

Butler County Historical Society

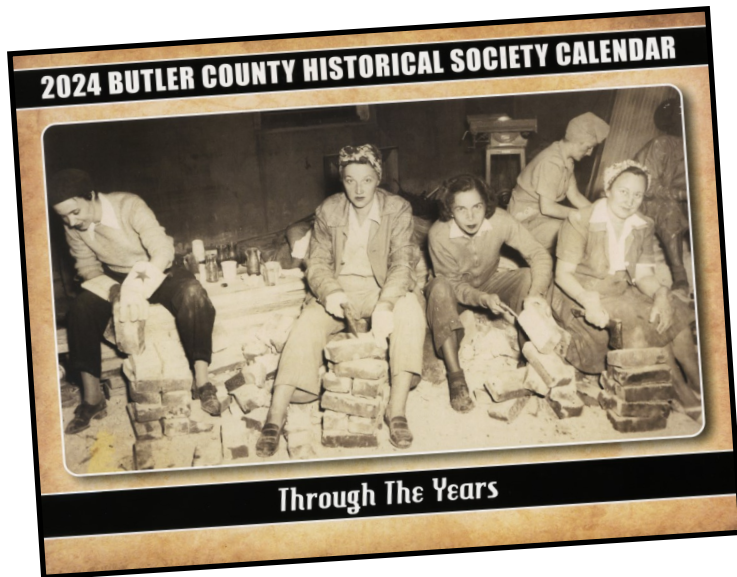
December 2023  
Volume 44, Issue 4



# Butler County *Historian*

Inside this issue

2024 Calendar.....1  
Portraits in the Parlor.....2  
Inside the Archives.....3  
Christmas Events.....4  
Director's Message.....5



# It's Here!

Celebrate twelve of Butler's longest-lived shops and organizations with our 16th annual calendar, *Through the Years*. They're still only \$10 and you can order your copies by phone (724-283-8116), in person at the Lowrie House (123 W. Diamond St.), at any of our featured local businesses listed at right, or online at [butlerhistory.com](http://butlerhistory.com).

## **Purchase Your 2024 Calendar At:**

**The Butler Florist**  
123 E. Wayne Street

**Cummings Candy &  
Coffee**  
146 N. Main Street

**May's Music Shoppe**  
247 E. Jefferson Street

**Natili North**  
204 N. Main Street

*Many Thanks to our 2024 Calendar Sponsors:*

**The Law Offices of Gail E. Suhr, PLLC**



**The Housing & Redevelopment Authority  
of Butler County**

**Please support these local  
businesses!**

# PORTRAITS

*in the*

# PARLOR

Saturday, November 25th

11 AM to 3 PM



\$15 for a 15 minute session

Images available via digital  
download

Reserve your spot by calling

724-283-8116

Get your Christmas pictures  
taken in the beautifully  
decorated parlor of the  
Senator Walter Lowrie  
House. These photos will be  
perfect for greeting cards,  
gifts, or just for fun!



# Inside The Archives

## Archaeology at the Schoolhouse

*While preparing new exhibits for the Little Red Schoolhouse, we found a treasure trove of artifacts.*

Big things are in store for the Little Red Schoolhouse in 2024! Next year the building will get a complete makeover: a new roof, scrubbed and repointed brick walls, reimagined exhibits, freshly repainted interior, and schoolhouse style lighting.

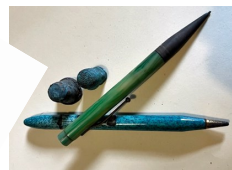
While curating the new exhibits several months ago, I pulled five old cardboard boxes from under the current display table. Inside were *dozens* of objects that had been discovered under the school's floorboards during repairs and improvements in the 1990s.

During the restoration work, the Society conducted archaeological investigations that unearthed a lost world of everyday objects. For more than a century, people in the Schoolhouse dropped all sorts of things that “fell through the cracks” and remained hidden in the dark, under the floor for generations.

The Little Red Schoolhouse was the city's main school from 1838-1876; until the community had to build much larger schools. So the little building served through the years as an administrative building, school nurse's office, public library, DAR Chapter House, storage area, Red Cross work site, and school museum. Most of the recovered objects date from the mid-1800s to the early 1900s, when the building functioned as part of the school system. Throughout that timeframe, folks lost many possessions under the floor...frustrating for them, wonderful for us!

Just imagine the anguish of students who lost favorite marbles, or the irritation of their parents at the careless loss of buttons, shoelaces, pencils, rulers, slate wipers, and eating utensils.

Adults lost their fair share of treasured objects as well. Their recovered possessions include keys to the building, pens and mechanical pencils, sewing thimbles, a cigarette card, a watchchain, and a beautiful sorority brooch. (And we found information about the brooch's owner!)



Next year all of these extraordinary finds will be displayed on interpretive wall panels, plinths, and docent aprons at the back of the schoolroom. You can be sure that we'll have a Grand Reopening and plenty of tours! I do hope that you'll visit the Little Red Schoolhouse after its makeover; there will be lots of lost-and-found treasures to see! (And no, if your third great-grandfather lost his fancy hand-painted marble when he was a schoolboy, you may not have it back!)

-Jen Ford

3RD ANNUAL

# Christmas Cookie Walk

Saturday, December 2nd | 4PM to 7PM

Donate \$12 for a bakery box to fill with your favorite treats as you walk through the decorated 1828 Lowrie House.



**Free Parking!**

Senator Walter Lowrie House  
123 West Diamond St., Butler  
*Behind the Courthouse*

---

## Christmas Tours

*Of the*

## Senator Walter Lowrie House

**Friday, December 8th | 4PM to 8PM**

**Tours every hour | Last tour starts at 7 PM**

Learn about the Sullivan family and holiday traditions of the Victorian era.

---

Please **reserve your ticket** by calling 724-283-8116 or online at [butlerhistory.com/](http://butlerhistory.com/)

\$10 Members  
\$15 Nonmembers



# Message from the Director

## ~Everything Old Is New Again~

(With apologies to Peter Allen)

By definition, historical societies preserve objects from the past. That's what we do. But sometimes the societies themselves need a bit of a make-over, and that's what we're getting up to in 2024!

Some changes you can look forward to include a newly designed website that will be more informative and easier to use than the current incarnation.

To go along with the new and improved website, we'll have a fresh logo! The old one served BCHS well for many years, but it's time for a more modern design. (Sneak peek of the new logo at right.)



Thanks to Tim Shaffer's generous bequest, we've begun scheduling repair and restoration work at all three of our sites: the Lowrie House, Little Red Schoolhouse, and Cooper Cabin. All three are well past due for maintenance. There's a jungle growing out of the Schoolhouse roof, racoons are invading Cooper Cabin, and the beautiful porch pillars at the Lowrie House are rotting.

I might be most excited about our search for a new Collection Manager. That person is responsible for preserving and cataloging the thousands of objects BCHS owns, and we've been without one since last year. I can't wait to add a new member to our merry band of museum nerds – I mean professionals.

Last but far from least, thanks to Outreach Coordinator Mackenzie Herold, we now have a Friends Group and *they* have already come up with a new event: Portraits in the Parlor, happening on Saturday, November 25<sup>th</sup>. Who knows what they'll think of for next year?!

2024 at BCHS will be especially exciting; hope to see you often!!

-Jen

## 2022-2023 Board of Directors

Joyce Rauschenberger  
**President**

Brad Pflugh  
**Vice-President**

Margaret Hewitt  
**Secretary**

Candee Barnes  
**Treasurer**

Brian Abels  
Donna Collins  
Sara Dickensheets  
Jeff Double  
Gail Suhr

## BCHS Staff

Jennifer Ford, PhD  
**Executive  
Director**

Mackenzie Herold  
**Outreach Coordinator**

**BONUS  
ACCOUNTING**

## Office/Tour Hours

The BCHS Office and Research Library at the Senator Walter Lowrie House (123 W. Diamond Street) are open to the public

## Membership Updates

**If your name is highlighted on the address label, it's time to renew your membership! Please renew online at [butlerhistory.com](http://butlerhistory.com) or by sending a check to our office with your renewal information.**

**THANK YOU SO MUCH for your continued support. Every membership is important; each one enables us to preserve Butler County's past for future generations!**

And a warm welcome to our newest members:

Cecilia Tomko  
Laine Repic  
Maggie Babinka-Repic

### Our Mission

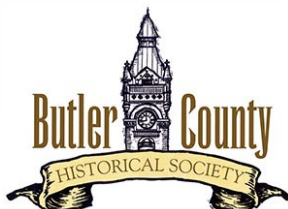
*The Mission of the  
Butler County  
Historical Society is to  
collect, preserve,  
maintain, and interpret  
the historical  
documents and sites of  
Butler County's rich  
history.*

## Butler County Historical Society

123 W Diamond St  
Butler, PA 16001

---

[www.butlerhistory.com](http://www.butlerhistory.com)  
Phone: 724-283-8116  
Fax: 724-283-2505  
E-mail:  
[society@butlerhistory.com](mailto:society@butlerhistory.com)



NON-PROFIT ORG

U S Postage

PAID

Butler, PA

Permit #312