

# Wilson Community House (Operated/Owned by the Town Improvement Society a 501 c 3 nonprofit)

One of Buchanan's best known historic landmarks is the Wilson Warehouse. Completed in 1839 for John S. Wilson as a combined store, warehouse and private residence the structure is still in use today. The John S. Wilson Company was the chief shipper and receiver of goods during "Canal Days" when Buchanan acted as the western terminus of the James River & Kanawha Canal.



The Wilson Warehouse remained in the family for almost a century. Ownership of the Wilson Warehouse passed from John S. Wilson to his son, Charles L. Wilson and daughter, Anna L. Allen, then passed to her children Anna L. and Edwin W. Edwin purchased the house outright, renovated the large storeroom on the west side of the house and turned this room over to the Village Improvement Society for their use in 1927. The image to the left shows the 1855 Edward Beyer painting of the Town of Buchanan. This painting was owned by the Wilson family and is now owned by the Town Improvement Society who also own the Wilson Warehouse/Community House.

In 1936, Oscar Caperton Huffman, president of Continental Can Company purchased the Wilson Warehouse. After extensive renovations of the House under the direction of architect, Stanhope Johnson of Lynchburg, Mr. Huffman presented the building to the Village Improvement Society. On April 30, 1938. Members of the Village Improvement Society known today as the Town Improvement Society, and 300 guests gathered at the historic building for its dedication as the "Community House". Since that time, the Community House has been an important historic landmark and social center of the community. The image at the top shows the house immediately following restoration by the Huffman family and the image on the right shows Oscar Huffman, Lucy Beal Huffman and their son O.B. Huffman and son in law Ralph C. Smith at the dedication.





The historic brick structure features a center hall passage flanked by one large room on the west side and two equal sized rooms on the east side. The building has two front doors because the left side was used as the Wilson's business and the other was used as the Wilson's private residence. The top floor retains the original elevator system used to hoist cargo for storage. All of the rooms retain their original woodwork, floors, fireplaces and mantels. Of special note are the original carpenter locks and brass hardware on the doors throughout the house. In the front hall you can see the mechanics for the original doorbell as well as the winding staircase making its way up three flights, all of these details exemplify the craftsmanship of the period.

The image above shows the Wilson Warehouse/Community House as it looks today. This early 1800's Canal Era landmark is one of the four stopping points in Buchanan which are included on the [Hunter's Raid Trail](#).

Since 1938 to help with maintenance of this important landmark, the Buchanan Town; Improvement Society has rented the Wilson Warehouse/Community House for wedding receptions, anniversary parties, family reunions, and public meetings.

The house is also open on the second Sunday of each month for dinner from 12 noon until 2pm as part of the Second Sunday Dinner series.

To find out about renting this historic home for your celebration, to schedule a tour, or, to purchase a Cook Book, please call the Town Improvement Society at (540) 510 - 0780 or (540) 580 - 8944.