

JUNE 2023

THE ARCHIVE

Preserving Esperance's history for future generations



WALKING IN HISTORY'S FOOTSTEPS: SECOND ANNUAL SOUP & STROLL

The Esperance Historical Society held its second annual Soup & Stroll on October 15, 2022. On a beautiful fall day, the event brought together nearly sixty people, all eager to experience the area's rich history through the eyes of historian Ken Jones.

The walking tour began at the Esperance Schoolhouse and visited ten stops, each steeped in history and packed with anecdotes. Abram Westall's Soda Works, Peck's Inn, Eastman's Cheese House, a cracker factory, and even a bus driver who ran off with Marion Rockwell all played a part in the storytelling.

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CALENDAR

May 29, 2023

Museum opens for the season.

August 26, 2023

History of William C. Bouck, 13th Governor of New York State, presented by David Brooks.

October 14, 2023

3rd Annual Soup & Stroll: Follow our Facebook page for more announcements about this event.

December 2023

Christmas in Esperance: Decorated trees, homemade cookies, hot cocoa, crafts, raffles, carols in the Old Stone Church, and much more! Follow our Facebook page for more announcements about this event.



The Archive is the official newsletter of the Esperance Historical Society and Museum.

IN MEMORIUM, JOHN VAN DERWERKEN

By Ken Jones, EHS President

John R. Van Derwerken of Route 30A, Central Bridge, passed away on October 6th, 2022 at the age of 95.

He and his wife Joan were regular attendees at the former monthly historical meetings. John had been an active member of the Board of Directors since 1997.

In 1993 the new Museum Carriage Barn exhibits were under development by his nephew Gus La Monica. John provided the barn beams, lumber, and artifacts from a former dairy barn on his farm in Central Bridge to be used in creating the exhibit space. In lieu of payment, John asked for a lifetime membership in the Historical Society. The Board granted this, and John had the distinction of being the only lifetime member of the Society.



John later served on the Town of Esperance 150th Anniversary Committee in 1996. On the passing of longtime volunteer Curator Gus La Monica, John suggested that the Carriage Barn be named in his honor which it was in 2008. In 2009 John was serving as Vice President of the Historical Society, and he was elected President the following year. The Chapel Library was constructed from remnants of the 1902 Chapel in the Esperance Cemetery during his tenure. John cut the ribbon at the grand opening in 2014.

John often recruited and suggested speakers for our Society Meetings and spoke himself on the topic of farms in the area and on S.K. Campbell and his threshing machines. John saw the transition from horsepower to tractor on the farms and worked on a threshing crew himself.

John continued to support the Historical Society as recently as May when he was interviewed for a historical documentary on the change from dairy farming in the Town of Esperance. His father Elon purchased the property in 1926 and ran a dairy operation.

Central Bridge Farms was the first farm in the county to use electricity (barns were electrified long before the house), and one of the farm tractors (Massey Harris 101 junior) was the first tractor that was self-starting on rubber tires manufactured after WWII. After taking over the farm from his father, John was a poultry and cattle farmer for 60 years.

At the peak of the poultry operation, John had over 10,000 chickens. John started a black angus herd in 1964. At the peak of operation, he ran over 200 cattle on 500 acres of land. He also was a real estate agent for 40 years.

John is survived by three children; Roger (Jacque) VanDerwerken of Escondido, CA, Alice VanDerwerken (David Sprague) of Rome, ME, and Mark VanDerwerken of Central Bridge, who lovingly cared for him. He is also survived by his daughter-in-law, Anna Trigg VanDerwerken, six grandchildren, six great-grandchildren, numerous nieces, and nephews, including special nephew Nick Lamonica and grandnephew David Lamonica.



HISTORY'S FOOTSTEPS

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Ken delighted guests with fascinating tales about the people and places in the area, painting a vivid picture of what life was like in the ages gone by. His knowledge and engaging storytelling style kept everyone entertained throughout the walk.

After the stroll, guests were invited to enjoy a bowl of soup or two, prepared by museum volunteers, at the Methodist Church. Attendees appreciated the opportunity to sit and chat while sampling six homemade soups, each as delicious as the last.

The event was a great success, showcasing the rich historical legacy of Esperance and bringing together local residents and history buffs.



WELCOME NEW OFFICERS

The Esperance Historical Society is proud to announce the election of Brenda Hewett and Victoria O'Milne as the new directors, taking over the positions left by the recent passing of John Van Derwerken and Edith Balogh.

We look forward to working with them as they bring their passion for promoting and preserving Esperance's rich history.

IN MEMORIUM, MARK SULLIVAN

Mark Sullivan, recently living in Greenfield, Indiana, formerly from Schoharie, NY, passed away on November 22, 2022.

Mark was always there to support Esperance Historical Society's endeavors, like with the library construction fund or swinging a sledgehammer to install the post for the Jumble sign.

He was also active in the Old Stone Fort Historical Society. He participated in historical reenactments, helped maintain the cemetery and museum, and conducted historical research.

Mark is survived by his wife Rosalinda Sullivan, daughter Annica Sullivan, brother Anthony Sullivan and wife Nee- Wah Sullivan, sisters Cynthia Kelly and husband Robert Kelly, Judith Valloze and husband John Valloze, and Chris Van Meter and husband David Van Meter, and many nieces and nephews.

THANK YOU TO OUR 2023 PATRONS

Dave Burnham Citroen
Don's Automotive Service
Duanesburg Diner
Esperance Auto Electric
Esperance Elks

Esperance Health & Wellness
Heritage Memorials
Home Magic
Langan Funeral Home

Livingston Fuels
Perillo Insurance Agency
Pick-a-Pumpkin Pumpkin Patch
Pine Ridge Dental
Young Home Heating Fuels



CELEBRATING THE HOLIDAYS: CHRISTMAS IN ESPERANCE 2022

Our annual Christmas Celebration on Saturday, December 3, 2022, truly showcased the holiday spirit. The festivities were held in the museum, filled with beautifully decorated trees, and the library, overflowing with unique handmade crafts, stocking stuffers, and Esperance souvenirs. Guests enjoyed complimentary hot cocoa and delicious home-baked cookies while shopping and admiring the stunning displays.



The raffle prizes were a standout feature that allowed guests to win some fantastic gifts. The prizes ranged from gift baskets to handcrafted items, and everyone left with a smile on their face.

But the true highlight was undoubtedly the enchanting Christmas carols played by piano in the Old Stone Church.

The Esperance Historical Society has been hosting the Christmas celebration for years, which has become a beloved tradition in the community. It's a wonderful way for people to come together and enjoy the holiday season while also supporting the historical society. This year's celebration was one of the best yet, with a record turnout and a festive atmosphere enjoyed by all.





POURING OVER HISTORY: EXPLORING ANTIQUE BOTTLES

On Sunday, April 2, 2023, the Esperance Historical Society hosted our Spring Meeting at the Two Saps Sap House in Central Bridge. Despite the windy and cool weather with temperatures in the mid-30s, nearly thirty history buffs gathered and enjoyed a delicious breakfast of pancakes, eggs, sausage, cookies, orange juice, coffee, and of course, maple syrup.

The gathering began with a brief business meeting and check-in with the officers. After the formalities, Ken Jones took center stage and provided an insightful history lesson on antique bottles.



Ken shared his passion for collecting and experience evaluating and dating antique bottles. He discussed the various types of bottles, differences in glass, and how to look for bubbles and imperfections to determine a bottle's age. His presentation was informative, engaging, and insightful and allowed attendees to view and learn about some of his and the museum's antique bottle collections.

The gathering was a resounding success, thanks to the friendly guests and welcoming atmosphere of the Two Saps Sap House.



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IN MEMORIAM, EDITH BALOGH

By Ken Jones, EHS President

Edith I. Balogh of Cumpston Street, Esperance, passed away on June 1st, 2022.

She was a member of the board of directors of the Esperance Historical Society for several years, as well as a close neighbor to the Museum. Edie was an active member of the board up until the time of her passing. Her friendly and easygoing nature helped keep meetings congenial. Always willing to assist where she felt needed, we will sincerely miss Edie at our meetings.

Edith was also an avid garage sale enthusiast. Edith made her career of being a nurse at the VA Stratton Medical Center in Albany for 26 years.

Edith was predeceased by her loving husband, Robert Balogh, whose parents ran the Smoke House Country Store on Main St. Esperance for many years.

She is survived by her three daughters, Judith (Lee) Venette of Colonie, NY, Robin (Stewart) Smith of Gainesville, VA, Laura Walters of Sharon Springs, NY, and her granddaughter Alexis Williams of Sharon Springs, NY,



STAY TUNED

Willard Martin, pictured above in the play "Second Anniversary," is working on his latest production, a documentary about farming featuring interviews with Esperance residents such as Hart Rockwell and the late John Van Derwerken.

Willard is working on the final edits and will debut the documentary later this year. Spoiler alert. It's amazing! Watch our Facebook page announcements.



WELCOME BACK

The Esperance Historical Museum opens for the season on Memorial Day, May 29th, and we're so excited to welcome you back!

Thanks to our new and returning docents who have signed up for 3-hour shifts, we'll be open on weekends from 1-4 p.m.

We greatly appreciate our volunteers, and thank you for being part of our team!

THANK YOU

As you know, our members are the backbone of our society's operations and mission to preserve and celebrate our community's rich history.

Your contributions help us promote our valuable work, ensuring we can continue providing educational programs and events.

If you haven't already, please take a moment to renew your membership, as we are counting on your support again this year.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to the Esperance Historical Society, and we look forward to all the exciting events we have planned for your this year!