THE STORY OF ROSS MOUNTAIN CLUB

A VANISHING TYPE OF AMERICAN SUMMER RESORT

ELISABETH REED ORR*

The Ross Mountain Club was the outgrowth of a desire on the part of a group of Pittsburgh business and professional men and their wives to find a suitable and healthful summer resort within easy reach of the city where they could spend the heated term “amid the charms of nature and the amenities of the home circle” in the heart of the mountains. This was seventy years ago. The history of the site and the early developments of the Club may prove nostalgic to the elders and informative to the youngsters who know its charm.

The story of Ross began when Jean Jacques Mathiot and his bride, Catherine Marguerite Bernard of Lorain, France, landed in Philadelphia September 4, 1754, from the brig NANCY. They settled in Lancaster County, where six children were born.

George was their second son. He volunteered in the service of the Colonies and was frequently interpreter for Lafayette’s Corps, remaining in the Government’s employ after the war. In 1876, while riding through a little village near Baltimore he saw a pretty girl, lost no time in learning her name, Ruth, daughter of Joshua Davies, Quaker, and presented himself to her father, asking for permission to woo his daughter. Joshua was pleased with his manly, earnest manner but refused to yield to a stranger in such a momentous matter. Finally he thought he would banish him forever by demanding abandonment of the profession of arms and a complete acceptance of the Quaker faith, dress and customs. George Mathiot renounced his profession, gave up his military uniform and donned Quaker garb, then returned to Joshua Davies to claim Ruth, who was willing to be claimed. He won his suit and presented himself for membership to the Friends at Indian Spring Meeting. In October 1787, George 28, and Ruth, 16, were married “according to the good order established among Friends.”

Several of their eleven children and later descendants became notable. The eldest child, Jacob Davies Mathiot, is the one with whom we are concerned. He was a constant reader, a student, a clear thinker with

* Elisabeth Reed Orr has been brought up at the Ross Mountain Club. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Almer H. Orr, life-long members and granddaughter of Mr. James P. Orr, one of the founders. Ed.
excellent judgment, hospitable, always well dressed, a courtly gentleman. In his mature years his ever-widening views were not in keeping with the Friends rules and he became a Methodist. He married Mary McKean, "the belle of Westmoreland County" in 1815. He was elected to the State Legislature in 1831 and served two terms. Just before the outbreak of the Civil War, while living in Laughlintown, Westmoreland County, he received an appointment in the United States Treasury Department. When the war came his time and money were wholeheartedly given to the men from his home county for he devoted them to seeking the wounded, dead and missing. His letters to Laughlintown were eagerly awaited and when the hack carrying the mail from the Railroad reached the Post Office in the village store people flocked in to hear the letters read aloud.

* * * * * *

The Ross blast furnace for smelting iron was built in 1814 by Colonel Isaac Meason on Tubmill Creek, four miles south of New Florence, Pennsylvania. It was one of six furnaces built in the Ligonier Valley which furnished iron ore, wood for charcoal, and water. The Hanna Furnace, located on the same stream a few miles further down, antedated the Ross Furnace by four years but was soon abandoned.

Colonel Meason, who built and named Ross Furnace, also built a number of other furnaces in Pennsylvania (particularly in Fayette County). He was a native of Virginia and his wife was a Miss Harrison from that state. It is supposed that in building this furnace he probably patterned it after a furnace built by Randall Ross on the south bank of the James River in Virginia.

Ross Furnace, with superior advantages as to location and able management was in blast continuously for forty years (1814-1854). Gordon's Gazette of the State of Pennsylvania in 1832 states the Ross Furnace in Westmoreland County, operated by Colonel J. D. Mathiot, was the only furnace in the vicinity operating at that time.

In 1842 James Paull, Jr., became a partner of Colonel Mathiot in

1 The name "Tubmill Creek" was derived from a grist mill built by Joseph Dechard which may well have been the first power mill west of the mountains. It consisted of a horizontal water wheel turned by the current pressing tubs on its periphery which caught the water. This was the only wheel involved but its axial shaft at right angles turned the stone which did the grinding in a 1 to 1 ratio. See Indiana County, Pennsylvania by Stewart, p. 567.
the ownership of Ross Furnace under the firm name “Mathiot and Paull.” James Paull was born, raised and died at Deer Park, on the Paull farm near Dunbar, Fayette County. He was a great traveler, often going by horseback as far as Ohio, so the trip to Ross was nothing for him. When the firm was founded in 1842 they erected a new stack of stone thirty feet square at the base, hollow to the top. Built close by a hill, not much trestle was needed to reach the stack into which the ore, limestone and charcoal were dumped. When ignited and the blast turned on a roaring noise began, followed by a shower of sparks from the top of the stack. This was continuous day and night as the metal could not be allowed to chill in the furnace. Water to actuate the bellows for draft was taken from the Tubmill and carried along a hill through a race from which it poured through a trough into the capacious buckets of an overshot wheel.

Professional chemists were not available, but experienced iron masters, such as Colonel Mathiot, tested the ore by roasting it in a blacksmith’s forge until it crumbled, then crushing it with a hammer to powder. The amount of iron clinging to a horseshoe magnet decided the richness of the ore. People from other counties came to Colonel Mathiot with samples to be tested. The furnace products at Ross were pig iron, stoves, kettles, ovens, skillets, pots, etc., which were hauled to the Conemaugh River at New Florence, four miles north, by oxen team and taken to Pittsburgh and Allegheny on flat boats and rafts when the water was high. Later the Pennsylvania Canal was used until its abandonment on the completion of the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1852. The helpers who went down with the rafts to Pittsburgh walked back to Ross Furnace.

Nearly all the men who worked at the furnace lived on the property. Houses for the workmen, charcoal burners and teamsters, were chiefly log, with a big chimney outside. These houses were at the back of the meadow where there is now a shooting range. When the property was purchased by the Club there were a number of workmen’s houses or at least the stone chimneys of these houses still standing.

The water wheel, as well as the wooden cylinders with pistons in them that furnished the blast for the furnace were all intact when Ross Club took possession but were dismantled for fear the children would meet with an accident in climbing over them.

The low grade iron ore was obtained from the hill south of Tubmill Creek and the charcoal was burned from timber obtained all over
the mountain side. Some of the charcoal pits can still be recognized.

The "Manor House," occupied by Colonel Mathiot's family, was a large attractive building, white with green shutters, consisting originally of six rooms to which a parlor and three additional rooms were added. This home was the scene of much social life, friends from elsewhere always finding the house "open." The large parlor witnessed many merry-makings and the weddings of several of the daughters. This Manor House at Ross was located just to the right of the center road crossing the golf course (fourth hole) going toward Tubmill and the stable.

When Colonel Mathiot came to Ross Furnace he built a frame house (or perhaps fitted up one already there) on the knoll south of the immediate house grounds for the purpose of holding Sunday School and church services. Ministers from the nearby churches in Fairfield and New Florence gladly gave their services. Willing teachers were found in the neighborhood.

The Furnace, where many men were employed, furnished an animated scene all day long. Workmen with mules and carts, "traders" passing to and from the Company store, visitors and idlers coming and going. Business was carried on at the store which consisted of only two rooms to hold the goods necessary to meet family needs. Barrels of molasses, sugar, salt-fish, salt, etc., commodities not furnished by home products, found their way to Ross by Conestoga wagons which returned with local products. There was a constant demand for leather, shoe-peggs, nails, candles, tobacco, dishes, tableware, etc. The store had the usual dry goods "department," silk dress patterns, shoes, trinkets and glass jars with red and white sticks of candy. The farmer's wife or daughter alighted on the up-on-block, fastened her horse at one of the rows of hitching-posts, slipped off a long riding skirt, for an hour's diversion looking over the latest additions to the stock and disposing of her produce—eggs three cents a dozen, butter ten cents a pound, etc. Any one fortunate enough to own sheep, a spinning wheel and a big noisy loom was assured of a market for wool, yarn and blankets, and rag carpets.

When the furnace site, with its surrounding acres, passed into the private ownership of George Torrence Paull, son of James Paull, Jr., (about 1862) all of the picturesque features had not vanished. The rusty furnace bell was to ring once more. During the Civil War, when news of a great victory won by the Union Army was flashed over the country, Mr. Henry Phipps and Mr. Andrew Carnegie were guests at
the Manor House for a few days. They climbed up over rickety timbers and assisted the long-silent bell to do its best to celebrate the victory.

The many features and general attractiveness of the place suggested to the owner, George Torrence Paull, its admirable fitness for a summer resort. He died but his plan that Ross should be developed as a resort was carried to completion by a competent committee consisting of Jacob Graff, Executor of the Paull Estate, William J. Scully and John F. Miller, both sons-in-law of George Torrence Paull.

On August 24, 1886, the first meeting of subscribers to the capital stock of an association (not named) was held. The incorporators were:

Jacob Graff        Blairsville, Pa.
James P. Orr       Allegheny City, Pa.
William J. Scully  What Cheer, Iowa
John F. Miller     What Cheer, Iowa
F. L. Blair        Allegheny City, Pa.
James B. Dewhurst  Pittsburgh, Pa.
James L. Styne     Emsworth, Pa.

These were men of vision, men who wanted to establish a country home in their beloved Pennsylvania mountains and they worked hard to make their dreams come true. The first few years were busy ones. It was a heroic task to get Ross started. The men met from month to month—usually in a member's office or the lawyer's office, appointing committees, planning the work, studying finances. In the interests of domestic tranquility a meeting took place now and then at one of the members' homes in the evening with the ladies present to have their say in the arrangements.

James Beacom was selected as solicitor and instructed to examine the title to the property known as Ross Furnace in Westmoreland County, on Laurel Ridge of the Allegheny Mountains, owned by the Paull estate, of which Jacob Graff was executor.

The original property purchased consisted of 1293-44/100 acres. Later the property of J. and E. Hanna (19 acres), and also the property of Charlie and Thomas Neil (70 acres), were purchased.

Messrs. Graff, Blair and Orr formed a committee to employ a surveyor, Cyrus Long of Greensburg, to arrive at the correct boundary
lines. Having made a survey of the property they then wrote a report, accompanied by a sketch.

Messrs. Graff, Gillespie and Blair were named a committee on improvement of grounds. They also visited the property, had it posted and employed a special policeman to protect the grounds.

A committee of five, Messrs. Gillespie, Blair, Styne, Walker and Orr, was named to employ a superintendent to take charge of repairs and of the grounds. This proved to be a most difficult task. Many men were employed during the first few years but all required constant pushing. When the different committees visited the property the men were given full instructions and they agreed to carry out the work immediately, but at the next visit not much had been done and it seemed to require some one to be there in order to accomplish anything. Later on Mr. James Neil became superintendent and for many years served faithfully and efficiently.

Mrs. Gillespie, Mrs. Walker and Mrs. Orr formed a committee to make necessary purchases of furniture for the reception room and dining room, as well as equipment for the kitchen, including a range.

The spring of 1887 was spent in repairs, building, posting the property. A special policeman and a superintendent were also employed, as mentioned. The main building was repaired, the old building behind it was removed and a one story dining room, 60 x 30 feet, with a large fireplace for wood fires was built in its place. Also a porch 12 feet wide in front and at one end of the Manor House was added for a Reception Hall. A small building was used as kitchen and laundry. Also stables and sheds were built.

In the spring and summer of 1887 the first three houses were erected for F. L. Blair, James P. Orr and W. K. Gillespie (houses now occupied by James Orr Boswell, Mrs. Gertrude Orr Fife and Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin W. Kerr). Mr. Blair and Mr. Orr were granted permission to occupy the tenant house just being completed until their cottages were ready.

Mr. William H. Pfahl, Sr., was elected a member and his cottage was started in the fall of 1887 and finished in the spring of 1888. (It is now occupied by Mr. William H. Pfahl, Jr., of Lancaster and his family.)

In February of 1888 Thomas Menoher asked for the privilege of getting some timber from the company grounds for a barn he was building and the request was granted. The Menoher Highway, near Ross, is
named for this family.

During the spring of 1888 the By-Laws were adopted as follows:

"Certificate of Incorporation, By-Laws and List of Membership of the Ross Mountain Park Association, July 1888:

President: Jesse W. Walker
Vice President: John F. Miller
Secretary & Treasurer: James P. Orr

Board of Directors:
- Jesse W. Walker
- James P. Orr
- William K. Gillespie
- William H. Pfahl
- James B. Dewhurst
- Frank L. Blair
- Robert S. Smith
- John F. Miller

"In these days of fierce competition in trade, and the consequent demand for almost ceaseless attention to detail, it is a very common thing to hear live business men say: 'I haven't time to take a vacation.' And usually they don't until their physician prescribes 'mountain air,' or 'salt sea breezes' as an aid toward recovery from nervous prostration, or the like.

"To reconcile this seemingly necessary presence and personal oversight with a reasonable care for one's own health and, likewise, that of one's family, is a problem worthy of the most conscientious attention. Ross Mountain Park Association is an out-growth of an attempt to solve the problem by providing a suitable and healthful summer resort within easy reach of the city where the wives and children of busy men can spend the heated term and where, amid the restorative charms of nature and the amenities of the home circle—removed for the time being to the heart of the mountains—the tired-out worker can gain new vigor for his tasks by at least one day of real rest in seven and an occasional outing with rod or gun.

"With this end in view, during the summer of 1886, a party of ladies and gentlemen from Pittsburgh visited the old Ross Furnace property situated in the Ligonier Valley four miles south of New Florence, a station on the Pennsylvania Railroad, sixty-four miles from the city. The natural wildness and beauty of the location, the invigorating freshness of the air, the abundance and purity of the water, and the fact that, notwithstanding its seclusion, it is but little over three hours from business, appealed so strongly to the desires and needs of those present that a temporary organization was formed at once, which some weeks, later, purchased the tract mentioned and on the seventeenth day of January 1887, become a chartered institution of the Commonwealth under the name of the Ross Mountain Park Association. When the old Furnace was in active operation from 1814 to 1855, the Ross tract consisted of several thousand acres. Of this some twelve hundred acres, partially cleared but mostly covered with valuable second-growth timber, remains, and is now the property of the Association. The cleared ground, outside of the reservation for cottages, lawns, gardens and play grounds, is admirably adapted for a grazing farm and will be utilized for that purpose under the direction of the farmer, who has general charge of the place and maintains a careful watch over the streams and forests.

"The buildings that marked the site of a once busy and prosper-

2 The name "Ross" is derived from the Furnace and is combined with "Mountain Park" for its location in the mountains. There is no "Ross Mountain" as many have believed. Later the "Park" was dropped in favor of "Club."
ous settlement had largely fallen into decay and were removed, with
two or three exceptions. The old Manor House, carefully repaired
and renovated, now does duty as the Association Hotel, while an-
other modernized dwelling has been set apart as a residence for
the farmer. A good barn with an adjoining carriage house com-
pletes the list of Association property, though a couple of local coal
banks and unlimited iron ore and charcoal cinder might be added,
while two mineral springs of acknowledged virtue furnish an ad-
ditional attraction for those who put their faith in healing waters.

“Believing that in its natural simplicity and ruggedness lies
much of the beauty and benefit of Ross, the projectors of the Asso-
ciation especially desire to avoid any ‘city-park-like’ effects in
further improving the property and aim only to make it convenient
of access, attractive in appearance, and valuable for the purposes
of real recreation. This plan of action, with a liberal but, by no
means, extravagant scale of living at the Association Hotel, insures
a maximum of healthful comfort and enjoyment with a minimum
of cost.

“The same moderate spirit has ruled in the individual improve-
ments of the past two seasons, the cottages erected during this
time being marked by an absence of any effort at display and an
evident preference for comfort and convenience. Four of these
private dwellings now crown the lovely slope beyond the Manor
House, facing the rising sun, and others are projected.

“As regards sporting matters, small game is scarce, as yet,
but will doubtless grow more plentiful as farming operations are
extended. Deer are killed on the tract every winter. Old Tubmill
Creek, famous for its trout, is still a favored resort for the gamest
of fish, though persistently angled for half a century. With the
establishment of a strict watch over the miles of streams, large and
small, that run through the Ross tract it bids fair to become one of
the finest preserves in the State and offers an endless amount of
sport with rod and reel to the members of the Association and their
friends.

“The plan of government of the Association, with the effective
methods adopted to limit expenditures and insure the best of society
and the most congenial companionship at Ross, will be found in the
By-Laws. A full list of the present membership is also given.
Pittsburgh, July 30, 1888”

In the summer of 1888 an ice house was built enclosing the spring
house, to supply ice during the summer. This was built by carpenter P.
Z. Gamble, who lived nearby, and he was instructed to use all the ma-
terial he could from the property and have it sawed at Garman’s, a saw-
mill on the road toward New Florence.

A ball ground and tennis courts south of the Dining Hall were
planned. Arrangements were made for cultivation of the field behind
the cottage: (part of the Golf Course now) and a road was laid out—
instructions given to get out the material for the road during the winter.

It was decided to permit Mr. Trimble, a neighboring farmer, to
use as much of the large field back of the cottages as he cared to put in
corn—he to furnish all seed and do all the work and give the company
one-third of the corn and fodder.
Board at the Dining Hall for members of the Association was set at the rate of 15 cents per meal for all persons over 14 years and 10 cents per meal for all under 14.

In the spring of 1889 a garden was planted—potatoes, peas, beans, lettuce, onions, sweet corn and cabbage.

The early years at Ross were full of activity. At first water was carried from Tubmill to the cottages but soon a pipe line was put in. There was a tennis court which was continually in use. The boys swam in the mill dam which was there from the days when the furnace was in operation. The road went down through what is now a lake. The island in the lake is the top of a large cinder pile and the mill race, dam and ice pond were between the island and the far shore of the lake.

There were hay rides on moonlit nights and occasional hack rides to Ligonier, using what is known now as the Waterford Road, only turning to the right before getting to Waterford. Ligonier then, as now, was a small, attractive, historic town.

The older boys played ball and the team found competition in others from New Florence and Fairfield.

Oil lamps were used for light and all the cottages had fireplaces for wood fires, as evenings in the mountains are generally cool and often damp.

The Garmans, down below the island, ran a grist mill and saw mill and these were of unfailing interest to the young ones at Ross.

During the next years more cottages were built on the lower row on both sides of the original four, extending to the northeast. Designating them by the surname of the original builder and giving the names of the present owners the cottages are as follows: Walker, built about 1890 (now George P. Haas), Edeburn (Mrs. William M. Patterson), Smith (James B. McCullough, Washington), Joseph Paull (David G. Hill), Samuel Miller (later taken down), Joe T. Miller (George B. Baton), John I. Stewart, soon taken over by Rev. William J. Reid (Cornell Emanuel, Lancaster); and to the southwest Dewhurst (H. W. Prentis, Lancaster) and Carnahan (later taken down).

In 1901 a printed copy of the List of Officers, List of Members, Certificate of Incorporation and By-Laws of Ross Mountain Park Association states:

"Said corporation is formed for the purpose of maintaining a private park in which to build rural homes, propagate and preserve game and fish and pursue other social enjoyments."

As of September 1901 the members were:
The High Ridge Water Company purchased 50 acres from Ross Mountain Park, on which in 1905 and 1906 they built Tubmill Dam or Reservoir, which was filled in 1907. Ross reserved the exclusive privilege of boating and fishing on or within the lands of the said Water Company, both of which are still enjoyed today. Tubmill Dam—capacity 200,000 gallons—is about 1200 feet broad at the breast, 40 feet deep, and backs up about 2000 feet. Stone from the mountain side was used in building the dam. A narrow gauge railroad ran between the dam site and the stone quarry. For many years one of the favorite hikes at Ross was to this stone quarry. Remains of several saw mills can also be seen, although these and the stone quarry are almost overgrown now.

The elevation of the dam at the spillway is 1326 feet above sea level. The elevation of the lower row of the houses is 1400 feet and the upper row 1460 feet.

Ross Mountain Club now consists of 1332 acres.

In 1906 the dam was finished and in 1910 the present clubhouse was built on a hill overlooking the lake and facing the mountains. The clubhouse was modeled after Mount Vernon, with large first and second floor porches. The first floor consists of a large dining room across the front, with fireplaces at each end, kitchen, office, pantries, storage rooms, etc., behind. The second floor front part, above the dining room, was designed as a dance floor, being built of hard solid maple on steel beams, and proved its worth through many years when dances were held every Saturday evening when the highlight of the evening was a vigorous “Paul Jones.” Behind are living quarters for the staff serving
the clubhouse.

Tom, colored cook who came with the dam builders, stayed on to cook at Ross for many years during the summer season. During the winter he lived with some of the Ross families. Tom was a wonderful character, a worthy successor to the "retainers" of early Ross days. He was dearly beloved by all the children. They crowded around him while he did his work, gathered outside to watch him prepare the chickens for Sunday dinner (a rather gruesome sight) and ran to him if a knee was cut or a head bumped in a fall (or a fight), whereupon the victim was gathered upon an ample knee, comforted and crooned to. Tom was another of the pleasant Ross memories of the past.

The men brought their families to Ross in early June, complete with trunks, and the women and children who stayed until school time in September. They came by train to New Florence where they were met by a hack drawn by two dapple-gray horses driven by Jim Neil. It was also the custom for this hack to meet the week-end visitors from the city and return them on Monday morning to entrain for Pittsburgh. The Cresson and Ebensburg Special ran Friday and Monday and most of the men used this train. Several families had horses and buggies which they drove to Ross at the beginning of summer and back in the fall. This was a two day trip each way, with an overnight stop in Greensburg.

Exactly when the golf course was started cannot be recalled; however at the time the first cottage on the upper hill was built in 1910 by Almer H. Orr, son of James P. Orr, there were a few holes on the upper hill, which had formerly been a cornfield, and before that there had been one hole on the lower hill.

About the time of the beginning of the golf course a "Ross Improvement Society" was formed, with officers, dues and by-laws. There were eight committees, the duties and powers of which were as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Finance</th>
<th>By-Paths and Wood Paths</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water Sports</td>
<td>Field Sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>The Preservation of Natural Beauties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Game and Fish</td>
<td>Social and Indoor Amusements</td>
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"The By-Path and Wood Road Committee shall devise ways and means to secure Trails, Forest and Mountain Paths and Roads, the right to use the same, lay out, open up, repair and maintain the same to points of interest and beauty in and adjacent to Ross Mountain Park. Also to provide along the side roads and paths, proper sign boards giving, if possible, accurate distances to various destinations.

"The Water Sports Committee shall devise ways and means to secure a proper and safe swimming pool, and in addition, if pos-
sible, to secure data toward the construction of a safe pond (for children).

"The Field Sports Committee shall devise ways and means to secure a proper golf ground with shelter house, and supervise the laying out, construction and maintenance of the same. Also for the securing and caring for a base ball ground, and to care for and add to the present tennis court, with an addition, when possible, of a croquet court, and provide rules and regulations for the control of the same, subject to approval of the Executive Board.

"The Committee for the Preservation of Natural Beauty, shall seek to guard the forest and road-side trees from damage, and to interest all possible in the care of the same. The Committee shall beautify, where possible, all such pieces of property as might otherwise become waste and unavailable, by underbrush growing up, and to promote the propagation of native plants.

"The Game and Fish Committee shall, when possible, introduce on the property of the Ross Mountain Park Association, such wild game as they can secure, also to maintain and to properly stock the streams within the confines of the Ross Mountain Park, with brook trout. They shall also devote their energies to the protection of such game and fish, and to secure, if possible, the arrest and prosecution of parties who may hunt and fish within the bounds of Ross Mountain Park without proper authority from the Ross Mountain Park Association.

"Social and Indoor Amusements. This Committee shall make as its special object, the social fellowship of the Association, shall have charge of all entertainments and supervise all indoor sports and games. It shall devise ways and means to secure, in future, if possible, billiard, pool and shuffle tables. They shall also lend their assistance in securing proper music for the Saturday evening dances, and in the direction of the assembly room. They are also to secure, if possible, proper persons to talk and discuss nature and out-of-door topics, and to provide books of nature study for common reference in the assembly."

The early presidents of Ross were:

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<tr>
<th>President</th>
<th>Terms</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jacob Graff</td>
<td>1886 to Apr. 30, 1888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. W. Walker</td>
<td>Apr. 30 1888 to Feb. 27, 1897</td>
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<tr>
<td>W. A. Edeburn</td>
<td>Feb. 27, 1897 to Feb. 27, 1900</td>
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<tr>
<td>W. J. Scully</td>
<td>Feb. 27, 1900 to July 25, 1903</td>
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<tr>
<td>J. W. Walker</td>
<td>July 25, 1903 to July 25, 1906</td>
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<tr>
<td>T. D. Carnahan</td>
<td>July 25, 1906 to July 25, 1908</td>
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<tr>
<td>J. P. Orr</td>
<td>July 25, 1908 to about 1916</td>
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</tbody>
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Later on, the first motoring days at Ross were full of adventure. A Winton, a National, a Mercer, a Chandler, all roared toward Ross. A narrow winding Lincoln Highway to Ligonier, then a country dirt road the rest of the way, was the route. Every journey was undertaken with an eye to the weather because if it rained, the mud made the road practically impassable, to say nothing of the state of the occupants of the car who had their choice of being drenched or stifling behind leather and celluloid curtains. If the sky looked threatening on the way up, one could only hope for the best. Sometimes a wait in Lig-

3 A form of croquet.
onier was deemed best. Usually, however, the brave adventurers pressed on and many a time one of the modern miracles was pulled out of a ditch by a good old farm horse team.

The journey took many hours because it was always filled with punctures or engine trouble or even parts of the car falling off, and those of us who belonged to the Early Motor Age grew to know every inch of the road because we had stopped at most spots along it. One of the most exciting moments then was when one made the Fairfield Hill in high and jubilantly reported it upon arrival at Ross. In fact, it was an exciting moment just to arrive at Ross!

For a number of years several members had horses which they kept in the attractive stable at Ross. There were many country roads over which to ride and trails through the woods were cleared for bridle paths. Mr. George Paull (descendant and namesake of George Paull of this earlier history) kept several horses and he and his daughters, Nancy Lea and Mary Lou, were among the enthusiastic riders, as were Mr. Hackett, Mr. Prentis, Dr. Anderson and daughter Barbara, and Betty Orr. One summer, early in the horsey days, several of the “older” women took part in the sport, to the great hilarity of their children, I’m afraid.

The swimming pool, built beside the lake, was an immediate success. It became the focal point of interest on summer afternoons, from the very smallest child being initiated in the shallow end, through the next stage—the slightly larger child being given his first swimming lesson by Mrs. Emanuel, to the half boy-half fish cavorting about at the deep end showing off his diving ability, to the older group who like to spend a lot of time sitting beside the pool and a little time perhaps bobbing about in the center part of the pool.

The golf course has its faithful addicts, both men and women. There are many good golfers and lots of tournaments go on during the summer. Another Ross tradition is the Labor Day fancy dress tournament when the course is filled with struggling teams in anything from sheeted Arabs to “Eleanor Roosevelt” and “Perle Mesta.”

The lovely picnic grounds beside the stream are used every year when still another Ross tradition finds the picnic ending with everyone singing old songs to the accompaniment of a banjo and fiddle and the children, with lighted candles, parading through the trees.

Through all the years at Ross there have been Sunday vesper services conducted by members. All the families gather on the upstairs porch of the clubhouse Sunday evening, the small children up front,
then the intermediates, the adults at the back by choice. It is a simple service, with singing and prayers and reading from the Bible. It is also a part of Ross tradition—the children look forward to it all week—two of them take up the collection each week and one of the older boys counts the people. The collection, for many years, has been sent to the American Sunday School Union. A special collection was recently taken up to donate to the Building Fund of the Fort Palmer Presbyterian Church on the Ligonier Road several miles from Ross. This church, originally called the Fairfield Presbyterian Church, was organized in 1782. It met in a small log meeting house and tent at first. It came to be known as the Fort Palmer Church because it was so close to the site of Fort Palmer, a settlers’ fort during the dark days of the Revolution. The church building burned to the ground in 1953 and the small congregation worked hard and diligently to erect a lovely new church building.

Memories of a childhood filled with the joys of Ross from the moment of arrival until the unwilling departure (always completed with a tearful last Sunday when all sang “Till We Meet Again”), recall that the days were never long enough, the nights far too long. Visiting, tree climbing, riding on the farm horses, helping milk the cows, watching Patsy skin a sheep with his sharp knife, visits to see how Tom was getting along, building dams in the creek and always getting soaked in the process, exploring upstream, making camps and building tree houses were all necessary activities of the day. I wonder if the children of Ross now, with different and more sophisticated pleasures, feel the same way? Somehow I think they do.

Ross Mountain Club, as it is now called, has gone on and prospered. After the first house on the hill was built by Aimer H. Orr, one beside it was built by B. W. Kerr (now owned and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Joseph D. Watson). Some time later came Hackett’s (now Mr. William A. Meyer) and Fisher’s (now Mr. and Mrs. Ralph M. Rush). The William M. Robinsons built an attractive house at the top of the hill overlooking part of the golf course, which he and Mr. and Mrs. Joseph G. Robinson now occupy. At the end of the upper row the Stevensons built (now Dr. and Mrs. S. Harris Johnson III). Then, around the bend near the upper entrance to the club Mr. Hackett built a lovely house (now Dr. & Mrs. Henry A. Anderson). The last house, built by Mr. George S. Baton between the upper row and the clubhouse, facing the golf course, is now occupied by Mrs.
Baton and Mr. & Mrs. Edwin F. Sheetz. There are now nineteen houses.

Naturally there have been changes over the years. "It is but little over three hours from business" can now be cut in half. But the changes have been relatively few. Tubmill still flows silver in the sun, its water cold, soft and sparkling. The old furnace still stands, mute testimony to the beginning of Ross. The beautiful trees still abound, the ferns and moss and lovely spring violets still await the explorer along the stream, the peace and charm of a mountain retreat remain, and the fourth generation of original families is still coming to Ross.4

4 Much of the information about the early history of Ross was obtained from the book "Paull-Irwin, An Enlarged Family Sketch," by Elisabeth Maxwell Paull, privately printed in 1915 and 1936, loaned by Miss Mary Louise Paull, of New York.

The excerpts from the early days of the Ross Mountain Park Association were taken from the papers of the late James P. Orr, now in possession of his son, Almer H. Orr, who also supplied much of the information about the building of the Tubmill Reservoir and life in the first years of the Association.