

# News For Members of PITTSBURGH HISTORY & LANDMARKS FOUNDATION

NUMBER 29 September 1971

## THE OLD POST OFFICE DECLARED NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

We are very proud to announce that The Old Post Office on North Side that we are now restoring as our new museum and headquarters building has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. On August 6 the state liaison officer, Dr. S.K. Stevens, joined with Senators Hugh Scott and Richard S. Schweiker and Congressman William S. Moorhead in announcing the receipt of the information of this great honor from George B. Hartzog, the Director of the National Park Service, which is entrusted with maintaining the Register. A national review committee approved the building and our nomination for its inclusion.

This recognition means that the federal government has officially designated the structure as being of national historic importance and further that it has accepted the inclusion of it in the historic preservation program of Pennsylvania.

This is the first building in Allegheny County to be so designated, although we are currently making other nominations to the state and federal governments.

The building is also now officially on the Pennsylvania Register of Historic Sites and Landmarks as well as the Allegheny County Register, and legislation is now being prepared so that City Council may officially designate it a historic building as well.

Painting is now well along at the Old Post Office as you can see in this photograph of the dome. The workmen erected a 90 feet high scaffold, which they scale without the help of a ladder and which gently sways with the strokes of the brushes. The original granite exterior sparkles now that 75 years of grime and soot have vanished under blasts of sand and chemicals, and boys from the Neighborhood Youth Corps have scraped and stacked the belgian block that will be used for walls and paving. The staff is now planning the first exhibit, in the midst of packing and starting on the relocation of the offices.



## CIVIC GROUPS UNDERWRITE SPECIAL MUSEUM COSTS

We are very gratified to be able to announce that The Allegheny County Committee of the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has agreed to contribute the "Members Room" at the post office. This corner room overlooking the garden court will be furnished with bookcases, light fixtures, and interior woodwork from Ridge Avenue houses, and will be furnished with a Victorian sofa donated by the Burchfield family, and several comfortable leather chairs. An adjacent room will become a study area for the use of scholars and students. Our extensive architectural library, and several paintings donated by friends, will also be placed in the room. The room will be available for the relaxation, browsing, and study of members, and we hope that tea will be available each afternoon. The Chapter will donate funds to cover all costs (estimated at \$5,000) for the room and will select interior decorations.

The Mayflower Society is donating the \$750 cost of mounting and lighting a magnificent stained glass window from a Ridge Avenue mansion to be placed in the lower gallery of the Museum.

We earlier reviewed the benefit at the Pittsburgh Playhouse that the Fashion Group, Inc. gave several months ago to establish a special fund to be used for the preservation and exhibit of fashions at the museum. We are pleased to report that the benefit raised \$1,300 and we have received a check in that amount from the Group. We have received a number of donations of fashions from a variety of our members and friends and we will describe these in a later newsletter.

SAFE CO.      We are pleased to report a donation in the amount of \$450 from the  
DONATES      Mosler Safe Company in Hampton, Ohio for the restoration of the  
two ornamental safe doors at the Old Post Office.

We are pleased to announce receipt of a grant in the amount of \$1,000 from  
the Vira I. Heinz Fund of The Pittsburgh Foundation to help de-  
fray our costs in relocating from our downtown offices to the  
GRANT                      post office. Members of our staff have volunteered to work in  
ANNOUNCED                the evenings and on weekends to do the moving and thereby sig-  
nificantly cut costs but funds were still needed for truck rentals and mis-  
cellaneous expenses.



*This photograph shows the construction of the stone walkway up to the Neill Log House. We recently awarded a landscaping contract for over \$11,000 worth of work at the Neill House to implement the designs of Griswold, Winters & Swain. Members are invited to inspect the work which is now moving well along.*

**WANTED:** A secretarial chair. If any company or individual possesses a secretarial chair in good condition that they could donate to us, we could make good use of it.

## BY-LINE: LANDMARK ASSOCIATES

First, thanks are in order to those of you who helped with the Mexican War Streets House Tour with a specified job or by simply showing up for the occasion. The streets were a festive sight with banners flying, children hawking lemonade, flowers in window boxes and a crowd of obviously interested people exploring the variety of homes opened for the day. It is encouraging to those of us who live here as the neighborhood offers a socially, economically and culturally-mixed bag of people. Life is far from dull and a car is not a necessity. A bicycle, sturdy legs and a smile do much to close the generation gap while improving our atmosphere.

Second, preparations are underway for the second PHLF auction to be held October 2nd (rain date Oct. 3rd). We hope to duplicate the successful efforts of the first and urge all you "pros" from before to sign on again. If you didn't participate with the first auction please investigate this chance. Spirits are high and rewards to PHLF are worth the effort. David Russell has agreed to act as auctioneer and Don Kenagy will coordinate the project as before. There is a new selection of artifacts from other storage areas, so come armed with a yardstick and ideas. More details in future newsletters. To sign up for the auction please call 231-2539 on or after September 8th.

Third, there is more to a restoration area than restored homes. There is education and what is being done about it. The North Side New School is a different type of elementary-age school and is run by the parents, the teachers and the students--with communication throughout a major concern. It is "open classroom" in design but stresses that children who come out of our neighborhood should be well-taught in the areas of reading, math, science and all the fundamentals of education. We have special hopes for a close relationship between teacher and child and know that a building does not make a school. Learning or "awareness" should continue over into the neighborhood and home. A child is always learning and observing. How sad to see children who don't ask questions or when they do, don't get an answer. The parents pay for this school (with some individual help and a small grant from one foundation) and could use donations of:

resource books, science equipment, an aquarium, a phonograph, a television, rugs, building tools (hammers, nails, etc.), stimulating games, a big desk, a refrigerator, file cabinets, pencils, paint, paper, and anything useful in the classroom situation.

We have two rooms rented from the Trinity Lutheran Church and twenty students to start with. To be a "Friend of the North Side New School" membership is set at \$15. You would then be on the mailing list and could attend school meetings. All contributions are considered tax-deductible and checks should be made payable to the Trinity Lutheran Church (c/o North Side New School), 616 West North Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15212. We feel exciting education for children should not be limited to Oakland and the suburbs, but should thrive here in the city surrounded by such cultural institutions as the Aviary, Buhl Planetarium and the projected Carnegie Library.

Even without newspapers, 650 people came to the Mexican War Streets on a hot and steamy Sunday afternoon on June 20 to our the houses and apartments open for the day. Using posters, radio, television, and word of mouth, the committee of hard workers under the chairmanship of Louise M. Boesel attracted people to the tour from throughout the city as far away as Cincinnati and Cleveland. PHLF grossed over \$1,900 in admissions, \$30 in publication sales, and immense good publicity for the area. To all those who worked so diligently, we express our deep gratitude.

**MEXICAN WAR  
STREETS  
TOUR SUCCESS**



*Carl Detwiler answers a question regarding the beautiful garden court at the rear of his house and 1201 Resaca Place. He and Mrs. Detwiler have restored their home and designed this patio.*



*Mrs. William Petty, Mrs. Walter Miller, Mrs. William Niedringhaus, and Mrs. Kenneth Boesel and a moment of conversation in front of Mrs. Boesel's house at 1213 Resaca Place.*



*It was appropriate that the Wick-ersham Studios of Music at 414 West North Avenue produced the music for the day as visitors stopped and listened, or even sang along as they toured the unique house. Above, Janis Dietrich, and her mother Mrs. Lois Dietrich, who owns the house, look on as piano instructor Neil Milechman begins to play.*



*Discussing antiques with Mr. David Russell are Miss Loretta Guehl and Miss Margaret Guehl in the Russell home at 1402 Monterey Street. The Guehl sisters own the Ober-Guehl house described on p. 146 of LAAC.*



*Surrounded by guests, Mrs. Donald Kenagy of 400 West North Avenue explains how she and her husband restored their beautiful living room chandelier which was greatly admired by those on the tour.*



*Mrs. David Genter greets Mrs. Hallie Tyler, and Mrs. James Townsend and her daughter at the door of her restored carriage house.*



*Mr. & Mrs. Robert Kennedy of Cincinnati and Mrs. J.C. Oliver, Jr. discuss the restoration of the Oliver House at 1201 Buena Vista. Mr. Kennedy is a restoration architect.*



*Our unique noon hour walking tour of Market Square last June attracted 150 attendees and several hundred spectators! Here the group is gathered around listening to Mr. Van Trump review the history of the Square. Mr. Van Trump recently published a five-part series on the history of the Square in the Market Square News.*

Junior Auxiliary of Ladies Hospital Aid Society auxiliary to Montefiore Hospital is conducting a tour of "Landmark Architecture in Pittsburgh" on September 22nd. The featured buildings (and homes) are Chatham Village, Duquesne University Student Union, Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Rodef Shalom Temple (exterior), and a modern private home in the East End. The tour will convene at the Rodef Shalom Temple parking lot at 9:30 a.m. Bus transportation and a boxed lunch are included in the \$4.50 donation for the tour. Tickets will be available as of September 8th, at Kaufmann's 9th floor ticket office, Montefiore Hospital Gift Shop, University of Pittsburgh Student Union ticket office or by calling 824-5087.

SECOND ARTIFACTS AUCTION SET

We are now preparing for a second artifact auction. Co-chairmen Donald and Sandy Kenagy and David Russell will soon be calling upon our volunteers to lift and carry, serve up hot dogs and donuts, and man the cash registers. The date is Saturday, October 2 (rain date; October 3), from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The staff has now been able to free a number of choice items for sale because most artifacts needed for the museum have now been selected. Over the summer Warren Schweitzer and the crew have gathered more artifacts. Plan ahead for October 2 as it will be the biggest, most varied, as well as the last auction for a long time.

PITTSBURGH HISTORY & LANDMARKS FOUNDATION

*Announces a late summer bus tour*

THE HOUSES OF PETER BERENDTSEN

September 25, 1971

The five houses being shown on this tour are a physical demonstration of the theory of "organic architecture" as promulgated and practiced by the great American architect Frank Lloyd Wright. According to this theory the structure, and particularly the house, is conceived of as an organism that proceeds, one might almost say, grows out of the environment not only mystically through the perception and ingenuity of the architect, but also temporally through the materials used--especially those of the earth itself--brick, wood, and stone--honestly and felicitously used to express concepts of space, proportion, and order.

Peter Berendtsen, while thoroughly imbued with Wrightian architectural theory has notably interpreted it through his own considerable talent. A Berendtsen house is a design for living in which the client and the natural world live together in harmony.

Busses will depart from the Pittsburgh Hilton, Downtown, at 10:30 a.m. and will return at approximately 4:30 p.m. Lunch will be served at the Shannopin Country Club.

Tickets \$8.50 each for members; \$11.50 each for non-members.

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

Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ tickets for members and \_\_\_\_\_ tickets for non-members. My check is enclosed.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

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