



# Slippery Rock Park Civic Association

Phone: 412/287-7056

514 North Main Street

Box 29, Butler, PA 16001

TO: Committee consisting of President Graber, Al Graber, George Staudacher, Buzz Miller and Paul Baroutsis

At the last Director's Meeting on May 1, you were appointed to study the importance of a hydro power plant on our dam. We are to study it, reach our decision Sunday morning and report our decision at the next directors meeting.

I would like to address you in the future as:

## "THE DAM COMMITTEE"

I shall never forget what an important part a former dam committee had in the late forties and the early fifties.

But let me start earlier than that, in 1822. Deposits of iron ore, limestone and coal near the surface of the land had led to the blast furnace to turn the three into pig iron. Several of these iron mongeries were established in Butler County in the early days. One of these was on Slippery Rock Creek near our present dam and the other near Keister called Hickory Furnace.

In 1822, Dr. John Thompson built the hydro power plant on the property we know today as the George Wilson property

Long after these furnaces went out of blast, due to the discovery of the huge deposits of iron ore and limestone which led to making Pittsburgh the center of pig iron making and the center of the steel making and thus making Pittsburgh the steel making center of the United States.

Now let us jump to 1914. Five of us boys were camping on this property owned by Loyal F. Daugherty. I was seventeen years old. Mr. Daugherty used this old wooden dam and the hydro power it furnished to run his grist mill. A grist mill was two stones, circular, flat and about twelve feet in diameter to grind grain into wheat for the farmers. Farmers brought the grain to be ground into flour or feed for their domesticated animals. During the two weeks we camped there, I saw hundreds of wagon loads of grain brought to be ground. Now remember that the power came from the old wooden dam built in 1822 by Dr. John Thompson.

I shall never forget one day when Mrs. Daugherty came down to our camp and she said that she was serving chicken dinners to the people in Butler who owned automobiles, but she was unable to get the help to serve the chicken dinners. If we would serve the dinners, she would give us each a chicken dinner. Boy, did we jump at that offer!

That night twenty cars were parked in her yard. Many years later this led to the formation of the Automobile Club of Butler County. Just think of the thousands of members who now belong.

The L. F. Daugherty farm changed hands many times. It finally became the property of George Blythe, who gave it to his son Donald with whom the residents of the park tried so hard to build a new dam where the original wooden dam deteriorated in the late forties. As we saw the wooden dam disintegrating, board after board, a "Dam Committee" was formed. We had no boating on the creek, just five or six pools, where you could not use a boat.

As you all know, Don Blythe demanded \$25,000.00 from the Civic Association to build a new dam on the site of the original wooden dam. We could not possibly do that and the "Dam Committee" tried every possible answer to build a new dam at the site of our fallen bridge.

William J. Dillner was president of the association at that time. He was the president and chief owner of the Dillner Transfer and Storage Company in Pittsburgh.

I can best tell the story from here on by enclosing a copy of a letter I wrote to Slippery Rock Park Civic Association members on August 16, 1973. Since then many of the members named in the letter changed, and the circumstances have changed but the story of the "Dam Committee" has not changed a bit.

# SLIPPERY ROCK PARK CIVIC ASSOCIATION

By

Ralph A. Nicholas

August 16, 1973

I have been asked to write the story of Slippery Rock Park Civic Association, how it began, what it means to every home owner, permanent or summer, and why every single cottager should belong.

If I use the personal "I" too often, you will have to forgive me. The Association, even as the Park, is a part of me, and I am a part of it, just as the loving relationship between a parent and child. If this were the story of the Park, it would be "we" because my wife has been as much a part of it as "I", but this is the story of the Civic Association of which I have been secretary since its inception and I shall try to keep it so.

To properly understand the true meaning of the Civic Association, you have to go back to the beginning of the Park, which was bought in 1925, laid out in lots in 1927 and sales begun in 1928.

The first sign of interest was in 1926 when Ordell Crawford built a cottage on rented ground where the Helmerichs now live. Lot No. 1 was very carefully laid out around his cottage. The plan was laid out by Aiken and Greenough (Dee Greenough was the father of Bill Greenough, the Civil Engineer whom many of you know.) There was a tremendous problem.

Slippery Rock Creek was a non-navigable stream. If I sold a lot to John Smith, and Pete Jones owned the land on the other side, they could build a fence across the creek and prevent boating. Not a problem at all with our 1973 20-20 hind sight vision. It was a tremendous problem then. Their final solution was the "Reserve" tract. It

seemed a fine solution. I "bought" it and so did 62 lot purchasers in 1928 and 60 odd in 1929. No questions asked. Crawford's attorney helped my attorney draw up the first four standard restrictions in all your deeds.

Later, about nine or ten years, as I remember, there were questions and a great deal of concern. Dozens of cottages had been built along Creek Drive, Lone Pine Way and Mohawk Trail. At first there was a Mohawk Trail but no Creek Drive. The only way one could come into the Park was the three mile dirt road from Stoughton's Beach (now Rock Falls Park), and the dirt Mohawk Trail and a terrible swamp (now Hap's lake, along Golf View Drive). Yes, that young developer, Ralph Nicholas, had done what he promised when we bought our lots, build the bridge, a road down over the hill to it from the Slippery Rock road, hauled 90 rail car loads of furnace slag brought from Pittsburgh to Muddy Creek to build roads, built the dance hall and the Golf Course. Every promise he made when he took our money, but what if he decided to sell the Reserve Tract in front of our cottages? "That would be terrible!"

So the "Watergate" questions arose and the cottagers called a meeting one Sunday morning in Crawford's cottage to settle the matter. Was I called on the carpet to answer the questions!!

The first question hurled at me: "Would I sell the Reserve Tract and how much per lot?" The answer was "Yes, it is a recorded plan, but if they could arrange the legal end of it, they could fix the price."

So everybody put a slip with a price on it into a hat. The prices ran from \$25.00 to \$100.00, with an average of \$50.00, as I remember it. And even if it were a recorded plan which required 100% approval of all property owners to change it, that our intention from its inception was never to sell the Reserve Tract, I promised that I

would record such a statement, which is recorded in Butler County Register and Records office, Deed Book 494, page 5, on November 14, 1938.

Everybody relaxed, and Slippery Rock Park Civic Association was born, a loose organization of property owners in the Park. R. O. Crawford was elected President and I was elected Secretary.

I might say in passing, that the question of sale of the Reserve Tract to each lot owner has arisen many times. There never was 100% agreement, because the "inside" lot owners would lose the privilege of going down to the Creek and using it, and objected. I learned my lesson too. How, at this point in the history of Slippery Rock Creek could anybody build a fence across the creek and prevent boating? So in the 40's when new Route 8 was built on my property, Addition No. 1 and No. 2, both along Route 8, were laid out with the lots being deeded to the middle of the Creek. So was Addition No. 3 (Overlook Drive) and so were Additions IV through IX in 1955. The Reserve Tract remains only a problem to the property owners in the original Slippery Rock Park Plan of lots. I have wished a thousand times it could be solved properly, not just partially, as I have, with all my might, tried to solve it.

For example: when the Cole property came on the market, I bought it, retained a 15 foot right-of-way from Creek Drive to the Reserve Tract, and 50' of the Reserve Tract. Then sold the remaining property, now Sam Marshal's between Carney and Barrera.

That solved the problem for the inside lot owners, such as Buc Buchanan and John Saloki, or seems to have. But suppose John Saloki sells to someone who insists on his deeded rights to go down a 15' right-of-way between Howard Gray and Clarence Rennick and build a boat house, dock, etc. smack in front of Grays or

Remnicks cottage or any other cottage on the Reserve Tract along Creek Drive? It could be a nightmare.

In 1955 I tried to solve the problem along Mohawk Trail. We had an auction and sold many, many lots. But any inside lot along Mohawk Trail was sold without the privilege of going to the Reserve Tract and building a boat house, but with an undivided interest in the Reserve Tract known as the "Little Beach" at the Wadsworth Bridge, so they could boat and swim. Fortunately, the inside lots along Mohawk Trail were bought by owners of cottages for a garage or parking lots, or pure additions to their land, as in now the case of George Staudacher and John Hawk. The few lots I am now selling along that section will also be sold with no privilege of the Reserve Tract, except the Little Beach. I am committed to that.

The problem was <sup>further solved</sup> ~~not solved~~ in 1963, when Armco bought Additions IV, VII, and IX to enlarge the Golf Course to 27 holes. Addition No. IV consisted of over 100 lots. This tract is the jungle across from Mohawk Trail, where the spring is causing a swamp. My present opinion is that Armco is having trouble getting enough members for an 18 hole course, let alone a 27 hole course. They have almost cemented that judgment by building their maintenance shed by the proposed No. 27 Green.

Another example: We happen to still own 11 lots across the Creek from our cottages between Shames and Hotchkiss. Even at \$30-\$40 a foot front we will never sell, because we enjoy our privacy. But he could not give Reserve Tract privileges on my Reserve Tract. In my best judgment that solves the Reserve Tract problem along all of Mohawk Trail.

This year or next I shall attempt to sell the lots I still own back of Howard Bridenbaugh, Margaret Kohn and Ray Wallace and fully

expect to give them Reserve Tract privileges in front of Murray, Queen, Anderson-Boyts, where the Reserve Tract is so wide that it will not interfere with their driveway nor detract from their value.

So, in my opinion, the Reserve Tract which really gave birth to the Civic Association, and was a mistake in the first place, presents no real problem today to anyone, but I still cling to my opinion that ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> ~~if~~ could be properly solved by the Civic Association and me while I am still around. Personally, I would rather own a lot to the middle of the creek than to have only deeded privileges to use the land along the creek.

But I have wandered from the story of Slippery Rock Park Civic Association, what it means to property owners and why they should want to belong at any cost--not just a \$5.00 share of stock, and \$10.00 annual dues.

The Association, loosely-knit as it was, remained a staunch power of strength over the years. During the depression days, when none of us had any money, the road through the Park blew off. The 12" of slag which I had ~~but~~ <sup>put</sup> on diminished to 5" or 6" and the road was full of pot holes. We had a dust problem and no road. The Association brought pressure on Slippery Rock Township Road Supervisors to put calcium on. They finally did. The time came for the township to "adopt" the road. They refused. The Association and I took them to Court and forced them to take it over. The dividing line between Brady Township and Slippery Rock Township ran east and west across my open field about 100' south of Helmrichs cottage and about Ray Welty's or Ed Goldsmith's. Everything south of it was Brady Township and north Slippery Rock. The court worked a proposition to which everybody agreed. Change the township line so that Slippery Rock Township would get the taxes south of Helmrichs in the Park and then build the road.

Brady would lose the taxes, not have the road. The Court so ordered, officially changed the Townships' line, and we got our public road, which was then improved to about what it is today.

Without the help of the Association, all of whom were witnesses and who were largely prominent Butler businessmen at the time, I would have gotten nowhere, and the Park would have gone to pot.

The Association got us garbage collection, and remained just a loosely-knit property owners Association until the real tragedy happened.

About 1946 or 1947 (don't ask me to check dates exactly) we noticed that a board had broken loose on the wooden dam at the Slippery Rock Road which gives us our deep water. Then a few more. We offered to furnish the lumber and fix it. The owner would not let us touch it. For about two years we watched this dam disintegrate and for seven years we had no boating, just pools here and there. The Association formed the "Dam Committee" made up of our <sup>q's</sup> most progressive and influential members who approached the owner with every plan we could think of. He wanted \$25,000.00, as I remember, for the dam site. No one would consider that. But the Association had lots of muscle and guts and every year tried a new approach. Plans were drawn, State permission obtained, to build a new dam at the Nicholas Bridge. Half a loaf is better than no loaf. Then someone came up with a <sup>brilliant</sup> idea. If the owner of the dam would not permit a new one to be built, why not try to build a new one just above it. The Committee got Norma Straub and Sal Stoughton, who owned the land just above the dam, to give a deed 450 feet above the dam for a strip 50 feet wide and for enough of land to build a dam. They did so, and we were ready to raise the money.

Bill Dillner, head of Dillner Transfer and Storage Co. in Pittsburgh, was President at that time. He pledged \$500.00 and so did I. Many



pledged \$100 - \$300. We raised about \$6000 or \$7000, but no more.

Then the Association really came to life. The resistance of the owner of the dam collapsed. We could build the dam on the old site and acquire the ~~REPAIR~~ <sup>RIGHTS</sup> to high water level clear to the shallows at Wadsworth Bridge.

By 1955, Bill Dillner and his attorney, Ernie Adamson, and Cline, who ran Bill's Dodge agency in Slippery Rock formed a non-profit corporation, Slippery Rock Park Civic Association. With ~~far~~ <sup>far</sup> more muscle than the former Association, one which could sell stock with par value \$50.00 and raise the money that way.

The plans for the dam had been ~~made~~ <sup>made</sup> permission from the State obtained, and a bid to build the dam for \$17,500.00

I shall never forget that first meeting of the Corporation. Bill called it to order, and announced that he would buy \$2000.00 worth of stock and that I would also. Having gone broke in the 1929 Depression, and having taught school from 1931 to 1944 to keep my family alive and try to hang on to the Park (my salary did increase from \$980.00 a year to \$1600.00 in 1944 when I quit, with \$25.00 a month going to save the Park), it seemed like all the money in the world. But again, that's my story, not the Association's.

~~Our~~ <sup>One</sup> pledges were made, others \$100.00 to \$500.00, Armco donated \$1000, and so we raised \$14,500. On the endorsement of five of us, the Slippery Rock Bank loaned us \$3000 and the dam was built. The Association owns it and that is worth many times the value of a share of stock. I must not forget to say that the Business Men's Bureau of Slippery Rock were very helpful and many people who had no personal interest in the Park bought stock to save this beautiful section of Slippery Creek.

Just one more comment about the dam, the most vital thing the Association has ever done. There has always been a "watergate" in

history. Soon the question was raised that Bill and I had control of a non-profit corporation. To solve that problem, Bill had a few shares issued to his dad and uncles (4 or 5 as I remember) and I had one issued to me and one to Hap. We got away with the rest as a contribution. Know my I.R.S. today as I do, we couldn't today.

Then a year or two later there was a great division in the Park. Either you had bought a share of stock, or you hadn't, or couldn't. To solve it, the decision was reached to sell the stock for \$5.00. Those who had not, or could not buy previously, were urged to buy from the many multiple share owners, who could take their loss on their Income Tax that year. Well, it worked very well. There are few multiple share owners today, almost all cottage owners are members and pay their dues. There are some new residents who have not known about the Association, or who have not bothered to have the stock of the former owners transferred.

If this story of Slippery Rock Park Civic Association over almost fifty years does not get you off your duff, then I'll tell you just one more thing.

Having Jim Clements as President should. I have known many able ~~and~~ <sup>AND</sup> progressive presidents over the years, such as Ordell Crawford, Dr. Hardin, George Dillich, Bill Dillner in past years, and recently George Lackey and Hap Nicholas, but never have I known or been associated with a President who spends more time and energy, or who has more ideas to make Slippery Rock Park a better place in which to live, than Jim Clements. I could list many ideas he has which have not come to the surface yet, but if the picnic, the road signs, the Township Road signs, the Beach restoration, clean-up day, aren't enough for a first-term administration, why say more? And your Directors, with the time and energy and enthusiasm they personally

devote to the Association, and Jane Lackey, our very able treasurer, I think I can unequivocally say back him to the hilt. Slippery Rock Park is revitalized, largely through <sup>his</sup> all efforts. Back him!

It is very simple. Either you own a share of stock and paid your dues, you are a member and you own a chunk of Slippery Rock Creek and your property value is bound to go only up. If you have paid your dues, but do not own a share of stock in your own name, I can help you get it transferred from the former owner to you, or if that's too much trouble, just buy a share for \$5.00, and be a member of an organization that is so necessary to all of us property owners.

Now that <sup>the</sup> ~~as~~ Secretary of the Association has told his memory of the Association, let me add a personal note. Over the last week or two I have not been feeling too well, but had planned to go to the office today, as usual. My wife and her house guest, her sister from California, had taken off for Pittsburgh as we had planned, before I got up. Then I decided I should not go to the office today, but what should I do for a day all alone? Well, it suddenly occurred to me that I could write this, as I never find time to do such things in the office.

On my beach, overlooking half a mile of the creek, I began. I first saw ~~George~~ Shame and his two children come by, and we waved. I saw a Riviera Cruiser, it must be Bob Spatholt, as he came down not up the Creek. Any number of boats with young people whom I did not know, and do not know me from Adam. Then came two girls in a canoe. It could only be Anne Oesterling, who is a very beautiful, lolls in her canoe, and runs it with an out-board motor on the side. Sure it was Anne. Then a pack of young people swimming or floating on rafts near the Wymer cottage. Knowing what swimmers Carolyn and Randy are I judged it a party of one of them, they floated and swam down to my dock, landed and walked up to the road and back. Seven of them. And one little girl who

was slow in catching up with them, yelled "You guys, if you leave me here I'll never forgive you." But they did. Finally she landed, took after them and probably caught them. I am sure one of them was her boyfriend and she did forgive him. That's what Slippery Rock Park is all about!

At the meeting in the old dance hall, Bill Dillner called to announce the organization of the new Civic Association. There were several hundred people present. He announced the details. A share of stock would cost \$100.00. He personally would buy \$2000.00 and so would Ralph.

You can imagine how I felt. I had formed the Golf Association, built the dance hall, the new bridge and creek drive. I was deeply in debt and to support my family was teaching school. My salary when I started in 1931 was \$1,080.00 a year and when I quit in 1944 I was earning \$1,600.00. I nearly died at his announcement, but had to agree and managed to survive. Some of those present bought \$100.00 worth of stock, a total of 5 or 6 thousand dollars worth were sold.

But the present Slippery Rock Park Civic Association was formed and legally sound.

In the meantime Don Blythe died without getting \$25,000.00 to use the site of the disintegrated wooden dam. His widow and children signed an Article of Agreement with the association which granted us the right to build our dam on the site of the old wooden dam.

Later the price of the stock was reduced to \$5.00 a share.

At the present we have members who own stock (1 to 3 shares) and have paid their \$10.00 dues.

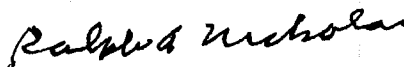
Now we are ready to begin another big project - build a hydro power plant on our dam.

Presently, so much has happened since our last meeting. Bill Johnson has offered to come back and solve our problems. That I think is a very generous offer, along with the fact that I have personally paid \$1,350.00 to Olsen, Zarnick & Seybert as consultants.

I am to have my eye operated on to remove my cataracts and a cornea transplant next Monday. Then I hope I won't need to use a magnifying glass to see and read and will be able to work with our present "Dam Committee".

Cordially,

Slippery Rock Park Civic Association



Ralph A. Nicholas

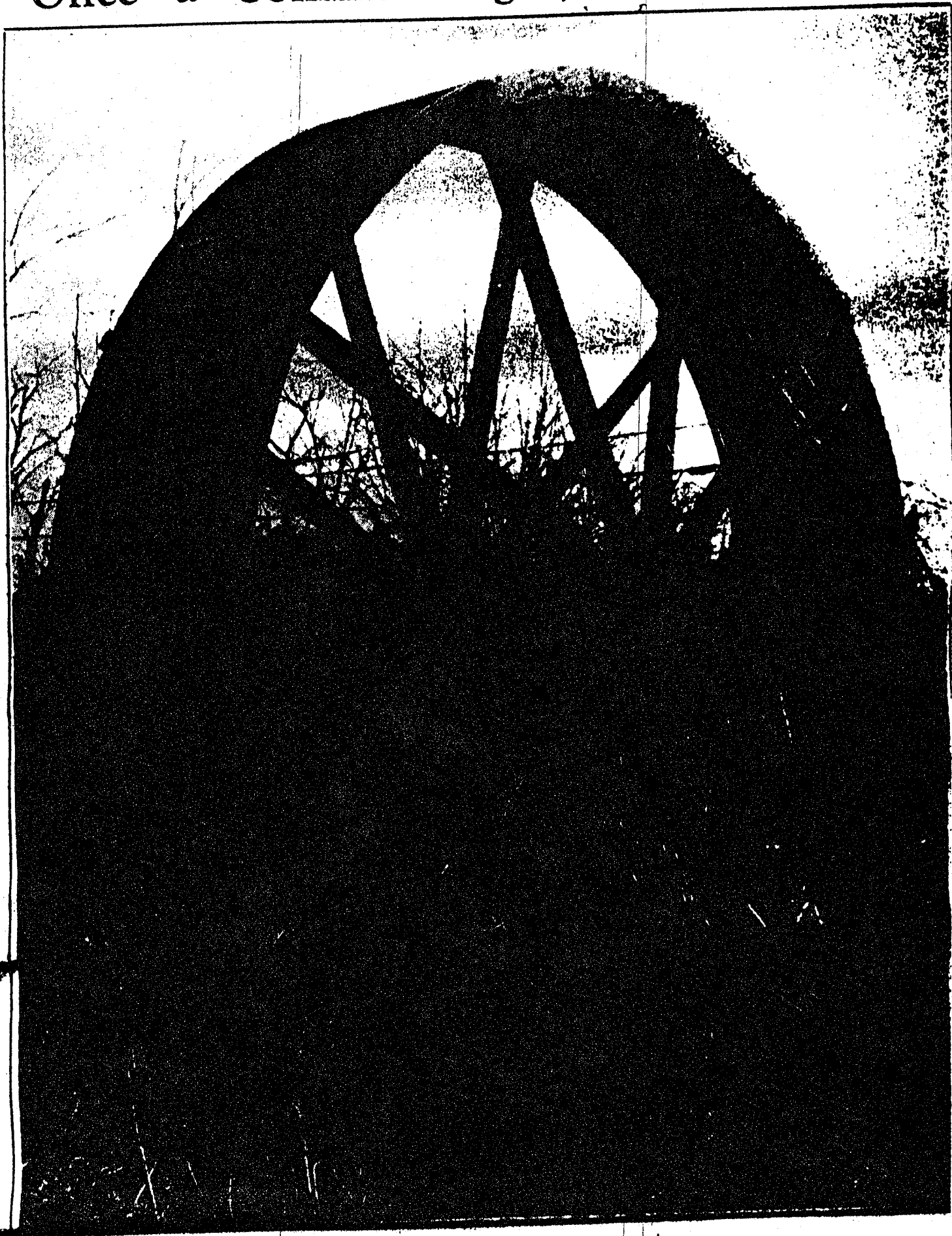
Enclosures

RAN:avy

May 1983

THE PRINCETON RECOLLECTOR

# Once a Common Sight, Little is Left



7

The second iron blast furnace was at Mount Etna, built in 1822 on Slippery Rock Creek. Dr. John Thompson operated it until financial difficulties forced him to give up, though he later repaid all his creditors, and it was sold at Sheriff's sale to David McJunkin. He ran it for seven years and in turn leased it to Ephraim Rose, John Near and Company, and Robert McGowan. William S. Bingham also operated the furnace before 1840, when it blew out. The furnace was located at Etna Mills on Slippery Rock Creek.

A third furnace was on Slippery Rock Creek at Keister, where the original dam still is in operation. It was called Hickory Furnace.

Both Etna and Hickory produced good ore but transportation difficulties were too much for successful and profitable business.

Etna mills was located on the property you now know as George Wilsons', and where I told you in 1914 was the property of Loyal F. Daugherty, who owned the original dam and the stone archway connecting the creek under Rt. 253 for power to his grist mill. Just look at the drawing of the George Wilson property made by my consulting engineers, Ron Olson and Bill Johnson.

*Ralph*  
*A. Nicholas*  
*Developer*  
*Slippery Rock Park*  
*514 N. Main St.*  
*Butler, Pa. 16001*  
*AC 412-287-7733*

December 20, 1973

To: ALL COTTAGE OWNERS IN SLIPPERY ROCK PARK

Dear *Don and Anne*:

The enclosed data has to do with three things and it will take less than an hour to read it.

PART I. The history of SLIPPERY ROCK PARK CIVIC ASSOCIATION was written for a News Letter, but since the one containing pictures of Clean-Up Day and the Picnic was more important, this one would not go out until April. Most of you are members in good standing, owning a share of stock and having paid 1973 dues. To you it is just history. To the newcomers, and those who have not belonged nor paid dues, it is tremendously important that you realize what the CIVIC ASSOCIATION means to all of us property owners and that you take the step of owning a share of stock and paying 1974 dues and be a member in good standing.

My judgment is that it cannot wait until next spring to go out as a News Letter, and so I am sending it to every resident, whether a member of the ASSOCIATION or not, at my own expense, and am attaching a note at the end of PART I to those who do not own a share of stock, showing the name of the previous owner of your cottage who does, and who would gladly turn it over to you, as should have been done when he sold his cottage.

PART II. Only the officers and Directors of the ASSOCIATION know of the tremendous effort that has been made this year toward having the State remove the trees that have fallen into the creek and also those about to fall, under the Stream Clearance Act. Every member should be aware of it, and, so, I am sending the reports to you which have been sent to the Directors. We are very hopeful that, with Don Oesterling's help, it will be done next year.



PART III. This part is purely personal. It is a marketing approach to sell lots, and will be sent to many prospects. I am sending it to you now, so that if you have friends who are interested in the Park, they may select the best lots ahead of the "crunch" which I hope will come in the Spring. If you will look at some of the lots as temporarily laid out with red stakes, 100' x 300' more or less, most covered with huge trees, with a view of the creek or the golf course, either on the creek or with access to it, you will agree with me that they are beautiful, and you can recommend them to friends as a good buy.

Just let Jim Clements show them to you. If he happens to be unavailable at the time you want to look, I will be available.

Cordially,



Ralph A. Nicholas  
Developer

RAN:pd  
Encl.

Hap, Olga, their family, Mary Jane and I wish you a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.



# Slippery Rock Park Civic Association

Phone: 412/287-7056

514 North Main Street

Box 29, Butler, Pa. 16001

## PART I

### SLIPPERY ROCK PARK CIVIC ASSOCIATION

By Ralph A. Nicholas, Secretary

August 16, 1973

I have been asked to write the story of SLIPPERY ROCK PARK CIVIC ASSOCIATION, how it began, what it means to every home owner, permanent or summer, and why every owner should belong.

To properly understand the true meaning of the ASSOCIATION you have to go back to the beginning of the Park. The first property was purchased in 1925, the original plan laid out in 1927, and sales begun in 1928. By July 1929, the bridge had been built, the roads made of steel mill slag 12" to 15" thick, the dance hall and golf course built, more than 130 lots sold and dozens of cottages erected.

Then the Depression, which hit the country in October, 1929, caught us in July. There were no more lots sold or cottages built until 1936. During the Depression days, when none of us had any money, the most of the road through the Park blew off. The original 12" to 15" of slag diminished to 5" or 6", and the road was full of pot holes. We had a dust problem and not much of a road.

A group of us got together to request the Township Road Supervisors to put calcium on it. They finally did. Then came the time to pressure the township to "adopt" the road as a public road. They refused.

This was in the late thirties, and we had grown into a loosely-knit CIVIC ASSOCIATION, which had elected Ordell Crawford its President and me its Secretary, and decided to take the Supervisors to Court. And we won.

Every lot and cottage south of what is now Helmrigh's and Welty's, lay in Brady Township; everything north of this dividing line lay in Slippery Rock Township. The Court worked out a solution to which everybody agreed: change the Township line, so that Slippery Rock Township would get all the taxes in the Park and adopt the road; Brady Township would get no taxes from the Park and would not have to participate in the road.

About 1946 or 1947 (don't ask me to check dates exactly) we noticed that a board had broken loose on the wooden dam at the Slippery Rock Road, which gave us our deep water. Then a few more. We offered to furnish the lumber and fix it. The owner would not let us touch it. For about two years we watched the dam disintegrate and for seven years we had no boating, just pools here and there. The ASSOCIATION formed the "Dam Committee", made up of our most progressive and influential members, who approached the owner with every plan we could think of. He wanted \$25,000.00, as I remember, for the dam site. No one would consider that. But the ASSOCIATION had lots of muscle and guts and every year tried a new approach. Plans were drawn, State permission obtained, to build a new dam at the bridge which has collapsed since then. Half a loaf is better than no loaf. Then someone came up with a brilliant idea! If the owner of the dam would not permit a new one to be built, why not try to build a new one just above it? The Committee got Norman Straub and Sol Stoughton, who owned the land just above the dam, to give a deed 50 feet above the dam for a strip 50 feet wide and far enough inland to build a dam. They did so, and we were ready to raise the money.

Bill Dillner, head of Dillner Transfer and Storage Co. in Pittsburgh, was President at that time. He pledged \$500.00 and so did I. Many pledged \$100.00 - \$300.00. We raised about \$6,000 or \$7,000, but no more.

At this point, the resistance of the owner of the dam collapsed. We could build the dam on the old site and acquire the riparian rights to high water level clear to the shallows at Wadsworth Bridge. Then the ASSOCIATION really came to life.

By 1955, Bill Dillner and his attorney, Ernie Adamson, and L.H. Cline, who ran Bill's Dodge agency in Slippery Rock, formed a Non-Profit Corporation, SLIPPERY ROCK PARK CIVIC ASSOCIATION, with far more muscle than the former ASSOCIATION, one which could sell stock, par value \$50.00, and raise the money that way.

The plans for the dam had been made, permission from the State obtained, and a bid to build the dam for \$17,500.00 was received.

I shall never forget the first meeting of the Corporation to sell stock. Bill called it to order, and announced that he would buy \$2,000.00 worth of stock and I did the same.

Our pledges were made, others pledged \$100.00 to \$600.00, Armco donated \$1,000.00, and so we raised \$14,500.00. On the endorsement of five of us, the Slippery Rock Bank loaned us \$3,000.00 and the dam was built. The ASSOCIATION owns it and that is worth many times the value of a share of stock. I must not forget to say that the Businessmen's Bureau of Slippery Rock were very helpful and many people who had no personal interest in the Park bought stock to save this beautiful section of Slippery Rock Creek.

Just one more comment about the dam, the building of which is the most vital thing the ASSOCIATION has ever done. The question was raised by minority shareholders that Bill and I had control of the Non-Profit Corporation. What to do? To solve that problem, Bill had a few shares issued to his dad and uncles (4 or 5, as I remember) and I had one issued to me and one to Hap. We got away with the rest as a contribution.

Then a year or two later, there was a great division in the Park. Either you had bought a share of stock, or you hadn't, or couldn't. To solve it, the decision was reached to sell the stock for \$5.00. Those who had not bought, or could not buy previously, were urged to buy from the many multiple share-owners, who could take their loss on their Income Tax that year. Well, it worked very well. There are a few multiple share owners today, almost all cottage owners are members, and pay their dues. There are some new residents who have not known about the ASSOCIATION, or who have not bothered to have the stock of former owners transferred, when they purchased their cottages.

If this story of SLIPPERY ROCK PARK CIVIC ASSOCIATION over almost fifty years does not motivate the few who have not participated, then I'll tell you just one more thing that should. Having Jim Clements as President should. I have known many able and progressive presidents over the years, such as Ordell Crawford, Dr. Harden, George Dillich, Bill Dillner, in past years, and recently, George Lackey and Hap Nicholas, but never have I known or been associated with a President who spends more time and energy, or who has more ideas, to make Slippery Rock Park a better place in which to live, than Jim Clements. I could list many ideas he has which have not come to the surface yet, but if the picnic, the road signs, the Township Road signs, the News Letter, and Clean-Up Day aren't enough for a first-term administration, why say more? And your Directors, with the time and energy and enthusiasm they personally devote to the ASSOCIATION, and Jane Lackey, our very able Treasurer, I think I can unequivocally say, back him to the hilt. Slippery Rock Park is revitalized, largely through his efforts. Back him!

It is very simple. If you own a share of stock and paid your dues, you are a member in good standing and you own a chunk of Slippery Rock Creek and your property value is bound to go only up. If you have paid your dues, but do not own a share of stock in your own name, I can help you get it transferred from the former owner to you. Or if that is too much trouble, just buy a share for \$5.00, and be a member of an organization that is so necessary to the welfare of the Slippery Rock Park community as a whole.

Our records show that you own stock certificate number 181, have paid your 1973 dues and are an active member in good standing. Don, nobody knows better than I that "active" is the understatement of the year. We all appreciate very much what you have contributed to the Association.

R.A.N.



# Slippery Rock Park Civic Association

Phone: 412/287-7056

514 North Main Street

Box 29, Butler, Pa. 16001

## PART II

### STREAM CLEARANCE

July 12, 1973 At the suggestion of Don Oesterling, a member of SLIPPERY ROCK PARK CIVIC ASSOCIATION, and Deputy Secretary, Department of Environmental Resources, the ASSOCIATION wrote to Mr. Clifford McConnell, Deputy Secretary Resources Management, requesting that the fallen trees, and those trees about to fall, be removed from the creek.

July 24, 1973 Mr. McConnell replied that the work done last summer was funded under the Federal Disaster Assistance Program and not the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. He would, however, have his District Engineer, in Carnegie, look at our situation.

Sept. 5, 1973 Don wrote letters to Vernon T. Houghton, District Engineer, Carnegie, Byron Breisch, District Conservationist, United States Soil Conservation Service, Butler, and to Mr. McConnell, urging action on our request.

Sept. 20, 1973 Mr. Houghton made the inspection trip, accompanied by ten of us. After lunch he talked for an hour or two with us. His reactions were wonderfully positive.

Sept. 21, 1973 Mr. Houghton walked nearly the whole distance along the creek trying to take pictures.

Sept. 24, 1973 Vern Houghton called to say he talked with Col. Delbridge this A.M. and that an Army Corp engineer and Houghton will be at my cottage on Oct. 3, at 11:00 to go on our boat to take pictures along the creek. The Corps of Engineers are studying their files to see how much they can do under OEP (Office of Emergency Proclamation) with what funds are left after the great boondoggle of last year. Much depends on that. Under Gov. Shapp's emergency declaration after Agnes, the Corps of Engineers were authorized, and are still authorized to do such work, if funds still are available.

He talked to Harrisburg today and there are problems, but his report will emphasize that all fallen trees, and trees about to fall, are a future flood problem, and particularly a potential cause for loss of our dam.

Oct. 3, 1973

Mr. Vernon T. Houghton, Jr., District Engineer, Department of Environmental Resources, his assistant, Jack Crain, and Dayle Miller, USA Corps of Engineers, met me and Happy at the Park and went up and down the creek taking pictures. These pictures are part of Vernon Houghton's report to his chief, Cliff McConnell, and then on up to Dr. Goddard, Secretary of the Department of Environmental Resources of the State of Pennsylvania.

The purpose of the report is to show the necessity of removing the trees from the creek, and those about to fall, to prevent flooding in the future, particularly the destruction of our dam.

With the enthusiasm of Mr. Houghton, and the support of Don Oesterling before Dr. Goddard, we may accomplish what we deem so important.

Oct. 25, 1973

I have a gut feeling that with Don's pressure and Houghton's enthusiasm, we will get our stream clearance. In addition, I believe Don will succeed in getting the pollution threat from the coal-washery above us removed. He calls it a "time-bomb of pollution set on Slippery Rock Creek". He is working on it and the swamp problem in the Park. Add that to the fish stocking this year, 10,000 muskellunge fingerlings, which only Don brought about. The rest of the accomplishments have been a joint effort by Don, in his position to help, and your ASSOCIATION, which is very much alive.

*Ralph*  
*A. Nicholas*  
*Developer*  
*Slippery Rock Park*  
*514 N. Main St.*  
*Butler, Pa. 16001*  
*AC 412-287-7733*

PART III

Dear Sir:

The lead article in TIME Magazine issue of October 1, 1973, "THE LAND BOOM" shows the tremendous inflation in land prices in U.S.A., particularly, for vacation-second homes for the affluent, and retirement home sites.

Land, as a physical quantity, seems almost changeless. But the economic and social use that man makes of the land is changing as rapidly as anything in America. An enormous -- and disruptive -- land boom is grossly inflating prices, a new social attitude is replacing the old idea that a man could do with his property as he damn well pleased. If you will take time to read this issue of TIME, you will learn the dimensions, causes and consequences of the new land rush, which far surpasses frontier land fever. You will find a comparison of prices of acreage in various parts of the country, the experiences of happy and unhappy home purchasers, and find some tips on how to avoid being rooked when buying land. Finally you will find new ways in which communities are trying to control and guide development for the good of society.

You will learn that the average price of the land under a house with a Federal Housing Administration-insured mortgage is now \$5,300.00, up about 80% since 1963, while the average plot size has shrunk from about 11000 square feet in 1965, to 7000 square feet.

If you have any interest in a permanent home, a vacation home, or a retirement home and do not have an October 1, 1973, issue of TIME, just go to the library and read it before you commit yourself.

Particularly, if your interest lies in a beautiful recreational area such as SLIPPERY ROCK PARK, less than fifty miles from Pittsburgh, ten minutes from Moraine Park, having 4 1/2 miles of boating on Slippery Rock Creek, beautiful trees and all utilities.

Opposed to the tremendous inflation and reduced size of lots as described in this article, I want to call your attention to our reduced prices and increased sizes of lots now for sale in Slippery Rock Park.



When I first purchased, in 1925, the farms that now comprise Slippery Rock Park, there was no Route 8, only a three mile dirt road into the Park from the Slippery Rock Road at Rock Falls Park. We built a bridge connecting the Park to the Slippery Rock Road from Butler for better entrance.

We laid out lots, all about 50 x 150 feet, or 7500 square feet, in 1927, sold 60 or more of them in 1928, and in 1929, again 60 odd. Even then people were conscious of the beautiful environment of this area with 4 1/2 miles of Slippery Rock Creek running around it, and covered with beautiful big trees.

Our sale price then was \$500.00 a lot, which went up to \$750.00 by 1945, and in recent years to \$30.00 per foot for lots fronting the creek and \$1000 for inside lots with access to the creek and the privilege of building a boat house and dock on the creek.

In 1955, we held a big sale and sold about \$50,000.00 worth of lots in a few days. Then in 1956 Armco Steel Corporation bought the 18 hole golf course and restricted playing privileges to Armco employees only. Well, needless to say, that spoiled my development as far as selling lots to people who wanted to build overlooking a beautiful public golf course, and play golf on it.

In the meantime, all my energy went toward building another business and I devoted no time to Slippery Rock Park. We have grown to 136 beautiful homes, some still second homes for vacation, but fast growing into permanent homes, mostly for retirees.

So, finally, this year the decision was reached to start again to market the remaining lots, aimed at the Moraine Park market. Have a summer home in Slippery Rock Park, with good roads, all utilities, ten minutes away from Lake Arthur, and 20 minutes from the boat launching area. Have a small boat on Slippery Rock Creek and your big one on Lake Arthur.

What do you do about the price? Under present environmental control, no longer can you drill a well and install a septic tank on a lot that does not contain at least 20,000 square feet. So we decided to take three or four of our old 7500 square foot lots and make one of about 25,000 square feet, most of them covered with beautiful big trees, all on the creek or with access to the creek, and go into an active sales program. And again at what price?

The final decision was, take four \$1,000 lots, and sell the four as one lot at \$3,500.00. Either cash or for \$500.00 down and the balance at \$50.00 or \$100.00 per month. For income tax reasons we really prefer the latter. We did not succumb to the land fever, as described in the article in TIME, and inflate the price. We reduced the price that

has prevailed for many years.

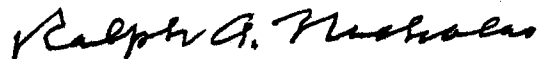
The plan has succeeded, and is going very well. Since I am too old to carry the load myself, I have arranged with a very fine young man, Jim Clements, who is a teacher in Butler High School, with a Masters Degree and who lives in the Park and is President of Slippery Rock Park Civic Association, to carry the load. His address is R. D. # 1, Slippery Rock, Pa., 16057, and his phone number is 794-3731.

Since this marketing program has just started, and there are so many lovely lots available, I simply want to call your attention to this wonderful opportunity to have a beautiful home site, either as a place to live, retire, vacation, or as an investment in the most beautiful recreation area in the Pittsburgh area, only ten minutes from Moraine Park.

If you are interested, call Jim for an appointment to see these lots. He will be happy to show you how big they are, how big the trees are, and what a beautiful ride it is on four and one half miles of scenic Slippery Rock Creek.

And if you are an Armco employee, add to the above - your permanent home on your own golf course - thirty minutes (at the outside) from work.

Sincerely,



Ralph A. Nicholas  
Developer

RAN:pd

NOV 26 1973

*Ralph*  
*A. Nicholas*  
*Developer*  
*Slippery Rock Park*  
*514 N. Main St.*  
*Butler, Pa. 16001*  
*AC 412-287-7733*

November 19, 1973

Senator Donald O. Oesterling  
Deputy Secretary For Legislation and Boards  
Department of Environmental Resources  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Room 521 South Office Building  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania  
17120

Dear Don:

Enclosed is a letter I intend to send to all the cottage owners in the Park, but since your name is mentioned so many times in it, I thought I had better check with you first. If you approve, it will go out as is. If you disapprove part of it (I hope not) then scratch out that part and it will be sent only as you approve.

About the swamp problems in the Park. First as to mine. There really is no problem there. We were able to mow most of it a week or so ago and I am convinced there is no problem.

To start with, it used to be a real swamp. When we built my lake in 1967, we captured eleven springs along the hillside from my garage on down to your place. They were caught in 3" plastic pipe near your place, running into 4" and then 6" and then into the lake. I walked it the other day and there is no leakage whatever into the low place.

There is a big spring in the bank near your cottage which we captured years ago and ran diagonally across Lone Pine Way near the crest of the hill near you. Then it runs into a ditch along my side to a 12" drain that runs through to the creek through property that I then sold to John O'Brien.

When Buzz Miller and Bob Howells approached me in the spring of 1972 about fixing up their red-dog road, it was agreed that they would put in a catch basin in the road near you and revamp the old pipe from the spring across the road, and continue the flow down to the outlet through O'Brien's property. That way Hirschinger and his neighbors could avoid

the spring and road drainage running into their properties, which they did. Having property along Lone Pine Way, I paid my share of this with all of you people on Lone Pine Way.

Two weeks ago I inspected the open ditch and it is not functioning properly. Neighbors have cut small brush and thrown it into the ditch. Next spring I will have to clear this away, make the ditch a little deeper and see that the spring and road water run properly to the drain to the creek.

We want to keep that whole section mowed from now on, and can't tolerate any swamp. I am sure what I have mentioned will cure the "swamp problem".

As to the real swamp problem near Hap's lake on Golf View Drive, it really is a real problem. Just this week I had to wait to go past a car parked in the middle of the road while two people were looking at the Armco side and probably discussing that the water would soon cover the road. Last year the Township people dug a 40' ditch on our side to relieve this problem. It is bound to raise a fuss again this winter.

To start at the beginning. About 1928 or 1929 when I began to sell lots along the lower line on Creek Drive there were no springs. Your grandfather built a big reservoir about 10' in diameter and 10' or 12' high and we captured the spring and ran a 2" pipe down to these cottages. There was enough water for twelve of them and they would let no others hook on.

Eventually they became dissatisfied with the low pressure by gravity, and formed Mohawk Water Company. They drilled a well, abandoned the spring, put two big pressure tanks in the cistern and had plenty of pressure. There are still five houses served by Mohawk Water Company, the others have drilled their own wells.

In 1963, Armco laid plans to enlarge the 18 hole course to 27 holes and purchased land from me to do so. Part of this land was Addition No. 4, 102 lots between Mohawk Trail, Golf View Drive and the Golf Course.

In their deed from me they legally acknowledged Mohawk Water Company's well and right-of-way to Mohawk Trail, and also gave me the right to use the spring for \$1.00 a year, so we could run it into the lake we were considering building. There never has been a \$1.00 paid to Armco.

Everything worked fine until about two or three years ago when we began to realize that there was too much water. We had put in a plastic pipe drain from the Township culvert under Golf View Drive down to the creek joining into it the over flow from the lake. The topo map shows only a two foot fall from road to creek which works well enough when the creek is at normal level, but when the creek rises a little, as it does most of the year, the water backs up into the pipe, forms

a sodden swamp in our area, killing so far about thirty big trees, and forming the swamp on Armco's side. To continue this way will spoil our beautiful wooded section (it has already spoiled it) and will always cause a road problem for all the people in the Park who have entrance only over this road, since the bridge collapsed.

Realizing the problem, early this summer, I engaged Wayne Cypher to lay out a drain on Armco's side along Golf View Drive, go under the road at Dr. Wymer's and down a 40' right-of-way I own between Wymer's and Rebecca Wilson's cottage.

You are familiar with the fuss they made about it, writing to Senator Zembretti.

You are not familiar with Wayne's answer to the problem, so I am enclosing a copy of his topo. Imagine a ditch on Armco's property, not on the road right-of-way, finally becoming 6' deep and 10' wide on Johny Hawks!! I wasted the \$100.00 I paid Wayne.

The only reason for hiring him instead of Greenough, who has always done our work, was that he is well up in the Armco hierarchy. Before his final report came in, I asked him to ask his boss if Armco would furnish about 250' of 8" corrugated drain under the road and to the creek. He thought they might if the Association or I could do the rest. When his final report came in, the whole idea went out the window.

For months Nap and I pondered the question, should we, or should we not, approach Armco. For twenty years we had a perfect rapport with them, terminalling their pig iron and alloys and hauling them to Butler. But Armco has a new breed of cats today both in Middletown and at Butler; they prefer pig by rail at a higher cost, and we have definitely lost our rapport. We still do a lot of work for them and we definitely did not want to risk this over a drainage problem.

Since then, I have found a proper way to solve the problem. The catch basin of the spring on Armco's property can be rebuilt and about 750' of 2" pipe, paralleling Mohawk Water Company's 2" pipe, and drain to the creek through a right-of-way I own between Baroutsis and Kirchel. I can get right-of-way across a couple of inside lots owned by Kirchel. He is so disgusted with his high-and-dry inside lots becoming wet and swampy from the spring, that I am sure he would give this right-of-way. No problem about the Township under the road near the Baroutsis-Kirchel properties. And ~~or~~ very little cost to Armco if they will consider it their problem. Jim Clements showed the problem to Jim Ihlenfeld, President of the Country Club. He denied it was their property. Then he came back and admitted it was their property, but not their problem.

Don, the only reason I am bothering you with all this is, that I firmly believe that if Amco is properly approached by your DER about the mosquito problem, as well as the road problem, the local management will accept it as their problem, not ours, and will solve it next year.

Will you put it on the top of your list and pursue it?

Cordially,



Ralph A. Nicholas

RAN:pd  
Encl.

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Ralph  
A. Nicholas  
<sup>Developer</sup>  
Slippery Rock Park  
514 N. Main St.  
Butler, Pa. 16001  
AC 412-287-7733

November

To: ALL COTTAGE OWNERS IN SLIPPERY ROCK PARK

Dear

The enclosed data has to do with three things and it will take less than an hour to read it.

PART I. The history of SLIPPERY ROCK PARK CIVIC ASSOCIATION was written for a News Letter, but since the one containing pictures of Clean-Up Day and the Picnic was more important, this one would not go out until April. Most of you are members in good standing, owning a share of stock and having paid 1973 dues. To you it is just history. To the newcomers, and those who have not belonged nor paid dues, it is tremendously important that you realize what the CIVIC ASSOCIATION means to all of us property owners and that you take the step of owning a share of stock and paying 1974 dues and be a member in good standing.

My judgment is that it cannot wait until next spring to go out as a News Letter, and so I am sending it to every resident, whether a member of the ASSOCIATION or not, at my own expense, and am attaching a note at the end of PART I to those who do not own a share of stock, showing the name of the previous owner of your cottage who does, and who would gladly turn it over to you, as should have been done when he sold his cottage.

PART II. Only the officers and Directors of the ASSOCIATION know of the tremendous effort that has been made this year toward having the State remove the trees that have fallen into the creek and also those about to fall, under the Stream Clearance Act. Every member should be aware of it, and, so, I am sending the reports to you which have been sent to the Directors. We are very hopeful that, with Don Oesterling's help, it will be done next year.



PART III. This part is purely personal. It is a marketing approach to sell lots, and will be sent to many prospects. I am sending it to you now, so that if you have friends who are interested in the Park, they may select the best lots ahead of the "crunch" which I hope will come in the Spring. If you will look at some of the lots as temporarily laid out with red stakes, 100' x 300' more or less, most covered with huge trees, with a view of the creek or the golf course, either on the creek or with access to it, you will agree with me that they are beautiful, and you can recommend them to friends as a good buy.

Just let Jim Clements show them to you. If he happens to be unavailable at the time you want to look, I will be available.

Cordially,

Ralph A. Nicholas  
Developer

RAN:pd  
Encl.



# Slippery Rock Park Civic Association

Phone: 412/287-7056

514 North Main Street

Box 29, Butler, Pa. 16001

## PART I

### SLIPPERY ROCK PARK CIVIC ASSOCIATION

By Ralph A. Nicholas, Secretary

August 16, 1973

I have been asked to write the story of SLIPPERY ROCK PARK CIVIC ASSOCIATION, how it began, what it means to every home owner, permanent or summer, and why every owner should belong.

To properly understand the true meaning of the ASSOCIATION you have to go back to the beginning of the Park. The first property was purchased in 1925, the original plan laid out in 1927, and sales begun in 1928. By July 1929, the bridge had been built, the roads made of steel mill slag 12" to 15" thick, the dance hall and golf course built, more than 130 lots sold and dozens of cottages erected.

Then the Depression, which hit the country in October, 1929, caught us in July. There were no more lots sold or cottages built until 1936. During the Depression days, when none of us had any money, the most of the road through the Park blew off. The original 12" to 15" of slag diminished to 5" or 6", and the road was full of pot holes. We had a dust problem and not much of a road.

A group of us got together to request the Township Road Supervisors to put calcium on it. They finally did. Then came the time to pressure the township to "adopt" the road as a public road. They refused.

This was in the late thirties, and we had grown into a loosely-knit CIVIC ASSOCIATION, which had elected Ordell Crawford its President and me its Secretary, and decided to take the Supervisors to Court. And we won.

Every lot and cottage south of what is now Helmrach's and Welty's, lay in Brady Township; everything north of this dividing line lay in Slippery Rock Township. The Court worked out a solution to which everybody agreed: change the Township line, so that Slippery Rock Township would get all the taxes in the Park and adopt the road; Brady Township would get no taxes from the Park and would not have to participate in the road.

About 1946 or 1947 (don't ask me to check dates exactly) we noticed that a board had broken, loose on the wooden dam at the Slippery Rock Road, which gave us our deep water. Then a few more. We offered to furnish the lumber and fix it. The owner would not let us touch it. For about two years we watched the dam disintegrate and for seven years we had no boating, just pools here and there. The ASSOCIATION formed the "Dam Committee", made up of our most progressive and influential members, who approached the owner with every plan we could think of. He wanted \$25,000.00, as I remember, for the dam site. No one would consider that. But the ASSOCIATION had lots of muscle and guts and every year tried a new approach. Plans were drawn, State permission obtained, to build a new dam at the bridge which has collapsed since then. Half a loaf is better than no loaf. Then someone came up with a brilliant idea! If the owner of the dam would not permit a new one to be built, why not try to build a new one just above it? The Committee got Norman Straub and Sol Stoughton, who owned the land just above the dam, to give a deed 50 feet above the dam for a strip 50 feet wide and far enough inland to build a dam. They did so, and we were ready to raise the money.

Bill Dillner, head of Dillner Transfer and Storage Co. in Pittsburgh, was President at that time. He pledged \$500.00 and so did I. Many pledged \$100.00 - \$300.00. We raised about \$6,000 or \$7,000, but no more.

At this point, the resistance of the owner of the dam collapsed. We could build the dam on the old site and acquire the riparian rights to high water level clear to the shallows at Wadsworth Bridge. Then the ASSOCIATION really came to life.

By 1955, Bill Dillner and his attorney, Ernie Adamson, and L.H. Cline, who ran Bill's Dodge agency in Slippery Rock, formed a Non-Profit Corporation, SLIPPERY ROCK PARK CIVIC ASSOCIATION, with far more muscle than the former ASSOCIATION, one which could sell stock, par value \$50.00, and raise the money that way.

The plans for the dam had been made, permission from the State obtained, and a bid to build the dam for \$17,500.00 was received.

I shall never forget the first meeting of the Corporation to sell stock. Bill called it to order, and announced that he would buy \$2,000.00 worth of stock and I did the same.

\$1,000.00, Armer donated \$1,000.00, and so we raised \$14,500.00. On the endorsement of five of us, the Slippery Rock Bank loaned us \$3,000.00 and the dam was built. The ASSOCIATION owns it and that is worth many times the value of a share of stock. I must not forget to say that the Businessmen's Bureau of Slippery Rock were very helpful and many people who had no personal interest in the Park bought stock to save this beautiful section of Slippery Rock Creek.

Just one more comment about the dam, the building of which is the most vital thing the ASSOCIATION has ever done. The question was raised by minority shareholders that Bill and I had control of the Non-Profit Corporation. What to do? To solve that problem, Bill had a few shares issued to his dad and uncles (4 or 5, as I remember) and I had one issued to me and one to Hap. We got away with the rest as a contribution.

Then a year or two later, there was a great division in the Park. Either you had bought a share of stock, or you hadn't, or couldn't. To solve it, the decision was reached to sell the stock for \$5.00. Those who had not bought, or could not buy previously, were urged to buy from the many multiple share owners, who could take their loss on their Income Tax that year. Well, it worked very well. There are a few multiple share owners today, almost all cottage owners are members, and pay their dues. There are some new residents who have not known about the ASSOCIATION, or who have not bothered to have the stock of former owners transferred, when they purchased their cottages.

If this story of SLIPPERY ROCK PARK CIVIC ASSOCIATION over almost fifty years does not motivate the few who have not participated, then I'll tell you just one more thing that should. Having Jim Clements as President should. I have known many able and progressive presidents over the years, such as Ordell Crawford, Dr. Harden, George Dillich, Bill Dillner, in past years, and recently, George Lackey and Hap Nicholas, but never have I known or been associated with a President who spends more time and energy, or who has more ideas, to make Slippery Rock Park a better place in which to live, than Jim Clements. I could list many ideas he has which have not come to the surface yet, but if the picnic, the road signs, the Township Road signs, the News Letter, and Clean-Up Day aren't enough for a first-term administration, why say more? And your Directors, with the time and energy and enthusiasm they personally devote to the ASSOCIATION, and Jane Lackey, our very able Treasurer, I think I can unequivocally say, back him to the hilt. Slippery Rock Park is revitalized, largely through his efforts. Back him!

Our pledges were made, others pledged \$100.00 to \$600.00, Armco donated \$1,000.00, and so we raised \$14,500.00. On the endorsement of five of us, the Slippery Rock Bank loaned us \$3,000.00 and the dam was built. The ASSOCIATION owns it and that is worth many times the value of a share of stock. I must not forget to say that the Businessmen's Bureau of Slippery Rock were very helpful and many people who had no personal interest in the Park bought stock to save this beautiful section of Slippery Rock Creek.

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Then a year or two later, there was a great division in the Park. Either you had bought a share of stock, or you hadn't, or couldn't. To solve it, the decision was reached to sell the stock for \$5.00. Those who had not bought, or could not buy previously, were urged to buy from the many multiple share owners, who could take their loss on their Income Tax that year. Well, it worked very well. There are a few multiple share owners today, almost all cottage owners are members, and pay their dues. There are some new residents who have not known about the ASSOCIATION, or who have not bothered to have the stock of former owners transferred, when they purchased their cottages.

If this story of SLIPPERY ROCK PARK CIVIC ASSOCIATION over almost fifty years does not motivate the few who have not participated, then I'll tell you just one more thing that should. Having Jim Clements as President should. I have known many able and progressive presidents over the years, such as Ordell Crawford, Dr. Harden, George Dillich, Bill Dillner, in past years, and recently, George Lackey and Hap Nicholas, but never have I known or been associated with a President who spends more time and energy, or who has more ideas, to make Slippery Rock Park a better place in which to live, than Jim Clements. I could list many ideas he has which have not come to the surface yet, but if the picnic, the road signs, the Township Road signs, the News Letter, and Clean-Up Day aren't enough for a first-term administration, why say more? And your Directors, with the time and energy and enthusiasm they personally devote to the ASSOCIATION, and Jane Lackey, our very able Treasurer, I think I can unequivocally say, back him to the hilt. Slippery Rock Park is revitalized, largely through his efforts. Back him!

It is very simple. If you own a share of stock and paid your dues, you are a member in good standing and you own a chunk of Slippery Rock Creek and your property value is bound to go only up. If you have paid your dues, but do not own a share of stock in your own name, I can help you get it transferred from the former owner to you. Or if that is too much trouble, just buy a share for \$5.00, and be a member of an organization that is so necessary to the welfare of the Slippery Rock Park community as a whole.



# Slippery Rock Park Civic Association

Phone: 412, 287-7056

514 North Main Street

Box 29, Butler, Pa. 16001

## PART II

### STREAM CLEARANCE

July 12, 1973 At the suggestion of Don Oesterling, a member of SLIPPERY ROCK PARK CIVIC ASSOCIATION, and Deputy Secretary, Department of Environmental Resources, the ASSOCIATION wrote to Mr. Clifford McConnell, Deputy Secretary Resources Management, requesting that the fallen trees, and those trees about to fall, be removed from the creek.

July 24, 1973 Mr. McConnell replied that the work done last summer was funded under the Federal Disaster Assistance Program and not the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. He would, however, have his District Engineer, in Carnegie, look at our situation.

Sept. 5, 1973 Don wrote letters to Vernon T. Houghton, District Engineer, Carnegie, Byron Breisch, District Conservationist, United States Soil Conservation Service, Butler, and to Mr. McConnell, urging action on our request.

Sept. 20, 1973 Mr. Houghton made the inspection trip, accompanied by ten of us. After lunch he talked for an hour or two with us. His reactions were wonderfully positive.

Sept. 21, 1973 Mr. Houghton walked nearly the whole distance along the creek trying to take pictures.

Sept. 24, 1973 Vern Houghton called to say he talked with Col. Delbridge this A.M. and that an Army Corp engineer and Houghton will be at my cottage on Oct. 3, at 11:00 to go on our boat to take pictures along the creek. The Corps of Engineers are studying their files to see how much they can do under OEP (Office of Emergency Proclamation) with what funds are left after the great boondoggle of last year. Much depends on that. Under Gov. Shapp's emergency declaration after Agnes, the Corps of Engineers were authorized, and are still authorized to do such work, if funds still are available.

He talked to Harrisburg today and there are problems, but his report will emphasize that all fallen trees, and trees about to fall, are a future flood problem, and particularly a potential cause for loss of our dam.

Oct. 3, 1973 Mr. Vernon T. Houghton, Jr., District Engineer, Department of Environmental Resources, his assistant, Jack Crain, and Dayle Miller, USA Corps of Engineers, met me and Happy at the Park and went up and down the creek taking pictures. These pictures are part of Vernon Houghton's report to his chief, Cliff McConnell, and then on up to Dr. Goddard, Secretary of the Department of Environmental Resources of the State of Pennsylvania.

The purpose of the report is to show the necessity of removing the trees from the creek, and those about to fall, to prevent flooding in the future, particularly the destruction of our dam.

With the enthusiasm of Mr. Houghton, and the support of Don Oesterling before Dr. Goddard, we may accomplish what we deem so important.

Oct. 25, 1973 I have a gut feeling that with Don's pressure and Houghton's enthusiasm, we will get our stream clearance. In addition, I believe Don will succeed in getting the pollution threat from the coal-washery above us removed. He calls it a "time-bomb of pollution set on Slippery Rock Creek". He is working on it and the swamp problem in the Park. Add that to the fish stocking this year, 10,000,000 muskellunge fingerlings, which only Don brought about. The rest of the accomplishments have been a joint effort by Don, in his position to help, and your ASSOCIATION, which is very much alive.



*Ralph*  
*A. Nicholas*  
Developer  
Slippery Rock Park  
514 N. Main St.  
Butler, Pa. 16001  
AC 412-287-7733

PART III

Dear Sir:

The lead article in TIME Magazine issue of October 1, 1973, "THE LAND BOOM" shows the tremendous inflation in land prices in U.S.A., particularly, for vacation-second homes for the affluent, and retirement home sites.

Land, as a physical quantity, seems almost changeless. But the economic and social use that man makes of the land is changing as rapidly as anything in America. An enormous -- and disruptive -- land boom is grossly inflating prices, a new social attitude is replacing the old idea that a man could do with his property as he damn well pleased. If you will take time to read this issue of TIME, you will learn the dimensions, causes and consequences of the new land rush, which far surpasses frontier land fever. You will find a comparison of prices of acreage in various parts of the country, the experiences of happy and unhappy home purchasers, and find some tips on how to avoid being rooked when buying land. Finally you will find new ways in which communities are trying to control and guide development for the good of society.

You will learn that the average price of the land under a house with a Federal Housing Administration-insured mortgage is now \$5,300.00, up about 80% since 1963, while the average plot size has shrunk from about 11000 square feet in 1965, to 7000 square feet.

If you have any interest in a permanent home, a vacation home, or a retirement home and do not have an October 1, 1973, issue of TIME, just go to the library and read it before you commit yourself.

Particularly, if your interest lies in a beautiful recreational area such as SLIPPERY ROCK PARK, less than fifty miles from Pittsburgh, ten minutes from Moraine Park, having 4 1/2 miles of boating on Slippery Rock Creek, beautiful trees and all utilities.

Opposed to the tremendous inflation and reduced size of lots as described in this article, I want to call your attention to our reduced prices and increased sizes of lots now for sale in Slippery Rock Park.

When I first purchased, in 1925, the farms that now comprise Slippery Rock Park, there was no Route 8, only a three mile dirt road into the Park from the Slippery Rock Road at Rock Falls Park. We built a bridge connecting the Park to the Slippery Rock Road from Butler for better entrance.

We laid out lots, all about 50 x 150 feet, or 7500 square feet, in 1927, sold 60 or more of them in 1928, and in 1929, again 60 odd. Even then people were conscious of the beautiful environment of this area with 4 1/2 miles of Slippery Rock Creek running around it, and covered with beautiful big trees.

Our sale price then was \$500.00 a lot, which went up to \$750.00 by 1945, and in recent years to \$30.00 per foot for lots fronting the creek and \$1000 for inside lots with access to the creek and the privilege of building a boat house and dock on the creek.

In 1955, we held a big sale and sold about \$50,000.00 worth of lots in a few days. Then in 1956 Armco Steel Corporation bought the 18 hole golf course and restricted playing privileges to Armco employees only. Well, needless to say, that spoiled my development as far as selling lots to people who wanted to build overlooking a beautiful public golf course, and play golf on it.

In the meantime, all my energy went toward building another business and I devoted no time to Slippery Rock Park. We have grown to 136 beautiful homes, some still second homes for vacation, but fast growing into permanent homes, mostly for retirees.

So, finally, this year the decision was reached to start again to market the remaining lots, aimed at the Moraine Park market. Have a summer home in Slippery Rock Park, with good roads, all utilities, ten minutes away from Lake Arthur, and 20 minutes from the boat launching area. Have a small boat on Slippery Rock Creek and your big one on Lake Arthur.

What do you do about the price? Under present environmental control, no longer can you drill a well and install a septic tank on a lot that does not contain at least 20,000 square feet. So we decided to take three or four of our old 7500 square foot lots and make one of about 25,000 square feet, most of them covered with beautiful big trees, all on the creek or with access to the creek, and go into an active sales program. And again at what price?

The final decision was, take four \$1,000 lots, and sell the four as one lot at \$3,500.00. Either cash or for \$500.00 down and the balance at \$50.00 or \$100.00 per month. For income tax reasons we really prefer the latter. We did not succumb to the land fever, as described in the article in TIME, and inflate the price. We reduced the price that

has prevailed for many years.

The plan has succeeded, and is going very well. Since I am too old to carry the load myself, I have arranged with a very fine young man, Jim Clements, who is a teacher in Butler High School, with a Masters Degree and who lives in the Park and is President of Slippery Rock Park Civic Association, to carry the load. His address is R. D. # 1, Slippery Rock, Pa., 16057, and his phone number is 794-3731.

Since this marketing program has just started, and there are so many lovely lots available, I simply want to call your attention to this wonderful opportunity to have a beautiful home site, either as a place to live, retire, vacation, or as an investment in the most beautiful recreation area in the Pittsburgh area, only ten minutes from Moraine Park.

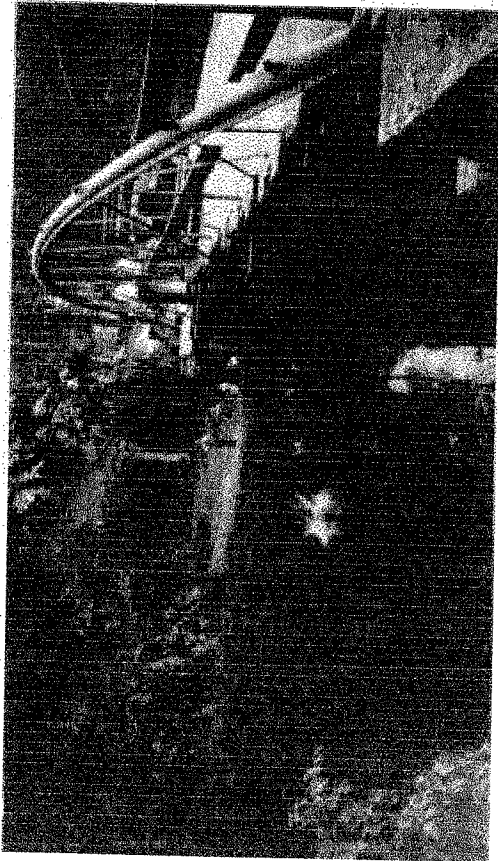
If you are interested, call Jim for an appointment to see these lots. He will be happy to show you how big they are, how big the trees are, and what a beautiful ride it is on four and one half miles of scenic Slippery Rock Creek.

And if you are an Armco employee, add to the above - your permanent home on your own golf course - thirty minutes (at the outside) from work.

Sincerely,

Ralph A. Nicholas  
Developer

RAN:pd



VING FROM THE OLD NICHOLAS BRIDGE - (Note  
e special diving platform on the side. Long-  
me residents claim that only one side was safe  
dive from. The water here is supposedly  
proximately 20 ft. deep.)



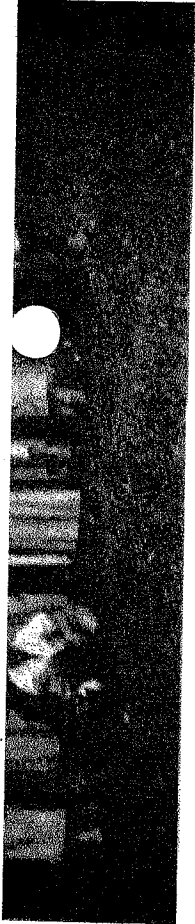
RAUB'S BEACH - Note the depth of the water  
mediately above the old dam. If you attempt  
stand in approximately the same place today



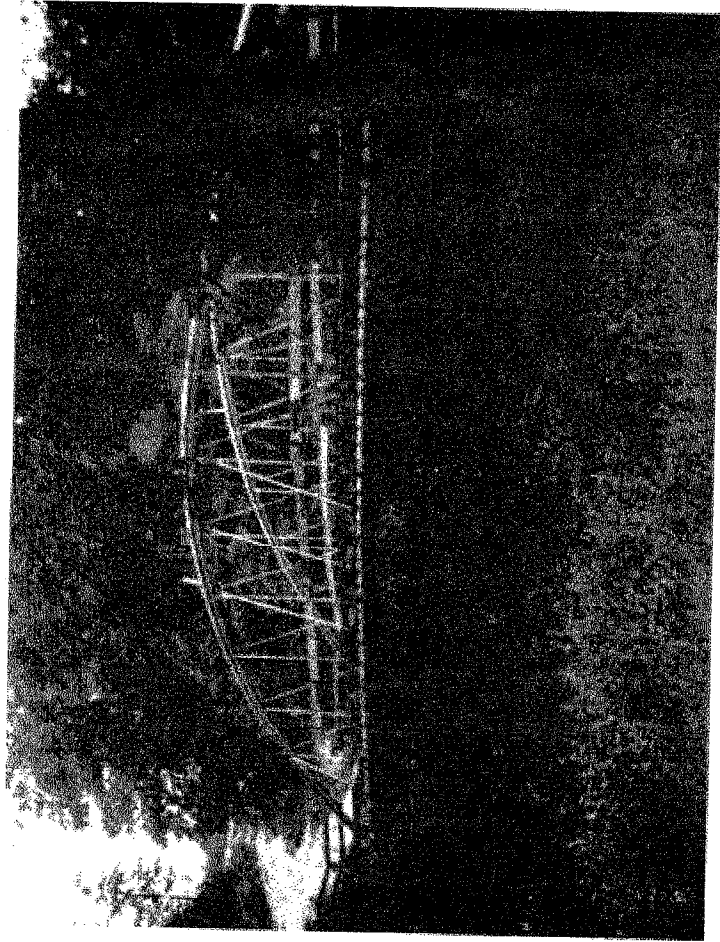
THE OLD BRIDGE AT STRAUB'S BEACH - The bridge  
pictured has long-since been replaced by the  
present structure at Rock Falls Park. However,  
from a boat the stone abutments shown here are  
still visible.



DOWN AT THE ORIGINAL DAM - This bevy of beauties  
(and the cold looking gentlemen) were frolicking



ALL SET FOR A DAY AT THE LINKS - This was taken in front of the Crawford cottage. Note the golf attire of the day.



1928 NICHOLAS BRIDGE - When this was completed folks no longer had to drive several miles over dusty roads in order to get into the Park. (The bridge lasted until 1963.)

SLIPPERY ROCK PARK CIVIC ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

SPECIAL COMMEMORATIVE EDITION AUG. 3, 1975

James Clements.....Editor

- to THE PARK. GOLFCOURSE DOESN'T  
1944 DUE TO THE WAR EFFORT AND GAS  
1945 GOLFCOURSE IS SOLD TO WYNN TREE  
1952 A DRIVE WAS HELD TO GET THE HIGH  
DOWN TO THE NICHOLAS BRIDGE PARK  
1953 THE FIRST SLIPPERY ROCK PARK PROJECT  
HELD.  
1955 ON AUGUST 23 THE SLIPPERY ROCK  
ASSOCIATION WAS FORMALLY INCORPORATED  
THE LEADERSHIP OF PRESIDENT WILLIAM  
NICHOLAS HELD A LARGE LAND AUCTION  
CHATAQUA TENT.  
ARMCO BUYS THE GOLFCOURSE FROM  
TREADWAY.  
1956 THE DAM WAS FINALLY REBUILT FOR  
AFTER A VIGOROUS CAMPAIGN HEADED BY  
BILL DILLNER AND RALPH NICHOLAS  
1957 SLIPPERY ROCK PARK DISPLAY CARD  
PENNANTS ARE ISSUED. (DO YOU HAVE  
1959 REPAIRS WERE MADE ON THE DAM.  
1963 ON MARCH 17 THE BRIDGE COLLAPSED  
1964 ON JULY 12 THERE WAS A GREAT FLOOD  
THE CREEK. SLUDGE PONDS BROKE  
MINE ACID WENT EVERYWHERE.  
1965 SNAGS AND STUMPS WERE PULLED OUT  
CREEK BY THE ASSOCIATION.  
1966 PRESENT SIGN AT THE OLD BEACH WAS  
1973 ROAD SIGNS WERE INSTALLED.  
NEWSLETTER STARTED.  
MASSIVE PARK CLEAN-UP HELD.  
1974 MOSQUITO ELIMINATION PROGRAM STARTED  
BEACH RESTORATION PROJECT HELD.

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## Slippery Rock



### Rock Falls Park

Two miles south of Slippery Rock, off of State Route 173, along the Slippery Rock Creek is the ruins of Rock Falls Park. The park was once a popular picnic destination, but all that remains is the vegetation overgrown remains of the old swimming pool and other smaller signs of what once existed.



[Click to Enlarge Picture](#)

The park was first named Stoughton's Beach after Saul Stoughton who had it built on part of his farm. (Mr. Stoughton had a one foot right-of-way surveyed around the entire perimeter of his farm so that no one would have access to the park other than via his road.) The park opened in 1932 and was truly a Stoughton family business. Saul's son Howard and his family did most of the work at the park. Howard ran the merry-go-round, his wife Esther operated the custard stand, and five of the seven kids pulled clean-up duty. Two of the sisters taught roller skating. In addition to the operating of the park, which was of course seasonal, Saul owned a sawmill and Howard had mules which he used in the logging business. In addition to all of these activities the Stoughtons operated two farms.

When the park opened it boasted the largest swimming pool in Pennsylvania. The pool featured two diving boards—a ten foot high board which was open to all, and a twenty foot high board which was used mostly for diving exhibitions. Stoughton's featured a diving show every Sunday. For one of the attractions gasoline was poured on the water and set afire. Divers would plunge into the water through the fire to the amazement of all.

In 1941 the gasoline rationing of World War II and the accompanying decline in customers caused the park to close, but when the war ended in 1945 it reopened. Just after the war the park was purchased by Albert MacDonald who along with his family had operated a resort in Virginia. MacDonald changed the name of the resort from Stoughton's Beach to Rock Falls Park. During the years which MacDonald owned the park he kept tab and reports that 128 different businesses, companies, and groups had picnics at Rock Falls Park; many of which were annual affairs. In 1952 he sold the park only to repurchase it when the new owner declared bankruptcy in 1961. MacDonald spent some money renovating the park but sold it again in 1967 for the final time.

Before he divested himself of the park Mr. MacDonald sold the park's merry-go-round. He didn't realize the value of the ride and sold it for \$400 only to discover later that it was re-sold for \$2,000 to a shrewd antique dealer who sold it to the Smithsonian Institution for \$18,700. The ride had been imported from Germany around 1900. It was a very rare, hand-carved carousel with real horsehair tails. As the original horsehair was pulled out by riders the tails were replaced by twine.

The last operator of Rock Falls Park was Ed Frank, a retired photographer who had worked for the Pittsburgh Press. Frank purchased the park from Sam Emigh in 1972. Its final year of operation was 1975. The Slippery Rock Creek has long been an attraction to those seeking fun in the sun. Summer cottages still line the creek. As far back as the 1820's a dam, mill race, and grist mill were located near the bridge on what is now Route 173. For most of its history the grist mill was referred to as Daugherty's although they were not the original owners. The impounded water behind the dam created a nice swimming hole which was enjoyed by several generations. When Stoughton's Beach was in its heyday, the Straub family owned the area and it was a popular swimming spot. The Straubs never charged admission and we could find no records of any drownings or lawsuits. It was a different era. Straubs had a picnic grove near their

beach, and it was for all to enjoy.

Improved highways and high speed automobiles gave people access to a larger selection of leisure time activities. Small amusement parks such as Rock Falls, Cascade, West View, Alameda and others were not able to compete with the likes of Conneaut Lake, Kennywood, Cedar Point and Presque Isle.

*(From Butler County, the Second Hundred Years , by Ralph Goldinger and Audrey Felters.)*

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