


Wednesday, October 23, 2024 @ 7:00 pm at OSPOB

## "FROM THE STEEL CITY TO THE WHITE CITY -- WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA & THE WORLD'S COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION"

In "From the Steel City to the White City," Zachary Brodt explores Western Pennsylvania's representation at Chicago's Columbian Exposition in 1893, the first major step in demonstrating that Pittsburgh was more than simply America's crucible—it was also a region of developing culture and innovation. This talk will examine Western Pennsylvanian exhibits at the exposition, as well as the experiences of Pittsburghers visiting the fairgrounds. Zach will also discuss how the Columbian Exposition influenced Pittsburgh's development at the turn of the 20th century.

This event is FREE and open to the public. Advance registration requested via the SVHS website, or by contacting the SVHS office at 412-741-5315 | [info@sewickleyhistory.org](mailto:info@sewickleyhistory.org)

SEWICKLEY VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESENTS:



FROM THE  
**STEEL CITY**  
TO THE  
**WHITE CITY**  
WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA & THE WORLD'S COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION

A PRESENTATION BY: ZACHARY L. BRODT

But First, Buy Tickets to Attend...





## Wednesday, October 23, 2024 @ 5:30 pm at OSPOB

The Chicago Columbian Exposition of 1893 was the United States' coming out party -- every part of it was designed to showcase that the US was a modern world power, that it had arrived and was a force with which to be reckoned. Celebrating the 400th anniversary of the "discovery of the New World" by Christopher Columbus, the organizers of the 1893 World's Fair set out to proudly display the best of American innovation in architecture, technology, industry, and -- most deliciously -- food.

Vendors and exhibitors offered visitors to the fair everything from the newest ways to grow and process food to fresh ways to make and eat classics. Foods that debuted or were served at the Chicago World's Fair made an impact on the American palate and the global food industry.

**Join SVHS on Wednesday, October 23 to have a little taste of the delicious history associated with the 1893 fair.**

The evening will start with SVHS Executive Director, Amanda Schaffer as she walks you through the foods being offered and their history with the 1893 fair and beyond. Attendees will then be able to assemble their own plates, enjoying the historic foods while exploring the Collections at SVHS and special 1893 Fair history posters on display for the evening, viewing Sweetwater Center for the Art's 2024 Mavuno Exhibition, *Visions in Motion*, or meeting Zachary Brodt, author of "From the Steel City to the White City" and the SVHS lecture series presenter for the later that evening.

Your paid ticket to the pre-lecture "A Bite of History' Chicago Columbian Exposition Edition" will include a light dinner of some of 1893 affiliated food fares and delights.

Since no fair is complete without some souvenirs to take home, guests will also receive a few special items to commemorate their time taking a bite out of the history of the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition.

Tickets are \$17.49 per person -- the price the original \$.50 ticket to the fair would cost attendees today!

Advance registration and payment is required. Space is limited to 50 people.

This event is a PAID event and is open to the public. Advance registration is REQUIRED via the SVHS website, or by contacting the SVHS office at 412-741-5315 | [info@sewickleyhistory.org](mailto:info@sewickleyhistory.org).



To purchase your ticket scan the QR code above, visit the SVHS website, or contact the SVHS Office.





# Notes from the Postmaster's Office



By: Amanda Schaffer, Executive Director, SVHS

For a fundraiser, my undergraduate history club sold shirts whose back read "You'd be more interesting if you were dead." It made us history majors chuckle; my grandma when I inadvertently wore it while visiting her in the hospital, not so much.

I certainly did not mean to direct such sentiment towards my grandma, there is no denying that if you are a historian, your relationship with dead people, your interest in them and what they left behind, could be considered, at the very least, a little quirky.

That was never more apparent than as I processed the most recent donation made to the Collections at SVHS. Because while processing what those long dead left behind is nothing new, processing items that once belonged to a funeral director that had been stored in a funeral home basement since his death, and being really excited about it, does have one questioning just when did they become so comfortable pawing through the [potentially haunted in this case] items the dead leave behind? Like I said, quirky to say the least...

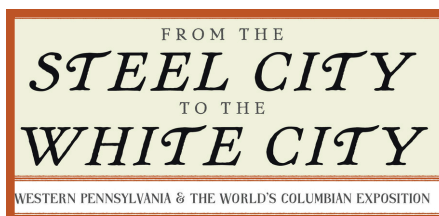
As he prepared the building run as a funeral home under his family's name for the last 60 years for closure, Rick Cole came to SVHS to ask if perhaps we were interested in some items that he and his brother were unsure what to do with -- items relating to the history of the funeral home and its original owner **William (Bill) E. Gray**. A faster yes could not have been said.

Coming to SVHS in four very large boxes, two of which had been stored in the coal cellar of the funeral home since Gray's death, was a mix of the personal effects and documents of Gray's life as well as items pertaining to the history of the funeral home.

According to Cole, Gray trained with one of the first Sewickley undertakers -J. Marlatt- before opening his own funeral home. The Gray Funeral Home at 328 Beaver opened in 1931. In 1937 Gray clad the frame house in brick veneer, creating the soon to be demolished community landmark.

Gray ran the funeral home until selling it to his own trainee, Richard D. Cole, in the 1960s. Gray continued to live in the apartment above the funeral home until his death.

The new collection includes everything from photos of the 1937 renovation to Gray Family vacation photos, from a scalpel (that I sincerely hope was not used) to an incredible scrapbook of Gray's time on the 1940 Sewickley Centennial Committee. The history it contributes to the Collections at SVHS is remarkable and we thank the Cole family for making SVHS its new home.



## Ways to Sign Up to Attend this month's Lecture:

- 1.) Scan the QR code below to be taken directly to the event's page on our website to sign up for the program.
- 2.) Visit [sewickleyhistory.org](http://sewickleyhistory.org) and find the event listing the on the homepage. Click thru to learn more and to sign up to attend
- 3.) Call the SVHS Office at 412-741-5315 or email us at [info@sewickleyhistory.org](mailto:info@sewickleyhistory.org)



Please RSVP in advance for person or zoom attendance.

Light refreshments will be provided for in-person attendees.

**WE HOPE THAT YOU WILL JOIN US!**



**A highlight of items from the donation by Rick Cole, clockwise from top:**

Photograph of Bill Gray in the backyard of 328 Beaver, Bill Gray's bowler hat, glasses and case of Bill Gray, photograph of 328 Beaver featuring the name "Gray-Cole Funeral Home."





# COMMUNITY MEETING

## STATUS OF ST. JAMES CONVENT / HERBST HOUSE

**Sewickley Public Library**  
**Wednesday, November 20, 7 - 8 pm**

**Early 1880's** D.C. Herbst House built (according to Hopkins Atlas).

**December 1913** St. James Church purchases the D. C. Herbst House to be used as the parish's first school.

**Dec 1913 - 1990's** St. James Church uses the structure as a school, convent, and gathering space. By 2000 the utilities are terminated and the building is no longer actively used by the parish.

**July 2022** The Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh submits an application for demolition for the St. James Convent / Herbst House.

**August 2022** Based on ordinance 198-8 Effects of Designation, the Historic Review Commission (HRC) for the Borough of Sewickley unanimously votes to recommend denial for the demolition permit to Borough Council.

**October 2022** Council representatives for the Borough of Sewickley vote to table further discussion and a final vote until the Borough engineer inspects the property.

**Oct 2022 - Feb 2023** Talks between Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation (PHLF) and the Divine Redeemer Parish take place. Talks are not open to the public. No resolution is found.

**March 2023** Borough engineers are allowed access inside the building for a structural inspection.

**April 2023** Based on the recommendation of the HRC, the engineer's report, and ordinance 198-8 Effects of Designation, council representatives for the Borough of Sewickley vote to deny the Catholic Diocese the application for a demolition permit.

**April 2023** The Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh appeal Council's decision to the Allegheny County Court. The judge pushes the case back to the Borough and Diocese to mediate a resolution.

**May 2024** The St. James Convent / Herbst House achieves designation to the Preservation PA At Risk program, highlighting statewide awareness of possible demolition.

**May 2023 - August 2024** The Borough of Sewickley seeks to enter into discussion with the Diocese regarding various options for preservation funding, future uses and the possibility of selling the property. The current status remains at an impasse.

SVHS is collecting information to better understand community interest and knowledge regarding the St. James Convent / Herbst House status.

Please use the QR Code below to fill out the survey, Your voice is important - all are welcome to attend the Community Meeting regardless of filling out the survey. For SVHS members uncomfortable or unable to use the QR code --to the right is a paper version of the survey. Please fill out and return to the SVHS office before November 20, 2024.



## Information gathering on the status of St. James Convent / Herbst House

**Do you believe the St. James Convent/Herbst House should be:**

- ☐ Preserved
- ☐ Demolished
- ☐ Undecided

**Are you a member of Divine Redeemer Parish?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Only enrolled with St. James School
- ☐ Member of the Parish and enrolled with St. James School
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

**How do you use the Borough of Sewickley? Check all that apply.**

- ☐ Live
- ☐ Work
- ☐ School
- ☐ Worship
- ☐ Events

**Are you aware of the considered future uses for this structure? Check all that that you have an awareness of.**

- ☐ Adaptive reuse (such as office space or event space) to provide passive income for Divine Redeemer.
- ☐ Adaptive reuse (such as food pantry or missionary work) to serve the spiritual mission of the Church.
- ☐ Demolition for a playground for the St. James School.
- ☐ Sell the structure to a private owner for rehabilitation into a single family home or local institution.
- ☐ I was not aware of the considered future uses for this structure.

**Comments ... (max 800 characters, not required, feel free to attach an additional page for longer comments if needed)**

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**Your name will not be published or generated in any report pertaining to this survey. It is confidential and provides quality assurance for any possible duplication, ensuring one submission per individual. Thank you for your time!**

Name \_\_\_\_\_



## Patrons, Benefactors, Friends, Sponsors

Many Thanks to the following who since our last newsletter have supported SVHS with gifts in addition to dues.

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## Special Contributions

- National Trust for Historic Preservation, in honor of Verna Corey
- Nancy Johns Fine, in memory of her father Ken Johns
- Oliver and Mary Kay Poppenberg, in honor of Marty O'Brien
- The Carol and Gary Schurman Family Fund

## Welcome New Members!

- Deanne Etienne and Family
- Hadley Haas

## Designated Funds Contributions

### Acquisition Initiative

Ivan and Ruth Hofmann

### Digital & Oral History

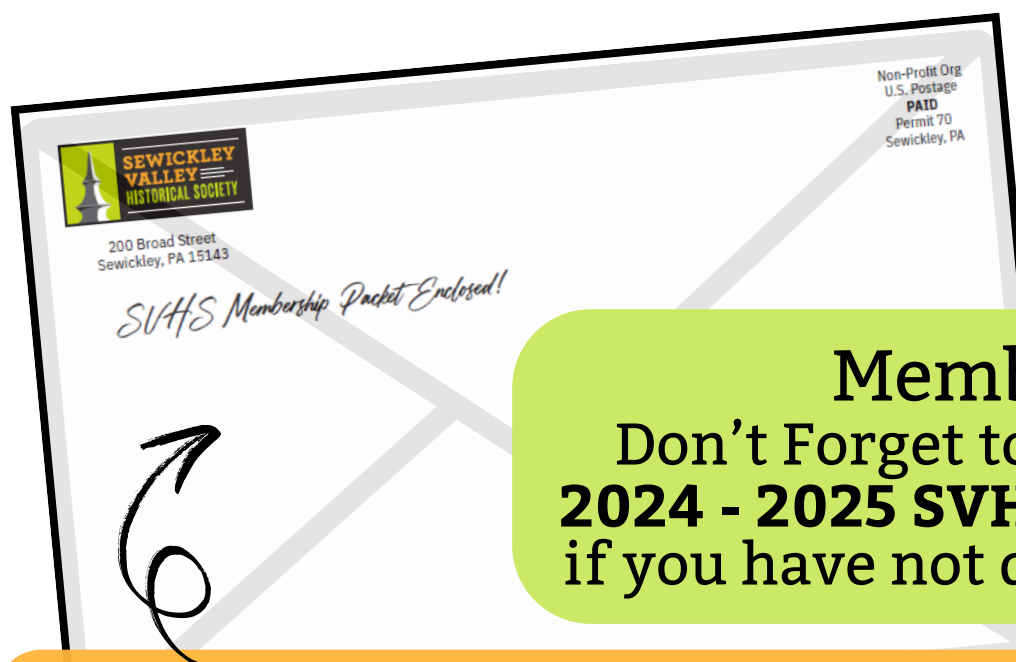
Joe and Judi Nocito  
Susan Nevin Cockrell

Ivan and Ruth Hofmann  
Marilyn and Lawrence Knotts

Martin and Joanne McDaniel

### Speaker Honorarium

Ivan and Ruth Hofmann



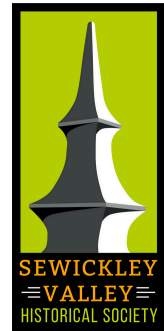
**RENEW ONLINE!**  
USE THIS QR CODE  
TO BE TAKEN DIRECTLY TO THE PAGE

**Members!**  
Don't Forget to **Renew Your**  
**2024 - 2025 SVHS Membership**  
if you have not done so already!

Your Annual Membership Renewal and Appeal Packet should have reached you by the end of August in an envelope with a design like above. If you have not received it, please reach out to the SVHS office to arrange a new one to be sent.

SEWICKLEY VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
200 BROAD STREET  
SEWICKLEY, PA 15143

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Amanda Schaffer

## WEAR YOUR LOVE OF SVHS

SVHS is now using [bonfire.com](http://bonfire.com) to bring you your next favorite shirt!

We've created two custom SVHS designs that through bonfire we are able to offer in a variety of shirt types and colors in all sizes. With bonfire you can pay and have the shirt shipped to you directly -- SVHS does not need to take on inventory and the organization still receive \$5 - \$10 per shirt sold!

Scan the QR code next to the design you are interested in and be taken to the design's page where you can pick from different types of t-shirts, sweatshirts, and tank tops, in a multitude of colors and sizes.

With any questions, reach out to the SVHS office.



SVHS New Logo Gear



SVHS Represents Gear



Signals is written, designed, and edited by SVHS Executive Director, Amanda Schaffer.  
Visit our website, [www.sewickleyhistory.org](http://www.sewickleyhistory.org) | e-mail us at [info@sewickleyhistory.org](mailto:info@sewickleyhistory.org) | or call us at 412-741-5315.  
SVHS offices are open 10am - 2pm Monday - Friday.  
Appointments are encouraged.