

Fig. Schenley

# The Story of Schenley Farms

WITHIN the next few weeks four of the most noteworthy buildings in America will be formally dedicated in Schenley Farms, popularly known as the civic or institutional center of Pittsburgh. The buildings are the world-famed Cathedral of Learning of the University of Pittsburgh, the Mellon Institute of Industrial Research, the Heinz Memorial Chapel, and the Stephen C. Foster Memorial. These structures are within a block or two of one another and each is in its own way an architectural masterpiece.

The dedicatory exercises will not only bring to Pittsburgh distinguished scientists and artists from many countries, but will be events of nation-wide newspaper interest.

As these buildings comprise the most splendid addition yet made to the community's institutional center—already the admiration of visitors from all parts of the world—the story of the development of Schenley Farms becomes a timely one and GREATER PITTSBURGH presents herewith a portrait of F. F. Nicola, to whose vision and courage Pittsburgh is so largely indebted for this magnificent community development.

When Mr. Nicola some thirty-one years ago bought Schenley Farms, a totally undeveloped tract used for cow pastures, and announced that it was his aim to make it the site of a greater University of Pittsburgh and the buildings of many other civic and educational institutions, some of the financiers whose cooperation he solicited told him it was the most reckless sort of gamble. His leadership was so un-

daunted and inspiring, however, that enough of those to whom he appealed were infected by his enthusiasm to permit him to launch successfully the initial projects. His dream was a bold one, but he looks upon its complete fulfillment today.

Mr. Nicola had been a close observer



F. F. Nicola

for many years of civic centers in Washington, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, and Rome, and believed that some day a similar grouping might be accomplished between Schenley Park and Herron Hill.

In fulfillment of his ideal, Schenley Farms was divided into three definite areas, binding each portion to specific uses, namely—public, semi-public and residential, all of the property fronting

here if the Schenley estate would agree to sell to him its remaining land between Fifth Avenue (including that now occupied by the Schenley High School) being dedicated for the use of monumental buildings.

The County Commissioners made the first purchase for the Soldiers & Sailors Memorial, the University Club the second; then followed the purchase of thirty-two acres by the university on which are located many University of Pittsburgh buildings; next by the Pittsburgh Athletic Association, the Logan Armory, Frick Training School; Concordia Club, University and Twentieth Century Clubs, Syria Mosque, and Masonic Temple, Historical Society building, First Baptist Church, Ruskin Apartments, Schenley High School, Physicians' Building, National Union

Fire Insurance Co., Schenley Apartments, Hotel Schenley, and Schenley Theatre, and many residences. These improvements prompted the erection, on adjoining properties, of such splendid structures as the Mellon Institute, Cathedral of Learning, Heinz Memorial, Hospital Center (consisting of Presbyterian, Montefiore Hospital, Children's Hospital, Eye and Ear Hospital); Medical Arts Building, Forbes National Bank, Board of Education, Young Men & Women's Hebrew Association.

The total number of monumental buildings attracted to the center now stands at thirty-three; the number of residences one hundred and twenty-seven. Thirty-one years ago, Mr. Nicola alone "saw the vision."

Approximately one hundred and fifty million dollars have been expended in the creation of this center. In 1905, the City and County taxes of the properties of the Schenley Farms Company and the Ni-

cola Land Company totaled \$6,400. Their total taxes today are in excess of \$640,000, thereby proving that land can be developed into a Civic Center with substantial benefit to municipal income.

In no other city of the United States has an equal number of public buildings of like character been brought together in the same length of time. It is interesting to note that the Universities, Schools, Masonic bodies and Clubs domiciled today on this one-time dairy farm have an enrollment of 84,000.

In the beginning, one broad, comprehensive plan was made with reference to streets, grades, building restrictions, class of occupancy and value of improvements, which has been strictly adhered to throughout the entire development of Schenley Farms. This unity of purpose and fulfillment of ideal has been dominated by one individual with a single purpose in view.

The result of this break-up of pasture lands has been a social and intellectual environment of international importance.