

Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation

PHLF ACQUIRES EXTENSIVE KING-LUSK PROPERTIES IN MEXICAN WAR STREETS AREA



Utilizing funds from recent grants from the Sarah Mellon Scaife Foundation and the A. W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, we have exercised an option that we have held several years with Mr. H. G. Lusk on a group of properties that he and his wife owned at Monterey and Taylor Streets. The package includes one house and three apartment houses on Monterey, a storeroom at the corner of Monterey and Taylor, and five houses on Taylor.

These houses were probably built after 1870 by Alexander King. His son Robert B. King held them for many years and then sold them to Mr. Lusk, who was his real estate agent. Mr. Lusk has retained them ever since. Because he has appreciated the improvements that have come to the area under our community restoration program, he allowed us to hold our verbal option for about three years while we raised purchase funds.

The buildings consist of both two and three story structures with cast iron and wood ornamentation.

We plan to restore some of the units as single family housing, create several apartments of various sizes, and maintain our policy of making restored structures available to a variety of income groups. In every case possible we will not dislocate tenants. This group of buildings will become a firm anchor in the area and will give new strength to our work, particularly on Taylor Avenue. These are our first properties facing on Taylor and constitute a continuous half block.

Museum News

Dust, debris, a great hole punched through the floors, new concrete forms, and wiring everywhere, these constitute the story of the old post office at the moment. The contractor has been doing demolition work in the building for the past six weeks and is now starting to build the new fire stair, elevator, and office floor. One of the most pleasant discoveries was the quality of brick in the walls and columns under the old plaster in the basement. These have been sandblasted and we have decided to let them remain visible. Now we are investigating whether we can do the same with the brick in the barrel vaulted ceiling.

Congressman Moorhead and Congressman Fulton have introduced a bill in the House of Representatives to enable us to obtain the building at no cost from the federal government. Senators Scott and Schweiker will be introducing the same bill in the Senate. If the bill passes we would save \$85,000. Write your congressman and the two senators favoring this bill.



Telegram

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CHARLES ARENSBERG PRES PGH HISTORY AND LANDMARKS FOUNDATION
900 BENEDUM TREES BLDG PGH 15222

AM GLAD TO ADVISE HAVE INTRODUCED WITH CONGRESSMAN WILLIAM
MOORHEAD BILL TO PROVIDE THAT ALLEGHENY CENTR URBAN RENEWAL
PROJECT MAY DONATE NORTH SIDE POST OFFICE TO PITTSBURGH HISTORY
AND LANDMARKS FOUNDATION HAVE ALSO ASKED SENATORS SCOTT AND
SCHWEIKER TO INTRODUCE THIS LEGISLATION ON SENATE SIDE WE WILL
CONTINUE TO KEEP YOU ADVISED ON THE PROGRESS OF THIS BILL
ALWAYS GLAD TO BE OF ASSISTANCE

CONGRESSMAN

JIM FULTON

MEXICAN WAR STREETS HOUSE TOUR

We are pleased to announce that the Mexican War Streets house tour will be held on June 20th from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. We changed the date from April to June so that we could be more assured of warm weather and so that the gardens and the Allegheny Commons will be in full bloom. Houses recently restored by members as well as houses of old-time residents will be open for public viewing. This should be a festive celebration of the many fine restorations now proceeding or completed in the Mexican War Streets area.

Tickets must be ordered in advance and are available to members and the general public at a cost of \$3.00. We also hope that each of our members will be able to sell tickets. All income will be applied to further work in the Mexican War Streets area.

The steering committee for the house tour program consists of Louise Boesel, Sandra Kenagy, Ann Genter, Marge Eichleay, Barbara Russell, and Arthur P. Ziegler, Jr. Sub-committee chairman appointments will soon be announced. *We need volunteers for the day of the tour to take tickets in each house. If you can help, please call the office at 281-6207.*

Working with us on the tour are the members of Landmark Associates and the Mexican War Streets Society.

A Greek Revival house (c. 1820) is for sale. It is located at 123 Faybern Court, three miles from East Liberty, the house is situated on one acre of land and has four bedrooms, two baths and a powder room, a large kitchen, enclosed patio, and a double garage. An unusual feature is a trickling spring in the basement. Interested persons should contact Mr. Frank Schiller, 661-3651. See p. 225 in LAAC.

The Pittsburgh Press recently recognized the volunteer aid given PHLF by the Pittsburgh Chapter of Women In Construction. The article noted that the local group won two awards at a regional forum and one of the awards was for their assistance in completing the national register forms for a number of buildings listed in Landmark Architecture of Allegheny County. Mrs. Geraldine Dellostretto, a foundation member and chairman of the WIC projects committee, pointed out that members of the women's organization also find time to address envelopes, label artifacts, and compile biographies of prominent early Pittsburghers. Our May-June Newsletter reviewed the work of this fine organization.

Under the guidance of Professor Robert Stipe (of the Institute of Government of the University of North Carolina), the National Trust for Historic Preservation is initiating a lawyers group within the Trust. One of their intentions is to assemble a mailing list of lawyers throughout the country who would like to receive preservation materials that relate to legal matters. There are no obligations involved but any lawyer who would wish to receive such materials on the progress of legislation and the court cases in this field should send their names to our office.

Soldiers-Sailors Hall Report

By THOMAS P. SNYDER

A "wholly undisciplined staff" is responsible for many of the problems at Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall, according to the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation.

only to obtain courteous service, useful information and helpful guidance but we could also not even contact members of the staff during regular working hours and concluded that frequently certain ones were simply not there."

The report added that hall employees seen "conversing with another

30-Hour Week

County employees under the hours will be commissioners, whose work they're week totals 30 hours, appear Sta

to be in for a rude shock. Chairman Leonard C. Staisey disclosed yesterday at a meeting with the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall board members that the work

SOLDIERS & SAILORS MEMORIAL HALL

Last spring our concern about the neglected landmark Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Hall prompted us to propose to the Allegheny County Commissioners that we undertake a study on its revitalization. The Honorable Loran L. Lewis, Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, aided us in obtaining support for our study. In January we submitted our report on the Hall to the Commissioners, who termed it "courageous". Leonard C. Staisey, Chairman, Thomas J. Foerster, and William R. Hunt, M.D., were all very enthusiastic about our suggestions.

In order to achieve fuller use of the Hall by the community we have recommended:

1. Reduction of a vastly dilated custodial staff and employment of guides and guards, and appointment of a professional director.
2. Creation of an educational program for the schools and the general public.
3. Sponsorship of special exhibits and programs and encouragement of schools and civic groups to organize their own exhibits and programs.
4. Upgrading and expansion of the exhibits.
5. Physical improvements to the structure, including renovation of the auditorium.
6. Increased publicity about the Hall and its facilities.
7. Appointment of PHLF to consult on an annual contract basis in the creation of exhibits and programs.

A significant part of our study was the preparation of a catalog of the artifacts at the Hall. For several months members of Landmark Associates assiduously recorded almost 5,000 items. Every Thursday they were climbing ladders to reach paintings and prints, crawling into narrow exhibit cases, and sorting through dusty boxes of mementos. They have now completed this catalog, identifying each article and assigning it an accession number. Prior to the volunteers' work there had been no record of the Hall's holdings.

However, whether the board of manager of Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Hall, which operates on its own authority with county funds, will put the recommendations into effect is unknown. To date they have ignored the directive of the county commissioners to interview candidates for the directorship together with us and have refused to allow us to attend their meetings. We submitted a budget to the commissioners that would save the taxpayers at least \$5,000 a year and perhaps more, but will the savings be made by the board of managers? We hope that the county commissioners will take a firm hand. As of March 1st the board had appointed a new person to direct the Hall and Museum, a retired fire captain, we are told, who is active in one of the veterans' organizations in town.

It Rips 'Undisciplined Staff'

Out—Staisey

employees under such sched-

Commissioner Leonard C. Staisey suggested that the board meet with Ziegler "and come up with a program of implementation."

The county currently is carrying out a program of physical improvements for the hall beginning with replacement of seats.

new seats
dis-

into an exhibit hall for other than Civil War relics.

✓ Establish the hall as the official county military museum.

✓ Catalogue all possessions in the hall and evaluate paintings.

✓ Establish an audio-visual lecture room for school children.

Lack of Direction Cited

Soldiers, Sailors Hall Accused of Payroll Padding

A report highly critical of payroll padding, inattention and lack of direction at the Allegheny County Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall was put in the hands of the county commissioners yesterday.

The report, prepared by the Allegheny County History and Landmarks Foundation, urged great abandonment of the dining hall, and a complete restructuring of the staff at a cost of \$17,000 to \$19,000.

The 70-page document termed the staff at the hall in Oakland "undisciplined."

Some Not There

"When we first began our studies our identities were not known," Arthur P. Ziegler, foundation executive director, "we found it difficult to obtain courteous service, but information and helpful guidance could not contact members of staff during regular working hours. It concluded that frequently certain staff members simply not there."

"Guests

Sprucing Up Soldiers and Sailors

FEW PITTSBURGHERS have, we suspect, been inside the Allegheny County Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall recently — if ever. Some reasons for their neglect of the Oakland building may be found in a report handed to the county commissioners.

According to this Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation report, many of the building's staff are discourteous to visitors. Some employees can't be found on the premises during working hours. Others sleep on the job while burned-out light bulbs go unreplaced, boxes pile up in front of exhibits, and the gardens outside go to weed. The hall's board of managers hires and pays employees with money budgeted annually by the county commissioners.

Noting that the board employs 19 persons, including 15 utility men and a foreman compared to Syria Mosque (across the street) which employs only three utility men, the report made these recommendations which it says could save county taxpayers up to \$19,000 a year:

► Reduce the board's staff to a full-time director, staff assistants and guides.

► Make the director's prime duty promotion of the hall for rental use by veterans and other groups and for student tours.

► Have workmen from the county's Property and Supplies and Parks departments maintain the building.

► Let the Landmarks Foundation take over and handle museum

development for the hall.

Arthur Ziegler, the foundation's director, correctly points out that in this potentially splendid hall are rather poorly done exhibits relating to military history. When the foundation undertook its study, for example, it found nearly 5,000 artifacts — revolvers, rifles, uniforms, helmets, etc. — lying around, uncatalogued and mostly undisplayed. The report suggests that they be displayed attractively in the building's little-used dining room.

Turning the dark, dingy hall into the showplace it should be is a worthy goal (especially since the county's annual budget for the building is well over \$100,000). The county commissioners would do well, we believe, to endorse the foundation's intelligent and constructive recommendations.

But ultimately the responsibility rests with the various veterans organizations which elect members to the board of managers, of which the three county commissioners are only minority, ex-officio members. The board, in effect, must vote to reform itself or its way of managing the hall.

Until a home rule charter puts the legal responsibilities for the management of institutions like this one into the hands of elected public officials, it will be up to the commissioners (through their control of the purse strings), the public in general and the veterans groups in particular to exert pressure for reformation.

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
SECOND SECTION
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27, 1971

RYAN HOMES FOUNDATION GRANTS \$12,000
FOR PHLF TO RESTORE IN MANCHESTER

During 1969 one of the world's largest home builders, Ryan Homes, Inc., built modern housing on vacant land on Sheffield Street in Manchester. Of this housing and its location and design, we very vocally approved. After completing the housing, Ryan Homes wanted to thank the community by investing its own funds in the restoration of one of the old houses in the area.

We worked with them for several months to develop a program and then we cooperated with the Manchester Development Corporation, a local community organization, to examine various houses that could be restored within the limitations of the budget.

After considerable searching, all parties agreed that the feasible solution was to restore a house that we already owned so that we would not have the added cost of purchase involved. We therefore selected 1329 Liverpool Street, one of the fine structures on the most important street for us in Manchester. We then applied to the Ryan Homes Foundation for a grant that would enable us to pay for most of the restoration in conjunction with a small mortgage.

We are pleased to announce that Ryan Homes Foundation, Inc. has granted \$12,000 to us to undertake this work, which we plan to start within the next few months.

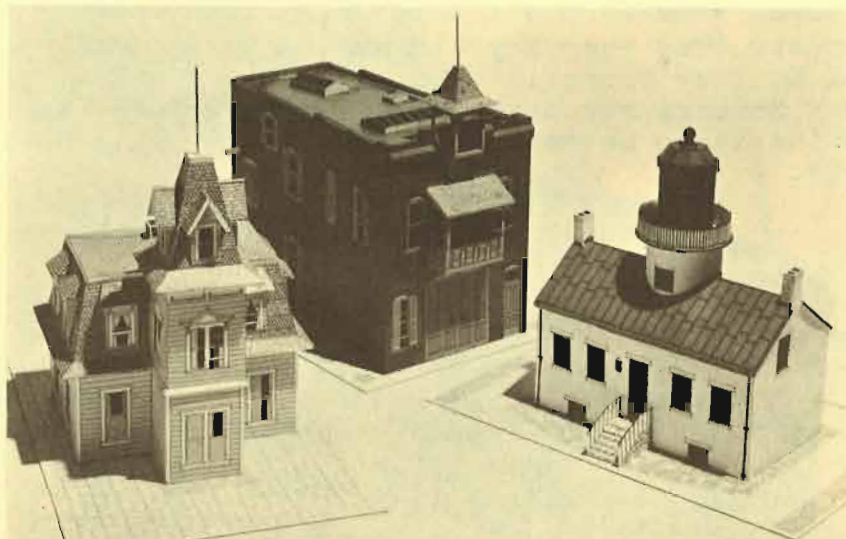
We have been working with James Knox, Director, Allegheny County Housing Authority, in an effort to memorialize General Braddock's defeat at the hands of the French in the construction of the new public high-rise for the elderly in Braddock. The building is rising on or very near the site of Braddock's defeat. Together with Mr. Knox we recommended to the federal government that a fountain be placed near the entranceway of that building to be called the General Braddock Towers. It would provide not only recognition of General Braddock and of the importance of the site on which the structure is located but it also would provide an amenity not generally found in these rather spare federally-constructed buildings. The Department of Housing and Urban Redevelopment rejected the suggestion but Mr. Knox is going to attempt to implement it through his own office if possible. We have also recommended that the new high-rise for the elderly that his agency is building in Carnegie be named the Andrew Carnegie apartments.

L. A. needs you on March 21st

There will be a work party on March 21st (Sunday, 2:00 p.m.) at the old fire station near Allegheny Mall (across from White Tower on Cedar Street). Our purpose will be to sort artifacts and make room for the coming auctions. We need many strong hands. To those people who volunteered at the annual meeting--we look forward to seeing you Sunday afternoon. If you have not already volunteered but are interested in working on the auctions, please call Mrs. Sandy Kenagy at 231-2539.

CHAIRS Does anyone have any folding chairs that they would be willing to
NEEDED part with? We need some for temporary use in the new museum and
for our planned artifact sale. Call the office at 281-6207 if you
have any such chairs that you could donate to us.

The Foundation now has available authentic scale models of historic buildings
in kit form. Printed in color on paper, they are ready to cut
MODEL KITS out and construct. These unique kits are of good quality and
make excellent gifts. They are packaged in illustrated 10" x
15" envelopes and can be easily prepared for mailing.



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

Please send me the kits checked below at \$3 per kit:

- ☐ The Cabildo, New Orleans, Louisiana
☐ Victorian Dickey House, Tiboron, California
☐ St. Paul's Chapel of Trinity Church, New York City
☐ Old Plaza Firehouse, Los Angeles, California
☐ Point Loma Lighthouse, San Diego, California

Total of kits.....

6% Pennsylvania sales tax.....\$

TOTAL.....\$

NAME

ADDRESS

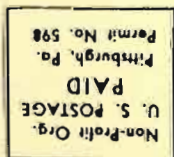
Four years ago we began to work with the Department of City Planning to develop protective historic zoning for landmark buildings and districts in the City of Pittsburgh. Under the state Enabling Act legislation can be written by local municipalities that protects such buildings and districts from demolition or alteration of facades. Anyone wishing to demolish or change the exterior of a building must submit his plan in writing and obtain a special permit. If permission is denied, a six month delay automatically ensues during which time we and others are given an opportunity to persuade him from his unfortunate intentions. The state act, however, does not give permanent protection. If the owner is still intent after six months on making the changes, he is then permitted to do so. However, most experience shows that a six month period is a very useful delay. We are pleased to report that after many meetings over these years, we have arrived at a suitable ordinance and it has received the approval of the Urban Redevelopment Authority, the Department of City Planning, and on February 23rd the City Planning Commission recommended the legislation's approval by City Council. The last step now will be to obtain City Council's action. Members may be called upon to attend the Council meeting when the legislation is to be considered so that we will have a good showing of citizen support.

LANDMARKS
ORDINANCE

After many years of discussion with the district office of the Pennsylvania Department of Highways, we are pleased to announce jointly with Anthony Gaeta, District Engineer, that we have established a relationship with the department whereby we will be called in at the earliest stages of "corridor selection" to identify landmarks and see if corridors can be so designed as to obviate their demolition. We are also to receive formal design notifications from the central Harrisburg office of the Highways Department that are forwarded first to the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission for review. The Commission forwards them to us and we inspect the routes and report back to the Commission as well as to Mr. Gaeta. In the past month we have studied five highway routes in various sections of Allegheny County for the Commission and we have participated in discussions with the district division for the Hazelwood by-pass.

HIGHWAYS DEPART-
MENT RELATIONSHIP

Landmark Association
needs you to work
March 21



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

