

Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation

NEWS FOR MEMBERS

NUMBER 24 - JANUARY FEBRUARY 1971

MUSEUM CONTRACTS LET RESTORATION WORK NOW UNDERWAY MORE FUNDS REQUIRED

On December 8th our board of directors reviewed the bids from thirteen contractors for the basic restoration work on the North Side Post Office to convert it to The Landmarks Museum and awarded the contract to Henry Busse, Inc. This bid totalled \$494,000. Special interior work and furnishings and development of the garden court together with architectural-engineering fees and contingencies add an additional \$224,000 to the cost. We must also pay the Urban Redevelopment Authority \$116,000 for the building.

The total required is \$835,784.97. We have \$744,627.63 in hand and therefore must raise an additional \$91,057.34. A commitment of \$375,000 from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has been denied as reported in an earlier newsletter.

However, it is possible to complete the basic work by fall of 1971 and proceed with some of the remaining work as funds are raised. We have therefore determined to proceed forthwith believing that the community, which has supported the campaign so fully, will see it through to completion.

HOWARD HEINZ ENDOWMENT ADDS \$25,000 TO MUSEUM FUND

The Howard Heinz Endowment has generously contributed \$25,000 to the restoration fund for the Landmarks Museum. The grant comes at just the right moment. When bids were opened on 8 December 1970 we found ourselves short \$116,000 to complete the full work and approximately \$25,000 even to complete the basic work. Without this money we could not proceed as we could not finish the office areas of the interior so that the staff could be moved to the museum and establish our headquarters there.

Almost at the very time that we were reviewing the bids the trustees for the Heinz Endowment were reviewing our proposal requesting a grant for this work and subsequently they notified us that a grant of \$25,000 had been made and we immediately awarded the bid for the museum.

A few months ago we had the commitment of funds from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania if we raised \$700,000. After we received a considerable sum of money from the community and private foundations, business and labor, as well as private individuals, the trustees of the Sarah Mellon Scaife Foundation granted \$250,000 that enabled us to qualify for the state funds. However, the state at that time withdrew the money and we trimmed down our budget but we simply could not trim it down far enough. The grant from the Heinz Endowment now enables us to proceed on the reduced budget at least to get the building in good shape again and to get the office operating.

PHLF ACQUIRES FOUR HOUSES IN BIRMINGHAM



We are pleased to announce that we have acquired four houses on Jane Street in Birmingham (South Side). These houses are severely deteriorated but have architectural promise. The 1880 exteriors are intact and we plan to restore all four and will probably rent them under the Leased Housing Program to the Pittsburgh Housing Authority for low income tenants.

This entire block of Jane Street is decaying rapidly and we felt that restoring these houses would help arrest the blight that will otherwise spread through the area.

Work will begin within the next six weeks on the first house and on the others shortly thereafter.

Shown above are three of the four houses. The fourth stands several doors down the street.

We extend 100th birthday best wishes to the Allegheny County Bar Association, the oldest county bar association in the United States. As one of the many anniversary events during 1970, the Centennial Committee of the Bar Association under the chairmanship of Charles Covert Arensberg, our president, assembled a special exhibit "Early Wills & Legal Artifacts". PHLF was appointed to compile biographies and other relevant information, prepare the exhibit, and write a catalog. Mr. Arensberg and his committee gathered the various items from government bureaus and private persons. Included in the exhibit are the wills of Hugh Henry Brackenridge, Ebenezer Denny, James O'Hara, Thomas A. Mellon, and numerous oddity wills. One leaves a rope "for which to hang my wife" and if that doesn't work, money to purchase poison as "she is rotten to the core!" The exhibit also includes early photographs, maps, and portraits. Our members were invited to the reception for the exhibit on 19 November and may view it further at the Pitt Art Gallery until 11 January.



ANNUAL MEETING
January 20
Author Allan Eckert To Speak
New Directors Nominated

On January 20th at 8:30 p.m. in the Fort Pitt Museum in Point State Park we will gather for our annual meeting. This year, however, rather than reviewing our work which has been reported on regularly in the newsletter, we will hear a lecture by Allan W. Eckert who has written more than 200 magazine articles on history, nature, and wildlife preservation and who has just published the third volume in his series "The Winning of America". It is entitled The Conquerors and is an immense undertaking in itself. Several of the volumes include the early days of Pittsburgh.

The Nominating Committee composed of Theodore Bowman and Samuel Golden have recommended the nomination of the following directors to stand for re-election:

Lawrence C. Howard
James W. Knox
J. Craig Kuhn

Henry Oliver, Jr.
Mrs. William C. Robinson, Jr.
Mrs. James M. Walton

The committee nominates the following persons to fill vacancies on the board:

1971

Richard D. Edwards
Mrs. Paul B. Ernst
Alfred M. Hunt

1972

Mrs. Dorothy M. Richardson
John P. Davis, Jr.

1973

James Bibro

1975

Mrs. David L. Genter
Mr. Joseph M. Katz

For officers the committee nominates the following:

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| President: | Charles Covert Arensberg |
| Vice Presidents: | Mrs. Henry P. Hoffstot, J. Judson Brooks, Ralph E. Griswold, James W. Knox, James D. Van Trump |
| Secretary: | Mrs. Robert E. Fulton |
| Assistant Secretary: | Arthur P. Ziegler, Jr. |
| Treasurer: | William R. Oliver |

With the completion of the restoration of 1201 Buena Vista Street by Mr. & Mrs. J. C. Oliver, Jr., and several other units as well, MORE APARTMENTS AVAILABLE we now have some extremely fine apartments for rent in the Mexican War Streets area. Sizes range from two room efficiencies to two-bedroom units. All are newly restored, have lovely kitchens, and in most cases are carpeted. Rents from \$100 to \$225 plus electric and gas.

PROGRESS REPORT ON I-79 WORK

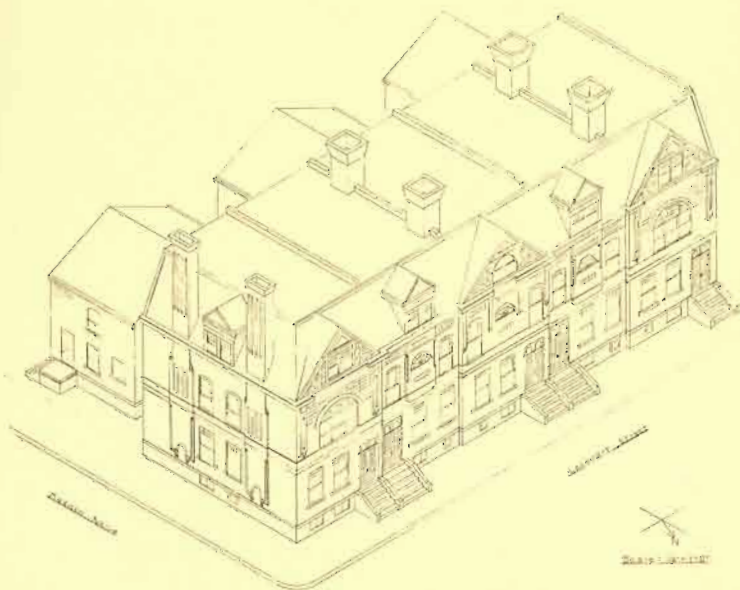
Under our grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Highways, we are continuing to photograph and measure and draw the fine buildings that are to be demolished on North Side for Interstate 79. Warren Schweitzer has retrieved many architectural fittings and interior ornaments for reuse in our restoration work. Mr. Van Trump has been walking the area and writing up an architectural description. The following is from his notes.

The architecture of the Dutchtown and East Street valley area runs the entire gamut of 19th century American urban architecture from the Greek Revival to the Colonial Revival of the 1900s. Since Dutchtown was fairly well settled by the 1830s, that area possessed some handsome Greek Revival houses, particularly along Canal Street, which was at mid-century a "good" residential street.

The most notable Greek Revival in the entire district is, however, the Avery Institute at Avery and Nash, which is much identified with local Negro history. A handsome example, unique in Pittsburgh, of the Neo-Classicism of the early 19th century is St. Mary's R.C. Church (1853-1854) on Pressly Street at Nash. St. John's Lutheran Church (1868-1870) at Madison and Lockhart is a large, gaunt, but impressive, church in the High Victorian vernacular Gothic manner of the mid-century.

Much of the domestic architecture of the Dutchtown and East Street areas is of the mid-century vernacular Italianate-Second Empire type with occasionally a Richardsonian Romanesque example.

Up the East Street valley is the district's one notable example of 20th century architecture--St. Boniface R.C. Church (1925-1926), which is a handsome domed building in stone in the Byzantine-Romanesque style of the 1920s. The dome and vaulting of the interior are done in Guastavino tiles.



P&LE RAILROAD STATION--
SAVED???

Last summer developers announced the proposed Mon-Plaza complex to be built along the southern side of the Monongahela River opposite the Golden Triangle planned to consist of an office building, a hotel, restaurants, and other facilities. Missing from the plans, however, was the P&LE Railroad Station with its superb Edwardian waiting room. (See LAAC, p.43)

We wrote to the developers as follows:

The great waiting room of the P&LE Station is undoubtedly after the foyer of the Pittsburgh Carnegie Music Hall, the finest Edwardian interior space extant in Western Pennsylvania. Its elegance, its grace, its considerable drama create one of the greatest architectural spectacles this area has ever known. We would hope that the structure could continue to function in the new plaza since you are attempting to create particular kinds of atmosphere and a variety of facilities.

You have in this singular structure one of the potentially greatest attractions that has been developed in this city. We know that it could be used to increase the visitors to the area. In fact if you would promote the Smithfield Street bridge, the P&LE Station, the Monongahela Incline, and the old streetcar tunnel as a complex of Victorian transportation systems, you would have one of the best tourist attractions in the world.

The response was excellent. Russell O. Deeter, partner in the architectural-development firm and a director of PHLF, promised new studies of the feasibility of saving the Station. We then met with several designers in the Deeter-Ritchey-Sippel office and proposed adaptive uses for the building.

Since that time the City Planning Commission has ruled that the Pittsburgh Convention Center may be located in the complex provided that the Station is saved, partly as a result of our recommendation.

In October we placed one of our "Historic Landmark" plaques on the Station.

The rebuilding of North Avenue along the perimeter of the Allegheny Commons is now complete. Two years ago when the plans were being formulated for this project, we learned that they called for the widening of North Avenue by about twelve feet and the elimination of the great strand of elms that parallels the entire length of the street. We joined with the Department of Parks of the City to protest this benighted plan, and we

TREES SAVED worked out a useful compromise whereby the street was widened only between Cedar and Federal Streets and in no place wide enough to disturb the great elms. Last month we recommended to the Forestry Department that young trees be planted between the elms so that they will begin to mature in the event that the elm blight, which has affected a few of the trees at the western end, should spread. We are pleased to report that Mr. Earl Blankenship has endorsed our suggestion and says that the planting will begin in the spring.

PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE

The enthusiastic sales response to the publications that we have offered to members via recent newsletters has prompted us to initiate a regular listing of publications dealing with history, architecture, urban planning, restoration, conservation, and related subjects that we feel our members will be interested in purchasing for their home libraries. Listed below is our first offering.

The Ohio Canals, by Frank Wilcox \$15.00
hardbound

This pictorial survey is a record of this important transportation system, employing both words and illustrations in an authoritative description of these historic waterways.

Andrew Carnegie, by Joseph Frazier Wall \$15.00
hardbound

A biography of a giant of American industry--the first full life of Carnegie in more than a generation reveals every aspect of the man's complex personality and fabulous career.

The Conquerors, by Allan Eckert \$10.00
hardbound

A historic narrative dealing with Pontiac's uprising, the conquering English who undertook the dangers of the Indian trade for profit and for the adventure of opening a new land, and of the Indians who were driven to violence to protect their way of life from an alien civilization.

The Architectural Heritage of
Early Western Pennsylvania, \$17.50
by Charles M. Stotz hardbound

This large volume of photographs, measured drawings, and text by the well-known Mr. Stotz is a definitive record of local building before 1860.

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

Please send me the following:

| | |
|--|---|
| _____ <u>The Ohio Canals</u> @ \$15.00 | _____ <u>The Architectural Heritage of</u> |
| _____ <u>Andrew Carnegie</u> @ \$15.00 | _____ <u>Early Western Pennsylvania</u> @ \$17.50 |
| _____ <u>The Conquerors</u> @ \$10.00 | |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|----|-----------|
| Total of my order..... | \$ | _____ |
| 6% Pennsylvania sales tax..... | \$ | _____ |
| Postage & handling..... | \$ | _____ .50 |
| TOTAL..... | \$ | _____ |

Name _____

Address _____

WE ARE GRATIFIED TO ANNOUNCE RECENT SPECIAL GIFTS TO OUR WORK

For The Restoration Fund
*For Use In Mexican War Streets,
Birmingham, Manchester, Hill District*

Mrs. George L. Craig, Jr.

Mr. & Mrs. John C. Oliver, Jr.

For The Landmarks Museum Fund
For Use In Restoring The North Side Post Office

Mrs. James Ballantyne, Jr.
Margaret Shaw Campbell
Eichleay Foundation
The Hunt Foundation
Women's Fortnightly Review
of Mount Lebanon
Frame Electric Company
Edgar J. Kaufmann Foundation
Howard Heinz Endowment
Herbick & Held Printing Company

Kennametal Corporation
Kiwanis Club of Pittsburgh
Mayflower Descendents of Pa.
Margaretta Phillips
Pitcairn-Crabbe Foundation
The Pittsburgh Foundation:
Charles Spang Fund
Wherrett Memorial Fund
PPG Industries Foundation
Vesuvius Crucible Company

For The Robert Baur Memorial Fund
For Developing The Garden Court At The Museum

Philip LeMaistre Foundation

Jane A. Tiegal

For The Photography Fund
To Record Significant Buildings

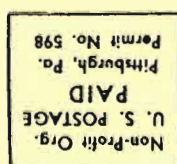
The Rust Foundation

For The General Fund

The Bergstrom Foundation
H. M. Bitner Charitable Trust
Mrs. J. Judson Brooks
Anna and George L. Clapp Trust
Deeter-Ritchey-Sippel
J. B. Finley Trust
Mary and Leland Hazard Fund
William Randolph Hearst Fund
(Courtesy WTAE-TV)
The Katz Foundation

Karen A. Klaphake
J.S. McCormick Charitable Trust
The Mudge Foundation
Passavant Hospital Medical Staff
PPG Industries Foundation
Henry Oliver Rea Charitable Trust
The Rockwell Foundation
Western Colony Fund

Author Allan Eckert
To Address Annual Meeting
January 20, 1970



PITTSBURGH HISTORY &
LANDMARKS FOUNDATION
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