

*Nanticoke Valley Historical Society  
of Maine New York*



*Janet W. Bowers Museum*

*13 Nanticoke Road, Maine, NY*

*The Dayton-Kenyon-McGregor House ca. 1850*



ca. 1900



**Nanticoke Valley Historical Society P.O. Box 75 Maine, NY 13802**

For up-to-date news and information, please visit our website:  
[nanticokevalleyhistoricalsociety.com](http://nanticokevalleyhistoricalsociety.com) and our Facebook page

***Suggested Donation: \$5.00***

*“It has been said that, at its best, preservation engages the past in a conversation with the present over a mutual concern for the future.”*

William J. Murtagh, first Keeper of the National Register for Historic Places



The first settlers arrived in this area around 1793. The land was offered for sale by the Boston Purchase Company of Massachusetts. The town of Maine was organized in 1848 and by then the population had grown to 1,800 people. The area was an old growth forest and the first industries were lumber and leather. The town served the farms which occupied the region after the forests were cut down. The farms were originally suited to growing grains and our Pitcher's Grist Mills (ca. 1830) ground the local grain until closed in 1955. The soil was not fertile and after about 40 years many of the farms converted to dairy farms with local creameries serving the farmers.

“This 1905 image shows George L. Kenyon, a farmer and local milkman, posing with his horse and wagon in front of his home near Bowers' Corners. Kenyon bought this farm and house from Albert B. Dayton in January 1904. The McGregor family bought the house and since 1976 it has been home to the Nanticoke Valley Historical Society museum.” (Susan Lisk)

## First Floor Exhibit “The Men’s Story”



“This display covers the history of the Nanticoke Valley from its earliest settlements in 1790 into the early 1900s. The exhibit also features doctors, lumbermen, farmers, architects, and various other tradesmen, plus a section focusing on leisure pursuits.” (Sue Lisk)

When the community heard that the historical society planned to establish a museum they responded with generous donations of local artifacts from their families. Everything you see here belonged to families that lived in the Nanticoke Valley. The Nanticoke Valley stretches from the towns of Glen Aubrey and Nanticoke south to Union Center. The creek running through it was named after the Nanticoke Indian tribe that once lived in this region.

## Former 1870 Victorian Parlor



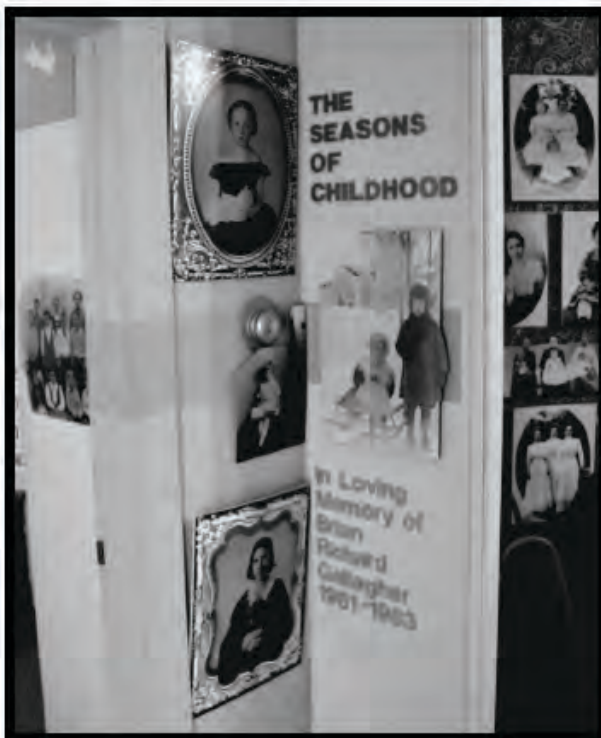
In 1870 fire destroyed part of the original 1850 house. Albert B. and Elvira Dayton changed the home by adding an ell on the south side. This wing included a new room which formed the parlor area, and a second floor which today houses our library. In 2014, a frozen pipe burst causing extensive damage to the parlor and its contents. Since repaired, this area now houses our “Maine Space Art Gallery” and hopefully in the future it will again be home to a restored 1920 living room.

Also on the first floor is found a central gallery used for rotating exhibits. To the west of that room is the meeting room dedicated to Clarence F. Stratton, an early president of NVHS, a historian and artist. The meeting room occupies what was originally a summer kitchen and a space to house a buggy. This room was added in May 1985 for multiple purposes, including the display over a dozen of Mr. Stratton's paintings.

## The Women's Story



“Found on the second floor of the museum, this display includes artifacts pertaining to women's work inside and outside the home and also covers family and social life in the Nanticoke Valley.” (Susan Lisk)



## The Children's Story

Upstairs a labyrinth leads you through “The Seasons of Childhood”. It is filled with all of the things that children encountered during the middle of the nineteenth century.

## 13 Nanticoke Road

### Dayton, Kenyon, McGregor House

"This indenture made the 13th day of February the year of our Lord one thousand and seven hundred and ninety-two between Isaac Curtis of Stockbridge in the County of Berkshire in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts of the 1st part and Benjamin Norton of Stockbridge aforesaid of the 2nd part for a sum of 95 pounds and 6 shillings" begins the history of the land and house now owned by the Nanticoke Valley Historical Society.

Benjamin Norton was the first of the pioneers to settle in what is now the Town of Maine, in 1792. Travel in those days was usually done during the winter along the frozen rivers and creeks. Oxen pulled large sleds laden with family household articles.

Benjamin Norton sold the Museum site to his son Amasa in 1795. Then on May 1st, 1807, Amasa Norton sold the property to Ephraime Hutchinson and Benjamin Simonds for \$1,165. Interestingly, on May 13th, 13 days after Amasa sold the property to the two Norwich men, the sheriff seized the land, along with lands owned by Elisha Bradley, to pay debts of these two men totaling \$393.75. The property in turn was sold to another Norwich man, George Saxon, in the amount of \$400.

Thompson Lewis, a sea captain from Connecticut, bought the parcel of land in January, 1813 for \$800. Lewis moved his family to Maine and became a farmer. He was a charter member of the Maine Baptist Church in 1835 and Justice of the Peace for 13 years in the village.

On the 1st of April, 1854, Albert B. Dayton purchased the land and house for \$3500. In 1870 a fire ravaged the Museum House and extensive renovation occurred. The roof was raised and an ell was built on the south side to create a Victorian house. Albert and wife Elvira were members of Maine

Congregational Church. In April 1895, the couple celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in the house.

After the death of Elvira, Dayton sold the house to George L. Kenyon, a farmer, in January 1904 for \$2650.

The house changed hands several times from 1920 to 1937, when Venley McGregor and his wife Clara bought the property. The McGregors ran a chicken and egg farm for many years. A son of Venley, Dane McGregor, and his wife Ruth lived in the house for several years, but otherwise it was rented to tenants.

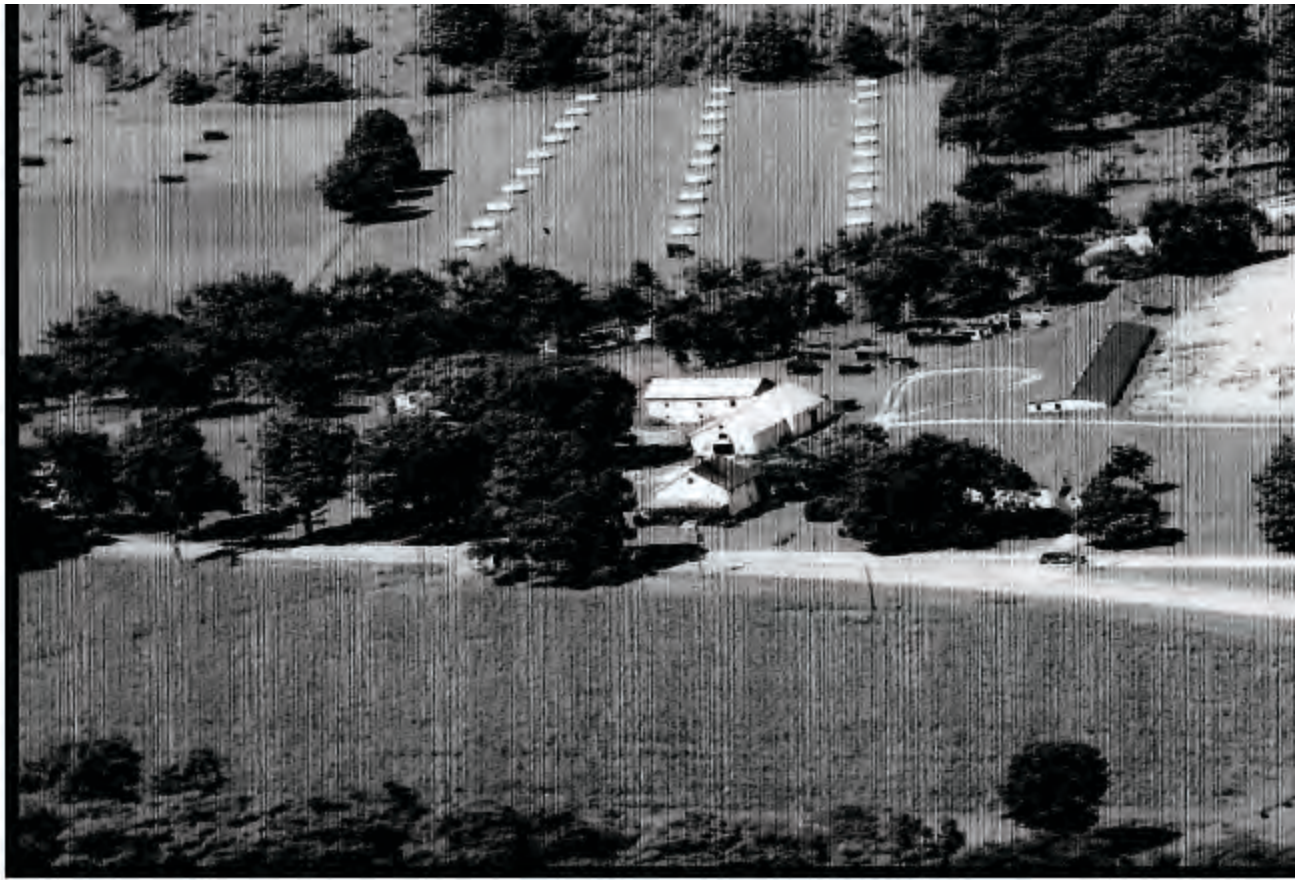
On April 29, 1976, the property was deeded to the Nanticoke Valley Historical Society. The Society made plans to renovate the house to fulfill the needs of the community as a museum. There will be displays of historical artifacts of the Nanticoke area. Portions of the house will be furnished in the period of 1870 to demonstrate the home and life-style of a prosperous rural family.

*The story on pages 6 and 7 was taken from a December 1978 pamphlet introducing NVHS.*

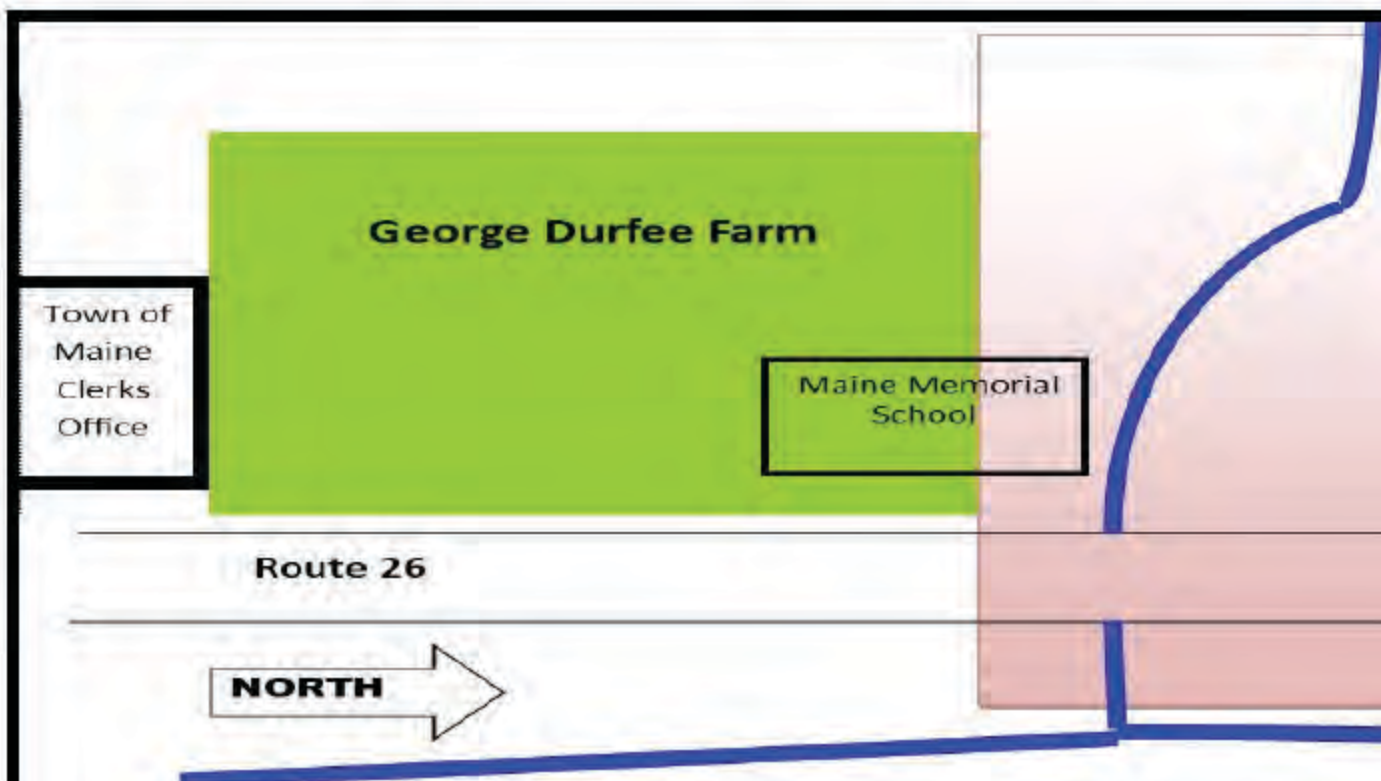


This 3-seater outhouse (ca. 1850) was donated by the Scanlon family. It is an original structure moved from the Scanlon residence just south of the town.





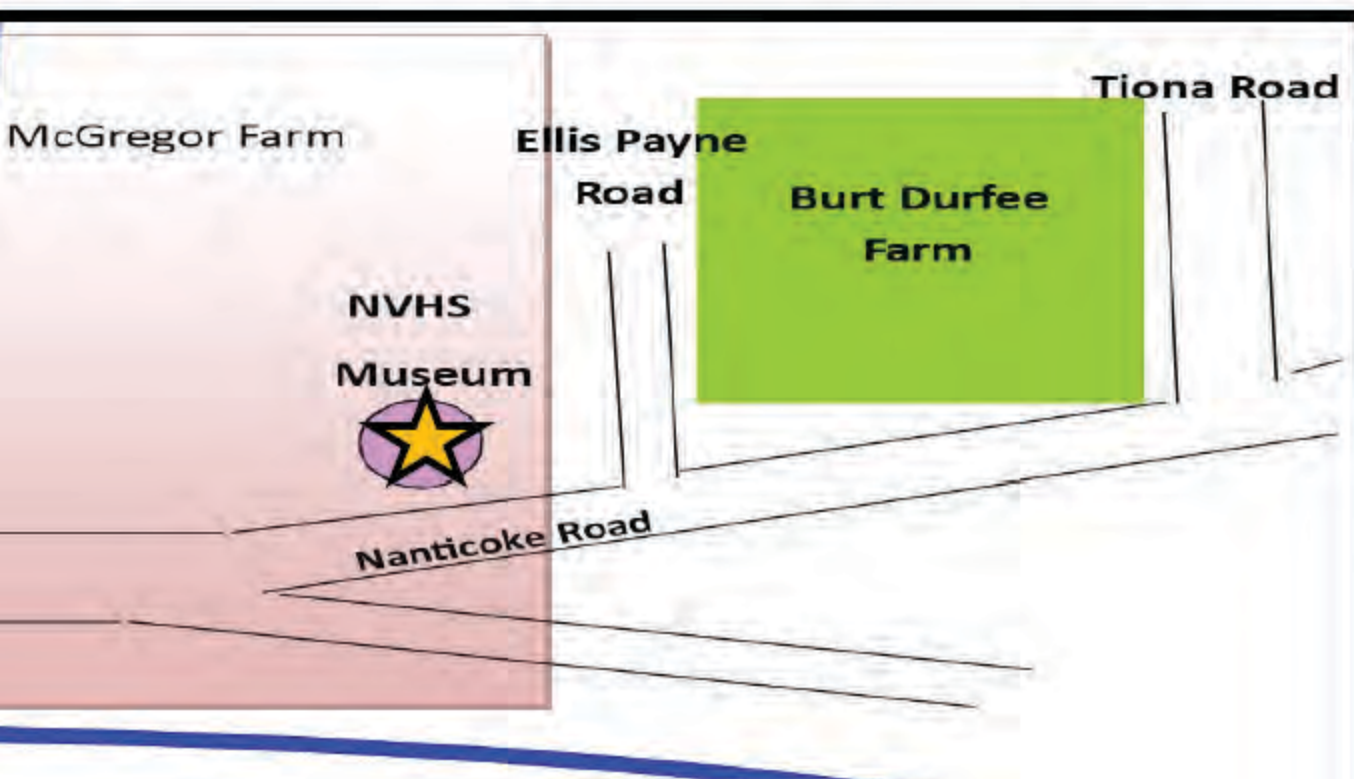
The photograph above was taken around 1970. At that time, the McGregor of chicken coops on which today is located the town park. The NVE location of the Town of Maine Highway Department. The intersecti







...r Poultry farm occupied almost the entire area. To the upper left are rows  
...HS museum is indicated by a (star) and just west of it is the current  
...ion of Nanticoke Road and Route 26 is near the center of the photo.



**Nanticoke Valley Historical Society** “A meeting was held at the home of Mrs. Gloria Oliver on October 21, 1969, to discuss the formation of an Historical Society primarily concerned with local history. There were eighteen present including Mrs. Marjory B. Hinman, President and Richard Haberlen, History Curator at Roberson Center. A second meeting was held at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Emerson Comstock on November 18, 1969, at which twenty-one were present. A “Steering” Committee was appointed to determine the time and place of meetings and nominations for temporary officers. The next meeting was held in the J. Ralph Ingalls School with sixteen present. Temporary officers were elected: Mrs. Burton Oliver, Chairman; Elton Parr, Vice Chairman, and Mrs. David Lasing, Secretary-Treasurer. These three, together with Mrs. Gordon Woodward, Dr. Clement Bowers, Robert Adams, Mrs. Rodger Gallager, Mrs. Myrle Bauer and Clarence Stratton were to act as a Board of Directors. Paul Gunsalus was appointed chairman of a By-Law's Committee and was subsequently added to the Board. Regular meetings were held on the third Tuesday of each month with an average attendance of 15-20. At the meeting on February 17, 1970, four members of the fire department attended and suggested a community celebration to recognize the 125th Anniversary of the formation of the Town of Maine. At the April 1970 meeting a set of By-Law's was adopted which provided, among other things, that the name of the organization would be the Nanticoke Valley Historical Society and that its aim was to collect and preserve the history of the Nanticoke Valley and its environs. The year ended in June with a picnic at the Gunsalus home with an attendance of approximately 80, including wives and members of the Town Board, Planning Board and Zoning Board. The second year started off with an average attendance of 25-40. Meetings were held at the J. Ralph Ingalls School until December when a supper was held at the Federated Church. Subsequently the meeting place was changed to the Maine Memorial school where they were held for many years. *(Continued on page 13)*

## REMEMBERING JAN BOWERS

January 9, 1935—May 29, 2004

“During the Nanticoke Valley Historical Society’s final meeting of 2015, the organization’s body of members voted to name its original museum site, the “Janet W. Bowers Museum.” Janet Bowers is being honored, in part, for her role as the organization’s first curator. It was she who consulted with a group of professionals to install the museum’s original displays, some as they remain to date.



**Janet autographing her cookbook in 1994**

Jan was born in Maine, NY in 1935 to Dr. and Mrs. Clement Bowers and she grew up in their family home at Bowers Corner. Jan’s affiliation with the historical society and its museum started when she visited the hamlet of Maine during its 125th anniversary celebration in 1973. At that time, she discovered that Nanticoke Valley’s fledgling Historical Society had corroborated with the Town of Maine’s local government, churches, service organizations and much of its population to relive the Hamlet’s rural past during a weekend festival held in May that year. It was estimated that over 10,000 people celebrated the Town’s history during the event, and Jan Bowers was delighted that Maine successfully honored its past with so much community spirit and cooperation. Partly because of her personal interest in history and her desire to contribute to the formation of a historical society, Jan moved to Maine, NY and began investing her efforts to help the organization succeed.”

## Celebrating the Arts



*Continued from page 10: Nanticoke Valley Historical Society*

The June meeting was a picnic held at the Gunsalus home with the Maine Community Band as guests. Approximately 80 attended. The Band provided a concert after dinner. During this period considerable planning was done on a proposed community celebration recognizing the 125th anniversary of the town. The Town Board passed a resolution setting the Memorial Day weekend in 1973 as the time of such celebration and designating the Historical Society as the agent for planning and carrying out such celebration. In 1972 our average attendance was 35 and many interesting programs were presented. In view of our involvement with the celebration it was deemed advisable to incorporate the Society. After much work with our lawyer, Stuart Pearis, an application was made to the Board of Regents for a charter and new By-Laws were adopted to conform with the Regent's requirement. At the **January 1973** meeting this charter was presented and signed. “



#### **HISTORICAL SOCIETY SIGNING CHARTER**

*(Left to Right) Elton Parr, Marion  
Gallager, Shirley Woodward, Paul  
Gunsalus, Chester Carlson, Gloria  
Oliver, Clarence Stratton, Lillian  
Ames, Eleanor Swan, Peg Parr.*



This is an 1866 map showing the town of Maine. Notice that both Lewis Street and McGregor Avenue have yet to be constructed. To the north is the location of Bowers Corners. The major north/south road is Nanticoke Road and at Tiona Road you can turn right (east) and cross Nanticoke Creek. Where Tiona Road meets Nanticoke Road was the home of G.S. Bowers, constructed around 1835 and totally destroyed by fire in 1873. The family rebuilt the house and you can still view this home today, located just a few hundred feet north of the museum.



### **Publications written by NVHS authors and Town Historians**

- I. **Shirley L. Woodward**, Town Historian wrote *A Short History of Maine, New York* (self-published, 1973).
- II. **Janet Whitney Bowers**, Curator Nanticoke Valley Historical Society wrote *Cooking up the Creek: Recipes from a Rural New York Valley, Maine, NY* (Bowers' Corners Press, 1994).
- III. **Ann Page Lewis**, Town Historian wrote for the Historical Society *THEN AND NOW: A Pictorial History of the Town of Maine, New York* (May 1998 160 Pages, ASIN: B0006R3UCC).
- IV. **Nancy Grey Osterud**, Historian wrote *Bonds of Community: The Lives of Farm Women in Nineteenth-Century New York*. (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 1991. ISBN-10: 0801497981).
- V. **Nancy Grey Osterud** Historian wrote *Putting the Barn Before the House Women and Family Farming in Early Twentieth-Century New York* (Cornell University Press, 2012, ISBN 10: 0801450284).
- VI. **Susan H. Lisk**, Curator Historical Society wrote *Maine and the Nanticoke Valley* (Arcadia Publishing 2012, 128 pages, ISBN 9780738576862).
- VII. **Gordon Gottlieb** and **Phil Childs**, Editors, published *Clarence F. Stratton: Artist and Historian, Town of Maine NY* (2018).



Painted by Scott Yurko (2020)

