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Newsletter

December 2025

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 monthly programs on topics of interest primarily focused on Squirrel Hill and Pittsburgh history. The December program will take place at 7:30 p.m. at Church of the Redeemer, 5700 Forbes Ave. A Zoom option is also available. The programs will move to the JCC in January.

How to contact the SHHS:

P.O. Box 8157
Pittsburgh, PA 15217

Website:
squirrelhillhistory.org

Email:
sqhillhist@shhsoc.org

Most of our programs are recorded. If you would like to view past programs, go to 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. SHHS derives no financial benefit from any business included in our publications or programs.



The Squirrel Hill Historical Society (SHHS) 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, or write to SHHS, PO Box 8157, Pittsburgh, PA 15217.

It's Time to Renew Your SHHS Membership!

Our 2026 Membership Drive is underway! SHHS memberships run from January 1 to December 31. You can renew online through the SHHS website, by mail, and at our programs. Membership is still only \$15/single or \$25/couple. Details and a renewal form are on the last page of this newsletter. Names of those paid for 2026 are listed on the Members Page of the SHHS website.

President's Message

Dear SHHS Members:

SEASONS GREETING TO ALL! **Hanukkah**, the eight-day Jewish Festival of Lights, begins on the evening of Sunday, December 14. **Christmas** is on Thursday, December 25, and celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ. **Kwanzaa**, the seven-day celebration of African-American culture, begins on Friday, December 26. **New Year's Eve** is on Wednesday, December 31. HAPPY NEW YEAR! We hope all are able to celebrate and cherish the holidays with family and friends.

The SHHS's 25th Anniversary year seems to have flown by. We were busy presenting eleven monthly programs and undertaking many projects preserving the history of Squirrel Hill. We want to thank everyone who worked on the programs and projects.

In January 2026, SHHS programs will be moved from the Church of the Redeemer to the **Jewish Community Center (JCC)** near the corner of Forbes and Murray. We will have more seating in Levinson Hall B, and it's outfitted with A/V capabilities, including Zoom integration, projector, Bluetooth sound, microphone, and lighting adjustments. The JCC staff will set up and take down the tables, chairs and podium for our programs, a feature we all like! Both members and nonmembers will be waved through JCC security by telling them you are attending the SHHS program in Levinson B room. Admittance will not be a problem for anyone attending a SHHS program.

The 2026 "Squirrel Hill—Then and Now" calendar was created by SHHS members and printed by Trust-Franklin Press, a printing company located in the South Side. By purchasing a calendar, you are shopping local two ways—supporting an area business and the SHHS. Our calendars make great holiday gifts! They are priced at \$25 and can be purchased at SHHS programs, Games Unlimited on Forbes Ave., and online at squirrelhillhistory.org.



The SHHS 2026 membership drive is in full force. You can renew or join online at squirrelhillhistory.org or at the monthly programs. Our dues have not changed for many years—they are still only \$15 single/\$25 couple for the entire year. As they say—What

SHHS Officers and Board

The SHHS is an all-volunteer organization. Board Members are Toby Chapman, Audrey Glickman, James Hammond, Tony Indovina, Stanley Klein, Todd Miller, Alex Musicante, Rod Permigiani, Charles Succop, Helen Wilson, Todd Wilson, and 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: Rod Permigiani Media Specialists: Audrey Glickman, Alex Musicante Website Manager: Janine Michael Principal Researchers: Helen Wilson and Tony Indovina All SHHS members are welcome to contribute articles, suggest programs, and participate in our activities.

a bargain! Please join or renew as soon as possible. Since it's sometimes hard to remember if you've renewed, we put a list of the names of those who paid through '26 on the Members Page of our website. For security, the page is password-protected and only members' names are shown.

A great asset of SHHS is the squirrelhillhistory.org website, with information about upcoming programs and ongoing projects, links for historical research, and over 200 videos of our past programs. The SHHS website is made to be shared with everyone, except for the SHHS Members Page. Besides the list of renewed members, the Members Page has the archive of all our past newsletters, a great resource for research.

Again, we want to thank all our current members and hope to have many new members join the SHHS family to experience the fellowship, history, and programs available to members of our society. SHHS can't continue our service mission without our members' support.

Jim Hammond President, SHHS.

Information about Our Move to the JCC in January

As we announced in last month's newsletter, starting in January 2026, SHHS programs will be moved to Levinson Hall at the JCC. Program time will remain the same at 7:30. The SHHS board decided to make the change because it felt we were outgrowing the space at Church of the Redeemer. Since the JCC will set up and take down the chairs, and the room has built-in audiovisual equipment, attending the program will be an easier experience for all. While Church of the Redeemer has been a tremendous partner for us for many years, (and we certainly appreciate that partnership), Levinson Hall can better accommodate our growing audience.

You do not need to be a member of the JCC—or of the SHHS—to attend our programs at the JCC. The venue is open to all. To gain access (member or not), enter the facility from either the entrance on Darlington Rd. or via the parking garage entrance on Forbes Ave.

If **entering from Darlington Road**, after you pass through the first set of doors, ring the bell/buzzer, and security will buzz you in. Let them know who you are and that you are there to attend the SHHS program in Levinson Hall. After satisfying any security requirements or concerns, they will direct you to Levinson Hall.

If **entering from Forbes Avenue**, you can enter only through the parking garage. After you pass through the first set of doors, ring the bell/buzzer, and security will buzz you in. Let them know who you are and that you are there to attend the SHHS program. After satisfying any security requirements or concerns, they will direct you to make a left and either take the stairs up one level or take the elevator to the second floor, which is the main floor of the JCC. At the top of the stairs or outside the elevator on "2," you will make a left, and the entrance to Levinson Hall will be down the main corridor 75 feet on your left.

As for parking, the JCC has a parking garage below it. The entrance is on Forbes Avenue side. The lot is run by the City of Pittsburgh Parking Authority, so you'll need to pay \$1.50 per hour for parking there. However, and likely more convenient for most, on-street parking is always free on Darlington Road, and free on Forbes and Murray Avenues after 6 p.m.

We will continue to offer the Zoom option to those who can't attend in person. Viewing and sound quality should be better because of the JCC's equipment. This move gives us the exciting opportunity to be located right in the heart of Squirrel Hill and hopefully will allow us to further expand our beloved SHHS through greater visibility to the public!



We continue to bring you this public service announcement for the safety of everyone who walks, rides, and drives around Squirrel Hill!



Remember: Signaling your approach is the law:

Pennsylvania Statutes, Section 3508 –

"A person riding a pedalcycle (bicycle) upon a sidewalk or pedalcycle path used by pedestrians shall yield the right-of-way to any pedestrian and shall give an audible signal before overtaking and passing a pedestrian."

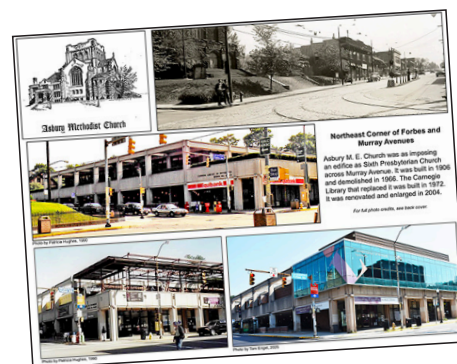
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Don't Know What to Get the Squirrel Hiller Who Has Everything?

How About Our 2026 Calendar: "Squirrel Hill—Then and Now"

The 2026 "Squirrel Hill—Then and Now" calendars will be on sale at the December SHHS program for \$25, including tax. They are also being sold at some Farmers Markets on Sunday mornings in December and Games Unlimited on Forbes Ave. In addition, the calendars can be ordered online on our website, squirrelhillhistory.org on the link "SHHS Books and 2026 Calendar." If you don't use email, you can send a check made out to SHHS for \$28 (\$25 + \$3 postage) for each calendar with a note giving the name and address for where to send the order. Please write clearly and include your email address or phone number in case we have questions about your order.

The calendar is filled with pictures of different stages of Squirrel Hill's history—a fun journey from the neighborhood's past to its present. It is a great gift for anyone who loves Squirrel Hill as much as we do. And get one for yourself, too!



Editor's Note: "But Wait—There's More!"

Helen Wilson

When I was collecting photos for the 2026 "Squirrel Hill—Then and Now" calendar that Audrey Glickman and I put together, I could actually see the passage of time in the neighborhood. But that's not the end of the story. After the calendar was finished, more remnants of the past going into the future have surfaced, some related to the pictures in the calendar, some to topics we've researched and wrote about in past newsletters, and some to our programs.

A case in point for both the calendar and newsletters is the Nike missile pictured in our 2026 calendar. It was part of an anti-aircraft battery located in the field beyond where the Blue Slide Playground is now in Frick Park to protect the Homestead steel mills in the 1950s. The battery was moved to Forest Hills to protect the Westinghouse factories as well. After the batteries were decommissioned, the missile was donated to Churchill Cemetery by the Army and placed in the military burial section there. Recently a SHHS member sent me an article from Homestead's newspaper, *The Valley Mirror*, dated November 13, 1925, that said four volunteers from the Wilkins Elks recently undertook the repair of the deteriorating missile and held a re-dedication ceremony in the cemetery on November 1. It was great to discover this great new part of the story!



Photo by Helen Wilson

Another case in point relates to Mark Fatla's SHHS November talk about Pittsburgh's historic stadiums and arenas. When he talked about **Duquesne Gardens**, I remembered seeing the **Ice Capades** there when I was little. Serendipitously, the Heinz History Center's Holiday issue has a short article that said, "One of sport's greatest spectacles, the Ice Capades, got its start at an unassuming ice rink in Pittsburgh's Oakland neighborhood." During the Great Depression, entrepreneur John H. Harris leased the Gardens and hired Olympic skater Sonja Henie to perform between hockey periods. The rest is history!

Click here to return to 2025 Newsletters **Upcoming SHHS Programs and Events (Live and on Zoom)**

December 2025

UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, all programs are presented both live and on Zoom on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. unless inclement weather causes a program to be aired on Zoom only. In that case, a notice will be sent to members and those on our extended mailing list the day of the program. Our November and December programs will be held live at Church of the Redeemer, 5700 Forbes Avenue,. Free parking is available in the Church of the Redeemer and St. Edmund's Academy parking lots. Members will be sent a link to the Zoom program a few days before the program. Programs are recorded and put on YouTube and can be accessed a few days after the program through the "SHHS Past Programs and Events" link on our website.

IMPORTANT NOTE: *As of January 2026, we are moving our monthly programs to Levinson Hall at the Jewish Community Center (JCC). Our first program there will be about the history of the JCC at its multiple locations through the years. The larger space at the JCC will better accommodate our growing membership and give us greater ability to attract a wider swath of the community. Although the Church's parking lot will no longer be available to us, plenty of free on-street parking can be found on Forbes and Murray Avenues and on Darlington Road. We look forward to continuing our tradition of exploring local history in a modern space designed for community gatherings.*

Tuesday, December 9: "The ABCs of Pittsburgh Aviation"

Western Pennsylvania History magazine editor **Brian Butko** and public historian **Sue Morris** will discuss the thrilling early days of flying in their new book, ***Bettis: Where Pittsburgh Aviation Took Off***. Beginning in the 1920s, the daredevil women and men of West Mifflin's Bettis Field helped shape the industry from barnstorming to passenger service in less than a decade. A book sale and signing will follow. *(This program will be at Church of the Redeemer.)*

Tuesday, January 13: "A History of the JCC"

To launch our programs in our new meeting location, we'll welcome **Jason Kunzman**, President & CEO of the Jewish Community Center (JCC) of Greater Pittsburgh; **Melissa Hiller**, the JCC's Community Engagement and Development Officer; and **Eric Lidji**, Director of the Rauh Jewish Archives at the Senator John Heinz History Center. Together, they'll trace the JCC's history from its beginnings in the Hill District and its years in Oakland to its establishment as a cornerstone of the Squirrel Hill community today.

Tuesday, February 10: "From Roots to Results: The Story and Ongoing Work of SHUC"

Maria Cohen, Executive Director of the Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition (SHUC), will discuss the organization's founding, mission, and lasting impact on neighborhood life. Her talk will highlight community partnerships, planning successes, and SHUC's continuing efforts to enhance Squirrel Hill's vitality

Tuesday, March 10: "One Wild Place: The Pittsburgh Zoo & Aquarium Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow"

Dr. Jeremy Goodman, President & CEO of the Pittsburgh Zoo & Aquarium, will trace the zoo's fascinating history, its growth and transformation over time, and the initiatives now guiding its future.

Tuesday, April 14: Mary Murrin, Executive Director, Rivers of Steel, will talk about the history of Carrie Furnaces and the purpose of the Rivers of Steel organization.

May 12: *To be announced.*

Tuesday, June 9: Helen Wilson, SHHS Vice President, will talk about Pittsburgh and Squirrel Hill's extravagant Fourth of July celebrations of the past.

Other December Events of Interest to our Members

Saturdays, December 7, 14, 21, from 10 a.m.–1 p.m.: Squirrel Hill Winter Market

The Farmers Market returns in December with the addition of craft vendors. Come to the market at the Beacon/Bartlett Parking Lot for your holiday shopping!

Saturday, December 13, 4-7 p.m.: Holiday Wine Walk

Uncover Squirrel Hill's self-paced wine tasting experience will take place in the heart of the Squirrel Hill Business District, along Forbes and Murray Avenues. Participants will enjoy tastings of approximately 15 different wines and access exclusive discounts at participating local merchants. Tickets are needed for this event. For more details and to purchase tickets, visit Uncover Squirrel's website, uncoversquirrelhill.com.

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December Update on the Friends of Neill Log House (FONLH): Neill Log House Harvest Festival Recap

December 2025

Ranger Emily Ehrenberger, Pittsburgh City Parks

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.



Park Ranger Emily Ehrenberger
(Photo by Mardi Isler)

The **Neill Log House Harvest Festival** planned by the Pittsburgh Park Rangers and Friends of Neill Log House took place on Sunday, November 9th. The event celebrating the one-year anniversary of the log house's restoration featured docent tours, park ranger activities, historical re-enactors and more. Despite the rainy weather, over 120 members of the community came and learned about the log house's history with tours led by FONLH docents. Re-enactors helped create a period-accurate atmosphere with historical attire and musical instruments.

Guests enjoyed an array of period-accurate food, including Wild River Kettle Korn, soft pretzels from the Philly Pretzel Factory, assorted pies from the Pittsburgh Pie Guy, apples fresh from Frank's stand at the Squirrel Hill Farmers Market, and beer donated by Independent Brewery. The festival even featured a homemade cider press from City Forester Michael Kelley. Guests assisted in the cider-making process, from cutting the apples to grinding them up, and then got to enjoy a cup of freshly pressed cider as a reward for their hard work.



Re-enactor and musician Alex Brown
from Oliver Miller Homestead, (Photo by
Mardi Isler)

The Pittsburgh Park Rangers provided a variety of activities, including pinecone-birdfeeder-making, a lesson on native animals complete with taxidermy and animal fur, cornhole games, and a campfire with marshmallow roasting. The ranger organization efforts were led by me— Emily Ehrenberger, the designated Neill Log House ranger—and Jonathan Furman, the program supervisor.

The Neill Log House Harvest Festival, concluding the first open season of the Neill Log House since the latest restoration, would not have been possible without the generous donations of Charlie Stewart and Tod Hunt. Regular weekly public visitation will start again in the spring, but private tours may still be scheduled through the CitiParks and Squirrel Hill Historical Society websites.

Below left: Rainy weather didn't deter festival visitors. *Below right:* Re-enactor Mark Pearson of the 8th PA Regiment of the Continental Line (left) and Mike Khulman from Oliver Miller Homestead (right) at the festival.



Photos by Tom Engel



The next regularly scheduled quarterly meeting of FONLH will take place, in-person or by Zoom, at 11:00 a.m. on Tuesday morning, December 9, at the Arnold Palmer Learning Center of First Tee, at the Bob O'Connor Golf Course in Schenley Park. The agenda promises to be lively, with discussion on some current needs of the Neill Log House and a historic resolution to be presented about the future of FONLH. This will all be reported on in our January Update.

Preview of January's FONLH Update, "The Living History of the Neal Family in Indiana County"

January's SHHS Newsletter will have an article featuring the Neal Family Farm in Homer City, in nearby Indiana County. The article was inspired by a visit made by Tony Indovina and Helen Wilson to pick up cornstalks donated for the recent Neill Log House Harvest Festival. We had an altogether enjoyable fall trip, especially for Helen, who reported that she had never actually been on a working farm. We watched the family operate machinery to harvest cornstalks for winter feed, and Helen, who has two cats, liked being surrounded by all nine of the family's farm cats.

The January article will be a blend of old and new stories of the living history that surrounds the last remaining Neal family farm, located on over 200 scenic acres, operated since 1931 on a historic farm dating to 1738. These Neals are among the many family members who settled in Indiana County on what was once over 3,000 acres of farmland first acquired by their founder, William Neal, brother of Robert Neill. Brian Neal, his wife Stacey, and their children operate the current farm to grow grain and raise beef cattle, which are sold as local farm-to-table freezer beef. They are joined in this endeavor by Brian's father Brad, who owned and operated a dairy farm there before them. As a background to the modern history, the January article will feature a much expanded and updated history on the Neal/Neill family provided for us by Brian's brother Stephen Neal, an academic and working professional who grew up on this farm. Stephen has provided FONLH with much research over the past year that has allowed us to significantly update the historic narrative for the Neill Log House on our website. As an offshoot of this article, we intend to create a new Appendix for our History that will include genealogical information from him and other family members.

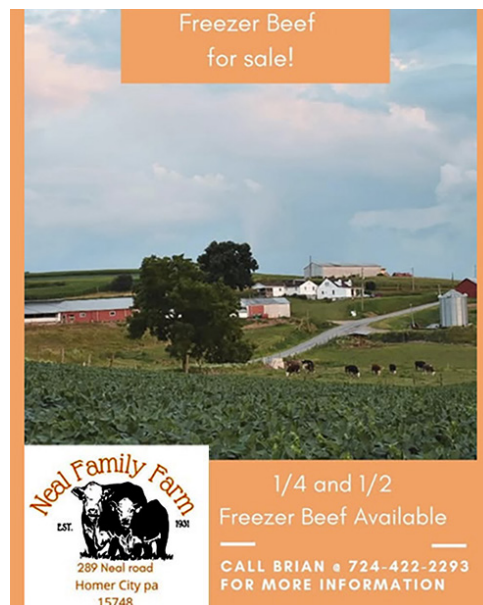
Note: As part of the "living history" of the article, I decided to include some information such as the accompanying photo and sales information maintained on Facebook by the family for their business. This is with my belief that it is important to support family farmers like the Neals, especially as their ranks diminish through competition from much larger businesses. They also survive under constant pressure to sell their land for modern development.

One last personal opinion: small family farms have been the lifeblood of our nation and, historically, much of the world. If you enjoyed your Thanksgiving dinner, thank farmers like the Neals.

Note: SHHS derives no financial benefit from any business included in our publications or programs.



Larry Williams. (Photo by Mardi Isler)



The Neal Family Farm is a family owned and operated farm in Western Pennsylvania since 1931. The family raises high quality freezer beef on grass and hay and finished on soybeans, corn silage, and high moisture corn—all grown on the family farm.

Meeting the Neill Family

Helen Wilson

One of the great things that has been happening throughout the restoration of the Neill Log House is that descendants of Robert Neill have been contacting us and visiting the house. At the Harvest Festival, Neal descendant Larry Williams and his wife Debbie came to the house for the first time from their home in the state of Indiana, bringing with them information and stories and copies of portraits of two of his ancestors.

Larry told us a family story that Elizabeth Neill (1780-1852), daughter of Robert Neill, and Thomas Carroll McCullough (1776-1811) married in Pittsburgh in 1801 and traveled by flatboat to Cincinnati, along with Samuel McCullough and Samuel's wife, Sarah Robb McCullough. Stories are told of the couples anchoring the flatboats in the middle of the river during the journey to avoid Indian attacks. The couples settled in Oxford, Ohio. After Elizabeth's husband and Thomas's wife died, Elizabeth and Samuel wed in 1818. They

had several children together. Two of their children were Larry's 3rd great-grandfather, Neel Carroll McCullough, who was born on Christmas Day in 1820, and his brother, Thomas Neel McCullough, who was born on June 12, 1818. Samuel died in 1823. Elizabeth passed away in 1852.

Both Neel C. (*portrait on the left in the picture*) and Thomas N. (*right*) started banks in the mid 1800s. Neel C. started the Citizens Bank in Anderson, Indiana. Thomas N. started the Citizens Bank in Oxford, Ohio. Neel C. died in 1888. Thomas N. died in 1901. Thomas N.'s obituary appears on the front page alongside the obituary of McCullough family friend President Benjamin Harrison in the local Butler County Ohio newspaper. Thomas N.'s obituary tells a story about his mother, Elizabeth Neill, riding on horseback from Oxford to Pittsburgh to visit her family. Perhaps one of young Elizabeth's visits back to Pittsburgh was due to the death of her father, Robert Neill in 1804.

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Meriwether Lewis and the Neill Log House

Helen Wilson

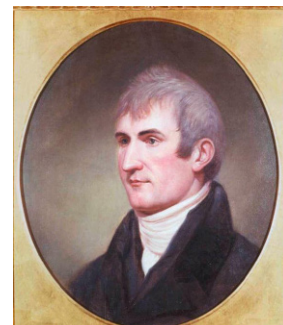
Only a few sentences in the "Neill Log House History" on the SHHS website make mention of Meriwether Lewis: "Current interest in restoring the Neill Log House began when the SHHS was presented with research from the National Park Service suggesting Meriwether Lewis, of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, may have stopped to water his horses at Snyder Spring near the log house on his way to Pittsburgh to begin his westward exploration. The spring is now culverted and covered by the Catahecassa Fountain."

Even though there are only a few references to Meriwether Lewis in the Neill Log House History, he was, of course, a significant national historical figure, traveling all the way to the West Coast and back again in the Lewis and Clark Expedition of 1803-1806. You might be wondering why he is associated with the Neill Log House. It turns out that in August 2020, the SHHS was contacted by a National Park Service (NPS) contractor working on a project to connect historical sites connected with the Lewis and Clark expedition to communities along the route to highlight their historic sites and amenities. (See lewisandclark.travel.) The contractor provided FONLH with National Park Service research about Lewis's stop at the spring near the Neill Log House. The spring's proximity to the house suggests it was where Lewis stopped.

It is probable that Lewis was already familiar with this area. He enlisted in a Virginia militia in 1794, whose commanding officer was William Clark, and they became friends. In 1794, the militia was sent to Western Pennsylvania to put down the Whiskey Rebellion. Lewis later joined the Army and for two years was stationed at Fort Fayette, the successor to decaying Fort Pitt (decommissioned in 1797). Fort Fayette was located near the intersection of what is now Penn Avenue and Ninth St. downtown. Lewis was promoted to Captain in 1800, and shortly afterward, newly elected President Thomas Jefferson selected him to be his personal secretary. After the Louisiana Purchase, Jefferson chose him to lead the Corps of Discovery, with the aim of collecting information about the huge territory the United States had acquired from France. Lewis asked Clark to join him as co-leader. Jefferson sent Lewis to Philadelphia to receive scientific instruction from members of the American Philosophical Society and to purchase supplies for the journey. Lewis then made his way to Pittsburgh, possibly following an extension of Nemacolin's Trail, later Braddock's Road, which is believed to have run near the Neill Log House, but no hard evidence exists for this claim.

The Lewis and Clark Expedition is well-known and well-documented, so it won't be addressed here. This article is about Lewis's possible visit to the Neill Log House. He would not have been greeted by Robert Neill, who had sold the house and property to John Reed and moved to Downtown Pittsburgh in 1795 and died there in 1804. Reed sold the property to Brintnal Robins, but the dates of the sales are not known, and it's possible Reed and Robins rented the property to tenant farmers, so it can't be determined who, if anyone, Lewis met when he passed by.

A little more about Meriwether Lewis: After the Corps returned from its expedition, Jefferson appointed Lewis governor of the Louisiana Territory in 1806. When he took on that post nearly two years later, he faced immediate challenges on many sides, including personality conflicts, political differences, and questions about the appropriation of government funds. In 1809, Lewis decided to go to Washington, D.C., to settle the financial questions plaguing him. Throughout his life, he had fought bouts of depression, financial problems, and alcohol abuse, and the pressures he was experiencing affected his mental health. He also suffered from malaria. In late 1809, Lewis died at the age of 36 in his lodgings in Tennessee. The common belief is that he committed suicide, but people who have studied his life believe he could have died from complications of malaria or even that he was murdered.



Meriwether Lewis, by Charles Willson Peale, 1807

Tony Indovina

Our "Squirrel Hill Street Names Project" and "House History Project" are both ongoing, with new entries continually being added to our database. The latest is my entry on the Quinn family, who lived on Quinn Drive, a small street that runs parallel to Beechwood Boulevard off Guy Street below the 3000 block of Beechwood. The story of Quinn Drive is the story of Dan and Jane O'Neill Quinn, and because their story is not only about Quinn Drive but also the Quinns' house, the information has also been put on the "House History" page of the SHHS's website, squirrelhillhistory.org.

NOTE: The Squirrel Hill Street Names Project is a very rewarding but time-consuming task for the dedicated team of volunteers working with our vice president, Helen Wilson. The Project database has not been put on the SHHS website yet, but we continue to collect information about the neighborhood's 200-plus roads and bridges. If anyone has information they'd like to contribute, please contact us at sqhillhist@shhsoc.org. More help is always welcome to realize the end product of our research—a book to be published within the foreseeable future.

Quinn Drive Database Entry for the Squirrel Hill Street Names Project (in the Street Names Project's format)



Photo by Helen Wilson

Named for: The Quinn family, who lived in the house abutting the western terminus of Quinn Drive before it was dedicated.

Description: Quinn Drive originated as an unnamed street from the western boundary of a very early 20th century development off Guy Street below Beechwood Boulevard to the eastern boundary of said development. The earliest map shows that the present alignment of Quinn Way described below was to be connected to the southern boundary of this planned development by both Guy Street and from an unnamed extension off it ending on a westerly extension of Kemper Street above Nine Mile Run Valley. Neither extension exists today, but it is believed the old unnamed street that became Quinn Drive was to have been an integral part of this total development below Beechwood Boulevard. (The entry about Quinn Drive will be referenced in the entry on Guy Street in the *Squirrel Hill Streets* book as part of a "... planned development that was never completed.")

Location: Extends on a straight line west and east of Guy St. below Beechwood Boulevard and above Kemper Street.

Map Coordinates: 40.420577528445136, -79.92111152080585

Length: 366.43 ft.

Year Dedicated: First named Quinn Way by a City Ordinance dated April 1959 from the unnamed street appearing on the earliest maps, when the area below Guy St. was first developed. In September 1959, the same street was renamed Quinn Drive. The story of Quinn Drive is the story of Dan and Jane O'Neill Quinn, who lived in the old family house Jane grew up in, and when Quinn Way that later became Quinn Drive was first named. Information about the Quinns' house is posted on the **House History Page** link on our SHHS website, squirrelhillhistory.org.

From Street Description to House History

As stated in the technical description of our Squirrel Hill Street Names project, the approximately 366 ft. long Quinn Drive, running parallel to Beechwood Blvd. below Guy St. in Squirrel Hill South, was named for the Quinn family, who lived in the house abutting its western terminus even before the street was dedicated. The information included in our project description further states that it was originally an unnamed roadway in an area that was planned for development in the early 20th century. However, that development was never completed as envisioned because of slag dumping by the Duquesne Slag Company that began several decades later in Nine Mile Run valley just below this neighborhood. The earliest maps show Quinn Drive extending from an angular portion in the western part of this development, across Guy Street, to its terminus in the east, just above Kemper Street.

House History Story – The Quinn Family of Quinn Drive

Author's Note: The full narrative below, of how this road was named and the family that lived there, was an outcome of the SHHS project on naming streets in Squirrel Hill and a rich enough story in itself to deserve adding it to our "House History Page." It was a very personally rewarding effort for me—a close friend of the Quinn family through decades of living in the neighborhood of Squirrel Hill South along the winding bends of Beechwood Boulevard before entering Greenfield.

The story of Quinn Drive is the story of Dan and Jane O'Neill Quinn who lived in the old house Jane grew up in. Jane was born on Howe St. in Shadyside in 1926, and the following year her parents bought a house and property off Guy and Kemper Streets. An old frame house appears on a 1939 Hopkins plat map with the name "C. J. O'Neill," Jane's father, and is believed to be one of the oldest structures in this area off Beechwood Blvd. below Guy St. This house appears on maps as early as 1910 under unnamed ownership and its exact age is not known. Dan and Jane married in 1951 and a few years later bought her family's house and property. They would eventually raise three daughters here and run their family business out of their home.

It is not certain whether the Quinns approached the city or someone from the city approached them about dedicating the unnamed street next to their house in 1959. But after use of the family name was agreed to, it is likely there was further discussion about changing the name from Quinn Way to Quinn Drive to fully satisfy Dan and Jane.

Jane was known to be very vocal in her community. She was a neighborhood spokesperson in 1955 when broken sewer lines plagued area residents around her home off Beechwood, and she persisted in having the city resolve the issue.* During 1972-73, the Quinns began major renovation to the old house that originally belonged to Jane's parents, expanding it and modernizing it, so that today one cannot recognize the now brick-clad structure as being one of the oldest structures in this old neighborhood below Beechwood Boulevard. Several years prior, Dan fell off the roof of the house while working on it and spent several months in traction. When renovation actually began, he and Jane enlisted help from two of her brothers who grew up in the old house to work with them, while hiring contractors to do brick and asphalt work. The basement served as an office for Dan and Jane's family business in supplying industrial conveyer belts. The address of the house and business retained the old address of Kemper Street from before Quinn Drive was dedicated. The lot was zoned commercial because Jane's father ran a nursery business there in the 1940s.

Prior to the house's renovation, the only access was off Quinn Drive above Kemper Street. Another access was created with a private drive that drops steeply off Beechwood Boulevard about thirty feet in elevation to the house below it. This extension of the property appears as a small lot on Beechwood Boulevard with C.J. O'Neill's name on the 1939 map. The lot remained vacant until then because it was too small to develop. As part of the renovation in 1973, Dan and Jane had the lot graded and paved so there could be a separate entrance to the house. Even though the house and property has always been connected to Beechwood Blvd. by this small parcel, the house now has the same numbered address on Quinn Drive as the old commercial Kemper St. address. At its scenic and wooded location at the head of a large ravine facing Nine Mile Run Valley, the rejuvenated family house is now owed by a new family, but has always been part of the old community below Guy Street.

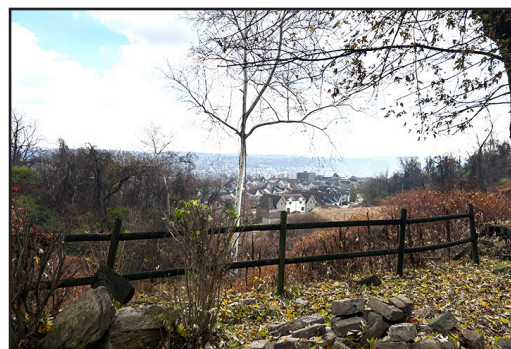


Photo by Tony Indovina

**For more information about the sewer line break, see the December 2021 SHHS Newsletter, "The Sewer System Above Nine Mile Run—Living, Breeding History," by Tony Indovina. SHHS Newsletters are on the password-protected "Members Page" link on the SHHS website.*

December's "List of 25 ..." Ways the SHHS Will Make History in 2026

Helen Wilson

The SHHS is looking forward to making history in 2026! As we begin the new year, we'll be starting new projects and continuing our ongoing projects. Here is our final list of "25 Things for 2025"—What we plan to do as we head into the future of our organization. There are many ways SHHS members can participate. Contact us at sqhillhist@shhsoc.org to volunteer.

1. First and foremost, the SHHS will be continuing to **research and report on Squirrel Hill's unique and interesting history**. We're continually finding topics to delve into about Squirrel Hill, sparked by a question someone asked, an article in a media source, an event of some sort, or a picture given to us. This is one of the most fun parts of being involved in the SHHS—discovering a new area of research from a small germ of an idea. So if you have a question or information about anything about Squirrel Hill, contact us at sqhillhist@shhsoc.org.
2. Our big news is that in January, our **regular Tuesday evening programs will move to the Jewish Community Center**. We'll meet in Levinson Hall on the main floor, which offers built-in audiovisual equipment that will provide a better viewing experience for our audience. In addition, the staff at the JCC will set up the chairs and take them down. Program time will remain at 7:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month.



3. Our program schedulers, Todd Miller and Toby Chapman, are booking great programs for 2026. To see what is on the schedule, see the list in this newsletter or go to the SHHS website and click on the link "**Upcoming Events.**"
4. The SHHS recently hired a person to scan photos and documents to add to our collection on the **Historic Pittsburgh website, historicpittsburgh.org**. Previously, we put 60 of our photos on the website, many taken by SHHS member Patricia Hughes in 1990. We have a lot more to add, and it's now in progress. And if you have some, let us scan them!
5. In 2025, the SHHS, working with Preservation Pittsburgh and the Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition, were successful in getting **City Designated Historic Site status for Schenley Park**. Since then, several new projects have been proposed for the park, and a new parcel was added to it in Junction Hollow. We will continue to monitor the course of the projects.
6. The landslide that closed **Serpentine Drive** is finally being repaired. The SHHS, SHUC, Greenfield Community Association, and other organizations feel strongly that the historic drive should be reopened to vehicular traffic because the detours are extremely dangerous, taking cars into tight residential streets with no sidewalks to get to the Neill Log House, golf course, and Oakland.
7. We are continuing to plan **walking tours** on Saturdays to historic places in our neighborhood.
8. We keep the interactive **Squirrel Hill Driving Tour** updated on our website by adding new information and sites.
9. We will continue our involvement with the **Neill Log House** when it reopens to the public in the spring. Meanwhile, we are monitoring the physical condition of the house and remediating problems that arise.
10. Along with maintaining the **Neill Log House**, we'll continue to research its history, interacting with Neal/Neill descendants and learning more about the house's historical background.
11. We are continually revising and updating the **SHHS website, squirrelhillhistory.org**, to keep it current and correct.
12. Our **Squirrel Hill Street Names Project** is continuing. The Street Names committee has already discovered interesting facts about the origins of the names of many of Squirrel Hill's over 200 roads and bridges and continues to discover more information about them, to be compiled in a future book.
13. In July, we'll be commemorating the **250th birthday of the United States**. In June, Helen Wilson will give a presentation about elaborate past Fourth of July celebrations in Squirrel Hill.
14. We've applied for a **CMU intern** to annotate and republish the book ***Right Here in Squirrel Hill*** by Hodge MacIlvain Eagleson. The book, published in 1957, relates stories about the earliest settlers in Squirrel Hill and Greenfield. It has long been out of print but should not be forgotten. Some of the people named in the book are buried in Turner Cemetery at 3424 Beechwood Boulevard, which will be part of the intern's research.
15. We will continue to provide our members with monthly **SHHS Newsletters** of at least eight pages.
16. The **display board at the Squirrel Hill Branch of Carnegie Library** will continue to feature different topics about Squirrel Hill's history. It is changed every few months.
17. Our **House History Project** continues, with historic houses being added as we research them. You can read about the ones we have already researched on the "House History Project" link on the SHHS's website.
18. We're also researching the origin and histories of **commercial, religious, and educational buildings** in Squirrel Hill.
19. We're still finding large and unusual trees in Squirrel Hill for our **Champion Trees Project**. Pawpaws were planted at the Neill Log House, a magnificent red oak tree stands on E. Circuit Road near Tank Avenue, and we recently discovered small invasive princess trees growing near the Bartlett St. Playground and the Post Office parklet.
20. We will continue to work with the **Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition (SHUC)** and other local organizations on topics that concern our neighborhoods.
21. The SHHS belongs to the Heinz History Center's **HCAP (History Center Affiliates Program)**, which shares news and ideas about historical happenings in Western Pennsylvania. We pass applicable information on to our members.
22. We're following the progress of the new **Commercial St. Bridge** project and the environmental and traffic impacts it has on Nine Mile Run valley, as well as the progress of repairs on the **Anderson and Panther Hollow Bridges**.
23. We continue to look for people who want to **participate in the running of the SHHS**. Let us know if you are interested in being on the SHHS board, want to contribute an article to the newsletter, or help with research on our projects.
24. We're thinking about other places in Squirrel Hill worthy of **historic designations**. For example, Nine Mile Run valley has a long and varied history, including salt production, a mineral water bottling plant, mining, and gas drilling.
25. We like how the **2026 calendar** turned out, so we'll likely create another one for 2027. Happy New Year!



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 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 the new password will be emailed to members in late February and to new members when they join. If you are a member but have forgotten the password, email the SHHS at 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, or email us at sqhillhist@shhsoc.org.

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