

HEINLEIN GENEALOGY

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The Families & Estates of Coraopolis Heights

Most of the following information is based on Forgotten Past: A History of Moon Township, Pennsylvania, by Robert A. Jockers. D.D.S., published by Xlibris Corporation in 2006. Dr. Jockers founded the Old Moon Township Historical Society in 1975 and served as its president for the next eight years. He is currently the historical society's archivist.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, as was the case in the Heights above Sewickley, Pittsburgh industrialists discovered that the hills above Coraopolis were a desirable place to live. In addition to stunning vistas and fresh air, the area was close to the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railroad, which made commuting to the city convenient. By 1919, sixteen wealthy families were residents of Coraopolis Heights, adding a new dimension to a community, which, up to that point, had consisted mostly of farmers of modest means. A few of their estates are briefly described below.

The first of the great estates, "Cranston Farm," was established around 1905 by Stewart Johnson, President of Pittsburgh Steel Foundry. The Dutch Gambrel style mansion, sold in 1941, was destroyed by fire in 1958, and the property was later developed into a residential community called "Londonderry Estates."

Also in 1905, Pittsburgh attorney George E. Shaw, purchased a 123-acre farm and commissioned the architects MacClure and Spahr to construct an English Tudor style mansion, which he called "Roselea Farm." Charles Lockhart bought the estate circa 1916, added four rooms to the house and constructed a farmer's cottage. In 1922, the mansion and 32 acres were sold to David Crawford, Vice President of the Locomotive Stoker Company, and in 1923, an additional 25 acres were sold to John R. McCune IV. The Lockharts retained 51 acres, and in 1927 they sold 15 to Lloyd Smith, President of Union National Bank, who would build an estate known as "Baywood." In 1950, the Russell Pattons purchased "Roselea Farm," and the farmer's cottage functions today as a bed and breakfast.

In 1907, Charles M. Robinson, President of Robinson Oil Company, purchased 143 acres and constructed a two-story farmhouse as a summer home for his family. The President of Columbia Steel and Shafting Company, Edward L. Parker, purchased the estate in 1919 and expanded the house. Charles R. Ferguson, a Coraopolis banker, was the next owner, and he expanded the house further. The estate can still be found on Coraopolis Heights Road.

Harvey Childs II, a wealthy Pittsburgh industrialist, built a Federal style mansion in 1908 called "Pine Hill Manor." Subsequent owners, including the Kaufmann family of department store fame, expanded the house and the gardens. In 1962, Robert Morris College purchased "Pine Hill Manor" and used it for faculty housing and administrative purposes. Eventually the house was razed and replaced by a large administration building.

In 1909, John Robinson McCune III of Union National Bank and his wife obtained a 71-acre farm on Coraopolis Heights Road and proceeded to greatly expand the existing farmhouse, creating a grand Greek Revival style mansion and naming it "High Skeog" after Mrs. McCune's family farm in Scotland. The house, which was destroyed by fire in 1938, was reconstructed on the same site by their son, Charles Lockhart McCune.



"Roselea Farm"

After the death of Charles Lockhart McCune in 1979, his executor was approached by Montour Heights Country Club, which was investigating the possibility that "High Skeog" could become the clubhouse for their proposed new 18-hole golf course. The club had been founded in 1912 on Beaver Grade Road as the Sunset Golf Club, which provided sport and social activities for the newly arrived wealthy residents, very similar to the 1904 Allegheny Country Club on Sewickley Heights.

In 1963, the nine-hole golf course had been expanded to 18 holes with the acquisition of the adjacent W. C. Moreland property, and a new clubhouse and pool were constructed. Development pressures driven by the close proximity of the Pittsburgh Airport made this property very desirable for sale. Fortunately, the McCune estate was obtained by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, which imposed conservation easements and then sold the property to Montour Heights Country Club. Pete Dye was hired to lay out a new golf course, and an architect refitted "High Skeog" for use as a clubhouse. The new club opened in 1987, the old golf course was developed into an industrial park, and the old clubhouse has become the Moon Township Public Library and Community Center.

In 1909, C. J. Lang, founder of the Russell Machine Company, purchased a parcel on Coraopolis Heights Road and constructed "Langhurst," a 12-room, three-story English Tudor style mansion. In 1918, the Langs sold their property to the Serbian Church, which used the house as an orphanage. The estate was subsequently sold as a private residence, which it remains today.

1910 brought Charles H. Curry, president of a glass manufacturing company, and his wife to a 67-acre site on Thorn Run Road, where they built a 25-room Federal style house. Although reduced in size and remodeled, the house survives today.

There was a new round of estate building on Coraopolis Heights in the 1920s. The Dutch Colonial mansion of Philip Gundelfinger, a Coraopolis realtor, was built on Beaver Grade Road in 1922. In