

**Click here to return to 2024 Newsletters**



# NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2024

## About SHHS

The Squirrel Hill Historical Society (SHHS) is a membership organization established in 2000, committed to gathering, preserving, and celebrating the historical memories of our neighborhood. The SHHS sponsors a monthly lecture series on topics of interest primarily focused on Squirrel Hill and Pittsburgh history. The programs take place on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at Church of the Redeemer, 5700 Forbes Ave. A Zoom option is also available.

### How to contact the SHHS:

P.O. Box 8157  
Pittsburgh, PA 15217

Website:  
[squirrelhillhistory.org](http://squirrelhillhistory.org)

Email:  
[sqhillhist@shhsoc.org](mailto:sqhillhist@shhsoc.org)

Most of our programs are recorded. If you would like to view past programs, go to [squirrelhillhistory.org](http://squirrelhillhistory.org) and click on the link "Squirrel Hill Past Program Videos and Events."

SHHS Newsletters are sent only to SHHS members. Past issues are posted on the password-protected Members page on the SHHS website. If you are a member and need the password, email the SHHS to request it be sent to you.

*The Squirrel Hill Historical Society, Inc. has been determined to be exempt from federal income tax under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3). All contributions to the SHHS, including dues, are deductible from federal taxes under Section 170 of the IRS Code.*

The Squirrel Hill Historical Society (SHHS) is a membership organization established in 2000. It is committed to gathering, preserving, and celebrating the historical memories of our neighborhood.

To submit an item of historical interest for publication, suggest a topic for a speech, ask a question, or give feedback, send an email to [sqhillhist@shhsoc.org](mailto:sqhillhist@shhsoc.org), or write to SHHS, PO Box 8157, Pittsburgh, PA 15217.

## Happy New Year!

It's the start of the new year, and since it's winter, there's always a chance of bad weather on the evening of a SHHS program. If we decide to cancel a program or present it only on Zoom due to inclement weather, we will send a notice to SHHS members and those on our extended mailing list, so please check your inbox for announcements. Cancellations will also be posted on our website. **Note that our February program will be presented only on Zoom.** There will not be a live presentation that month.

## SHHS 2024 Membership Drive



SHHS's membership year runs from Jan. 1-Dec. 31.

Please renew for 2024 through our website or by mail.

See the last page of this newsletter for renewal details.

If you are not sure if you have renewed, you can check on our website. See page 2 for instructions.

## President's Message

Dear SHHS Members,

HAPPY NEW YEAR! Let's hope 2024 brings peace to a troubled world and that all nations can solve the global challenges and universal human rights issues that separate them.

Due to technical issues, our December program, "**Writing and Illustrating America and the Holocaust**," presented by SHHS member/author Barbara Burstin and illustrator Fred Carlson, was live only and was not broadcast on Zoom. We apologize to those who had planned to watch on Zoom. The program has now been uploaded to our website, [squirrelhillhistory.org](http://squirrelhillhistory.org) website, and is well worth viewing. Click on "SHHS Past Program Videos and Events" and go to the program dated 12-12-2023. Copies of Barbara and Fred's 30-page illustrated graphic booklet titled **America and the Holocaust** are available by ordering from [www.americaandtheholocaust.com](http://www.americaandtheholocaust.com).

When the SHHS membership drive ends on March 1, 2024, a new password will be sent to all paid members so they can access the protected "Members Page," which has an archive of all the SHHS Newsletters in searchable format.

# Click here to return to 2024 Newsletters

January 2024

## SHHS Officers and Board

The SHHS is an all-volunteer organization. Board Members are Dr. Jean Binstock, Wayne Bossinger, Toby Chapman, Audrey Glickman, James Hammond, Tony Indovina, Stanley Klein, Todd Miller, Charles Succop, Helen Wilson, Todd Wilson, Eveline Young.

President: Jim Hammond  
Vice-President and Newsletter Editor: Helen Wilson  
Program Coordinators: Todd Miller and Toby Chapman  
Membership Coordinator: Stanley Klein  
Email Coordinator: Tony Indovina  
Treasurer: Eveline Young  
Media Specialist: Audrey Glickman  
Website Manager: Janine Michael  
Principal Researchers: Wayne Bossinger, Helen Wilson, and Tony Indovina

All SHHS members are welcome to contribute articles, suggest programs, and participate in our activities.

Please renew as soon as possible, and remember—you can give gift memberships to family and friends so they can enjoy our great monthly SHHS Newsletter and all the informative articles on Squirrel Hill's history. Yearly membership is only \$15.00 single/\$25.00 couple! The SHHS has many interesting programs and activities in the works for 2024, so renew now to stay informed about them.

Thank you for your continuing support!

Jim Hammond, SHHS President

## Our Website Has a List of Names of Those Who Have Renewed for 2024—Is Your Name on the List?

Dues received since October 1, 2023, are paid through December 31, 2024. Those who haven't renewed will remain on the active members list until March 1, the end of our membership drive. If you're not sure if you've renewed, you can check on our website, [squirrelhillhistory.org](http://squirrelhillhistory.org), where we've posted a list of members who have paid their 2024 SHHS dues. To protect our members' privacy, the list can be accessed only through the Members Page of our website and has only members' names.

To check if you have renewed, click on "Members Page" on our website, enter the password, and click on "Members Currently Paid for 2024." If you have forgotten the password, send an email to [sqhillhist@shhsoc.org](mailto:sqhillhist@shhsoc.org) requesting it to be sent to you. Contact us if you think you have renewed but your name isn't on the list. We will check our records to see if your name has been inadvertently omitted.

## Editor's Note: New Year's Resolutions

Helen Wilson

Short and sweet: My holiday season has been beset with too much to do and a nagging cold (not Covid) that kept me from attending to SHHS business. I resolve to get back to doing what I love so much—researching the various facets of Squirrel Hill's interesting history and presenting articles about that research in this newsletter. I also plan to add a lot of other pictures to the Squirrel Hill collection on the *Historic Pittsburgh* website, [historicpittsburgh.org](http://historicpittsburgh.org). And I definitely plan to become more knowledgeable about Zoom so we can avoid future program glitches. **By the way, if any SHHS member is familiar with Zoom or knows someone who is, we would welcome their help at our programs.** Email us at [sqhillhist@shhsoc.org](mailto:sqhillhist@shhsoc.org) or talk to us at our programs. We can use the help!

SHHS members can help the SHHS in other ways as well. Do you have a speaker or topic you'd like us to schedule? Let us know! Attendees at our programs already help with putting chairs away after presentations, but we could also use help setting up. Some of us arrive around 6:30 to get the church hall ready. Feel free to join us. We could also use help manning the information table in the back of the room during programs. And last but not least—consider submitting articles for publication in the SHHS Newsletters!

## January SHHS Program

*Unless otherwise noted, all programs are presented on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at Church of the Redeemer, 5700 Forbes Avenue. Free parking is available in the St. Edmund's Academy parking lot.*

### Tuesday, January 9: "Jewish Family & Community Services, Present & Past"

**Ivonne Smith-Tapia**, Director of Refugee and Immigrant Services at Jewish Family and Community Services (JFCS) will explain how the organization helps immigrants and refugees build new lives in Pittsburgh and will also provide an overview of the organization's 80-year history. Ivonne joined JFCS as Director of Refugee and Immigrant Services in July 2021. She holds master's degrees in Cultural Anthropology and Social Work with a certificate in Human Services Management. Ivonne worked for more than a decade with the Colombian government, international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and think tanks promoting community development, education, human rights, and leadership in diverse rural and urban communities in Colombia. She moved to Pittsburgh in 2013 and has worked with the University of Pittsburgh to provide training and technical assistance to Family Support Centers and at the World Affairs Council of Pittsburgh leading programming on global issues.

# [Click here to return to 2024 Newsletters](#)

## Upcoming SHHS Programs

January 2024

SHHS Program schedulers Todd Miller and Toby Chapman are now scheduling programs for 2024. Some of the speakers have been booked, and titles of presentations and more information about them will appear in upcoming newsletters.

**Tuesday, February 13: ZOOM ONLY. Professor Edmund Russell, CMU, and Lauren Winkler, Cartographer, "Pittsburgh's Role in Uniting the States with Telegraphs, 1844–62."**

**March 12: Howie Ehrlichman**, author of *Not a Bad Trip: A Pittsburgh Cab Story*.

**April 9: Ann Belser**, Founder & Publisher, Print Newspaper

**May 14: Dr. Matthew Johnson-Roberson**, Director of Robotics Institute at Carnegie Mellon University

**June 11: Lynn McMahon**, author, of *The Story Behind the Smile: Eat'n Park*.

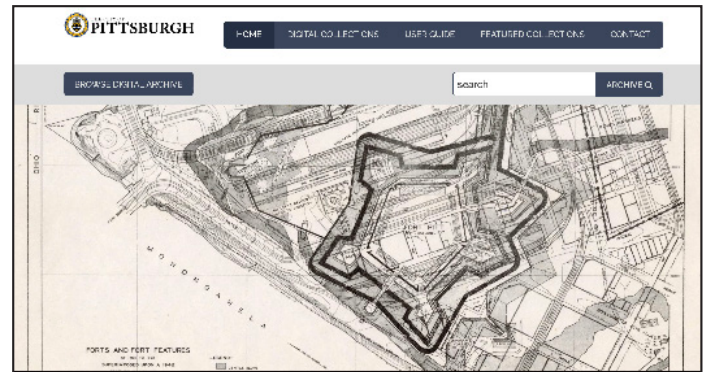
Also in the lineup of speakers are **Giulia Lozza Petrucci**, executive director of Dragon's Den (cancelled in September); **Rob Ruck** and **Ted Muller**, co-authors of *Pittsburgh Rising: From Frontier Town to Steel City, 1750-1920*; **Tony Indovina**, who will give an update on the Neill Log House restoration project, and **Helen Wilson**, who will present interesting information about the buildings of the Squirrel Hill business district.

## City Clerk's Office Launches City Archives Digital Collections Website

*This press release was sent to the SHHS by Charles Succop, City Archivist, who is a SHHS board member. He adds that everyone can keyword search for people, businesses, streets, schools, places of worship, parks, etc. The press release appeared in the December SHHS Newsletter but is reprinted here because of its importance in historical research.*

Pittsburgh, PA (November 27, 2023) - The Records Management Division of the Office of the City Clerk and City Council is pleased to announce the launch of a City Archives Digital Collections website, where extensive material from the archives will be made available to the public to browse and research online. The website features recently digitized records including meeting minutes, photographs, reports, maps and more from a variety of archival collections spanning two centuries of Pittsburgh's history. Go to <https://pittsburgharchives.access.preservica.com/> Selected highlights include:

- The Pittsburgh City Hall Cornerstone Collection, which features items placed in a time capsule in Pittsburgh's former City Hall at the corner of Smithfield St. and Oliver Ave. in 1869;
- A collection of over 2,000 photographs of interior and exterior views of buildings in the Lower Hill District from 1955 to 1960, prior to the construction of the Civic Arena;
- Legislative records including ordinances, resolutions and minutes from Pittsburgh City Council and from two dozen annexed municipalities, from Allegheny City to Westwood Borough;
- City Planning Commission meeting minutes from 1918 to 2001, covering important developments in Pittsburgh's planning and zoning history.



*Digitization of selected content has been supported in part by grant funding from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC). The Records Management Division will post updates on its social media pages when new digital collections are made available. For more information, contact Records Management Division manager Nick Hartley at [nicholas.hartley@pittsburghpa.gov](mailto:nicholas.hartley@pittsburghpa.gov) or 412-255-0873.*

## Another Great Website for Research: CMU's Pittsburgh Jewish Newspapers Project

Search for Jewish history in Pittsburgh's Jewish newspapers. Google "Pittsburgh Jewish Newspapers - Digital Collections." The project is a collaboration of CMU Libraries, the Rodef Shalom Congregation Archives, the Rauh Jewish Archives at the Senator John Heinz History Center, the *Pittsburgh Jewish Chronicle*, and Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. Generous financial support has been provided by the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh, the Philip Chosky Charitable Educational Foundation, and donations to CMU in memory of Henry Posner, Jr.



# Click here to return to 2024 Newsletters

January 2024

## January Update on the Friends of Neill Log House (FONLH): Final Update from Village Restorations, Inc., and an Interview with Pam Roub

*Tony Indovina, SHHS Board Member and FONLH President*

### Mission Statement for the Friends of the Neill Log House (FONLH Inc.)

*Adopted February 2022*



Friends of  
NEILL LOG HOUSE

***"We secure funds to restore and maintain the Neill Log House, foster knowledge of its historic significance, and work with interested parties to ensure the continued educational use of the structure and its site for future generations."***

Individual support for the FONLH restoration effort will always be needed. To make online donations by credit card or PayPal, go to the SHUC website, [shuc.org](http://shuc.org), and click on the "Projects" link in the black menu bar at the top of the page. A pull-down menu will appear. Select "Friends of the Neill Log House." Alternatively, checks can be sent to SHUC (put FONLH in the memo line) at the following address: SHUC, 5604 Solway Street, Pittsburgh, PA, 15217.



The photos on this page, accompanying this final update from our primary contractor, Village Restorations, Inc. from Hollidaysburg, PA, represent a holiday present to all our hardworking board members and generous funders. The picture on the left above shows the Neill Log House in its precarious position in 2020 before the restoration project began. The other photos above and to the right show the house as work progressed on it.



The photos below, taken in December 2023, show all four sides of the completed house. What a great accomplishment for the dedicated people who saw the project through to completion!

After stockpiling materials and logs on site in September and actively beginning work that month, Village Restorations formally concluded all work to restore the Neill Log House to historic standards by mid-December. Though a little later than they had anticipated because of a delay





# **Click here to return to 2024 Newsletters**

in receiving roofing shakes from their suppliers, they were well within the schedule originally agreed to.

Here is the first very brief report we received of their final work:

- Add and cinch the rosehead nails in the door (remove the screws that were used when building it)
- Add the replacement hand-forged thumb-latch
- Replace the pine shutter in the front with a new oak shutter and add the stops on the window
- Install the shelf above the fireplace and the peg boards on the wall
- Do a final cleanup to the site, including stockpiling old logs, timbers replaced, and other miscellaneous material inside the fence

All work completed was reflected in Village Restorations' final invoice to FONLH and reported to the City for its final inspection, which is briefly summarized below. All of this was done after earlier work, including shoring up and re-chinking the log house, was completed and previously paid for.

- Clearing foundation stone to cabin grade and repointing all exposed stone, replacing missing stones; holes in chimney filled and repointed inside and outside.
- Carpentry work, including replacing and hanging new oak front door and shutter, and repairing and stabilizing other shutters and windows. Other carpentry repairs outside and inside included work to gables, replacing sills and inside ceiling repairs (floor repairs had been done earlier).
- Shingles were completely replaced with one-inch cedar shakes after all rafters were inspected and repaired.
- Both fireplaces, cooking and heating, were "parged" to historical standards and appearance (*right*).

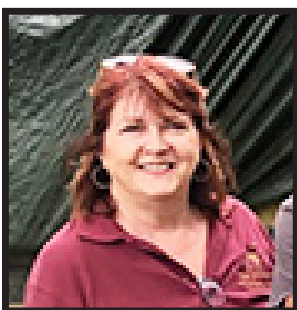


Most of the above work was done under the original contract, with a minimal amount of change orders. Additional work that was done, at no expense, included installing a shelving board above the fireplace, providing and hanging peg boards where they would have been, and installing a period panel near the fireplace to reflect the wall that would have run along the back of the main room.

The new year promises many exciting site enhancements to compliment the beautiful work we were fortunate to have received from our friends and partners from Village Restorations. Stay tuned for further updates in our newsletters about site enhancements and educational programming in the future.

## **An Interview with Pam Roub, President and Owner of Village Restorations, Inc.**

*Tony Indovina, SHHS Board Member and FONLH President*



The November SHHS Newsletter featured an interview with Roland Cadle, site foreman and vice-president of Village Restorations, Inc. (VRC). I now present an interview with Roland's partner, Pam Roub, president and owner of VRC. Both interviews tell a wonderful story of these hard-working and dedicated individuals who applied their different talents to make this recent restoration of the Neill Log House a success, and of how two individuals with diverse backgrounds came together in friendship and a shared passion for historic restoration.

I first asked Pam about her early life, and what experiences brought her to her present role as owner and president of VRC. She related that she was the oldest of four in a family that was not wealthy. Pam said her mother passed away in her teens and her father worked all the time. She also reveals growing up as a consummate tomboy, building tree houses and dams in local creeks, all perhaps in preparation for building and restoring, and being her own "boss." Her early jobs included a series of "unintentional" experiences, all focused on business, sales and marketing. After seasonal work with Sears, where she met her husband, Pam was invited by the cousin of the owner of Blue & White Bus Lines, Altoona, to be interviewed and was first hired as a reservationist for the 1984 World's Fair in New Orleans, for which she ran a hundred motor coaches a month. Pam describes the "crazy" responsibilities she later took on while under the wing of the owner's cousin, and moved up the ladder with this company to become the sales and marketing director, supervising all staff and planning all tours from Altoona to Arizona and Florida. As Pam describes everything back then, "when you're in

# Click here to return to 2024 Newsletters

January 2024

your twenties and hungry, you don't know what you don't know." Then, in the late '90s, Pam and her husband sold their home for her to pursue an opportunity to become vice-president of a tourism and motor coach company in Flushing, N.Y., with a promise of future ownership. Though her husband flourished in their new surroundings and she said "these were fun and exciting times for them," Pam described her job there as manic and hectic. So, when both their parents became ill, they made the decision to move back to the hills of Pennsylvania she missed, both without jobs. Her husband was subsequently able to return to his Sears management job. Pam related a lesson learned from that experience, "that money does not always make you happy, and as long as you're doing something you enjoy, it never feels like work."

This was all perhaps a turning point in Pam's experiences that brought her to where she is today. With her motor coach experiences, Pam applied for and was hired for a group sales job at Old Bedford Village, her introduction to the world of living history and re-enactors. When the person who was then the Director of the Village became ill, Pam was asked to assume his job and, after giving herself a trial period as assistant for a year, she felt she wanted to assume that role in the non-profit world she knew little about. Her jobs included official responsibilities from building relationships and writing grants to delivering firewood and cooking for events.

I told Pam that Roland stated his partnership with her began 23 years ago, but he believes she would say it was longer. The question I posed to her was "when and how exactly did you and Roland get together?" Pam explained that she first met Roland in her capacity as Executive Director of Old Bedford Village, working with him for a year before becoming business partners, then being in business for a year before VRC was incorporated in 2001. She explained exactly how they got together and how their relationship and business began. Pam said it all started when she realized that she had 45 log structures, most of them needing help. She was given Roland's name as a person who was "the best of the best" in log structure restoration. He and his wife were in the process of returning to the Hollidaysburg area from Greene County, and Roland recalls that his wife made him return Pam's calls. Pam describes their first meeting when Roland, in his rather blunt way, proceeded to tell her everything that was done wrong historically with each log building in Old Bedford Village and that the best option was to "call Hollywood and they could burn everything down."

Pam stated that she was probably prepared for his sarcasm by having been insulted by some of the best while living in New York. This, some might say, was the beginning of a beautiful friendship. Roland agreed to volunteer at the Village for a time while his family was in transition with their move. He accepted an unofficial non-paid position as Historic Structures Advisor. Pam believes it was a win-win situation for both of them as he could keep doing things he loved in making suggestions for the site, and the site was better for it. She said that they became good friends through these experiences and she learned that their personalities and management styles had much in common. Though things were improving overall at Old Bedford Village, Pam made a decision to leave her position there because of some other changes occurring within that organization. When she told Roland she was leaving, he basically said, "Then I am, too!" She broached the subject of starting a company that did period restoration work as well as buying and selling historical materials and asked if that was something he might be interested in doing with her. He spoke to his wife, told Pam that they prayed about it, and as they say, the rest is history.

One of the first jobs of Village Restorations was to fabricate cabins, historic displays, and props for a museum design company in Alton, IL., that Roland introduced Pam to while she was still with Old Bedford Village. Much has followed,



including props for several movies, restoring or reproducing museum structures, and ongoing work for the Army Heritage Center in Carlisle, PA. Not to mention countless restoration jobs over the years for historical sites and individuals. Pam admits that their similar personalities has proven challenging at times, but they are both individuals of faith who believe they were put in each other's path for a purpose, and that has enabled them to work through anything. Pam expresses hope that, with some younger workers like Roland's grandson coming onboard, Village Restorations will continue to thrive, and their shared dream of keeping history alive will continue.





# [Click here to return to 2024 Newsletters](#)

## Schenley Park's Unfolding Mysteries

January 2024

Helen Wilson

The SHHS's research into the history of the Neill Log House uprooted some of our basic beliefs about the house itself, such as how old it was and who built it. Older sources stated that the house dated to 1769 and was built by Ambrose Newton, whose name is on the first deed to the land. We now know from dendrochronological (tree ring) testing that the house dates to 1795, when the land was owned by Robert Neill. However, records show that Neill moved his family downtown in 1795, and we also know he lived on the land on Squirrel Hill (possibly as a squatter) for perhaps as many as 20 years before that. Where did he live before building the log house that bears his name today? We can surmise he must have lived in a previous log cabin, which he could have torn down to build the sturdier one that exists today, but we have no proof. It's unlikely we'll ever know for sure.

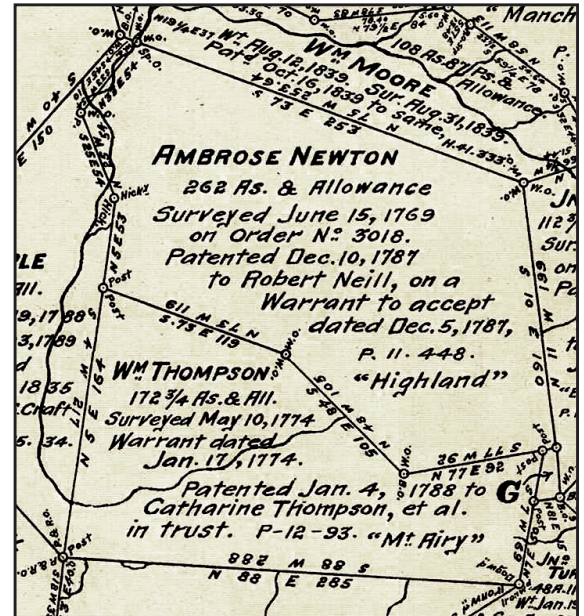
Another mystery concerns the tract of land itself. We don't know whether Neill or Newton named it "Highland," but that's what it's called on the *Warrantee Atlas of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania*, (excerpt at right) which was constructed from the earliest deeds on record in the Department of Internal Affairs from 1909-1912 and published in 1914. The map is a treasure trove of names of the earliest European settlers in Allegheny County, but in the case of Schenley Park, it creates some mysteries besides who named it. One is that "Mt. Airy," the same name as the tract of land later given to the City by Mary Schenley to become Schenley Park, was originally the tract south of Highland owned by William Thompson, of whom we know nothing at this point. The map notes the tract was patented in 1788 to "Catharine Thompson, et al. in trust." Perhaps William had died, because two Thompsons show up on the 1790 census, John and George, but not William. Catharine's name doesn't appear either. The Thompsons will be a subject for future research.

The story of how Mt. Airy and Highlands became Schenley Park continues with James O'Hara, born to a wealthy family in Ireland around 1752. He emigrated to Pittsburgh and opened a trading post. He learned French and various American Indian dialects, so he was hired as a government agent and began negotiating land purchases. He served on the American side during the Revolutionary War, and in 1792 was appointed by President George Washington as the sixth Quartermaster General of the U.S. Army, serving until 1796. When he left military service, he moved back to Pittsburgh and opened a general store, O'Hara & Company, and was also a government contractor, providing the army with provisions during the Indian Wars that followed the Revolutionary War. By the 1790s he was a prominent businessman, establishing the Pittsburgh Glassworks in 1795, a salt works, sawmill, and several other businesses and even becoming Burgess, the equivalent to mayor today. Meanwhile, he continued to be an enterprising land speculator in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. With his military connections and interest in land speculation, it is possible he knew Ambrose Newton (who had been stationed at Fort Pitt), William Thompson, and perhaps even Robert Neill, who was a wagoner who transported goods across the mountains from the east. However, there is absolutely no evidence of any connection between the men.

When James O'Hara died in 1819, his daughter Mary (mother of Mary Elizabeth Schenley) was his only heir, so she inherited his vast land holdings. She married Col. William Croghan Jr., a prosperous businessman. Mary Elizabeth was their only surviving child, so she inherited her mother's vast estate on her death in 1827. The story of Mary Elizabeth's elopement with dashing 43-year-old Captain Edward Wyndham Harrington Schenley is well known. It turned out to be a happy marriage, but the couple and their nine children lived in England because Mary had asthma and Pittsburgh's bad air bothered her.

Toward the end of the 1800s, Mary began donating land to the city and to various organizations, including West Penn Hospital, the Western Pennsylvania Institute for the Blind, the Fort Pitt Blockhouse, and many, many others.

In the City Beautiful era, when cities were waking up to the ugliness and grime of their industrial environment, the idea of spacious city parks and boulevards was born. Mary donated 300 acres of prime real estate on Squirrel Hill to the city for what was envisioned to be the most beautiful park in America, with sweeping views, wide boulevards, scenic bridle paths, picturesque ponds, and grand entrances. She also gave the city the option to purchase a little over 100 acres adjoining the tract at half price, which the city did in 1889.



# Click here to return to 2024 Newsletters

January 2024

In her article, "One Hundredth Anniversary of the birth of Mrs. Schenley," in the *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, Vol. 9, No. 4, October 1926, Mrs. S. Kussart wrote, "By deed dated October 30, 1889, [Mary Schenley] gave to Pittsburgh, for public park purposes forever, 300 acres of land, of the tract known as Mount Airy, and at the same time gave the city an option on 100 acres adjoining for \$125,000. The deed and option were accepted by the city in joint session of councils, November 15, 1889. Her sale to the city, for \$75,000, of 19 acres, now forming the park entrance, was accepted by councils on November 26, 1890."

If you look at old maps of the tract of land that became Schenley Park, it appears that Highland and Mt. Airy must have been consolidated after they were bought by O'Hara, and neither name appears on any map other than the Warrantee Map. "Mt. Airy" seems to have been the common name used for the tract.

It is interesting to trace the history of Mary Schenley's tract of land through maps, and a great place to do it is through the *Pittsburgh Historic Maps* website (to access it, google the name because the web address is long, and it doesn't work on Safari). This website has a series of maps showing changes in land ownership over time.

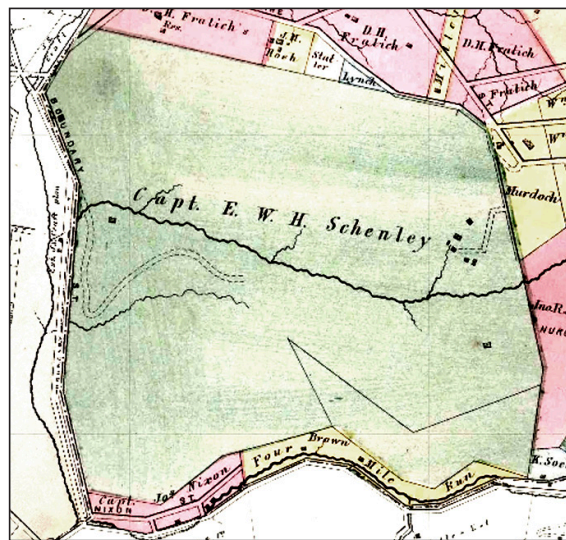
Interestingly, the first applicable map on the website, from 1862, shows the land owned by E. W. H. Schenley, Mary's husband. The next map, from 1872 (*excerpt shown on the right*), also has Capt. Schenley's name on the property. Finally, the 1882 map has Mary's name as owner, and the 1890 map says "Schenley Park." Up until then, the only details on the Schenley property on the maps show little squares representing the Neill Log House and outbuildings (*to the right of the word "Schenley"*). The 1910 map shows the trails and roads laid out through the park, completing the change from farmland to city park.

I was curious as to what acreage Mary donated and what she sold, but the information was difficult to find. The website *storymaps.arcis.com/stories* says, "Schenley Park, Pittsburgh's second largest park, was created from land donated by its namesake, Mary Schenley, on October 30, 1889. Schenley's gift included 300 acres of the Mt. Airy Tract, which is today known as Flagstaff Hill." That being said, an extensive article in the *Pittsburgh Daily Post*, "Schenley Park Will Grow," dated December 4, 1889, claims that "No particular portion was reserved by her, but Chief Bigelow designated this eastern border for his own convenience." There is no mention of Mt. Airy in the article, reinforcing the supposition that the Mt. Airy name for the tract was unofficial.

The *Daily Post* article gives a glowing picture of what was envisioned for the grand park as planning for it took place. For now, it will suffice to end this article with what the *Daily Post* reporter wrote about the Neill Log House:

*At the head of Panther hollow, up which there will be the most beautiful driveway of all, the forest almost hides a scene of rustic beauty no park in the land can equal. Here stands an old log cabin, surrounded by a little garden and a row of Lombardy poplars. It is such a place as fairy tales picture in childish minds, upon which the youthful hero is supposed to stumble after a long tramp through the forest, to find, mayhap, some withered old witch who gives him the secret to fortune. But, although there is plenty of romance about the little log cabin, there are no witches there, or anything more uncanny than lizards, owls and bats.*

*"That cabin will be preserved," said Chief Bigelow, "as one of the natural beauties of the place. No one occupies it now, and it is badly out of repair, but we will not rob it of its natural beauty by plastering up the cracks or fixing up the windows. This place will one day be the great point of interest to park visitors, I think. Its elevation is so great that it will be a cool retreat, and the spring hard by will add to its charm. The log cabin drive, as we have decided to call it, will wind up through the woods and terminate in a loop around the old cabin. I would like to know the history of that old house. It must have been built when this was a wild, unbroken forest. Mrs. Schenley can remember hearing blood-curdling stories about the Indians and panthers which used to roam up this hollow. But the place is comparatively civilized now. There are three farms on the plot."*







## SHHS MEMBERSHIP FORM

The Squirrel Hill Historical Society membership year runs from January 1 to December 31. Dues can be paid at SHHS programs, by mail to SHHS, PO Box 8157, Pittsburgh, PA 15217, or through PayPal or credit card on the SHHS website. Go to [squirrelhillhistory.org](http://squirrelhillhistory.org) and click on the link HOW TO JOIN/DONATE in the main menu.

SHHS members receive monthly newsletters. Only members receive them. If you provide your email address on this form, we will send the newsletters via email, which saves the SHHS copying and postage costs. NOTE: We email newsletters to the email addresses provided on the membership forms. If two or more members live at the same address and would each like to receive a copy of the newsletter, please include all email addresses on the membership form. If you do not provide your email and you let us know you would prefer a hard copy, we will mail the newsletters to you.

Past newsletters are archived under the password-protected MEMBERS PAGE link on the SHHS website. The password is changed each year and will be emailed to members when it is changed and new members when they join. If you are a member but have forgotten the password, email the SHHS at [sqhillhist@shhsoc.org](mailto:sqhillhist@shhsoc.org) and you will be sent the password. Put "Requesting Members Page Access" in the memo line.

-----

If paying by mail, detach this part of the form and mail it with your check to SHHS, PO Box 8157, Pittsburgh, PA 15217. Make your check payable to SHHS. Thank you for your support.

Annual Dues: \$15 individual \_\_\_\_\_ \$25 couple \_\_\_\_\_ Check No. \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address(es) Please print clearly): first email: \_\_\_\_\_

If couple, second email: \_\_\_\_\_

Check one: Renewal \_\_\_\_\_ New Member \_\_\_\_\_

Additional donation \_\_\_\_\_ Total enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

For more information or questions, contact us at our website, [squirrelhillhistory.org](http://squirrelhillhistory.org), or email us at [sqhillhist@shhsoc.org](mailto:sqhillhist@shhsoc.org).

*The SHHS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. All donations, including dues, are tax deductible for federal income taxes.*