

Butler County Historical Society

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Butler County *Historian*

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2023

BCHS Membership Meeting



When: Saturday, June 24, 2023 from 11 AM to 1 PM
Where: Meeting Room at The Butler Area Public Library
(218 N. McKean St., Butler)

- ◇ Light Refreshments
- ◇ Introduction of Board Members & Staff
 - ◇ 2022-23 Activities Report
 - ◇ Planning for the Future
 - ◇ Q&A—We Need Your Input!
- ◇ **No Charge for this Members-Only Event**
Please Sign Up by June 20!

724-283-8116

society@butlerhistory.com



Movie Night at Cooper Cabin



July 20th | 199 Cooper Rd., Cabot, PA

Family-Friendly Movie TBA

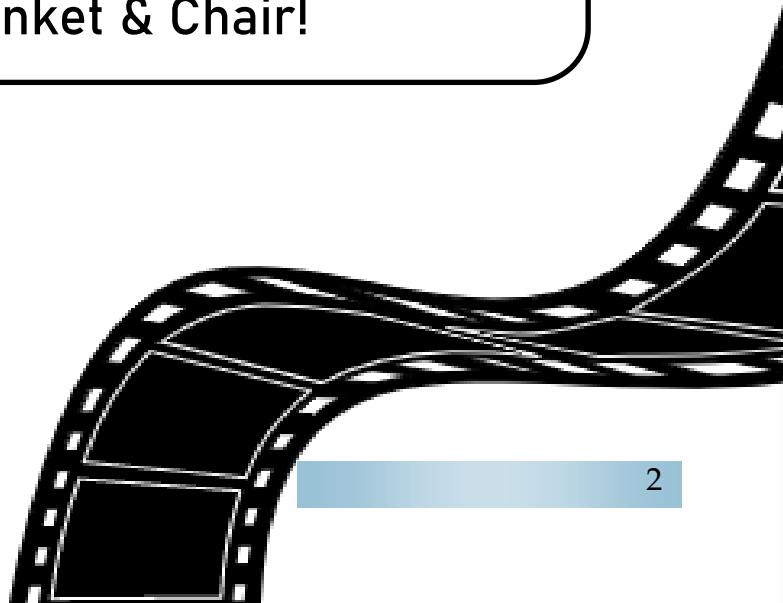
FREE ADMISSION!!

Gate Opens at 7 | Movie Starts at 8

Fire Pit | Lawn Games | Music

Snacks & Refreshments

Just Bring a Blanket & Chair!



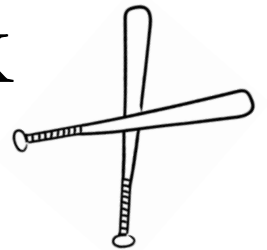
VINTAGE BASEBALL GAME!!



SATURDAY ~ AUGUST 19TH

HISTORIC PULLMAN PARK

6:00 PM ~ TICKETS \$5



Inside The Archives

~ Memory & Meaning ~

Outreach Coordinator Mackenzie Herold shares her thoughts about three special objects from our Sullivan-Shaw Collection. The Sullivans owned the Senator Walter Lowrie House from 1839 to 1986.

If you have driven anywhere in the past few weeks, you have probably noticed the outcroppings of yard sale signs posted along the roads. Maybe you look at them and see opportunities to find new things. Maybe you find yourself nodding and saying, “That sounds like a good idea.” Maybe you are like me, and you find yourself suppressing a wince every time you see one.

It’s not that I don’t like a good yard sale, but every May I find myself tucked away between boxes of items that are haphazardly labeled “keep”, “donate”, or “toss” with my glasses tossed to the side as I try to massage a tension headache away. Decluttering has always been stressful. My sentimentality runs deep and it’s a struggle to release items that I have grown attached to. On a logical level, I am aware that I am being ridiculous. But on an emotional level, it makes perfect sense to keep those pink, sparkly sunglasses I’ve had since I was five. They were a *gift*.

I work in a building that is brimming with sentimentality. When Mary Iola Shaw died in 1959, her daughter Isabelle couldn’t bear to part with the family home or the items inside. So, she locked the doors. For thirty years, the house sat vacant of people, but filled with a treasure trove of furniture, clothes, toys, and family memories. In the March newsletter, I talked about the three generations of Sullivan/Shaw family recipe books and the lessons that we can learn from them. In this issue, I would like to focus on Isabelle’s toys.

As an only child, Isabelle received many toys, dolls, books, and stuffed animals. The historical society is very fortunate that Mary Iola (and later Isabelle) decided to keep as many of these childhood objects as she did. They help us to tell the family’s story and give us insights into their way of life.

The dolls are the first thing that catch your eye when you enter Isabelle’s room. Growing up, Isabelle had a plethora of dolls and stuffed animals. Some are well-loved. Their faces are fading, and their bodies are stretched and marked. The bear pictured above is one of these creatures. The little embroidered nose is coming undone, the fur is matted with dirt, and it has lost some of its shape. Every time I look at it, I am reminded of this quote from *The Velveteen Rabbit*:



“Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in your joints and very shabby. But these things don’t matter at all, because once you are Real you can’t be ugly, except to people who don’t understand.”

Inside the Archives, cont'd

Isabelle didn't just have dolls and stuffed animals. Her room also features several educational toys with fascinating histories. The educational boards were created in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The red educational board is called the "Cress Reversible Educational Letter/Number Board". On one side of the board are blocks of letters which were used to form words and sentences. On the other side of the board are blocks of numbers with mathematical operators. This educational board was created by John H. Fox and Horatio G. Cress of Ohio. These two childhood friends-turned-rivals patented letter and number boards then created their own companies to profit from them. Cress would eventually come out on top, with his boards being endorsed by Good Housekeeping.

Iola also kept some of Isabelle's art supplies, such as these Kroma Crayons created by the American Crayon Company (ACC). The ACC was a family business that first set its sights on making a new type of chalk that was more practical for school life. As a school superintendent, Marcellus Cowdery saw firsthand how chalk crumbled when used on a blackboard. Enlisting the help of his brother-in-law, they created their first crayon at a kitchen table in 1890 when they mixed wax into the chalk mixture. At its peak, the ACC topped every other crayon company in its yearly production rate.

Whether she was saving them for grandchildren or for sentimental reasons, we will never know why Iola decided to keep so many of Isabelle's childhood things. Despite that, I'm sure many parents will relate to her story. Children grow up faster than you can ever really prepare for. Sometimes, all you can do is hold onto their toys and reminisce about how little they used to be. Toys, clothes, and dolls are all physical reminders of a time that has come to pass, but being able to tangibly feel a memory makes it all the more meaningful.

While I have been writing this article, I have been looking at my boxes from this year's decluttering. As I skim my hands through the "keep" box, I'm filled with a bitter longing for a simpler time. But as I sit here with my thoughts, the heartbreak begins to fade, and I am left with peace. These items show that I have grown, that I have made choices, and that I have experienced life to its fullest. These are memories made tangible.

The next time you find yourself going through your old things, ask yourself: What do these items say about my past? What stories do they hold? How can I preserve these memories for the future?



RESCHEDULED!

Echoes From Our Past *2023 Cemetery Walk*

May's rained-out Cemetery Walk has been rescheduled!

Please join us on

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16th

North Side Cemetery ~ Tours at 11 AM and 2:30 PM.

Tickets purchased for the May event will be honored!

New tickets for September are available at 724-283-8116

or online at butlerhistory.com/shop



This year's characters include

Maj. George Washington Reed

Rosetti Fry

Lovey Rhoades Forkin

Paul Bobak

Dr. Lida Earhart

Josephine Hammond Marshall

Message from the Executive Director

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
Deb Kruger
Gail Suhr

BCHS Staff

Jennifer Ford, PhD
Executive
Director

Mackenzie Herold
Outreach Coordinator

In the March newsletter I thanked several people for their front-line support, but several projects have been completed since then and everyone involved deserves to be acknowledged!

>The porch deck at the **Lowrie House** is now repaired, repainted, and looking sharp! Many, many thanks to **David Pinson** for covering the entire cost of the great work done by Jason and the crew at Arris Construction.



>Eagle Scout **Jeremy J. Dawson** finished his Service Project and Cooper Cabin now has the best-looking signs in the county! JJ, his friends, and family worked for two days to erect and complete two new signs, one at Rt. 356 & Cooper Road, the other at the site's entrance! JJ did everything from getting permits to budgeting to engineering and the results are eye-popping.



>If not for the time and talent of **Cyd Johnston** and other members of the **Butler Garden Club**, the Lowrie House would have no landscaping to speak of. Thank you one & all for the work you put into beautifying our historic mansion!



>**David Pinson** gets a *second* shout-out for accomplishing the near-impossible by restoring a functioning bathroom in the Little Red School-house! Next month we start installing new exhibits at the LRSH thanks to generous support from the **General Richard Butler Chapter of the DAR**. Can't wait!

~Jen



**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 Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. or by appointment.

Membership Updates

If your name is highlighted on the address label, it's time to renew your membership! Please renew online at 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:

Jessica Lizarazo
Deborah Schmiedecke
Miranda Crotsley
Cameron Tarker

Sonya Tarker
Nancy Nalepa
Tom Carden
Dana Herold

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

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