

THE McCAIN HOUSE



ARMSTRONG COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM AND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

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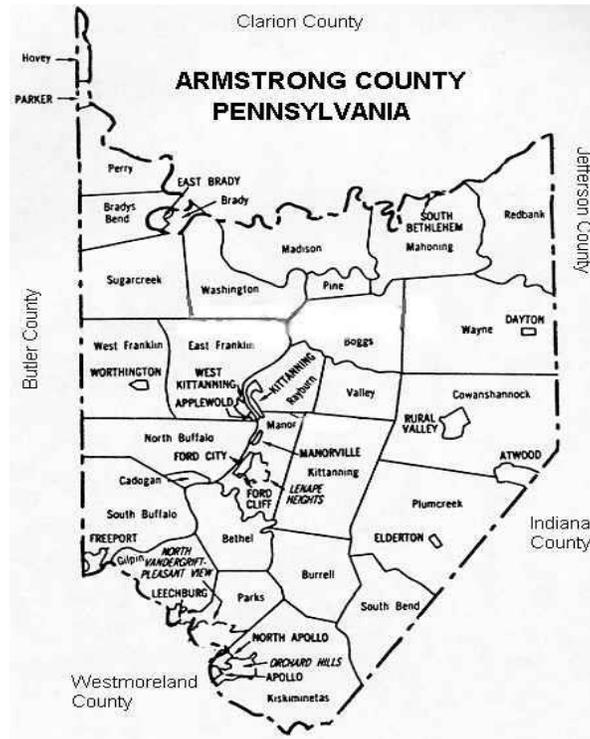
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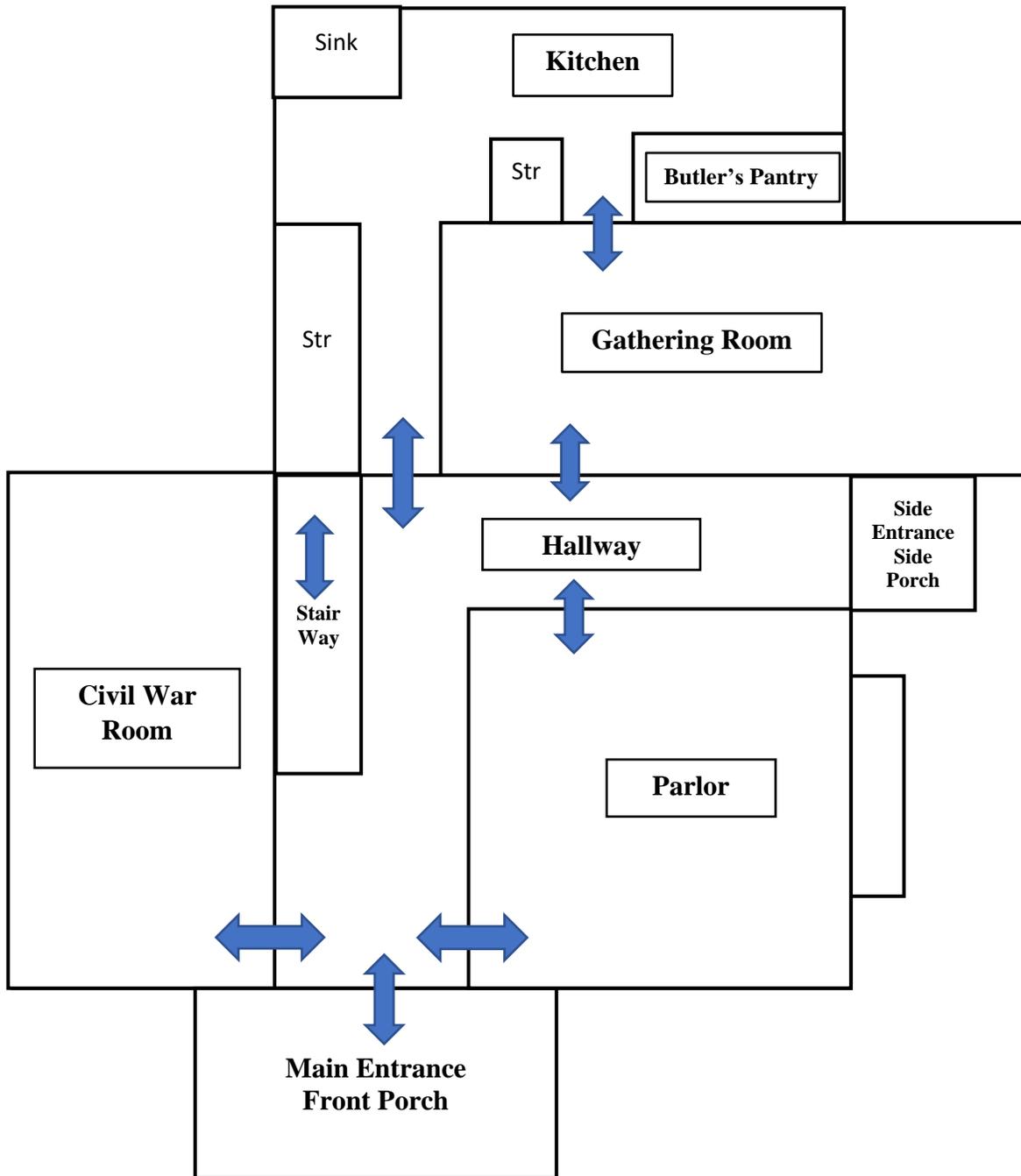
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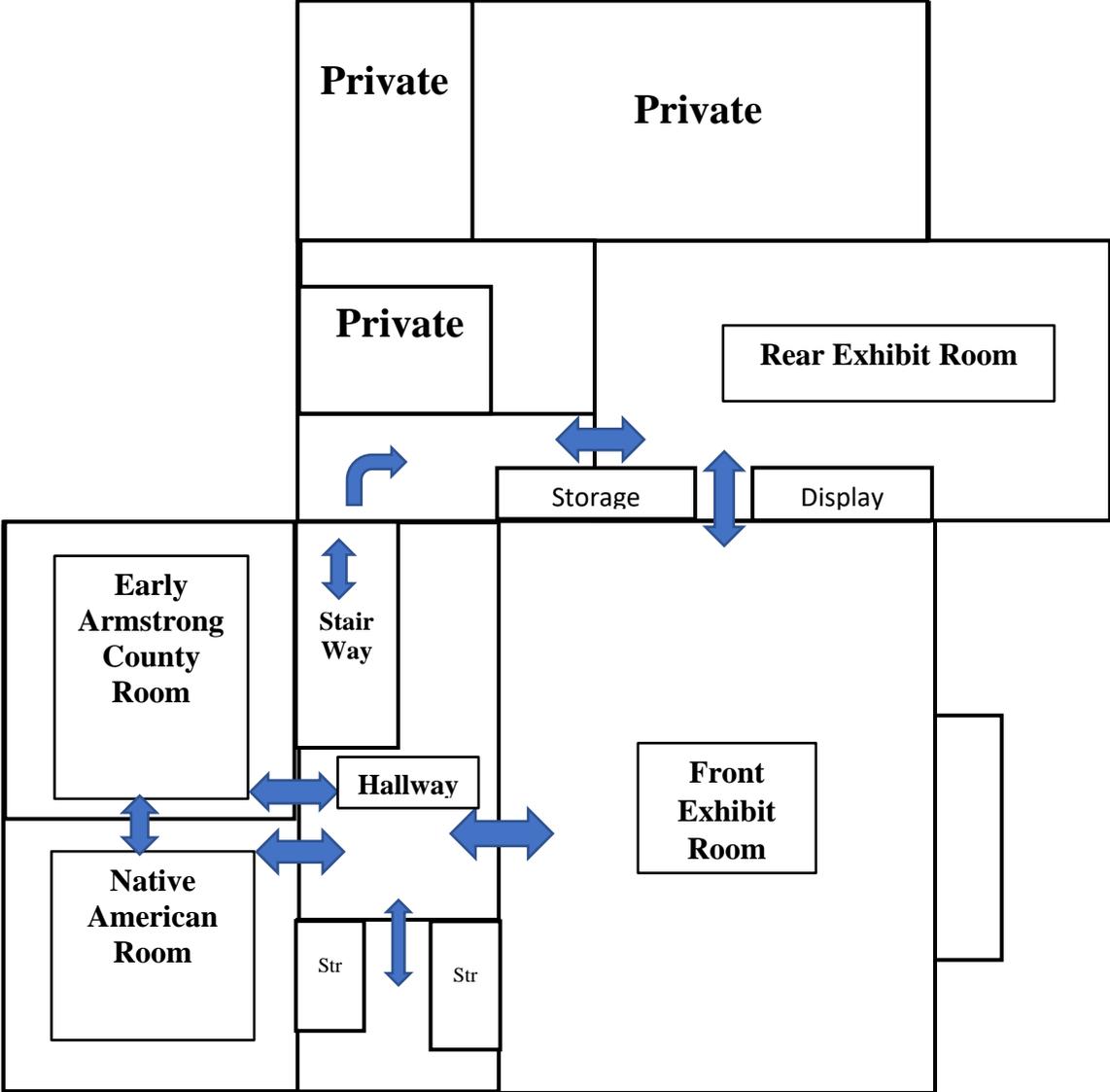
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McCain House – FIRST FLOOR



McCain House – SECOND FLOOR



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the McCain House, a Federal-style building that serves as the home of the Armstrong County Historical Museum.

In 1924, a few local community leaders recognized that steps should be taken to preserve the early history of Armstrong County. As a result, the Armstrong County Historical and Museum Society was formed with Judge James King as president. The Society survived for 40 years until becoming inactive in 1964. It was reactivated in 1967 and then incorporated three years later in 1970.

The McCain House, centrally located in the Borough of Kittanning, became the Society's home in 1971. The mission of the Society is to preserve the history of Armstrong County. The story of its people, places, and past events is told through the items on display in the museum.

The history of Armstrong County, as a county unit, began with the Legislative Act passed on March 12, 1800, which, in Section VIII, defined the new boundary of a separate county to be henceforth called Armstrong County. This new county was formed out of parts of Allegheny, Westmoreland, and Lycoming counties. The place of holding the courts of justice for the said county were fixed by the Legislature and were to be located along the Allegheny River, at any place at a distance not greater than five miles from the old Kittanning town. Section XIV of the Act provided for the appointment of John Craig, James Sloan, and James Barr as Trustees for the County of Armstrong.

It is important to note that this newly established county derived its name from Colonel John Armstrong, who led a band of Pennsylvania Regiment soldiers that destroyed the Delaware Indian village of Kittanning on September 8, 1756.

THE McCAIN HOUSE HISTORY

The current building was built in two stages. Robert E. Brown, a local entrepreneur, businessman, and land owner purchased the property from the Armstrong County Commissioners and started to build his house, the front portion of the current building, in 1842.

Before the house was completed, Brown sold it to Thomas McConnell and his wife, Olive Robinson McConnell, in 1842. Mr. McConnell, whose portrait hangs in the parlor, was a banker, businessman, and investor in oil. It is not known when the original modest two-story brick house was completed. The original house most likely extended back to the beginning of the existing gathering room and was quite plain. The first-floor layout probably consisted of one main room on the right with

two rooms on the left. The second-floor layout may have had four rooms with two on each side of the stairs. It had no shutters, grand porch, wrought iron fence, or sweeping lawn to the street.

Reverend H. L. Chapman, while serving in the Kittanning area from 1853-1854, described the McConnell home as follows: “A large brick house with ample grounds surrounded by fruit and shade trees and other indications of wealth and refinement.”

The McConnell’s had five children: Thomas, Elisha Robinson, William H., Olive, and Elizabeth R.

After the death of Thomas McConnell in 1888, the property was handed down to his daughters, Olive and Elizabeth, with each holding one-half interest in ownership. Olive McConnell married Oliver W. Gilpin and their daughter, Adele McConnell Gilpin, married Samuel McCain and here enters the McCain family name. After the deaths of Olive McConnell Gilpin and Elizabeth McConnell, Adele Gilpin McCain and her husband Samuel McCain became joint owners with Oliver W. Gilpin. The McCain’s held one-half interest and Gilpin held the other half. Upon the death of Oliver W. Gilpin, his interest was willed to his daughter, Adele Gilpin McCain, who was also the granddaughter of Thomas McConnell. She then conveyed one-half interest to a group of trustees: Henry E. Moesta, Calvin E. Dunmire, and Calvin E. Miller. These trustees were designated as the judgement lien creditors of the deceased Oliver W. Gilpin.

The original house was enlarged during the late 1800s or early 1900s when the existing gathering room, kitchen, pantry, hallway, back stairs, grand porches, and porte-cochere were added. The modest two-story house was transformed into an elegant “mansion” with manicured lawns and wrought iron fencing. The addition more than doubled the size of the house.

In the past, there was another house located at the rear of the original property. That portion was sold to the Atlantic Richfield Company who built a gas station there. The former gas station is now an automobile repair shop.

At one time, a tavern was in another building at the rear of the original property. Benefactors of the Society purchased that property and had the building torn down.

Adele Gilpin McCain, her husband Samuel, and trustees Henry E. Moesta, Calvin E. Dunmire, and Calvin Miller sold the property to the Kittanning Borough School District in 1944 for the sum of approximately \$27,500. The contents of the house were sold at auction at the same as the property.

The Armstrong School District sold the property to the Armstrong County Historical Museum and Genealogical Society on May 17, 1984.

From 1971 to the date of purchase, the Society occupied the former elegant “mansion” under a rental agreement for \$1.00 a year.

FIRST-FLOOR CIVIL WAR ROOM

The “Armstrong County in the Civil War” exhibit focuses on the County’s involvement in the Civil War. An estimated 3,652 men from the County served in the war to preserve the Union, preserve states’ rights, and abolish slavery.

The exhibit endeavors to honor the long-ago soldiers who were the ancestors of many of today’s Armstrong County residents. Visitors can travel back in time to see Civil War artifacts such as the Company G Morning Reports book and a General Orders book associated with the 78th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry regiment; a diary carried by a local soldier who survived the conditions of the prison in Andersonville, Georgia, while serving in the 103rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry regiment; antique battlefield maps; first edition regimental history books; muster rolls from several regiments; documents and personal items from several soldiers who served in the 159th Pennsylvania Volunteer Cavalry regiment (14th Cavalry), the 78th, 103rd, 104th, and 139th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry regiments and other units; and period musical and medical instruments.

Included in the exhibit are numerous information boards. Some enumerate the facts and figures of the County’s involvement in the Civil War and others include summaries of regimental/company units such as the 62nd PVI – Company D; 78th PVI; 103rd PVI; 139th – Companies B, C, E, and F; 155th PVI – Company K and 14th Cavalry – Companies K, L and M. The faces and stories of individual soldiers are remembered through the photos and other items on display.

The exhibit is the home of the original painting “The Wheatfield – Whirlpool of Death” done by local artist Larry Smail. The painting hangs above the fireplace. Smail captures on canvas the heroic actions of the 62nd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry regiment against the Confederates on July 2, 1863. That deadly battle occurred in Rose’s wheat field just outside the village of Gettysburg.

The Society is honored to have on display artifacts that once belonged to Privates Adam Hetrick and James W. Jack. This extensive collection was donated by descendants of these two soldiers that fought in the 78th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry regiment.

On permanent loan to the Society from the Kittanning ELKS Lodge No. 203 is the remaining portion of the militaria once owned by Dr. Charles Jessop, founder and

organizer of the Kittanning General Hospital. Civil War muskets, swords, sabers, and various soldier's accoutrements from the doctor's collection are on display in the exhibit.

Included in the exhibit are items once owned by Colonel William G. Sirwell, commander of the 78th PVI. These items were donated to the Society by Ron Gancas, great-great-grandson of Colonel Sirwell.

Items on display that were obtained from the Armstrong County Courthouse are the Armstrong County Record Book - Statements of Weekly Relief Payments to Soldier's Families during the Civil War and soldier Burial Records books. The relief records indicate the amount of monies paid out by the County Treasury to aid the soldier's families that remained at home while the soldier was at war.

The veterans, sons of veterans, and orphans of the Civil War are not excluded from the exhibit. A portrait of Private John F. Croll, who was killed in action during the war, hangs on display. The Grand Army of the Republic Post No. 156 in Kittanning was named after him. Information on the Soldiers' Orphan's School in Dayton is included in the exhibit as are items related to the GAR. On display is a hat and coat that was worn by Robert L. Gibson, a member of the John T. Crawford Camp No. 43, which was a Camp of the Sons of Veterans of the United States of America located in Kittanning. Gibson was a son of James R. Gibson, a Civil War veteran from Armstrong County.

FIRST-FLOOR PARLOR

The parlor was the best room of the house, reserved for special occasions and time with guests. Treasured possessions such as family heirlooms, photographs, and portraits were often on display. Wealthy families may also have had a piano or an organ in this room. Usually the furniture, while the nicest the family could afford, was made for looks rather than comfort.

The McCain House parlor is furnished today like a typical parlor of years past. An operating pump organ made by Weaver Organ and Piano Company in York, Pennsylvania, is located near the front entrance. This organ was donated by Sandy Zacour, a descendant of the original owner Harriet Phillips. An 1878 Emerson Square-back Grand Piano made in Boston, Massachusetts, sits in the right rear corner of the room. Above the piano hang portraits of Peter and Susan Graff, done in the mid-1850s. Peter married Susanna Lobengier on January 25, 1830, and established the Buffalo Woolen Mills near Worthington, Armstrong County, in 1865. Another portrait of Peter Graff, painted during his later years, hangs nearby.

The parlor is the home of the Society's prized possession, an original 1878 landscape painting of Kittanning done by artist George Hetzel. A past director of the Westmoreland Art Museum informed the Society that Hetzel was a well-known painter of the Scalp Level School of painters, who painted in the same style as the more famous Hudson School. The Scalp Level name was given to a group of painters who met to paint at a favorite spot known as "Scalp Level," located in Fayette County, Pennsylvania.

The County's Courthouse, two church spires, a bridge spanning the Allegheny River, and a large field (located in present day Applewold) are clearly visible in the painting. The painting was discovered in the attic in 1984 and had been badly damaged as a result of being stored there for many years. The Westmoreland Art Museum authenticated the artist, restored the painting, and returned it to the Society in 1986 for display. The painting is registered with the Library of Congress.

This painting is rare because Hetzel, known for still life and nature scenes, did not typically paint villages. The painting was commissioned by Andrew Dull for his wife Judith Reynolds Dull who lived in Kittanning before moving to Harrisburg PA. Andrew formed Reese, Griff and Dull Company for the manufacture of iron.

The parlor is also furnished with antique chairs and a settee in addition to a Rishell gramophone, record cabinet, library table, and other miscellaneous items typical to the Victorian era. Two oil paintings done by Adelaide Reed Nulton, wife of Barclay Nulton, are on display. An antique dress, from the early to mid-1800s, that belonged to Susan Van Dyke Hindman is located to the left of the fireplace.

To the right of the Hetzel painting hang portraits of Thomas McConnell, whose family was the first to live in the McCain House, and Ross Reynolds, a prominent citizen of Kittanning in the mid-1800s, who gained wealth from his lime and clay businesses.

FIRST-FLOOR GATHERING ROOM AND HALLWAYS

The Gathering Room is furnished with a china cupboard, dining table and chairs, settee, chair, and several display cases. The cupboard contains items made by Wick China and W.S. George China.

The first display case on the left contains miscellaneous items from the local area.

On display in the second case on the left is dishware made by former local potteries Wick China and Ford China, which were located in Kittanning and Ford City. A child's tea set made by Wick China for Miss Margaret McKee is included in the

display. After the tea set was made, the molds were destroyed, making this the only set of its kind. Histories of the potteries can be found on the plaques.

The Daugherty Visible typewriter exhibit is in the glass case on the back wall. In 1889, James Denny Daugherty, a Kittanning resident, completed and patented a machine called the “Daugherty Visible”, which was a forerunner of the best visible typewriter. The type bars strike the front of the platen, making the words “visible” during typing. Five years after receiving the patent, Daugherty’s local friends assisted him with opening a manufacturing plant in Kittanning.

On the same wall as the Daugherty exhibit is a display case containing various bottles from local companies, past and present.

In front of the fireplace is a statue titled “Worker at Forge.” Above the fireplace are pictures of various Kittanning scenes.

Displayed on the dining table is a 5 o’clock tea set, circa 1890, manufactured by the Bradley and Hubbard Company in Connecticut.

Above the dining table hangs an oil lamp that has been converted to use electricity.

Another oil painting done by Adelaide Reed Nulton, wife of Barclay Nulton, hangs on the wall to the left of the big window.

On the shelf below the main window in the room are various items for sale to benefit the Society.

Main Entrance Hallway: Wall hangings in the main hallway include an old Armstrong County map from 1861; several old maps of the boroughs of Kittanning and Ford City; a framed display of old postcards; and a painting of an old log house in early Kittanning.

Side Entrance Hallway: On the wall opposite from the parlor exit hangs a Simplex Time Recorder clock that was once in use at the Pittsburgh Plate Glass plant in Ford City. On this same wall and to the right of the clock hangs another oil painting done by Adelaide Reed Nulton, wife of Barclay Nulton. Another framed display of old postcards hangs nearby. To the right of the parlor exit is a case displaying the glass salt collection once owned by Marcia Shanafelt.

FIRST-FLOOR BUTLER’S PANTRY

Historically, a butler's pantry (or scullery) was used to store, count, and polish the family silver. This room also had storage space for numerous sets of china and large serving dishes like platters, tureens, and coffee urns. In order to prevent theft of these heirlooms, the butler would keep the cabinets locked.

Various pottery is displayed on the shelves and a "Flow Blue" soup tureen sits on the counter. A feather duster and a sweeper hang on the wall. A framed print of the Hetzel painting that is in the parlor hangs on the wall along with a landscape scene dated 1870.

FIRST-FLOOR KITCHEN

The kitchen is furnished with appliances and other domestic tools typical to the period.

The two-door icebox was manufactured in Illinois. Large blocks of ice, placed in the top compartment, kept the food in the bottom compartment chilled. Several items are placed on top of the icebox, including a butter mold, an early piece of Yellow Ware, and butter paddles. The cookstove was made by Wincroft Stove Works of Middletown, Pennsylvania. Several "sad irons" are placed on top of the warming ovens. A toaster, waffle iron, and water kettle are displayed on the cooking surface.

The baker's cabinet, manufactured in the state of Indiana by the G.I. Sellers company, features a work surface to roll out and knead dough, a few cabinets above, and "possum belly" drawers below to hold flour and/or meal. Oftentimes the drawers were lined with tin to protect the contents from rodents.

An apple butter kettle stands in the corner, and various pottery is displayed on the corner shelves on either side of the window. A kraut cutter hangs on the wall on the right of the stove, and a coal scuttle, clothes agitator, and clothes dryer are to the left. Other items on display include a rug beater, ironing board, wash tub and wash board, cheese box, egg shipping crate, dozen egg carrier, tea box, cider press, apple peelers, wall telephone, cast iron shoe lasts, and a work table. Above the work table hangs another oil lamp that has been converted to use electricity.

In the small room off the kitchen, there is a large sink and the shelving above it holds various pieces of bakeware. Pie lifters and an enamelware tub hang on the wall to the left.

SECOND-FLOOR NATIVE AMERICAN ROOM

The Native American exhibit focuses on the history and heritage of the Native Americans that resided in the county in the 1700s and earlier.

Larry Smail, local artist, historian, and author, has been curating the Native American exhibit since 2007. Smail turned his childhood fascination for Native

American history, specifically the 1700s, during and after the French and Indian War, into a lifetime of research and accepted the opportunity to create this exhibit.

Many of the items depicting Native American life and culture in the exhibit were either collected from past and current collectors or were hand-made by Smail to represent items used by the Lenni-Lenape or Delaware tribe that lived in the county during the 1700s. One of the display items made by Smail is a hoe made from the shoulder bone of a bear. Stone implements and other various stone artifacts are found throughout the exhibit.

Several prints of Larry Smail's paintings hang on the exhibit walls. One entitled "Home to Kit-Han-Ne" depicts a Delaware raiding party returning to its village. Another entitled "Evening Smoke - Delaware 1755" shows a typical Eastern Native warrior.

Included in the exhibit are images painted by Larry Smail on the upper part of the walls in the room. These images depict actual petroglyphs (rock carvings) discovered north of Kittanning near Parker, Armstrong County. The actual carvings are found along the Allegheny River and were believed to have been created by an Algonquian speaking people related to the Monongahela tribe. Most of the carvings were believed to have been carved between 1000 B.C. and 1500 A.D.

The exhibit houses an extensive collection of Native American artifacts donated to the Society by Bernard C. and Ferne Snyder. Snyder was born in Wayne Township, Armstrong County, and spent much of his life enjoying archeology as a hobby. He and his wife gathered the large collection of arrowheads and other items throughout Armstrong County.

Larry Smail's mural of the Allegheny River is painted on one wall. The river is shown from the upper regions of Armstrong County to its confluence with the Monongahela River where they form the Ohio River in present-day Pittsburgh. The tributaries of the Allegheny River, along with the name and locations of various historic Native American events/battles, are shown.

Several photos hang on the walls. One is a photo of two Eastern Warrior reenactors clothed in native attire and another is of a typical small wigwam used as a seasonal hunting abode.

The exhibit includes an older oil painting done by Esther Crum from Kittanning. It shows an Armstrong County scene which includes John Baker's Map of the Delaware Indian village at Kittanning.

SECOND-FLOOR EARLY ARMSTRONG COUNTY ROOM

The Early Armstrong County exhibit focuses on the early history of the county.

The exhibit highlights the most famous historical event that happened within the county boundaries. The story of the Battle of Kittanning is retold – the September 8, 1756 destruction of the Delaware Indian village at Kittanning by Colonel John Armstrong and his militiamen from Cumberland County. In January of 1757, Colonel Armstrong and his men were honored for their bravery when the City of Philadelphia had a medal struck commemorating the Battle of Kittanning. Several reproductions of the Kittanning Medals owned by the Society are on display.

On September 8, 1926, the Society and the Pennsylvania Historic Commission dedicated a stone marker with a bronze plaque that was placed along the riverbank in Kittanning. That ceremony marked the 170th anniversary of the battle. Pictures and articles about that day hang on the wall adjacent to a display case.

Another display case holds numerous books and documents related to the Battle of Kittanning and several items from and about that September 8, 1926 dedication day mentioned in the previous paragraph.

Biographical information on Colonel Armstrong and a written description and survey plan of his “Victory” lands that he was able to secure in the latter half of the 18th century hang on the walls in the exhibit. This large tract of land was located along the Allegheny River and included present-day Kittanning and surrounding properties. Several related land transfers hang on the wall adjacent to the Colonel Armstrong items noted above.

The room’s built-in display case contains several late 1700s land documents; the Kittanning Medals; several 1700s Native American artifacts believed to be associated with the Delaware tribe from the village of Kittanning; original copies of Robert W. Smith’s History of Armstrong County-1883, Armstrong County Pennsylvania Her People, Past and Present published in 1914 by J. H. Beers, Chicago, IL, and the Armstrong County Atlas of 1876. Also included is an original Plan of Lots of the Town of Kittanning which was printed by James Alexander in 1803. Several items associated with Colonel Daniel Brodhead are displayed, including his Revolutionary War depreciation certificate and a letter addressed to him that was written by George Washington.

Also on display are historical facts on the birth of the county, important historical dates and facts, and early maps of the county showing how the townships reorganized through the 19th century.

Various early deeds from the Plan of Lots of the Town of Kittanning hang on one wall and the survey map and 1804 land indenture for the Kittanning Manor, a large tract of land in present-day Manor Township, hang on another.

Located in the center of the room is a multi-sided, vertical wall display that contains numerous pictures and old documents from years past.

Books available for research are located on the table in the room and include Smith's History of Armstrong County-1883; Beer's Armstrong County Pennsylvania Her People, Past and Present; and a first edition of Pennsylvania, A History Volume II dated 1926 (Opened to Chapter XIX on Colonel Armstrong's Kittanning expedition). A small copy of John Baker's layout of the village of Kittanning is also placed on the table. Baker was held captive at the village for weeks but escaped and was later killed in the raid on Kittanning.

SECOND-FLOOR FRONT EXHIBIT ROOM AND HALLWAY

This display room contains unique and one-of-a-kind items from the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s.

Several military exhibits are located here. Numerous artifacts, uniforms, and memorabilia from World War I are displayed. This exhibit focuses on Company K, 112th Pennsylvania Regiment, 28th Infantry Division. Men from the local area served in this regiment and Judge J. Frank Graff, former President Judge of Armstrong County, was one of them. This regiment was part of the American Expeditionary Force that fought in France. Numerous artifacts, uniforms, and memorabilia from World War II are also on display. A roster of Kittanning soldiers that fought in this war hangs on one wall.

Men from Armstrong County also served in the Spanish-American War. Captain Austin Clark commanded Company G of the 16th Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, First Brigade, First Division, First Army Corps. Items related to this regiment are presented in a built-in display case.

Another display features the life and military career of Second Lieutenant Charles Hutchison. Charlie "Hutch" Hutchison was the son of Armstrong County Sheriff Thomas C. Hutchison and his wife, Dorothy. He was a 1960 graduate of Kittanning Senior High School where he excelled in both academics and athletics. In June of 1964, he graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point. In May of 1965, he died in military action in the Dominican Republic.

On the mantle above the fireplace, which is near the Hutchinson exhibit, are items that relate to the county's involvement in the War of 1812.

Items associated with Judge Jackson Boggs are shown. In November of 1874, Boggs was duly elected President Judge of the newly created Pennsylvania Thirty-third Judicial District composed of Armstrong County.

A unique clock is located on the mantle above one of the fireplaces. This fretwork clock was made by Armstrong County resident, B. Richard Lenk, in 1907.

Another early to mid-1800s dress that belonged to Susan Van Dyke Hindman is located near the fretwork clock.

An exhibit dedicated to local and community bands is included in this room. On display are pictures, stories, uniforms, and instruments from groups such as the Kittanning Firemen's Band, Walk Chalk Local Band, Kittanning Boys Band, Cowansville Band, Manorville Band, Kittanning City Band, Ford City Sokol Band, and the American Legion Post 122 Drum and Bugle Corp from Kittanning.

In the display case below the Arcade sign is an exhibit of medical and surgical equipment once owned by Doctors Robert G. and William J. Ralston. This collection represents a century of service in Armstrong County by two members of the Ralston family. Dr. Robert G. Ralston (1830-1918) practiced medicine in Cowansville from 1861 to 1913 and his son, Dr. William J. Ralston (1874-1960), practiced medicine primarily in the Slate Lick area beginning in 1902. Also in this display case are medical implements once owned by Dr. Eleanor Jean Hetrick Lawson. Dr. Lawson was a practicing physician in Kittanning from 1901 to 1928. Her office was in her residence at 213 North Jefferson Street.

A Windsor-style chair once owned by Dr. Morris Rambach sits near the exit into the rear display room. This was one of the waiting room chairs that was in his dental office that was located at 116 Market Street, Kittanning, near the former Montgomery Ward Store.

Also on display is optical equipment once owned by Dr. Albert E. Picard, who was a practicing optometrist in Kittanning for 35 years until his retirement in 1980.

Hanging on the wall above the medical display is a sign from the former Arcade store that was located on Market Street in Kittanning. In the 1920s, the Arcade, L. H. Nevins & Co., was advertised as Kittanning's Greatest Store.

Located near the center of the room are several display cases. Several items relating to the journalist Elizabeth Cochran Seaman (better known by her pen name Nellie Bly), born in Cochran's Mills, Armstrong County, are displayed in one. Another contains items associated with the 1967 dedication of the James V. Colonna band shell on North Jefferson Street in Kittanning. Models of a Pennsylvania Canal boat and the Crescent towboat are placed in another.

Second-Floor Landing/Hallway: At the top of the steps hang three framed charters of local organizations. Down the hallway on the left hang three portraits of the David Stewart family: David, his wife Caroline, and their daughter Anna. The Stewarts were former residents of Kittanning.

At the end of the hallway, near the entrance to the Native American Room, is a display case that contains items related to the former Kittanning Central School, including the contents from the school's time capsule.

SECOND-FLOOR REAR EXHIBIT ROOM

This exhibit room contains some rare and unique items from the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s.

On the far wall is an exhibition of old newspapers from the 1800s and portraits of two newspaper men from the early 1900s. The highlight of this group is the rare September 20, 1810 edition of the *Western Eagle* which was the first newspaper published in Kittanning. Other newspapers displayed include the *Columbian*, *Kittanning Gazette*, and the *Mentor*. Portraits of John T. Simpson and his son Roland hang on the wall as well. John T. Simpson operated the *Daily Leader-Times* from 1921 until his death in 1926. His son, Roland B. Simpson, continued as general manager of the newspaper until his death in 1930.

Housed in this room are several rare items associated with William Freame Johnston. Johnston and his wife, Mary Montieth, were former residents of Kittanning and Johnston was a former Governor of Pennsylvania. Johnston Avenue in Kittanning was named after him. Displayed adjacent to the roll top desk is the Johnston Bible that he presented to his wife in 1855. Hanging on the wall above the Bible is a framed letter from 1863, signed by Johnston, that contains significant content regarding the ongoing Civil War and the historic Emancipation Proclamation. A print of Governor Johnston hangs beside the framed letter.

The roll top desk was originally owned by Augustus and William Aye and was used in their office in Kittanning.

One display case, located opposite the entrance, contains numerous items related to the history of the Armstrong County Courthouse.

Another display case contains unique and rare items related to Gottlieb Burge. In the late 1800s, Burge bought, sold, and repaired carriages, buggies, and wagons at his shop on McKean Street in Kittanning. He was also an inventor, and prototypes for his patent applications are displayed here. A portrait of Burge hangs on the wall near the case.

A small case contains a plaid woolen blanket made at the Buffalo Woolen Mills located in Worthington and other items associated with this company.

Opposite of the Burge display is another case that contains items from and pictures of the McCain House from the past. The candle mold and small plate in the case are the only items possessed by the Society that belonged to the McConnell family, the first owners of the McCain House. Included in this exhibit is an antique quilt from the mid-1840s, made by women who lived in or around Kittanning, that may have been used by a member of the McCain family who once lived in this house.

This room houses a portrait of Barclay Nulton, who was an attorney and prominent citizen of Kittanning during the mid to late 1800s.

Located in other display cases and hanging on the walls are many other unique and one-of-a-kind items and pictures from years past.

SURROUNDING GROUNDS

Cornerstone and Bell: In August 2019, ninety-nine years after the official ceremony to lay the cornerstone of the former Kittanning Central School was held, the Society reset the cornerstone directly across the street on the museum property. The school was closed and demolished by the Armstrong School District due to the recent construction of the new Armstrong Junior/Senior High School in 2017. The Society secured the bell, 300 brick, and the cornerstone from the school district for historical purposes.

Society and museum volunteers decided to place the cornerstone on the front lawn of the museum so that the community could remember their former school building where so many memories were made. The cornerstone was secured on a foundation surrounded by the original brick from the school with the restored cast iron bell placed on top. The Society plans to ring the bell on special occasions.

Carriage House: Located just north of the museum is the Society's carriage house. This historic two-story building is the home of the Mildred Lankard-Thomas Genealogical Library, which was founded in 1973. The library has an outstanding collection of family, county, community, and church records used for genealogical research and is open for use by Society members and visitors from May through October.