

Squirrel Hill Historical Society

Squirrel Hill Then and How?



When people try to tell you where something is located, they often say, “You know—where (fill in the place) used to be.”

Squirrel Hill is filled with “used to be’s” that are now other things. But how do we know what those “used to be” had once been?

This display shows resources that help us uncover and remember the past.

squirrelhillhistory.org

About the Squirrel Hill Historical Society

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

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, including dues, to the SHHS 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.

For More Information ...

Go to the SHHS website, squirrelhillhistory.org, for information about upcoming speakers and events, recordings of past SHHS programs, links to other historical organizations, and a wealth of other information about Squirrel Hill and the Squirrel Hill Historical Society. You can also contact us at sqhillhist@shhsoc.org. Members receive monthly newsletters.

MAJOR ANNOUNCEMENT

Beginning Tuesday, January 13, SHHS programs will be held in Levinson Hall at the Jewish Community Center. The programs will be held on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m.

How Do We Know What Squirrel Hill Was Like Before We Got Here?

The mission statement of the Squirrel Hill Historical Society is that it is “committed to gathering, preserving, and celebrating the history and memories of our neighborhood.”

But how do we do it?

In this display, we’re taking a look at some resources the SHHS uses to research bygone days of our neighborhood. You can use these resources, too, to delve into personal topics concerning your own family’s connections to Squirrel Hill.

Memories are important. We are interested in hearing or reading them. Sometimes a chance remark about an anti-aircraft battery on the fields beyond Blue Slide Playground or a question about gambling dens on Forbes and Murray Avenues will send us scurrying to find out more. Let us know your questions and stories.

We’ll report our findings in our monthly SHHS Newsletters.



The SHHS’s Website

A wealth of information about Squirrel Hill can be found on the SHHS website. Take a look at the links on the website to see our offerings—everything from a history of Squirrel Hill to our monthly programs for 2026. Dive into the *Squirrel Hill News* newspapers from 1935-1970. Take an interactive driving tour of our neighborhood. Learn more about the Neill Log House. And “Links for Historical Research” lists many of the online resources we use in our own research, which you can use, too.

Squirrel Hill Historical Society

Mission Statement: The Squirrel Hill Historical Society (SHHS) is a membership organization established in 2000. We are committed to gathering, preserving, and celebrating the history and memories of our neighborhood.

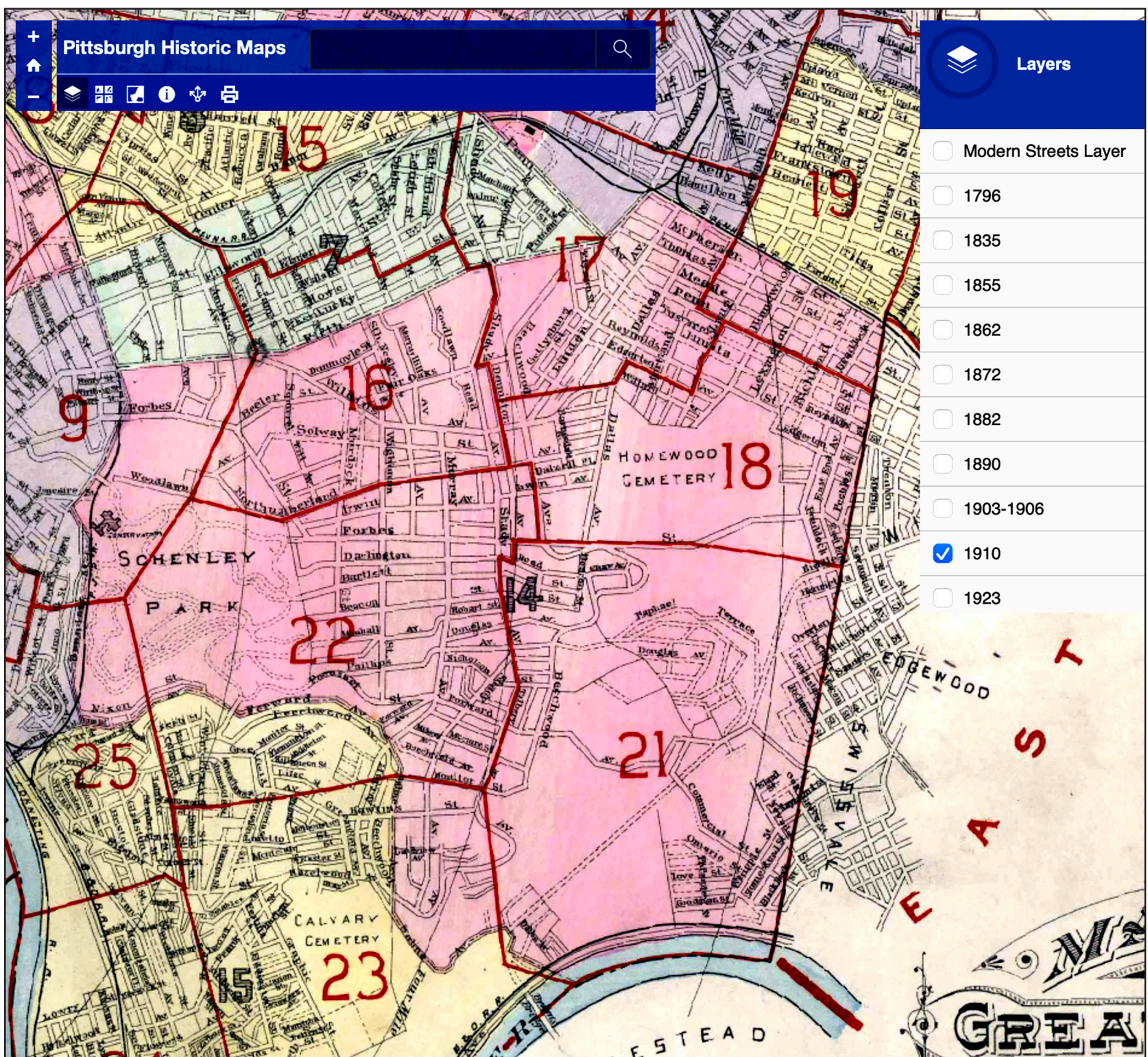
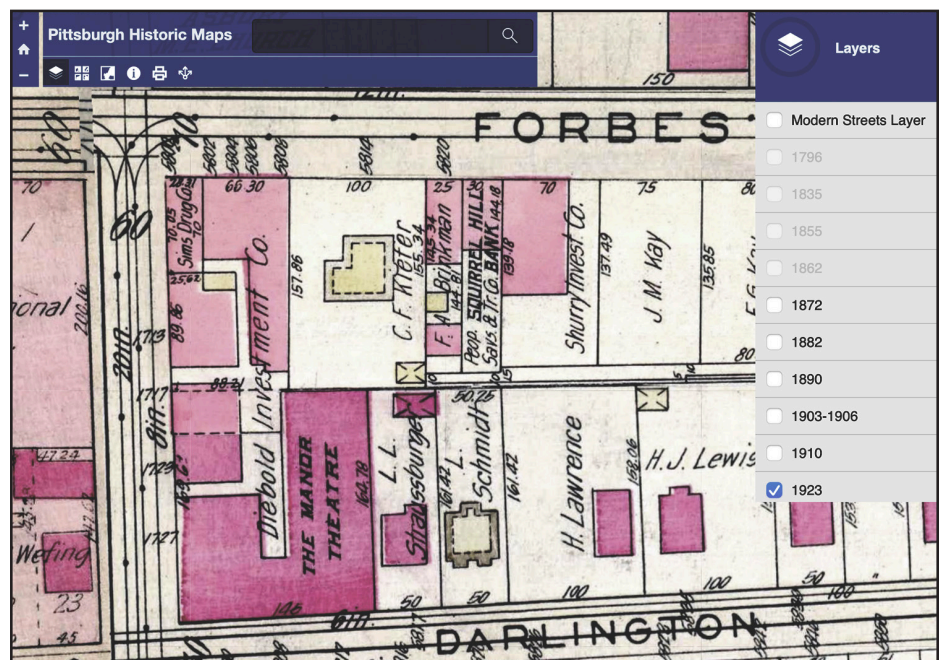
- [HOME](#)[ABOUT US](#)[HISTORY OF SQUIRREL HILL](#)[UPCOMING EVENTS](#)
- [SHHS PAST PROGRAMS VIDEOS AND EVENTS](#)[SQUIRREL HILL NEWS NEWSPAPERS](#)
- [SHHS PHOTO ARCHIVES](#)[SQUIRREL HILL MAGAZINE ARTICLES \(IN PROGRESS\)](#)
- [SHHS CARNEGIE LIBRARY DISPLAYS](#)[DRIVING TOUR OF SQUIRREL HILL](#)
- [SHHS BOOKS AND 2026 CALENDAR](#)[HOUSE HISTORY PROJECT](#)[MEMBERS PAGE](#)
- [NEILL LOG HOUSE \(INCLUDES INFORMATION FOR VISITATION\)](#)
- [LINK TO LEWIS AND CLARK NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL EXPERIENCE](#)
- [LINKS FOR HISTORICAL RESEARCH](#)[HOW TO JOIN/DONATE](#)[CONTACT US](#)



Pittsburgh Historic Maps Website

The **Pittsburgh Historic Maps** website is a great website that allows you to view how an area developed through time. You can zoom in to see details as small as individual buildings and streets. After 1923, the format shifts to aerial maps up to 1993.

Since the website address is long and complicated, just google "Pittsburgh Historic Maps."




Pitt’s Historic Pittsburgh Website

The University of Pittsburgh’s Historic Pittsburgh website, historicpittsburgh.org, is an incredible resource with a world of information on it—full texts, maps, directories, photographs, and other materials for anything you need to know about Pittsburgh. New collections are continually being added to it.

The SHHS has placed 60 photos on Historic Pittsburgh and is in the process of adding another batch in the near future.

Hosted by the University of Pittsburgh Library System

HISTORIC
PITTSBURGH




AboutNewsFAQRelated

HomeCollectionsExhibitsChronologyFinding AidsPartners

Search all collections...searchAdvanced Search

Collections

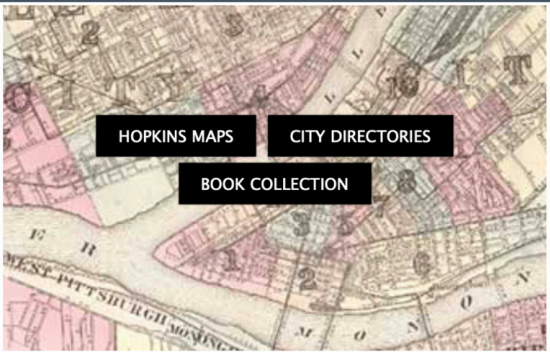


Highlights


HOPKINS MAPS

CITY DIRECTORIES


BOOK COLLECTION




Exhibits




Chronology



Finding Aids



Partners



Historic Pittsburgh comprises primary and secondary sources about the greater Pittsburgh region, including a wide range of publications, maps, manuscripts, visual images, and audio-video materials, that support personal and scholarly research. Launched in 1999, the site has grown each year through partnerships with more than a dozen cultural heritage institutions willing to digitize and share their collections to support personal and scholarly research.

Recently Added Material

[Moses Chess Diaries and Papers](#)
(Added October 2024)

[Maurice Levy Oral History of Music in Pittsburgh Collection](#) (Added October 2024)

[Aaronel deRoy Gruber Papers and Photographs](#) (Added October 2024)

[Jim Papariello Photographs](#) (Added October 2024)

[Frank Floyd Hightower Photograph Collection](#) (Added October 2024)

[Frank Russell Hightower Photograph Collection](#) (Added October 2024)

[Pittsburgh Public Theater Collection](#) (Added October 2024)

[Byrd R. Brown Autograph Album](#) (Added September 2024)

[Allegheny County Medical Society Minute Book](#) (Added August 2024)

[Brashear Association Records](#) (Added August 2024)

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette Archives

The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette Archives is a great website to search for events as they happened in real time.



Google News Archive

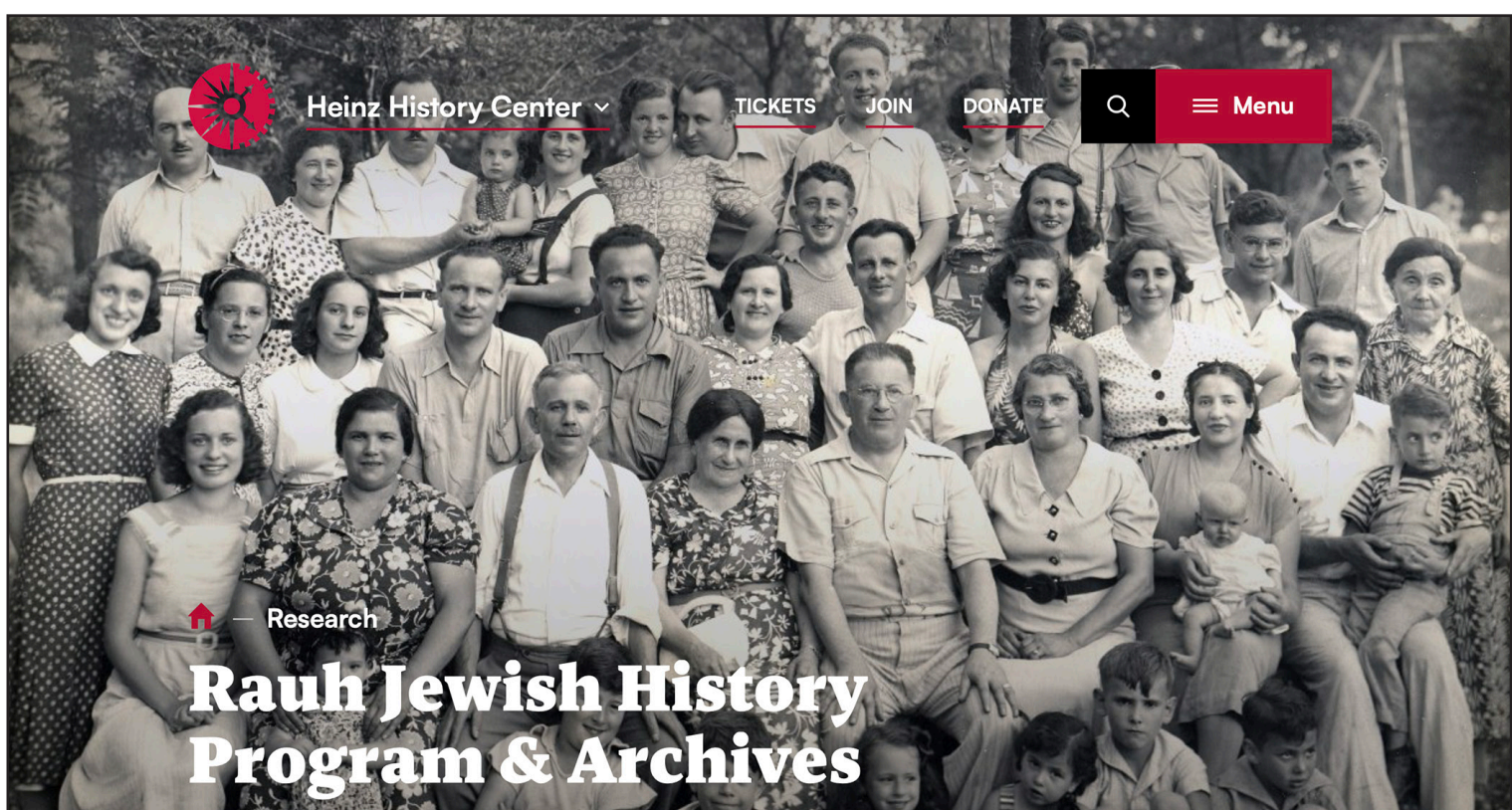
A paid subscription is required for the Post-Gazette Archives. A free website with even more Pittsburgh newspapers is available on the Google News Archive, news.google.com.

Pionnier de Sherbrooke 465 issues Oct 13, 1866 - Jun 24, 1881	Pittsburger Volksblatt 6,488 issues Aug 8, 1859 - Dec 31, 1900	The Pittsburgh Commercial 3,097 issues Apr 29, 1859 - May 4, 1965	Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette 6,079 issues Jan 1, 1877 - Nov 23, 1901
The Pittsburgh Daily Commercial 151 issues Sep 7, 1863 - Jun 30, 1864	The Pittsburgh Daily Gazette 1,050 issues Mar 29, 1847 - Jun 4, 1872	Pittsburgh Daily Gazette and Advertiser 654 issues Feb 24, 1816 - Mar 27, 1847	The Pittsburgh Gazette 5,350 issues Mar 7, 1795 - Nov 12, 1962
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette 22,000 issues Mar 18, 1916 - Sep 28, 2007	Pittsburgh Post-Gazette and Sun-Telegraph 28 issues Jun 1, 1960 - Jun 30, 1960	The Pittsburgh Press 28,963 issues Jul 18, 1819 - Jul 28, 1992	Pleasants County Leader 79 issues Feb 25, 2006 - Mar 1, 2008

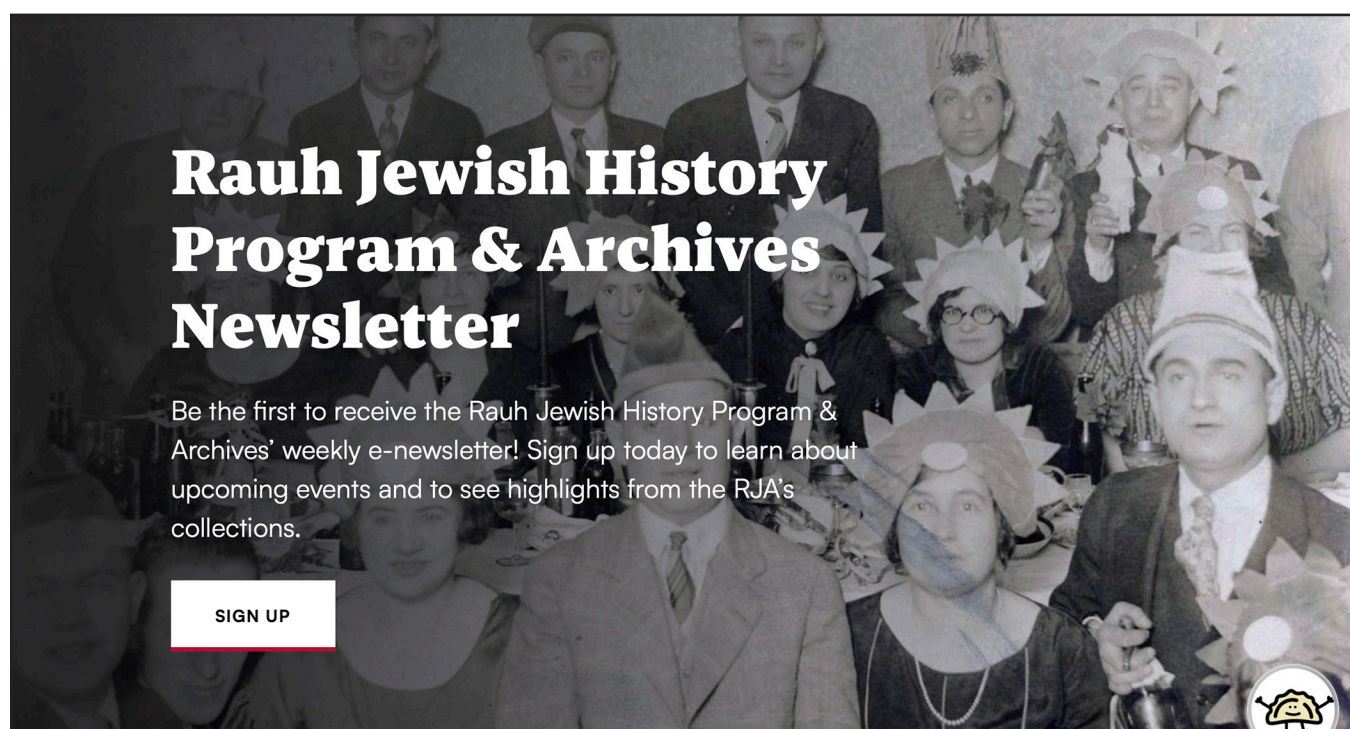
Rauh Jewish Archives

The collections of the **Rauh Jewish History Program & Archives** at the Heinz History Center document the lives of individuals and families and the histories of congregations, organizations, institutions, and businesses. Correspondence, diaries, memoirs, ledgers, minutes, audio tapes, scrapbooks, ephemera, photographs, and moving images are housed in archival containers and stored in a monitored, secure, and climate-controlled environment.

The collections are available for research in the reading room of the Detre Library & Archives of the History Center. For more information, email rjarchives@heinzhistorycenter.org.



You can sign up to receive the weekly Rauh Jewish History Newsletters by going to heinzhistorycenter.org.



Squirrel Hill News

Newspapers

SHHS digitized its collection of *Squirrel Hill News* newspapers from 1935–1970 several years ago. They can be accessed on both the SHHS website, squirrelhillhistory.org, and the Historic Pittsburgh website, historicpittsburgh.org. If you are interested in information about Squirrel Hill in the past, this is the place to go!

Squirrel Hill News

Search all issues...

[Browse issues](#)

Expand all monthsCollapse all months

1938

1939

1940

1941

1942

1943

1944

1945

1946

1947

1948

1949

1950

▼ January

January 07, 1943

January 14, 1943

January 21, 1943

January 28, 1943

▼ February

February 04, 1943

February 11, 1943

February 18, 1943

February 25, 1943

▼ March

March 04, 1943

March 11, 1943

March 18, 1943

March 25, 1943

RATION DATES
PROCESSED FOODS, Blue A, B, C, Coupons, Book No. 2, Good to MAR. 31.
SUGAR, Coupon No. 11, Book No. 1, Good to MAR. 15.
COFFEE, Coupon No. 25, Book No. 1, Good to MAR. 21.
GASOLINE Coupon No. 4, Good to MAR. 21.
SHOES, Coupon No. 17, Book No. 1, Good to June 15.

SQUIRREL HILL NEWS

The Home Paper of Pittsburgh's Leading District

VOL. X, NO. 20PITTSBURGH, PA., THURSDAY, MARCH 4, 1943TWO CENTS

Red Cross Drive On Hill Gets An Auspicious Start

Business District Already Doing Good Job In Big Campaign

Squirrel Hill's business district took the lead in the Red Cross War Fund drive which seeks to raise \$2,250,000 in Greater Pittsburgh as captains started drive work early this week.

Squirrel Hill's residential area teams under the direction of district women will launch their work as part of the nation-wide drive this Sunday. A total of \$125,000,000 is being sought to enable the Red Cross to continue the work for which it has become world famous. Now, with war raging in all parts of the globe, the

HERE AND THERE

INTERESTING SIDELIGHTS ON COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

"Quit your shovin'!"
"I'll slug you, lady."

These were among the choice phrases hurled in Squirrel Hill butcher shops during the past week as local housewives sought vainly to coax a steak or a liver from badly harassed merchants. Long lines of meat-hungry shoppers waited for hours and when they finally reached the counter they were confronted with the "all sold out" edict.

Men forgot their manners as they shoved and insulted women who sought to steal their place in

FBI Will Probe Clothes Hoarding

Squirrel Hill women and merchants who might have discounted or doubted the story in last week's issue of The News about clothing buying and hoarding can give the matter another thought this week for it was revealed in Washington this week that the Office of Price Administration has asked the Federal Bureau of Investigation to investigate recent heavy buying runs.

The investigation will be launched in clothing stores to determine whether Fifth Columnists have had a hand in promoting the recent runs on women's clothing.

Alarmed By Situation

Alarmed by the feverish purchasing which has depleted clothing stocks in many areas, OPA officials pointed out that the inspiring of such runs leaned towards Fifth Column activity which tries to create confusion among civilians.

They pointed out that France had numerous heavy buying runs, spurred by Fifth Columnists, before the Nazis launched their attack against the Maginot Line in May, 1940.

The Bureau of Intelligence of the Office of War Information, which has been conducting a separate investigation, announced however that it had uncovered no evidence thus far that the clothing runs were encouraged by subversive elements.

Darken Homes For 40 Minutes In Blackout

Tonight's Test To Be Final Announced In Advance For Duration

BLACKOUT !!
Blackout tonight!!!
Blackout tonight at 8:50 o'clock!!!

Blackout will last for 40 minutes, the all clear sounding at 9:30 p. m.!!!

Those are the salient facts concerning tonight's blackout. For additional information, you should read the remainder of this article.

Homes throughout Squirrel Hill and other sections of the city will

SHHS Newsletters and Newsletter Archives

Every month, SHHS members receive a 10-page newsletter with a list of upcoming programs, research reports, articles about various aspects of Squirrel Hill's history, and much more. After publication, the newsletters are available to members on the password-protected "Members Page" link on the SHHS's website, squirrelhillhistory.org.

This sampling of articles gives an idea of the wide range of topics covered in the newsletters:

- 10-11—Helen Wilson, "The Civil War in Pittsburgh and Squirrel Hill" (Part 1 in a Series on the Civil War)
- 5-12—Helen Wilson, "Captain Sam Brown and the Kentucky Derby"
- 11-15—Wayne Bossinger, "Creeks to Streets"
- 8-21—Tony Indovina, "Catahecassa, the Man Behind the Fountain Sculpture"
- 10-21—Caroline Boyce, "My Happenstance with Henry Koerner"
- 11-21—Tony Indovina, "Friends of Neill Log House (FONLH), Inc."
- 12-21—Tony Indovina, "The Sewer System Above Nine Mile Run—Living, Breeding History"
- 1-22—Helen Wilson, "Squirrel Hill's Geology Determined Its History"
- 2-22—Helen Wilson, "Squirrel Hill's Service Centers and Gas Stations in 1939"
- 2-22—Helen Wilson, "The Block Building Burns Down"
- 2-22—Helen Wilson, "Sandy Baskind and a 1937 Stroll Down Murray Avenue"
- 3-22—James Wudarczyk, "John T. Comés: The Man Who Shaped the Architectural Landscape of Pittsburgh"
- 3-22—Helen Wilson, "The Mysteries of Forbes Avenue and Fern Hollow" "
- 7-22—Tony Indovina, "The American Chestnut Tree and Frick Park"
- 4-23—Helen Wilson, "Successes, Failures, and Compromises—The Varying Fates of Building Developments in Squirrel Hill"
- 6-23—Lauren Winkler, "Launch Announcement: Uniting the States with Telegraphs, 1844-1862"
- 10-23—Helen Wilson, "Turner Cemetery History Walk: Come to Where Squirrel Hill Began!"
- 6-24—Emily Ehrenberger, Park Ranger, "The Pittsburgh Park Ranger Program at Frick Park"
- 2-25—Helen Wilson, "Press Release Announcing the SHHS's 25th Anniversary"
- 3-25—Cathie Talbert, "Your Muralist, My Father" (about Alan Thompson, the artist who painted the WPA mural in the Squirrel Hill Post Office, entitled *History of Squirrel Hill*)
- 11-25—Helen Wilson, "City Council Votes to Grant Historic Site Designation to Schenley Park"
- 12-25—Helen Wilson, "Meriwether Lewis and the Neill Log House"
- 1-26—Eric S. Lidji, "Pittsburgh's Pre-World War II Jewish Artists"



CMU's Pittsburgh Jewish Newspaper Project

COLLECTION

PITTSBURGH JEWISH NEWSPAPERS

ABOUT THE COLLECTION

USING THE COLLECTION

FEATURED ITEMS

VIEW THE COLLECTION

About the Collection

The history of Jews in Pittsburgh began in the 1840's with a small community of primarily German immigrants, whose first communal action was the establishment of a burial society. By the end of the Civil War, there were two congregations, Rodef Shalom and Tree of Life.

The German-Jewish community was already quite prosperous when Jews from Eastern Europe and the Russian Empire began to arrive in large numbers in the 1890s. The influx of Yiddish-speaking Jews lasted until 1920, when immigration laws became more restrictive. During this thirty-year period, the number of Jews in Pittsburgh and the region grew dramatically.

Just as this new wave of immigrants had begun to arrive, the first English-language Jewish newspaper, the *Jewish Criterion*, was established in 1895. This weekly newspaper published articles related to national and international political and entertainment news, along with information concerning local social and life-cycle events. In 1934, the *American Jewish Outlook*, which had offerings similar to those of the *Criterion*, began publication.

Highlights From Pittsburgh Jewish Newspapers



American Jewish Outlook Vol. 27
No. 18



American Jewish Outlook Vol. 48
No. 07



American Jewish Outlook Vol. 01
No. 01



American Jewish Outlook Vol. 01
No. 02



American Jewish Outlook Vol. 01
No. 03



American Jewish Outlook Vol. 01
No. 04



American Jewish Outlook Vol. 01
No. 05



American Jewish Outlook Vol. 01
No. 06



American Jewish Outlook Vol. 01
No. 07

Don's List

If you haven't checked out Don's List, donslist.net, yet, you're in for a shock. Besides having most of Allderdice, Fifth Avenue, and Peabody's yearbooks on it, it has a host of other high school and college yearbooks, plus directories, institutions, census records, and military records.

Pittsburgh/Allegheny County and Much More

Social Security	New	Directories	Institutions	Yearbooks	Census	Military	FindingGuides	OffSite
Death Index	Additions	-NoFrames-	-NoFrames-	-NoFrames-	-NoFrames-	-NoFrames-	-NoFrames-	Collections

WELCOME to DonsList.Net

We have 8,792 titles with 3,584,838 pages + finding guides for 31,594 offsite microfilm reels with 33,660,782 pages.

- In July, 2012, we served 10,407 visitors with 163,886 pages viewed (262,924 hits).
 - In July, 2015, we served 3,890 visitors with 131,084 pages viewed (223,194 hits).
 - In July, 2019, we served 3,267 visitors with 124,773 pages viewed (209,078 hits).
 - In July, 2020, we served 3,103 visitors with 126,263 pages viewed (212,765 hits).
 - In July, 2022, we served 2,372 visitors with 55,166 pages viewed (96,830 hits).
 - In July, 2023, we served 2,408 visitors with 66,850 pages viewed (112,156 hits).
 - In July, 2024, we served 3,161 visitors with 50,797 pages viewed (85,999 hits).
 - In May, 2025, we served 8,585 visitors with 302,851 pages viewed (344,294 hits).
- No donations are accepted and there is no advertising.
If you would like to give something, please spread the word that DonsList.net exists.
You can also check out Credits/Sources and support them.
- - Thank You Very Much for Visiting - -



AI and the Internet

It's amazing what information you can find on the Internet these days, including the answers AI gives when you ask it questions. But you have to be careful because the information might not be correct.

Here is an example. If you ask AI, "When did the first settlers arrive in Squirrel Hill?" you get this answer:

The first settlers arrived in Squirrel Hill in **the 1760s**, establishing homesteads along the Monongahela River near Fort Pitt, with notable early figures including Colonel James Burd, who built the first recorded house, and Ambrose Newton, whose home still stands in Schenley Park. This rural, forested area developed slowly from these pioneer beginnings into the community it is today, with early settlers attracted by game, land, and proximity to the fort. [🔗](#)

Key Early Settlers & Structures:

- **Colonel James Burd**: A soldier from Fort Pitt, built the first house around 1760, calling his property "Summerset".
- **Ambrose Newton**: Built a home in the 1760s that is still standing in Schenley Park (now known as the Martin House).
- **Mary Girty Turner**: Arrived in 1764, and her sons were among the first to apply for land when the office opened in 1769.
- **Robert Neill**: Built the Neill Log House around 1765 (or 1795, sources vary), also in Schenley Park, which is Pittsburgh's oldest log domestic structure. [🔗](#)

This answer is only partially correct. Ambrose Newton possibly may have built the Martin cabin in what is now Schenley Park, but it's not still standing. It was completely rebuilt in the 1930s. Nothing remains of the original house. Also, the date of the construction of the Neill Log House has been definitely determined to be c. 1795, based on dendrochronological (tree-ring) dating. However, looking at "hits" below the AI answer can point you to other sources of information for research.



Squirrel Hill Historical Society
<https://squirrelhillhistory.org> › squirrel-hill-history

History of Squirrel Hill

French and British hunters and trappers roamed Squirrel Hill in the **mid 1700s**, but it wasn't settled by Europeans until after the French and Indian War, when ... [Read more](#)



Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition
<https://shuc.org> › explore-squirrel-hill › about-squirrel-...

About Squirrel Hill - Pittsburgh

The modern story of Squirrel Hill starts in **1760** at its southern end. The first settlement was along the Monongahela River in an area called Summerset with a ... [Read more](#)



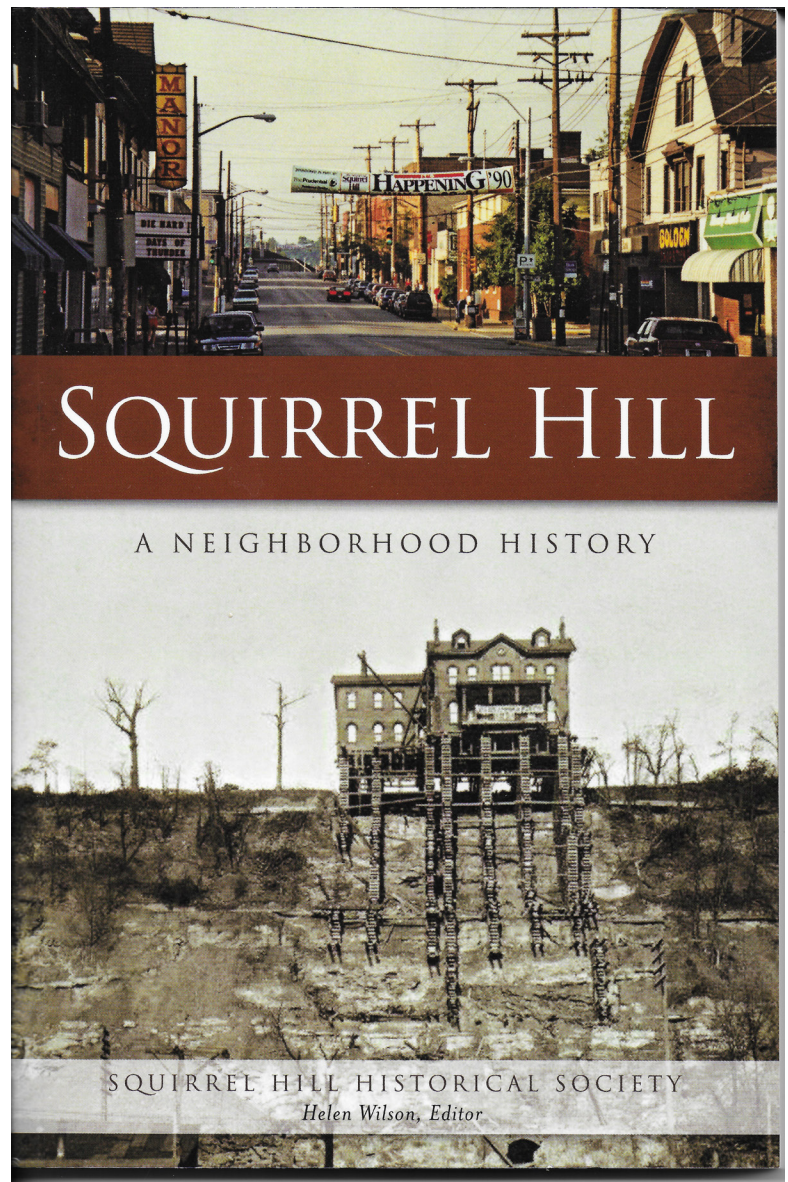
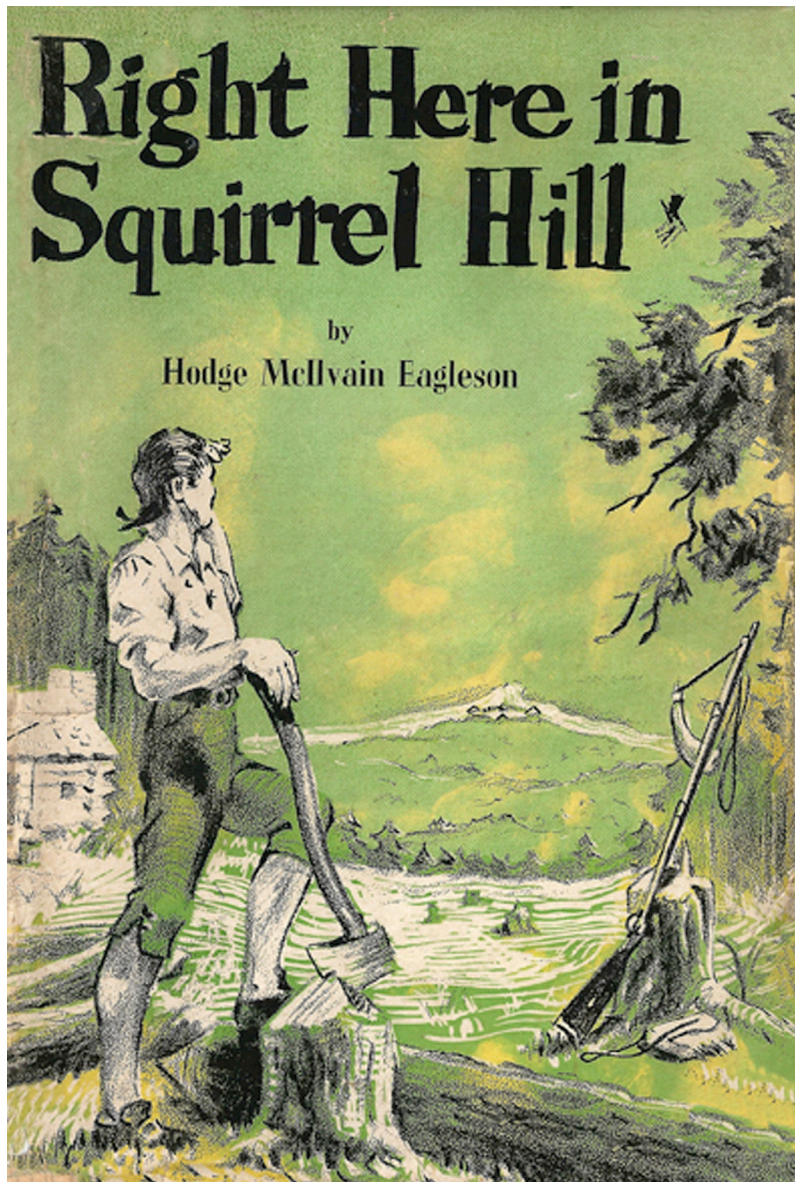
Wikipedia
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Squirrel_Hill

Squirrel Hill

The first recorded house was built in 1760 by a soldier at nearby Fort Pitt, Colonel James Burd, at a place called Summerset on the Monongahela River. [Read more](#)

Books about Squirrel Hill

Several books have been written specifically about Squirrel Hill's history, and many more contain information that sheds light on various aspects of the neighborhood.



Right Here in Squirrel Hill, by Hodge McIlvain Eagleson, Jackson Press, 1953.

Squirrel Hill: A Neighborhood History. Squirrel Hill Historical Society, The History Press, 2017.

Images of America—Squirrel Hill. Squirrel Hill Historical Society, Arcadia Publishing, 2005.

Below are some other books with information about Squirrel Hill. There are lots more. Dr. Barbara Burstin's books include ***Steel City Jews: A history of the Pittsburgh Jewish community 1840-1915*** (2015), ***Steel City Jews in Prosperity, Depression, and War: A history of the Pittsburgh Jewish community 1915-1950*** (2015), and ***Jewish Pittsburgh***. Images of America Series (2015).

Jacob Feldman, ***The Jewish Experience in Western Pennsylvania, A History 1755-1945***. Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, 1986.

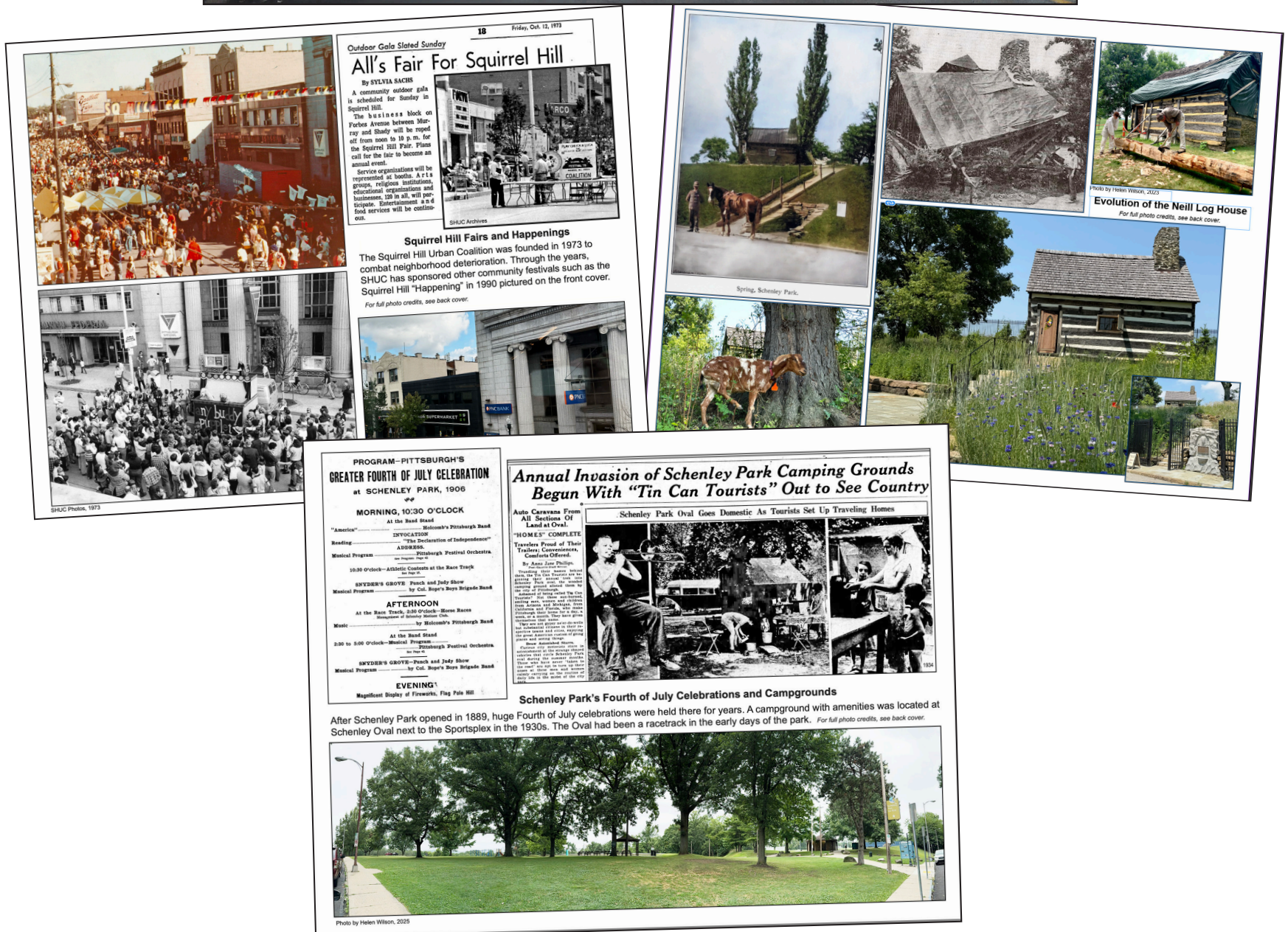
Melanie Linn Gutowski, ***Images of America—Pittsburgh's Mansions***. Arcadia, 2013.

Phillip W. Hoffman, ***Simon Girty, Turncoat Hero***. Flying Camp Press, 2009.

Anita Kulina, ***Millhunks and Renegades—A Portrait of a Pittsburgh Neighborhood***. Brandt Street Press, 2004.

The 2026 “Squirrel Hill— Then and Now” Calendar

If you enjoy looking at the transformations of Squirrel Hill through time, you can enjoy doing it all year with the SHHS's 2026 "Squirrel Hill—Then and Now" calendar! It's on sale at SHHS Programs and can also be purchased through the SHHS website, sqhlllhist@shhsoc.org, and the Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition's website, shuc.org.

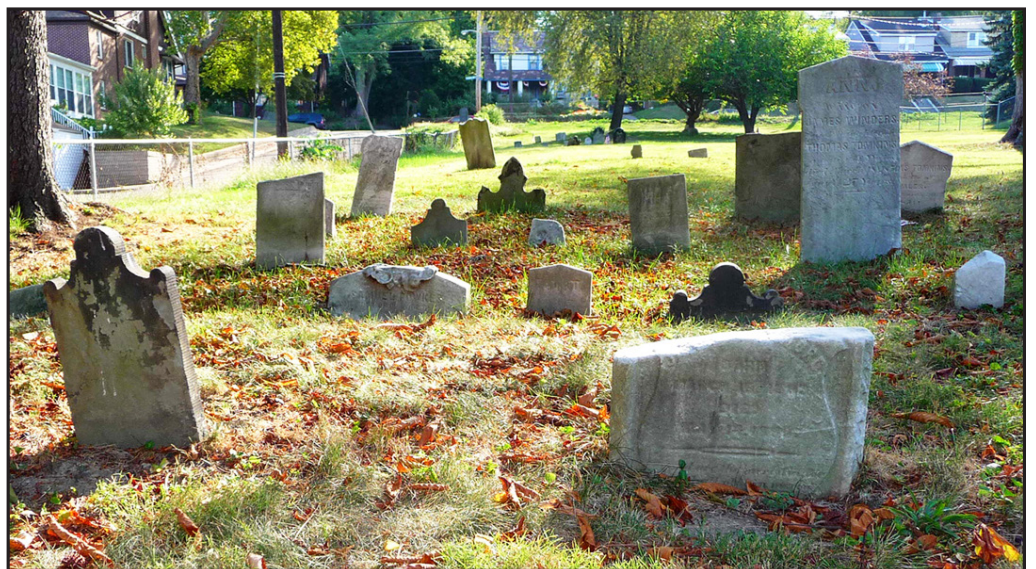


Cemetery Records

The people buried in cemeteries are part of Squirrel Hill's history, and their stories illustrate different times and facets of the neighborhood's development. A good place to begin cemetery research is on findagrave.com, which has birth and death dates and sometimes pictures and articles. The cemeteries in and around Squirrel Hill have varying histories. For more information, google the individual cemeteries.

Smithfield East End Cemetery, bounded by Forbes and S. Dallas Avenues and Aylesboro Street, is the only cemetery within Squirrel Hill's borders, but it actually has the least connection to the neighborhood. It began as a church graveyard for the oldest organized church in Pittsburgh—the first German Evangelical Protestant Church, founded in 1782 by German Lutheran and Reformed settlers. In 1787, descendants of William Penn granted the small congregation a property on Smithfield Street that was large enough for a church, rectory, and cemetery. As Pittsburgh grew, Smithfield and other small graveyards became overcrowded and unsightly. In 1860, the downtown cemetery was closed and moved to Troy Hill, but urban development in that area was the cause for another move in 1886 to a 26-acre site in Squirrel Hill. In 2002, the Smithfield church (now Smithfield United Church of Christ) relinquished ownership of the cemetery to The Homewood Cemetery, which now maintains it.

Turner Cemetery, (*right*) located at 3424 Beechwood Boulevard, just across Squirrel Hill's border in Greenfield, is Pittsburgh's second oldest cemetery. Its 2.5 acres hold the remains of early settlers of Squirrel Hill, military veterans up to the Mexican-American War, and other burials up to at least 1880.



The Homewood Cemetery, located on S. Dallas Avenue near Forbes Avenue, was founded in 1878 as part of the American Cemetery Movement of the 1800s to provide a cemetery for residents of Pittsburgh's East End when small church and community graveyards couldn't cope with the increasing demand for burial space as the population grew. The Cemetery Association purchased 178 acres of this land with the intent of implementing a Lawn Park style cemetery, a merger of landscape design and a system of rules and regulations. The non-profit, non-denominational mission of the cemetery ensured all people were served by the new burial ground. Today, The Homewood Cemetery remains a non-profit, non-denominational entity.

Calvary Catholic Cemetery, located at 718 Hazelwood Avenue, was established in 1886 by the Pittsburgh Diocese on a 200-acre tract of land. Calvary is the largest of the diocesan cemeteries in Pittsburgh. It also holds the central offices of The Catholic Cemeteries Association. A total of 146,301 interments and entombments have taken place at Calvary Cemetery as of 2001.