



Wheeler Talk, Mini Episode 1, Brothers of the Itchy Whiskers

Transcript:

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Allison

[ALLISON] Welcome to Wheeler Talk's Mini Series. I'm your host, Allison, the local history librarian. Wheeler Talk's Mini Series brings you short snippets pertaining to artifacts you can find in Wheeler's own collection. Let's jump right into it. Upon entering Wheeler, you'll notice six locked cases. These glass cases contain Wheeler's rarest and most precious items. In one of these locked cases, there's a medium sized button - small enough that you might not even notice that upon first glance. The button is black with yellow letters which say "Brothers of the Itchy Whiskers." So what's this button all about? Most of you probably know of the classic film The Amityville Horror. Some of you may even know that there's a house in Ocean County that was used to film the iconic window. But what you may not know is that there's another location in Ocean County where parts of this movie were filmed. That's right. Part of The Amityville Horror was filmed right here at the Ocean County Library, specifically the Bishop Building. The Bishop Memorial Library was built in 1941. It was funded by the estate of writer and adventurer Nathaniel Holmes Bishop. The Bishop Library originally housed non-circulating local history and genealogy collections. In 2006, these items were relocated to the Hugh B. Wheeler Room. The Bishop Building is a gorgeous brick structure with arching windows situated directly beside the main library building in Toms River. Filled with beautiful wooden bookcases and framed historical pictures, Bishop takes you back in time, which is likely why the building appealed to the film crew. The Ocean County Library is in possession of several artifacts from the filming, including photos of James Brolin in character. But this button always gets the most attention because it's such an obscure object. Many people ask, "What does Brothers of the Itchy Whiskers mean?" And the answer is, it doesn't mean anything. As you can imagine, people frequently tried to crash the filming set. Now, the crew could have made up passes that clearly labeled who was allowed on set and who wasn't. But something like that would have been too easy to reproduce. I'm sure you can see where I'm going with this. The clever solution was to create these buttons with a saying that would have been hard for locals to understand and thus recreate. Anyone who was allowed on set had to be wearing one of these buttons. The film crew donated two of these buttons to the Ocean County Library, and you don't need a special secret button to come view them. Just stop in Wheeler next time you're here. Are you an Amityville Horror buff? The Ocean County Library is hosting an event on October 26th from 1 to 4 p.m., called 45 Years of Amityville. This event will take place at the Toms River Branch, and will include a screening of the classic film, as well as a display of Amityville artifacts from the library's archives. Registration is required for this event. Thank you for listening to Wheeler Talk's Mini Series. See you next time for another blast from the past.