

News For Members of PITTSBURGH HISTORY & LANDMARKS FOUNDATION

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MAJOR OPERATING GRANT GIVEN BY SARAH MELLON SCAIFE FOUNDATION

We are pleased and gratified to announce that the trustees of the Sarah Mellon Scaife Foundation have given strong support to our general operations and the Old Post Office Museum through a grant of \$100,000, payable half in 1972 and half in 1973. It is to be used for general operating and administrative expenses in our many programs and in particular for the Old Post Office.

Our general operating expenses including those of the Old Post Office are expected to more than double the current \$70,000 a year, to a new total of approximately \$160,000. We hope to finance this through at least \$50,000 in admissions and rentals at the Old Post Office, \$80,000 in private fund raising, an increase in memberships of over 50%, or a total of \$30,000 a year. The Scaife grant shores up our organization and gives our staff the freedom to concentrate on museum and membership development.

A major membership campaign will be announced very soon, and all of our members will be urged to seek new members for the Foundation.

Executive Director Ziegler pointed out that "the Scaife Foundation and the Scaife family have been very generous supporters of Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation activities. They enabled us to initiate our Manchester program, our Mexican War Streets program, and they took the lead in funding the restoration of the Old Post Office. The Foundation has also made operating grants in previous years to the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation."

CALENDAR OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS

March 15, 8:15 p.m. -- Mrs. Edward Fawcett, of the Victorian Society of England, will lecture on "Victorian London"

April 23, 2:30 p.m. -- Annual Meeting

May 11, 8:15 p.m. -- George Stephen, Head of Rehabilitation Division, Boston Redevelopment Authority, will lecture on "Rehabilitating Old Houses in Boston"

May 20-21 -- Special weekend tour to Wheeling, Sistersville, Marietta

We are pleased to report that after four years of effort the Burtner House has been placed on both the state and national registers of historic buildings.

The Burtner House is located in Natrona Heights near Tarentum and was built in 1821 of stone. It was originally built by Philip BURTNER Wynell Burtner and his wife who was born Anna Negley. The house was recently saved through the efforts of the "Save the Burtner House Committee", a local group in Natrona Heights area who worked diligently to persuade the department of highways to spare the house as the Allegheny Valley Expressway emblazoned its way up the valley. Soon the house will be restored and opened to the public.

SPRING TOUR ANNOUNCED

In conjunction with the Early American Glass Club we are planning a special spring tour to take place on the weekend of May 20-21, 1972. We will leave on Saturday morning by bus and go to Wheeling, West Virginia, where the Friends of Wheeling, a group that we helped to establish to preserve the architecture of Wheeling, will give us a tour of some of the interesting houses of their city. We will then see the newly restored Independence Hall and have lunch in Wheeling with their members.

Then we will proceed down the Ohio River to the pleasant and pristine oil boom town of Sistersville, West Virginia where, again, we have helped establish a preservation organization. Their members and their mayor and councilmen will take us on a tour of the extraordinary buildings of Sistersville, and then we will check into the restored Victorian Wells Inn just two blocks from the river. There we will have a fine dinner and entertainment and we will spend the night.

The next day we will embark for a drive further down the Ohio River, crossing at Marietta over to that fine Victorian town where we will see some churches, the Marietta Museum, the rectory of the Roman Catholic Church which is a restored Italianate structure and the steamboat W.P. Snyder, Jr. We will lunch at the restored Lafayette Motor Hotel, famous for its food. Then we will proceed back up the river on the Ohio side, crossing at New Martinsville, drive through that small but pleasant town, and proceed back to Pittsburgh for arrival around 6:00 p.m. The cost of the tour is \$32 with a double occupancy room, \$35 for a single occupancy room plus one dinner and one luncheon to be ordered from the menu. Because the hotel at Sistersville is small, we must limit reservations to 40, including the membership of the Early American Glass Club. If you are interested in a reservation, send a post card to the office immediately. Further details will be announced in a future newsletter, and you will be billed in advance of the trip for the cost.

Needed: We urgently need old sheets to use as dust covers to protect artifacts in storage at the Museum. Any size will be acceptable.

THE UNFALLEN TOWERS ST. MARY'S--SHARPSBURG

Recently in these columns, when we were lamenting the rapid disappearance of church towers and spires, we thought that it would be a good idea to commend those churches that had not only retained their towers but have handsomely restored them. We would particularly like to notice, in this regard, St. Mary's Church in Sharpsburg the terminal cupolas of whose towers were handsomely replaced in 1967. This great church designed by Peter Dederichs and built in 1916-17 is a salient landmark in the Allegheny River valley, and when the original cupolas decayed, we urged that they be replaced rather than simply removed and the church authorities then did have new cupolas constructed by the Overly Construction Company of Greensburg which were put in place by a giant crane. Although the new finials are not as elaborate as the originals they are even handsome in their simplicity.



We are pleased to report that the artifact sale and the special pre-Christmas opening of the Old Post Office Museum Bookstore held on December 18
SALES were resounding successes. Members and non-members alike enthusi-
SELL astically purchased over \$1,300 worth of one-of-a-kind artifacts
at the firehouse. Most encouraging, however, was the response to
our new museum shop. Victorian period items, books, and handicrafts grossed
\$320 for our work, and indicated substantial interest in this unique feature
of the "new" Old Post Office.

PLEASE Do you have an old, unused chair in your attic or basement? In
BE keeping with the out-of-the-ordinary nature of the Old Post Office
SEATED Museum, we are establishing an "Odd Chair" auditorium in the Stan-
ton Belfour Gallery. To avoid the uniformity of conventional audi-
torium seats and provide a distinctive touch, we will happily accept your un-
used old chair (or bench!) at the museum.

On Friday evening, 22 October at eight o'clock at a service of Holy Communion
in Grace Episcopal Church, Bertha and Sycamore Streets, Mount Washington,
Mr. Van Trump presented a Landmark plaque to the congregation on
PLAQUES the 120th anniversary of the founding of the parish. The service
AWARDED was conducted by the Rt. Rev. Robert B. Appleyard, Episcopal
Bishop of Pittsburgh, the Rev. Charles D. Keyes, Priest-in-charge
of the parish, and the Rev. Thomas Bigham, whose family had been prominent in
establishing the church in 1851. After the service a reception was held in the
parish hall. . . We have also affixed one of our historic landmark plaques to
the Old Post Office with funds generously donated by Mr. & Mrs. Alan Wohleber.

On Sunday, December 19, our president, Charles Covert Arensberg, North
Hills Rotary Club vice-president, Vern Metz, and North Hills Rotary-PHLF
liaison, Jack Ross, joined to present a landmarks' plaque to Dr. & Mrs. Chester
Beall, owners of the Shinn-Beall House in Evergreen Hamlet. The presentation
of a landmarks' plaque to the Shinn-Beall
House, in addition to the Hampton-Kelly House,
the Sellers-Grove House, and the Hill-McCallam-
Davies House in Evergreen Hamlet marks our
continuing program of noting historically and
architecturally significant structures in Al-
leghey County. Evergreen Hamlet, founded by
Pittsburgh lawyer William Shinn in 1851, was
one of America's first planned communal soci-
eties. Although the communitarian principle
was abandoned in 1866, the beautiful eclectic
and Gothic houses have remained, their youthful freshness contrasting sharply
with later suburban construction.



Close cooperation between a South Side resident and our Birmingham restoration
program has resulted in the replacement of a beautiful patterned
BRICK brick sidewalk, a practical feature of Birmingham's early civic heri-
SIDE- tage that one doesn't see often anymore. Although her sidewalk was
WALK quite worn, this resident laudably decided that slabs of poured con-
crete couldn't replace the beauty of patterned brick. We served as
contractor and in three days, removed and discarded the unusable old bricks,
leveled the sidewalk bed, and laid 1,200 new bricks in an attractive pattern
to restore the 22' x 12' walk.

OLD POST OFFICE OPENING PARTY

January 9th was the greatest day historic preservation has had in Pittsburgh, and it was one of the most momentous in the nation, for on that day the Old Post Office opened for a members' preview. After years of strenuous effort to alter the plans for Allegheny Center and save and restore the building, we were able to invite the community in to experience the accomplishment.

People saved this building, and the people now have a museum of the life and times of our area, housed in a magnificent and unique structure.

Over 1,500 members and friends of the Foundation braved the wet and cold weather to attend the gala opening. Hundreds of invitees were on hand well before the ribbon cutting ceremony, anxious to catch a glimpse of the spanking new edifice. Well represented were members of the cultural, educational, corporate, and artistic communities as well as representatives of other foundations.

Prominent guests from outside the city included Chairman and Mrs. James B. Stevenson, The Director and Mrs. S. K. Stevens, Mr. & Mrs. William J. Wewer, and Mrs. William N. Richards of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

Everyone agreed that the restoration of the Post Office was a great success and the interesting exhibit added the right atmosphere. The photographs below attempt to capture a little of the activities of the gala occasion and a few even show some of the work being carried out prior to the great day.



An overview of the large opening day crowd.



The girls were dressed in beautiful Victorian fashions which had been donated to the museum.



Foundation member Mrs. William Eichleay is greeted at the door by Lois A. Callen, our correspondence and membership secretary, as Mrs. Keith Zeisloft looks on.



University of Pittsburgh Chancellor, Wesley W. Posvar, & Mrs. Posvar, and William Block, publisher of the Post-Gazette pause for a moment in front of one of the exhibits.



Mr. & Mrs. Edward Smuts & family admire one of the fine light box transparencies.



Charles Covert Arensberg, our president, Mrs. Arensberg, & William R. Oliver, our treasurer, relax for a moment in the Members Room.



High above the crowd, the Jack Purcell Orchestra played a steady stream of appropriate music.



Warren Schweitzer, our restoration & maintenance supervisor, & Frank Vennare are shown with several of the artifacts that were exhibited.



Mrs. Malcolm McFarland & William R. Oliver, our treasurer, discuss the great interest expressed by the visitors in the handsome furnishings of the Members Room. The room was donated by The Allegheny County Committee of The National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.



Miss Virginia Trimble & Bess Kimberly, both members of the Pittsburgh Fashion Group, dress a mannequin in Victorian clothing. Members of the Group contributed much time, effort, and financial assistance to making the costume displays an exciting and interesting part of the total exhibit.



Anthony Vennare puts the finishing touches on one of the many exhibits he helped to install.



Ellis Schmidlapp, assistant for design programs, and Keith Zeisloft, assistant for educational & research programs, hang one of the many artifacts that were exhibited on the outer surface of the new second floor plaster rail.

We are pleased to announce that the Department of Community Affairs of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has granted us \$8,410 toward the cost of the Jane Street house restoration program in Birmingham (South Side). We have acquired five houses in the 2800 block and are nearing completion of two of them. A major setback occurred in December when we had to replace a sewer line for #2811 at a cost of \$2,400. We are endeavoring to rent these units at low to moderate rentals, but surprise costs like these are disasterous.

One of our members suggested that we should be aware of the fact that the scissors that were used for the ribbon-cutting at the Old Post Office opening will some day be artifacts significant in our own history and that we should keep one pair and that we should offer the others to members on a donation basis of \$100 a pair. The unique fund-raising idea appeals to us and we therefore are offering the remaining four pair of scissors that were used to cut the ribbon on opening day to the first four members who make a special donation of \$100.

SELF-CREATED
ARTIFACT

To commemorate various historic landmarks in Western Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh National Bank has joined with us to issue a series of limited-edition collectors' plates. Each plate bears an original drawing of local landmarks by Pittsburgh artists, a brief description of the landmark, and the notation that the plate is part of a limited-edition. The first plate in the series was issued this winter and

COLLECTORS' bears an original drawing of
CHINA the Fort Pitt Blockhouse by
local artist Calvin Stewart
Lynch. The plates are made

of fine Castleton china, which is used in the White House and in all United States embassies abroad. The rim of each plate is handpainted in gold. According to our president, Charles Covert Arensberg, limiting the number of plates in the series makes them collectors' items, and the value of each plate is sure to increase as the years pass. The mold for the first plate, for example, will be destroyed on February 28, 1972. The blockhouse plates can be purchased for \$10 at the Old Post Office Museum.



The response to our plea for volunteer assistance for the Museum gift shop has been gratifying and most generous. Without volunteer efforts, the entire gift

GIFT STORE store operation would not have gotten off the ground. For those
VOLUNTEERS who would like to volunteer to work on a regular basis or as an
alternate, there are some time slots still unfilled: Saturday
from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00, 12:00 - 2:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. - 4:30
p.m.; Sundays from 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.; Wednesdays
from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00; Thursdays from 2:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.; Fridays from
12:00 - 2:00 p.m. If you would like to help the Museum shop become a good
income producer and also if you enjoy meeting the variety of people visiting
the museum call 322-1204 and ask for Keith Zeisloft.

WANTED: Five or six volunteers who would like to learn about Pittsburgh's history and the Old Post Office Museum. The Museum needs volunteers to act as guides for tour groups for one to two hour periods on an "on-call" basis.

One of the more ironic advertisements that we saw in the Pittsburgh newspapers recently was for the Allegheny Campus of the Community College, which shows an image of the entranceway to the B.F. Jones House on Ridge Avenue, in which the College has located its administration. Obviously, they are using it for image-building purposes because it does give the appearance of tradition, history, art, and elegance. The irony is that this is the same institution which demolished the Henry W. Oliver House, the Denny House, the Marshall House and other great mansions of Ridge Avenue in its quest for modernity...*For Sale:*

Unique Victorian mansion in Avalon; ten large rooms, built in 1841. Contact Frank H. Young Agency, 766-6800... Several members of our organization recently served on an awards jury to judge the first annual submissions of
BRIEF modern architectural design of the Northeastern Chapter of the Penn-
NOTES sylvania Society of Architects. Members included Mrs. Kenneth S.
Boesel, Mrs. Henry P. Hoffstot, Charles Covert Arensberg, Oliver

Kaufmann, Charles W. Shane, Ellis Schmidlapp, James D. Van Trump, G. Thomas Williams, and Arthur Ziegler...*James D. Van Trump represented our organization at the National Conference of the National Society of Architectural Historians.* ...Several members of our organization attended the National Trust for Historic Preservation annual meeting in San Diego. These included Mr. and Mrs. Henry P. Hoffstot, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Edwards, Mrs. Pat Black, and Arthur Ziegler...

Mr. Ziegler has been appointed to the committee on architectural preservation of the Society of Architectural Historians and has been reappointed for a second term to the advisory committee on the National Historic Preservation Fund of the National Trust...Friends of Wheeling, an organization which we helped to launch to preserve in that neighboring city, came for a tour of the Mexican War Streets and the Old Post Office on January 23.

NEW BOOK
REMODELING OLD HOUSES
WITHOUT DESTROYING THEIR CHARACTER

A new book is just off the press this week that spells out in excellent detail how to remodel an old house. It describes how to measure and make rough drawings, how to deal with brick, clapboard and other siding, windows, porches, doorways, dormers, color, how to orient rooms and spaces, how to lay-out bathrooms, bedrooms, and kitchens, and in general how to produce a livable, unspoiled house.

The author is George Stephen, a friend of ours, and Director of Rehabilitation Design for the Boston Redevelopment Authority. He will be addressing our membership on May 11. We highly recommend this expert book, jam-packed with solid, practical advice and many useful illustrations. Hardbound \$8.95. Paperbound \$3.95. Available in the Old Post Office Shop or by filling out the coupon below.

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