

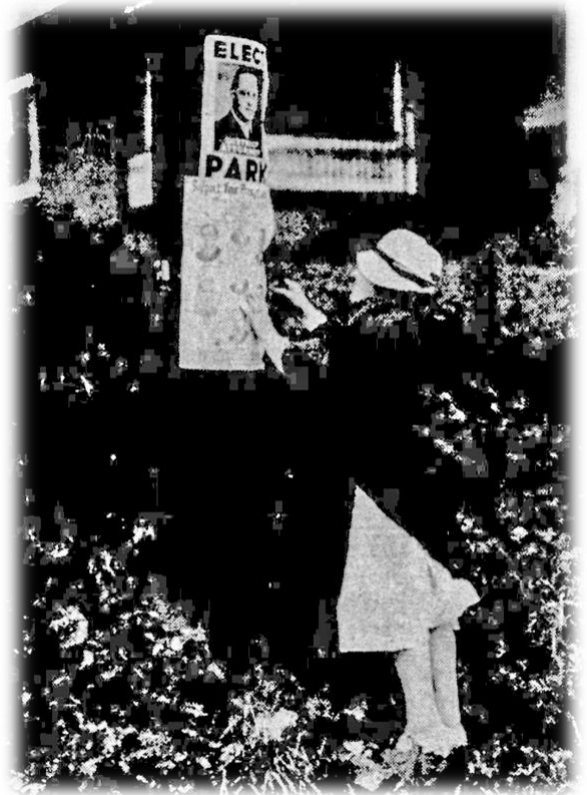
Bell Acres History...

Politics, Poison Ivy & the Ohio River Boulevard

Having personally paid for Lombardy poplars and shrubbery used to beautify the newly constructed Ohio River Boulevard, Mrs. Elizabeth Walker Pontefract of Little Sewickley Creek Road made it her mission to remove political posters and other advertisements that detracted from the roadside's natural beauty. With help from both her chauffeur and gardener, the Edgeworth society woman personally tore posters off utility poles and painted over messages on rock outcroppings.

During campaign seasons, posters reappeared as quickly as they were removed, making their removal a continuous battle of wills. In the ongoing feud, Mrs. Pontefract and her chauffeur considered planting poison ivy on roadside cliffs to discourage rock painters.

In recognition of her effort to promote roadside beautification throughout the city of Pittsburgh, Allegheny County honored Mrs. Pontefract by naming a section of the Ohio River Boulevard near Glenfield "Pontefract Terrace" (1937). Mrs. Pontefract's influence was such that it was only after her death in 1948 that billboards began to appear on the boulevard. Her Poplar trees, which stood as sentinels along both sides of the roadway, were removed for a widening project a few years later.



"We people of the Sewickley Valley are interested in the Ohio River Boulevard and want to see it kept clean," Mrs. Pontefract said. "The county spent \$100,000 for shrubbery along the boulevard, the Garden Club of Allegheny County, \$1,800 and I spent \$1,500 myself to make the boulevard look better. I hated to see it marred and disfigured by posters."

(Pittsburgh Press Photos and Excerpt)

This Bell Acres History article also appeared in the **Sewickley Herald**.