THE PENN-McKEE HOTEL:
Vital Statistics and Narrative History

Compiled For:

Arthur P. Ziegler, Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation
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SUMMARY

COMMON NAME

Penn-McKee Hotel aka Community Hotel, Hotel Winter's Haven

LOCATION

124-132 Fifth Avenue, First Ward, City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pa. (Allegheny County Deed Book Volume 7173, Page 256)

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Brick and steel hotel with ballroom, dining room, coffee shop and retail shops on first floor.

The section of the hotel housing the retail spaces, lobby and residential rooms is in a four-story, L-shaped configuration, with the legs of the “L” facing Fifth Avenue and Strawberry Alley. Inside the “L,” facing Haber Alley, is a one-story kitchen and ballroom.

ORIGINAL OWNER

The Community Hotel Company of McKeesport
CURRENT OWNER: Uncertain

The deed to the Penn-McKee Hotel is held by a Pennsylvania corporation, See Bee Inc., which purchased the property in 1985 for $25,500. See Bee Inc. was chartered July 25, 1985 by Carl Przywarty of Greensburg and Helen Lampl of Pittsburgh. No current mailing address or officers are on file at the state Corporations Bureau and See Bee seems to be dormant.

Property tax bills are sent to Edward L. Kemp Co., 410 West Fifth Ave., McKeesport—which implies that Kemp now controls See Bee—but the taxes are delinquent and Kemp claims not to be responsible.

Further complicating matters: White Oak, Pa., evangelist Jim Armstrong, claims that Kemp sold the building to him, but Armstrong does not have a bill of sale and no deed transfer was recorded.

ARCHITECT

Benno Janssen of Janssen and Cocken, Pittsburgh

GENERAL CONTRACTOR

Blair and Mack Company, McKeesport
CONSTRUCTION TYPE

The Penn-McKee Hotel is a steel frame structure with poured concrete floors and brick exterior walls.

Although written documentation is not available, interviews conducted by the author indicate that the interior walls are made of concrete block, and contemporary news accounts described the hotel as "completely fireproof."

From photographic documentation, interior walls appear to have been covered with walnut paneling or plaster and lath typical of 1920s commercial construction.

CONSTRUCTION HISTORY

Feb. 21, 1925: Benno Janssen receives architectural commission from Community Hotel Company

June 16, 1925: Blair and Mack receive construction contract

June 19, 1925: Groundbreaking ceremony held

Aug. 8, 1925: Steel erection begins

Sept. 2, 1925: Topping-off ceremony held

Sept. 17, 1925: Bricklaying begins on exterior walls

Jan. 8, 1926: Board hires general manager and head chef

March 24, 1926: Contracts awarded for furnishings

Aug. 31, 1926: First guests—20 traveling salesmen—arrive

Sept. 1, 1926: Formal dedication and opening
ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION: 1926

*Single-occupancy rooms:* 98 (private baths in 60)

*Retail spaces:* Four storefronts, approximately 20-by-32-feet each, with Fifth Avenue frontage and interior French doors connecting to the hotel lobby and ladies' lounge

*Dining facilities:* Coffee shop, lounge and formal dining room; dimensions unknown

*Ballroom:* Total capacity of 700 people, with a 60-by-75-foot parquet dance floor designed to accommodate "250 couples"

PRESENT CONFIGURATION: Unknown

Hotel guides from the 1960s list "100 rooms." But a 1972 news account specifies "102 rooms," while one from 1973 says "94 rooms" and a 1980 news story says "77 rooms." Without a careful on-site inventory—currently unavailable—it is difficult to say how the Penn-McKee may have been modified during its lifetime.

INTERIOR FURNISHINGS: 1925

The following descriptions come from the McKeesport *Daily News*, Sept. 1, 1926:

*Carpeting:* "Wilton carpet" in black-and-gray tones
Woodwork: Walnut

Ballroom: "The decorations and furnishings are in the style of the Louis XVI period. Overhead, the entire ceiling is constructed of glass. Suspended from the supports are great chandeliers in black and gold and of glittering crystal." (Benno Janssen designed the chandeliers especially for the Penn-McKee, according to the newspaper.)

"The wall decorations are gorgeous, a mottled buff predominating. This is shaded into delicate tones at the top, the whole blending into the brightly lighted ceiling. At either side of the ballroom is a series of French doors, connecting with the ladies' lounge on the one side and the main dining room on the other. By throwing open these doors, the three rooms may be converted into one large hall."
In 1943, according to *The Bulletin of the American Ceramic Society*, Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company was commissioned to create a mural for the cocktail lounge of the Penn-McKee. It was described as “the largest edge-lighted mirror mural ever built ... a life-sized Greek dancing girl ... sand-blasted onto a single piece of polished plate glass, one-half-inch thick, seven-feet, five-inches high, and six-feet, ten-inches wide.”

**CURRENT FURNISHINGS: Unknown**

In the early 1970s, 40 rooms were rented to Community College of Allegheny County for use as faculty offices. In 1980, the hotel stopped accepting overnight guests and became a residence for transients and the elderly. The hotel’s sleeping rooms closed in 1985. Contemporary photos from the 1980s show suspended, fiber-type ceilings in some rooms.

The cocktail lounge was remodeled at least three times—in the early 1940s when it was converted into the “Victory Lounge,” in 1975 when it became the “Red Fox Lounge,” and in the early 1980s when it was rented to AMVETS Post 8 for use as a veterans’ club.

At least two fires have been set on the first floor, but the extent of the damage is unknown. Some of the windows are missing glass and rooms have thus been open to the elements for an undetermined amount of time. Photos taken by so-called “urban explorers” indicate heavy water infiltration and growth of moss, mold and vegetation in several rooms.
TIMELINE

1924: Community Hotel Co. chartered in McKeesport by president R. F. Dulany, vice president R. E. Stone, secretary W. T. Norton, and treasurer J. Denny O’Neil. Nearly 700 residents raise $700,000 to fund the hotel’s construction by purchasing 3,500 shares of stock; seven prominent businessmen together hold the bulk of those shares, valued at $366,000.

1925: Construction begins on the Penn-McKee Hotel.

1926: Penn-McKee Hotel dedicated Sept. 1 with banquet and dinner dance.

1926-1970: The Penn-McKee becomes a center for civic and business life in McKeesport and vicinity. Its approximately 100 rooms serve as “home away from home” for executives and salesmen, while its dining room, ballroom and meeting spaces host events both large (political rallies and conventions) and small (club luncheons, bridal showers and card parties).

1969: Community College of Allegheny County opens its South Campus in McKeesport, renting 40 rooms at the Penn-McKee for use as faculty offices.

1970: Former McKeesport City Councilman Michael Newman purchases controlling interest in the Community Hotel Co.. Newman announces plans to demolish the neighboring Famous Department Store and construct a new shopping plaza connected to the Penn-McKee. In December,
a 100-room Sheraton Hotel with attached Red Bull Inn restaurant opens on Lysle Boulevard in McKeesport, approximately four blocks from the Penn-McKee. The new Sheraton, with free off-street parking and a heated swimming pool, siphons off much of the Penn-McKee's business.

1973: Newman purchases the remaining shares of the Community Hotel Co. for $120,000. Community College opens its new South Campus in West Mifflin, vacating the Penn-McKee.

1976: A massive fire breaks out May 22 in the former Famous Department Store next to the Penn-McKee. The blaze destroys seven buildings and damages 22 others, including the Penn-McKee. Newspaper accounts report that "75 permanent residents" of the hotel are forced to evacuate. The Penn-McKee closes temporarily for repairs.

1980: McKeesport police and Allegheny County detectives raid the Penn-McKee, arresting five people accused of operating a brothel and selling drugs. On Oct. 30, Newman announces plans to close the hotel, citing bad publicity. Newspaper accounts report "35 to 40" permanent residents are living in the hotel.

1981: A non-profit organization, Winters Haven Inc., acquires 80 percent of the Community Hotel Co. from Newman and in February takes over operation of the Penn-McKee Hotel for use as a boarding house for the elderly and indigent. In September, however, Community Hotel Co. files for
Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, citing $360,000 in delinquent bills and real-estate taxes.

1985: A federal judge orders Community Hotel Co. liquidated under Chapter 7 of U.S. Bankruptcy Code. All residents are ordered to leave by April 30. AMVETS Post 8 remains on the first floor, along with an office for State Rep. Emil Mrkonic. See Bee Inc. acquires the Penn-McKee Hotel on Oct. 16 for $25,500.

1986: AMVETS Post 8 moves out of the Penn-McKee Hotel.

1992: New legislative districts are created following the 1990 U.S. Census and Rep. Mrkonic's State House seat is eliminated. His office in the Penn-McKee Hotel closes. The hotel is completely vacant.
A tragedy inspired the creation of McKeeseport's most luxurious hotel.

On July 5, 1923, fire swept through the Hotel Schmidt on Fifth Avenue, killing at least eight people—some of the bodies were never identified—and injuring many more.

Panic-stricken victims leapt from the fourth-floor windows in their efforts to escape the blaze; one man screamed “for God’s sake, help me get out of here!” before jumping to his death in front of the horrified onlookers.

“The ruins today presented a ghastly scene as the debris was combed and carted away,” the Pittsburgh Press reported. “The finding of several dismembered hands, feet and particles of flesh gave further indication of a great loss.”

News of the conflagration—still the greatest single loss of life in McKeesport’s 215-year history—was flashed around the country by the wire services.
Local Leaders Stirred to Action

In Western Pennsylvania, McKeesport's commercial district was second in sales volume only to the City of Pittsburgh. Its industrial plants, including the National Tube Company, U.S. Steel's Woods Works, and the McKeesport Tin Plate Co., employed well over 15,000 people from the city and vicinity.

Political leaders and business owners in the fast-growing city, which would top 54,000 residents by the end of the decade, decided they couldn't afford a repeat of the event. Stirred to action, they resolved to build a safe, modern, fireproof hotel.

Seven prominent businessmen, led by J. Denny O'Neil, publisher of the McKeesport Daily News and a former Allegheny County commissioner; Gilbert F. Myer, a real-estate developer responsible for much of the pre-World War II housing in the McKeesport area; R. E. Stone, owner of one of the city's largest furniture stores; and R. F. Dulany, a wholesale grocer; urged citizens to purchase shares of stock in their new Community Hotel Company. Eventually 660 people purchased approximately 7,000 shares to fund the hotel's $700,000 construction cost.
New Hotel Would Rival Pittsburgh’s Finest

McKeesport boosters viewed their city as a natural rival for Pittsburgh and staunchly held off attempts to merge the municipalities into a single metropolitan government. Naturally, McKeesport’s largest and most important hotel would also have to equal or better the finest hotels that Pittsburgh had to offer.

In February 1925, the Community Hotel Company commissioned architect Benno Janssen—designer of the William Penn Hotel on Pittsburgh’s Grant Street—to build their new edifice. A prominent local firm, Blair and Mack, was hired as the general contractor. To prevent a repeat of the Hotel Schmidt disaster, the new hotel would be constructed of steel columns with concrete floors—as fireproof as possible. To provide an appropriate meeting place for a proud city, a ballroom seating 700 people was included.

Construction of the new hotel soon became a community-wide rallying point, with nearly daily articles in O’Neil’s newspaper keeping interest levels high. When the McKeesport Chamber of Commerce held a contest to name the hotel, 1,500 entries were received. On April 12, 1925, Callie M. Frye of 903 Grant St., McKeesport, received $25 for her submission, “Penn-McKee,” the “unanimous” choice of the hotel’s directors.

In August, Janssen and his partner, William Y. Cocken, took the directors on a tour of other public buildings in Pittsburgh so that they could
examine the brickwork and furnishings. "They seemed to favor the tapestry brick used in the Young Men's Hebrew Association building in Schenley Farms, Pittsburgh," the Daily News reported in August. A month later, when the steel columns that would support the four-story hotel were completed, hundreds of people turned out to watch the topping-off ceremony.

A Place of 'More than Ordinary Pride'

In January 1926, the directors hired Maxwell D. Pearce as the Penn-McKee's general manager and H. Husser as head chef. Pearce was an executive with the Hollenden Hotel of Cleveland who had previous management experience with the William Penn and Fort Pitt hotels in Pittsburgh, while Husser was described as "one of the country's most famous chefs." Contracts for beds, tables and carpeting were awarded—not surprisingly—to Director R.E. Stone's furniture company, while local silversmith Alex Rankin supplied flatware, Helmstadter Brothers department store provided bedding and dishes (some 14,000 pieces in all), and local plumber K. J. Stickrath installed the boiler.

A grand opening celebration was readied for Sept. 2, 1926, with a banquet and dinner dance. The speaker was James Francis Burke, former U.S. congressman from Pennsylvania and one of the architects of the Federal Reserve System, who was then serving as general counsel to the Republican
National Committee. The guest of honor was William M. Furey, president of the Berkshire Life Insurance Co. of Pittsburgh and an executive with the Pittsburgh Hotels Corp., while Danny Nirella and His Orchestra provided musical entertainment. The Penn-McKee's opening was a "brilliant social event," crowed the Daily News, and the hotel was "a place to which one may take friends with more than ordinary pride."

For 40 Years, 'It Happened at the Penn-McKee'

And until the early 1970s, the Penn-McKee would retain its status as the brightest spot in Allegheny County's second-largest city. As the
*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* noted in 1980, "for the next four decades, if it happened in McKeesport, it probably happened at the Penn-McKee."

On weekdays, card parties and civic meetings kept the first floor hopping. (On Tuesdays, for instance, both the Lions and the Kiwanis held their meetings at the Penn-McKee.) In the evenings, the ballroom and cocktail lounge swung with the sounds of the big bands. On Sundays, families wearing their finest clothes met for brunch in the dining room.

Upstairs, the Penn-McKee's 98 rooms (60 with private bathrooms) housed traveling salesmen, executives and others visiting McKeesport to do business with U.S. Steel and other corporations centered in the city, including the Firth-Sterling Co., a major producer of stainless steel; the G.C. Murphy Co., a chain of variety stores located in 24 eastern states; and Potter-McCune Co., a wholesale grocery chain with operations in several mid-Atlantic states.

President Harry Truman dined at the Penn-McKee Hotel several times, as did most of Pennsylvania's governors during the middle part of the 20th century. Perhaps the most famous political visitors were future presidents John F. Kennedy and Richard M. Nixon; as freshmen congressmen, the two debated the merits of the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947 at the Penn-McKee Hotel, 13 years before they faced off in front of national television audiences.
Between 1931 and 1952, years when the Allegheny County Airport in nearby West Mifflin served as Pittsburgh's terminal for Trans World Airlines, Capital Airlines (founded in McKeesport) and other carriers, the Penn-McKee housed flight crews and stewardesses on overnight layovers. During World War II, when McKeesport's industrial facilities were converted to munitions production, War and Navy department personnel filled many of the rooms.

Short, Sharp Decline in the 1970s

The Penn-McKee's sad slide into dereliction began in 1969, when a new Sheraton Motor Inn opened a few blocks away on Lysle Boulevard. The Sheraton benefitted from a nationwide reservation network and offered amenities unavailable at the Penn-McKee, including a heated swimming pool and free, off-street parking. Both interstate travelers and important meetings began leaving the increasingly dowdy Penn-McKee for the new Sheraton.

A former city councilman, Michael Newman, took controlling interest in the Penn-McKee, but his efforts to redevelop the property were stymied by his own legal problems, including a conviction for illegal wiretapping.

In 1976, a massive fire that broke out in a vacant building next to the Penn-McKee consumed several blocks of Downtown McKeesport, destroying seven buildings and damaging two-dozen others, including the hotel. The city's shopping district, already hard-hit by nearby shopping malls, was in
serious decline. So was the Penn-McKee. When it reopened, it had lost much of its former luster and became a residence for the poor and elderly—little more than a boarding house.

By 1980, when McKeesport police and Allegheny County detectives broke up a prostitution and drug ring operating on the Penn-McKee’s third floor, the hotel’s best days were behind it. A non-profit corporation, Winters Haven, attempted to turn the hotel into an apartment building for the elderly, but debts accumulated under Newman’s ownership eventually forced the Penn-McKee into Chapter 11 bankruptcy. In 1985, a federal judge ordered the hotel emptied and the property liquidated.

From Point of Pride to Eyesore

Since 1992, the Penn-McKee has been completely vacant, a target for vandals who broke windows and set fires. Located at the entrance to McKeesport’s Downtown, the Penn-McKee has turned from a point of pride for the community into a highly visible eyesore. Adjacent to the city’s main commercial street, Lysle Boulevard, its boarded-up storefronts and broken windows present a bleak picture to visitors using the busy McKees Point Marina, a public boating facility constructed on a former brownfield along the Youghiogheny River; the Pittsburgh-to-Cumberland biking-hiking trail known as the Great Allegheny Passage; and the Palisades Ballroom, a
restored dance hall and convention facility currently home to the largest wooden dance floor in Western Pennsylvania.

Twice, city officials have condemned the Penn-McKee Hotel because of numerous health, safety and fire-code violations, only to remove it from the demolition list at the request of historic preservationists.

Without a solid plan in place to rehabilitate and reuse the facility, however, the Penn-McKee is unlikely to be spared demolition a third time. But the solidly built structure may yet have the last laugh—preliminary estimates for tearing down the Penn-McKee peg the cost at $150,000 or more. Demolition, if it comes, is likely to be done at taxpayer expense.
As a Civic and Political Center:

Almost from its opening, the Penn-McKee Hotel was a signature spot in the Mon Valley—and indeed, all of Western Pennsylvania—for political gatherings. It was practically an obligation for anyone running for governor, for instance, to hold at least one rally at the Penn-McKee. Gifford Pinchot made numerous stops at the Penn-McKee, as did Pittsburgh mayor and eventual governor David L. Lawrence.
Of course, appearing at the Penn-McKee was no guarantee of electoral success—Philadelphia Mayor Richardson Dilworth also held rallies at the hotel during his unsuccessful campaigns for the governor's mansion in 1950 and 1962.

Among national figures, Harry S. Truman was perhaps the Penn-McKee's most important fan. The senator from Independence, Mo., and 33rd U.S. president made his first documented visit in 1944, while campaigning for the vice presidency, and returned several times while traveling around the country after leaving the White House.

The most notable national political event in the Penn-McKee's history occurred April 22, 1947, when freshmen congressmen Richard M. Nixon of California and John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts debated the Taft-Hartley Act in the Penn-McKee's ballroom.

The bill to restrict the power of labor unions was a hot topic of discussion in the industrialized Steel Valley, and Kennedy and Nixon were both members of the U.S. House Committee on Education and Labor—though on opposing sides.

Thirteen years before the two future presidents faced off on national TV, they debated Taft-Hartley in the ballroom of the Penn-McKee Hotel in front of 150 to 200 McKeesport-area businessmen. During a 1962 visit to McKeesport, Kennedy said that Nixon had won the Penn-McKee debate, joking that “then we went on to other things.” Later, in his book *Six Crises*,...
Nixon wrote that the audience of employers rather than laborers worked to his advantage, because “they tended to be on my side.”

Some thirty years after the event, Paul Harvey featured the Penn-McKee in his nationally syndicated radio program and newspaper column, “The Rest of the Story.” Referring to the 1947 skirmish as “the McKeesport so-what debate,” Harvey pointed out that when 85 million television viewers watched the two presidential candidates square off on Sept. 26, 1960, they though they were watching the first-ever Nixon-Kennedy debate.

McKeesporters, Harvey pointed out, knew the “rest of the story.”

The following is a sampling of other notable political events culled from local newspapers:

Oct. 25, 1930: At a dinner for 300 people in the Penn-McKee Hotel hosted by State Senator William D. Mansfield, Edwin R. Crawford, head of the powerful McKeesport Tin Plate Co., announced that he was backing Republican gubernatorial candidate Gifford Pinchot.

Other guests included Allegheny County District Attorney Andrew T. Park and State Secretary of Internal Affairs James F. Woodward. (The Pittsburgh Press)
Nov. 1, 1934: Speaking at a Republican meeting at the Penn-McKee Hotel, Governor Gifford Pinchot responded to charges from the Democratic Party that he had traded jobs for political support in his administration.

Pinchot, the Republican candidate for U.S. Senate, called the accusations "another fairy story" and then directed attacks at George E. Earle, Democratic candidate for governor, and Joseph F. Guffey, nominee for U.S. Senate. (*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*)

Oct. 29, 1944: Three heavy-hitters on the national political scene arrived at the Penn-McKee almost simultaneously before the election that gave President Franklin D. Roosevelt his unprecedented fourth term.

"Co-chairman David L. Lawrence will address the final Democratic rally before Election Day tomorrow evening at 8 o'clock in the Penn-McKee Hotel," reported the *Pittsburgh Press*. "He will be followed by Gov. Edward Martin, speaker at a Republican rally Wednesday night at the Penn-McKee Hotel. Vice-Presidential Candidate Harry S. Truman will be the speaker at a Democratic lunch the following day at noon in the Penn-McKee."

Aug. 27, 1948: Members of 42 local unions of the United Steelworkers of America met at the Penn-McKee Hotel in McKeesport to hear reports on political activities, the *Pittsburgh Press* reported.
Sept. 25, 1950: "Richardson Dilworth, Democratic candidate for governor, will cap a three-day swing through Western Pennsylvania with a full-day performance in Allegheny County," reported the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

"The candidate's party will arrive at the Penn-McKee Hotel, McKeesport, for a 1 o'clock luncheon and a meeting of 200 people sponsored by the Tenth Legislative District Democratic Organization."

Oct. 22, 1956: "There must be quite a few working people in the sprawling industrial valley of the Monongahela who 'like Ike,'" reported the Pittsburgh Press.

An "overflow crowd" jammed the ballroom of the Penn-McKee to see U.S. Secretary of Labor James P. Mitchell at a "Labor for Eisenhower" rally. "Many of them wore union buttons and some had on their work clothes. They gave Mr. Mitchell some cheers that could have rocked a blast furnace."

March 23, 1962: Democratic gubernatorial candidate Richardson Dilworth spoke at a luncheon at the Penn-McKee Hotel sponsored by McKeesport Mayor Andrew Jakomas.

Before the luncheon, Mr. Dilworth and his wife were escorted to a nearby steel plant that had been founded by his maternal grandfather, W. Dewees Woods. Once known as "Woods' Works," the mill in 1962 belonged to
U.S. Steel and had become part of the National Tube division. (The Pittsburgh Press).

As a Regional Cultural Center:

It would be nearly impossible to catalog all of the wedding receptions, bar and bas mitzvahs, bridal showers and other family gatherings held at the Penn-McKee Hotel between its opening in 1926 and its eventual closing as a public hotel in 1980.

The Penn-McKee's ballroom and smaller conference rooms hosted literally thousands of these events and many others, including lodge meetings, sports banquets and local club gatherings that were historic and memorable only to those who participated.

But outside of the hotels of Downtown Pittsburgh (and possibly the George Washington Hotel in Washington, Pa.), the Penn-McKee was Western Pennsylvania's most prestigious location for small (and not so small) regional banquets and conventions of all sorts.

Just a year after Charles Lindbergh made his historic trans-Atlantic solo flight to Paris, for instance, Pittsburgh aviation pioneers celebrated their own successes at the Penn-McKee Hotel.
In 1934, delegates from four states to a B'nai B'rith convention held at the Penn-McKee heard some of the first reports of Nazi atrocities committed against Jews living in Germany.

In the 1960s, labor leaders held a civil-rights convention at the Penn-McKee, and in the 1970s, the fledgling Community College of Allegheny County—now one of the top 20 community colleges in the United States—used the hotel as part of its South Campus.

A sampling of news clippings from Pittsburgh newspapers indicates the variety of educational and cultural activities housed within the Penn-McKee during its heyday, ranging from gatherings of Socialists and Boy Scout leaders to postmasters and U.S. Navy brass, including President Roosevelt's Secretary of the Navy, Frank Knox:

*March 14, 1927:* "One-hundred-twenty-eight municipalities, including three third-class cities, 71 boroughs and 54 townships, were represented at a banquet last night at the Penn-McKee Hotel, McKeesport," noted the
"They were gathered to organize a program to defeat proposed metropolitan annexation legislation."

Oct. 28, 1928: McKeesport in the 1920s was a center for commercial aviation activity since the creation of nearby Bettis Field and the launch of Clifford Ball Airlines, a predecessor of today’s United Airlines. Pioneering woman aviator Helen Richey, the first female commercial airline pilot, was among the McKeesport natives who were taking to the skies.

"Pittsburgh entrants in the recent transcontinental air derbies will be honored this month at a dinner in the Penn-McKee Hotel, McKeesport," reported the Pittsburgh Press, "including Capt. Jack Morris, Col. William Thaw, Edward Schulz, Robert Dake, Theodore Daney, J. Warren Smith and Alvin Litzenberger."

Nov. 22, 1933: U.S. Rep. Clyde Kelly and Assistant U.S. Postmaster General C.B. Ellenberger were speakers at the Western Pennsylvania Postmaster’s Association Convention at the Penn-McKee Hotel, McKeesport. (Pittsburgh Post-Gazette)

May 24, 1934: Delegates to the 82nd annual convention of B’nai B’rith District No. 3, held at the Penn-McKee Hotel in McKeesport, were shocked to hear reports about the treatment of Jews in Germany.
U.S. Sen. William King of Utah and Dr. Abram L. Sacher of the University of Illinois, national director of the Hillel Foundation, delivered the distressing news about the plight of European Jewry.

Besides Pennsylvania, delegates to the convention represented Delaware, New Jersey and West Virginia. (Pittsburgh Post-Gazette)

March 30, 1937: “Leaders from Boy Scout Councils across Pennsylvania will attend an all-day Explorers’ Training Conference at the Penn-McKee Hotel, McKeesport,” reported the Pittsburgh Press. “The speaker will be Frank Braden, assistant director of the program division of the Boy Scouts of America.”

Oct. 15, 1937: The Pittsburgh Press reported that John P. Quinn, national organizer for the Socialist Labor Party, was to deliver an address entitled “Social Legislation or Social Revolution—Which?” in the ballroom of the Penn-McKee.

Feb. 20, 1940: “Bombing raids on defenseless Chinese cities and the terrorizing of the population after Japanese air attacks were described last night by Dr. Henry S. Frank, who addressed the men of the Junto Club at the Penn-McKee Hotel, McKeesport,” the Pittsburgh Press reported. “Dr. Frank is
head of the Chemistry Department at the University of Lingnan in Canton, China.

Nov. 11, 1942: An overflow crowd estimated at more than 1,100 people jammed the Penn-McKee Hotel to hear an Armistice Day address by U.S. Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox.

Knox urged both industrial and union leaders to put aside their differences for the duration of the war.

"The American soldier, sailor or marine who is fighting or dying so that we may live can ask—can demand—everything we've got," Knox told listeners. "When any conflict arises between labor and management, I beg them to remember that an interested third party is standing silently by—an American in uniform who is working harder than any of us." (Pittsburgh Post-Gazette)

August 20, 1963: A governmental union of the NATO nations was "imperative to the future of the free world," a speaker told the fourth-annual International Village banquet at the Penn-McKee Hotel in McKeesport.

Adolph W. Schmidt, member of the U.S. Citizens Committee on NATO, was a governor of Pittsburgh's T. Mellon and Sons and a leader of Pittsburgh's renaissance. The affair at the Penn-McKee preceded a two-hour
parade through the McEachesport business district to launch the three-day international festival. (*The Pittsburgh Press*)

*August 8, 1967:* "A daylong civil rights conference has been called by the United Steelworkers union for Aug. 19 at the Penn-McKee Hotel in McKeesport," the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* reported.

More than 200 delegates from USW District 15 were expected to attend the conference, which would be addressed by USW International Vice-President Joseph P. Molony. Molony, chairman of the union's civil rights committee, was on the program with Alex Fuller, USW civil rights director; Bernard Kleiman, the USW's general counsel; and William J. Hart, state secretary of labor and industry.

*Sept. 16, 1970:* Rear Admiral Edwin M. Rosenberg—the Defense Department official in charge of training for all naval reservists in the United States—was the guest of honor at a luncheon at the Penn-McKee Hotel, McKeesport, sponsored by the Mon-Yough Chamber of Commerce and the Kiwanis Club.

The admiral and a party of 25 Pentagon representatives also toured the Westinghouse Electric Corp. plant in East Pittsburgh and the Naval Reserve Training Center in McKeesport. (*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*)