

Sewickley Valley Historical Society

Signals

XLI, Number 6

April 2014

Saturday, April 26, 2014

A Visit to Roselea Farm

with Lunch in the Barn

A joint field trip with Old Moon Township Historical Society

Arrive at Roselea Farm, 1474 Coraopolis Heights Road, Coraopolis, PA 15108, between 10:00 and 10:30 a.m. for a 10:30 tour of the main house. If you wish to carpool from Sewickley, please let us know at 412-741-5315. A box lunch, catered by BGourmet, Sewickley, will be served at noon in the barn (see below for menu and order form), followed by a tour of the gardens and grounds at 1:00. We will depart Roselea about 2:30 p.m.

For more about Roselea Farm, see page 2 of this newsletter.

Box Lunch Menu

(Includes sandwich, white bean salad, beverage and cookie)

- I would like to order** ___ Rosemary Roast Beef Sandwich (crispy onions, arugula, Gorgonzola, aioli, farm bread)
 ___ Grilled Portobello Sandwich (sweet peppers, black garlic aioli, arugula, challah bread)
 ___ Turkey, Bacon, Swiss Panini (honey mustard, avocado, farm bread)

box lunches @ \$10 each

Name: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please make checks payable to Sewickley Valley Historical Society and return with this form to:
SVHS, 200 Broad Street, Sewickley, PA 15143

DEADLINE FOR LUNCH RESERVATIONS IS WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2014

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.

Roselea Farm

In 1905, Pittsburgh attorney George E. Shaw (see below) commissioned the architectural firm of MacClure and Spahr to design a summer home on 123 acres in Coraopolis Heights. The result was the imposing twenty-one room Tudor mansion at what the Shaws called Tophorn Farm. The estate was purchased ca. 1916 by Charles Lockhart, who added four rooms and had a “farmer’s cottage” built on the estate for the caretaker and his family.

When the Lockharts sold the estate in 1922, they subdivided the grounds, selling the mansion and 32 acres to David Crawford (see below), vice-president of Locomotive Stoker Company, who renamed the property Roselea Farm. In 1923, the adjacent 25 acres were sold to Lockhart’s nephew, John R. McCune IV. The Lockharts retained 51 acres east of McCune’s estate, and in 1927 they sold 15 remaining acres of the original farm to Lloyd Smith, president of Union National Bank.

Russell and Nancy Patton purchased the 32-acre farm in 1950, but the estate was condemned for lease purposes by the U. S. Government on behalf of the Air Force at the beginning of the Korean conflict, and the Pattons had to temporarily relocate. Forty-nine enlisted men were billeted in the main house, and the barn was used as an officers’ club. The property was returned to the Pattons in 1958.

The Pattons’ daughter and son-in-law, Nancy and Richard Mills, inherited Roselea Farm in 2003, and they have been restoring the grounds, gardens, main house, farmer’s cottage, tower house and large barn ever since. In 2004, they added a herd of goats, a donkey named Rick and a third barn, as well as a commercial greenhouse, which is now open to the public. In 2007, the historic barn was renovated and restored, and the farmer’s cottage was converted to a B & B.

*This information is primarily from
Forgotten Past: A History of Moon Township, Pennsylvania,
by Robert A. Jockers (XLibris Corporation, 2006)
and the Roselea Farm website, www.roseleafarm.com.*

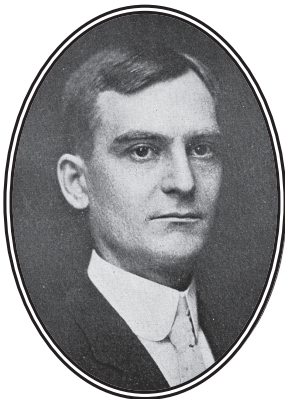


The garden pathway at Roselea Farm.
We hope that the wisteria will be in full bloom for the tour.



The Roselea greenhouse provides all of the flowers for the gardens.
These are among the 50 containers planted every year.

George E. Shaw (1861-1938)



George Shaw was born in Pittsburgh. He attended local schools, graduated from the University of Michigan, was admitted to the bar in Pennsylvania, and in 1881, along with Edwin W. Smith and Samuel McClay, joined the law firm founded by Philander Knox and James H. Reed in 1877. This firm handled the affairs of many of Pittsburgh’s leading industrialists, including Carnegie, Frick, Mellon, Heinz and Westinghouse. In 1901, Mr. Reed represented Andrew Carnegie in the negotiations that led to the creation of United States Steel. In that year Philander Knox left the firm to assume the post of Attorney General of the United States, and later he would become a U. S. Senator and Secretary of State. The law firm, still in existence, came to be known as Reed, Smith, Shaw and McClay.

Mr. Shaw married Mary Elizabeth Ewing in 1893. She was the daughter of Judge Thomas Ewing, Jr., a real estate lawyer, civil war general, speculator in Kansas and key figure in national politics. Judge Ewing was a foster brother to William Tecumseh Sherman and later his brother-in-law, as Sherman married Ewing’s sister Ellen.

David Francis Crawford (1864-1937)

Mr. Shaw was interested in business and civic affairs as well as the practice of law. He was a Director and Secretary of Crucible Steel company, Director of the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad, Director of Mellon National Bank, Union Trust Company and Union Savings Bank. He was a Trustee of the Carnegie Institute of Technology and served for many years as Chairman of the Fine Arts Committee of Carnegie Institute.

Born in Pittsburgh, educated in public schools and at the Pennsylvania Military Academy, in 1885 David Crawford was apprenticed in the Altoona shops of the Pennsylvania Railroad. He remained with that company until 1918, by which time he had become General Manager of the Pennsylvania Lines West. In 1918, he became Vice President of the Locomotive Stoker Company and President of the Westinghouse Union Battery Company.

Snowfall

by Margaret Dury

When the media start to complain about the recent “big” snowfalls, I have to grin – but then that shows my age.... Do you remember the Great Appalachian Storm of Thanksgiving weekend, 1950?

I’d been in Connecticut for a wedding on Friday, and on Saturday took the Greyhound bus from New York City to Harrisburg – a five hour trip, which arrived on schedule. It was when we headed west from Harrisburg that the weather started to deteriorate and the adventure began. The trip to Pittsburgh took 42 hours! Our bus led the way, picking up stranded people, including drivers of small trucks. When we got off the turnpike at Irwin (the end of the turnpike at that time), the very wise bus driver decided to get more fuel. The traffic that we had been leading was able to proceed only one mile further.

We were stranded in front of a motel; however, the snow was so deep that the units could not be reached. As I remember, the snowfall there was between 36 and 39 inches. Luckily, necessary supplies were kept in the motel owner’s home, which soon became our headquarters. There were over 60 people taking refuge. Car occupants stayed warm and slept in the house, and the bus passengers slept in the bus.

One woman announced that she had carrots and celery in the trunk of her car but could not get it open. The truck drivers volunteered

to help, and soon the woman started to make soup. At the time I thought it strange that someone was transporting a large quantity of carrots and celery after Thanksgiving.



Centennial Avenue, Sewickley, between Broad and Locust Streets, after the Thanksgiving snowstorm of 1950. The buildings are those that predated the Wise Medical Center.

Next, the woman asked if there was a grocery store nearby. A small store was located about a mile away, and once again the truck drivers volunteered to go. They were given a list of what to try to find. They returned excited – they had found a box of Velveeta! Soon there was the aroma of homemade bread, and we were treated to grilled cheese sandwiches. Other than water, our beverage was reheated coffee grounds.

It turned out that this tall, lovely woman had been on her way to St. Louis to do a TV program on food. And, yes,

her name was Julia, although it couldn’t have been Julia Child, who was in France in 1950. Our Julia was an extraordinary cook, nonetheless.

One of our passengers had a harmonica, and once in a while would play a ditty. Finally, when we could proceed westward, the bus driver took all his passengers as close to their destinations as possible. I was delivered on Monday, half a block from my Carnegie Tech dorm. A lot of the male students who had remained on campus made enough money shoveling snow to pay for their next semester’s tuition, including room and board!

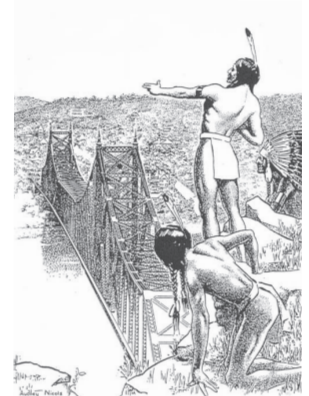
Now THAT was a SNOWFALL!

The Great Appalachian Storm of November 1950 was a large cyclone that moved through the Eastern United States, causing significant winds, heavy rains east of the Appalachians, and blizzard conditions along the western slopes of the mountains, depositing up to 57 inches of snow in the central Appalachians. In Pittsburgh, 30.5 inches of snow accumulated, and tanks were used to clear it. Hurricane force winds disrupted power to 1,000,000 customers during the event. The storm impacted 22 states, killing 353, injuring over 160, and creating \$66.7 million in damage. U. S. insurance companies paid more money out to their policy holders for damage resulting from this storm than for any other previous storm or hurricane.

Sewickley Valley Historical Society
200 Broad Street
Sewickley, PA 15143

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April 2014



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Report of the Nominating Committee

The Sewickley Valley Historical Society Nominating Committee

W. Brewster Cockrell, Chairman

Jay Judson Brooks, Jr.; Margaret Dury; George Gaadt; Maleet Gordon

proposes the following slate of officers and directors for election
at the SVHS Annual Meeting, Wednesday, May 14, 2014:

Secretary: J. Judson Brooks, Jr.

Treasurer: David Genter

Directors:

(1st two-year term)

Harold Bonnett

Julie Buscher

Mary Anne Riley

Jean Sebolt

(2nd two-year term)

Charlotte Bober

Fran Merryman

Marian Miller

(Filling an unexpired term)

Agnes Pangburn

Friends, Sponsors, Patrons, Benefactors

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

Deb & Jim Thornton