

Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation

NEWS FOR MEMBERS

NUMBER 20 - MAY JUNE 1970

WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEARST FOUNDATION
GRANTS \$10,000

We are pleased to announce that we have received a \$10,000 grant from the William Randolph Hearst Foundation through their WTAE division here in Pittsburgh. A portion of the grant is to help defray the expenses of our national conference on historic preservation, which we will host here in Pittsburgh in September. The remainder will be used to carry on our general work.

In a statement to the press, Charles Covert Arensberg, president of PHLF said, "We want publicly to acknowledge the assistance given to us by the officials of WTAE in securing this grant from the Hearst Foundation and in many other ways through the years. They have always been a very cordial and sympathetic group to work with."

Mr. Arensberg added that it was very reassuring to have the support of a national foundation; "It confirms our belief that many of the techniques of restoration and preservation that are being applied here could be used throughout the country."

The proposal to the Hearst Foundation reviewed the total work of PHLF and David W. Hearst, president of the Foundation, noted that the largest portion of the grant should be allocated to general financing of all programs.

Over two years ago the city committed itself to restoring the Allegheny Library and vacated the building in order to do the work. However, bids came in at a much higher cost than projected, and the entire project was shelved temporarily. We have been working with various city agencies and the library board to find a solution to the problems; recently City Council announced that restoration work will begin as quickly as possible.

ALLEGHENY LIBRARY TO BE RESTORED Thanks are due to many community organizations and citizens who actively sought the restoration of the library. The Mexican War Streets Association, The Central Neighborhood Council, the Allegheny West Organization, the North Side Chamber of Commerce, and the Allegheny Society along with PHLF secured over 7,000 signatures on petitions to have the building restored. Not only is this structure historically significant as the first library Carnegie commissioned but it is visually important in Allegheny Center and is a keystone in the cultural ell that we have been promoting in North Side. We commend this city for initiating work on this project again and trust that within a year the building will be functioning.

The Foundation is again participating in the Three Rivers Arts Festival by placing an exhibit in the windows of Gateway Two. The brokerage firm of Arthurs, LeStrange & Company has graciously donated their windows to us again this year as they have several times in the past. Our exhibit concentrates on two of our major projects: the Mexican War Streets restoration program and the Manchester Historic Preservation Study, which we announced in an earlier newsletter. We urge our members to see our exhibit when they attend the art festival.

Landmarks Associates, the volunteer arm of Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation, will hold a general meeting on Sunday, June 14, at 2:00 p.m. at Fellowship Hall of Trinity Lutheran Church on the North Side at West North Avenue and Buena Vista Streets. All members, both men and women, are urged to attend.

ASSOCIATES
MEETING

BIRMINGHAM RESTORATION PROGRAM

The Birmingham Restoration Program received a major thrust recently when the exterior of the Mellon Bank building on East Carson Street was cleaned and new windows were installed. The handsome Renaissance structure, built about 1905, joins the growing list of commercial and residential buildings being re-



stored on the South Side. Mr. William Foulis, manager of the South Side office, said that both the exterior and the interior are being refurbished. Mr. Foulis pointed out that exterior lamps, similar to those on the Chamber of Commerce building will complete the exterior work. The Birmingham Program is a plan whereby the South Side can remain an attractive community for both residents and business through the restoration of the fine old architecture in the community rather than through government programs with their resultant demolition and uprooting of residents. The program is sponsored

by the South Side Chamber of Commerce, the South Side Community Council, and Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation.

We are happy to say that the Burtner house, which we had reported to have been demolished is still standing. Lacking any solution for the preservation of the house, we had retrieved the mantles, made a photographic record, and sighed our last sad sigh. Suddenly community interest was sparked by several women in Harrison Township including Mrs. Joseph A. Ferree and Mrs. Norman H. Jacobs. The civic clubs rallied round and over a thousand local residents signed petitions to the Highways Department to save the house.

BURTNER HOUSE
STILL STANDS

Fred DePasquale, Deputy District Engineer, at the last instant, when the wrecker was already on the way to the house and out of telephone contact, dispatched a man from his office to the Burtner house to stop the wrecker's ball. With only minutes to spare, the wrecker was stopped and a month's extension has been granted. The local groups are now forming a "Save the Burtner House Committee" and already have over \$10,000 pledged to the restoration. Still, we must persuade the Highways Department to move the troublesome proposed ramp.

At the present time, we have several very nice one bedroom apartments for rent on Resaca Place in the Mexican War Streets restoration district.

FOR RENT

They have been renovated, and each one retains the original architectural detailing, mantels, and hardware that make them unique. Two apartments have log-burning fireplaces and several have pleasant backyards and courts. Rents range from \$120 to \$150 plus electricity. For more information, call Mr. Shane at our office, 281-6207.

First Summer Sunday Afternoon Walking Tour Announced

VANISHING DUTCHTOWN

2:00 P.M. Sunday June 28, 1970

The Dutchtown section of North Side is rapidly being bulldozed for Interstate 79. This area, which lies between eastern Allegheny Commons and the H. J. Heinz Company plant, was developed in the 1830s when the Pennsylvania canal passed through. Several buildings still exist from that era although most of them have been demolished within recent weeks. Hundreds of houses and several churches that were built between 1850-1895 are also facing their last days and many have already been destroyed.

Under a grant from the Federal Bureau of Roads and the Pennsylvania Department of Highways we are carrying out a \$45,540 project of recording these buildings and retrieving artifacts.

Our tour will take us along the streets of this once charming but now sad area; we will visit the oldest remaining Catholic church in the diocese, two Victorian churches, and the historic Avery College, a Greek Revival structure that is important in local Negro history.

We will meet in the nave of St. Mary's R.C. Church on Lockhart, at Madison Street just one block east of Cedar Avenue, which parallels the Allegheny Commons. Parking is available on the surrounding streets. The church is served by bus routes 1A, 1C, 1D, 1E, 1F boarding downtown at Tenth and Liberty in front of the Clark Building. This will be the last opportunity to see this historic area and we encourage our members to make this walk with us before the district is transmogrified into a tangle of concrete.

Admission: Free to members
\$2 each for non-members

Please make _____ reservations for me of which _____ are for members and _____ are for non-members.

My check in the amount of \$ _____ is enclosed for non-members.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

To save expense, tickets will not be mailed; reservations will be checked at the door.

FIVE YEAR REPORT

The Five Year Report that we published in January has received many compliments both locally and nationally. Below are several letters praising the report.

I was delighted to receive a copy of the impressive and beautifully produced Five Year Report of the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation. Congratulations on what you are doing for this splendid cause. J. Carter Brown.

I have just received the very informative and extremely well done Five Year Report to landmark members. My congratulations! P. M. Gwaltney, Jr.

Thank you very much for sending me your handsome Five Year Report. All of your material is extremely well done and informative and the job you are doing merits the highest praise. Deirdre Stanforth

I wanted you to know how very nice the new booklet looks. My congratulations! Leonore R. Elkus.

We are extremely impressed by your Five Year Report. You and your staff can indeed be proud of so handsome a publication to describe so outstanding a program. Thank you for remembering AASLH with a copy of the Report. Paula A. Hiles.

You are all to be congratulated on the handsome appearance and impressive content of your Five Year Report. It is a remarkable record of achievement exceeding by far my most optimistic anticipations for this organization. It restores my faith in the ultimate good intentions of people when I think back to the conditions when I first arrived in Pittsburgh in 1927. I have read every page and studied all the pictures with amazement that such miracles could happen. I am especially delighted to read that the old post office has been saved. Keep up the good work. Ralph E. Griswold

The Pittsburgh Chapter of Women in Construction #161 was presented an award at the Women in Construction forum held in Philadelphia recently for their work in assisting PHLF to complete the national register forms for a number of buildings listed in Landmark Architecture of Allegheny County. The local chapter, which is a member of Landmark Associates, volunteered to complete this very important work and they have been devoting a great deal of time to this project in recent months. We congratulate them for winning the award and thank them for aiding us in our work.

The Foundation is participating in the Architects' Week Traveling Exhibit that is being sponsored by the Pittsburgh Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. Architects' Week began April 13. We entered two boards; one describes our Mexican War Streets program and the other explains our Manchester Historic Preservation Study that we are doing under contract with the Urban Redevelopment Authority. Both boards contain photographs and brief text. The exhibit will be displayed at the William Penn Hotel during Architects' Week and then it will be exhibited at public places throughout the county. It will appear at the South Hills Village Mall, April 20-25, Monroeville Mall, April 27 to May 2, Allegheny Center Mall, May 1 to May 9, Northgate Mall, May 11 to May 16, and Greengate Mall, May 18 to May 23.



Mexican War Streets Restoration Area, Pittsburgh

NEW NOTEPAPER

An artist has sketched three lovely scenes of our Mexican War Streets restoration area to serve as illustrations for new notepaper for our organization. One is shown above and the others include an individual house and a Victorian doorway.

They are line drawings in brown ink on an ivory stock. This notepaper, unlike the standard type, has two folds and opens to a large writing area of approximately 7" x 9 1/4". The drawings are very well done and will make a handsome addition to everyone's stationery supply as well as a unique gift. Use of the paper will help develop public awareness of this restoration program that we have been working on since 1967 in Allegheny. The cost is \$1.86 per box including tax and postage, with 15 pieces in a box.

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

Please send me _____ boxes of Mexican War Streets notepaper
@ \$ _____ including tax. My check is enclosed.

Name _____

Address _____

ANOTHER MEXICAN
WAR STREETS RES-
TORTATION



These "before" and "after" photographs show very graphically the excellent restoration of this house at 1214 Monterey Street. Owned by Foundation director, Mrs. Kenneth Boesel, the house has been carefully restored both inside and out. The interior has been renovated to accommodate contemporary living needs, while retaining the original architectural details and hardware. On the exterior the bricks were steam cleaned and pointed, and the trim was painted a handsome lime-green. In addition, the yard has been landscaped. Many of our members are familiar with Mrs. Boesel's first restoration project on the Mexican War Streets, 1213 Resaca Place.

Commendations to Jerry Peckitch. After restoring the Victorian Building on Carson Street at Eleventh so elegantly and successfully, Mr. Peckitch has acquired and is now restoring two more key properties on strategic corners of Carson Street in South Side in conjunction with our Birmingham program. Work is now going forward with the Carson Curb Market next to the South Side Market House and he has begun work on the Hahn building at Seventeenth & Carson Streets. Mr. Peckitch will retain the market on the first floor level of the former and will have apartments above, in the Hahn building he will provide new office space. As always he plans a faithful restoration. If we had 50 more like Mr. Peckitch, Carson Street would be restored and blossoming as a nineteenth century shopping area.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press has announced that it has commissioned James Van Trump and Arthur Ziegler of our staff to write a guidebook to the modern architecture of the Pittsburgh region. MIT has initiated a series of guidebooks to contemporary urban architecture, and this one will be third to be issued. The authors plan to examine current local architecture in light of the historical developments in building design here and will open the book with an historical essay about the architecture of the area.

*Landmark Associates To Meet
First Summer Walking Tour
To Be Announced*

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