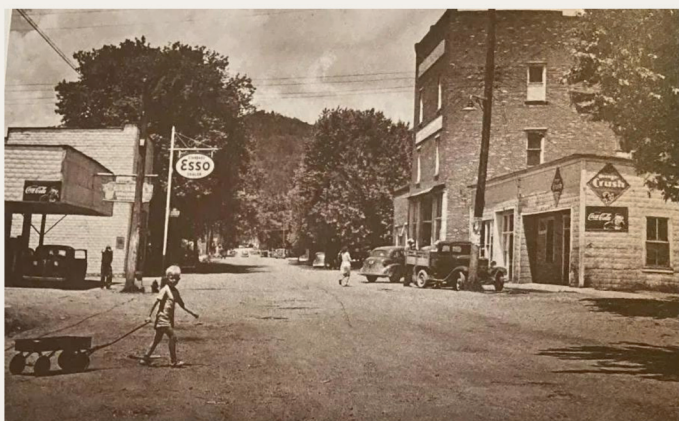


NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2024



Old Butler Day – a time to remember & celebrate “the town that wouldn’t drown!”

When we think of Old Butler Day, we may think of summer fun, but our research shows that December 1, 1954 was probably the chilly inaugural “Old Butler Day.” The time was set aside to celebrate and honor Butler, Tennessee, which was sacrificed to mitigate tremendous damage from flooding and to provide cheap electricity to this part of Appalachia. It would be the only incorporated town the TVA ever intentionally flooded.

As time has gone by the history is not always clear about this first gathering of people of Old Butler at Watauga Elementary School just six years after the opening of the Watauga Dam.

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What’s new at the Museum!

Museum of Butler, TN featured on
Ingle’s Open Road in July!

We were delighted to welcome Chris Bainbridge and Carson Fox as they explored the museum and learned more about Old Butler. The Ingles Open Road is broadcast to a million people each week on 11Alive (Atlanta), WATE 6 On Your Side (Knoxville), News13 (Asheville), 7News (Greenville/Spartanburg), and News Channel 11 & ABC Tri-Cities (Johnson City).

Scan the
QR code
to watch
the Butler
episode!



Old Butler Day - a time to remember & celebrate.

Visit the Museum of Butler, TN on Saturday, August 24th!

Unlike today's festivities, at this first observance, Rev. Ben Wood sang "Gathering at Old Butler" while F. P. Curtis gave a history of Old Butler in poetic form. Rev. Wood also delivered a devotional and Mr. Paul Cates gave a talk on Watauga Academy. After the program, those who remained and those that had left, came back together to enjoy a time of fellowship as they remembered their Old Butler.

By 1959 the Watauga Alumni Association was developed, and they hosted annual Watauga Academy reunions which also included giving an annual scholarship to the young people of Butler. The reunions were always held at the Butler Baptist Church with alumni having a covered dish luncheon after the service. Miss Selma Curtis, who taught music at Watauga Academy, and Professor Romulus Skaggs, who taught Greek at Watauga Academy, performed the old Watauga School song. The Alumni Association continued to meet (almost) annually at Butler Baptist Church with some type of lunch afterward.

Some 35 years ago Butler Ruritan members, Deana and Larry Shoun, had the idea to create a "homecoming" for Old Butler in addition to the Watauga Academy Reunion. The "family reunion" provided a way to reconnect with people who had lived in Old Butler and to raise money for the many community services provided by the Butler Ruritan. The 1989 Old Butler Day was held on Howard and Martha Courtner's property, located across the street from the Butler Baptist Church, where the current Butler Post Office stands today. It was full of games, music, food, a little train ride and lots of laughter. It was deemed a success with the help of many members of the Butler Ruritan and the Watauga Alumni Association.

In 1999, thanks to the donation of property by Selma Curtis, the Old Butler Day celebration moved to its current location of Babe Curtis Park - named in her honor - located at 123 Selma Curtis Road. The Butler and Watauga Heritage Museum, the Watauga Alumni Association and the Butler Ruritan continue to work together to celebrate and preserve the history of Old Butler and Watauga Academy. Those who attend Old Butler Day each year not only help keep the memory of Old Butler alive but also help provide valuable resources for the families who now call this small community home.



Visit us at the
Museum of Butler, TN!



COME & JOIN US FOR
OLD BUTLER DAYS
FRIDAY, AUGUST 23 6P-9P
AND
SATURDAY, AUGUST 24 9A-8P

Events:
FRIDAY
BUTLER PARK- CORNER OF HWY 67
AND PIERCETOWN ROAD

**Miss Old Butler Day Pageant,
Live Music, Rolling Smoke
BBQ!**

SATURDAY:
BABE CURTIS PARK
123 SELMA CURTIS ROAD

**Over 30 Vendors! Ring Toss, Face
Painting, Live Music, Axe Throwing,
Cotton Candy, Concessions, Raffle
Prizes, and so much more!!**

FREE ENTRY!

We look forward to seeing you on Saturday, August 24 from 9:00am until 8:00pm. Stop by the Stan Stout Store for cool treats, chat with our guides, and check out our gift shop!



In search of:
Museum ♥
Volunteers!



MUSEUMOFBUTLERTN.ORG

Remembering
Selma Y. "Babe" Curtis



The legacy of a local music teacher lives on.

When you take the turn into the park where the Museum of Butler stands, you will notice her name memorialized. A native of Old Butler, Miss Curtis taught music privately and through Watauga Academy. When she was faced with the choice of staying or leaving Old Butler in 1947, she sold property she had inherited and, using its proceeds, bought a house and moved it to a new location on higher ground. Sadly, in 1972 while she was away, burglars broke in, stealing two pianos and an organ before burning her home to the ground. She decided to move closer to her sister in Johnson City and, in 1987, donated 4.3 acres of her property and \$20,000 to the Watauga Alumni Association to create a place for families and children since they had lost their only park after the flooding of Old Butler. Visit her exhibit downstairs at the museum.

Museum of Butler, TN

123 Selma Curtis Road | Butler, TN 37640

website | MuseumofButlerTN.org

phone | 423-281-1113

facebook | @museumofbutlertn

Donations are tax exempt, as allowed by law.



Birdseye View of Butler, Tenn.



Museum of Butler, TN
PO Box 261
Butler, TN 37640

*Thank
you!*
