

EXPLORING THE PAST

5. Become Tootsy and visit the Mifflinburg Buggy Museum

Helen Elizabeth Smith Biggs was the third child (of five) of the Reverend Samuel Smith and his wife, Helen Lovina Zeibach Smith. Helen Elizabeth was known to her family as “Tootsy”. We can get a sense of what Tootsy and her sister, Anna Catherine, were like through visiting the Heiss House and trying your hand at chores or entertaining guests with tea.

The Mifflinburg Buggy Museum preserves the family home, the original Coach Works and the Repository (showroom) of the Heiss family. William Heiss and his wife, Anna Catherine Smith Heiss lived in the home in the late 19th and early 20th century. While William was a buggy maker, furniture maker, beekeeper, and salesman, Anna worked with him as a seamstress; as well as a midwife. Both William and Anna were involved with their church.

Most women of the late 19th century followed a loose schedule for their chores. Monday was laundry day, Tuesday was ironing day, Wednesday was bread baking day, Thursday and Friday were house cleaning days and then Saturday was for visiting, quilting bees. Sundays were for Church and absolutely necessary chores. Women made three meals a day, although the evening meal might be lighter.

The late 19th century was also known as the Progressive Era, there were many inventions that made household chores and motherhood easier. On your own, you can explore some of the inventions and innovations of the Progressive Era.

While visiting the Buggy Museum you can choose to 1) tour the Heiss home and learn about how the average 19th century family lived; 2) get dressed up in reproduction clothing and hold a tea party; and/or 3) try your hand at 19th century chores: laundry, ironing, and sewing.