

"EARLY EDGEWOOD PARK, PA"

TRY TO IMAGINE EDGEWOOD AS BEING TOTALLY UNINHABITED - A FOREST OR AS WE CALLED IT, A "WOODS". THE FIRST HOUSES WERE BUILT OF LOGS ALONG WHAT IS NOW THE AREA AROUND BRADDOCK AVENUE AND THE END OF WHAT IS NOW GREENDALE AVENUE. (ON THE FLAT ACROSS BRADDOCK AVENUE FROM THE END OF GREENDALE). WHY THAT LOCATION??? PROBABLY BEING NEAR THE ONLY ROAD IN THAT AREA AND TO BE NEAR NINE MILE RUN _ FOR DRINKING AND WASHING WATER. WE TRACED THE ORIGIN UP THE NINE MILE RUN THROUGH THE HEART OF WILKINSBURG TO DREAM CITY PARK - AN AMUSEMENT PARK ABOUT HALF WAY UP ROBINSON BOULEVARD ON THE LEFT.

IN 1875 JANE GRAY SWISSHELM BECAME STREET COMMISSIONER FOR STERRETT TOWNSHIP, WHICH LATER BECAME WILKINSBURG-EDGEWOOD AND SWISSVALE. SHE LAID OUT AND SUPERVISED THE CONSTRUCTION OF SWISSVALE AVENUE AND NAMED IT SWISSVALE AVENUE - CHANGING IT FROM ITS FORMER NAME, WATER STREET. IT WAS PROBABLY THE SECOND STREET LAID OUT IN THE AREA - AFTER BRADDOCK AVENUE.

SHE BUILT A HOUSE AT 235 WEST SWISSVALE AVENUE ABOUT 1875, DESIGNED SOMEWHAT IN THE FASHION OF A SWISS CHALET. A WELL WAS DUG NEAR THE BACK PORCH AND OF COURSE THEY HAD AN outhouse.

MAPLE AVENUE WAS PAVED IN THE EARLY 1890's AND WAS PROBABLY THE FIRST STREET IN EDGEWOOD PAVED AFTER BRADDOCK AND SWISSVALE AVENUES. I REMEMBER ERNIE CRAIGHEAD TELLING ME THAT, WHEN HE WAS ABOUT SEVEN YEARS OLD, HE STOOD AT THE LOWER PART OF MAPLE AVENUE AND WATCHED BRICK BEING LAID UP MAPLE PAST THE GRADE SCHOOL.

I WATCHED THE PAVING OF RACE, VINE, WASHINGTON, GREENDALE, EAST END AND SAVANNAH, EAST OF HUTCHINSON.

RACE STREET WAS PAVED ONLY FROM VINE TO PENNWOOD ABOUT 1912. THERE WAS A BOARD WALK UP THE RIGHT SIDE - WITH 12 x 1 FOOT WIDE BOARDS LAID TWO ABREAST AND A STEP UP AT EACH SET OF BOARDS. THERE WERE NO HOUSES ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF RACE - THAT WAS AN APPLE ORCHARD FROM THE PRESENT BALLFIELD TO PENNWOOD.

GREENDALE ONLY CAME UP TO WHERE THE TENNIS COURTS ARE NOW (BEFORE IT WAS PAVED), THEN TURNED RIGHT TO MEET VINE STREET. THERE WAS A WOODEN BRIDGE (AND A GAS LAMP POST) ON GREENDALE WHERE IT TURNED TOWARD VINE - NEAR WHERE THE CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND IS NOW. I DON'T RECALL EVER SEEING AN AUTO TRAVERSE THESE UNPAVED STREETS - ALL DELIVERIES WERE MADE BY HORSE AND WAGON - HUCKSTERS (SELLING FRUIT AND VEGETABLES) THE ICE MAN, FEEDSTORE (OATS FOR HORSES AND CORN FOR CHICKENS) DEPARTMENT STORES - GROCERIES - MILKMAN - RAG MAN - ICE CREAM MAN - WAFFLES AND SO FORTH. THERE WAS A HORSE WATERING TROUGH ON RACE STREET ABOUT WHERE THE BOROUGH BUILDING STEPS COME DOWN TO RACE. STREET

BACK OF THE PRESENT BOROUGH BUILDING WAS THE LOVE MANSION - A LARGE WHITE FRAME HOUSE AND LOVE PLACE WAS THE UNPAVED LANE RUNNING BACK TO THE HOUSE. THE LOVES WERE CLOSE FRIENDS OF JANE GRAY SWISSHELM AS WERE THE STEVENSON SISTERS, INDIA, MAUDE AND BIRDIE - ALSO A DICKSON FAMILY OF SWISSVALE (DICKSON SCHOOL & DICKSON FIELD WERE NAMED FOR THAT FAMILY). THE STEVENSONS LIVED IN A LARGE FRAME HOUSE ON WEST SWISSVALE WHERE THERE ARE NOW SEVERAL SMALLER HOMES JUST BELOW McDADES HOME

OVER AT BRADDOCK AND HUTCHINSON (CATICORNERED FROM THE DRUGSTORE) WAS ROGERS FARM. THERE WERE NO HOUSES ON BRADDOCK FROM HUTCHINSON UP TO OVERTON AND ON THE RIGH SIDE OF HUTCHINSON FROM BRADDOCK WAS ALL WOODS - NOW FRICK PARK - THEN CALLED FERN HOLLOW. THERE WAS A FARMHOUSE AND BARNS BACK OF THE FARM ON THE EDGE OF THE WOODS. THE FIRST AIRPLANE I EVER SAW WAS ON THIS FARM. THEY HAD A LARGE CANVAS TENT - WITH NO SIDES JUST CANVAS TOP AND TWO AIRPLANES. (FLY JUST OVER THE TREETOPS OVER FERN HOLLOW AND BACK - ONE AIRPLANE FELL AND THE PILOT WAS IN COLUMBIA HOSPITAL FOR TWO WEEKS BUT SURVIVED.

WHERE SWISSHELM PARK IS NOW WAS THE SWISSHELM FARM, OWNED BY JANE GRAY SWISSHELM AND HER HUSBAND JAMES. WHEN I WAS A BOY IT WAS STILL CALLED THE SWISSHELM FARM AND WAS RUN BY A FAMILY NAMED NOLTE. THE AREA NOW CALLED SWISSHELM PARK WAS THEN CALLED N. HOMESTEAD. WE WOULD TAKE A "TEDDY WAGON" OVER THERE AND PICK OUR OWN TOMATOES FOR .50 A BUSHEL. THE WAGON WOULD HOLD TWO BUSHEL. THEY HAD THE FIRST ELECTRIC MILKERS IN THE AREA AND WE, AS BOYS, WERE FASCINATED BY THE FACT THAT MRS. NOLTE WORE MEN'S TROUSERS.

THE GRADE SCHOOL WAS BUILT IN THREE SECTIONS AND WHILE THE THIRD SECTION WAS BEING BUILT WE WENT TO KINDERGARTEN IN THE BASEMENT OF THE OLD CHURCH. OUR TEACHERS WERE A MISS CLULEY AND MISS TURNER. ONE MORNING THEY TOOK US TO KOENIGS' HOUSE TO SEE THE PIGEONS. THEY HAD A LARGE PIGEON HOUSE BY THE SIDE PORCH ROOF. THAT IS THE ONLY TIME I REMEMBER SEEING MISS KOENIG, AS SHE CAME OUT ON THE SIDE PORCH TO GREET US. MISS KOENIG DIED WHEN I WAS IN THIRD GRADE, AS WAS, FRANCIS KOENIG -ART'S SISTER.

WE THEN WALKED TO WILKINSBURG TO A BLACKSMITH SHOP ON PENN AVENUE ABOUT 1/2 BLOCK BELOW WOOD STREET TOWARD THE RAILROAD. THE BLACKSMITH FINISHED SHOEING A HORSE THEN MADE EACH OF US A RING OUT OF A HORSESHOE NAIL.

IN 1915 WE WATCHED THEM BUILD THE FIRST EDGEWOOD HIGH SCHOOL BALL FIELD, ADJOINING THE TOP OF OUR PROPERTY - AT THE END OF MIFFLIN OVER TO THE END OF SAVANNAH - ABOUT A BLOCK SQUARE. THERE WERE NO MECHANIZED VEHICLES THEN. MOSTLY THEY USED WHAT WAS CALLED A "DUMP WAGON" WITH ONLY TWO WHEELS - HORSE DRAWN AND, THE BED OF THE WAGON COULD BE RAISED TO DUMP THE DIRT. IT WAS RED CLAY AND I REMEMBER BEFORE THE BALL FIELD WAS BUILD I SAW THE REMAINS OF A BRICK YARD - PROBABLY THERE BECAUSE OF THE RED CLAY.

WHAT IS NOW KOENING FIELD WAS THEN CALLED "THE PASTURE". JOHN MOUNTFORD AND HIS FAMILY LIVED IN THE RED FRAME HOUSE AT THE FOOT OF RACE STREET AND THE SMALL FRAME HOUSE NEXT TO IT, FACING GREENDALE, WAS THE STABLE FOR THE MOUNTFORDS' SIX COWS, THAT PASTURED WHERE THE KOENING FIELD IS NOW. ALL FOUR OF THE BLACK BOYS DELIVERED THE MOUNTFORDS' MILK (STILL WARM) TO A WAITING LIST OF CUSTOMERS AROUND RACE - VINE - WASHINGTON - TRENTON, etc. KOENING FIELD WAS BUILD ABOUT 1926.

ONE OF THE BOYS FAVORITE GAMES IN THOSE DAYS WAS "RUN SHEEPY RUN". MOST EVERY MOTHER THEN BAKED THEIR OWN BREAD AND PASTRYS AND KEPT A LARGE HEAVY PAPER FLOUR SACK IN THE HOUSE. WE WOULD SAVE THE "EMPTYIES" AND TEAR UP OLD NEWSPAPERS INTO LITTLE SQUARES UNTIL WE WOULD HAVE TWO OR THREE SACKS FULL OF "CONFETTI". THEN ON SATURDAY MORNINGS WE WOULD CHOOSE UP SIDES AND ONE SIDE WOULD START OUT

THROUGH THE WOODS - USUALLY TOWARD FERN HOLLOW. THEY TOOK THE "CONFETTI" AND HAD TO DROP A TRAIL SO THAT THE OTHER SIDE COULD FOLLOW THEM. THEY USUALLY HAD ABOUT A TEN MINUTE HEAD START AND, SOME TIMES WE WOULD BE ALL DAY, OR MOST OF IT, FOLLOWING THE TRAIL, BEFORE THE FIRST TEAM GOT GACK TO THE STARTING POINT. IT WAS GREAT FUN AND VERY GOOD EXERCISE.

WHY SWISSVALE AVENUE AND WEST SWISSVALE AVENUE? THERE WAS A CROSSING THAT CONNECTED THE TWO STREETS, WHICH WAS ELIMINATED IN 1897. JOHNSTON'S GROCERY STORE BUILDING, PRESENTLY THE ANTIQUE SHOP, WAS BUILT IN THREE SECTIONS - THE FIRST, JUST THE GROCERY STORE, THEN THE MEAT MARKET^{now Beauty Shop & shoe maker shop} - THEN THE DRUG STORE. THE FIRST WAS BUILT IN 1897 AND THE OTHER TWO, I'M SURE, WITHIN TEN YEARS - NEXT TO THE DRUG STORE WAS A ONE-ROOM FRAME BUILDING THAT YOU WENT UP ABOUT FOUR STEPS TO "MR. LUCKY'S BARBER SHOP" WHERE MANY OF US HAD OUR FIRST HAIRCUT.

JOHNSTONS GROCERY DID A VERY LARGE "CHARGE" GROCERY BUSINESS. THEY HAD SIX DELIVERY WAGONS AND SIX MULES, WITH A STABLE AT THE END OF LINDEN AND ACROSS ELM STREET. ABOUT 1910 (I WAS IN 4TH GRADE), IT BURNED TO THE GROUND AND JOHNSTONS THEN BOUGHT 6 FOOD DELIVERY TRUCKS (AS I REMEMBER THEY HAD BRASS FRONTS AND CANVAS SIDES THAT COULD BE ROLLED UP OR DOWN).

THE HIGH SCHOOL WHICH WAS BUILT IN 1916, HAD BEEN ON THE SECOND FLOOR OF GRADE SCHOOL. THE SCHOOL DISTRICT BOUGHT THE PROPERTY FROM THE EDGEWOOD CLUB WHO IN TURN HAD PURCHASED IT FROM A McDERMITT FAMILY - IT WAS A LARGE FRAME HOME AND THE CLUB BUILT AN ADDITION TO IT FOR BOWLING ALLEYS. BEHIND THE CLUB HOUSE THEY BUILT THREE CLAY TENNIS COURTS - WHICH WERE DOWN LOW ENOUGH THAT THEY BUILT BLEACHERS ON A SMALL HILLSIDE BETWEEN THE COURTS AND CLUB HOUSE FOR SPECTATORS. ALL THIS WAS FILLED IN WITH THE EARTH WHEN THEY EXCAVATED, FOR THE HIGH SCHOOL BASEMENT, TO MAKE THE PRESENT PLAYGROUND.

Andrew Carnegie
gave 1000 for the library
(only one in the
area) and the
library was
named after
him.

C.C. MELLOR (MELLOR PIANO CO. - WOOD STREET - DOWNTOWN) HAD A LARGE HOME
ON THE GROUNDS OF THE PRESENT EDGEWOOD CLUB - THE GROUNDS WERE UP HIGHER THAN THE
STREET (EVIDENTLY ON A LEVEL WITH THE STREET WHEN W. SWISSVALE MET THE CROSSING
TO E. SWISSVALE. MR. MELLOR DONATED THE PROPERTY FOR THE EDGEWOOD CLUB AND
MELLOR MEMORIAL LIBRARY. IT WAS COMPLETED IN 1916 AND I REMEMBER SITTING ON
THE FRONT STEPS WHEN A TROOP TRAIN STOPPED TO TAKE ON LOCAL MILITIA TO GO TO
THE MEXICAN BORDER TO FIGHT PANCHO VILLA. ^{in 1916} WE RECOGNIZED AN EDGEWOOD FELLOW
BY THE NAME OF HOD TUCKER WHO LIVED ON MIFFLIN AVENUE. WE ALL STARTED TO
HOLLER, "BRING US BACK A GREASER" - AN EXPRESSION OF THE TIME.

MANY CHANGES TOOK PLACE IN EDGEWOOD IN 1916 - THE HIGH SCHOOL - THE CHURCH
AND CLUB WERE ALL COMPLETED THAT YEAR AND THE STATION WAS RAISED 3FT AS WERE THE
TRACKS AND THE CEMENT WALL WAS BUILT FROM THE EDGEWOOD STATION TO THE
WILKINSBURG STATION TO ELIMINATE THE RAILROAD CROSSING IN WILKINSBURG AT
REBECCA, SOUTH, ROSS AND PENN AVENUE.

MANY PEOPLE WERE KILLED AT THE CORSSING AFTER THE AUTOMOBILE CAME IN - A
SHOEMAKER'S (ON REBECCA,) WIFE AND FOUR CHILDREN WERE KILLED AT REBECCA STREET
CROSSING - GOING TO A PICNIC AT KENNYWOOD.

UNPAVED STREETS - GREENDALE (DUQUESNE) RACE - VINE - WASHINGTON - WALNUT
ABOVE BEECH - GORDON PROPERTY WENT DOWN TO RAILROAD. MORRIS, CHESTNUT TO
OAKVIEW (NOT CUT THROUGH TO LLOYD) - WEST SWISSVALE PAVED TO WHERE HARLOW IS
NOW - EAST END, SAVANNAH AND MIFFLIN - EAST OF HUTCHINSON. *Auction of 4th on Harrison & Harlow*

OLDEST HOUSES IN EDGEWOOD - OURS AT 500 GREENDALE ONE OF THE OLDEST
STEVENSONS (SLAVE WOOD CARVER) - ^{Now Oaks} CADMANS - ^{Now Breelands} GORDONS - CRAIGHEADS
OLDEST STILL STANDING - GORDONS , 150 GORDON STREET, CHANGED TO 327 CHESTNUT
(WHEN CHESTNUT WAS CUT THROUGH TO LLOYD) BUILT 1857.

CRAIGHEADS, 159 LaCROSS AND JANE GRAY SWISSHELMS, 235 WEST SWISSVALE in 1875.

A. W. CADMANS, 155 WASHINGTON STREET. (MR. CADMAN WAS THE SON OF SAMPSON CADMAN WHO BUILT THE HOUSE IN 1867 - HE WAS ONE OF THE FIRST COUNCILMEN WHEN EDGEWOOD WAS INCORPORATED IN 1888. HE WAS ALSO A CHARTER MEMBER OF THE EDGEWOOD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, AND OF THE EDGEWOOD CLUB.

DANIEL McAFEE - PENNWOOD AND WASHINGTON STREETS ERECTED 1895 - WAS A BUILDING CONTRACTOR, ERECTING WESTERN EXPOSITION BUILDING (ON THE POINT), HOLY GHOST COLLEGE (DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY) SIXTH WARD SCHOOL - PITTSBURGH AND, I THINK, ERECTED THE ORIGINAL SOUTH AVENUE METHODIST CHURCH.

IN CONCLUSION - I HOPE I HAVE GIVEN YOU SOME INSIGHT OF HOW EDGEWOOD HAS DEVELOPED FROM A WOODED, HILLY AREA - NO DOUBT INHABITED BY DEER, BEARS AND OTHER WILD ANIMALS, HUNTED BY INDIANS AND GRADUALLY DEVELOPED INTO ONE OF THE FINEST MIDDLE CLASS COMMUNITIES IN ALLEGHENY COUNTY, IN WHICH I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN THANKFUL I WAS BORN IN AND RAISED OUR TWO DAUGHTERS IN.

I'D LIKE, IN CONCLUSION, TO LEAVE YOU WITH A LITTLE VERSE I MEMORIZED MANY YEARS AGO;

"BE CAREFUL OF THE WORDS YOU SAY AND KEEP THEM SOFT AND SWEET, YOU NEVER KNOW FROM DAY TO DAY, WHICH ONES YOU HAVE TO EAT."