

The Allegheny City Society
REPORTER DISPATCH

Fall 1995

The Quarterly Journal of Old Allegheny History and Lore - Volume 1 No. 1



When they called her Allegheny she was a lady fair, with velvet skirts and laces, she wore diamonds in her hair. Her ballrooms, grand, were noted throughout the east and west; and her dinners and cotillions were among the very best.

... From a poem by Martha M. O'Moore published in 1972 by the Allegheny City Society

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the Allegheny City Society's *Reporter Dispatch*.

The Allegheny City Society was organized in 1957, by residents born when the North Side of Pittsburgh was its own City of Allegheny. The incorporators wanted the organization to be non-political and non-sectarian. In addition the Society would not a pressure group and "be solely interested in the development of the North Side" as stated in the first meeting minutes.

Continued on next page..



Continued from Page 1

The Society wanted to insure Allegheny City was remembered in the upcoming Pittsburgh Bicentennial. On March 17, 1958, Pittsburgh Mayor David L. Lawrence at the presentation of the charter in Judge Montgomery chambers stated he "hoped all of the sections of Pittsburgh would enter into the celebration as this particular group proposed to do"

The Society planned the revival of Jubilee Day, the last day of school when thousands of school children in Allegheny marched to the Commons for drill and dancing for part of their bicentennial celebration.

William Rimmel in *The Allegheny Story* wrote that "Jubilee Day was the only day that everyone was allowed to walk on the grass of the commons without being fined."

Included in the Society's plan for the celebration was the rebirth of the traditional game of "Copenhagen", an old fashioned kissing game where boys and girls tried to keep each other encircled with a length of rope. Once a prisoner "escaped" the circle the guards tried to catch them. Once caught the guard's reward was a kiss.

"Several old timers, said Mr. Adam E. Daum, one of the Jubilee Day organizers, have written to him requesting they be a part of the first dance during the Copenhagen festival"

The celebration of old Allegheny days, and Society dinners help the organization to survive well into the early 1960's. Many of the incorporators were in their 50's and 60's when the Society was started as they aged the Society met less frequently. The last entry in the Society scrapbook kept at the Allegheny Branch of the Carnegie Library was a poem by Martha M. O'Moore who was acting secretary in 1958 entitled "Allegheny" dated 1972:

She was, indeed, so lovely, so gay and oh! So warm, but her marriage to Pittsburgh city has ruined all her charm.

The rebirth of the Society started in early 1992 with the first board meeting and the election of officers in Nov. 1993. The mission of the Society has not changed since the founding in 1958 "to perpetuate the history and social life of Allegheny City.

We hope you enjoy this newsletter. If you have any comments or suggestions, please call us at 322-8807.

THE LOSS OF A TRUE FRIEND

This summer Old Allegheny lost one of its guardian angels James D. Van Trump (Jamie), co-founder in 1964 of the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation. An architectural historian, Mr. Van Trump helped call attention to what urban renewal was doing to the historical neighborhoods in Old Allegheny.

The Foundation tried to save the old Market House but the project had proceeded to far to stop the wrecking ball. However, thanks to their efforts the old Post Office built in 1888 was saved. A reuse for the building was found, first as the Foundation's offices and Museum and now as the Pittsburgh Childrens Museum.

The magnificent porches of Liverpool Street, the Langenheim Mansion both in Manchester would have been lost with out Trump's efforts. These tangible examples of his accomplishments are far outweighed by the vision he instilled in the North Side: Our community is unique and special, our architecture and history are worth the effort it requires to save it.

Thank you Jamie and rest in peace.

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BOARD MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

☞ **Lois Henderson Yoedt**, president of the Society was asked to join the advisory board of the local history project of the Western Pennsylvania Historical Society.

☞ **Myrna Antonio-Hall**, program coordinator of Partners In Parks was awarded the U. S. Department of Justice National Volunteer Service Award. She was honored for her work with the criminal justice program.

☞ **Michael Eversmeyer** was honored by the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation for his work on the Historical Review Commission's walking tour pamphlets. The Old Allegheny neighborhoods of Allegheny West, Manchester and the Mexican War streets are featured.

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 22 - John Brashear factory and house tour - Cost \$10.00 for members and \$15.00 non members. The tour will visit the former Brashear Optical Company factory and the last home of "Uncle John" Brashear, founder of the Observatory in Riverview Park.

October 18 - Board meeting to be held at our new office location the historical, Community House, 801 Union Ave.

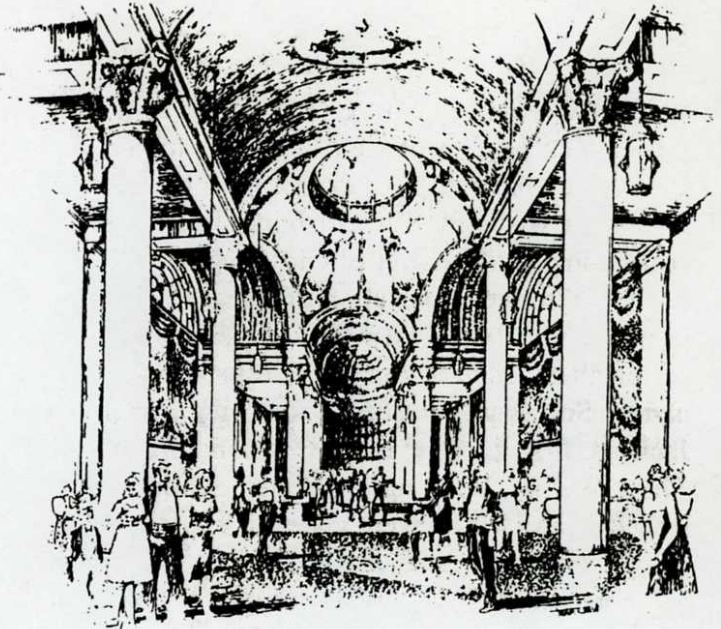
Upcoming newsletters will inform you of 1996 events including the First Charles Avery Awards Dinner.

Watch for our first 1996 issue featuring the Civil War and Allegheny City

REGAINING THE GREATNESS

Pittsburgh's Grand Hall at the Priory, will open in November 1995.

The former St. Mary's German Catholic Church at 614 Pressley St. is being converted into a banquet and meeting hall that can accommodate 350 people for a sit-down dinner and up to 550 cocktail style. The Grand Hall has not only preserved the grandeur of the church but accentuated the historical Italianate style



Pittsburgh's Grand Hall at The Priory

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structure. The interior features Corinthian columns with gold leaf capitals supporting the domed windowed ceiling. The Austrian stained glass windows are breath taking in the sun light.

The Graff's, owners of The Priory, A City Inn must be complimented for their work on saving the church and the "Great Hall" concept.

CALVARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The Allegheny Historic Preservation Society, is returning the Calvary United Methodist Church at 971 Beech Avenue in Allegheny West to its original



gothic style. The exterior cleaning is the most visual component of the on-going restoration project. The cleaned spire can now be seen even more dramatically on the horizon of Allegheny.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Mr. S. Greene Drucker, former executive director is not longer affiliated with the Allegheny City Society. We all wish him much success in his new future endeavors.

OUT OF THE PAST

William M. Rimmel, author of *The Allegheny Story* was an incorporator of the Allegheny City Society in 1957. The following is an except from his Saturday column he wrote for The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette concerning his memories of Old Allegheny.

With the "annexation of Allegheny by Pittsburgh in 1907It was discovered that many of Allegheny and Pittsburgh's streets bore identical names. So Allegheny streets like Craig, Butler, Jackson, first, Liberty, Locust, Second, Main, Pike, Third, Walnut, Washington, Water, Strawberry, Rebecca, and Virgin were given new names. When Alleghenians protested about the changes they were informed that Pittsburgh had changed Fernando Street in the Hill District so Allegheny could retain its Federal street.

Sixty years have passed since the annexation but hundreds of old Alleghenians still cling to the old street names. To them Foreland Street will always be First Street and Reedsdale St. will always be Rebecca street".

Allegheny Tid Bits

- The first professional football player was William "Pudge" Heffelfinger, a Yale man, who was paid \$500.00 by the Allegheny Athletic Association in 1892. Allegheny paid "Pudge" the money to help them defeat their bitter rivals the Pittsburgh Athletic Association. The final score was Allegheny 4 and Pittsburgh 0.
- The first American soldier killed in World War 1 was a Northsider, Thomas F. Enright. The former Enright Theater on Penn Ave. was named in his honor.
- Kaufman Brothers, Cothing Business was on Federal St. in Allegheny from 1874 to 1878. The erection of a four-story building on Smithfield St. 5th Ave. in 1878, was the beginning of the Kaufman Family Department Store business.
- We all know that George Ferris, the inventor of the Ferris wheel was an Allegheny resident. Few will know what street he lived on? Arch Street.
- The great American architect Frederick John Osterling, designer of Union Trust Building and the Belefield Presbyterian Church in Oakland to name a few of his commissions, was educated in the Allegheny Public Schools in 1870's. One of the many commissions of Mr. Osterling still standing on the North Side is the Bradberry Apartment Building on Reddour St.
- Josh Gibson home run hitter of the Homestead Grays Baseball Team of the 1930's and 40' lived for a time on the North Side. The housing development on Charles St. built in the 1980's was named in his honor - Gibson Green.

Information for this article was from the Pittsburgh Album, The History of Pittsburgh and the Professional Football Hall of Fame in Canton Ohio.

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UPCOMING HOUSE TOURS

Old Allegheny offers the best of the house tours in the Pittsburgh area. Check out the fall dates and plan to attend one. See the beautiful architecture and meet the current residents who make the North Side a great place to live.

October 8 - Perry Hilltop - Home and garden tour begins at Perry South Senior Citizen Center.

Tickets \$10 call Craig Bennett for information

Oct 27 & 28 - Allegheny West - Spirits of Old Allegheny, guided walking tour with real stories of documented happenings and hauntings. Cost \$5.00 no advance sales. (not recommended for children under 12)

Dec 9 -10 - Allegheny West - Annual Christmas House Tour - 2 hour guided tour features 6 houses and Calvary Church. Book early this event is always a sellout. Cost \$15.00 call 323-8884 for reservations and information.

NORTH SIDE CHRONICLE NEWS ARTICLES

Watch every month for an article in the North Side community newspaper is published during the first week of the month for our History of Allegheny Commentaries. If you have ever had the dream of seeing your name in print think about submitting some of your literary work to the Society. Articles must be between 350 to 500 words on any subject relating to Allegheny City. Photos may accompany your articles.

Submit the articles to the office at 801 Union Ave.

Long articles can be submitted to the society for inclusion in the newsletter. So dust off your old research paper you have always thought deserved publication.

ALLEGHENY TO PITTSBURGH'S NORTH SIDE A SKETCH

Steve Pietzak, a reference librarian at the Allegheny Regional Branch Carnegie Library, wrote this easy tour of the lower North Side for new Allegheny Community College students to find their way to the library. We are republishing it in our

newsletter to help new residents to become acquainted with the area.

Let's start in the 800 and 900 block of Ridge avenue, called "millionaires's row", because of the wealthy families that owned mansions and lived here. This is now the location of the Community College of Allegheny County, in the neighborhood known as Allegheny West, one of the smallest in the City of Pittsburgh.

Byers hall (1898) at 901-905 Ridge ave. was formerly the home of Alexander M. Byers, a wrought iron and pipe manufacturer, and his son-in-law J. Denniston Lyon, the banker. The 90 room Byers-Lyon house is in the Flemish Renaissance design. The architects for the mansion was the noted Pittsburgh firm of Alden and Harlow.

Jones Hall (1908) at 808 Ridge Ave. was built by Benjamin F. Jones one of the founders of the Jones and Laughlin Steel Company. The style is Tudor Revival, the architects were Rutan and Russell. The millionaire townhouse is constructed of red brick and terra cotta had 42 rooms and cost in 1908 \$375,000 to build.

West Hall (1911) at 809 Ridge Ave. was formerly the dormitory building of the Western Theological Seminary. The seminary was first built on Monument Hill, the area today is the upper student parking lot at the far eastern end of the campus. In 1829, after fire had destroyed the building on the hilltop location the seminary constructed the dormitory using the Collegiate Tudor style.

The last of the millionaire enclave still standing in the 800 block of Ridge Ave. is the William Penn Snyder House (1911). Mr. Snyder was owner of the Shenango Furnace Company, the building cost \$450,000 and was one of the first to feature a self-contained garage. The building is now occupied by the Babb Insurance Company.

Going toward the Allegheny River, below the campus, near the present site of Three Rivers stadium and the surrounding parking lots was Exposition Park where the Pittsburgh Pirates played the first modern world series in 1903, against Boston and they defeated in the final game 4 to 3 and losing the series three games to five.



Following Ridge Ave. to West Ohio St. you will see the large Catholic Church next to the National Aviary in Pittsburgh. This is St. Peters (1874). In the 1870's this church had its own bishop and did so until the Allegheny diocese merged with the Pittsburgh diocese. This church was attended by Arthur Rooney, the former owner of the Pittsburgh Steelers.

At the end of West Ohio St. and West Commons, you'll find the old Allegheny Post Office (1897), which is now the home of the Pittsburgh Children's Museum. This early Italian Renaissance building features a dome. Along the entrance to the garden of the museum is the portal of the now gone Manchester Bridge. On the portal are depictions of two early heros of Allegheny's early history Christopher Gist and the Indian Chief Guyasuta.

The Pittsburgh History and Landmarks foundation fought to save this piece of architecture and many of the buildings of the North side during the period when urban renewal was considered tearing down old buildings. The Foundation used the old Post Office as its home in the 1970,s before moving to Station Square.

Now we are in the Allegheny Center Mall complex area. Across the street from the Childrens Museum is the Buhl Planetarium (1939) done in the Classical style. This building was the former home of the yearly Christmas model railroad display. Now the model railroad exhibit is totally computerized and can be viewed year-round at the new Carnegie Science Center.

Before the Planetarium was built this was the site of the City Hall of the Allegheny. Walking a little farther East you will find the Allegheny Branch of the Carnegie Library (1888). One of the first publicly supported that Andrew Carnegie, the steel magnate gave to the world. This building features Richardsonian Romanesque architecture done in granite. The library was built to include a music hall which now houses the Pittsburgh Public Theater.

ADVERTISHMENTS FROM 1907

THE ADS PICTURED BELOW WERE TAKEN FROM THE NEIGHBORHOOD CLASS, THE MAGAZINE OF THE EIGHT U.P. CHURCH'S MEN'S BIBLE CLASS. THESE ADS REPRESENT ONLY A FEW OF THE RETAIL ESTABLISHMENTS ON PERRYVILLE AVE. IN 1907. SHOPPING HABITS HAVE CHANGED IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD BUT SOME BUSINESSES AND BUILDINGS HAVE SURVIVED.

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Have you ever wonder what was on a particular piece of land 50, 75 or 100 years ago? For this author, the Perrysville Plaza Apartment, a senior citizen high-rise building at 2403 Perrysville Ave. is one of those locations.

The Eighth United Presbyterian Church stood on the corner of Perrysville Ave. and Burgess Street and the query has lead to a whole trail of historical research that is still on going.

The Eighth U.P. Church had several different locations in Perry Hilltop before laying the cornerstone for their building at Perrysville and Burgess in 1899. The Church's humble beginnings were formed from Sabbath School meetings at two different locations, one in Perry Hilltop (at an old school house on Ridgewood Ave. - 1877) and the other on East Jefferson St. (in present day Central Northside area - 1879). The location on East Jefferson meeting house was nicknamed the "Butcher shop Mission" from it's location in an old meat shop.

The two missions united in 1882 erecting a chapel at the foot of Lombard Street (now Letsche St. in Fineview) under the auspices of the Fourth United Presbyterian Church of Allegheny (located at corner of Montgomery and Sherman in Central Northside). Students from Allegheny Theological Seminary performing pastoral duties at this newly formed mission church called the Lombard Street Mission. The Mission held its first Communion on February 13, 1887 and 16 new members were added to the rolls.

During this time in the Perrysville and Perry Hilltop area, a growing and strong Scotch-Irish population wanted to attend a Presbyterian church. The Lombard Street Mission was too small to accomodate the number of people who wished to attend Sunday services and the nearest Presbyterian church was the Fourth, quite a distance to travel each Sunday without public transportation.



Eighth Presbyterian Church altar and organ as they appeared in the 1950's

(The street car tracks running along Perrysville Ave were a few years in the future.)

Within a few years the Mission's congregation started plans for a new edifice. On October 13, 1889 a new red brick church building was dedicated on Federal Lane (the present Federal Street Extension between Lafayette and Perrysville Ave). The building is still at this location only it was moved back from the street to make room for the new building constructed by St. Luke's Lutheran Church in 1911.)

1890 was a memorable year for the Eighth Presbyterian Church it was organized as a congregation and Rev. William I. Wishart, accepted the call of the members to become their first pastor. The church started out with 86 charter members and within 10 years 624 individuals were received and added to the church rolls. Rev. Wishart and the Church's Session determined that their growing congregation would yet again need more space.

The land at Perrysville Avenue and Euclid (now Burgess St.) was donated with the stipulation whatever was built would be for "the good of the community." Construction began in 1899 and on



October 7, 1900 the new church building was dedicated. \$40,000 dollars was spent on the construction and this including the price of the organ.

According to *The Pittsburg Dispatch* from October 8, 1900 "over a thousand persons attended the dedicatory exercises of the new Eighth United Presbyterian ... An offering to reduce the church debt was made and nearly \$2,000 collected".

A who's who of Presbyterian elite officiated at the service Rev. R.J. Miller of *The Christian Herald* gave an address and Rev. John McNaugher Professor of Greek at the Allegheny Theological Seminary delivered the prayer of dedication. The service was conducted by Rev. Wishart with his father Rev. William Wishart, D.D. reading the scripture lesson. Seventeen years later to the day, a new sabbath school and gymnasium was completed and dedicated on October 7, 1917.

The years of service of Rev. Wishart were ones of growth and benefit to the Hilltop community. Starting in 1906 the Eighth U.P. Church was the meeting place for the neighborhood Men's Bible Class, a men's only bible study class meeting every Sunday at 2:15 pm. Rev. John McNaugher was the classes instructor and Rev. Wishart was on the executive committee. An advertisement read: "Wanted: at the neighborhood men's bible class nothing but men, young men, old men, married men and men willing to be married".

The study class published a non-sectarian monthly magazine called "*The Neighborhood Class For Thinking Men*" starting in 1907. Topics included a list of the monthly events held at the eight protestant churches on the Hilltop. Every issue detailed upcoming events at Eighth U.P. Church: lawn fetes, annual church basket picnics at the Chapel in Riverview Park, taffy pulling, sabbath school outings at West View Park and the yearly September rally day events that began the sunday school church year.

The cost of the pamphlet was 50¢ subscription for a year and a single copy sold of was a nickel. The cost of the publication was augmented by the selling of advertising. The businesses of Perrysville Ave. placed their ads and stressed the

importance of telling the business owner "you saw their ad in *The Neighborhood Class* and staying on the hill to do your shopping.

During August when the pastor was on vacation the evening service was held on the church lawn. In charge of the service was the Young Peoples Christian Union. While the service was being conducted the Pittsburg Railway Co. ordered all street cars to pass the church slowly during the hour of 7:00 thru 8:00 pm.

When Rev. Wishart had retired in 1931 after 41 years of service, Rev. Thomas H. Newcomb became the pastor.

In 1940 the church's Golden 50th Anniversary year a homecoming and rededication service was held. The entire church plant was renovated with a new electrified organ, new lights and beautiful new chancel. Rev. John McNugher who had spoken at the church dedication back in 1900 and now president of the Pttsburgh-Xenia Sseminary gave the rededication sermon on Dcember 15, 1940.

The church bulletin from the golden anniversary gives a description of the wooden ornamental screen behind the altar depicting the Last Supper "carved by the master-carver, Mr. Alois

Below: The original church on Federal Lane. Still standing behind St. Luke's Lutheran Church





Lang, as painted by Leonardo Da Vinci. Mr. Lang is a descendant of an old family of wood carvers of Oberammergau, Germany."

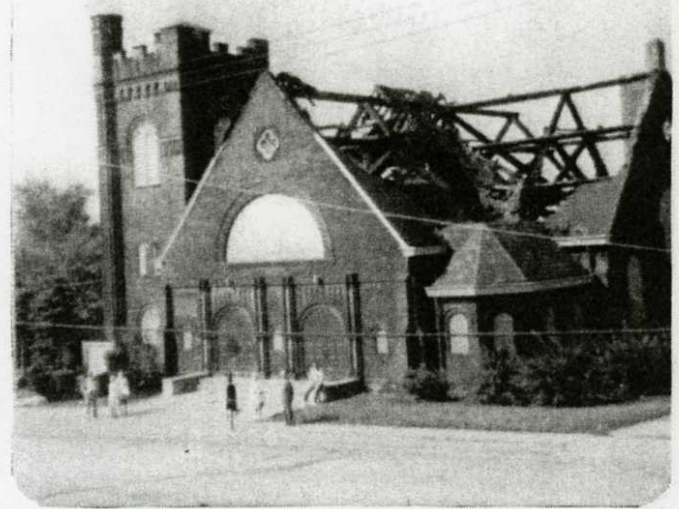
The Eighth U.P. Church was the servant of the Perry Hilltop area well into the 1970's. The church was the location for all the significant religious events in a member's church life even after they had moved out of the neighborhood. The Eight provided the cement in holding the bricks of the neighborhood together. But the neighborhood was beginning to change. In 1970, Pastor Richard Goodhart, the last minister of the Eighth U.P. Church, told a newspaper reporter that "we are in the same position as the other churches in the Perrysville area, the majority of our people are older and not too many young are coming (to church) to replace them."

However, the loss of this church building, was not due to the idea that to create a modern city, the older buildings had to be torn down or a dwindling congregation. The destruction of this piece of our communal memory happened one July day in 1976, the result of a spark from a grass fire that was left undetected and that later reignited in the church structure. In only a few hours the building was damaged beyond repair.

"The church baptismal records were the only valuables saved from the fire. The records were carried from the church before the roof collapsed," stated Louis E. Sweeney, chairman of the buildings and grounds committee. However, Sweeney added "officials hope to salvage the hand-carved depiction of the Last Supper from the ruins".

The fire caused a great upheaval for the over 600 members of the congregation. For over a year the church conducted services at 11:30 am at St. Luke's Lutheran Church at the invitation of that congregation. Frances M. Withey still an active member of St Luke's remembers that this arrangement continued until Oct. 1977. "We had many combined services and many delightful dinners together-- we missed them when they left."

In 1977 a church consolation agreement was passed by the members combining North End U. P. Church on Perrysville and Vinceton (now the Pittsburgh Chinese Church) and Watson U.P.



The ruins of the Eight U.P. Church after the fire in 1976

Church at Perrysville and Riverview Avenues with Eighth U.P. Church. The new location of the combined churches was Watson Church and was named Riverview United Presbyterian Church.

The church was razed and the land cleared and sold to a development company. Today a senior citizens high-rise which was completed in the early 1980's occupies the site.

You can still see the beautiful wooden carving of the Last Supper which survived the fire. It now hangs in the rear of Riverview United Presbyterian Church, a visual memory of one of the vanishing churches of Allegheny.

Help with research for this article came from Lois Henderson Yoedt, archivist of Riverview United Presbyterian Church, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph MacCall, Peg MacCall, Patrick and Claudia Shaughnessy. Mistakes are the fault of the author..please forgive. Ruth McCartan



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- + Officially document, preserve, and interpret the history of Old Allegheny City and Pittsburgh's North Side;
- + Support efforts to preserve the " Commons," monuments, and landmarks in Allegheny City; *
- + Support movements for the improvement and beautification of that portion of the City of Pittsburgh known prior to 1907 as Allegheny City; *
- + Create tours, lectures, publications and educational programs that perpetuate the history of Allegheny City and the North Side.

(* original charter language)

Membership Benefits

- + Reduced rates on tours, lectures, seminars and special events.
- + Free subscription to Allegheny City Society Newsletter, published three times a year.
- + Docent and volunteer opportunities.
- + Invitation to Annual Meeting and Awards Ceremony.

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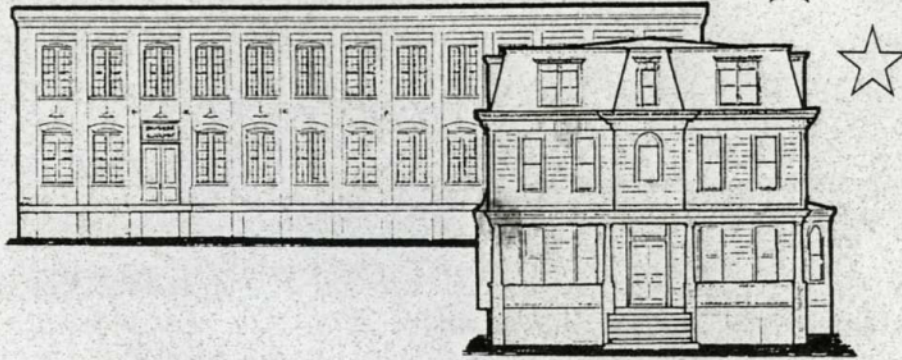
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