

THE "FIRST" SLIPPERY ROCK PARK

While checking through historical records of the county it was learned that there was actually another Slippery Rock Park. It occupied part of the site of the Park as we know it today. The facts are sketchy, but here is what has been learned.

Somewhere around the 1880's the Pittsburgh, Shenango and Lake Erie Railroad established a Picnic Park south of Kiester. It was known as Slippery Rock Park. The extent of its popularity is testified to by the fact that on p. 623 of the History of Butler County Pennsylvania 1895 it states:

Slippery Rock Park....is one of the most picturesque and beautiful places in the county, and a favorite resort for visitors during the summer.

As the brochure on the opposite page illustrates week-end excursions ran quite regularly. People brought their lunch, picniced and went home by train at the end of the day.

Ralph Nicholas Sr. stated that a favorite story related to him by his parents concerned his parents courting days. It seems that in the early 1890's they took one of these Sunday excursions to the Park. While they were there a huge rainstorm occurred and washed out a railroad bridge between here and Butler. As a result everyone on the excursion had to spend the night sleeping on and under the picnic tables in the Park. No one got home till the next day.

One of the most famous excursions run to Slippery Rock Park occurred when the oil boom was on in the Western Pennsylvania area. This event was known as the Oil Mens Pipe Line Picnic. A good account of this is found in a book published recently by the Butler County Historical Society entitled Beautiful Bountiful Butler County. It states:

SUMMER DELIVERY OF THE LOCAL PAPER

If you'd like to get the Butler Eagle delivered daily to your address here in the park, call 794-4612 and ask for Bobby Edmondson.

Times of Trains.

SPECIAL TRAIN, CENTRAL TIME.

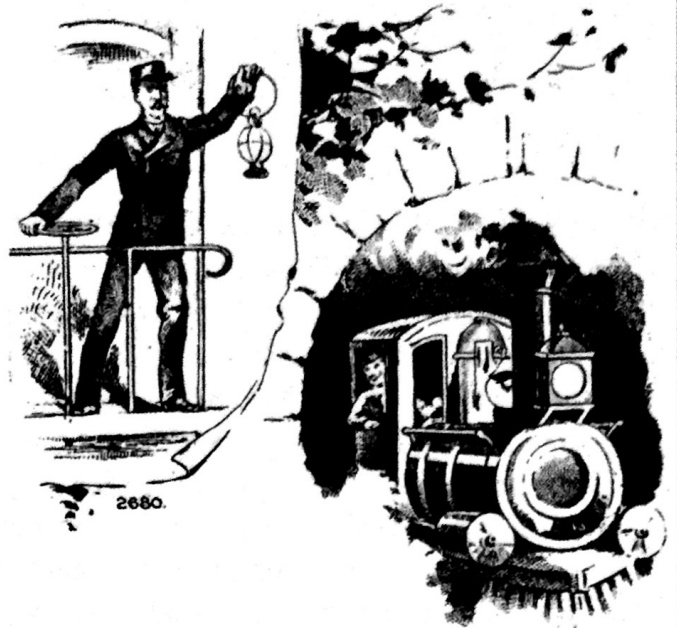
Leave Allegheny, - - - - 7:10 A. M.
 Leave New Castle, - - - - 6:30 A. M.
 Leave Foxburg, - - - - 7:23 A. M.

RETURNING, SPECIAL TRAIN LEAVES PARK, 6:30 P. M.

RATES.

*Fare for the round trip, including dancing, for
 Gentlemen, \$1; for Ladies, 60 cents.*

BENNETT STAR PRINT, BENNETT, PA.



ANCHOR LINE DIVISION 217,

O. R. C.

SLIPPERY ROCK PARK,

Saturday, August 20th, 1892.

Actual size brochure furnished by the Crawford family of Butler

Anchor Line Division No. 217,

ORDER OF RAILWAY CONDUCTORS,

Desires you to attend its First Annual

EXCURSION AND PICNIC,

AT

SLIPPERY ROCK PARK,

Saturday, August 20th, 1892.

Original Royal Italians, McMichaels.

Refreshments may be obtained at the Park.

⊕ COMMITTEES. ⊕

ARRANGEMENTS.

W. H. BAIRD,
 J. C. HUBNER. S. B. CLANEY,

FLOOR.

E. R. EMERY,
 O. W. CROOKS, R. E. WHITE,
 W. H. MANN,
 A. T. SCOTT, JAMES TONKS,
 W. J. BURKE,
 M. DEMPSEY, D. C. HENSHAW,
 L. B. FORTNEY.

When the Pittsburgh, Shenango and Lake Erie Railroad was built through Kiester, they established a picnic park there called Slippery Rock Park. In June 1887, C.R. Wattson met with C.A. Hite, Division Superintendent of the United Pipe Lines, in the office at Petrolia and organized the Oil Men's Pipe Line Picnic. Early in the morning of June 28, 1887, a special train was made up at Foxburg, on the narrow gauge - one passenger coach, a flat car, and two box cars with planks nailed in for seats. The excursion made it to Butler where all were transferred to the other train which headed for Slippery Rock Park at Kiester. This was the first Pipe Line Picnic to be held and it became a big annual affair for many years. One of the main attractions at the Slippery Rock Picnic was Coleman's Brass Band and the Orchestra of Titusville, which was a celebrated oil Country organization. One of the guests here on this day, shown in a picture taken, was the Honorable A.W. Smiley of Foxburg, General Agent for the worlds first oil pipe line in 1865, the Van-Syckel. He shared his room for some time at a Franklin Hotel with John Wilkes Booth, who assassinated President Lincoln.

So there you have it. Not only was the Park well-known, but the name endured. As to what happened to the original Park itself--that's all hazy. When the area was cleared for lots in the late 1920's there were still some stone and wood foundations last remnanants of the buildings in the original Park. But that was all. As to the Park's exact location--as close as can be determined it was somewhere in the general area between the present railroad bed and the Creek. (Route 8 did not exist then.) Slippery Rock Park has been around a lot longer than most people can remember.

LAST NEWSLETTER

This will be the last newsletter that you will receive unless you have renewed your membership in the Association. Dues for the year are \$10. Make checks payable to the "Slippery Rock Park Civic Association" and send your check to our treasurer, Mrs. Jane Lackey, 114 Stewart Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15227.