoring houses in the Mexican War Streets area, Manchester, and South Side. In notifying us of the grant the President of the Trust, Mr. Theodore L. Hazlett, Jr., said, "the trustees expressed considerable interest in this project finding it innovative and having broad social overtones." Money from this grant is being expended on several of our properties in the Mexican War Streets and Manchester and part has been utilized to study the relevance of government programs to this work and to the possibility of restoring houses in South Side and renting them to the Pittsburgh Housing Authority in the Leased Housing Program.

MEXICAN WAR STREETS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION ESTABLISHED

The property owners and residents of the Mexican War Streets have joined together at the Foundation's suggestion to form the Mexican War Streets Society. The purpose is to tackle neighborhood problems for the improvement of the area. A recent election saw the following officers elected: Mrs. William Eichleay, Chairman; Mr. and Mrs. Donald Kenagy, First and Second Vice Chairman respectively; Mr. Jay Minsinger, Third Vice Chairman; and Mr. Gary Menice, Program Chairman. Membership is open to all residents and property owners in the area at \$1.00 a year.

BROCHURE PUBLISHED ON MEXICAN WAR STREETS PROGRAM

Fresh off the press is an eight page, vest pocket brochure describing our purposes and accomplishments in the Mexican War Streets area. The illustrated pamphlet serves as an invitation to contribute to The Restoration Fund or to

purchase and restore a house in the Mexican War Streets area. Copies are free to members; please enclose a stamped, self-addressed business-size (#10) envelope with your request.

MR. & MRS. J. C. OLIVER, JR.
ASSIST RESTORATION FUND AND
MEXICAN WAR STREETS PROGRAM

Major assistance for our work has come through the generosity and commitment of PHLF members Mr. & Mrs. John C. Oliver, Jr., of Sewickley. In December 1969 they donated over \$13,000 to the Restoration Fund, stressing their interest in our efforts to restore houses for low and moderate income groups and to achieve a demographic diversity in the Mexican War Streets area. A portion of the donation has been applied to the purchase of a parcel of property containing two houses on Monterey Street and two on Eloise Way in the Mexican War Streets described below. The money has also been used at 1246 Resaca Place and 1220 Monterey Street both of which rent primarily to low income persons and families.

Besides this significant donation to our Restoration Fund, Mr. & Mrs. Oliver have also purchased from us one of the key houses in the Mexican War Streets area, the Romanesque house at 1201 Buena Vista. They have appointed us to restore it for them, and work is underway with a completion date scheduled for early fall. This magnificent endeavor by this fine family will bring new vitality to our program and will give us our first restored house on Buena Vista Street.

FOUR HOUSES ACQUIRED

With funds from Mr. & Mrs. J. C. Oliver, Jr., we have acquired four key properties in the Mexican War Streets area, all on the corner parcel at Monterey Street and Eloise Way. One house has been vacant for over a year and we will begin work on it this fall. Three of the properties now rent to low income persons, and this pattern will be continued. The corner house will be restored and will contain three apartments that will rent at moderate to middle income rates. Thus our efforts to achieve demographic diversity will be sustained in this new complex.



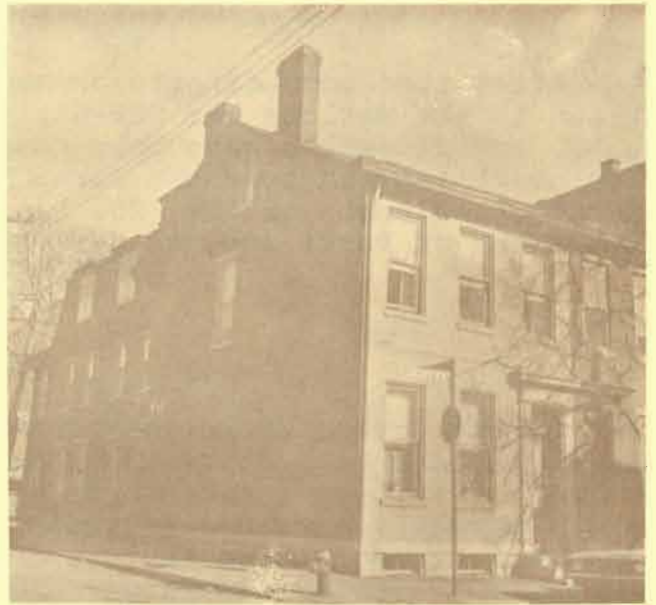
We are offering 1246 Resaca Place in the Mexican War Streets area for sale. This is a corner property and has three stories with a mansard roof on the side. It is built of brick and has a small rear yard as well as three entrances on the first floor. To date we have expended a considerable amount of time and money in cleaning the house very thoroughly (in particular the basement) and we have re-

PHLF HOUSE
FOR SALE

restored the third floor as a very nice, one bedroom apartment. The house needs more restor-

ation work and we are looking for a purchaser who might like to undertake it either himself or by employing an outside contractor or by employing PHLF. Priority

work includes a new heating system, major roof and cornice repairs, and a fire escape. Other interior work could be done as the owner would wish. PHLF owns three other properties in the Mexican War Streets area which we plan to retain as anchor houses, and a number of our members have already bought and are restoring houses. In the future it will be the policy of the Foundation to purchase houses that are on the market and need to be secured for the benefit of the area, to make whatever immediate repairs are necessary, and then as frequently as possible, we will offer them to purchasers who will undertake their restoration. Written into the purchase agreement is a covenant protecting the facade of the structure for 99 years. The covenant permits the owner to make no alterations to the facade except to restore it to its original character. The sales price is \$15,000. Taxes and transfer stamps must be borne by the buyer.



HILLCREST GARDEN CLUB TO ADD WINDOW BOXES TO PHLF HOUSES

The members of the Hillcrest Garden Club have generously offered to provide and plant window boxes for our houses in the Mexican War Streets. We feel that window boxes will add some lovely grace notes in this area where the houses front directly on the street and we are very grateful to the ladies of the club for this undertaking which will add so much beauty to the neighborhood. Board of directors member Louise M. Boesel is serving as liaison with the club, of which she is also a member. Mrs. Boesel recently completed a splendid restoration of a house on Monterey Street. Two years ago she restored a fine three story house on Resaca Place.



Shown here is the striking yard recently landscaped by Mr. & Mrs. William Eichleay, members who recently took up residence at 1218 Monterey Street. Mrs. Eichleay used the pebbles because "its lovely and neat every season of the year".

MONTEREY STREET PAVED; TREES PLANTED

After strenuous efforts on our part, the trolley tracks on Monterey Street in the Mexican War Streets have been removed and the entire street, curbs, and sidewalks have been completely replaced. With assistance to the City of Pittsburgh from the Sarah Mellon Scaife Foundation, trees have been planted the length of the 1200 block, for which thanks are also due to the Department of Parks and Mr. Earl Blankenship, chief forester.

FUNDS NEEDED
HOUSES FOR SALE

We are trying to restore houses in the Mexican War Streets, Manchester, and South Side with funds that have totalled \$180,000 since December 1966. With today's construction costs, it is not hard to understand our urgent need for more funds. We ask that members and friends consider the value of this work and donate to the Restoration Fund. Small donations are welcome; for those interested in larger grants, we can apply them as partial or full payment for the purchase or restoration of particular houses. All donations are used over and over because the fund revolves through sales and rentals.

Currently houses are available that we should acquire at prices from \$7,000 to \$47,000, the latter for a complex of contiguous structures of great importance to us in the Mexican War Streets. Our executive director, Arthur Ziegler, will be pleased to show any interested persons the work to date and houses we would like to acquire.

For those who would like to restore a house for a residence or investment, we also invite you to call the office, and to meet those who have already committed themselves to this project at a meeting of the Mexican War Streets Association.

NOTE: THROUGH FINANCING AND FOUNDATION GRANTS, EVERY DOLLAR GIVEN TO THE RESTORATION FUND FINANCES \$3.00 WORTH OF RESTORATION. AND THROUGH SALES AND RENTALS, YOUR GIFT IS USED OVER AND OVER AS A PERMANENTLY REVOLVING GRANT.

MEXICAN WAR STREETS PROGRAM

SPECIAL ISSUE

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