

Sewickley Valley Historical Society Signals

XXXIX, Number 4

March 2012



Wednesday, March 14, 7:30 p.m.
Old Sewickley Post Office

The Italian Gardens of Sewickley & Pittsburgh

an illustrated presentation by
Mary Menniti,
The Italian Garden Project

Edgeworth resident Mary Menniti will give a slideshow presentation about the beautiful, traditional Italian-American vegetable gardens that still exist in the Pittsburgh area, including many in the Sewickley Valley. These gardens provide glimpses into the past, reminding us of how far society has come from the self-sufficient lifestyles that were commonplace not long ago. The connection between the local

history of Sewickley and Italian economic and political history will also be discussed.

Mary founded The Italian Garden Project to celebrate the joy and wisdom inherent in the traditional Italian American vegetable garden, preserving this heritage and demonstrating its relevance for reconnecting to our food, our families and the earth.

Friends, Sponsors, Patrons, Benefactors

Thanks to the following, who have generously supported the Sewickley Valley Historical Society with gifts in addition to membership dues:

Patricia S. Casella; Margaret O. Childs; Mr. & Mrs. David Genter; Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Goff; Robert Gordon;
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Y. Kopf; Peter & Susan Sour; Elizabeth & Peter Stein; James R. Wardrop;
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Wasco, Jr.; John Wendt & Liza Thornton

New Members

Mr. & Mrs. W. George Edel, Sewickley
L. Michael May, Pittsburgh
John Wendt & Liza Thornton, Sewickley
Kenneth E. Johns, III, Sewickley



Donations

Rebecca Bladen, in honor of Leslie Massey
Estate of Anne McK. Murdock
J. David & Belinda Thompson

In Memoriam

Ruth S. Crick; Jonathan Gordon; Mrs. William F. (Jean) Millar; Kenneth E. Whitlock; Robert Blomen Wood

The mission of the Sewickley Valley Historical Society
is to promote interest in and to record, collect, preserve, and document the history of the Sewickley Valley.

SVHS Committees Seeking Members

The following standing committees of the Sewickley Valley Historical Society welcome members from the Society's membership. If you are interested in serving on any of them, please let us know.

ARCHITECTURE: Peggy Dury, Chair

The Architecture Committee shall assist, where appropriate, local groups to educate and to catalogue and protect important examples of local architecture. Preservation awards may be presented. The chairman shall work with the Finance Committee in the proper disposition of the funds of Edgeworth Preservation.

FINANCE/WAYS & MEANS: Margie Gilfillan, Chair

The Finance Committee, chaired by the Treasurer, shall prepare a budget to be approved in April by the Board of Directors. This committee shall make recommendations concerning investments and disbursements of funds and shall monitor the disposition of special funds in conjunction with the appropriate representative(s) of said funds. The Ways & Means Committee shall determine sources of revenue on a short and long term basis that are consistent with the Society's purposes and are authorized by the Board of Directors. Further, it shall promote such projects as have been approved.

HOSPITALITY: Mary Lou Scholl, Chair

The Hospitality Committee shall coordinate with the Program Committee to make such arrangements as required for the meetings.

LONG RANGE PLANNING: Peter Floyd, Chair

The Long Range Planning Committee shall provide developmental framework for steering the Society toward an active and financially sound future.

MEMBERSHIP: Mike Tomana, Chair

The Membership Committee shall promote the Society and encourage interested persons to join and support the Society's goals. The committee shall maintain an active file of all current members and provide an updated roster to the Board of Directors on a regular basis.

PROGRAM: Peter Floyd, Chair

The Program Committee shall be responsible for selecting and coordinating the Society's regular programs and special events throughout the program year. It shall work closely with the Hospitality Committee in coordinating all program arrangements.

Intern Hard at Work at Historical Society Headquarters

For the past several weeks, an intern from Duquesne University has been working at the Historical Society while completing an archival internship. Elizabeth Mubarek, a graduate student at Duquesne, is currently pursuing her Master's degree in Public History, with focuses on Archival, Museum and Editing Studies.

Elizabeth has been going through and organizing several of our previously unsorted collections, among which are the Benjamin Franklin Jones Collection, comprising material amassed when Jones was Chairman of the Republican National Committee in the 1880s, as well as a collection of personal documents and correspondence of Franklin Taylor Nevin (1875-1939), author of the historical essays from the *Sewickley Herald* that were published in book form in 1929 as *The Village of Sewickley*. (A reprint edition is available from SVHS for \$20.00 plus tax, postage and handling.)

Elizabeth received her Bachelor's from Grove City College, with degrees in both history and communication studies, as well as a minor in sociology. She is from Concord, Massachusetts, but will be living in Sewickley during the remainder of her time at Duquesne.



The following, from the March 11, 1916, issue of The [Sewickley] Herald, indicates that the stone wall on Blackburn Road was the gift of Mrs. Henry W. Oliver, not her daughter, Mrs. Henry Robinson Rea, as has been stated in many recent publications. Mrs. Oliver was also the donor of the land on Blackburn Road on which Sewickley Valley Hospital and the YMCA were built. The Alexander Davidsons lived in the gatehouse at "Farmhill," the Henry Robinson Rea estate. Davidson's daughter, Virginia Davidson Lee, donated photo albums of the "Farmhill" gardens and family scrapbooks to the Sewickley Valley Historical Society.

Serpentine Curve on Blackburn Road

A splendid piece of construction work was completed some time ago on the Blackburn Road that is deserving of special mention. It is located at "Deadman's Curve," where the old bridge formerly stood, the abruptness of the curve being a constant menace to autoists and drivers. Some years ago an effort was made to have the county authorities repair the road at this point and make the curve less abrupt. Last summer the county engineers decided to widen the bridge by putting in a three-foot sheet iron pipe on the end of the eighteen-foot concrete work. As this work would be done on the Oliver estate, Mrs. H. W. Oliver and Mrs. H. R. Rea asked the county authorities to be permitted to take up the work and offered to pay for it. This request was granted, and Mr. Alex. Davidson, who has charge of the Oliver estate, was authorized to draw up a plan that would widen the road and bridge at that point and eliminate the danger.

This plan included a retaining wall around the curve and a concrete culvert, and the widening of the road from twenty to forty-two feet, which gives an even curve all the way, as the picture shows. The smooth portion shows where the old road lay, and the rough surface shows the widened thoroughfare. The spandrel on the east side of the road was also built up with stone concrete to have it correspond with the new wall, so the entire improvement would add to the beauty of the roadway.



Recent improvements made at dangerous curve along Heights Road, the width of which was about doubled at this point.

The entire work was planned and executed under the direction of Mr. Davidson and paid for by Mrs. Oliver and is a splendid illustration of broad-minded public spirit, and when the benefits to be derived from the elimination of this dangerous curve and the artistic value of the entire improvement becomes more apparent, this civic gift of Mrs. Oliver will be more fully appreciated.



Rachel Catherine McCready

A "Rosie the Riveter" from Edgeworth



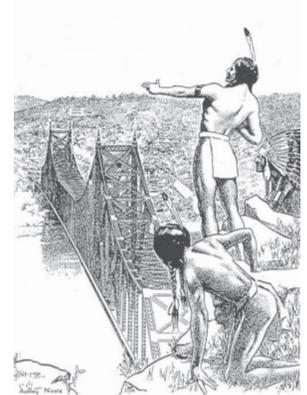
During World War II, the Dravo Corporation on Neville Island was a leader in the construction of Landing Ship Tank (LST) craft that were used in the European and Pacific campaigns. Dravo's wartime staff, of whom sixteen percent were female, produced a total of 145 LSTs. The women gladly stepped up to fill the jobs of men who had gone off to war, but when the war was over, they were summarily returned to hearth and crib so that the men could have their jobs back.

Shown at left is a Certificate of Merit presented by Dravo to Rachel Catherine McCready for six months' perfect attendance at her job at the shipyard. Rachel was the daughter of Robert T. M. McCready, a lawyer who lived on Oliver Road in Edgeworth.

Sewickley Valley Historical Society
200 Broad Street
Sewickley, PA 15143

Non-Profit Org
U. S. Postage
PAID
Permit 70
Sewickley, PA

March 2012



Those were the days... What could be done with a billion dollars

from The [Sewickley] Herald, September 15, 1915

What \$1,000,000,000—the amount the allies want to borrow in America—would, buy:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 2,500,000 automobiles, or two for every man,
woman and child in Allegheny county. | 5,555,555,550 pounds of dressed ribs of beef
at the present market price. |
| 20,000,000,000 pounds of sugar. | 9,090,909,000 gallons of gasoline. |
| 200,000,000 barrels of flour. | 200,000,000 pairs of men's shoes. |
| 10,000,000,000 10 cent cigars. | 4,000,000,000 pairs of socks. |
| 1,000,000,000 pairs of baby shoes. | 2,000,000 pianos. |
| 13,333,334 cows at \$75 each. | 500,000,000 men's shirts at \$2 each. |
| 10,000,000 horses at \$100 each. | 2,000 submarines at \$500,000 each. |
| 22,000,000 bales of cotton at 10 1/2 cents a pound,
which is more than this country raises. | 166,666,666 tons of soft coal. |
| 200,000 aeroplanes at \$5,000 each. | Will keep 93,333,334 families for 1 week at \$12,
or will keep 1,602,564 families for 1 year at \$12 per week. |
| 4,000,000,000 dozen eggs at 25 cents a dozen. | Will pay for 2,000,000 boys' college education for one year. |
| 40,000,000,000 suits of clothes at \$25 each. | Will buy homes for 200,000 at \$5,000 apiece. |
| 20,000,000,000 loaves of bread. | |

This sum of money will be used up by the British Government in 50 days, the war costing \$20,000,000 each 24 hours.