

Nanticoke Valley Historical Society

2024 Newsletter # 2 May edited by Phil Childs

www.nanticokevalleyhistoricalsociety.com

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CO-PRESIDENTS		Joanne Weir & Gordie Gottlieb
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Glen Aubrey Baptist Church

From the Co-Presidents:



Co-Presidents **Gordie Gottlieb**
and **Joanne Weir**

Happy May! Spring is the special time in upstate New York when we appreciate the signs of rebirth after a long, cold winter. This is especially true in Maine this year where we have seen a total transformation of the J. Ralph Ingalls building thanks to an amazing group of volunteers headed up by our Trustee Bill Austin. We expect to host more activities at J Ralph this summer and hope you'll be able to stop in to see the changes for yourself. On April 27 we invited members and the community to our "Spring Clean-Up Day" and were pleased to have an enthusiastic group help us inside and out at the museum and Schoolhouse No. 4. Thanks to Phil Childs, Gordie Gottlieb, Kerin Flannery, Sandy Rozek and Carla Sullivan for heading up this effort.

What's ahead and how you can get involved:

- **School tours - guides needed!** Ask any student who attended elementary school at Maine-Endwell and they're certain to fondly recall churning butter, push-mowing the lawn, and playing games at the historical society during a school tour. These tours offer a great, hands-on way of showing youngsters how their grandparents and great-grandparents grew up. We are in need of guides (docents) to help with the school tours. Training is provided and you'll have a "front row seat" to experience the kids' exposure to the past. If you or someone you know are willing to help out, please contact Sandy Rozek at 607-862-9480.
- Our annual **Memorial Day BBQ will be held on Monday, May 27** from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM, following the town's parade. This event, coordinated by our Trustees Carla Sullivan and Sandy Rozek, features food by *Smokey Legend BBQ*, a bake sale, a basket raffle and more! Please come and invite your friends and family. We are in need of items/baskets for the raffle and baked goods for the sale. If you can help, please contact Carla at 607-862-5385.
- Watch for details on our **Concert Series at J Ralph Ingalls** this summer on Monday evenings **June 24, July 29** and **August 26**. Bring a lawn chair, your friends and family, and enjoy a relaxing evening of live music and good company.
- **Member Picnic on Monday, July 15** at the Janet W. Bowers Museum. Come and enjoy a pot-luck style dinner and music on the lawn. More details will be sent by email and will be posted on our website as the date nears. 5 PM start time.

We would like to shout out thanks to our Trustee Christine Clifton-Kendall for heading up the newly-formed **Greenspace Committee**. More information pertaining to the committee's goals and upcoming events is contained in the newsletter.

We are thankful for the enthusiastic board we have in place and we especially value you, our devoted members. Please, if you have not already renewed your 2024 membership, take a moment to do it now. Your support is what enables us to continue and expand our programming to preserve the history of the Nanticoke Valley.

Thank you!
Joanne and Gordie

Curator's Report:

In March a remarkable crew got together to make repairs and paint the back meeting room at the museum. Special thanks to Linda and Bill Austin, Sue and Gordie Gottlieb, Linda Hansen, Dixie and Carl Kucharski, Lynn Ross, Sandy Rozek and Ken Weir. The Stratton paintings will be re-hung in the room in time for our open Sunday hours this summer.

The 1910 Living Room on the first floor of the museum is nearly complete. We are planning a few minor changes, but feel that we have depicted the vintage style for visitors to view. The piano was brought over from J Ralph Ingalls and will be used as entertainment during the upcoming school tours.

Joanne Weir, Curator

Growing up in the Town of Maine by Sylvia Ward



Days spent in the winter of my life, I realize I can never go home again. But I do have the luxury of going back into the recess of my mind, to experience again my wonderful memories growing up in our small town. Growing up in our little town back in the 1950's reassured us of adventure and surprises around every corner. TV's just came upon the scene, no smart phones, and indulging in a movie theater was a rare treat.

Our gang growing up consisted of three boys and myself. We did not do "girl things" because I was outnumbered. Building forts, treehouses, wading and swimming in the Nanticoke Creek amused our long, hot, fun summers. It was a standing rule that when darkness descended, we would go into the safety of our homes. Another long summer day of fun was done.

One day Chuckie, Lynn and Johnnie wanted to know if I wanted to go on an adventure with them. Something different to do on this one summer day. They said it would take all day and be sure to pack a lunch. With much eagerness, I was in. It was a perfect day to discover something new and venture across Route 26 where Maine Memorial and the Town Park are now. So before there was Maine Memorial School, there was an open field owned by a local farm family, the Durfees. Mrs. Durfee was a school teacher, but getting on in years. She was quick to come out and shoot her rifle in mid-air if she saw you step foot on her property! Since I had befriended Mrs. Durfee, she didn't mind us kids walking through her property so we were the lucky ones. The McGregor brothers owned a huge chicken farm up the road, and in the "grove" (now the Town Park area) there were some chicken coops. As we cut through Mrs. Durfee's field and then in between the many large A-frame chicken coops (that resembled large tents), we headed over to the Nanticoke tributary and I came to the full realization that this was the furthest I had ever ventured in my neighborhood.

I kept thinking I might hear my Ukrainian grandmother calling my name "Zoysha", as I walked further and further away from home. I soon forgot about that cloak of protection that always seemed to be just around the corner. The water was low enough so we could wade across it and up the steep bank to the other side. There was a slightly beaten path into the woods. I grabbed a walking stick, and as we walked along, Chuckie said "wait until you see this place, you're not going to believe it!" So on we trekked, and it seemed to take forever. We were all set to make an afternoon of it, on this beautiful sunny day.

Eventually we came to a clearing and to my shocked eyes was a delightful country cottage. I found out later that it belonged to Dr. Clement Bowers. At that point in my life I had no idea who he was, but realized many years later that he was a renowned specialist in plant breeding. He was known for hybridization among other lengthy accomplishments. (His home still stands at Bowers' Corners.) We were happy to find the door to the cottage slightly ajar. There were no adults around to tell us that we couldn't go in...so with much trepidation, we gingerly slipped through the door. The first thing we noticed was that it was in a little disarray. I found a broom in the corner and handed it to one of the boys to start sweeping. I first noticed a beautifully carved ornate dresser, with teardrop pulls. If my memory serves me I believe they were green, and I stopped to touch them as my eyes gazed upon their beauty. Was this the beginning of my deep love for antiques? Perhaps.

(continued next page)

Growing up in the Town of Maine (continued)

By Sylvia Ward

I remember a door off to the side of the stone fireplace, which led to a courtyard. As we entered the courtyard on this warm summer day, there were remnants of flowers and shrubs. This whole experience reminded me of “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs,” a movie I recently saw with my cousins in a movie theater—a rare treat. As I pretended I was Snow White, surely I would not dare share my fantasy with my playmates. I might get a good laugh out of them and besides, I would not want the chore of naming those three boys. Who would entertain the name “Dopey” anyway? Well with only a crew of three dwarfs, we managed to tidy it up before lunch.

We decided to go to the creek bank to eat our bag lunches. Another surprise awaited us as we noticed the stream had flowed over huge smooth slate slabs. Lunches were immediately abandoned as we **had** to go into those waters. There was just enough algae on the rocks to make it nice and slippery. So who cares about a growling stomach when there was so much slipping and sliding going on, with four kids squealing with delight as they played in the summer sun so long ago. Well finally we ate our lunch, which never tasted better as we listened to the trickle of a waterfall nearby. It was magical as birds flew over and the quiet of this spot, with Route 26 traffic far enough away to provide a sanctuary of peace.

After lunch we decided we had time to go upstream to do more exploring. And another surprise awaited us, as we gazed on the side hill... could that be an actual cave? To complete that picture, I’m sure our little minds and wide eyes imagined a bear in there. It did not take long to climb up to the entrance and gingerly enter that dark cave. At the time it was huge to my inquisitive eyes, only years later my adult eyes could see the reality of its smallness. I had heard that Native American arrowheads were found there by some lucky souls, after we were there.

I had only ventured back to this area where we found the cottage and cave that one time as a kid, but the magic of that memory has remained forever. Through the years it quickly became the “party spot” for the local teens. I remember going there in my adult years and only the roof remained of that sweet little country cottage. Remnants of it are still there today. Although many things have changed, my grandkids still go to this area to explore and swim. I know it’s different now and as hard as I can, I try to explain how it used to be but I’m also grateful that it still remains a magical place for the next generations to create their own memories. I’m so thankful that I had these carefree days as a kid growing up and exploring in the Town of Maine.



Sylvia Ward 2024

Sylvia Ward

Ketchumville Branch of Nanticoke Creek



Joseph Q. Daily 2019

Ketchumville Branch of Nanticoke Creek



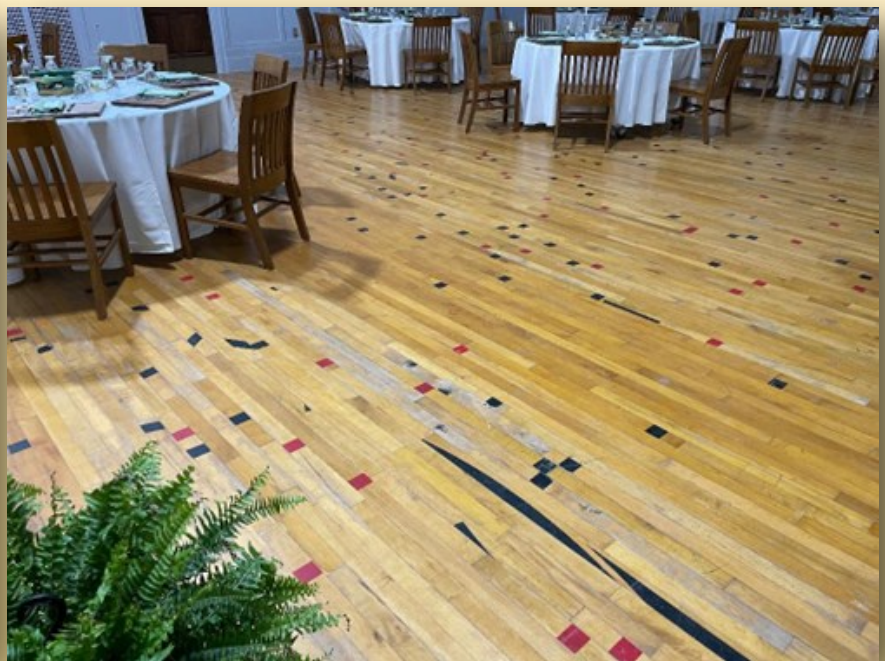
Lesley Stokes, Sylvia's daughter took this photo of the cave. It is located on the south side of the Ketchumville Branch of Nanticoke creek. It is close to the Bowers cabin. The painting above done by Joseph Q. Daily during our Plein Air Paint out in September 2019. This location is below the Bowers cabin. It was used by Bob Bradley P.E. educator at Maine Endwell to teach swimming. If you wish to walk along the creek go to the town park tennis courts and start heading west. It is a short walk!

What do you remember ? “Everything” – they say – “saw it all first hand.”

Of course they don’t. Someday they’ll see it all in bits and pieces, but as in all old puzzles, some pieces are always missing. The stories of a century, the tales of a town – the memories of the many, the fantasies of the few – the diaries of the dreamers – that’s what makes it history. What’s forgotten takes lifetimes to retrieve along with what we’ve painted, sung, photographed, written and shared. Yes, children, you will remember , but only that you were told the adventures, the joy, the sad times, the funny mishaps, mistakes and victories– sometimes over and over again until you don’t want to hear them anymore.

Then, there is a quiet time, a planning time, a progressive or a yearning time. Eager to move forward , we learn to make perfect once again what is old and worn. Dismay over what has been damaged by time and misuse gives birth to creative minds and hands working miracles – unforeseen vision into fixing what seemed impossible. This is now our story to tell as we watch our J. Ralph Ingalls (Maine Elementary) come back to life before our eyes. A flooded injured gymnasium floor needed to be used again and the dreamers jumped into action (that’s what they do).

Thank you for the vision of those in Endwell who carefully put away all the pieces of a whole gymnasium floor as progress brought down Hooper School. “Of course we can,” said Mike McKilligan, who saw nothing as impossible (well, maybe not in one lifetime, but history marches on). As he routed out all the tongue and groove edges clogged with multiple years of refinishing in that other old school, board by board a new floor appeared (dream team helpers, you needed to autograph those boards, or at least have kept a tally of how many pieces passed through your hands). Random designs took form as the boards found their places on the floor. After all, a basketball court is decorated for the game with its own kind of art, never to be replicated as random boards are placed and scattered stripes and squares of color dance their way around the room. We all know that some day in the future it will become “necessary” to sand and reseal this unique floor. But thanks to the invention of the camera (history at its greatest) we will not be allowed to make this era one of the puzzle’s missing pieces – the piece that tells the story of the confetti floor made for celebration , another milestone for our wonderful historic landmark . Thank you to all who made this possible and to all who will keep this story alive! Sandy Rozek



Photos are from the J. Ralph Ingalls “new” gym floor (Hooper School was the original location of this floor—Mike McKilligan purchased it to replace the one in Ingalls which was destroyed by the previous owner’s neglect!



The Supervisor
The Town of Maine, NY

Proclamation

Whereas: The Nanticoke Valley Historical Society has been a part of the Town of Maine since its organization in 1969 and it wishes to celebrate Arbor Day 2024.

Whereas: Arbor Day is now observed throughout the nation and the world, and trees can be a solution to combating climate change by reducing the erosion of our precious topsoil by wind and water, cutting heating and cooling costs, moderating the temperature, cleaning the air, producing life-giving oxygen, and providing habitat for wildlife, and

Whereas: trees are a renewable resource giving us paper, wood for our homes, fuel for our fires, and countless other wood products, and trees in our city increase property values, enhance the economic vitality of business areas, and beautify our community, and trees — wherever they are planted — are a source of joy and spiritual renewal.

Now, Therefore: I, James Tobos Supervisor of the Town of Maine New York do hereby proclaim April 26, 2024 as Arbor Day throughout the Town of Maine and encourage all our citizens to celebrate Arbor Day and to support efforts to protect our trees and woodlands, and I urge all citizens to plant trees to glad-
den the heart and promote the well-being of this and future generations.



Signed this twenty-sixth of April in the year twenty twenty four.

James Tobos
James Tobos, Supervisor, Town of Maine, NY



Greenspace Committee; This spring the NVHS formed a new committee whose task it is to improve the town of Maine's green heritage and future. It's first event was to celebrate Arbor Day 2024 by planting a hickory tree in the town park. A proclamation was read and a tree planting ceremony followed. The town recognized this date with a proclamation, having the Recreation Committee join us and by selecting a site to plant a tree within the town park. This park was established in the early 1970's when the McGregor poultry business sold the land to the town. Last year fifteen ash trees had to be removed for safety, as they were dead, due to the **Emerald ash borer beetle**. This year the committee has highlighted events such as: a riverbank clean-up in October, roadway trash pick-up, re establishing the Boy Scout trail on the hill west of the park, having a presence in the September Maine Fest event (9.14.2024), developing a Maine town "Largest Tee Survey", developing a Greenspace newsletter, and the planting of wildlife friendly bushes around the Maine School District solar farm. Our next steps before applying for Tree City status are to document the budget for tree care and to have an official Tree Ordinance. I've included some resources to help us. In regard to tracking the town's spending, we'll need to coordinate with some other groups. The town budget has qualifying expenses, but I believe we can also include qualifying expenses through the historical society, the county, and potentially NYSEG (see attached Tree City USA Expenses Sheet). Even our volunteer hours count towards qualification. I reviewed the town budget and it's not quite itemized specifically enough for our purposes so we may need to coordinate with someone to get the appropriate figures.



If you wish to be part of the group contact Christine Clifton-Kendall via email cliftonchristine@gmail.com. The town of Maine is also establishing a new committee chaired by Art Robinson which will deal with the future of trees with the goal of improving the environment around the town.

EXTINCTION IS FOREVER

“New York was the first state, in 1864, to adopt a hunting-license law. But because many Americans could not restrain the temptation to make everything possible an article of commerce, the “balance of nature“ soon ended for much of our wildlife. Foremost is the story of the passenger pigeon, which, as we read, seems beyond belief. Here is an account of the September of 1826:

The banks of the Ohio were crowded with men and children, for here the pigeons were to fly low. For a week or more the population spoke of nothing but pigeons and fed on no other flesh but that of pigeons. The whole atmosphere was strongly impregnated with the smell appertaining to their species.

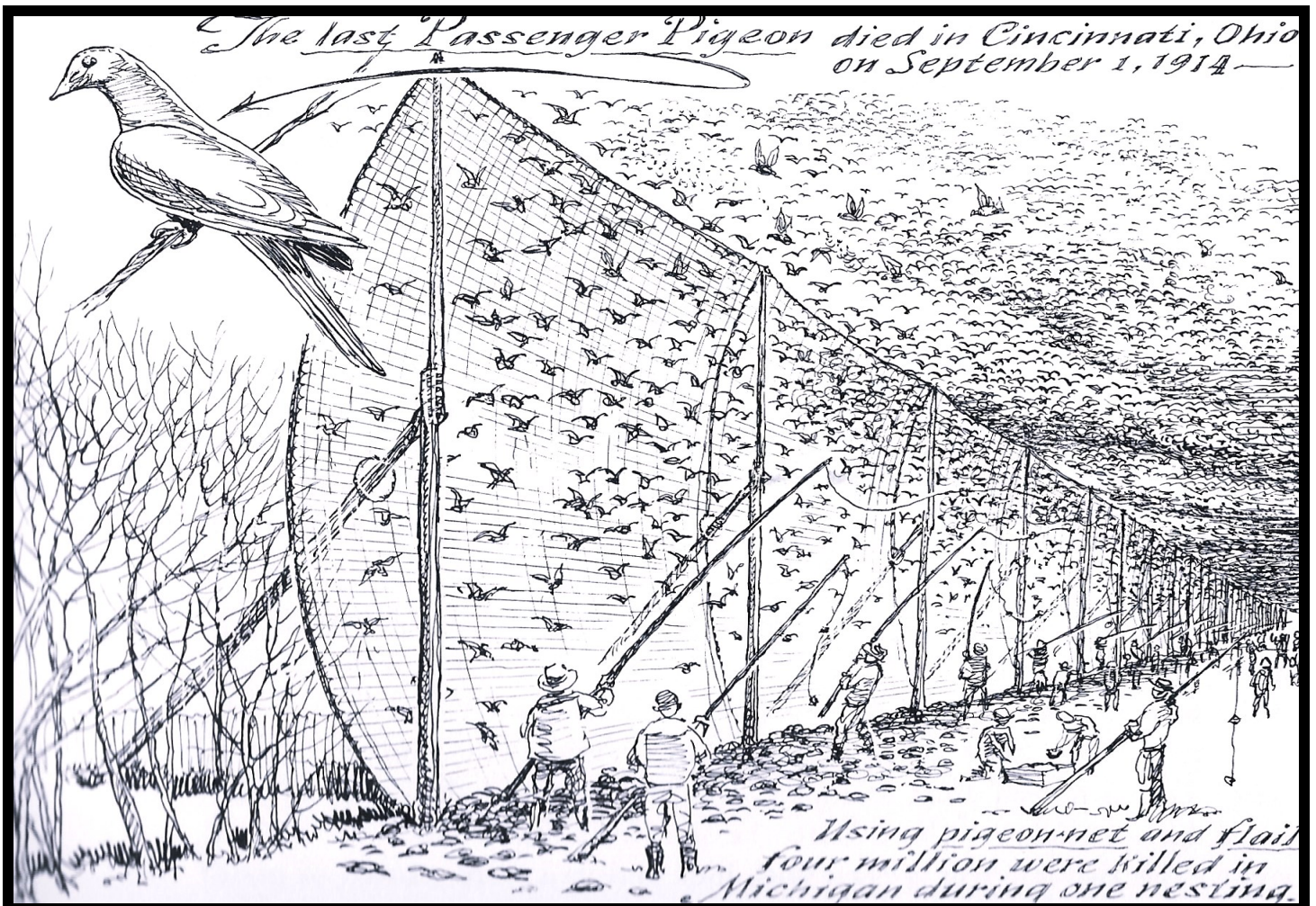
Allowing tow pigeons to the square yard, a column one mile in breadth was often pass overhead for over three hours: the count in one such flock should be one billion, one hundred and thirty-six thousand pigeons.... The dung of such a flock becomes several inches thick, covering the extent of their roosting place like a bed of snow. Many trees of two feet in diameter have been observed broken by their weight, at no great distance from the ground.

The sun gradually lost to view, though not a pigeon had yet arrived. But all of a sudden I heard a cry of ‘here the come!’ The noise which they made, though distant, reminded me of a hard gale at sea... As the birds arrived, I felt a current of air that surprised me.... Thousands were soon knocked down by poles The crashing of trees breaking from roosting pigeons added to the din.

From: Times Telescope, 1828

The last passenger pigeon died in the Cincinnati zoo on September first, 1914.”

From “The Seasons of America Past” by Eric Sloane Funk & Wagnalls, NY 1958. pp.86—87.





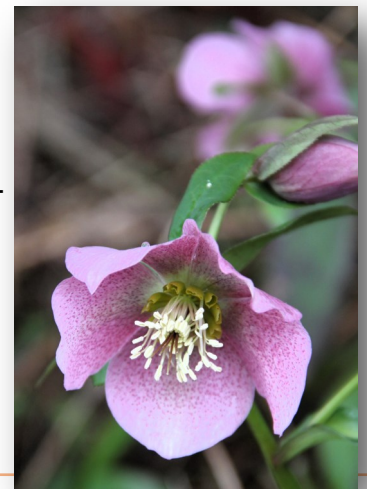
Old Bridge Southerland's Gulf, Maine, N. Y.

Possible answer as to where this 1900's photo was taken. Betty Welch believes it is of the "old" bridge off of today's Lewis Street, which crossed the creek, allowing the road to join the King Hill road and then onwards to Newark Valley. This bridge was "washed-out at least twice, once in June 1954 and again in the 1963 when the tragic event occurred which killed five ME high school students.



Next generation of **House Finches**.

Lenten rose is a perennial hybrid hellebore that blooms in late winter or early spring.

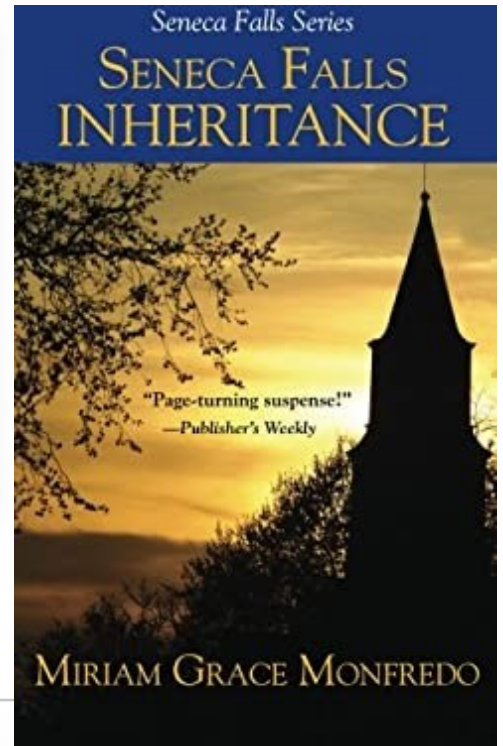


J. Ralph Report.

The hard work is paying off!!!!. Thanks to a grant from NYSERDA, "*NYSERDA works to promote energy efficiency, renewable energy, and emissions reduction across New York's buildings, transportation systems, power generation, and economy. Our programs serve New York residents and a variety of partners, including businesses, entrepreneurs, property owners, municipalities, community-based organizations, schools, institutions, and training providers.*" ([Find a Program - NYSERDA](#)) LED lighting has been provided to replace all the fixtures in the 1938 school. Our work crew has completed this enormous task! The front façade has been repaired and painted and the flooring of the stage has been totally repaired. Outside the pergola area to the west of the building has had a concrete pad installed along with landscaping....The is hopefully a location for outdoor concerts and perhaps a wedding or two!!!!



BOOK CLUB



Book Clubs first meeting was a huge success, other meetings are planned on the following dates: May 14, June 11, July 9, August 13.

The second book club novel is:

Seneca Falls Inheritance by Miriam Grace Monfredo.

A historical mystery set during the first Women's Rights Convention held in Seneca Falls, New York in 1848. Librarian Glynis Tryon must solve the mystery of why a woman would be murdered because of the new law governing inheritance.

For more information contact Sandy Rozek for details 607 862—9480 607 239 8868 May 14, June 11, July 9, August 13. (Second Tuesday of the Month) upcoming book club meetings at 6:00 PM at the museum:

General notice regarding the development of a **vintage stitchery workshop** as an extension of the Hearts for Hospice presentation at the April meeting? We do have a sign-up sheet in the middle room at the museum and anyone interested in being notified when details emerge can call Linda Austin or me (Sandy Rozek) to be added to the list. We already have a nice beginning to that group.

Also, a "calling all interested adult or teen helpers" for tours of our sites, both during open Sunday hours in the summer months and for school and organization tours.



Pastor: Jim Barnes took this sunrise on March 26th. It was taken on Church Street looking east. The two barns are vintage to the properties.

Upcoming programs...

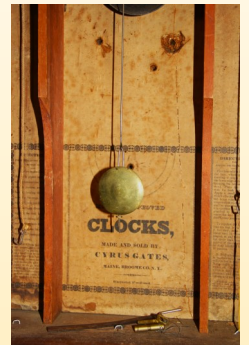
Schedule of Events for Nanticoke Valley Historical Society of Maine NY

Here are the programs in place:

- **Book Club** second Tuesday each month...contact Sandy Rozek for details 607 862—9480 607 239 8868
- May 20 Monday 6:30 PM Joe Cerwonka Bee There! **The life of a Honey Bee**
- May 27 Monday Memorial Day..After the Parade **Smokey Legends BBQ** and open house at our museum, school house and mill. Starts at 11 AM
- June 17 Monday Gary Lockwood Building Clocks - Cyrus Gates and others!
- **Concert Series at J Ralph Ingalls** this summer on Monday evenings **June 24, July 29 and August 26.**
- July 15 Monday Picnic 5 PM at J. Ralph "soft" Building opening. Come see what has been done to our beloved building.
- July— September Open house, Saturday 11—3 museum, school, mill
- August 19 Monday The little school that could: It's 25 years since the 1845 school house has been moved to Maine. It's a great story!
- September Sat. 14th starting at 11 Maine Fest with Plein air art event J. Ralph
- Sept. 21 & 22 Broome art trail 11—4, J. Ralph art display and sale local artists J. Ralph Ingalls 35 Church St.

Future Programs

- We are hoping to have a presentation on:
- The history of the Gates/Gunsalus house
- The history of baseball in the town of Maine as researched by Chuck Gunther and Sue Lisk
- A Roaring Twenties event to carry-out our pre-depression museum timeline (location{s}, time and details to be arranged)
- "Pitcher's Mill to Glen Aubrey" travel along NYS Route 26 to see what it was like in the 1800s. Phil Childs will be presenting this program.late this year.
- Look for **Coffee House** dates
- Broome County Art Trail September 21 and 22 at J. Ralph
- Help us when we have school visitations. May and June
- We will have programs each month through December check our web-site!



Sandy Rozek is our programs organizer. If you would like to present to NVHS this year contact her. If you know of some presentation that might be a great add to our year let Sandy know.



Nanticoke Valley Historical Society,

PO Box 75, Maine, NY 13802

May 2024 Volume #2

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Nanticoke Valley Historical Society, PO Box 75, Maine, NY 13802

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