

SPRING 2025

# THE ARCHIVE

*Preserving Esperance's history for future generations*



FIRST ROW: S. Agat, J. Aucompaugh, P. Miller, K. Negus, K. Ernest, P. Schlicht, M. Negus, R. Hewett, L. Ernest. ROW TWO: J. Largeteau, S. Conover, B. Aucompaugh, B. Jones, P. Jones, P. Benson, G. Negus, H. Martin, S. Lettis, C. Montanye, Mrs. Montanye, S. Palmer, D. Agat.

## REMEMBERING BARBARA SMITH: KEEPER OF FAMILY HISTORY

Barbara (Aucompaugh) Smith, who passed away on February 25, 2025, was a beloved member of the Esperance community and a guardian of its history. Many remember her as a kind-hearted woman with a deep passion for preserving the stories of her family and the town she called home. Barbara is pictured above in the second row, third from the left, in this 1961 class photo.

Barbara and her six brothers and sisters attended the Esperance school from kindergarten through third grade before being bused to Schoharie for the remainder of their education. Her childhood in Esperance was full of small-town memories, some of which, like her friend Sandy (Palmer) Farah recalls, were unforgettable, though not always for the best reasons.

Sandy shared, "I remember that awful baseball incident where she stood too close behind the batter. The batter swung and hit her in the mouth and knocked her out cold. I talked with Barbara a few years ago about this. I can't remember if she said they took her next door to Mrs. Bellinger's house (where Reuben Bennett lives now — she was one of the two teachers at that time) or maybe to the Sheldon Jackson building, which the school used for religious education, to lie down and get medical care."

Barbara's love for history and her tireless efforts to preserve the past made her stand out. According to Ken Jones, "Barb donated many artifacts over the years to the Esperance Museum connected with her family going back generations. She was also the keeper of family stories, tracing her roots back to her grandmother, Rita Rockwell Byrne."

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## CALENDAR

### April 13, 2025

Annual Membership Meeting with election of officers, pancake breakfast, and Code Talkers of WWII presentation by Maxine Christman at Two Saps Sap House, Central Bridge, NY.

### May 26, 2025

Memorial Day: Museum opens for the season: including Erie Canal Bi-centennial Celebration

### September 6, 2025

Annual barn sale: everything you've ever wanted and more!

### October 11, 2025

Soup and a Stroll: guided walking tour of Esperance street names and their connection to Revolutionary War Veterans.



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

## REMEMBERING BARBARA

*Continued from page one*

Barbara's dedication to family genealogy led her to a remarkable connection with Rufus Rockwell, who was buried in the Rockwell Cemetery on Priddle Road, not far from her home. Neighbors kept the cemetery in good condition for many years, but when Hurricane Irene struck, it left devastation in its wake — including the cemetery.

Not one to stand by, Barbara and her husband, David Smith, took it upon themselves to clean up the cemetery, locating and restoring broken and buried gravestones. Their efforts did not go unnoticed, and the town honored Barb and Dave for their hard work and dedication to preserving this important piece of local history.

In keeping with Barbara's lifelong passion for preserving local history, her family requested that memorial contributions be made to the Esperance Historical Society. We were deeply touched by the outpouring of generosity from friends, family, and community members — raising more than one thousand dollars in her memory.

We are incredibly grateful for these contributions and are considering the best ways to put them to use to honor Barbara's legacy and ensure that her work in preserving the history of Esperance continues.

Barbara's contributions to the Esperance Museum, her passion for genealogy, and her commitment to preserving family and community history will continue to resonate with those who knew her. She leaves a legacy that ensures future generations will remember and appreciate Esperance's history and people.



## NEED INSPIRATION FOR YOUR EASTER CELEBRATION?

Easter is just around the corner! If you're looking for some fresh ideas for your holiday breakfast, brunch, or dinner, here are a few of our top picks straight from the pages of our cookbook:

Morning Maple Muffins – Page 46

Angel Buns – Page 30

Ham and Scalloped Potatoes – page 77

Pineapple Scallop – Page 107

Carrot Cake – Page 157

You can grab these recipes and so many more from our cookbook. If you don't have a printed copy, it's now available digitally. Click the link or use your phone's camera to scan the QR code below and get instant access!

[Get the Village Cookbook here](#)



## SO MANY MEMORIES

*We loved this drawing David Serafen included with his membership, and we thought you might enjoy it, too!*



## UNLOCK THE SECRETS OF WWII: A SPECIAL EVENT AT TWO SAPS

Mark your calendars. Our Annual Membership Meeting is set for Sunday, April 13th at 1:30 PM, hosted at Two Saps Sap House, 303 Cripplebush Road, Central Bridge, NY.

We'll kick things off with a brief meeting, including the election of officers. Afterward, we'll enjoy a delicious breakfast featuring pancakes, eggs, sausage, cookies, orange juice, coffee, and of course, plenty of maple syrup.

During breakfast, we're excited to welcome Maxine Christman for an engaging presentation on the Code Talkers of WWII. Maxine's talk will highlight the heroic contributions of Native American soldiers whose unbreakable codes played a crucial role in securing victory during the war.

We look forward to seeing you there.

## HEARTFELT MEMORIES

We were so touched by this wonderful message from Nancy Serafen Stalker and wanted to share it with you. Thank you, Nancy, for your generous donation and for helping us preserve Esperance's history.



*"Please accept my donation to the Esperance Historical Museum. I'm thrilled that this landmark has been lovingly restored and has a purpose. I attended the school from kindergarten to second grade. My mother, Fran Serafen, substituted for Mrs. Montayne. I attended the Presbyterian Church next door and church camp.*

*It's been a while since I've been back to visit my hometown. Lots of good memories. Keep up the good work."*

## WARM THANKS FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT

We're overwhelmed by the outpouring of generosity from our members in response to our SOS about our heating situation. Your support has warmed our hearts and is helping us take steps to protect the treasures of Esperance's history.

Thanks to your donations, we're exploring heating options and solutions to prevent heat loss and improve the efficiency of our building. We're gathering estimates for necessary upgrades, including insulation and insulated doors. These improvements will help us maintain a more stable environment to safeguard our artifacts for years to come.

Your kindness and commitment to preserving our history mean the world to us. Thank you for standing by when we needed you most.

## WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE ESPERANCE WITCH?



Local legend says Esperance, NY, is the final resting place of a woman accused of witchcraft. But is it true... or just a folktale?

From an article that spread the tale nationwide to the handwritten recollections of residents, The Esperance Witch: A History of the Legend pieces together every known version of the story, giving readers a complete view of this enduring mystery.

If you don't have a printed copy, it's now available digitally. Click the link or use your phone's camera to scan the QR code below and get instant access!

[Get the Esperance Witch eBook here](#)



## AIMING FOR 1K

If you enjoy historical photos of Esperance and keeping in the loop about the Society's events, consider liking our Facebook page. It would be a huge help in reaching our goal of 1000 likes.



Please use the link below or scan the QR with your phone's camera and give us a like.

[facebook.com/EsperanceHistoricalMuseum](https://facebook.com/EsperanceHistoricalMuseum)



# THANK YOU SO MUCH!

Thank you to our new and returning docents who volunteered for 3-hour weekend shifts this past season, making it possible for us to be open to the public.

A special thank you to the "Book Buddies," our tireless volunteers who generously donate their time to organize our collection, plan events, and so much more.

Thank you for everything you do. We are truly grateful for your support!

## CELEBRATING 200 YEARS

Esperance Presbyterian Church: 1824–2024 is a beautifully written history celebrating 200 years of faith, community, and enduring legacy. From the founding of the village to personal stories from generations of members, it's a cherished chapter in local history.



If you don't have a printed copy, it's now available digitally. Click the link or use your phone's camera to scan the QR code and get instant access!

[Get the Esperance Presbyterian Church eBook here](#)



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Esperance, NY 12066