NIAGARA COMMISSIONED

Oliver Hazard Perry’s message “Don’t Give Up the Ship”, delivered during the Battle of Lake Erie in 1813, rang true again on August 18 as Governor Robert Casey officially commissioned the reconstructed US Brig Niagara. More than 1,000 people watched as the commissioning pennant was raised to the top of the main mast while cannons boomed on the USS Phairon and the national anthem was played by a local band.

“Commodore Perry didn’t give up the ship; neither have we, and neither has Pennsylvania,” Casey said as he proclaimed the Niagara Pennsylvania’s flagship.

The Niagara became Perry’s flagship during the Battle of Lake Erie after his first flagship, the Lawrence, was heavily damaged. Perry’s victory secured control of the Great Lakes for America in the War of 1812 and led Perry to send his famous message “we have met the enemy and they are ours.”

Ship designer and builder Melbourne Smith, who for more than two years has led the team of craftsmen in the reconstruction project, said, “I urge you to share her with the rest of America. Then I urge you to take care of her. You have a jewel of American history.”

The Niagara will be moored at the Litton Industries bayfront property in Erie which has been made available to the state as the permanent home for the ship and museum.

ST. BART’S LANDMARK STATUS UPHeld

In a case followed by preservationists all over the United States, the landmark designation of St. Bartholomew’s Church on Park Avenue in New York City was upheld by the Federal Court of Appeals on September 12 against a constitutional challenge by the Episcopal parish. The parish argued that landmark status interfered with its freedom of religion and its property rights.

The three judge panel of the Second Circuit stated that New York City’s landmark law “did not violate” the “church’s First Amendment right to the free exercise of religion or its Fifth Amendment right against takings of property without just compensation.”

Supporters of the landmark ordinance in New York City hailed the decision as an unambiguous affirmation of the law. This important decision has come at a time when the landmarks law has been under growing criticism from religious leaders in the city who had joined forces in the lawsuit on St. Bartholomew’s behalf.

From 1984 to 1986, the landmarks commission turned down three applications

continued on page 7

Also in this issue:
Bookshelf..........................p. 6
Calendar............................p. 8
Gubernatorial Candidates........p. 2
In the News.........................p. 3
Lustron Houses......................p. 4
Preservation PA News..............p. 5
Preservation Pennsylvania contacted the two leading gubernatorial candidates, Barbara Hafer and Robert Casey, requesting their views concerning the future of historic preservation in Pennsylvania.

**Question:** Pennsylvania is well known for its numerous historic sites and buildings. What role do you feel this legacy of history plays in the Commonwealth today?

**Hafer:** The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is known internationally for its rich cultural and historic heritage. Tourists travel to the state to enjoy its historic sites. As governor, I would put forth much effort to ensure that its cultural heritage is preserved and promulgated. Tourism is beneficial to the Commonwealth’s economy and the state must continue to cultivate interest from the public to visit its historic treasures.

**Casey:** The central role of history in Pennsylvania today is captured by the adoption of “America Starts Here” as a starting point for promoting the state’s many attractions. Indeed, the foundations of democracy were laid in Pennsylvania. The words “Independence Hall” have international name recognition. This legacy of history spread across the state with a story of many notable firsts, including the roots of the nation’s westward expansion.

Today, the Commonwealth, through the Department of Community Affairs, is laying the groundwork for both visitors and community members to appreciate another revolution — the industrial revolution. The state’s new Heritage Parks Program is designed to recognize and preserve Pennsylvania’s diverse industrial character and traditions by focusing on iron and steel, coal, textiles, machines and foundries, transportation, lumber, oil, and agricultural themes. Eight areas across the Commonwealth have been awarded grants to assist planning for the Heritage Park goals of economic development, intergovernmental cooperation, cultural conservation, recreation, and education. The future of this program should showcase a part of our history that is often neglected — industries and the people that made Pennsylvania the leading industrial state.

These programs supporting history are already providing economic dividends in the form of increased tourist visitation and dollars. They also provide the less tangible benefits of improved quality of life and community pride. Our past is indeed part of our future.

**Question:** Between 1978 and 1986 Pennsylvania led the nation in certified historic rehabilitations, with over one billion invested in the Commonwealth in preservation projects. Since 1986, the number of Tax Recovery Act projects has declined by eighty-one percent. Would you directly support changes in the Federal Tax Code that would revitalize rehabilitation activity?

**Hafer:** Yes, I would encourage the federal legislature to support tax incentives to revitalize rehabilitation activity in the Commonwealth.

**Casey:** Pennsylvania, like the rest of the nation, has seen a drop in the number of projects utilizing federal tax incentives for the rehabilitation of historic properties. The program is still generating successful projects in Pennsylvania, but with reduced effectiveness and numbers since the changes in the Tax Reform Act. The administration generally supports the tax incentives for historic preservation as a useful tool for reinvestment in Pennsylvania. However, changes in federal tax law are complex, and with the current deficit position, all proposals that have a revenue impact will be carefully scrutinized at the federal level.

**Question:** Each Pennsylvania county is required to enact a comprehensive plan by 1992. Do you believe such plans should take into account historic and environmental resources through zoning and/or other planning tools?

**Hafer:** Yes, these county plans should indeed address local historical and environmental resources. The preservation of history should continue to be an essential criteria in land use planning in the Commonwealth. As a county commissioner for Allegheny County, I learned first hand the need for local government to become an active and responsible participant in preserving its historical institutions.

**Casey:** In Pennsylvania, planning and zoning are traditionally the responsibility of municipal governments. The Commonwealth’s sixty-seven counties can play an important role in providing land-use information and technical assistance to local governments within their boundaries. Over the past twenty years, many counties have developed planning documents and many more will be tackling this issue in the future. The Commonwealth assists all levels of government in their planning efforts through the Department of Community Affairs, state planning assistance grants and through many courses offered by the Department’s municipal training division. Counties and other local governments are encouraged, as part of these programs, to include consideration of special resources (for example historic properties and sensitive environmental areas) as part of the comprehensive planning process.

**Question:** In 1987, Pennsylvania citizens passed a bond initiative to generate funds to preserve agricultural lands. Do you support a similar bond issue to generate funds for preservation projects?

*continued on page 3*
Citizens in the Lancaster County community of Ephrata have organized to save the Main Theater; a 52 year old, 900 seat Art Moderne style building. The Main was closed in May when it was purchased by the Denver and Ephrata Telephone Company. D&E announced plans to demolish the Main which led local citizens to form “Main Attraction: Citizens to Save the Main Theater.” Members of Main Attraction met with officials of D&E on September 10 to explain why the theater was important to the community and present possible alternatives to demolition. Judy Brady of Main Attraction said the D&E officials were receptive to ideas presented but were unwilling to release results of the engineering report that led to D&E’s decision to demolish. According to Brady, over 1700 local signatures have been collected on a petition to save the Main. Brady added, “the people of Ephrata don’t want just any theater, they want the Main.” At a press conference in Lancaster on September 26, D&E officials announced that the Main will definitely come down to make way for an office...and a new theater.

Shippensburg’s Historic District ordinance is under fire from a group of citizens who claim it is unnecessarily burdensome and intrusive on property owners’ rights. In effect since 1986, the ordinance requires that any alterations to buildings within the historic district be subject to review by the city’s Historic and Architectural Review Board which makes recommendations to the Borough Council, the authority for zoning.


Grace Gary................Executive Director
Bill Wright......................Editor

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LUSTRON: AMERICA'S STEEL HOUSES

The war was over, the boys were coming home. Hundreds of thousands of men whose lives had been put on hold by the Second World War wanted nothing more than to return home, get back to work, marry their sweethearts and start a family. But wartime restrictions on homebuilding meant too few houses for too many families. America, the world’s industrial giant sought to solve this problem using the methods that had propelled the nation into greatness. Why couldn’t houses be manufactured applying industrial techniques like those used to build automobiles and mass produced like razor blades? Carl Strandlund, an industrial visionary, created a product that would add a unique chapter to the history of housing in America, the Lustron House. In the early months of 1946 Strandlund went to Washington D.C. representing the Vitreous Enamel Corporation, a major producer of porcelainized steel panels for service stations and storefronts. Both steel and housing were in short supply at the time, and a sympathetic senator suggested that substantial quantities of steel could be made available for residential use rather than solely for commercial use. In a short period of time, Strandlund designed a stainless steel, porcelainized house that could be manufactured on an assembly line and shipped in pieces to the building site. The Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) liked the idea and approved the $15.5 million loan in June of 1946; the Lustron Corporation, a subsidiary of Vitreous, was formed. Strandlund’s simple but revolutionary idea was that assembly line construction of the housing components would keep costs down. The finished parts then would be trucked to the building site. Available in a variety of colors, the porcelain sheen gave the home an ultra modern appearance while the Lustron Home owner was assured of consistent quality through assembly line production.

With the government loan in hand, the Lustron Corporation converted the Curtiss-Wright fighter plane factory in Columbus, Ohio for use as a home component factory. In March 1948, the first Lustron Home rolled off the assembly line. For around $7,000, a one-story, two bedroom home with 1,025 square feet of living space could be purchased. Later, one and three bedroom models were made available - some with detached garages. When the ten tons of steel components arrived at the building site, a trained crew of five could erect a Lustron Home in around five days - about one-quarter the time required for a wood frame pre-fabricated home.

Lustron provided all components that were essential for the interior and exterior of the structure. The concrete slab foundation (there was no basement), electrical wiring and switches, tile floors, glass and furnishings were the only parts of the house not included in the package. All-steel cabinets and recessed bookshelves were built into the kitchen, bathroom, living room and dining room. The bedrooms were equipped with drawers. One interesting feature was a built-in combination dish and clothes washer located next to the kitchen sink. Heating was provided by an oil-fired forced air furnace. All pictures were, of course, hung by magnets.

The Lustron factory was designed to produce as many as thirty to forty thousand units per year. At this rate, and at the cheaper cost envisioned by Strandlund, Lustron should have cornered the pre-fabricated homes market in a few short years. Unfortunately, after only one year on the market, the Lustron Corporation went out of business. Skyrocketing building costs, a period of recession, a general alleviation of the housing crisis, and poor marketing practices led to the demise of Lustron. With $37.5 million invested, Lustron Corporation was repossessed by the RFC a short five years after Strandlund’s initial visit to Washington. No records of the actual number of Lustron Homes constructed exist, but estimates are usually in the 3,000 range. State preservation...
PRESERVATION PENNSYLVANIA ENTERS PARTNERSHIP

Preservation Pennsylvania has entered into a partnership with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and together will publish *Workbook of Environmental Planning, Land Use, Zoning and Legal Cases Law*.

The *Workbook* is a comprehensive guide to understanding the intricate workings of the legal, public and private aspects of growth management and land use planning. The book is a “why, what, when, where, and how to” manual for those organizations that have small planning staffs and those individuals and groups that have a vested interest in land use planning.

Grace Gary, Executive Director of Preservation Pennsylvania, stated, “We are happy to join with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation to address pressing planning issues that affect both historic preservation and environmental concerns across the state.”

CANDIDATES (continued from page 2)

**Hafer:** A broader based bond issue including preservation trusts is a worthwhile initiative to raise funds for preservation issues in Pennsylvania. The bonds should also address the needs of other environmental preservation projects.

**Casey:** The administration currently supports historic preservation through program funding to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. The historic preservation program provides survey and planning support, technical assistance and preservation planning assistance to local governments, organizations and private citizens across the Commonwealth. The establishment of alternatives for additional funding, such as a bond initiatives would be dependent upon future state revenues.

HIGHWAYS TO HISTORY

“The road is that physical sign and symbol by which you best understand any age or people – for the road is the creation of humankind and a reflection of the society that surrounds it.” So wrote Horace Busnell in 1846 in his essay “Day of the Roads”. This thought and other ideas concerning the impact of the highway on American culture were examined at the Highways to History Conference held in Pittsburgh October 3-6. Co-sponsored by the Society for Commercial Archeology, Preservation Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission and the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, the conference was held to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Pennsylvania Turnpike, America’s first superhighway. Over one hundred persons attended from ten states and Canada.

Attendees were treated to numerous presentations on the history and characteristics of famous American highways such as the Old Spanish Trail, Route 66, and the Lincoln Highway. Armed with a plethora of slides, presenters documented growth of “roadside culture” in the form of quirky and futuristic commercial architecture as well as displaying engineering feats involved in the construction of highways over the years.

A leitmotif of the presentations was the use of historic postcards to illustrate the physical development of highways and the social ramifications that these postcards represented. Historic postcards are a valuable primary resource in tracing the history of communities and highways because they were often the only professional pictorial records taken. The largest collection of such postcards is the Curt Teich Archives at the Lake County Museum near Chicago. Katherine Hamilton-Smith, Curator, says the collection contains over 350,000 postcards from all over the country. The Teich Company was the largest manufacturer of postcards in America from the turn of the century to the 1970’s.

continued on page 8

GARY RECEIVES GRANT

The National Endowment for the Arts recently announced the selection of Grace Gary, Executive Director of Preservation Pennsylvania, as a U.S.A. Fellow in the Design Arts Program. The fellowships support independent study and travel within the United States for mid-career professionals pursuing projects that significantly advance American design practice, theory, or education.

Gary’s eighteen month project will focus on the process of community political decision-making as it affects historic preservation. She will compile case studies documenting recent local zoning ordinances in Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, Santa Fe, Denver San Antonio and Atlanta.
Workshop of the World: A Selective Guide To The Industrial Archeology of Philadelphia by the Oliver Evans Chapter of the Society for Industrial Archeology. The Industrial history of Philadelphia spans 300 years and encompasses an incredible array of manufacturing and production enterprises. Workshop of the World reflects on some of Philadelphia’s industries by examining the city on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis; it then provides examples of some of the industries found across the city. Through extensive use of secondary resources, good historical overviews of the neighborhoods and associated industries are given. The book is laid out in a guide book format for those interested in exploring the various industrial neighborhoods and sites. Workshop of the World is well presented and gives the reader valuable insight into the scope and importance of the industrial history of Philadelphia. Available through Oliver Evans Press, 204 West Rose Valley Road, Walling Ford, PA 19086. Paperbound.

Caring for Your Old House: A Guide for Owners and Residents by Judith L. Kitchen. New from the National Trust, this addition to the Respectful Rehabilitation Series examines and answers questions about what is historically significant, what is appropriate rehabilitation, and when restoration is appropriate. Ms. Kitchen includes in this very handy book sections on cost considerations, potential problem areas in foundations, plumbing, roofs, and paint. Checklists throughout the book give readers important information at a glance, and the glossary provides a handy reference tool. A must for those who are considering purchase of an historic house or are already in the midst of rehabilitation. Available through Preservation Press, National Park Service, 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036. Paperbound, $14.95.

The Beginnings of a New National Historic Preservation Program, 1957-1969 James A. Glass. The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 changed the approach to the ideal and philosophy of the preservation of cultural heritage in America. James Glass has traced the history of this watershed legislation and its impact on the preservation movement. The book also discusses the roles of the National Park Service and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation in the formulation of policy. Also, the author gives a summary of how federal, state, and local governments work together to implement the directives set forth in the Act of 1966. This work is a must for organizations that deal with preservation matters and for those individuals new to the preservation profession. Available through the American Association for State and Local History, 172 Second Avenue, Suite 202, Nashville, Tennessee 37201. Paperbound, $9.95.

**IN MEMORIAM**

John M. Dickey

The preservation community in Pennsylvania lost one of its most distinguished members with the death of John M. Dickey on September 19.

"He was the dean of the historical architects in this section of the country," said Richard Tyler, historic preservation officer for the Philadelphia Historical Commission.

Mr. Dickey’s knowledge of architecture and history marked many of the most important restorations and reconstructions in the Philadelphia area, including: Fort Mifflin, the Daniel Boone Homestead, the Walnut Street Theater, the Athenaeum, the Old City Tavern and the Eagle Tavern in Trenton.

Mr. Dickey, who never retired, also played an important role in training new generations of restoration architects and historians.

Born in Chicago, Mr. Dickey was educated at Swarthmore College and received a bachelor’s degree and M.F.A. from Princeton University.

Memorial contributions can be made to the John Dickey Memorial Prize Fund, c/o The Athenaeum of Philadelphia, 219 South Sixth St., Philadelphia, PA 19106-3794.
MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

- Individual $15
- Family $25
- Associate $50
- Patron/Professional $100
- Benefactor $500
- Pennsylvania Heritage Club* and above $1000
- Nonprofit Organization $35

*Includes special membership benefits. For information contact Preservation Pennsylvania.

In the News (continued from page 3)

ing changes. A petition with about 160 names in favor of abolishing the ordinance has been presented to the council. The petitioners want the issue put to a referendum on November 6. Council and the community as a whole are divided on the subject. Members of the council, understanding the importance of the ordinance in maintaining the historic character of Shippensburg, are seeking a compromise that would take into consideration financial hardships in granting certificates of appropriateness for alterations. Another modification would permit the codes enforcement officer to approve minor alterations on site, so long as the basic historic character of the building was unaffected.

- The Richard King Mellon Foundation of Pittsburgh plans to donate 100,000 acres of conservation land and historic Civil War sites to the federal government. According to federal officials, the donation that includes ten locations in seven southwestern states is the largest single gift of land ever made to the nation. Included in the donation are 280 acres known as ‘The Cornfield’ at Antietam National Battlefield, lands linked to the battles of the Wilderness, Fredricksburg, Five Forks, the East Cavalry Field at Gettysburg and the Forked Lightning Ranch Civil War site in New Mexico. The largest parcel in the donation is the 93,000 acre tract of wetlands at Alligator River, N.C., an important wildlife refuge. Acceptance of two of the three Antietam parcels and the East Cavalry site will depend on congressional approval. In a related development, Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan, Jr. has announced the American Battlefield Protection Program. This program would allow the federal government to help state and local governments, preservation and conservation groups and private foundations curtail unsustainable development of Civil War and other battle sites. This will be accomplished by either outright purchase or by applying zoning, easements, or other restrictions.

Lustron (continued from page 4)

tion offices are now beginning to gather information on the number of Lustron Homes that may exist in their states. It is unknown at this time how many exist in Pennsylvania.

Those Lustrons that do still exist are generally in remarkable shape. Modifications have usually been minor; for example, addition of better insulation, baseboard heating, and/or double-paned windows. Construction additions may be found, but, generally, the steel paneled, pastel colored houses retain their character. Some auto body filler to repair holes or cracks and a yearly waxing is all these shiny vestiges of an interesting experiment in housing ever need.

St. Bart's (continued from page 1)

from St. Bartholomew’s for permission to demolish its landmark community house to make way for a highrise office building.

A lawyer for St. Bartholomew’s said he anticipated that the church would appeal before the U.S. Supreme Court.
Calendar


1991


Highways (continued from page 5)

The focus of the conference was indeed, to celebrate one of the great social and engineering events of this century, the Pennsylvania Turnpike. As America's first four lane limited access highway built on such an immense scale, the Pennsylvania Turnpike was a wonder of engineering achievement and acted as catalyst for the creation of the modern interstate system.

At 50 years old and eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and indisputably an American landmark, the Pennsylvania Turnpike helped Americans take to the road and change the face of the nation.