Butler Area Public Library
Obituary and Newspaper Database Information

About the Database
This Index is a joint venture between the Genealogy Department of the Butler Area Public Library and The Computer Science Department at Slippery Rock University. Since The 1980s, Library volunteers have read microfilmed newspapers, extracted the names and dates of published obituaries, and created a paper index that grew to over 100,000 entries. Due to the difficulty of managing such a large paper index, volunteers began transferring the information onto a computerized database. Recognizing the potential of such a genealogical treasure, the Library approached Slippery Rock University about preparing a more dynamic format that would be accessible online. Under the guidance of faculty, computer science students accepted the challenge and succeeded in producing a database of this valuable information.

What the Database Contains
The Database indexes more than 383,500 articles published in Butler County newspapers from 1818-2012. More than 1,000 rolls of microfilm for 72 newspaper titles have been extracted and are included in this Index. This is the largest collection of newspapers that were published in Butler County. While this Index was originally designed to exclusively record obituaries, the scope has been broadened to include other events of genealogical importance--births, marriages, divorces, court appearances, engagements, anniversaries, milestone birthdays, etc.

What is NOT In the Database
There are some gaps in the Online Database. There are a number of years from the 1800s when few Butler County newspapers survived. Not all articles related to marriages, births, divorces, etc. are yet included. The Butler Area Public Library is in the process of extracting articles from newspapers added to its constantly growing collection. Entries are added to the Database every week.

Value of Obituaries
Obituaries may contain a wealth of genealogical information. For some of our ancestors, obituaries may be the only extant records devoted to them. This is particularly true for those who died during the period of time when death certificates were not required by Pennsylvania law.
Obituaries vary greatly in the amount of information included. Some have only the briefest of details such as names, locations, and dates of death. Others, particularly in the twentieth century, provide three generations of relationships, places and dates of birth, spouses' names and dates of marriage, biographical sketches, religious affiliations, survivor's names and addresses, names of undertakers, and places of burial. Regardless of their length, obituaries provide information and clues for further research.