

Sewickley Valley Historical Society *Signals*

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April 2007



Brandon Smith (1889-1962)

Brandon Smith, Eclectic Architect

A Lecture by David J. Vater

Wednesday, April 25, 2007

Edgeworth Club

Optional Cash Bar: 5:30 — Optional Dinner: 6:30

(See below for details)

Lecture: 7:30

The Sewickley Valley Historical Society is pleased to present David J. Vater, who will give an illustrated lecture on the career of architect Brandon Smith (1889-1962). Born in Allegheny City, Smith studied at Carnegie Tech and worked in the office of Alden & Harlow before setting up his own firm. Best known as the designer of the Edgeworth Club, the Fox Chapel Golf Club, the B. F. Jones Memorial Library in Aliquippa and some of the buildings at Shadyside Academy, Smith was also the architect of many stylish private residences, including the now demolished B. F. Jones III mansion on Creek Drive.

David Vater, a Pittsburgh native, is a graduate of the University of Kentucky College of Architecture and studied at the Preservation Institute on Nantucket Island. He has been president of his own architectural firm since 1992. He has served on the Board of Directors of Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation, The Friends of Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh and The Society for the Preservation of the Duquesne Heights Incline. His home in Chatham Village was featured in Rick Sebak's WQED special "Houses Around Here."

Dinner Menu

Mixed Green Salad with Berries, Pecans and Mandarin Oranges
Beef Medallion with Bordelaise Sauce *or* Salmon with Dill Sauce
Asparagus, Quartered Redskin Potatoes
Almond Torte Cake
Coffee/Tea

\$25/person

For dinner reservations, call Sewickley Valley Historical Society, 412-741-5315, with your menu choice.

Checks should be made payable to Sewickley Valley Historical Society and mailed to SVHS, 200 Broad Street, Sewickley, PA 15143.

Deadline for dinner reservations & checks is Wednesday, April 18, 2007.

NOTE: You need not attend dinner to attend the lecture.

The mission of the Sewickley Valley Historical Society
is to promote interest in and to record, collect, preserve, and document the history of the Sewickley Valley.

Looking Back : Little Miss Lucy Was Cool in a Clutch

by B.G. Shields

Some little old ladies are laden with charm, and Lucy Eliza Haworth of "Mosscroft" was one of them. I can still see her sitting there, on the small back porch of her Edgeworth home, hands folded politely in her lap with her feet barely touching the sisal rug. Tiny she was, with very pink cheeks and wispy, white hair that framed her face. Her eyes were very clear and bright blue.

Then in her nineties, Miss Lucy, the last denizen of her family home, would be there on late Sunday afternoons when my father-in-law and I drove onto the grounds off Maple Lane and parked in the loop of the old carriage circle. As soon as we found our places in the wicker chairs, out would come her companion with a silver tray on which were three teeny-tiny glasses of sherry.

Her hands shaking slightly as she held her glass, she would begin entertaining her guests with a reference to the day the Hawthorns moved into their new house in 1905, and how the mother of my father-in-law sent over their first meal. She often recalled that it was a pot of baked beans that had been cooked over night and codfish balls. She remembered that my father-in-law's mother had been a New Englander.

The two former neighbors would discuss the days when the Hawthorn household included the mother, nee Anna Mary Mosscroft Dewhurst, a matriarch of the old school whose hobby was collecting antiques; her well-known brother, J. Frederick, who developed a device to take aerial photos even before the success of the Wright brothers; her reclusive brother, Riddle D.; and her sister, Miss Mary Maud Alice. The father, Jehu Haworth, a partner in the firm of Haworth & Dewhurst, popular for its Old Satisfaction coffee, had died in 1899 at 95.

Our hostess would then go on to recollections of Old Allegheny, where the Hawthorns had lived on Stockton Avenue. I loved the recall of how she and her lifelong friend, Emma Price, wheeled their doll baby carriages in West Park before both their families moved to Sewickley Valley. The Prices had moved to Sewickley and were residents of Thorn Street.

Each Sunday afternoon, Miss Lucy would mention her friend from Allegheny who, as she put it, "went under the name of Scovel." Because the Scovel name came up so often, I wondered if this had been an early romantic figure in her life. I always felt sorry for Scovel because, according to Miss Lucy, he loved the theater, and, "My dear," she would say, "his parents didn't approve." Apparently, in their view, theater was respectable if performed in a private home or for a charity benefit, but never on stage before a paid public.

Actually, in Sewickley Valley, the Hawthorns and friends would become involved in amateur productions to raise funds for the then fledgling Sewickley Hospital. I remember once seeing a

photo of Miss Lucy as one of the characters in the Dickens Carnival.

Then there was Major Montooth. Hardly a Sunday went by without mention of his name. Major Montooth, she said, was her chaperone on a trip to England from whence her forbears had emigrated in the 1800s. On the way home from Miss Lucy's, I would sometimes chuckle over his unusual surname and wondered about the circumstances of his travel with Miss Lucy.

Time marched on but the name Montooth never faded from my memory. "Wish I had asked Miss Lucy more about Major Montooth" was a thought that would occasionally pop into my head.

The mystery of Major Montooth was solved finally when in the year 2000 I received a letter from Joseph W. Rutter, who inquired about a clipping relating to Miss Lucy that he had found among the papers of his father-in-law, Frederick Way. Miss Lucy had apparently given them to Captain Way before her death in 1970 at the age of 100.

In a letter addressed to her sister Alice was a clipping from an August 1889 issue of a Pittsburgh newspaper headlined:

Major Montooth Tells of His Experience Abroad:
How the City of Chicago Went On the Rocks –
A Perilous Climb Up the Cliff.

"Once is enough for me. I wouldn't have missed the experience, but I want no more of it," said Maj. Montooth in speaking of the wreck of the steamer 'City of Chicago' off Kinsale on the Irish coast.

"Mr. Siebeneck of the *Chronicle Telegraph*, his son, young Scaife, Miss Haworth and myself were sitting on the port side when Mr. Siebeneck said: 'Major, look how queer the water is.'

"I looked and found it white and boiling. Just then I looked up and saw what I thought was a big white cloud, and I said I believe we are going to have a hurricane. Just then the rocks came out of the fog, and it was the most weird and awful sight I ever saw. We all knew in an instant that we were going on shore for the ship was heading directly for the great cliff in front of us, and we all jumped to our feet and tried to brace ourselves.

"The shock came quicker than I am taking to talk about it. The bow struck, then rebounded, then ground its way up the rock, and the vessel stuck fast at an angle of about 80 degrees. Scared? Oh, no! For a few minutes, there threatened to be a panic, but when it was discovered we could not sink the passengers became quiet.

(continued on next page)



Lucy Eliza Haworth

“I think the captain lost his head. He had been on the ocean 20 years, had a wife and large family and realized this mistake was the end of his career. And he was completely unstrung, and, as an evidence of this, he gave orders to back the engines. This order was not obeyed and had it been, I would not be home alive, for with the large hole in the vessel’s bottom, had we backed off the rock, we would have sunk in two minutes. And it was impossible for anyone to escape. I think the coolest one was Miss Haworth and at no time did she get excited.

“There was no beach, only a narrow edge of shelving rock. We were so close to shore that that planks reached from the ship to the edge of the rocks, and then we had to wade a few feet in the surging water about three feet deep to the foot of the cliff, where the coast guard had lowered a rope.

“There was a climb of 100 feet up the rope ladder and 165 feet up a grade about 60 degrees. We struck about 9:30 at night and it was 3 in the morning before we were

on top of the cliff, tired, hungry and generally demoralized. Miss Haworth went up the ladder ahead of me and I feared, at first, she would fall but soon found she was a much better climber than I, and she distanced me and stood at the top of the cliff to help me up.

“When we got to the top of the cliff, we started for the coast guard’s house but got lost in the fog and it took us four hours to go two miles. The company took care of us and did all in its power to make us comfortable, providing us with special and first class tickets to our destination.”

Major Montooth reported that the “City of Chicago” was a complete wreck. The vessel, which had cost \$900,000, had been broken completely in two and had fetched only \$2625 in the scrap yard.

Although Miss Lucy mentioned Major Montooth almost every week, she never gave this account of her personal courage.

But that was perfectly in character.



A historical note on Major Montooth ...



After reading B. G.’s article, we, too, became curious about Major Montooth. He sounded like a character from an Agatha Christie novel, but some research on the internet turned up the man who probably was Miss Lucy’s chaperone: Major Edward Alexander Montooth. Born in the third ward of Pittsburgh, September 18, 1837, Montooth enlisted in the Union army as a Lieutenant 1st class on August 23, 1862, in Company A of the Pennsylvania 155th Infantry Regiment. Promoted to Brevet Major on March 13, 1865, he mustered out of the army in Washington, DC, on June 2, 1865. He was present at the Battle of Gettysburg. A charter member of the Allegheny County Bar Association (1870), he served as District Attorney of Allegheny County from 1874-1877 and was later the Western Pennsylvania candidate for the Republican gubernatorial nomination. Montooth died in Pittsburgh on February 8, 1898.

The portrait at left is from Percy F. Smith’s 1901 volume, *Notable Men of Pittsburgh and Vicinity*; additional information on Montooth can be found in, among other places, *Under the Maltese Cross, Antietam to Appomattox: The Loyal Uprising in Western Pennsylvania, 1861-1865; Campaigns 155th Pennsylvania Regiment, Narrated by the Rank and File* (Pittsburgh: The 155th Regimental Association, 1910).

... and one on “Mosscroft”

The Haworths first came to the Sewickley Valley as “summer residents.” In 1894, they bought property in Shields on Woodburn Terrace, fronting on the railroad (now Ohio River Boulevard) and running through to Maple Lane. An existing home, remodeled and called “Mosscroft,” eventually became the family’s permanent residence. Local folklore has it that among the guests entertained there were Ethelbert Nevin, Jascha Heifetz and Albert Einstein. In a column in the January 23, 1974, *Sewickley Herald*, B. G. Shields stated, “I’m sorry newcomers will never know the pleasure of a visit to ‘Mosscroft,’ the Edgeworth home of the late Misses Lucy E. and M. M. Alice Haworth. I wouldn’t trade a moment’s time spent at their hearth for an invitation to the governor’s ball.” The house was in the Haworth family until Miss Lucy’s death in 1972 at age 100.



Some More Newly Discovered Aerial Photos



"Skipton," home of Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Holden Binns; later, the home of Mr. & Mrs. Harry Darlington and renamed "Highlawn"

"As You Like It," home of Mrs. William Thaw, Jr.

Courtesy of Glenn and Carol Bohn, Sewickley

New Member

Glenn A. Bohn, Sewickley

Signals is designed and edited by Susan C. Holton. Visit our website, www.sewickleyhistory.org — or e-mail us at sewickleyhistory@verizon.net.



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