

SOCIETY HILL NEWS

Gazette of the Society Hill Area Residents' Association

VOLUME 1 - NO. 1 - FEBRUARY 1958

PUBLISHED EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE

How do you like our new dress? Under the direction of Mrs. B. N. Schoenfeld and her Public Relations Committee the OLD PHILADELPHIAN did a wonderful job for SHARA and the community. Now that this newsletter is the voice of SHARA, it seems appropriate to give it a distinctive name and masthead of its own.

The name is descriptive of its job--to carry the news of Society Hill to all the residents of the area.

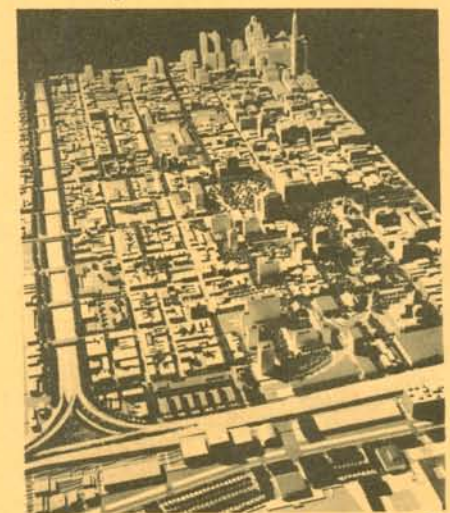
The illustration which backs the masthead is a reproduction of an historical print of the original Society Hill in 1754 -- a high bluff just South of Dock Creek along the Delaware, which was a prominent feature of the city's waterfront in early years.

This seems a good place to remind us all how Society Hill got its name. The hill was part of a tract which belonged to the Free Society of Traders, a company organized to help William Penn promote and settle Pennsylvania. "The Society's Hill" was used as a parade ground and open air meeting place, and in time gave its name to the adjoining section of the Colonial city. By the time of the Revolution, and for some fifty years after that, Society Hill was the dwelling place of citizens who were prominent in the founding of our Nation and in the life of America's first capital city and leading metropolis.

In the ten months since SHARA was organized many exciting and significant events have taken place. We have seen the City's plan for rehabilitation and restoration of the area gradually take shape. Surveys are under way to determine how the necessary changes can be effected with the least hardship and inconvenience to all.

Restoration and improvement of many individual properties is already under way, and many others only await Spring to get in the Swing!

SHARA MIDWINTER MEETING Monday, Feb. 17th, 8 P.M. Carl Schurz Memorial 410 Chestnut Street "Rehabilitating Your Home" Why? How? When?



View of Washington Square East Model looking westward from the proposed Delaware and Lombard Expressway Interchange.

Plan to attend and see this model of our area!

Nearly 300 residents and property owners of Society Hill have become members of the Society Hill Area Residents' Association, thus allying themselves with SHARA's objective -- "to make and keep Society Hill a safe, attractive and friendly place in which to live and work."

About one-fourth of Shara's members are active on the various committees to which they bring their enthusiasm and their special talents and abilities.

The officers, executive board members and committee workers are serving without remuneration except the satisfaction and thrill of working for the best interests of their neighbors and neighborhood.

ANY resident of Society Hill who would like to become active with SHARA, is invited to phone the President (Wa 5-7757) or any other officer or Committee Chairman. There's a job for anyone who is interested!

ART COMMISSION REJECTS COMMERCIAL SIGN

The neighbors of the 500 block of Pine Street have won another round in their fight to maintain a residential atmosphere. In December 1957 the Art Commission refused Potonkin Chrovolet Clearance design for the signs.

SHARA's Executive Board at January 13th meeting voted to ask "the Department of Licenses and Inspections to start proceedings to have the steel work sub structure for the sign removed from the building".



GOOD NEWS!

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CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ACTS ON SOCIETY HILL BILL

On Wednesday, January 29th, 1958 at 10:00 A.M. there was a public hearing before the Committee on Municipal Development and Zoning of City Council in Room 496, City Hall.

Bill Number 1809 introduced by Councilman Giordano to amend the zoning ordinance by changing the designation from partly "D-1 Residential", partly "A Commercial", partly "B Commercial" and partly "General Industrial" to a single designation of "D-1 Residential"; area bounded by Spruce Street, Second Street, Lombard Street and Seventh Street. The Planning Commission approved this change as in conformity with the plan for the area.



On June 18, 1957 SHARA's Board voted to request an ordinance to upgrade the area by rezoning. Miss Murdoch, SHARA President, headed a delegation of neighbors and spoke in favor of Bill.

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SOCIETY HILL NEWS IS DISTRIBUTED by the Boy Scouts of Troop 448, Old St. Joseph's Parish, as their community service of 1958.

WILL YOU HELP?

JOIN SHARA'S TELEPHONE SQUAD!

Duties - Make 10 calls once every month from your home. A list of names and numbers will be furnished.

Purpose - To inform SHARA members of meetings, etc.

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SOUTH PHILA. CITIZENS' CONFERENCE

Public Meeting

Tuesday, February 11th at 8 P.M.
auditorium

Sons of Italy Building, SW Corner of Broad and Federal Streets

1. Off street parking in S. Philly
2. Curtailment of Public Transportation
3. Delaware Expressway Route

Donald C. Wagner - Managing Director

JOIN THE OFFICE GANG

Duties

- address envelopes and cards
- stuff and mail Society Hill News
- type letters for SHARA committees
- run mimeograph

These jobs may be done at home or at SHARA's office.

Purpose - To keep SHARA's progress known and understood by its members.

Call MA 7-6545 and ask for Mr. Sennott, Staff Aide to your Residents Assn.

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED NOW!

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BRING A FRIEND to SHARA's mid-winter meeting, Monday, February 17th, 8 P.M. at the Carl Schurz Auditorium, 410 Chestnut Street

EDITORIAL

NEW VISTAS FOR SOCIETY HILL

It seems that whatever Grant Miles Simon F.A.I.A. does in the upbuilding of Society Hill turns out to be important. He is Advisory Architect to the permanent Federal Advisory Commission for the National Historical Park. It was he who prepared the authoritative map of our neighborhood for the American Philosophical Society, thereby visualizing the over-all task of redeveloping Society Hill and those areas immediately around Independence Hall.

His map has proved a thoroughgoing study of the potentialities of this older section of our city as a great historic center without parallel in this country. He spotted a total of 662 noteworthy sites within the district and the map revealed that there is still standing a total of 142 authentic 18th Century Buildings in the area. No wonder we can claim that we have "America's Most Historic Square Mile," a tourist Mecca with enormous possibilities.

And now Mr. Simon just has issued a brochure sponsored jointly by the Carpenters Company and the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. It is a handsome publication, wonderfully planned and printed. The deft drawing crayon of Mr. Simon's has revealed the charm of the various buildings that were important in the unfolding life of our city from its earliest beginnings.

You can still buy a copy of this brochure entitled "The Beginnings of Philadelphia" from the book committee of Carpenter's Hall, at its book table, for the incredibly

low price of \$2.00. If you wish to order it sent to you by mail include an extra 50 cents for postage.

Mr. Simon's technique of propaganda evidently is a subtle one; he did not say "These are the spots that must be redeveloped". Rather he quietly let all of us do our own thinking. And now we are well on the way to redeveloping many of the houses of the 18th centuries still standing.

Five years later, Mr. Simon comes along with his new brochure and includes in it two pages of replicas of documents that have survived as the root soil of American democracy. Superficially we may think that the American Government started with the signing of the Declaration of Independence, but nations through history cannot be created over night. Ideas of a new sort of government grow slowly. This Mr. Simon must have had in mind when he devoted the last two pages of his new brochure to reproductions of William Penn's "The Holy Experiment" and also the Charter of Privileges which was discussed before the huge open fireplace of Penn's town house, the Slate Roof House that once stood on South Second Street above Walnut.

Here, indeed, existed a picturesque shrine. It was the birthplace of religious freedom in the early 18th Century. From the basic ideas set forth in Penn's now Provincial Government there unfolded principles that became firm laws written into the Constitution of these United States. All this must have run through Mr. Simon's mind as he planned this new brochure on the

beginning of Philadelphia.

Some day, in the not too distant future, those of us who are interested in developing old Philadelphia as a great tourist center must start thinking about restoration project on important sites as well as rehabilitations of old buildings left standing. Some of these restorations are essential to complete the picture "by breathing life into the chronicles of bygone experience"...to borrow the stated purpose of the Rockefeller family in their highly successful Williamsburg, Virginia project.

We need to reproduce the picturesque Slate Roof House exactly as we know it existed in Penn's day. Also, our tourists would crowd into a restoration of Benjamin Franklin's last home which once stood on Orianna Street near Market. It should not take much to interest the printing industry, or advertising groups, to finance an exact restoration of this hallowed place. Then, there is the old boarding house at Seventh and Market Streets where once Thomas Jefferson labored over the text of the Declaration of Independence.

Tourists on a holiday want to be entertained by imagining the great events of our past on the very sites. On Society Hill, and thereabouts, there exist many such spots. There is the home of Lydia Darrah, the school teacher who became one of the first volunteer American spies. It was she who warned Washington of a plan she overheard for capturing his ragged, weary army resting at Whitemarsh. And there are many other sites in the area where such fabulous stories abound.

It will be the task of patriotic citizens or foundations interested in preserving the traditions of our great democracy, to supplement the efforts of our Federal Government, the State and the city in establishing these permanent, living memorials of the events which shaped our glorious past.

G.F.K.

The impressive accomplishments of SHARA are made possible by your support. Join now and send in your 1958 membership.

Sincerely yours,
Dr. Meyer Gansky
Membership Chairman
SHARA



Send your



Society Hill Area Residents Assoc.
c/o Mr. Robert Levens, Sr.
271 So. 4th St., 6

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JUDGE LEWIS HEAD CPHS

At their annual meeting of the Colonial Philadelphia Historical Society former Judge Edwin O. Lewis was inducted as their new president. The meeting was held in Congress Hall. Edwin C. Moore, the founder of the Society was elected Life Member and commended for his fine efforts in organizing the society. The society's headquarters will remain at 244 S. Third St. (MA 7-0364)

MEMBERS AT WORK

Project Area One Committee current action on proposed police administration building site at 2nd and Pine Sts. includes investigation of more residentially related uses and gathering of facts to support them. Arnold Nicholson, 241 Pine St. is chairman. SHARA members active in work are Allen Koss, 223 Spruce St., Alvin Plumer, 226 South St., Kurt Winter, 412 Spruce St., Ralph Ottaviano, 332 Delancey St., and Helen Paris.

REHABILITATION COMMITTEE chaired by L. E. Martin of 705 Spruce St.

Since the Society Hill Renewal will be largely rehabilitation in nature a series of "Rehab Clinics" are being developed. The first of these to be held Monday, March 3rd at 321 S. 3rd St., 7:30 P.M.

Other members of the committee include Frank Gogolski, 244 Delancey St., Frank Graham, 212 Spruce St., Kenneth P. Clark, Preston Anrade and Damon Childs.

Shara Rehabilitation Committee is offering all residents in the area bounded by Second and Fourth, Spruce and Lombard on the first steps in rehabilitation.

Subjects Architectural Design, what to do; Construction, How to do; Building Materials, with what to do, are the major topics to be discussed by experts in their fields.

This is your program; support is solicited in order that Shara may be of profit and help to you in creating a better place to live.

The first workshop is scheduled for March 3rd, at Keith Mansion, 321 S. 4th St. Bring photographs or any information regarding your property, which you

wish to discuss.

New Chairman of Streets is Helen Buerklin, 223, Pine St.

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George F. Kearney, Editor and chairman, Public Relations Committee.

Committee: Mrs. Benjamin N. Schoenfeld, Mary I. Jardin, Miss Selma Levin, Miss Anne List, Mr. Earl Lovelace, Miss Bertha Von Moschzisker, Mr. Harry Altman, Mrs. Catherine Phillips, Mrs. Sarah Pousman, Mr. Raymond Gogoloski, Mr. Bernard Sokolick, Mrs. Sheila Travaglia, Mr. Howard Silverman, Ed Scherneck, Pat Reed, Danny Primo, Madge Buerklin, John Sennett-Staff Aide.



PRIASE FROM BOSTON

An interesting meeting to all residents of "The Hill" was staged by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania on Thursday, Jan. 23rd. Mr. John Codman, chairman of the Beacon Hill Architectural Commission of Boston spoke. He described rehabilitation projects in many American city and used Philadelphia to obtain strong legislation to bulwark their preservation projects as a short-cut to success. He described what is being done in Boston on Beacon Hill and congratulated Philadelphia's progress on Society Hill.

