

Bell Acres History...

Big Sewickley Creek Motorlogue

Excerpts from the March 24, 1929 *Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph*



Automobiles or “machines” as they were often referred to, grew in popularity as they became more affordable. More than a century ago, the automobile club as well as newspapers began publishing directions for road trips around the Pittsburgh area. One such trip appeared in a Sunday edition of the *Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph* that guided motorists along the Beaver Road from Pittsburgh to Leetsdale where they were directed onto the newly rebuilt Big Sewickley Creek Road to the new Wexford-Bayne Road. Upon reaching Wexford, the motorist was directed northward into Warrendale and from there to Bakerstown before reaching the Allegheny River and the return Pittsburgh. The following excerpts describe the sights along Big Sewickley Creek seen from a DeSoto sedan.

“Spring was never greeted with more enthusiasm anywhere than by the simple farmer folk in the valley along Big Sewickley Creek. It meant a revival of all the interests and beauties of life and they knew of no district that was more beautiful than their own.”

For many years, the country drained by Big Sewickley Creek and its tributaries has been the mecca of countless Nature lovers of the Pittsburgh district. This Sunday hundreds of motorists following the first of the season’s Sun-Telegraph’s Motorlogues will join with other Nature lovers in greeting spring in this picturesque land.”



Undated Big Sewickley Creek post card
(Laughlin Memorial Library)

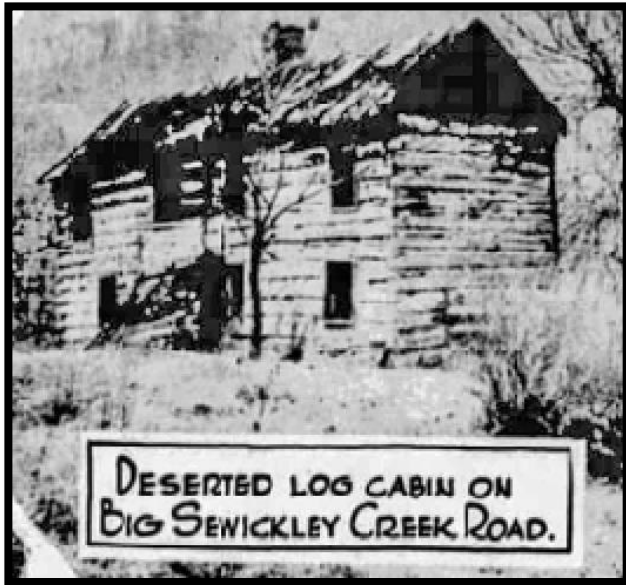


1925 newly built Big Sewickley Creek Road
(Allegheny County)

“In Leetsdale a slight right turn was made at the first traffic beacon, the route here following for a few hundred feet over a brick pavement that is a bit rough. A sharp right turn is made just before reaching a small bridge...Continuing up the valley road the motorist may enjoy to the greatest extent a picture of Nature in rolling hills and green fields, evergreen trees and a rugged countryside.”

OLD STONE BRIDGE

"After a short ride, up this road, the motorist will pass a stone bridge on the left. This bridge erected by the county many years ago, formerly carried the traffic of this road over the creek. The road has since been relocated and the bridge is now used by very few."



"Duff City, the first settlement that is noted on the maps of today, was at one time the favorite meeting place for the farmers because of the flour mill erected there by the Duff family. The ruins of the mill, which was operated by water power, are still to be seen and the mill dam, the mill pond and the race may still be traced.

Here the farmers from all the surrounding countryside brought their grain to be ground on the great stone wheels some of which are still there... and to discuss their political, religious, family and countryside problems. A swim in the old mill pond was an event in the life of the farmer here for which they worked from early morning to late at night for many weeks."

"One of the farm's old characters here was Billy Cope, small of stature and with a long black beard who assisted the Duff boys in the operating of the mill. When the water was low, Billy operated the mill with steam boiler which according to legend was supposed to have brought up the valley from one of the first steamboats. Billy was best known as a very religious man and would disappear for days at a time in the woods, where he would spend all his time in reading his Bible."



THROUGH OIL DISTRICT

"The route of this trip continues over excellent toads to Wexford.... In Wexford, a left turn is made on the Perry Highway and a right turn at Warrendale. From this latter town, the scouting party in their DeSoto sedan passed through one of the county's most extensive orchard districts..."