

HEINLEIN GENEALOGY

1923, John R. McCune IV purchased land from his uncle, Charles Lockhart, and built a house, which is located on Coraopolis Heights Road between "Roselea Farm" and the back nine of the old Montour Heights Country Club.

In 1924, Francis B. Nimick, President of the Colonial Steel Company, constructed "Robin Hill," a Georgian style house on Thorn Run Road. Upon the death of Mrs. Nimick in 1971, the house and grounds were bequeathed to the township for use as "parkland forever."

Lloyd Smith, president of Union National Bank, and his wife purchased 15 acres from Charles Lockhart in 1927 and constructed a

Federal style mansion called "Baywood." In 1962, "Baywood" was acquired as conference center by the Mobay Chemical Company.

In 1931, William and Clara Kryskill purchased property on the heights and took seven years to construct the French Provincial style home and restaurant they called "Hyeholde," which still provides an elegant dining experience today.

Only remnants of the high society that made Coraopolis Heights as distinguished as its neighbor in Sewickley survive, but those days are not forgotten.

To Breathe Fresh Country Air

The following is excerpted from a charming 1983 account by Hampden Frost Tener (1907-1985) of his early years growing up on Coraopolis Heights, written at the request of B. G. Shields. Included are memories of Raccoon Creek, one-room schools, Montour Heights Country Club, the Audubon Society of Sewickley, Allegheny Country Club horse shows, coon hunts, World War II, the winter of 1936 and the building of Greater Pittsburgh Airport. The entire memoir can be read at <http://thetenerfamily.blogspot.com/2004/09/hampden-frost-tener.html>. Mr. Tener was a regular contributor to the Sewickley Herald under the column heading "The Old Trapper."

In the early 1900s, land in the country sold for roughly one hundred dollars an acre, and there was a lot of it on the market.... Beaver Grade Road [was] the only hard road in [Moon] Township [at the time]. This road, known as a Pinchot road after Pennsylvania Governor Gifford Pinchot, ran from Route 30 in Robinson Township to Carnot, where it became the Brodhead Road, then unpaved....

The [Tener] family bought the old homestead on the Beaver Grade Road, Moon Township, in 1909. I remember them saying that it was then a choice between it and the one we came to know as the Bell Farm, which became the foundation of the Greater Pittsburgh Airport. The deciding factor was that our homestead was then on a hard road and the Bell Farm property was not. Also, our property was more than a mile closer to Coraopolis and the P&LE Railroad, and, although not critical, it was important at the time.

You see, in 1909 the first automobiles were a luxury and not dependable. People, as they had done for all time before that, depended upon the horse for transportation. In my father's case, he used a team of Shetland ponies that could trot the entire five miles each way to the station and back every morning and evening during those first years. One of my earliest recollections is seeing him arrive home on a bitter cold winter evening with his visor hat, designed much like the present ski-mask, covered with white frozen vapor from his breath. He used several lap robes. One was of buffalo, a holdover from the many made when the great herds were hunted in the west in the late 1800s. They also used heated bricks in a tin box to keep the feet warm.

By 1912, the automobiles came more into use and, here again, the fact that our property was on a hard road was a blessing. I don't think anybody today can imagine the condition of back country roads in the spring of the year after the frost had gone out from under [them]. The cars then were open with canvas tops. There were no starters, no heaters, and no storage batteries. They were equipped with hand wipers, hand horns, hand brakes and carbide gas lights. "Dependable" was the slogan of the Dodge, but the cars were not. It was a sales point for the Franklin that it was air-cooled and would not freeze in cold weather. Also, I recall the Franklin had a laminated

wood frame, supposedly stronger than steel, and a heater wire that ran from the inside direct to the manifold. I also recall that it was years after World War I that a tire was created that would get more than 5000 miles and cost only \$80. All in all, those were the days to forget.

We once had a hired man who was almost useless around the farm but my father kept him on. He did so because the man had worked on the building of hard-surfaced Pinchot and macadam roads....

Our lane from the hard Beaver Grade Road back to the buildings was a long one—about 2000 feet—and it was unpaved. When the frost of winter left the ground, or in the wet seasons of spring and fall, the bottom went out, literally. The topsoil was clay 18 inches deep, then a four-inch layer of blue clay before running into strata of shale and clay. When this became saturated with water, any weight simply sank.

I remember those early mornings when the farmer would hitch on to the front of the car with the team of horses and would pull it through the mud all the way to the hard road. In the evening the farmer and team would be at the entrance when Dad arrived and would pull him back in again. Many of the country residences had two or more lanes so that when the short one became too bad they could use another.

So my father kept on the man who had experience in building the foundations of the hard roads and kept him working on the worst places in our lane. With team and stoneboat, he gathered up all the flat stones around the farm and hauled them to the lane. He dug a trench along the wheel ruts and filled the trench with these stones laid upright, on edge, back to back. He then brought the trench up to grade with broken stone or gravel.

Such was the basis of the Pinchot road. The macadam road went one step further and covered the base layer of stones-on-edge with a mix of tar and gravel to grade. Thus, Governor Gifford Pinchot, and Henry Ford with his Model T with its high wheels, are both credited today as getting the back country farmer out of the mud, here in Pennsylvania.