

PH LF NEWS

Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation

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PHL News

ARTIFACT GARDEN AND PERFORMING ARTS COURT To Open September 28



The Old Post Office Museum Artifact Garden and Performing Arts Court will open with a formal dedication at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, September 28. All members are invited to attend.

Following the brief dedication ceremony cocktails and hors d'oeuvres furnished by the Joseph Horne Company will be served.

Featured in the Main Gallery will be a special display of Bicentennial Fieldcrest Collection of Linens based on design objects in the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C. A representative of the Smithsonian will be joining us for the dedication event.

THE GARDEN COURT STORY

Seven years ago the old Fourth Avenue Post Office and Federal Courts Building located in downtown at Smithfield and Fourth Avenue was being demolished. We engaged in a dramatic rescue of the granite maidens perched upon the rooftop. In looking for a place to store them, we asked the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh if we might temporarily place them in the vacant lot that had been cleared adjacent to the old Allegheny Post Office which was itself then scheduled for demolition. URA cooperated and we placed the statues on that land, thereby laying what was to become a claim to

the area! As our members well know, the following year we began a campaign to save the Old Allegheny Post Office from the same fate that the Fourth Avenue Post Office had suffered. After two years of effort we won and we restored the building as a community museum and use it as our headquarters.

When we obtained the Old Allegheny Post Office, we also acquired the adjacent open space on which the statues still stood. Diagonally across from the Old Allegheny Post Office the beautiful, green Ober Park with its fountain had been transmogrified into a dehumanized concrete "public square" that is closed seven months of the year to the public; when open, it is a bleak and forbidding place. We decided, in effect, to replace Ober Park by developing the ground adjacent to our Old Post Office as a green and highly functional space.

The court area is very large, measuring 90' x 150'. We determined to make it a multi-functional area and divided it into three approximate equal sections.

The area nearest our building has been developed in memory of Robert Baur, one of our most loyal members who suffered an untimely death several years ago. The center piece of this area is a pool with a bubbling, springlike pool surrounded by four quadrants of grass, a hemlock hedge and ornamental trees. It is an area for sitting and relaxing, reading, and conversation.

The central area, to be known as the Alcoa Foundation Plaza because the Alcoa Foundation granted \$75,000 toward the construction of the garden court,

is an open area and can be used for performing arts. We can seat nearly 400 people and wiring has been installed so that we can illuminate a stage-like area. The centerpiece here is the great Manchester Bridge portal sculptures, one facing into the plaza and one facing out to one of the Allegheny Center walkways. The plaza can also be used for summer sculpture shows and other outdoor events including flea markets and antique shows.

That section of the court farthest from the building is to be used as a permanent exhibition area of artifacts to be installed next spring. Enclosing this area is a Belgian block wall composed of blocks from Southern Avenue in Mt. Washington donated by the City of Pittsburgh. On the wall are exhibited numerous artifacts from various Pittsburgh buildings including the old Market House, the Fourth Avenue Post Office, Avery College, and houses from Duchtown to Sewickley.

A singular discovery occurred during excavation work when we unearthed the basement vaults that were under the sidewalk of old West Ohio Street. These are now exposed in the court as on-site archeological artifacts.

Each area is paved with a local material. In the Robert Baur garden is Pittsburgh slag, in the Alcoa Foundation Plaza is Monongahela River gravel, and in the artifact garden is New Castle limestone.

An iron fence has been constructed to enclose the northern and southern perimeters of the garden and 55 yews have been planted along the fence to complete the enclosure.

Many trees have been planted around the court including Moraine Ash, American Linden, Crimson King Maple, Sugar Maple, Red Oak, Tulip, Zellcoua, American Beech, Cucumber, Flowering Crab and Hemlock.

50 Hemlocks intended to grow seven feet high, have been planted to form hedges between the sections of the court and 31 Holly bushes have been located around the parking lot to the rear. Over 1,300 Purple Wintercreeper have been planted outside the iron fence as ground cover.

We installed lighting to illuminate the artifacts and included a sprinkler system as well.

The total cost of the garden court is \$150,000 and we have nearly completed the fund raising to pay for it. We still need approximately \$15,000 for the final work.



Modernization of lighting was recently undertaken for the Sixteenth Street Bridge. This bridge was built in 1923 and designed by Warren and Wetmore and is a good example of the large expansive through-truss bridge encased in Baroque architectural adornment.

The lamp standards donated to PHLF are made of steel I-beams with a crossbar at the top which supports the lamps themselves. Very large, they measure thirty feet in height.

Through the generosity of the Allegheny County Commissioners and Mr. Donald Berman, the Director of Public Works for the County, the lamp standards were donated to our organization for use in the garden court and other restoration areas.

Benedum-Trees Building Lobby Redecorated

The Benedum-Trees Building, where PHLF offices were formerly located at 221-225 Fourth Avenue, has recently received a complete redecoration of its lobby and a specially designed bronze Landmark Plaque has been affixed to its facade.

PHLF staff assisted with the redecoration by providing design suggestions appropriate to this 1905 Classical skyscraper (architect: Thomas M. Scott), and worked with the James H. Matthews Company to design a plaque in keeping with the existing plaques on the building's facade.

Festivities Celebrate Restoration of Downtown Building

PHLF has completed its first restoration of a building in downtown Pittsburgh. Commissioned by the Massey Shoe Company of Washington, D.C. PHLF was responsible for planning and coordinating both the interior and exterior design for Massey's new store in the Buhl Optical Building at 239 Fifth Avenue. The shopfront, modernized in the late 1940's, was redesigned by PHLF to be harmonious with the handsome upper stories of the building which dates to the early 1900's. PHLF removed existing marble facing on the building to expose the interesting terra cotta facade. The interior of the store, designed by PHLF consultant Chester LeMaistre of Pittsburgh lends a contemporary note with its blue, green and silver color scheme.

Mr. Frank Young, President of the Massey Shoe Company was enthusiastic and pleased with PHLF's work. "This is the easiest store opening I have ever had," he noted, "In fact the restoration of the store will come in on budget, if not under!" For PHLF, a chance to show downtown Pittsburgh that restoration is commercially feasible, if not economical!

To brighten the exposed exterior wall of the building, PHLF and the Massey Shoe Company sponsored a wall mural contest for Allegheny County professional and amateur artists. Local artists responded enthusiastically to the contest, submitting over twenty renderings for judging. A panel of judges including Mr. Frank Young from Massey Shoes, Mr. Morris Berman from Golden Triangle, Mr. Robert Lew, Pittsburgh National Bank and Arthur Ziegler chose Ms. Gloria Peterson's design of Victorian shoes for the exterior mural.

Ms. Peterson is a free-lance artist who formerly served as art director of the Universal Art Academy on Smithfield Street. She has taught at the Ivy School for Professional Art and currently teaches at the Renaissance Center for Art in Mt. Lebanon. She is a member of The Associated Artists, Allegheny Artists and the Pittsburgh Water Color Society.

Ms. Peterson was awarded a \$200 cash prize for the best design at a luncheon, August 16 celebrating the store opening. PHLF volunteers and friends enjoyed a buffet luncheon prepared by Chef Norman and a Fashion Show, "Nine Decades of Fashion" organized by Mr. Larry Winterstellar of Maier's Costumes and Ms. Pat Lyons of the Wheeler School.



Shown here is the Buhl Optical Building before restoration and a shot during the restoration work. Don't miss the finished product!

Recognition for PHLF

"Preservation in Pittsburgh", an article commending PHLF's efforts to preserve and renew the City's old neighborhoods appeared in 250 newspapers in the country. The article was written by Anthony Harrigan, Executive Vice President of the United States Industrial Council. Mr. Harrigan compliments PHLF's program on its recognition that architectural preservation and community renewal go hand in hand. The article ends with the following statement:

"It is incumbent upon all thoughtful citizens therefore to assist the kind of city-restoring, city-strengthening efforts which the History & Landmarks Foundation is making in Pittsburgh."

CHAIRMAN'S RAMBLE

Sunday, May 19th was a memorable day. At two o'clock we attended the reopening of Fort Pitt Museum following the disaster of Hurricane Agnes two years ago. A thousand or so gathered at the Point to watch the British troops move in, play the American and British anthems on fife and drum and fire their muzzle-loaders in salute to the new Fort Pitt.

Loath to leave this important event and with a glance at the soon-to-be-working 100-foot fountain at the birthplace of the Ohio, we drove to the Lincoln-Beech Area to pick up the Landmarks' walking tour of what remains of Old Allegheny's Patrizierhauser charm. There's a great deal left we found: Here the extraordinary Renaissance splendor of Babb & Co. at Ridge & Galveston, the opulent masculinity of Byers-Lyon cater-cornered across the street, charming hidden gardens along Lincoln-Beech, sophisticated restorations of old

Across the Allegheny Center Mall the Mayor of the City of Pittsburgh and Ted Hazlett of the A.W. Mellon Educational & Charitable Trust were greeting hundreds of people in dedicating the refurbished Carnegie Library, replete with its extraordinary theater, great brick walls exposed like some ancient coliseum. Pete was garnishing well-earned votes for this one, and many of their distinguished visitors, including Jim Walton of Carnegie Museum and John Miller of the Buhl Planetarium came across to visit our budding authors. Bill Wewer, Bill Richards and others of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission came over from the Point Park festivities to join us also. The fountains in the park splashed over the children who chased each other in and out and around the pools, oblivious of these momentous events.

In short it was a grand sight to see the emergence of Allegheny Center as a cultural area. Indeed it was a harbinger of good things to come.

--Charles Covert Arensberg

GARDEN CLUBS WANTED

inative care. The plots are not large and any garden club could establish for itself the amount of area they wish to be responsible for. If you can help us, please call Mr. Ziegler at 322-1204.

ROWHOUSES FOR SALE

PHLF is offering three brick townhouses on Taylor Avenue for sale: 603 Taylor, 604 Taylor, and 609 Taylor. 603 and 609 Taylor have a living room, dining room and kitchen on the first floor, four bedrooms and a bath on the second floor and a large third floor room. Both houses are unrestored and are for sale at \$10,000 each. 604 Taylor, an unrestored brick townhouse has two apartments; the house is for sale at \$9,500.

TOURS

BUS TOUR TO WASHINGTON COUNTY COVERED BRIDGE FESTIVAL
SEPTEMBER 21, 1974

Our fall bus tour will be a one-day tour to Washington County for the Covered Bridge Festival. We will leave the Old Post Office Museum by Greyhound at 8:30 a.m. We will journey to several of the covered bridges in the morning, have a luncheon at Century Inn in Scenery Hill, and then proceed to the Mingo Creek County Park, the scene of the festivities of the Festival. Featured will be Art Displays and Sale, Crafts Displays and Sale, Photography Displays and Sale, Farm Market, Food, Entertainment, Flea Market. We will spend the afternoon at the Park and plan to return to the Old Post Office at approximately 6:30 p.m.

The cost for the tour including lunch is \$15.00 for PHLF members and \$20.00 for non-members.

BUS TOUR TO PHLF PROPERTIES

October 12, 1974

PHLF members are constantly confronted with the names of the properties owned by PHLF, the work that is being done, and the conditions and functions of the properties; now we are offering members and friends a chance to see each of the properties and view the work first-hand. Our PAT charter will leave the Old Post Office Museum at 8:30 a.m. on September 7 and plan to return at approximately 6:00 p.m.

Our tour will begin with a tour of our properties in Manchester on Liverpool Street, proceed to Sewickley to the Flatiron building, then on to the Neville House on Route 50, next to the Walker-Ewing Log House where we will enjoy a box-lunch on the lawn. After lunch we will proceed to Springdale to the Rachel Carson House, then we'll go to Harrison Township to the Burtner House, return via Schenley Park to see the Neill House, stop at Jane Street to see the exterior of our restorations there and drive past 1705 East Carson Street.

The cost of the day's tour will be \$10.00 for PHLF members, and \$15.00 for non-members. Quite a number of members have been calling for reservations already, so don't delay!

Request for Children's Books

The Historical Collection of Children's Books in the Graduate School of Library and Information Sciences at the University of Pittsburgh is one of the outstanding collections of its kind in the United States. It comprises about 5,000 volumes and is growing rapidly. In 1976 a new room housing the collection will be opened and named in honor of Miss Elizabeth Nesbitt, authority on children's literature and formerly associate dean of the library school. The collection is to include children's books from earlier generations of Pittsburgh families, and members of the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation may be interested in donating such books. Anyone who has children's books, especially of the 19th century or earlier, is asked to get in touch with Margaret Hodges, Associate Professor, Graduate School of Library and Information Sciences, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15260. Or call 412/624-5234.

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. . . The Work Goes On

PHLF Restoration Crew installs granite curb stop in front of Old Post Office. The curb was removed from its original position under the Post Office loading dock when the development of the Garden Court required that steps be installed in its place. Now it will serve as an outdoor bench for visitors to the Museum.



PHLF Member Restores "Way" House in Mexican War Streets

PHLF member, William Tacey has completed the first restoration of one of the few remaining frame houses on the alleys and ways of the Mexican War Streets. Mr. Tacey bought the house and two adjacent houses on Buena Vista Street from PHLF last summer and selected this house on Mimosa Way as his residence. PHLF assisted Mr. Tacey with the tricky question of what material to apply to the sides of the house when new wood siding became prohibitively expensive. From a wide variety of modern materials PHLF, Mr. Tacey, and his architect Carl Detwiler, selected a Victorian yellow aluminum siding of a similar profile as that of the original wood siding. The result is a cheerful, restored house on Mimosa Way occupied by a PHLF member.



PHLF Undertakes Study of Log House/Cabin

"Tapawingo" is the name the Girl Scouts of America have given to their two-story log house/cabin in Plum Borough. Having a wooden floor but lacking a stone foundation the building falls somewhere between a log house, which has both, and a log cabin, which has neither. The building is used as a retreat for the girl scouts but is in need of major repair --primarily the replacement of bottom logs which have rotted due to contact with the earth, and the straightening of a twisted and bowing roof. PHLF has been commissioned to make a thorough examination of the building, make recommendations for restoration and project cost estimates for each recommendation. PHLF is being assisted in cost estimates by Reiber Construction Company, contractor for the Old Post Office Museum Garden Court.



Equibank Leads Way in Allentown Restoration

Pictured here is the Equibank building after it was entirely repainted last fall according to recommendations by PHLF using selections from the five-color scheme developed for the business area of Allentown. The building is painted a leaf green with deep green pilasters and white trim. Since this building was painted four other businesses on Warrington Avenue have repainted using the color scheme.



MEMBERS HONORED

PHLF honored two of its members, Mrs. Barbara D. Hoffstot, author of Landmark Architecture of Palm Beach and Walter C. Kidney, author of Eclecticism in America at the Authors' Party in the Old Post Office Museum on May 19. The authors chatted with nearly 80 guests while autographing books.

Landmark Architecture of Palm Beach is a 236 page compendium of photographs and descriptive text covering more than 150 local buildings exhibiting the richness and diversity of Palm Beach's extraordinary architecture. The work of famous architects particularly Addison Mizner, Marion Wyeth, Maurice Fatio, Howard Major, and the designer Joseph Urban is covered as well as numerous other delightful buildings. The contents are arranged so that a reader could drive or walk the island and see the buildings in sequence of location. Mrs. Hoffstot is a co-founder and Vice President of Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation.

Eclecticism in America describes the architectural movement in America that gave us so many neo-Georgian houses, Gothic churches, Byzantine synagogues, Roman banks, and so on between 1880 and 1930. Mr. Kidney's book defines, traces the history of and attempts to evaluate this rich and colorful movement.

Copies of both books are available in the Museum Gift Shop or can be obtained by returning the

following order blank. All copies sold through the Museum will bring a profit to PHLF.

TO: Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation
Old Post Office Museum
Pittsburgh, Penna. 15212

Enclosed is my check; please send me:

— copy(ies) of Landmark Architecture of Palm Beach @\$3.95 paperback, or \$10.00 hardbound

\$ _____

— copy(ies) of Eclecticism in America @\$4.95 paperback, or \$12.50 hardbound

\$ _____

Sub-total.....\$ _____

Members only less 5% discount.....\$ _____

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

Postage and handling.....\$.50

TOTAL.....\$ _____

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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|--------------|---|
| September 21 | Bus Tour to Covered Bridge Festival |
| September 28 | Old Post Office Garden Court Dedication |
| October 12 | Bus Tour to PHLF properties |