

Supporting the Soldiers

WWII changed women's roles on homefront

By Heidi Campbell-Shoaf

‘We embarked by way of a small landing craft with our pants rolled up — wading onto the beach a short distance ... We marched up those high cliffs ... about a mile and a half under full packs, hot as ‘blue blazes’ — till finally a Jeep picked us up ...,’ Ruth Hess, wrote to her hospital colleagues back home in Louisville, Ky., about her experiences in France as an Army combat nurse arriving just days after the D-Day invasion in June 1944.

She described the nonstop work tending to the gory wounds war makes while machine gun bullets whizzed overhead.

Four hundred thousand women served in the military during World War II, a small fraction of the 6.5 million American women who mobilized to support the war effort by taking paid employment or the more than 4.5 million volunteers for the Red Cross and other organizations.

The war immersed the U.S. in an unprecedented conflict that demanded innovation across all parts of society.

Stepping in

As millions of men entered the military, the country had to produce the equipment, weapons and food they would need, while keeping the civilian homefront supplied at the same time. Women, with the encouragement of the federal government, stepped into vacancies on assembly lines, in farm fields and in jobs across the economy.

Outside of paid labor, as Red Cross volunteers and members of the American Women's Voluntary Services (AWVS), they fought fires, delivered telegrams, and sold war bonds, and they were aircraft spotters.

The work women did during WWII not only helped win the war but laid the foundation for future advancements in women's opportunities.

See **Women**, Page 3



This photograph taken in 1943, shows women welders at Ingalls Shipbuilding Corporation of Pascagoula, Miss., during World War II.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES PHOTO

Artist J. Howard Miller, a freelance artist from Pittsburgh, produced this work-incentive poster for the Westinghouse Electric & Manufacturing Company. Though displayed only briefly in Westinghouse factories, the poster in later years has become one of the most famous icons of World War II, according to the Sen. Heinz History Center blog.

SMITHSONIAN IMAGE



This appeal to buy war bonds included a list of Butler County sponsors and published on July 25, 1942, in the Butler Eagle.

\$185.7 BILLION RAISED

Keystone State 2nd in nation in buying WWII war bonds

By Frank Garland

More than 16 million Americans were called to serve their country during the struggle that was World War II, and over 400,000 of them made the ultimate sacrifice by giving up their lives.

Pennsylvanians did more than their share; of the nearly 1.25 million Keystone State residents who served in the U.S. Armed Forces during the war, some 33,000 men and women died.

Wartime sacrifices extended beyond the battlefields of Europe and the Far East, however. On the homefront, a different type of sacrifice was made — going without various goods, for example, and plunking down a

portion of their hard-earned salaries and savings to help finance that war.

And while there's no comparison between sacrificing one's life and going without sugar, meat or gasoline, or giving up a portion of a weekly paycheck to buy what were called war bonds, those who spent the war years at home certainly contributed to what ultimately proved to be victory over the Axis powers of Germany, Italy and Japan.

On the financial front alone, war bonds proved to be a major boost to the war effort. According to ExplorePAHistory.com, the U.S. government began a bombardment of its own — flooding the country with advertising that urged residents to buy bonds as a way to help finance the war. By the time the bond drive ended in early

1946, U.S. residents had purchased \$185.7 billion in government bonds. Pennsylvania was second only to New York in the amount of war bonds purchased.

Those bonds made up a sizable part of the U.S. war chest; the federal government raised almost half the money it needed with taxes, and the rest came from borrowing, and most of that borrowing came through the sale of war bonds.

War bond advertising was ubiquitous; the Treasury Department called on some of the top Madison Avenue advertising firms to help design posters and other means of promoting the sale of bonds.

In one poster, a wounded U.S.

See **War bonds**, Page 4

BUTLER COUNTY, PA

History Day

Discover Butler County's historic past!

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Butler Old Stone House Region AACA Visit Butler County Historical Society for this stop.	Historic Harmony 724-452-7341 Zeigler Log Cabin - 538 Main St., Harmony Visitor's Cabin - 551 Main St., Harmony	
The Maridon Museum 724-282-0123 // 322 N. McKean St., Butler	Zelienople Historical Society 724-452-9457 Buhl House - 221 S. Main St., Zelienople Passavant House - 243 S. Main St., Zelienople	
Mars Area History & Landmark Soc. 724-272-9588 // 1 Brickyard Rd., Mars		

Learn more: VisitButlerCounty.com/HistoryDay2023

IDEA GETS TRACTION

Butler's American Bantam Car Co. builds first Jeep

By Paul R. Bruno

In 1929, Sir Herbert Austin, hailing from England, founded the American Austin Car Company in Butler. His goal was to build small cars for the American market based upon his successful line of vehicles sold in Europe. The venture proved a failure. Three years after its founding, American Austin went bankrupt, owing to the effects of the Great Depression.

The remains of Sir Herbert's company were bought by entrepreneur Roy Evans of Bartow, Ga., and renamed the American Bantam Car Company.

While these events were unfolding, the United States Army was searching in vain to find one mechanized vehicle that could meet the widely varied requirements of all the branches of the Army. By late May 1940, a suitable vehicle had still not been found, and there were no plans or ideas on how to find or create one.

In a series of remarkable events in the late spring of 1940, American Bantam, working with the Infantry branch of the U.S. Army, developed a general set of specifications for the long-sought vehicle.

The details were summarized in a memo dated June 6, 1940, exactly four years before D-Day in Europe. It was the first time, but it would not be the last time, the words "remarkable, amazing or miraculous" would be applied to the creation of the Jeep.

The Army, having no idea how to develop a set of specifications for the proposed vehicle, visited the Bantam plant on June 19 and 20, 1940.

From that conference, a working plan for the new truck came into being, including a concept drawing that represents the first sketch of a Jeep-like vehicle.

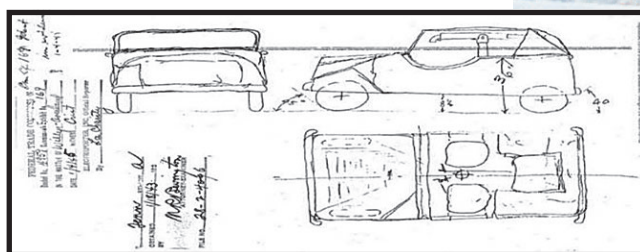
The Army, with Bantam's assistance, worked feverishly into early summer 1940 to develop more detailed drawings based upon the ideas devel-

oped in Butler. Amazingly by July 2, they had the documents ready to send to manufacturers for bids.

The Army sent specifications and drawings to 135 manufacturers, but at the bid opening on July 22, 1940, only four companies bothered to participate.

Two of the factories declined to bid based on their belief that the arbitrary 49-day deadline to deliver a finished vehicle was impossible to meet.

Only American Bantam and Willys-Overland submitted bids. After drama worthy of a Hollywood thriller, Bantam was awarded the contract — and enormous challenge — to build and deliver a prototype in seven weeks.



The Beasley-Brown drawing, June 19, 1940, is the very first sketch ever made of a Jeep-type vehicle.

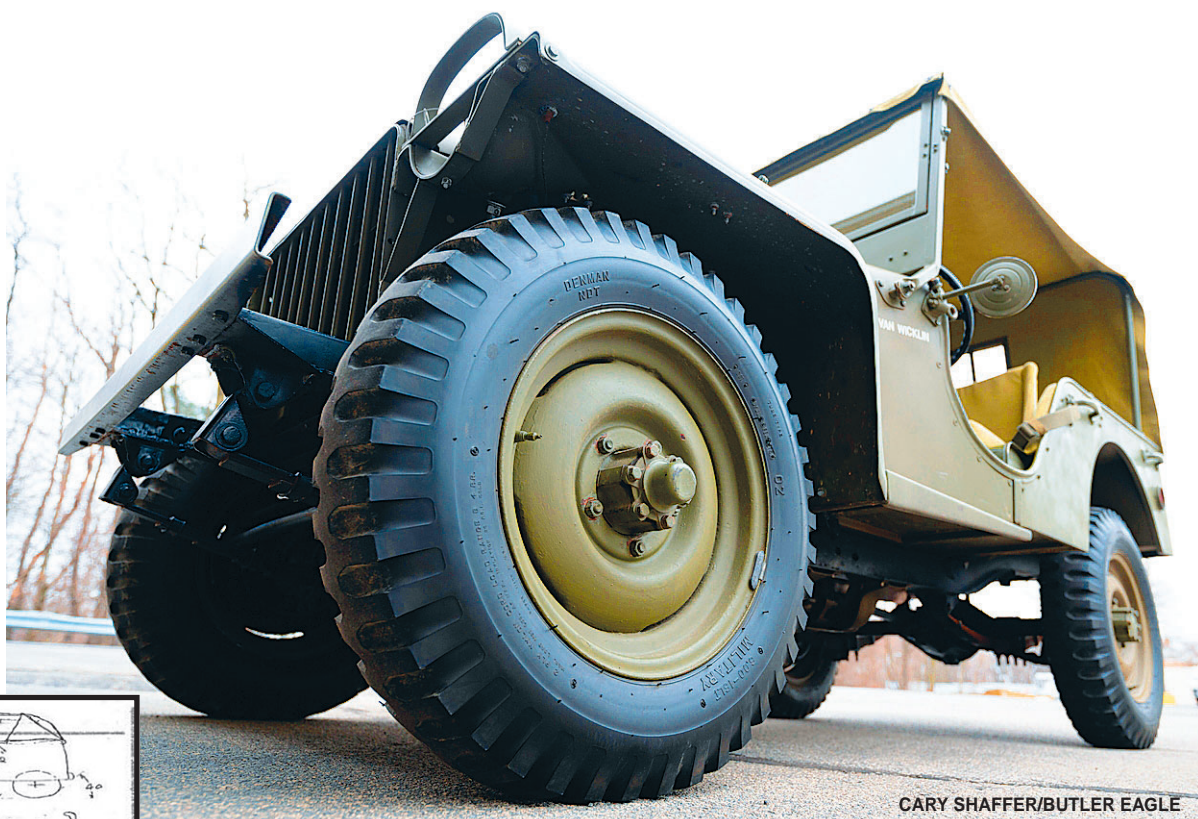
The intrepid Bantam team began building their vehicle on Aug. 5, 1940; that meant they had to deliver a finished vehicle ready for testing no later than Sept. 23.

During that time, the amazing met the miraculous.

Overcoming all obstacles, the Bantam team completed their prototype on Sept. 21 and christened their creation the Bantam Reconnaissance Car.

After a harrowing drive to Washington, D.C., the Bantam group delivered their revolutionary new prototype with a half an hour to spare on Sept. 23, 1940.

Upon receiving the vehicle, Col. Lawes, commanding officer of the depot, declared "I have driven every unit the services have purchased for the last 20 years. I can judge them in 15 minutes. This vehicle is going to be absolutely outstanding. I believe this unit will make history."



CARY SHAFFER/BUTLER EAGLE



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BUTLER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Above, a restored, 1941 Bantam Jeep owned by the city of Butler and maintained by the Butler Old Stone Region Antique Automobile Club of America.

At left, key players in the creation of the Jeep gather with American Bantam Car Co. employees around the first model in 1940. In the driver's seat is Harold Crist with Frank Fenn, Bantam president, beside him, engineer Karl Probst is at the far left.

The Bantam Reconnaissance Car passed every test the U.S. Army subjected it to from September to October 1940, and was approved to begin production.

After a while, a new name was applied to the Bantam vehicle and other similar prototypes — Jeep.

While companies other than American Bantam eventually mass-produced the Jeep for

service in World War II, it was Butler's American Bantam Car Company that helped design and build the very first Jeep.

Gen. George C. Marshall, chief of staff of the U.S. Army, declared that the Jeep represented, "America's greatest contribution to modern warfare" and it was Butler's American Bantam Car Company that built the first one.

Paul Bruno has spent more than 20 years researching and writing early Jeep history. He has written three books on the Jeep — "Project Management in History: The First Jeep" in 2014; "The Original Jeeps" in 2020; and "The Original Jeeps in Pictures" in 2022. Bruno has more than 30 years of experience in project management and information technology. He holds bachelor's degrees in management and computer software, as well as master's degrees in business administration and history.

EXPERIENCE HISTORY

Gathered here are suggestions where history can be experienced. Information was gathered from the museums' websites

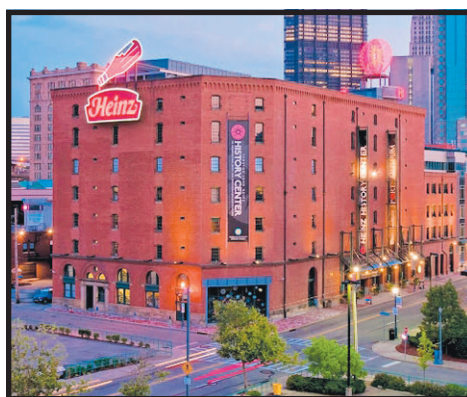
Heinz History Center

Address: 1212 Smallman St., Pittsburgh
Phone: 412-454-6000
Open: 10 to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday

Of note: The center has a 1941 Bantam Jeep, officially designated as a BRC-40 Reconnaissance Car, on display in its "We Can Do It" exhibit on the fifth floor. The exhibit explores the impact of World War II on the home, industry and battle fronts. In addition to the Jeep, the exhibit features a U.S. Army Air Corps jacket worn by Western Pennsylvania native and Hollywood star Jimmy Stewart; along with a U.S. Army Signal Corps field telephone used by Martin "Gabe" Torisky of Pittsburgh while serving with the 99th "Checkerboard" Infantry Division during the famous Battle of the Bulge in Belgium.

Southern Pennsylvania World War II Memorial

Address: In the Great Lawn Park, North Shore Drive, Pittsburgh
Phone: 412-393-0200
Open: 24 hours daily
Of Note: The memorial, dedicated Dec. 5, 2013, is a tribute to residents of the region



Heinz History Center in Pittsburgh

who fought and those who labored on the homefront during World War II. A simple ellipse creates a cathedral-like setting for remembrance and reflection. Steel, glass and stone highlights the region's rich mineral and manufacturing resources that helped win the war. This memorial extends the legacy of local public art within the Great Lawn Park immediately bordering the confluence of the three rivers around Pittsburgh. The memorial contains hundreds of photographs and 24 granite panels containing different narrative subjects. One of the largest pictures is that of the 28th Infantry Division (Pennsylvania National Guard) marching under the Arc de Triomphe after liberating Paris.

Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Hall and Museum

Address: 4141 Fifth Avenue, 3rd Floor, Pittsburgh
Phone: 412-621-4253
Open: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday to Saturday

Of Note: The marble tiled floors of Soldiers & Sailors lead visitors on a pathway of discovery with a timeline of themed displays ranging from the Civil War through the United States' most recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan

The North Hall brings visitors into the 20th century beginning with exhibits featuring World War I and continuing through World War II. Rare uniforms, helmets and other objects tell stories in 15 different display areas.

Eldred World War II Museum

Address: 201 Main St., Eldred, Pa.
Phone: 814-225-2220
Open: By appointment Tuesday through Friday; 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday

Of Note: "Why is there a World War II museum in Eldred?" The answer lies in a munitions plant that was operated in the Eldred area during the war. The plant did not start out as an American operation, however. George Roudebush, an American lawyer, with J.W. Whitmore, a Canadian, found the Eldred area to be a suitable location for a munitions plant that would serve British

armed forces.

"Three levels of World War II memorabilia await, including huge model displays that you can drive toy tanks over and replicas of life-size submarines, as well as life-size bunkers you can walk inside, thousands of artifacts from guns to patches and flags to uniforms. The museum could quite literally have been picked up from Washington, D.C. alongside any of the other Smithsonian's buildings and been dropped here overnight," according to a review on the museum website.

National World War II Museum

Address: 945 Magazine St., New Orleans
Phone: 504-528-1944
Open: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily

Of Note: Offering a compelling blend of sweeping narrative and poignant personal detail, the National WWII Museum features immersive exhibits, multimedia experiences, and an expansive collection of artifacts and first-person oral histories, taking visitors inside the story of the war that changed the world. Beyond the galleries, the museum's online collections, virtual field trips, webinars, educational travel programs, and renowned International Conference on World War II offer patrons new ways to connect to history and honor the generation that sacrificed so much to secure our freedom.

See History, Page 3

Butler Eagle

Founded 1869

Tammy Schuey
General Manager

Keith Graham
Vice President
of Advertising

Alice Lunn
Circulation Director

Donna Sybert
Managing Editor

Joel Christy
Press Foreman

Laurinda Klutinoty
Controller

Lorie Yates
Composing Foreman

Additional stories and photographs and past editions can be found on www.butlereagle.com

America250
A Journey Through Time

Look for it next month:

Nation: Power of the Rail Road
State: Johnstown Flood
County connection: Lyndora
Municipal: Mars and Valencia
Profile: The Sanzotti family



Women

From Page 1

Thanks to the now-iconic “We Can Do It!” poster created for Pittsburgh’s Westinghouse Electric Corp., it would be easy to assume women in the 1940s were clamoring to step out onto factory shop floors where they were welcomed with open arms. As with most events in history, the full story is more complex.

A complex story

Before the war, women working for wages were restricted to low-paying jobs as domestic servants, clerical workers, telephone operators, teachers and other occupations labeled by male employers as suitable for females. Most of these jobs were only open to unmarried women and were further subdivided by race.

Factory work, which offered higher wages, particularly if it was unionized, was reserved for men. Old habits die hard, and it took federal legislation to force many companies to hire women and more government intervention to open these opportunities to Black and Hispanic women.

For their part, some women were loath to abandon what culture defined as feminine to don overalls, slacks or dungarees to work in dirty factories. In stepped the government-funded War Advertising Council whose admen worked to produce print, radio and newsreel ads promoting the patriotism of the female workforce.

Women who did wrap their hair in a bandanna (some workplaces required women to cover their hair for fear of men being distracted) and pull on a pair of pants found in themselves a new confidence and love for working life.

Edith Speert of Cleveland, wrote to her soldier husband, “I want you to know now that you are not married to a girl that’s interested solely in a home — I shall definitely have to work all my life — I get emotional satisfaction out of working ...”

Many others discovered they could manage more than they first thought. Rhode Islander Katherine O’Grady left her \$15-a-week soda fountain job for a \$27-a-week position at a woolen factory making blankets and cloth for the military. Like many young women, she married her sweetheart before he shipped out, and she became a mother during the war.

“I was lucky in that there was a Salvation Army day nursery (a forerunner of today’s day care) on the street I lived on. They only charged \$3 a week,” she said. “After I moved to my own little apartment in East Providence, I used to have to take my son on the trolley car, bring him over to the nursery, and leave him there, and go back down the street and get on another trolley and get to work, and the same thing at night.”

Volunteer organizations like Salvation Army, Red Cross and others offered needed support for working women, as well as soldiers preparing to leave for the front. They provided opportunities for those who could



Col. Oveta Culp Hobby, right, confers with Auxiliary Margaret Peterson and Capt. Elizabeth Gilbert in 1943. In May 1942, the Women’s Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC) was created and attached to, but not integrated into the Army. Culp Hobby was appointed director. In 1943, the name was changed to the Women’s Army Corps (WAC) and the group was given full military status, according to the National Women’s History Museum.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PHOTO

not — or did not want to — enter the world of paid work a place to “do their bit” for the war effort.

Women’s Voluntary Services

The American Women’s Volunteer Service was organized in 1940 by Alice T. McLean, who modeled the organization on Britain’s Volunteer Women’s Services. Attracting nearly 350,000 women, AWVS members drove ambulances; assisted the Red Cross and Civil Defense organizations; worked in scrap drives; and helped with other homefront support tasks.

They wore distinctive blue, military-styled uniforms, and, from the beginning, the organization welcomed women from all backgrounds, as McLean said, “regardless of race, color or creed” — a rarity in a heavily segregated American society. Black women joined AWVS chapters in New York City; Chicago; Omaha, Neb.; Durham, N.C.; Pittsburgh; and other cities, even Hollywood.

Hattie McDaniel, who won an Oscar for her role in “Gone with the Wind,” was a member, as was future movie and TV star Betty White.

Meanwhile, in the countryside a literal army of women were working to keep food on the table.

Women’s Land Army

The Women’s Land Army of America (WLAA) was another adaptation of a British idea initiated during the first World War and was brought back during WWII.

Farm labor shortages were keenly felt across the country as 16.5 million men joined the military. Efforts to assist farmers in producing crops and livestock, and getting them to market included hiring migrant workers from Mexico, the Caribbean and Newfoundland; using prisoner of war labor; and granting Japanese Americans leave from the internment camps they were forced to live in. None of these efforts provided enough help to enough farmers to be effective.

Enter the WLAA, a branch of the U.S. Department of Agriculture headed by Florence Hall. The organization fielded 1.5 million women (more than the population of the state of Nebraska in 1940) in support of American farms.

Leslie Tresham wrote in 1944 of her experience on the farm as a member of the WLAA: “I had promised a farmer, whose only son had enlisted in the Marines, to haul corn from a picker to the (grain) elevator. ... I hooked a full load of corn to the tractor and started for the elevator. As I neared the hoist I became frightened ... there was only 3 or 4 inches clearance on either side of the wheels. If I made a mistake I might upset the hoist. ... I managed to put through without mishap. ... As I swung the empty wagon alongside of the picker ... the farmer shouted, ‘Have any trouble?’ ‘Not a bit,’ I lied, ‘It was easy.’

“And, so it went, load after load, day after day, until I have now hauled over 10,000 bushels of corn. Tired? Of course, I get tired, but so does that boy in the foxhole. That boy, whose place I’m trying so hard to fill.”

Freeing up more military men for those foxholes was the rationale for the War Department (today called the Department of Defense) to encourage women to enlist.

Joining the armed forces

Until WWII, there were limited opportunities for women to serve in the military and they were not recruited to join any branch. That changed after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, when tens of thousands of women signed up for every branch of the armed forces, albeit in their own distinct units.

A veritable alphabet soup of acronyms distinguished them: WAC (Women’s Army Corps), WAVES (Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Services), WASP (Women’s Airforce Service Pilots), SPAR (Coast Guard Women’s Reserves) and



By the end of 1944, farmers came to appreciate the Women’s Land Army of America recruits. Above are Mrs. Joseph Douglass, right, in the uniform she wore in 1918, when, as a member of New York State’s Women’s Land Army, she helped weed onions and other crops on up state farms. Ann Douglass wears the uniform adopted for the Women’s Land Army of 1943.

U.S.D.A./NATIONAL ARCHIVES

WR (United States Marine Corps Women’s Reserve).

Over the 200 duty assignments open to women, they performed clerical support; flew new and repaired airplanes (fighters and bombers) from factories to military airfields; were photographers on Naval and Coast Guard station staff; drove trucks; and were nurses.

Aside from patriotism, many were attracted by the equal pay they would get doing the same work as men — unheard of in civilian life. The military also welcomed Black, Japanese and Native American women into its ranks.

As was the case for Black men in the armed forces, Black women served in segregated units and a quota was set on how many African American women could join.

While women were not trained for combat, some like Ruth Hess in France in 1944 were close enough, “At nite — those d_d German planes make rounds and tuck us all into a fox hole — ack ack [antiaircraft guns] in the field right beside us, machine guns all around — whiz — there goes a bullet ...”

In the Pacific Theater, 77 Army and Navy nurses were taken prisoner in the Philippines and spent nearly three years in POW camps. They became known to the people at home as “The Angels of Bataan and Corrigador,” but not as prisoners of war.

Return to peacetime

When peace finally came, military women were encouraged to stay in their roles to serve in the occupation forces in Europe and Japan, and their demobilization

was similar to that of men.

Some female veterans used the G.I. Bill, which provided for educational opportunities and other benefits, to get college degrees.

Women’s work on the homefront helped the U.S. produce the materiel and food needed for victory. Like their military counterparts, they learned new life skills as well as job skills, and millions of women were profoundly changed by their experiences.

When peacetime came, the same admen who encouraged them to enter the workforce now worked to convince them to return to their prewar lives — to be satisfied with the waitressing or secretarial jobs they had before. Or even better, to stay home and keep house.

The work world was a man’s world was the gist. Many women did heed these messages, particularly since millions of them were now new mothers. Those mothers, however, did not forget their wartime experiences and instilled in their daughters a new attitude toward education and work.

The flood of women into the workforce during the war did not result in drastic changes in women’s opportunities for paid employment after the war, it laid the foundation for the fight for a variety of women’s rights in the decades that came after.

Heidi Campbell-Shoaf grew up in Butler County and attended Slippery Rock University for her undergraduate degree in history. She holds a Master of Arts degree in American history from Kent State University; and she is museum director and chief curator of the DAR Museum in Washington, D.C.

EXPERIENCE HISTORY



This artwork at the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C.

NPS PHOTO

From Page 2

World War II Memorial

Address: 1750 Independence Ave. SW, Washington D.C.

Phone: 202-426-6841

Open: Daily 24 hours a day, park rangers available to answer questions 9:30 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Of Note: The World War II Memorial was dedicated on May 29, 2004 to honor the 16 million who served in the armed forces of the U.S. during World War II, the more than 400,000 who died, and the millions who supported the war effort from home. The memorial is located adjacent to the Washington Monument, in the heart of the National Mall.

Gathered here are suggestions where history can be experienced. Information included was gathered from the museums’ websites

U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum

Address: 100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW, Washington D.C

Phone: 202-488-0400

Open: 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. daily

Of Note: A living memorial to the Holocaust, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum inspires visitors to confront hatred, prevent genocide, and promote human dignity. Federal support guarantees the museum’s permanent place on the National Mall, and its far-reaching educational programs and global impact are made possible by generous donors.

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War bonds — From Page 1

soldier with a blood-stained bandage wrapped around his head asks, “Doing all you can, brother?” while the message “Buy War Bonds” in all uppercase letters is pasted across his chest.

Another poster shows three young children in a field — one holding a model fighter plane, one holding a makeshift tool with a U.S. flag attached and a young girl holding a doll — with the dark outline of a Nazi swastika on the green grass beneath them. “Don’t Let That Shadow Touch Them — Buy WAR BONDS,” the message reads.

Yet another bond ad shows a U.S. pilot in the cockpit of his fighter plane, with more than a half-dozen planes in the sky above him, saying “You buy ‘em we’ll fly em!”

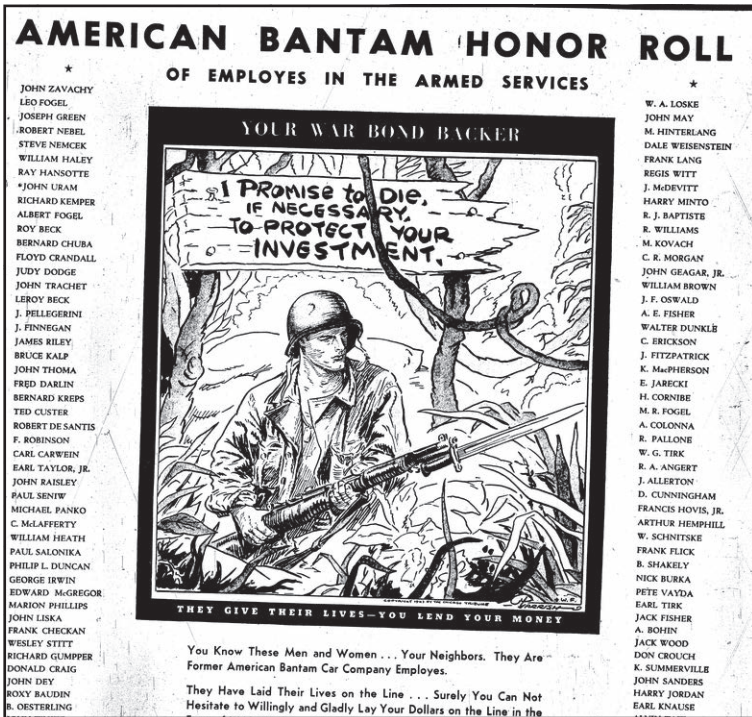
Even in local newspapers, the advertising was relentless. A full-page ad in the April 23, 1943, edition of the Butler Eagle lists the names of all the American Bantam employees in the armed services. The names serve as a border to a cartoon that features a soldier holding a rifle with a bayonet in a what appears to be a forest or jungle; in the background a crude sign reads: “I promise to die, if necessary, to protect your investment.” At the bottom of the cartoon, a message reads: “They give their lives – you lend your money.”

A text block beneath the cartoon tugs at the heartstrings. “You know these men and women ... your neighbors. They are former American Bantam Car Company employees. They have laid their lives on the line ... surely you can not hesitate to willingly and gladly lay your dollars on the line in the form of WAR BONDS ... today!”

Another Butler Eagle ad, which appeared in the July 25, 1942, edition, encourages readers to “get aboard the bond wagon!”

“Let’s go, Butler County! Come on, everybody! It takes more than heroes. To win this war, our fighting forces need millions of dollars’ worth of equipment and clothing NOW, in addition to billions of dollars’ worth of planes, tanks, ships and guns. They need them NOW. ‘Later’ may be too late.”

Yet another Eagle ad, which ran on July 16, 1942, urges readers to celebrate American Heroes Day the following day by buying bonds. “This day has been set aside to honor the brave boys of Butler County, who are fighting now on every battle front to protect our freedom and the flag we live under. To these brave boys ... to the heroes of all our wars, we the people of Butler County, dedicate American Heroes Day. We pledge that on this day we shall honor our heroes in the best possible way ... by redoubling our own efforts to win the war ... by buying U.S. War Bonds and Stamps in record-breaking numbers so that our boys will have the tools they need to finish the job.”



“I promise to die if necessary to protect your investment” was part of an American Bantam honor roll push for War Bonds published April 23, 1943, in the Butler Eagle.

A Montgomery Ward ad that appeared in the Eagle on April 26, 1943, meanwhile, took a different tack. The ad touted an upcoming sale — America’s Greatest Sale, in fact — but at the same time warned that quantities would be limited because America’s war production “has first call on all raw materials and factories. So, please buy only what you need and let your neighbors have their share of the special Ward Week values.”

In another large advertisement purchased by Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Co. that appeared in the Post-Gazette on April 9, 1943, readers were told of the need to reach into their pockets for the start of the second war loan period, which would get underway three days later.

“13 billion dollars must be raised!” the ad screamed. “The Government of the United States is asking us to lend it 13 billion dollars in the next few weeks.”

The advertisement explained the seven different types of U.S. government securities available, including United States War Savings Bonds Series E, which returned \$4 for every \$3 spent when the bond matured. These bonds were designed especially for the smaller investor in denominations of \$25, \$50, \$100, \$500 and \$1,000. The bonds could be redeemed anytime 60 days after the issue date, and the price was 75% of maturity value.

The newspapers didn’t miss an opportunity to promote the war bond effort; a story in the Jan. 11, 1945, issue of the Post-Gazette told the tale of Mrs. Viola Corp of Freedom, Beaver County, who lost two sons in the war but remained undaunted in her efforts to help her country. Her oldest son, Joseph, 23, was killed when the destroyer escort Leopold was sunk in the Atlantic, and her youngest son, Thomas, 22, died after the aircraft carrier Yorktown was sunk.

Despite the deaths of her sons, Viola Corp vowed that she would be “sticking to my war job (at the Beaver plant of the Curtiss-Wright Corp.) and investing every cent I can in war bonds.” The story noted that she bought \$3,000 in bonds in the most recent drive.

Doing our share

In the first year of the war, Pennsylvania certainly proved it was doing its share; from September 1941 to September 1942, the sale of Series E bonds totaled more than \$370 million within the state, and another \$287 million in Series F and G bonds also were sold.

Even children got into the act; in addition to bonds, the government created war savings stamps, which came in small denominations — 10 cents, 25 cents, 50 cents, \$1 and \$5 — and could be collected in a war bond stamp book. One promotion poster featured a woman in a suit of armor holding a sword. “Joan of Arc Saved France,” the wording at the top of the poster read. “Women of American Save Your Country. Buy War Savings Stamps.”

Theresa Yerman, of Pittsburgh, who was 12 when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor in December 1941, remembers those war savings stamps. “We would bring our dimes or 25 cents in to school and they’d put it toward a savings bond,” she recalled. “They called them victory bonds.”

Don Weiland, 96, who was living in Oakland Township until he was drafted in 1944, remembers his family contributed to the cause. “We bought war bonds,” he said. “Everyone was patriotic.”

Yerman also recalled some of the other efforts in place to help America and its allies win the war, including asking residents to contribute unused or unwanted metal and rubber items that could be repurposed for the military use. This effort was launched a little over a month after the

bombing of Pearl Harbor and was known as the “Salvage for Victory” program.

“Kids went around the neighborhood collecting aluminum pots and pans and rubber items,” she said. “Toys were not exempt from donation — even some train sets were sacrificed.”

The Conservation Division of the War Production Board, working with the federal Office of Education, encouraged school communities to join statewide “Junior Armies” that would organize large-scale salvage drives. The effort had a two-pronged purpose — to collect vital scrap iron, steel, rubber and other materials and to give school-age children a chance to participate in a patriotic activity.

Victory gardens

Children also helped their families in another major effort on the homefront — victory gardens. America’s entry into the war in late 1941 meant that food would be needed for the armed forces, and that ultimately led to a nationwide rationing program that began with sugar in May 1942 and would eventually include many food items that Americans came to rely on.

To help offset the loss — or at least the reduced availability — of some of those items, the call went out to those at home to begin planting gardens, which became known as victory gardens.

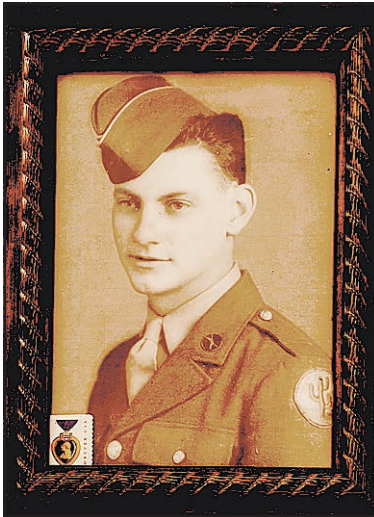
In Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh Press and KDKA radio joined to build a model victory garden near Children’s Hospital in Oakland. Local department stores, including Gimbels, hosted training sessions to “encourage bigger and better Victory Garden efforts,” according to one advertisement in the May 19, 1943, edition of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

Yerman remembers her grandfather helping out at a victory garden near Frick Park in Pittsburgh; another grandparent had her own backyard garden.

Although the numbers of those participating in victory gardens dropped as the war went along, the project overall proved very successful. Some research showed that at its peak, the gardens produced as much as 40% of the nation’s fresh vegetables. The effort was thought to have had some residual impact beyond the fresh fruits and vegetables that were harvested, as the time it took to plan the gardens, obtain seeds and actually work the land took people’s minds off the fighting overseas.

For those items that couldn’t be grown at home, families had to shop carefully and in some cases had to restrict their purchases, thanks to the widespread rationing program in place for such items as sugar, canned fruit and vegetables, cheese, processed food and meats. The program was designed to make sure the armed forces were fed and at the same time make sure that everyone at home received their fair share of the food that remained.

See War bonds, Page 5



Bob Leslie, who grew up in New Castle, served in the U.S. Army infantry during World War II. The Cabot resident recalled getting both K-rations and C-rations while serving in the 8th Armored Division in France, Germany and Austria.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS



Helen Buckham Rogerson, who grew up in Butler served in the U.S. Marine Corps. She is at right in the vintage photo above and was working at an office at Paris Island, S.C.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

GENERATIONS OF GROWTH

Schnur family’s planted roots in 1800s

By Layla Joseph

Many people know nothing about the lives of their great-great-grandparents, but for others, like county resident Jim Schnur, history has a funny way of repeating itself.

Schnur, 68, owns and operates Schnur’s Greenhouse, a long-time establishment in Summit Township. For over a century, the greenhouse has provided the community with holiday flowers, herbs, specialty plants and vegetables.

A green thumb may have become a genetic trait for the Schnur family, starting with Peter Schnur, Jim’s great-great-grandfather. Peter immigrated to America from Prussia, an area now primarily divided between Poland and Russia, with his mother and father in the 1830s.

The family’s story is preserved in “The Schnur Book” by Bill Schmitz, one of three books about the family housed in the genealogy section of the Butler Area Public Library.



Three generations of the Schnur family — Greg Schnur; his father, Jim; and his son, Will — pose for a picture in the family’s greenhouse.

LAYLA JOSEPH/SUBMITTED PHOTO

Early life

Peter grew up in Pittsburgh, where he worked at a steel mill for 10 years after graduating from high school. After leaving the mill, he got his hands dirty in a new way, working on a Pittsburgh

farm, before enlisting to fight in the Civil War.

Then, like many Civil War veterans, Peter found a career in agriculture after the war, moving north to start a farm of his own. Planting a seed that would con-

tinue to grow over 100 years later, Peter purchased land in Summit Township in 1870.

Perhaps a pleasant surprise for Peter was when Summit Township’s first “wildcat well” — an exploratory oil well — was drilled on the farm in 1873. Peter would soon have two wells “producing an average of eight barrels per day,” according to “The Schnur Book.”

Oil wells were drilled “as far south as Herman’s Station on the Butler Branch Railroad in Summit Township,” according to “The Schnur Book.” Acreage that once cost \$30 to \$40 began to sell at upward of \$250 per acre.

Six years after he bought the farm, Peter and his wife, Elizabeth, settled in Butler County. Their sons, George and Leo, would devote their lives to the family’s cause.

A passion for gardening

George had a passion for gardening, even as a child. He assisted his father on the farm, even while pursuing a “more profitable” trade as a stonemason

for 12 years, according to “The Schnur Book.”

In 1889, George named the farm “Schnur’s Greenhouse,” and began to sell produce out of his truck, traveling to Pittsburgh markets, according to his great-grandson, Jim.

After years of saving and providing for a family that included 12 children, George purchased an additional 80 acres of “fertile farmland” adjoining his father’s property by 1910.

George was responsible for many significant improvements to the farm: building his home, a barn and six “hothouses” on the property. These greenhouses were covered with sheets of glass as large as 112 feet by 155 feet.

George modernized production processes and “supplied a large wholesale trade at Butler, making a specialty of lettuce and greenhouse plants,” according to “The Schnur Book.”

When George died in 1934, the family tradition continued, as

See Family, Page 5

War bonds

From Page 4
Rationing

Families relied on rationing books that contained coupons of various point values to purchase those items; other nonfood items that were rationed included gasoline and fuel oil. The program was overseen by the Office of Price Administration, and some 8,000 rationing boards administered the program.

Yerman remembered going to a nearby meat market and watching her mother purchase various items. “They’d measure it out, of course, because you could only buy so much,” she said. “And then they’d take one of your coupons. I remember eating a lot of canned tuna — that was our main protein for the meal. And I remember getting cracked eggs at the store because they were cheaper. And there were so many of us, they used (the eggs) up fast, so it didn’t matter if they were cracked. Today you wouldn’t eat a cracked egg.”

Weiland recalled having to make do with less gasoline than he was used to having prior to the war. “We were only allowed to have three or four gallons a week,” he said.

To get around that, Weiland’s family would buy “homemade gas” made from local oil wells. “We called it ‘high-test,’” he laughed. “It worked, but it burned pretty quick.”

Gasoline needed to be rationed because it was essential for military uses. Not only did it power the planes, tanks, trucks, jeeps and many water craft, but it was used in army kitchens and medical stations.

“In fact, gasoline is our standard war fuel. Our fighting machine has been geared to it,” a fact sheet from the Office of Price Administration stated. “Perhaps the biggest and most complex single conversion job of the war was the change-over of gasoline and its transportation facilities from unlimited civilian use to emergency war use.”

As a result of rationing, the consumption of gasoline by civilian passenger cars fell to about 61% of pre-war levels by 1943. Of course, there was always a way around rationing, whether it was for gasoline or food.

“There was a black market,” said Bob Leslie, who grew up in New Castle and served in the U.S. Army infantry. “I didn’t know much about it, but I knew some people who participated.”

Yerman knew someone as well; one of her brothers had a friend who could get counterfeit rationing coupons. “It was a racket,” she said. “There were racketeers everywhere.”

The Post-Gazette exposed a thriving black market for meat in a series of stories in which a reporter went undercover and bought over a ton of black market meat and 10,000 red rationing points in less than a month. The series sparked a special U.S. Senate committee hearing, and that resulted in some changes, but the problems were never completely solved before meat was finally removed from the rationing rolls in late 1946 — more than a year after the war ended.

Those who served

About the only ones who were not affected by rationing were those serving in the armed forces, either at home or abroad.

Helen Buckham Rogerson, 96, who grew up in Butler and now resides in the Concordia at Cabot campus in Butler County, was in the U.S. Marine Corps and worked in an office at Paris Island, S.C. “In the service, you got your food,” Rogerson said.

Weiland recalled getting K-rations while stationed in the Far East; he was on board a ship headed to fight the Japanese in August 1945 when President Harry Truman ordered two atomic bombs to be dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Weiland ultimately spent time in the Philippines, Okinawa and Korea.

“You’d get a little can of some kind of vegetables, some crackers, a candy bar that was made out of some kind of chocolate and four cigarettes,” he said of the K-rations. “We didn’t mind it; when you’re young, you don’t give a damn.”

Leslie, who also resides in the Concordia at Cabot campus, recalled getting both K-rations and C-rations while serving in the 8th Armored Division in France, Germany and Austria. C-rations contained more calories, but that didn’t help Leslie much. “We all lost weight because we were carrying a load,” he recalled. “I was a machine gunner – I had to carry a rifle, ammunition for it and two boxes of ammunition for the machine gun that weighed 25 pounds apiece.

“It was kind of tough on me. I’m not a big person — I was 5-foot-7 and weighed 130 pounds when I went into the service, but I lost a lot of weight overseas.”

By the time the war ended, Leslie weighed barely 100 pounds. He also suffered from what is now call PTSD, or post-traumatic stress disorder, and was treated for it.

When he looks back on his experiences overseas, he doesn’t mince words.

“War is wrong,” he said. “And anyone who inflicts it should be punished.

“Man can be inhuman.”

Frank Garland is a retired college professor, freelance writer and coordinator of the Pittsburgh Media Partnership, based at Point Park University’s Center for Media Innovation.

Allegheny Twp. home of senator

By Austin Uram, Eagle Staff Writer

Over 50 years before Allegheny Township was formed, a pioneer by the name of John Lowrie settled in the region to raise his son, Walter Lowrie — a man who would go on to become Butler County’s only United States Senator.

According to “History of Butler County,” by James McKee, John was part of a mass of settlers who came in 1797 to what would become Allegheny Township. Butler County was founded just three years later.

And three years after that, according to township Chairman Chuck Stowe, Walter took his first steps on a journey that would take him to the U.S. Capitol Building.

“At the age of 19, he felt called to become a minister,” Stowe said.

The young man traveled to what is now Concord Township, Stowe said, to study under the pastor of the Concord Presbyterian Church.

“In the process of his studies to become a minister, he fell in love with the pastor’s daughter,” Stowe said. “He wouldn’t allow them to get married, so they ran off and eloped. Because of that, he was banned from becoming a minister.”

Or so the legend goes.

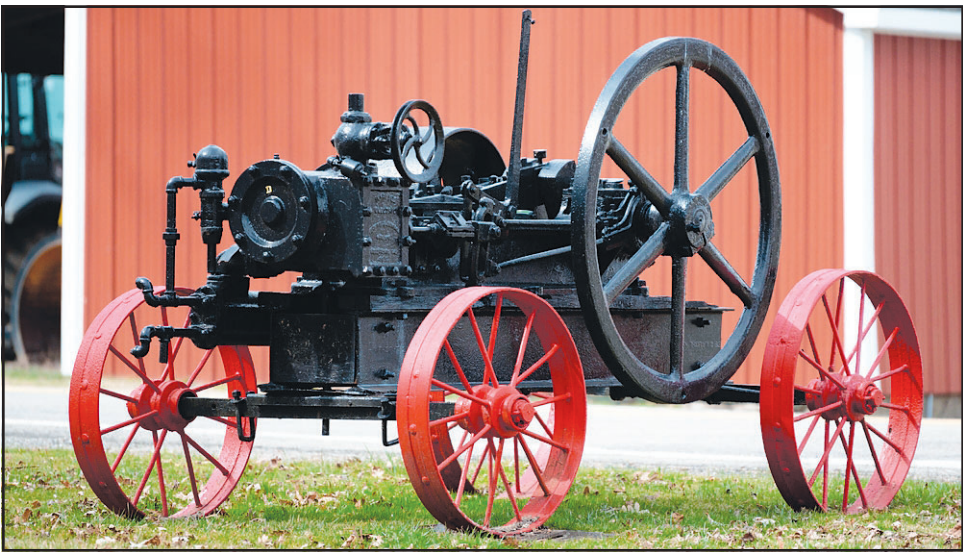
Jennifer Ford, of the Butler County Historical Society, said Lowrie more likely left due to a “personality clash” with the Rev. John McPherrin.

In his memoirs, Lowrie writes that he left the McPherrins at age 23 to take up teaching at an English school in the village of Butler. Four months later, he was appointed clerk of the County Commissioners.

By 1808, he had taken charge of the school and married Amelia McPherrin, the reverend’s daughter.

“Referring to public life, it was no doubt the growing acquaintance of the young teacher with the farming people and their interests in the northwestern counties,” the memoir stated, “that led largely to his election in 1811 as a member of the Pennsylvania Legislation — in the House of Representatives one year and in the Senate six years.”

In 1818, while still a state Senator, he



A steam engine in Six Points, Allegheny Township, remains as a monument to “those who served in the oil fields,” as the sign reads.

CARY SHAFFER/BUTLER EAGLE

was elected full term to the U.S. Senate, serving as chairman of the Committee on Finance. After his term, he stayed on for 11 years as secretary of the Senate before settling in New York City to work with the Missionary Board of the Presbyterian Church.

A township is born

While Lowrie likely never returned to the county after settling in New York City, Allegheny Township was formed from neighboring Parker and Venango townships in 1854 — just 14 years before his death.

According to McKee, the township took its name from the Allegheny River, which grazes its northeastern corner.

“The biggest trade in the township was basically farming,” Stowe said. “Then, when the oil ‘excitement’ hit, the town had several oil wells.”

Evidence of the township’s oil rush during the late 1800s are still present at Six Points, one of the areas’ early trading posts.

“We have an old boiler and steam engine that sits in front of the schoolhouse,” Stowe said. “(They) were used to drill the oil wells.”

The machinery, he said, was donated by two local families as a monument to “those who served in the oil fields,” as the sign reads.

Behind it stands the restored Six Points Schoolhouse, built 1876.

“My dad went there for the first eight grades, at the one-room school house,” Stowe said.

While the schoolhouse closed in the

Cherry Valley history a story of ingenuity

By Austin Uram, Eagle Staff Writer

At the turn of the 20th century, the borough of Cherry Valley did not exist. It was simply a quiet region of Venango Township, home to farmers, miners and oil wells.

That is, until the election of 1908.

According to a Nov. 16, 1939 article in the Butler Eagle, titled “Cherry Valley Borough is unique place in this county,” the region lost its representation on the school board after elections in 1908.

When residents of the township petitioned the board to elect a particular teacher, they were then refused, according to the article.

“Angered by what they considered a deliberate disregard of their rights, certain influential residents of the district, with plans of secession from the rest of the township in their minds, came to Butler to consult an attorney,” the article read.

Attorney Levi M. Wise, cooling their tempers, recommended instead that the region incorporate as a borough.

And so, after petitioning the court on July 30, 1909, and giving legal notice “in the Butler Eagle, a weekly newspaper of Butler County, for a period of thirty days and more,” the final decree on the incorporation of Cherry Valley Borough was recorded on Sept. 6, 1909.

“I’ve always found this fascinating,” Mayor Michael Bagdes-Canning said.

A legacy lost

Bagdes-Canning, who has lived in the

borough since 1982, lamented the loss of the borough’s previous mayor, Ron Lockwood, in 2021 and longtime resident William “Bill” Foreback in 2014 — and with them, much of the borough’s history.

“Bill grew up, actually, in Cherry Valley; Ron came to Cherry Valley later,” Bagdes-Canning said. “They both had fascinating stories, and I always kick myself that I didn’t do a better job of getting all the information from them.”

Foreback was born in the 28-year-old borough in 1937; Lockwood became the borough’s mayor in 1971.

In a 2009 article titled “Cherry Valley set for 100th,” Lockwood said the name of the borough goes back to one of its pioneers, Capt. Thomas Jolly.

A captain in the British Navy and a veteran of the American Revolution, Jolly supposedly deserted the British after the war, settling in the valley.

“He had gone to New England and brought back cherries and planted them here,” Lockwood said in the article.

The legend, then, goes that the borough took its name from the many cherry trees Jolly planted in the early 1800s.

In 1983, Lockwood highlighted the ingenious spirit of the borough, in a Pennsylvania Magazine article titled “A visit to Pennsylvania’s smallest incorporated towns.”

In the late 1900s, coal trucks began traveling over borough roads rather than taking the longer, designated state routes. Without local law enforcement to gather evidence, officials turned to more creative

mid-1900s, Stowe said, a teacher in the township helped resurrect it as a local museum.

“Judy Karns, she was a retired schoolteacher, and she was the one that instigated that and started the committee and headed off the work,” Stowe said. “She did a lot of work.”

Doing it all over again

In recent years, Stowe said, the township experienced a second round of fossil fuel “excitement.”

“We do have Marcellus Shale gas in our town,” Stowe said. “We have, right now, three well pads.”

The pads are owned by LOLA Energy, he said, which is in the process of building a fourth and fifth well.

And, while the wells are a far cry from the township’s one-time oil fields, Stowe said the township has benefited from them.

In addition, an industrial park along Route 38 employs 500 to 600 people from throughout the county, according to Stowe.

“We actually get more people that come into the township to work than we get that come out to vote,” he said with a laugh.

As of the 2020 U.S. Census, 620 people live in the township.

“I always tell everybody that Allegheny Township is the least populated township in Butler County,” Stowe said.

But, with a rich history of hard work and perseverance, size matters little to the folks of Allegheny.

“I told people, ‘We could live back in the 1800s oil boom, we can live it all over again,’” Stowe said.

Another 100 years

According to the 2020 census, Cherry Valley is home to a population of 60 residents and 34 homes, nearly half its population in 1910.

“One thing that’s interesting about Cherry Valley, I think, and it’s not in a good way, is that we’re pretty old,” Bagdes-Canning said, laughing.

The 2021 census lists Cherry Valley residents’ average age as 58½ years old.

“When you think about what the economy of Western Pennsylvania has gone through in the last several decades, bleeding jobs and, as a consequence, bleeding young people, especially in northern Butler County, it’s just a shame,” Bagdes-Canning said.

In spite of that, and in the borough’s spirit of defiance, Bagdes-Canning said he hopes it is still around “for another 100 years.”

“I love Cherry Valley,” he said.

erty — building two glass enclosures, both larger than before, and adding two plastic greenhouses in the 1970s.

Of Willis’s five children, Jim would carry the family business into the next generation. In 1990, Jim left his job with Summit Township and got back to his roots, returning to the greenhouse and working for his father full-time.

Just four years later, his father retired and left the business to him.

The family tradition continues — Jim and his wife, Cindy, continue to own and operate the greenhouse with their two sons, Greg and Scott. Jim says that Greg hopes to be the next heir to the greenhouse once he retires, allowing the Schnur family legacy to thrive.

Layla Joseph is a senior at Slippery Rock University, where she studies strategic communication and media with a concentration in multimedia journalism.

says with a chuckle. “We were just kids, messing around. She treated us well; she just liked to yell at us.”

A time of change

In 1952, Jim’s parents, Willis and Kathryn, bought the business, building a new home where the original barn once stood.

The 1950s and 1960s were a time of change as this fourth generation of Schnurs continued to grow the business, making improvements and renovations to the greenhouses, when possible.

According to Jim, Willis hit a crossroads in 1964 — the old greenhouses needed to be demolished. Willis questioned whether he should rebuild the greenhouses or change his occupation.

After tearing the structures down, he decided to dig his heels into the dirt and continue gardening. Within five years, he made modernized additions to the prop-



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