

Click here to return to Neill Log House Update June 2025 June Update on the Friends of Neill Log House (FONLH): Reporting on the First Month's Opening of the Neill Log House

Tony Indovina, FONLH President and SHHS Board Member



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

Adopted February 2022

"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, 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.



As of this writing, FONLH has concluded its first month of collaboration with Pittsburgh City Parks for opening the Neill Log House to the public during our inaugural 2025 season, marking the start of our active programming phase. Our Pittsburgh Park Rangers have admirably taken charge of publishing and managing the schedule and accommodating all who want to visit. Remember, you can always find the current schedule by googling "PittsburghPa.Gov Neill Log House" and clicking on "Neill Log House Events." Or you can go to our SHHS Homepage and click on Neill Log House from the Main Menu. The first thing you'll see is "Click on this City Parks Neill Log House Link," and you're there.

Our collaboration with the Pittsburgh Park Rangers has been nothing short of a joy. We are continually in communication with the rangers, from the first meeting earlier this month between our teams to the day-to-day and month-to-month plans that have evolved. This involves everything from scheduling on the website, setting up and closing down for openings, and adding new ideas to adjust to the public's demands. The challenge, from a former teacher friend's playbook, has been to "monitor and adjust." This is evident from the schedules you'll see posted on the City's Neill Log House site. At the time of this writing, both the May and June schedules appear on the site, and if you view them, you'll note differences that have been made. An earlier vision we had was to set up early to later times two to three days a week. We learned that while Sunday afternoons are very popular for walk-in visits, early Mondays are not.

It's been fun to drop in when the house is open and see the public's very positive response to everything presented, from the history of the land and its people, to how FONLH was formed and evolved, to plans that lie ahead. Besides amassing names in our guestbook, we are engaging in random conversations that include questions about whether the log house will be open for special events and offers from some local women to volunteer for the "Period Garden" that is planned.

The answer to the question about "events" was that, of course, we are ready to iron out the procedure for doing so and allow approved groups to use the house as a base for a catered event, with tables, chairs and possibly a picnic tent on our beautiful stone patio below the house. Besides the scheduled public visitation times, we continue to be willing to schedule private

visits by large or small groups. Recently, we hosted our first out-of-state travelers to Pittsburgh for a private visitation. The visit was by two more "cousins" of Robert Neill and his Neal brothers—two sisters who traveled from Columbus and Cedar Rapids as a followup to their family genealogy search. As a side benefit, they have been now connected to our "Descendent of Robert Neill" FONLH board member, Charlie Stewart, to be added to his list of cousins.

In addition to offering open hours and private visitations, the City Parks Department and FONLH will continue to add special events to the list of regular uses of the log house during the season. The first of these events was "Art in Schenley Park, Neill Log House," advertised by the Park Rangers to be held on May 31 by registration only. And a Neill Log House special event for SHHS Members is being planned for Sunday, June 22. See the announcement on the next page.



SHHS board member Todd Miller and his family and SHHS member Drew Porvaznik were among the visitors to the Neill Log House on Opening Day. *Photo by Helen Wilson.*