

The Cumberland Gateway

Vol. 5 2025

Collecting
Engaging
Sharing
Stories

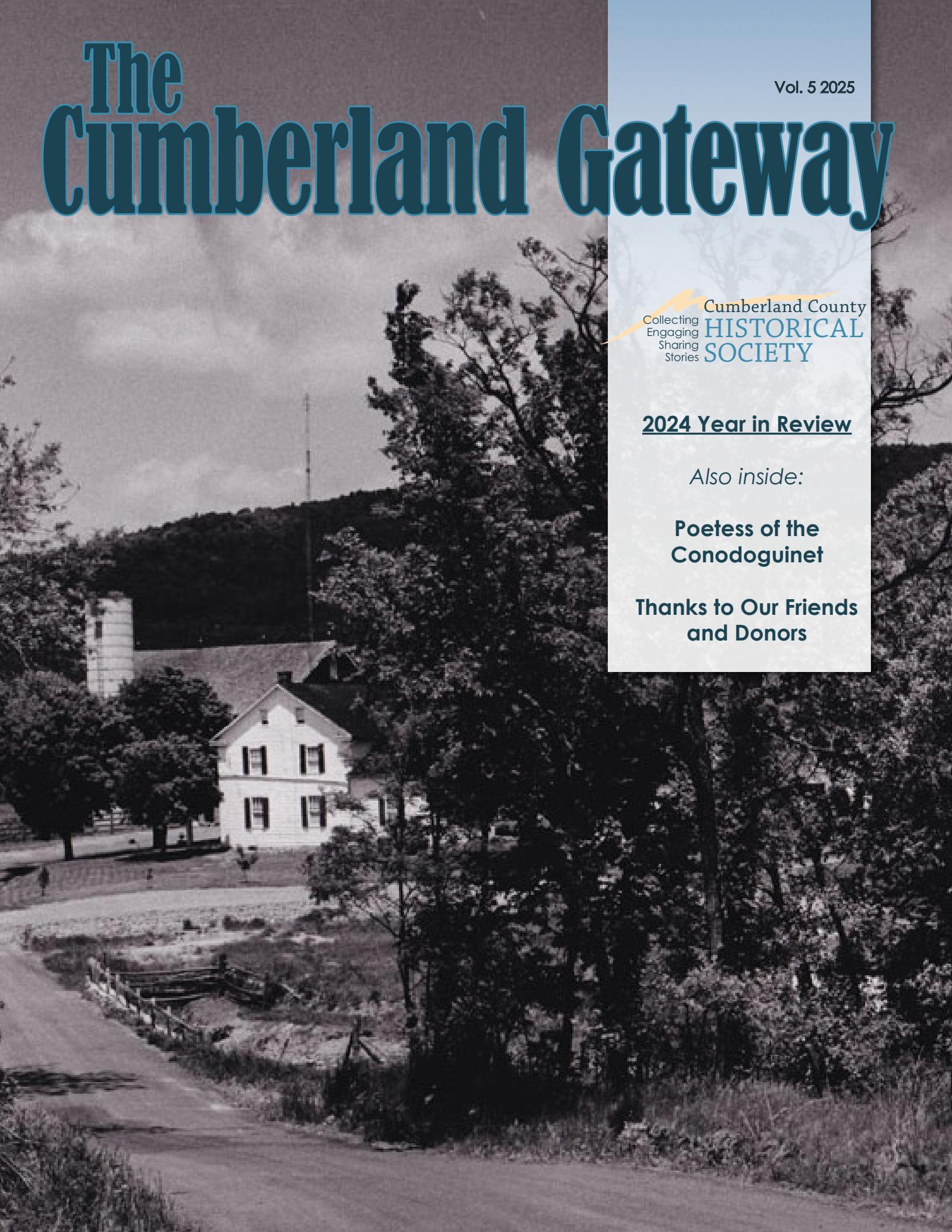
Cumberland County
**HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

2024 Year in Review

Also inside:

**Poetess of the
Conodoguinet**

**Thanks to Our Friends
and Donors**



Our Mission

We connect people to Cumberland County, Pennsylvania history.

We engage people with the stories of all of Cumberland County History, linking past to present, to build understanding and strengthen our communities.

Thank you for your support

CCHS is grateful for the continued support of the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, area foundations, and CCHS membership. For more information about programs, call the Historical Society at (717) 249-7610 or visit www.historicalsocociety.com. A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling, toll free within PA, 1-800-732-0999.

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*Photos in this issue were inspired by the theme "Cumberland County 275"
Black and white photos by Jim Bradley.*

DIRECTOR'S WELCOME



Walking Tour

2016, I was hired by the Greater Carlisle Project and CCHS to oversee the Heart & Soul grant from the Pennsylvania Humanities Council. This project brought me to CCHS and solidified my interest and commitment to public history. In 2018, CCHS appointed me as the first Community Outreach Director. After two years in that position, I decided to take on a new challenge, and moved to Vermont to take over leadership of a small National Historic Landmark, Rokeby Museum. Four years later my partner and I came back to Pennsylvania, and I was lucky to move home just as CCHS was searching for a new Executive Director.

I was greatly honored to be asked to return to CCHS and in the years since I left quite a bit changed, but what I love about the organization — a passion for history and community — has not. CCHS has always played an important role in the Cumberland County community, and seeing how outreach, education, and engagement have expanded and enriched the region is wonderful.

As I review the staff reports in this report I am inspired and excited for the future of the organization. There are talented individuals working and volunteering at CCHS and I look forward to the work we have ahead of us.

Sincerely,
Lindsay Varner

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "L Varner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "L" and "Varner" being the most prominent parts.

Executive Director
Cumberland County Historical Society

Dear CCHS Supporters,

It is an honor to be back at CCHS after four years away from the organization. It is exciting to see how the organization continues to grow and advance the mission. I have had the opportunity to reacquaint myself with many of you, but for those who I have still not had the chance to meet, let me share a bit of my background.

I am a historian by training. I have BA's in Government and History from Millersville University, and a Master's and PhD in history from Durham University in the U.K. In



A student group at Carlisle's
Old Courthouse

2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

► Archives and Library

Being involved with the Archives and Library for the 150th anniversary of the Cumberland County Historical Society was a truly enriching experience. Participating on the committee that examined photographs chronicling the institution's history was both inspiring and enjoyable. It is remarkable to reflect on the progress made since our inception as the Hamilton Library in 1874. As we transition from our anniversary year into America250, this presents an opportune moment to assess our collections and identify any narratives that may be underrepresented or inadequately documented. This will help Archives and Library department to continue to uphold the legacy envisioned by James Hamilton, Jr., many years ago.

We have introduced some remarkable collections into our

care, and for the first time, select items are now searchable in an online catalog. This represents a significant advancement for CCHS. We will soon be adding more materials, particularly photographs, to this catalog. Additionally, Finding Aids will continue to be incorporated into the Highlighted Collections section on our main website.

This digital transformation enhances accessibility and enriches the experience for researchers and history enthusiasts alike. By bridging the gap between technology and historical preservation, we aim to foster a deeper connection with our community's rich heritage. As we move forward, we invite you to explore these treasures, uncover hidden stories, and share in the journey of discovery. Whether you're conducting academic research, tracing family histories, or

1,005

simply indulging in curiosity for the past, our collections offer a window into our collective history.

We maintain our collaboration with local educational institutions such as Carlisle Area High School, Shippensburg University, and Messiah University to showcase our collections to their students. Some students generously volunteer their time, assisting in the processing of these collections through internships that provide valuable experience in the conservation of archival materials. One example of this work was hands-on involvement with the processing of the significant collection from Frog Switch Manufacturing Company. Additionally, we partnered with the War Peace & Justice Project to contribute to their “War and Peace Come to Cumberland County” exhibition.

The Elizabeth V. and George F. Gardner Library continued to see sustained visitors to its website. Volunteers and staff added new entries to the encyclopedia including “The Leesburg Robberies,” “G. Wilson Swartz: A Lawyer’s Life,” and “Wolfe’s Tourist Home, Restaurant, General



Babes in the Woods lecture

Store and Post Office: Walnut Bottom.” Our oral history collection also added the stories of Marilyn Stoner Swartz whose father owned the Willow Mill Amusement Park and longtime volunteer Merri Lou Schaumann.

In October, we said goodbye to our longest serving CCHS staff member, Richard Tritt. After many years of service in several different positions Richard hung up his pencil and retired. We certainly miss his wit and his photographic memory. It was always a pleasure to work with Richard. Richard had the opportunity to reflect on his time at CCHS at the Annual Meeting where his also received the Director’s Award. His program entitled “40 years at CCHS” is available on our website - <https://www.historicalsociety.com/past-talks-presentations/>

→ CARA CURTIS, Archives & Library Director

Photo Archives

The Photo Archives had a busy and productive year with 27 new and varied accessions added to the CCHS Photo Collection. Ten volunteers assisted with Photo Curator to accession, organize, research, edit and catalog new, as well as past accessions. Our 2024 volunteers were Mike Getter, Mark Ivin, George and Jenifer Johnson, Sandy and Beth Mader, Dennis McBurney, Sharon McDonald, Merri Lou Schaumann, and Nicole Dube. In addition our partnership with the South Middleton School District saw a group of students continue to catalog and scan photos from the Jim Bradley Collection many of which are shared daily on our Facebook and Instagram pages.

We had a good year for photo sales. We processed 34 photo orders that amounted to \$7,387.50 in income for the Society. Our Carlisle Indian School Collection is of interest

throughout the country, and we provided photos for a number of films, books, and other publications.



Spangler's Mill Bridge

We received a wide variety of new accessions. Several of the larger accessions included the following:

- The estate of Jeannette Cramer Miller donated a large family collection related to the Tritt/Cramer/Miller families.
- The Society purchased at a public sale 4 CDV albums and various photographs from Carlisle Photographers.
- Brian Robertson donated a collection of photos related to the Boy Scouts of America Troop 170.
- Judith Lebo donated a collection of photographs of Spanglers Mill Bridge.
- Sharon Owens donated a collection of photographs from the

Owens family of Shippensburg, dating from the late 19th century through the 1960s.

- John Kiracofe donated a collection of photographs, many of which are connected to Boiling Springs including a sepia print of members of the Debating Society of Boiling Springs, c. 1898 which included Daniel Kauffman.

Thank you to all our photo donors for their donations and to all our talented and faithful photo volunteers for your time and work.

→ **BLAIR WILLIAMS**, Assistant Director – Archives and Library



Updating the museum exhibits.

from Dickinson College. The students were busy creating Windows to History, learning how to create miniature versions of an exhibit, and assisting with the current rotating exhibits mentioned previously. They also received hands-on experience processing collections, rehousing projects, and building proper mannequins.

In August 2024, we said goodbye to Daniel Lewis, our Ann Kramer Hoffer Curatorial Mentee, as he joined the

VISITORS

13,240

total

INSTAGRAM

4,957
reach

901
interactions

1,345
follows

In addition to our spring 2025 interns, we had the privilege to work with Dickinson College Professor Dr. Borges and his Intro to Public History class of fourteen students on seven Windows to History projects that are being shown in the main museum. These projects are micro-exhibits on various topics that were created and installed by the class to gain hands-on exhibition experience in the museum field.

Looking forward, we are excited to see how the museum will continue to grow with the new rotating exhibits, *Contrasting Photos: Behind and in Front of the Camera at the Carlisle Indian School* and *Cabinet of Curiosities, Part 2*. We are also excited to meet all new potential volunteers and interns interested in joining us this fall, 2025, who want to learn or continue their growth in the history field.

— CIJIANNA BERRY, Associate Museum Curator

FACEBOOK

593,338
posts seen

49,267
interactions

1,698

Outreach

As we said goodbye to 2023 and hello to 2024, the Community Outreach Department at CCHS was working hard on a variety of exciting projects. We started the year with a used book sale in our G.B. Stuart during IceFest. This gave everyone an opportunity to warm up from the cold while supporting the Historical Society.

The Outreach Department was able to attend several events including Black Cultural Fest, Foundry Day, Monroe

Township Community Day, Welcome Expo at the Carlisle Barracks, Dickinson College Resource Day, Harvest of the Arts, and Pumpkinfest to name a few. We enjoyed attending new events, speaking with those who stopped by our table, and sharing the mission of CCHS.

Our Annual Golf Classic was held once again at the Carlisle Barracks Golf Course on May 17, 2024. We were happy to welcome golfers to the course for an exciting day, everyone

Two Mile House
tea party



Jeff Shaara book signing

enjoyed themselves. We were honored to have Capital Blue Cross, Dave Metz and Metz Wealth Management Group at Morgan Stanley, Tuckey, Mary Sachs Charitable Trust, Wentzel-Weitzel Gifts, Hershey Company, Trindle Inn Bar and Grill, M&Z Carpets, Bobby Rahal Automotive Group, Paul and Lois Hoch, 1794 The Whiskey Rebellion, DBB, Salzmann Hughes, P.C., Elaine Haag Designs, The Meeting House, Guidepoint Security, Earth Works, FSA, Bob and Linda Taylor, Wenger Meats and Ice, and Arista as sponsors. We raised over \$30,000, which benefits the Historical Society and our History POPS program.

The weather was perfect in July for our 30th annual McLain Bash, and guests dined on dishes from more than 20 area restaurants, tasted scotch whisky, enjoyed wine from Castlerigg Wine Shop (thank you Alan Tumblin), and were able to bid on raffle packages of gift cards from restaurants. Charlie Zahm delighted us with his beautiful voice as a special throwback to the festival. A special thank you to our generous sponsors Helen Scott, Jeff Scott, F&M Trust, Wentzel and Weitzel Gifts, Larry and Annette Keener-Farley, Mid Penn Bank, and Bessie Jamison for their support. We hope all of our guests enjoyed the evening as much as we did.

Our Annual Meeting was held in October. The meeting was held on Sunday, October 20, across our campus. Guests were able to view our exhibit on the history of CCHS, enjoyed special savings in our History on High shop, and visited our education, library, and museum departments before the meeting. We welcomed new members, Robert Hall and Julie Germany, as we said thank you to Kevin Hess and Tom Coolidge for their many years on our board. We celebrated our award winners, the 150th Anniversary Committee who received our Special Recognition Award; Rosemary Smith,

who received our Roger K. & Helen Todd Distinguished Service Award; Jerry Clouse, who received our Milton E. Flower Historian of the Year Award, The Junkin House for the William Foshag Preservation Award; and Richard Tritt for Leadership in History Award. The meeting concluded after a presentation by Richard Tritt on his "40 Years at CCHS" was enjoyed by all.

In December we held our 2nd Holiday House tour. Ticket holders enjoyed lunch, shopped in our gift shop, and finally boarded the bus to take them to the participating properties. We would like to thank Cumberland Hall owned by Diana and Chuck Kauffman, Mt. Tabor AME Zion Church owned by Mt. Holly Springs Borough, Rendezvous Run Farm owned by Lorelie and Rick Coplen, Stuart Manor B&B owned by Russell Mell and William Ohrum, and Thomas Grier Farm owned by Carol and Joseph Menkis. We would also like to thank our generous sponsors Friends of Peiffer Memorial Arboretum and Nature Preserve Inc., Tuckey, The Metz Wealth Management Group at Morgan Stanley, and Wentzel-Weitzel Gifts.

W E B S I T E

39,859

users

108,035

page views



Greetings on the
Holiday House Tour

Once Todd Hall renovations were completed, rentals at Todd Hall kept us busy. We were honored to have off site meetings from the Carlisle War College and Leadership Cumberland in Todd Hall on various days holding classes

and meetings. Todd Hall also held many lectures and smaller events over the year.

The Carlisle Garden Club and Penn State Master Gardeners worked hard to keep the gardens at Two Mile House beautiful. Jay and Joan McBride have been especially helpful with keeping up with the grounds.

Our Two Mile House property was busy from late April thru December. Guests hosted countless weddings, bridal and baby showers, picnics, and parties. We are looking forward to another busy rental season and welcoming many people to the grounds again.
- SHARON FILIPOVICH, Community Outreach Director

Y O U T U B E

14,177
views

461
subscribers

1,666
hours watched

History on High—The Museum Shop

Though 2024 is now just a memory, what memories were made at History on High!

The History on High Museum Shop sponsored numerous events throughout the year, strengthening our community connections. Visitors enjoyed book signings with local authors like Pat LaMarche, David Peiffer, Joseph David Cress, and J.M. West, and demonstrations by talented artists such as Elaine Haag and Paul Hoch. We also participated in several downtown events including the Ice Fest, Harvest of the Arts (our largest sales day of the year), and the Downtown Carlisle Holiday Open House when we made new friends and won Most Festive Cookie!

We tallied 5,813 visitors in 2024 with November being the highest month, kicking off a busy holiday selling season. December, November, and September were the top three months in sales.

Last year History on High's retail sales totaled \$38,944, plus \$4,004 in e-commerce sales. In addition, we earned \$12,059 from consignment sales.

Our dedicated History on High volunteers donated 815 hours in 2024. We couldn't function without the help of Lisa Brousse, Lynda Cook, Anne Fielding, Pat Figueiredo, Maryann Haft, Jo Ann Hutcheson, Debbie Reitzel, Ann Sheehan, and EK Weitzel. Their enthusiasm and knowledge are valuable assets in making everyone feel welcome in the shop.

Without a doubt, the most memorable event at History on High in 2024 was the retirement of Kim Laidler at the end of November. Kim was the shop manager from the very



Grand re-opening of History on High

beginning when it was only a small space in the museum. From the grand opening of History on High in 2008 and the years thereafter, she has touched so many lives with her kindness and positivity. Thank you, Kim, for everything you've done, supported, and inspired. Here's to a retirement full of joy, adventure, and endless relaxation!

Looking forward, History on High will continue to expand on our past successes and find new opportunities to grow. Our recent "refresh" and grand reopening as well the new Visitors' Center signing has welcomed many new customers to the shop. We'll always be on the lookout for fresh merchandise, talented local artists, and exciting events.

—AMANDA BOWEN, Museum Shop Manager

Education

In an effort to increase outreach, the Education Department formed many new partnerships, especially within the regional retired and homeschool communities. All this was done while continuing to provide programming for our traditional public, private and home school audiences. This expansion, coupled with increased walk-in patronage of the Stuart History Workshop, led to one of the best years for educational outreach for the department.

Last winter, Boiling Springs High School intern Wesley Hartle provided valuable research, programming, and exhibit design while learning about the workings of a multi department historical society. The Education Department would like to thank and wish him success in future endeavors.

GARDNER LIBRARY

23,271
users

92,722
page views



Limbo at Summer Camp

IN MEMORIAM

Members who have passed away in 2024

Raymond C. Bobb ✝ January 22, 2024

Truman Bullard ✝ March 13, 2024

Sherman (Bill) Bear ✝ May 11, 2024

Paul Gill ✝ May 17, 2024

Barbara Lillich ✝ July 3, 2024

Anne Bowne ✝ September 12, 2024

Faynelle Evans ✝ November 4, 2024

Merle "Skip" Ebert ✝ November 18, 2024

John "Jack" Griffith ✝ December 17, 2024

Honorable Sylvia Rambo ✝ December 23, 2024

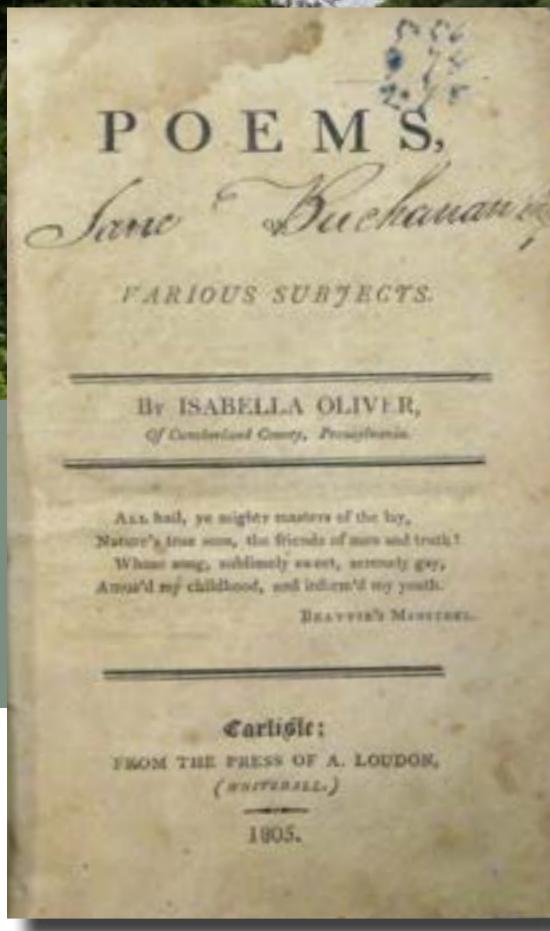
J. Donald Franklin ✝ December 30, 2024

Throughout the year, programming and tours commemorating the 150th anniversary of the incorporation of Mt. Holly Springs were very popular. These events included the Holly Heroines historic pageant, the publishing of a picture book, a newly created walking tour of the borough, and museum exhibit in the G.B. Stuart History Workshop.

The Native Americans of the Eastern Woodlands and World War II Adventure in History summer camps were a big success. We had many new campers. All three camps were full of students from central Pennsylvania and even some from neighboring states. There were many fun-filled activities that gave campers a unique perspective of some aspects of history that are not often covered in classroom learning.

The Education Department could not provide the myriad of quality programs it does without the help of its gracious volunteers. Many thanks go out to these men and women who donate their time and expertise to help foster a passion for history in our community.

✉ MATTHEW MARCH, Education Director



POETESS OF THE CONODOGUINET

“She wrote of love, the misery of war, her hatred of slavery, and many other facets of life.”

Isabella Oliver, (July 16, 1771–June 7, 1843), once known as the “poetess of the Conodoguinet,” or more colorfully as that creek’s “muse,” was the second—and the first female—published Cumberland County poet in 1805 with *Poems on Various Subjects*, following the unknown writer of *The Unequal Conflict* in 1792.

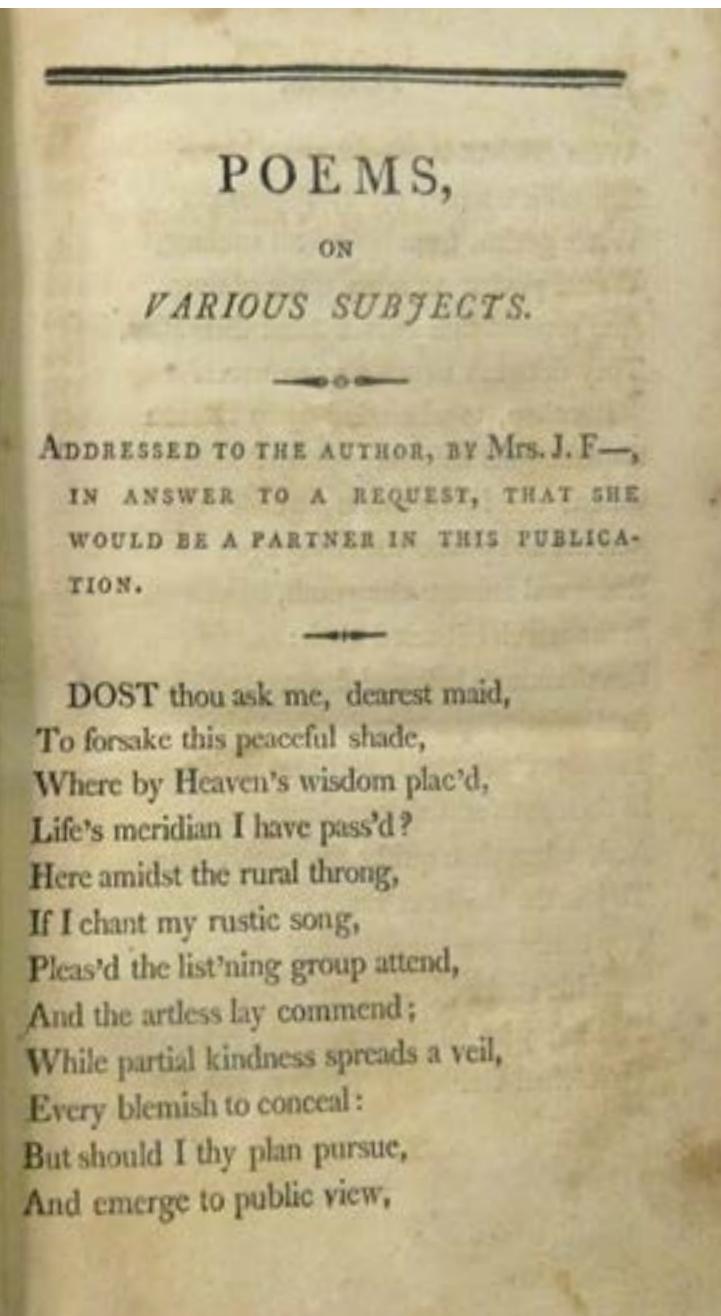
Isabella Oliver was born in that portion of East Pennsborough Township which has since become Silver Spring Township, on the estate of her father, James Oliver, Esq. (1731–1786). Her mother was Mary (1746–1831), daughter of Walter Buchanan. On January 14, 1812, Isabella was married by Rev. John Hayes, pastor of Silver Spring Presbyterian Church, to Capt. Alexander Sharp of Newton

Township, son of Thomas and Margaret (Elder) Sharp, at that time 55 years old, whose previous wife, Margaret McDowell of the Kishacoquillas Valley, had died in August 1810, leaving five sons and a daughter. Capt. Sharp, who had served in the Revolutionary War but whose rank may have been honorific, died in Newville December 8, 1824.

Her style was of less standing in her mind than a drive to promote “virtue and piety.” She had a brilliant father but lost him early and was given a basic “English” education, yet she enjoyed casting her thoughts into rhymes and composed her poems in her mind entire before a friend set them down on paper from her recitation. In this fashion, as the preface to her work prepared by Rev. Dr. Robert Davidson (writing as “R.D.”) describes, she prepared eighty-five poems for what has now become the most popular of all the early books printed in Carlisle. She wrote of love, the misery of war, her hatred of slavery, and many other facets of life. She personalized them, addressing them to friends by their initials, and it was this habit which made her work popular. In her book, which was published by Archibald Loudon, the list of subscribers runs to more than 1,000 names. The subjects of her poems include a memorial of Rev. Dr. Charles Nisbet, the first president of Dickinson College, and the deaths of George Washington and Alexander Hamilton. Her poems are in the Augustan Age and other 18th-century forms, although they include one which D. Wilson Thompson identified as “a 17th century idea in 18th century dress.” No evidence has come to light of any of Oliver’s further poetic activity. Rev. John Hayes admired Isabella Oliver’s poetry, as in his own *Rural Poems*, he wrote:

With softer grace, but with no meaner skill,
The pensive muse of Conno—’s winding bank
Touches the obedient strings, and wakes the soul
Of harmony, breathed soft thro’ all her strains
Sacred to friendship, or on wings of love
Ascending grateful to the source of good.
With soul that vibrates to the finer touch
Of nature’s hand, would she descend to sing
The flowery lawn, the various rural charms,
My muse would then suppress her harsher voice,
And listen to the song: to nobler themes
She tunes the lyre, and idle deems the strain
That warbles not her loved Redeemer’s praise.

Isabella Oliver Sharp, who had no children of her own, lived in Newville in her declining years, and was buried in the Newville Cemetery.



DOST thou ask me, dearest maid,
To forsake this peaceful shade,
Where by Heaven’s wisdom plac’d,
Life’s meridian I have pass’d?
Here amidst the rural throng,
If I chant my rustic song,
Pleas’d the list’ning group attend,
And the artless lay commend;
While partial kindness spreads a veil,
Every blemish to conceal:
But should I thy plan pursue,
And emerge to public view,

John Fralish
for the Gardner Library

Full article and endnotes available in the
Gardner Library entry <https://gardnerlibrary.org/encyclopedia/isabella-oliver>

Museum, photo, & archives donors

Adams County Historical Society	Hoffer, Ann Kramer	Simmons, Carolyn
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Dickinson College Archives	McGeary, Gay	Zinn, Pat
Eckman, Vonny	Mechanicsburg Museum Association	
Estate of James Bradley	Milkes, Sam	
Estate of Jeanette Cramer Miller	Miller, Susan	
Ewing, Stewart	Myers, Barry	
Families Through Adoption	Myers, Debbi	
Foster, Lillie	Norris, Dave	
Fralish, Jr., John C.	Nye, Dorothy Morgan	
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Heefner, Betsy Brinton	Ruth, Joby	
Heisey, Daniel J.	Rynard, Kathryn	
Henry, Karen	Sanders, Frances	
Hilliard, David	Senecal, Keith	
Hilliard, Joy	Schaumann, Merri Lou	
Hoch, Ronald	Seaford, Patresa	
	Shelow, Barbara	



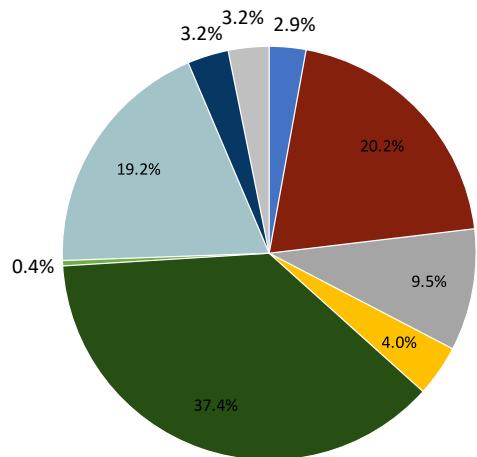
Financial donors

Aarestad-Luster, Elizabeth	Griffie, Michael	Medlin, Wildon	Simms, James
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Bayley, Mary and Edgar	Hershey, Philip	Metz, Joe	Stambaugh, Glenn
Benton, Bruce and Mary	Hess, Kevin and Connie	Mid Penn Bank	Stan and Connie Smith Faily
Big Spring High School Class of 1957	Heuser, Patricia	Miller, Gordon and Debbie	Charitable Fund
Black, Jon and Jane	Hlatky, John	Miller, Charles and Patricia	Stewart, Dave and Jane
Blaha, Pamela	Hoch, Paul and Lois	Miller, Tad and Eileen	Stoner, Leonard and Helen
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Ebert, Skip and Anne	Kreitzer, Sherry and Alan	Putman, Diana and Messer, Adam	Way, David and Cheryl
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George, Rosalie	McDowell, Hatty	Shay, Mary	
Germany, Julie	McInroy-Sheffer People	Sheaffer, Mary	
Gill, Donna	Trust	Sheehan, C. Ann	
Green, Alexander			
Greenawalt, Keith and Kami			
Gregor, Hope			

Thank you!

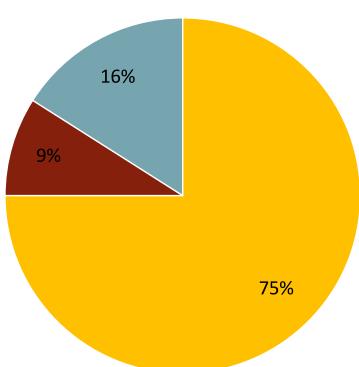
FINANCIALS 2024

Overview of Income



- Membership
- Contributions (restricted)
- Contributions (unrestricted)
- Program Revenues
- Investment Income
- Grants
- Interest in Trusts
- Fundraising Income
- Net Rental Income

Overview of Expenses



- Program
- Management & General
- Fundraising

Revenue, Expenses and Changes in Net Assets - Modified Cash Basis

Year Ended December 31, 2024

Includes Restricted and Unrestricted Funds.

Support and Revenue

Membership Contributions	66,366
with restriction	439,771
without restriction	221,164
Program revenues	92,994
Grants	9,681
Net fundraising income	74,720
Net rental income	73,852
Investment income	866,835
Interest in trusts	444,486
Total support & revenue	2,289,839

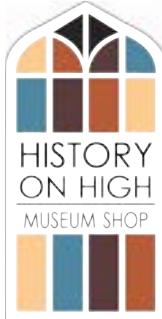
Expenses

Program	846,068
Management and general	120,144
Fundraising	180,330
Total expenses	1,128,542

Change in net assets **1,161,297**

Reflected in the financials is the generosity of our donors for the Raise the Roof campaign. Thank you for your support of CCHS!

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