

NUNDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Calendar Items

- Nunda Portrait Photographers
- Frank "Rexie" Wright
- Friends of Nunda Cemeteries Meeting
- *Squeezebox Johnny*
- Spring Work Day
- Annual Meeting
- Architectural Walk
- Annual Picnic

See Schedule on pg. 7

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Historic Nunda

Volume 2 Issue 1

Winter 2009

Society Remembers Mary Thompson Kitchen will be Memorial

On January 14th, before the regular program, the Society took time to remember Mary Jones Thompson, a most loyal and dedicated member for many years.

Mary, a retired Home Economics Teacher, kept extremely active serving her community in many valuable ways. Alice Thompson summarized a few of her contributions, including: the Nunda Food Pantry, 4-H leader/teacher, Literacy Volunteers, and service in the Methodist Church, both locally and at the district level.

As a member of the Historical Society, Mary served as Secretary for many years and also helped in countless other ways. Joan Schumaker recalled some of the many jobs Mary tackled. She was always ready to prepare for the Annual Yard Sale and work during the sale. Baking for and working at the Annual Bake Sale was also routine for Mary. She helped maintain clothing in the Museum Collection by sewing cotton containers for their storage. When we started renovating the museum Mary found many new projects to keep her busy, including staining and finishing all of the woodwork in the new addition. Mary took a special interest in the kitchen. She located, finished, and donated cabinets for the kitchen and prepared a special window mural that serves as decoration over the sink area. Mary also donated a new refrigerator. Once the museum was ready to be occupied, Mary was part of the moving crew that transferred our Collection from the Bell Memorial Library basement. She followed this by routinely cleaning at the museum and making our junk disappear every Tuesday. While these are what we remember, Mary had a way of quietly working in her own way and her accomplishments probably go well beyond those we have mentioned here.

Because of Mary's many contributions to the Society, and especially our kitchen, a plaque will be placed in the kitchen as a memorial to Mary. This plaque was unveiled in the presence of her family: her husband Don, son John, and daughter-in-law Linda.



John, Linda, & Don Thompson with President Tom

*Nunda Historical Society
Museum & Rose Shave
Gallery are open on
Sundays, 2 - 4 PM, April
through November and at
other times by arrange-
ment. Call 468-3879 or
468-5991*

The President's Corner

Our Mission

The Society is devoted exclusively to educating present and future generations concerning the cultural, economic, social, political and technical development of the area of western New York in and around the Town and Village of Nunda.

Welcome to the second issue of our newsletter, *Historic Nunda*. The first issue, published last summer, seems to have been well received by members and the community. We hope that the newsletter will continue to promote the Society and fulfill our mission.

It's hard to believe that Nunda's Bicentennial year is over. I hope everyone had a chance to participate in the many wonderful events and activities held throughout the year. A hearty thanks and "job well done" to our Town Historian Val Griffing and her Bicentennial Committee, our Historical Society members who took part, and to the many area folks and community organizations that joined in Nunda's celebration of our past, present, and future!

Although 2008 is over, the work (and fun) of saving and celebrating our area's past has not ended. As we move into our Town's third century, our Society will continue to do its part to preserve and present the history of the Nunda area. Through monthly programs, special activities, our website, historical research, publications, and constant "behind the scenes" collection management and building maintenance, the NHS will carry on its mission. We also plan to begin our second phase of the building project this year that focuses on the rear storage area of the Museum.

I hope that each member will take part in these efforts. There is much you can do, starting with keeping your membership up to date. Please take note of the membership list printed in this issue – if your name is missing, please send in dues! We also hope that you will attend the historical programs, visit the Museum on Sundays (we re-open for the spring in April), and volunteer your time and talents through a committee or activity. A good opportunity will be our first annual spring workday to be held on Saturday, April 18th.

We also invite all members to attend the Society's annual meeting. This year we are trying something new – to devote a regular monthly meeting to the required annual meeting instead of racing through it at our June picnic. This will be a great opportunity for all members to take part in discussions regarding our building, budget, and future projects. This is very important and we hope that you will try to attend on May 13th.

If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions for the Society or me, please contact me or any of the Board Members. I can be reached by email at tscook@rochester.rr.com or regular mail at PO Box 177, Nunda NY 14517. You can also call me at 5850468-5991. I will be looking forward to seeing you at the next NHS event!

Tom Cook



Nunda Notables

Dr. Fidelia Jane Merrick Whitcomb was the wife of Walter Bruce Whitcomb, a local merchant/banker, and the first woman physician in Nunda. She was born in Hume in 1831 and married in Nunda in 1851. She had two children: Eva Clara born in 1852 and S. Merrick Whitcomb born in 1859. Both children graduated from Nunda Academy and then Fidelia accompanied them to Boston where they received advanced education. Eva studied Elocution and Merrick graduated with an A.B. in History from Harvard College in 1876 at age 17. While in Boston, Fidelia attended and was graduated, also in 1876, from medical school at the Boston University School of Medicine with a degree in Homeopathy. She returned to Nunda and developed an extensive practice, including a large office practice at her home on Massachusetts Street. Fidelia had medical students who studied under her, was very active in the Universalist Church, and was a most effective leader in supporting the Civil War effort.

In 1880, Fidelia was one of the first two women elected to serve on the Nunda School Board. This was six months after legislation passed in NY allowing women to vote in school board elections. The two women

Continued on page 3

Treasures from the Past

Some reading this will remember Dr. Schneckenburger's sign hanging outside his office at 5 Mill Street. A few may recall when families had to be quarantined to protect the public from the spread of measles and scarlet fever.

We were most fortunate to have Dr. Schneckenburger serving our community from 1929 to 1962. Now we thank his daughter, Mrs. Barbara Bernstein, for donating these signs for our Collection. Barbara is a member and supporter of the Society who resides in Alfred Station.



Did You Know?

- You can read about Dr. Schneckenberger and Dr. Whitcomb in *200 Years of Medical Care in the Town of Nunda and Vicinity* by Tom Byrnes - See page 6

Nunda Notables continued Dr. Fedelia (Fida) Jane Merrick Whitcomb

were opposed by a ticket of entirely males, but were supported by many of the influential men in the village and were elected. The second woman was Augusta Bennett Herrick, better known as Mrs. C. W. Herrick.

Around 1882 Fedelia was ill and moved to Tarpon Springs, FL, with her son Silas Merrick Whitcomb. She most likely went to Tarpon Springs to recuperate because one of her professors from Boston University School of Medicine, Dr. Mary Safford, had moved there around the same time and touted it as a healthful area. Fedelia ended up spending her winters and practicing medicine in Tarpon Springs.

In November 1885 the *Florida Medical and Surgical Journal* contained an ad for the Tarpon Springs Hotel, a large fancy establishment, being managed by Drs. Stafford and Whitcomb as a health resort. The complex appears to have contained the three story hotel and separate cottages that were open on a seasonal basis. Unfortunately, the hotel burned in the early 1900s, destroying all records, guest lists, etc.

Fidelia advertised as a homeopathic physician in the 1886-87 *Florida State Gazetteer and Business Directory*. Dr. Safford has been credited with being one of the first practicing female physicians in Florida, and Fidelia seems also to be one of the first.

In 1888, Fedelia died in Tarpon Springs and her request that she be buried there was followed. A most thoughtful and flattering obituary appeared in the *Nunda News* and is reprinted in the new *200 Years of Medical Care in the Town of Nunda and Vicinity* by Tom Byrnes. Additional information on Dr. Whitcomb may be found in Captain Hand's *Centennial History of the Town of Nunda*.

Note: Much of this information on Dr. Whitcomb is from Dr. Elizabeth Coachman of Tarpon Springs, Florida, who is researching both Dr. Safford and Dr. Whitcomb.



MRS. DR. F. J. M. WHITCOMB

2008 History Days - Oct. 22 & 23

Almost three hundred Keshequa students and adults took part in the 2008 History Days sponsored by the Nunda Historical Society last October. Expanded into two days, this bi-annual event was part of the yearlong bicentennial celebration.

Wednesday, October 22nd was the Middle and High School Day. Students from 7th and 8th grade classes and several high school groups took part. They had the opportunity to explore many aspects of Nunda's long history, stretching from the days of the first people in the Valley to the Civil War.

Participants had the chance to kill a mastodon (hay bale) with an atlatl, an ancient spear-throwing device demonstrated by Letchworth Park Naturalist Doug Bassett. They then visited several learning stations on the Museum grounds. These included a program by West Sparta Town Historian David Palmer on 19th century tools and two encampments representing important chapters in Nunda's history.

Moses Van Campen Long Rifles held a frontier encampment. Member Gail Kellogg Hope showed the students samples of early 19th century clothing, and gave students a chance to try on some early dresses and jackets. Her father, Robert Kellogg, demonstrated frontier cooking and survival skills. Former Nunda resident Terry Parker discussed life as a member of the 136th New York, a local Civil War regiment that trained at the Parade Grounds at Letchworth Park. His rifle demonstration was a particular favorite of the students!

A wide variety of adventures awaited the students inside the Museum. Local expert Jim Cromwell displayed and discussed a variety of Seneca Indian cultural items, while Missy Clark of Barkertown Sutlers demonstrated 19th century spinning and weaving. Students also enjoyed early American Music played on a hammered dulcimer by Sue Henglesberg and had a chance to try a traditional mountain dulcimer with the help of members of our local Genesee Valley Mountain Dulcimer Club.

Thursday was Elementary History Day with adjustments in the program to accommodate the younger students. Although Doug Bassett was unable to attend on Thursday, the other speakers returned and adapted their presentation to the appropriate grade levels. A special walk along the Genesee Valley Canal Locks in Oakland was added, with guides Joan Schumaker and Tom Thornton leading the way. Presentations by Kay Swyers of Castile on the lives of Seneca women, and a discussion by Town Historian Valerie Griffing on 19th century uses of wool were also included.

Expanding the event into two days and other changes were the results of joint planning between the Historical Society's planning committee and the teachers in both the Dalton and Nunda Buildings, as well as funding provided by a 2008 NYS Council on the Arts Community Arts Grant administered by the Genesee Valley Council on the Arts. This partnership between the Keshequa School District and the Nunda Historical Society will continue for the next Nunda History Days in 2010 and we will again seek financial support for this event.

History Day 2008 was a great success. Middle School English teacher Stephanie Gehrig wrote "Just a note to say thank you for a great



Jim Cromwell on the Senecas



Terry Parker - Life in the 136th



Missy Clark Spinning Demo

"History Day" It was very well organized and had diverse groups of showcased items. Although it was cold, the students didn't complain and seemed to really enjoy themselves. What a great learning experience!" Fourth grader Heather W commented, "Thanks for all your time! You have cool things to share!!! I think you guys ROCK!"

Membership News - It's Still Renewal Time

The Society's membership year is from September 1 through August 31. **2008-2009 members to date are listed below and we thank them for their timely response.** If you have yet to renew or become a member, please return the enclosed envelope with your membership today. We are working to increase the Society's membership and urge you to join us and to also tell your friends about us. Thank you!

John & Barbara Adams
Ralph Asmus
Jeremiah & Susie Axtell
Mary Baar
Freeman & Jane Barber
Gerald & Margaret Barkley
Duane & Rosemary Bennett
Barbara D. Bernstein
Martha Blair
Elmore & Janet Blair
Audrey DeVinney Blakley
Angela & Neil Bliss
George & Chris Blood
Sandra Bonadonna
Vera G. Bowles
Patricia Brady
Philip & Sue Brooks
William D. Burt
Tom & Barbara Byrnes
Jim & Diane Byrnes
J Kirk & C. Strickland
Tammy Caine
Thomas Caine

Carolyn & Charles Carlson
Stephen Castor
Jeryllyn Clark
Josephine Clinton
Tom & Anne Cook
Denman & Patricia Coon
Philip & Avis Cox
John & Judy DeGrood
Brewster & Hope DePuy
Gail Diemoz
Timothy & Kathleen Diemoz
Michelle Donovan
Alice Edwards
Alberta Essler
Alena Farmer
Chris Foote
Theron & Pat Foote
Ethel Foster
Nancy Gebauer
Cathie W. Gehrig
Ira & Nancy Gelsler
Gerald & Helen Gibson
Karen Gibson

Mary Ellen Graves
Valerie & Don Griffing
Reginald & Margaret Grosse
Doris & Dick Guenther
Sally Hall
Ed & Judy Hamilton
Carolyn Hark
Leona & David Hawkins
Dan Hurlburt
Joyce Hussong
Charlotte Keating
Geraldine Kennedy
Joan H. Larson
Anne Lawson
William Lindsay
James & Linda Little
Jeff & Sue Long
Terry & Connie Lowell
George & Karen Lucas
Gary & Francine Ludwig
Kathleen & Ronald Macomber
Sherry Marano
Jean Mc Master

Terry & Connie Lowell
George & Karen Lucas
Gary & Francine Ludwig
Kathleen & Ronald Macomber
Sherry Marano
Jean Mc Master
Wixee Mc Master
Natalie McTarnaghan
June & Stephen Metro
Mary B. Moore
Douglas Morgan
Ken Morris
Marcia Morrison
Lyle & Joan Orton
Charles Ostrum
David & Shirley Palmer
Julie Piraino
Rose Piraino
Carolyn Polluck
John & Janet Rapp
Carol Rathbun
Betty Rice
Maryann Roby
Leona Ruckaert
Larry & Elizabeth Russell
Robert & Lily Sanford
Irving & Marie Schoenacker
Joan Schumaker
Edna Schutte
William & Ruth Slaughter
Robert & Maxine Snelgrove
*Tom & Margery Stamp
David & Helen Swanson
John Thomas Jr.
Gerald & Alice Thompson
Don Thompson
Tom & Laura Thornton
Earl & Helen Veley
Eleanor A. Walker
George & Shirley Walsworth
John & Rose Weaver
George & Beverly Westacott
Dr. Norman Wetterau
Dr. Eleanor B. Wright
Candy Zaluskii



David Palmer



Tom Cook on the Move

Gail Kellogg Hope



* The Stamps are Life Members and we apologize for omitting them from the 2007-08 Membership List published in the last newsletter.

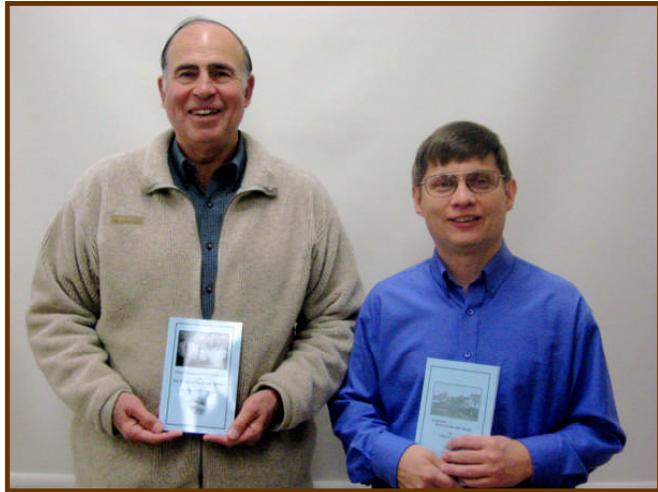
Bicentennial Publications Continue to Tell Nunda's History

The Bicentennial Committee has concentrated on publications that would capture and preserve Nunda's past.

***Yesterday - Stories from Old Nunda* by Thomas S. Cook and *200 Years of Medical Care in the Town of Nunda and Vicinity* by Thomas E. Byrnes are now available.**

Another publication in this series will be *Development of the Nunda School System* by Sandra Bonadonna. This should be available in late spring.

Photo: Thomas Byrnes & Thomas Cook



2009 Historical Society Calendar

Features the Rancheros & Nunda's Bicentennial

The new 2009 calendar contains a Bicentennial photo of the Rancheros on the cover and a 1963 championship photo of them in January.

Other months feature early Nunda portrait photographers, Dalton Garage, Bills Restaurant,

Farmers Exchange with Robinson's Drug Store, Welcome Paine's farm

Photo by: Michael Johnson for Livingston County News

implement business, the "Swain's Branch" Railroad and Kiwanis Park, Farming in the Nunda area, the Foote Company employees' 1943 Army-Navy "E Award, music in Nunda, and the Campbell-McCarthy-Clark/Davis house. The calendar contains the monthly Historical Society programs/events and interesting historical facts, mostly about Nunda.

Included are also four pages of color photos from Bicentennial events starting with the special postal cancellation in March and continuing through the July Homecoming Week.

Calendars are available for \$10 at the Historical Society, Nunda Family Pharmacy, Bell Memorial Library, Offices of the Nunda Town & Village Clerks, and on our web site at www.nundahistory.org

Bicentennial Items Still Available:

DVDs and VHS tapes of
"200 Years & (Re)counting"

Bicentennial Porcelain Plates
Bicentennial Logo Pins
Bicentennial Logo Hats
Logo Tee Shirts
Logo Sweat Shirts
Bicentennial Postage Stamps

Nunda Post Cards &
Envelopes with Bicentennial
Postal Cancellations



Spring & Summer 2009 Programs & Events

The Society usually meets on the **second Wednesday of each month (except for July and August) at 7 pm.** **Note: some meetings may be on Sundays.** All meetings, except those noted, will be in the **Historical Society Building at 24 Portage Street.** Any Changes in location or time will be advertised. Note that all meeting places are handicapped accessible. The location and time of special events are noted when the event is advertised.

Wednesday, Jan. 14: “Genealogy 101 - Begin Tracing Your Family Tree” - Valerie Veley Griffing, *Town and Village of Nunda Historian* (Note- Tom Cook presented a substitute genealogy program. A **follow-up workshop** on using the internet for genealogy is planned by Val & Tom. Anyone interested should contact Tom.)

Wednesday, Feb 11: “Early Portrait Photographers in Nunda and Dalton” - Tom Thornton

Wednesday, Mar. 11: “Frank ‘Rexie’ Wright - Nunda Soldier, Pharmacist, and Owner of City Drug Store” - Joan Schumaker

Sunday, Mar. 15, 2:30 PM: Spring Meeting of Friends of Nunda Cemeteries - program will be a discussion of plans for Oakwood Cemetery, including the new addition. Everyone welcome to take part in this discussion.

Wednesday, April 8: “Squeezebox Johnny Unfolds Accordion Tales” - John Quinn

Saturday, April 18, 10 AM: Annual Spring Work Day at the Museum - Join us as we work inside and outside the Museum. We will be cleaning, painting, clearing brush, etc. and can find a job for you. Bring your cleaning and painting tools and be prepared to have a great time as we spruce up our building and grounds.

Wednesday, May 13: Nunda Historical Society Annual Meeting and “Preserving Nunda’s Architectural Treasurers” - Joan Schumaker

Sunday, May 17, 2:30 PM at Trinity Church: “Architectural Discovery Walk of Nunda Village” with Cynthia Howk, *Architectural Research, Landmark Society of Western New York*

Wednesday, June 10, 6 PM at Kiwanis Park: Annual Picnic

August 7, 8 & 9: Nunda Reunionists Weekend - plans include a tour of Letchworth State Park, Oakwood Cemetery Tour, Historical Society Reception, Luncheon, Program - “*Remembering Nunda’s Past - Through the Reunionists and Nunda’s Bicentennial Year,*” Village Park Gazebo Concert,, and History Bus Tour of Town of Nunda - Watch for details.

Fundraising Success!!

Many hands contributed to a very successful **Yard Sale in October.** After working for nearly two weeks to set up all of the wonderful donations, Margaret and her helpers opened the doors on a beautiful sunny day to happy bargain shoppers. Sales were brisk all day, and the total sales figure of \$760.85 was well worth the effort. While you are cleaning this spring, remember to fill a box for next fall’s yard sale. **Thanks to everyone who contributed their treasures, to the workers and to the shoppers for this worthwhile event.**

On December 13, our **Annual Bake Sale** was held at Nunda Lumber. Again, we were very successful! **Thanks to the many bakers who contributed their delicious treats and the sales people who gave their time,** we were able to put \$317.50 in our treasury. Both of these fundraisers will help with our building renovations.

The Bicentennial Celebration may be over, but there are still many bicentennial items left to purchase. Stop in at the museum during our monthly meetings or on a Sunday beginning in April to get any of the items listed in the box on the previous page or one of the many books on Nunda written especially for this memorial year. All of these items may also be purchased on our web site, www.nundahistory.org, and most are available at the Nunda Family Pharmacy, Bell Memorial Library, and the Nunda Town and Village Clerk’s Offices.

NUNDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Visit us on line

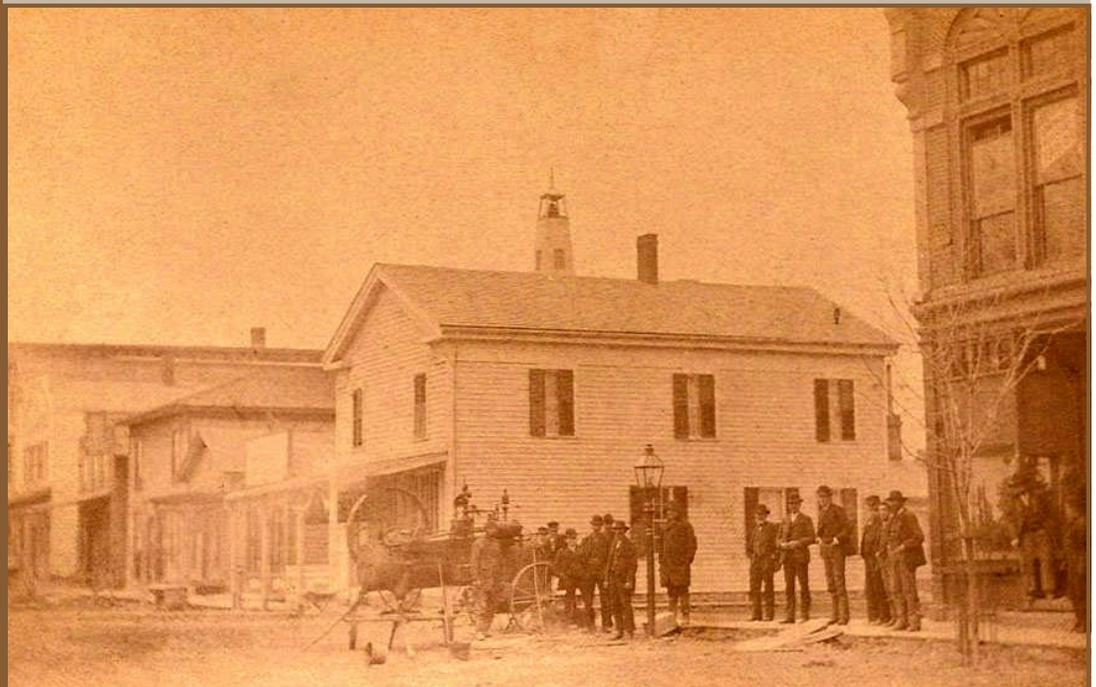
2008-09 Board of Directors

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Kathleen Macomber -
Vice President
Barbara Byrnes -
Recording Secretary
Francine Ludwig -
Corresponding Secretary
Joan Schumaker -
Treasurer
Margaret Barkley -
Librarian

Directors
Thomas Byrnes
Philip Cox
Sue Long
Charles Ostrum

Assistant Librarians
Sally Hall
Alice Thompson

Early Nunda



Steam Engine - Corner of State & Second Streets ~ 1890s

Note dirt street and plank sidewalks. The building behind the men was replaced by the GAR Memorial Hall built by Captain John Carter. The Union Block is on the right.