



L&A TREASURES

By David R. Grinnell, Chief Archivist

Phipps Conservatory Flower Shows

As I sit down to write this column to share with you some of the fun and fascinating items that we have in the collections of the Library & Archives at the History Center, it is a wintry day with bone-chilling cold outside

my window and the wind blowing fine flakes of snow.

Therefore, it's a great day for thoughts to wander towards spring as we eagerly await the smell of flowers and trees in the air.

Generations of Pittsburghers have been delighted over the years with the annual spring and fall flower shows at Pittsburgh's

Phipps Conservatory. Shown here are some wonderful photographs from the Allegheny Conference on Community Development Collection of early 1950s Spring Flower Shows. One image shows a display of a "New England Church." Other images in the collection depict "oriental" themes, water fountains and ponds, and various building



Phipps Conservatory in the 1950s sported not Chihuly's glass sculptures but instead a New England church.

All History Center L&A, Allegheny Conference on Community Development, Photographs, MSP# 285, Box 19 Folder 22.

façades. These displays may not be as provocative as today's Chihuly exhibition, but they nonetheless take our minds to a place that fills our senses with beauty and the smells of spring. After glancing through the many images I found a surprise—located in the folder of flower show images was a photograph of actor Kirk Douglas surrounded by some presumably local, unidentified beauties. Douglas made an appearance at the 1955 Spring Flower Show.

When I think of flowers, I am also reminded of the many garden clubs that once existed throughout this area. Recently, we received the records of the Beaver Falls Garden Club from Melanie Katip. Katip purchased a home in Beaver Falls and found these interesting records there. The records consist of meeting minutes, newspaper clippings, and a few photographs that reflect the club's annual flower sales, Chrysanthemum Shows held in local churches, and educational events at the Pittsburgh Garden Center.



The Library & Archives collects materials related to the history and culture of Pennsylvania. The L&A reading room is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Our catalog and many of our digitized resources are available at the Historic Pittsburgh website at <http://digital.library.pitt.edu/pittsburgh/>.

Local women greet actor Kirk Douglas at Phipps Conservatory.

