

# Sewickley Valley Historical Society Signals

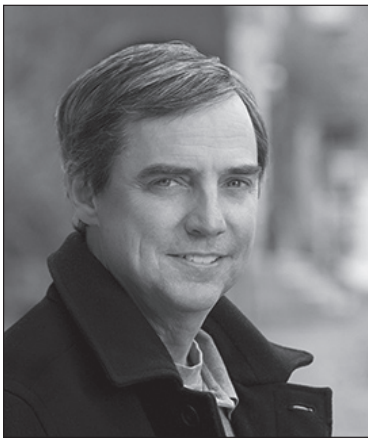
XXXVIII, Number 1

September 2010

Wednesday, September 22, 7:30 p.m.  
Old Sewickley Post Office

## *The Paris of Appalachia:* *Pittsburgh in the 21st Century*

A illustrated lecture by Brian O'Neill  
followed by refreshments & a book signing



**B**rian O'Neill was brought up on Long Island, educated at Syracuse University and worked in Roanoke, VA, before coming to Pittsburgh. After five years at the *Pittsburgh Press*, he has worked since 1993 at the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. O'Neill has won the Associated Press Managing Editors of Pittsburgh Award and the Pennsylvania Newspaper Publishers' Keystone Awards for column writing as well as regional honors. He lives on Pittsburgh's North Side with his wife and two daughters.

He says, "I love Pittsburgh like a brother—and my brother drives me nuts. But wherever we go from here, the journey shouldn't be as hard as the one that got Pittsburgh this far. We need only summon some of that old-time resilience and innovation."

In a November 2009 *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* review of *The Paris of Appalachia*, Samuel Hazo characterized the book as a "love letter to Pittsburgh. It's not blind love. O'Neill has an unbiased eye, and...he knows that tough love often is love in its purest form, even if it seems harsh.... [T]rue lovers know when the romance stops and where reality begins, and Brian O'Neill proves that he knows the difference page after page. For genuine Pittsburghers, this is required reading."

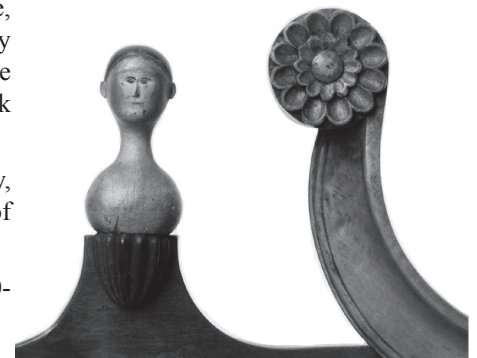
*The Paris of Appalachia* is now the fastest selling book in the 35-year history of the Carnegie Mellon University Press.

## *Harmony in Wood: Furniture of the Harmony Society*

**W**ritten by Philip D. Zimmerman, a nationally known authority on American furniture, this handsome new volume has been called "an innovative approach to furniture history through the collection of Pennsylvania's Old Economy Village." It was published by The Friends of Old Economy Village, Ambridge, and is available at Old Economy, Penguin Book Shop and the Sewickley Valley Historical Society for \$60, plus tax.

Dr. Zimmerman will hold a book signing at the Old Economy Visitors Center on Friday, September 17, from 6:00-8:00 p.m. Refreshments will be served. Please call The Friends of Old Economy Village at 724-266-4500 for further information.

Penguin Book Shop will also host a book signing on Saturday, September 18, from 10:00-11:00 a.m.



*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.

## Dorothy M. Moore (1920-2010), SVHS Archivist: An Appreciation

Dorothy Margaret McCClick Moore, Mrs. William L. Moore Sr., died May 6, 2010, after a long illness. Dorothy Moore was born March 1, 1920, in a farmhouse on Big Sewickley Creek Road in Fair Oaks, Pennsylvania. She had been a resident of Sewickley since 1940.

Dorothy Moore was not much inclined toward the pursuit of history until she became interested in the lineage of her family. As she became dedicated to her own genealogy, she realized that others might wish to know more about their ancestors. Especially relevant local source material was at hand in the *Sewickley Herald*, published continually since 1903. In 1965, she began to organize the obituaries found in the *Herald*—an average of 300 a year—by writing the information on 3 x 5 index cards. By her death she had

accumulated some 50,000 cards, many filled out on both sides. The Sewickley Valley Historical Society has obtained these cards as part of her collection, which also includes records of the Marlatt Funeral home from the 1860s to the 1960s, old phone directories, photographs, cemetery censuses, maps and books—a treasure trove of information about the people and events of Sewickley and the surrounding area for the past 100 years.

Dorothy Moore was among the founders of the Sewickley Valley Historical Society in 1973, and she served as its first Secretary. For 37 years Mrs. Moore also served as the Society's archivist, fielding queries about individuals and families and supplying results in her meticulous hand. It is unlikely that there will ever be another Dorothy Moore. She will be sorely missed.

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

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George Baker, Cahouet Family Foundation, Loreen Mottorn

In memory of William M. Kelly: B. G. Shields

In memory of Dorothy M. Moore: Susan Moore Atkinson-Armstrong, Wayne Cowdry, Drinda J. Kiner, Kathleen A. Maloney, B. G. Shields, Mr. & Mrs. Frank Wasco, Jr.

### In Memoriam

Carol Chaplin, William M. Kelly, Dorothy M. Moore, Sarah E. Murdock, Hay Walker IV

## The Memoirs of Elizabeth Walker Pontefract

*Elizabeth Walker Pontefract (1855-1948) was one of the eight children of Hay and Janet Charters Walker. She grew up in Allegheny City and at "Bonny Blink," the Walker estate in Brighton Heights, and later moved with her husband, James Gamaliel Pontefract, to "Bagatelle," designed by Alden & Harlow, above Little Sewickley Creek Road.*

*Mrs. Pontefract was a militant campaigner against advertising signs on the roadsides of Allegheny County, even climbing the cliffs above the Ohio River Boulevard to personally paint out signs on rocks. She finally resorted to planting poison ivy as a barrier to the repainting of the signs. She organized the planting of a mile of poplar trees along Ohio River Boulevard and was also responsible for the planting of ailanthus trees along the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks in Sewickley and Edgeworth. For years she campaigned for smoke control and for filling every corner in the city with trees, grass and flowers. She contended that Pittsburgh, with its natural setting, could be one of the most beautiful of cities. Morrow-Pontefract Park along Beaver Road in Edgeworth was established in 1956 on land donated by the John Morrow family and by the heirs of Mrs. Pontefract and William Walker.*

*The following is excerpted from a charming diary in the Historical Society collection entitled Memoirs of Elizabeth Walker Pontefract, Written for the Childs Grandchildren. (Mrs. Pontefract's daughter Isobel was the wife of Clinton L. Childs and the grandmother of the children for whom these reminiscences were written). The photograph below shows Mrs Pontefract, ca. 1937, with two of her dachshunds, Hindy and Bing.*

An amusing memory is of the pigs. When I was quite young, before we moved to Bonny Blink, we had many pigs; the pens were in a hollow with a stream running about ten or fifteen feet from the pens, then on the other side of the stream were the troughs. The feed house was on a rise above with a platform in front. My brother Will would stand on that platform and preach to the pigs; he would call out, "Citizens and Brothers" and the pigs would all run out of the pens and stare up at him. He would then give a lecture on politics, religion, philosophy—any subject that had his interest for the time. It was one of the funniest sights I have ever seen and I would laugh until the tears would run down my face. Pigs are as great, if not more amusing than monkeys.

When we moved to Bagatelle, we had a driver who asked if he could keep two or three pigs. We gave our permission, if he would keep them fairly clean. When I would feel a little down and dull in spirits, I would go up and see George's pigs. I was soon laughing so heartily that the dullness would all vanish.

When I was about ten years old, our favorite doctor, Dr. Dickson, brought his small daughter to spend the day. We, my brothers, Hepburn and Hay, and we girls, were looking at a litter of little pigs, when my hat, a favorite one, fell into the pen. I said, "Oh Hepburn, get my hat," but before he could even think of going after the hat, the old mother pig tore it to pieces. There were not two straws together.

Now, when I am writing this, I have three dogs, Robin, a Cocker Spaniel, light tan colored, with black eyes and nose, Hindy—"Paul Von Hindenberg", a brown Dachshund, and Cozy, a small King Charles Spaniel, black with tan trimmings, some ten years old,



sleeps much of her time, but is healthy and loves a walk. Hindy is bright and full of personality, seems to know all we say, loves the Morris chair, where I sit by the hall fire and read. The instant I leave the chair, he is in it, but when I say, "Hindy, isn't that my chair?" he at once gets out of the chair.

Yesterday, Friday, December 30, 1938, I went, much against my inclination, to take them for a walk, when on the road up to your Uncle Will's house, I slid on a bit of ice on the roadside, my hand hit the stones that stood up

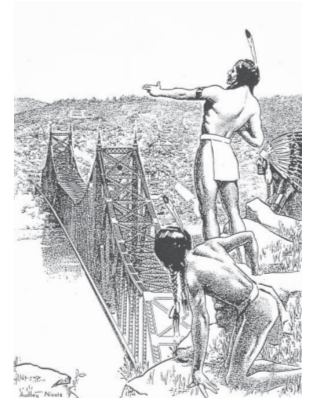
at the side and scraped the top of my head on the stones. I was so happy that the affliction that comes to so many old people, breaking their hip bone, had not happened to me. I sat for awhile in the gutter, which was dry, with the dogs jumping over me, licking my face. After the head eased up a little, I struggled up and came home with the blood dripping down my face from the scraped spot on the top of my head. The dogs followed me, quite humbled, and Hindy was especially attentive all evening.

We feed the birds and the squirrels with peanuts and sunflower seed. Hindy has discovered that the squirrels come for nuts and he will watch every morning and goes wild over them, but the squirrels are growing wise and only appear after Hindy leaves the window.

Sewickley Valley Historical Society  
200 Broad Street  
Sewickley, PA 15143

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Sewickley, PA

September 2010

A decorative poster for a "Riding and Driving Party". At the top left, there is a circular vignette showing a horse and rider. To the right, a banner reads "SAVE THE DATE!" and below it, "SEPT 25, 2010". The main text in a large, stylized font reads "RIDING AND DRIVING PARTY". Below that, it says "BENEFITING THE SEWICKLEY HEIGHTS HISTORY CENTER" and "SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 25, 2010 AT 4PM". At the bottom, it lists "ANTIQUÉ CARS, CARRIAGES, HORSES, THE HUNT, COCKTAILS & DINNER, MUSIC, AND MORE...".

SAVE THE DATE!  
SEPT 25, 2010

**RIDING  
AND  
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HISTORY CENTER

SATURDAY  
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AT 4PM

ANTIQUÉ CARS, CARRIAGES, HORSES,  
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AND MORE...

SPECIAL REDUCED DONATION FOR SVHS MEMBERS:  
**\$60 PER PERSON**



ATTENDEES AT THE SEWICKLEY VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S  
JUNE FIELD TRIP TO STATE COLLEGE

*From left:* John Kroeck, Phyllis Schell, Harton Semple,  
B. G. Shields, [Joe Paterno], Joan Balzer, Sallie Davis,  
Susan Holton, Steve Davis. *Not pictured:* John Holton