

Sewickley Valley Historical Society

Signals

XLVI, Number 1

September 2018

Wednesday, September 19, 2018

7:30 p.m., at the Old Sewickley Post Office

The Junction:

The Streetcar History of Beaver County and Its Adjoining Areas

A Program by

Jeffrey Snedden

Nestled between the communities of Rochester and New Brighton is an area known locally as Junction Stretch. Today, Junction Stretch is part of PA-65, a connector adjoining the upper and lower Beaver Valley, a fairly innocuous stretch of highway. The history of Junction Stretch tells a different story, one built along the tracks of the mighty streetcar. For nearly half a century, streetcars dominated transportation in Beaver County, connecting citizens of every community to one another with a convenience never before experienced. Streetcars also connected Beaver County to other progressive towns and cities, including New Castle, Steubenville and East Liverpool. Controversy was a part of the streetcar era, as each community fought to retain what it felt were its individual qualities.



In this lecture, Mr. Snedden will explore the history of streetcars and trolleys from the local perspective, showing how streetcars helped to build Beaver County as it exists today. He will also talk about the Sewickley gap between Beaver County and Pittsburgh trolley service.

Jeffrey Snedden is a local historian, writer, and researcher. He is the author of the long-running "Histories & Mysteries" column in the *Beaver County Times* and the host of the "History in a Minute" video series on timesonline.com. Since 2015, he has sat on the Board of Trustees for the Beaver County Historical Research & Landmarks Foundation. He has been studying Beaver County and Western Pennsylvania history since 1995. He is a lifelong resident of Hopewell Township, Pennsylvania.

Please note that our email address is now

info@sewickleyhistory.org

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.

The Trolley Controversy in Sewickley

Although trolley lines were extensive in other places in Allegheny and Beaver Counties, they were never laid in Sewickley and Edgeworth. They became a major issue around 1903-04, and the controversy continued for years. The premier issue of *The Weekly [Sewickley] Herald*, Volume 1, No. 1, Saturday September 19, 1903, had this headline on page one, followed by an article quoting unnamed residents on both sides of the issue:

A VERY IMPORTANT ISSUE.

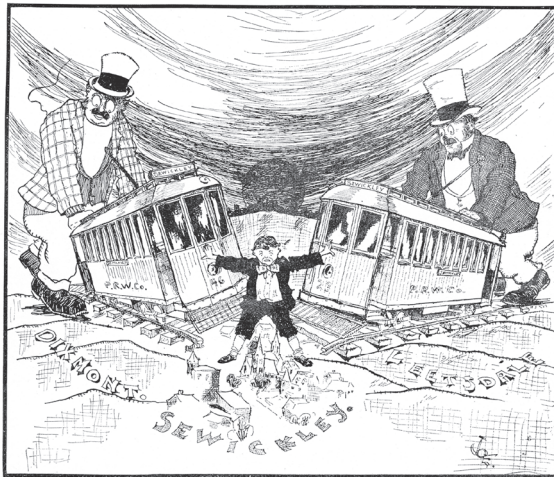
New Street Car Franchise—The People Becoming Interested—Council Has Not Acted Upon the Measure.

WHAT THE PEOPLE THINK ABOUT IT.

The end of the line from Beaver was just short of the bridge over Little Sewickley Creek on Beaver Road, Edgeworth. In earlier days, the house there was owned by E. W. Falck, who operated a construction firm there. Although the property was technically in Edgeworth, the business address was Leetsdale, thus legally accommodating the trolley turnabout. The end of the line in Sewickley was on the Sewickley side of the Sewickley Bridge, where the BMW dealership is today. Number 23 trolleys actually came over the bridge, but they did not come into Sewickley. The Number 23, which began as an early route of the Pittsburgh, Neville Island & Coraopolis Railway Company in 1894, was discontinued in 1952.

Below is a small sampling of the material in the Historical Society's collection concerning the trolley controversy. In addition to issues of the *Sewickley Herald*, we also have photographs and an essay by Jim Simons entitled "The Trolley Question," written in the 1970s for Charles Hinds, a history teacher at Quaker Valley High School.

This Lad Is Getting Tired of His Job.



This cartoon appeared on the front page of the January 29, 1910, Herald. The caption reads, in part, "Public sentiment in the Valley has changed so strongly in favor of trolley cars in the past few years that to resist them further is realized to be a waste of energy. Many of our largest property owners are now very much in favor of them."

Do We Need It? What? The Trolley!!!

If you're so endowed with this world's goods as to own an auto-car,
You don't need it. What? The trolley !
If you can pay a chauffeur wage to honk-honk near and far,
You don't need it. What? The trolley ! !
But supposing that some day you find you're out of gasoline,
The carburetor's busted in a manner that is mean,
Suppose to get to Haysville P. D. Q. you're very keen,
Then you'll need it. What? The trolley ! ! !

A poem by G. H. Hazelton-Haynes that appeared in the Herald, February 26, 1910, expressing sentiments FOR the trolley

"The Trolley Can't Come"

SEWICKLEY—AS WE INTEND TO KEEP IT

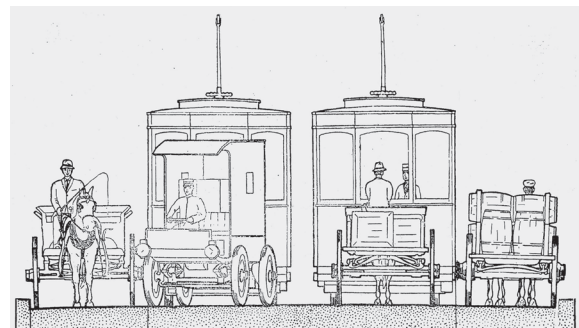
It seems to me I'd like to be
By big green lawns and leafy tree
Where cars don't run nor gongs don't sound,
Where I'd have stillness all around.

If 'tweren't for sight and sound and smell,
I'd like the city pretty well;
But when it comes to getting rest
I like the country lots the best.

On city streets the trolleys go,
They jar and jolt, and clatter so,
They scare the teams, and sometimes kill—
I like the country where it's still.

Sometimes it seems to me I must
Just quit the City's din and dust,
And get out where the sky is blue—
Now doesn't it seem so to you?

A poem from an unknown source expressing sentiments AGAINST the trolley



This drawing from The Sewickley Valley, July 22, 1911, shows why it would be impossible to lay double streetcar tracks along Beaver Street.

Friends, Sponsors, Patrons, Benefactors

Thanks to the following, who, since our last newsletter, have supported Sewickley Valley Historical Society with gifts in addition to basic dues.

Andrea & David Aloe	Trudy File	Joseph A. Marrone	Carol & Gary Schurman
George D. Baker	Peggy Ganong	Mr. & Mrs. F. J. Maruca, Jr.	Harton & Judy Semple
Dr. George & Gloria Berry	Mrs. Ronald E. Gebhardt	Mr. & Mrs. Martin McDaniel	Sewickley Cemetery
Cary Blancett & Denise Dufour	Beth & David Genter	Davud & Gretchen Medich	Sewickley Heights History Center
Barbara Bishop	David & Anne Genter	Mr. & Mrs. Simon C. Merrills	John A. Shoener
Charlotte Bober	Dr. & Mrs. Harlan Giles	Mrs. William Metcalf III	Donald & Elizabeth Spalding
James & Carolyn Bouchard	Margie Shields Gilfillan	Betty Ann Miller	Samuel & Judith Spanos
Charles F. Bowers, Jr.	James Oliver Golsdborough	Dr. & Mrs. John Moraca	Peggy Standish
Kathy & Rich Brandt	Robert B. Hamilton, Jr.	John & Kathryn Moyer	Barbara Cooley Thaw
Carl Wood Brown	Will & Katharine Harbison	Mr. & Mrs. Michael D. Mullins	Henry & Karen Thorne
Kathryn & Michael Bryson	Cynthia M. Hays	David & June Nimick	Kirk & Beth Vincent
Robert & Gretchen Burnham	Kathrin F. Hays	Simon Noel	William & Roberta Walker
William J. Carson	Trudy & Art Hetherington	Agnes Pangburn	Helge & Erika Wehmeier
David Grattan Caughey	Lawrence Hitchins	Dr. & Mrs. Thomas Pangburn	Wade Weissmann
Susan Cockrell	Ed Harrell & Chas Pelusi	Mary Beth Pastorius	J. Scott Wendt III
W. Brewster Cockrell	Ivan & Ruth Hofmann	Elizabeth Wilson Peer	Brenda & Mark H. Wert
Connor M. Cogswell	Charles & Cordelia Jacobs	Linda Pell & Lindsey Smith	Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Wheat
Verna Corey	Peter D. Jones	John & Cece Poister	Duncan P. Whittaker, Jr.
Sally & Joseph Cortese	Donna L. Kipp	Tom & Jebby Potter	Jefferson Willets
James & Melanie Crockard	Mr. & Mrs. R. Craig Kirsch	Margaret P. Rea	R. Bruce Williamson
George & Ada Davidson	Bob & Susie Kopf	Robert W. Riordan	Carol Yaster
Jim & Linda Edson	John & Sadie Kroeck	William & Linda Roemer	Tim & Amy Zeffiro
Mr. & Mrs. James M. Edwards	Gregg Liberi	Sally & Ned Ruffin	Missy Zimmerman
Carroll W. Ferguson	Elsie MacKenzie	Phyllis Schell	

New Members

David Brittain, Middlebury, CT	Nancy McGilvray, Pittsburgh	Barbara Cooley Thaw, Sewickley
Libby Brittain, Los Angeles	John & Kathryn Moyer, Sewickley	Ann L. Wagoner, Elizabethtown, PA
Jim & Anne Cooper, Sewickley	Mary B. Nichols, Sewickley	Kathleen Wagoner, Oxford, PA
Mr. & Mrs. David Dethero, Sewickley	Tess Riesmeyer, Pittsburgh	Wade Weissmann, Milwaukee
Gregg Liberi, Sewickley	Dan & Mackie Ross, Sewickley	Jefferson Willets, Swampscott, MA
Rachel Loden, Palo Alto, CA	Doris R. Strouse, Ambridge	

Special Contributions

Milana Bizic, in honor of Harton Semple	Susan R. Sour, in memory of Peter K Sour
The Ann & Frank Cahouet Foundation	William & Roberta Walker, in memory of B. G. Shields
Margie Shields Gilfillan, in memory of B. G. Shields	R. Bruce Williamson, in memory of B. G. Shields

In Memoriam

Rod Gartner
Jane Hitchins
James R. (Jamie) Wardrop

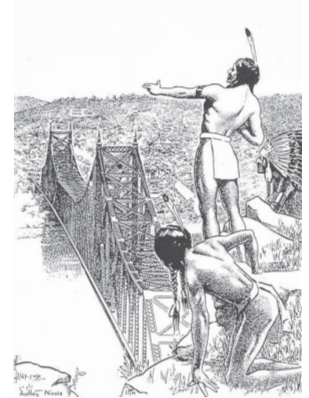
A Call for Committee Members

If you are interested in serving on one or more of the Historical Society's committees, please let us know. They include ARCHITECTURE, ARCHIVES/COLLECTION, DEVELOPMENT, FINANCE, HOSPITALITY, MEMBERSHIP and PROGRAM. A description of each can be found in the SVHS Bylaws, ARTICLE IX, which you can see on our website, www.sewickleyhistory.org under the heading "Latest Articles." We look forward to your participation.

Sewickley Valley Historical Society
200 Broad Street
Sewickley, PA 15143

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

September 2018



**SEWICKLEY VALLEY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

President

Harton S. Semple, Jr.

Vice-President

Joe Zemba

Secretary

Mary Beth Pastorius

Treasurer

Connor Cogswell

Directors

Gloria Berry
Brewster Cockrell
Verna Corey
Edward Harrell
Ivan Hofmann
Lori Kastan
Marty McDaniel
Marian Miller
Simon Noel
Ian Semple

Executive Director

John J. Poister, Jr.

Associate Director

Susan C. Holton

The B. G. Shields Memorial Garden

The hardscape in the B. G. Shields Memorial Garden beside the Old Sewickley Post Office, designed by E. K. Smith, is complete, and basic landscaping will begin shortly. The garden, honoring the memory of Sewickley Valley Historical Society's founder and long-time Executive Director, was made possible through generous donations from SVHS members and the Old Sewickley Post Office Corporation (OSPOC). It is hoped that, in the future, a bench and additional trees and shrubs can be added. A list of proposed plantings can be obtained from the SVHS office. If you would like to contribute, please send your check, made out to B. G. Shields Memorial Fund, to SVHS, 200 Broad Street, Sewickley, PA 15143. We plan to have a gala to celebrate the opening of the garden in Spring 2019.



The Illustrated Life of George Gaadt: A Retrospective

An exhibit of the work of SVHS member George Gaadt will be held at Robert Morris University from August 28 - October 12, 2018. Included in the show will be his portrait of B. G. Shields, "Morning Glory," from the SVHS collection. The hours of the exhibition are Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday, 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.; Thursday, 11:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m., in the Media Arts Gallery, Wheatley Center, 6001 University Blvd., Moon Township, PA 15108.