

## 2026 Programs & Events

See Schedule on  
pages 8 & 9 for  
2026 Programs



# Historic Nunda

Volume 15 Issue 1

Spring 2026

## Growing Up in Nunda and Portage Project

Last year, the Nunda Historical Society embarked on a multi-year project we call *Growing Up in Nunda and Portage*. Our goal is to collect, preserve, and present childhood memories, photographs, and memorabilia from the past century.

The first phase of the project focused on gathering photographs and memories from people who grew up in the area. Through our newsletter, Facebook page, website, and posters, we invited the community to share childhood stories and photographs. Many of these images were featured in this year's historical calendar. Other photographs, along with the collected memories, and objects from our collections will be used in a special exhibit, *Childhood Remembered: Home, School, Play & Community*, opening in March along the west wall of our Meeting Room.

You can still take part in this project in several ways:

**First**, if you have childhood photographs, we invite you to share them along with a short description: who is in the photo, where and when it was taken, and any memories associated with it. Digital copies are welcome, or we are happy to scan photographs if you can bring them in. These images will be added to a slideshow that will run alongside the exhibit throughout the year. We are also looking to borrow objects that evoke growing up in the area. These items will be securely displayed in locked cases and returned at the end of the year. If you have an object you are willing to share, please contact us.

**Second**, you may still submit written memories of your local childhood. This can be a paragraph or two, or an entire story. (You'll find questions on page 11 of this newsletter that can be used as writing prompts.) Submissions may be mailed to NHS, Box 341, Nunda, NY 14517, or emailed to [nhs@frontier.com](mailto:nhs@frontier.com). You may also choose to record yourself answering the questions or sharing stories of growing up. If you need help with recording or submitting your audio, please let us know.

**Finally**, throughout the year we will host a series of programs focused on local childhood memories. These programs are designed to collect memories from audience members about growing up in the area. Sessions will focus on Nunda, Dalton, Hunt, Portageville, Tuscarora, and growing up on a farm. Programs will be held live via Zoom so that those who live farther away can also participate. They will also be recorded and added to our museum archives. Please check the schedule for details.

We hope you will take part in this important project so that future generations will know what it was like to grow up in our communities in the "old days."

*Mrs. Long and the Keshequa 3rd Graders made  
this quilt in the 2001-2002 school year.*



# The President's Corner

Welcome to our first newsletter of the year! We hope you and your family are having a good winter—it certainly has been an “old-fashioned” one for much of the country. Luckily, spring is right around the corner.

We are looking ahead to March and the beginning of our program year. As you’ll see in the 2026 program schedule included in this issue, we have planned a busy and exciting year as we celebrate *Our Place in America’s Story*, our theme for the 250th anniversary of our nation’s independence.

Although our public programs do not begin until March 1, we have been busy at the Museum with special projects, new displays, and our ongoing work of accessioning, maintenance, and planning. We’ve included several “behind-the-scenes” peeks in this issue, which you may have noticed has expanded to twelve pages. Special thanks go to our friends at ARC GLOW Printshop in Mount Morris, who continue to do a wonderful job at an affordable price.

We are also pleased to have added several new volunteers to our regular Tuesday morning work team. A big NHS welcome goes out to Tom and Dee Burt, Patty Therrien, and Bob Gelser, who have joined our talented group of volunteers.

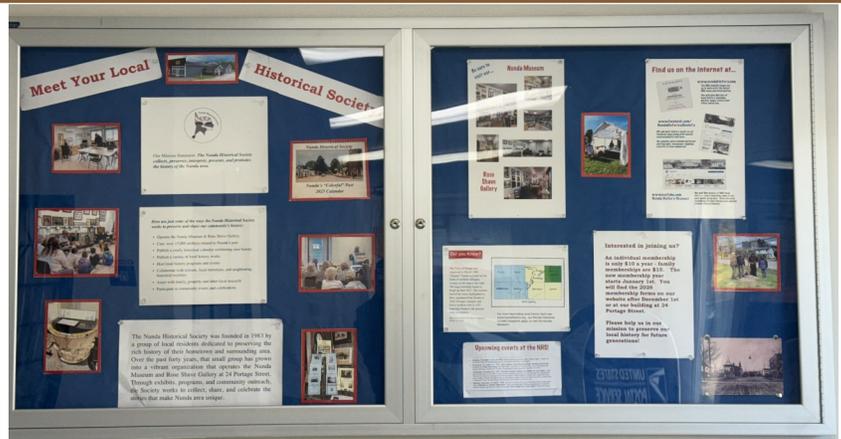
Finally, I want to thank all our members for your continued and valuable support! We truly couldn’t do it without you. I hope everyone has an opportunity to visit us during the coming year, either in person or through one of our online programs. And as always, if you have questions, concerns, or suggestions, please feel free to contact me at [tscook@rochester.rr.com](mailto:tscook@rochester.rr.com) or 585-465-0971.

Tom Cook



You can also keep up with the latest news from the Nunda Historical Society by viewing our display case at the Nunda Post office.

And many of our publications are for sale at the Nunda Family Pharmacy on State Street.



## The NHS Online!

In today’s world, the internet has become an essential tool for historical societies. Our website, [www.nundahistory.org](http://www.nundahistory.org), has been online for more than twenty years! It continues to be an important resource for those seeking historical information as well as the latest news from the Nunda Historical Society.

Our Facebook page has been especially successful. As of this writing, we have more than 3,000 followers and now average well over 1,000 views on our daily history posts. In January alone, our posts received more than 173,800 views! If you don’t already follow the Nunda Historical Society on Facebook, we invite you to join us there.

This year, with the help of NHS member Emily Pierce, we are expanding our online presence to include Instagram. Since Instagram is especially popular with younger generations, we hope this will help spark additional interest in local history and in the Society’s work.



On Wednesday, February 4<sup>th</sup>, our History Adventure Team hosted elementary classes in the NHS' Dalton History Room on the Global Day of Play. Teachers were able to sign up for half-hour sessions, giving their students a chance to experience a variety of old-fashioned games and toys from the 19th and 20th century.

NHS Team members Carol Castor, Tom Cook, Ann Crandall, Marge Foose, Karla Gordinier, Sue Long, and Laura Thornton had a great time with the students who ranged from PreK to 4th Grade. In the coming months team members will be leading local history adventures with the classes and plans are underway for several field trips to the Nunda Museum and Rose Shave Gallery in May and June.

Other members of the team who were unable to participate are Judy DeGrood and Margaret Grosse.





Greetings from the Town and Village of Nunda Historian's Office! Any local history researcher will tell you that researching genealogy is fun and frustrating all at the same time. It is fun to find new family and new information that gives you a better idea of your past. It's frustrating to hit that inevitable brick wall and come to a standstill. To start you on your genealogical journey and give you a few ideas of where to look, I thought I would share

the genealogical highlights of a project that recently came my way.

I recently acquired this mid-19<sup>th</sup> century spool wash stand, purchased at an auction in Ossian, NY about ten years ago. On the back was written "Arvilla Bisbee/Bradley's Spool Wash stand" and on the inside of the drawer was written "Marian Barron, 145 Cascadilla Pk". Since Bisbee is an Ossian name I tried Ancestry.com (available for free at Bell Memorial Library) for Arvilla Bisbee to no avail...Because Arvilla's given first name, and the one she went by before she married, was Fidelia! She disappears after the 1855 census so I typed in Arvilla Bradley and continued tracing her and her husband Abram from Ossian to Canaseraga and later the widowed Arvilla and her widower son-in-law William Mitchell to Boliver, NY and then back to Canaseraga. (Similar information is available on FamilySearch.org.)



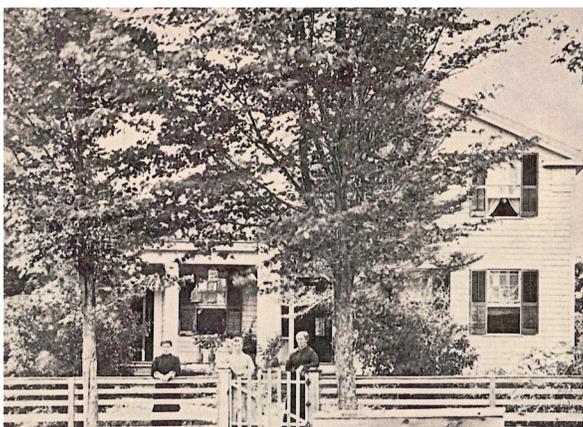
As luck would have it, in 2015 the Society's calendar theme was "Hamlets Around Nunda". Bisbeetown was one such hamlet and featured a picture of the Luther J and Eliza (nee West) Bisbee house that formerly stood at the top of the first knoll east of the Town of Nunda line on Rt 436 in the Town of Ossian. Arvilla Bisbee is one of the persons shown. How lucky was I to find this? Continuing my research, I checked Find-A-Grave and was able to trace out that Arvilla's great granddaughter was Mrs. John H. Barron of Ithaca. The frustration here is that women did not use their given names after they were married. I assumed that Marian Mitchell Barron was Mrs. John H. Barron but I wanted to see it in writing to validate my theory. So, I turned to Newspapers.com, a subscription service that has compiled and indexed hundreds of newspapers, to see if there was an obituary with more details published near Marian Barron's home in Ithaca, NY. Sure enough, an obituary for Mrs. Marian Mitchell Barron, of 145 Cascadilla Park, Ithaca, widow of John Hall Barron popped up in The Times-Union in 1969.

To come full circle, I would theorize that the wash stand was a wedding gift to Arvilla in about 1860 when she married Abram. From there it was passed down through the line to her great granddaughter Marian Mitchell Barron who passed it down to her sons Vincent and Robert Barron. Vincent's son Nathaniel commented previously that his third great grandmother often went around marking family information on numerous things. I am pleased to own a little piece of Ossian history.

By now I'm sure you are aware that 2026 is the 250<sup>th</sup> birthday of America. It seems like every organization is celebrating the occasion in some way. You can be part of that celebration. Start doing your own family genealogy. The Nunda Historical Society has a lot of information on hand and can guide you on where to find more. Stop in on Tuesday morning 9-12 or the first and third Sunday of each month. We look forward to helping you get started with your own adventure.

Historically yours,

*Valerie J.V. Griffing, Town Historian*



left to right, Eliza West Bisbee, Carol Bradley Mitchell and Arvilla Bisbee Bradley.





On Wednesday, September 10th, Don Burger, host of the Song Kitchen Show on WRAQ 92.7 FM, led members of the community in a performance of songs celebrating the Nunda area. The group met several times at the museum over the past year to create the songs.

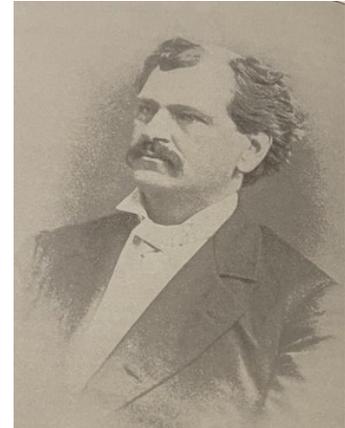
## Discover Oakwood Cemetery Day

On Sunday, October 5th the public was invited to visit Nunda's historic Oakwood Cemetery to meet some of its notable residents, including Polly Paine, Captain Hand and Cora Dowling. Local artist Sandra Bonadonna provided an introduction to graveyard art and symbols. There was a special museum display inside the 1902 cemetery vault and a family scavenger hunt. The weather was lovely and warm for a beautiful Fall event!



# More Programs and Activities from 2025

On Wednesday, November 12th, Tom Cook presented a program in honor of Veterans Day: ***“When Johnny Came Marching Home, the Role of Civil War Veterans in Nunda and Portage.*** Tom explored the impact returning veterans such as Captain Hand and Colonel Carter had on our communities in the years following the Civil War.



## Christmas in Nunda Events at Our Museum

On Saturday December 14th, the Nunda Historical Society offered several family activities. We had a cookie decorating station and a fabulous Christmas cookie sale. Special holiday displays highlighted Christmas celebrations of the past. Local history gifts, 2026 Historical Society Calendars, and our new publications were on sale. Complementary hot chocolate was provided to the people watching the fireworks after the parade. A huge thank you to all our members and volunteers who made cookies and helped out at the events!!!



Local historian Jane Oakes returned to our museum on Wednesday, December 10th, with her program *Christmas Customs: Origins and Oddities*. She explained the origins of bringing trees and greenery into our homes and which holiday customs were rejected by early church elders. She described the European tradition of Saint Nick's malevolent companion "the Krampus." And of course, following the presentation Christmas cookies and eggnog were enjoyed by all,



## Volunteer Christmas Party

Even more Christmas cookies (and other snacks) were shared in front of the electronic fireplace at the museum on Tuesday December 16th. The Tuesday morning volunteers took a break from their usual tasks to enjoy some holiday cheer together. And once again, Santa brought baking supplies for Karla Gordinier, so she can continue to help the volunteers to stay focused on their jobs at the museum every week!



## Members Only Historic Home Tour

To close out the year, members of the Historical Society were invited by Meg and Todd Galton to view the Christmas decorations at their historic home, sometimes called the Dickinson-Galton House, on December 29th. We thank them for their hospitality!





## Celebrating Our Place in America's Story!

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### NHS EVENTS 2026

*Unless otherwise noted, all programs are held at the Nunda Historical Society, 24 Portage Street, Nunda. Please see the schedule for specific times and any location details. All events are free and open to the public unless indicated. This schedule is subject to change; for the most up-to-date information, visit [www.nundahistory.com](http://www.nundahistory.com) or follow us on Facebook.*

- **Sunday, March 1, 2-4 PM; Open House - Nunda Museum and Rose Shave Gallery** - Come see our new displays including *Childhood Remembered - Home, School, Play & Community*.
- **Wednesday, March 11, 7 PM; Childhood Memories of Nunda.** This program will kick off a series of panel discussions where local residents will be sharing memories about Nunda. Everyone welcome - and bring your favorite memories! Check the schedule for more of these sessions on Dalton, Hunt, and other local places!
- **Sunday, March 15, 2-4 PM;** Nunda Museum and Rose Shave Gallery Open.
- **Wednesday, April 8, 7 PM; Clara Barton, Dansville's own "Angel of the Battlefield" by Jane Oakes.** Best known for her work as a battlefield nurse and as founder of the American Red Cross, Clara Barton made neighboring Dansville her home base for many years because of her close association with "Our Home on the Hillside" water cure. Drawing on diaries and letters from private collections, local historian Jane Oakes explores Barton's life in Livingston County and the work she carried out from there.
- **Sunday, April 19, 2:30-4 PM; Childhood Memories of Dalton.** Everyone welcome - and bring your favorite memories! (Nunda Museum and Rose Shave Gallery Open 2-4 PM.)
- **Sunday, May 3, 2-4 PM;** Nunda Museum and Rose Shave Gallery Open.
- **Wednesday, May 13, 7 PM; Vintage Tweets: Suffrage Era Postcards by Carol Crossed.** The presentation highlights original suffrage-era postcards and explores themes such as women's suffrage, abolition, temperance, and the artists behind the movement. It's a lively, visual, and engaging 45-minute program shared by author and historian Carol Crossed, founder of the Susan B. Anthony Birthplace Museum in Adams, MA.
- **Sunday, May 17, 2:30-4 PM; Childhood Memories of Hunt.** Everyone welcome! (Nunda Museum and Rose Shave Gallery Open 2-4 PM.)
- **Visit our booth on Friday and Saturday of Nunda Fun Days! Watch for Details!**
- **Sunday, June 7, 2-4 PM;** Nunda Museum and Rose Shave Gallery Open.
- **Wednesday, June 10 – NHS Annual History Tour & Picnic:** From **4:00–5:00 PM**, members are invited to a guided history tour of one of the area's historic houses or buildings. The **Annual Picnic** will follow from **5:30–6:30 PM** at the NHS Pavilion, with the **NHS Annual Meeting** held in the History Resource Room from **6:30–6:55 PM**. At **7:00 PM**, musician and storyteller **Don Dwyer** returns to the NHS with his new program, "*The Patriotic Songs of the American Republic*" (**7:00–8:00 PM**). **The 7:00 PM concert is open to the public.**
- **Sunday, June 21 - 2:30-4 PM; Alumni Memories** Everyone welcome! Bring your favorite memories of Nunda and Dalton Schools! (Nunda Museum and Rose Shave Gallery Open 2-4 PM. )

**Did you know? NHS has a YouTube channel! Many of our programs can be viewed on our channel which is called Nunda History**

*Calendar of Events Continued on Page 9*

- **Saturday July 4, Marking America's 250th Birthday!** Rededication of Nunda's Revolutionary War Plot at Oakwood Cemetery & Dedication of NHS New Flag Pole. (watch for details)
- **Sundays, July 5 & 19, 2-4 PM;** Nunda Museum and Rose Shave Gallery Open.
- **Wednesday, July 8, 7 PM; The Story of Nunda: 1776–2026** Jump aboard for a fast-paced journey through time by local historian Tom Cook, with brief stops in Nunda from 1776 to the present. Using images and storytelling, this illustrated program explores the people, places, and events that shaped our area while connecting Nunda's past to *America 250* and our place in America's story.
- **Sunday, August 2, 2:30-4 PM; Childhood Memories of Growing Up on the Farm!** Everyone welcome! (Nunda Museum and Rose Shave Gallery Open 2-4 PM.)
- **Saturday, August 15, 9 AM-2 PM; NHS Annual Yard & Bake Sale** This is one of our most important fundraisers. Stop by to look for that special treasure to take home along with some delicious baked goods.
- **Sunday, August 16, 2-4 PM;** Nunda Museum and Rose Shave Gallery Open.
- **Sunday, September 6, 2-4 PM;** Nunda Museum and Rose Shave Gallery Open.
- **Wednesday, September 9, 7 PM; "Every Foote a Mixer: A History of the Foote Company of Nunda 1898-1955" by Chris Foote** In 1898, Nunda brothers Charles and Chester Foote invented the first powered cement mixer — a quiet but transformative innovation that helped fuel the road-building revolution and construction boom of the early 20th century. Foote mixers supported major infrastructure projects, provided steady employment for Nunda families during the Great Depression, and later contributed to the Allied war effort during World War II. Presented by Chris Foote, great grandson of Chester Foote, this illustrated program draws on years of research, historic images, and family stories to share the history of Nunda's most famous industry.
- **Saturday, September 12; NUNDA AMERICANA DAY!** New Date! Watch for details!!!
- **Sunday, September 20, 3-4 PM; William D Burt presents his new NHS book "The Last Days of the Rochester Branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad,"** book signing will follow the program. (Nunda Museum and Rose Shave Gallery Open 2-4 PM.)
- **Sunday, October 4, 2:30-4 PM; Childhood Memories of Tuscarora!** Everyone welcome! (Nunda Museum and Rose Shave Gallery Open 2-4 PM.)
- **October 14, 7 PM; Oakwood Cemetery Art & Symbolism by Sandy Bonadonna.** Cemeteries serve as wonderful windows to the past - not only in the individuals whose names appear on the grave stones, but also through the art and symbolism that often accompany the names. Sandy will be taking you on a tour of examples found in Nunda's Oakwood Cemetery using photographs taken on the grounds.
- **Sunday, October 18, 2:30-4 PM; Childhood Memories of Portageville!** Everyone welcome! (Nunda Museum and Rose Shave Gallery Open 2 - 4 PM.)
- **Sunday, November 1, 2-4 PM;** Nunda Museum and Rose Shave Gallery Open.
- **Wednesday, November 11, 7 PM; Fraternity, Charity, Loyalty: The Women's Relief Corps and the Legacy of Women's Service in Nunda by Sue Long,** Founded in the years following the Civil War, the Women's Relief Corps became a national organization dedicated to supporting Union veterans, preserving memory, and promoting patriotic service. In Nunda, the WRC played an active role in community life through charitable work, Memorial Day observances, and civic events that shaped how the Civil War generation was remembered. Guided by its motto — *Fraternity, Charity, Loyalty* — this program explores the local history and lasting legacy of women's service in Nunda across generations.
- **Sunday, November 15, 2-4 PM;** Nunda Museum and Rose Shave Gallery Open.
- **Saturday, December 5, 3 PM; Childhood Memories of Christmas.** We finish our series of programs on Growing Up in Nunda and Portage with an evening of sharing Christmas memories. Bring your own memories and special mementoes from Christmas Past!
- **Saturday, December 12, 10AM-5PM;** Be sure to stop by the Nunda Historical Society during this year's **Christmas in Nunda Celebration!** Enjoy our traditional Christmas decorations, our special holiday displays and shop for local history gifts. **Don't forget our Cookie Sale!!!** Watch for details!

Few artifacts connect us to the past quite like photographs. They are truly windows into earlier times, preserving the faces, places, and everyday moments that make up our community's story. The Nunda Historical Society is fortunate to care for several thousand images, from cherished family snapshots to the work of talented amateur and professional photographers who documented life in our area. One of those photographers was Frank Hewitt (1865–1946), who operated a studio in Nunda's Union Block during the late 19th century.

Last fall the Museum received an especially memorable visit when Frank Hewitt's granddaughter, Nancy Hewitt Holler of Maine, arrived with her family and containers filled with photographs taken by her grandfather more than a century ago. This remarkable donation includes over a thousand images dating from the late 1800s and early 1900s.



Nancy Hewitt Holler and her husband Fred and their daughters Karen and Lynn

We are currently accessioning this collection, and look forward to making these historic photographs available for public viewing later this year

## New Museum Displays for 2026



Do you remember Dalton's Erie Railroad depot? Did you know that a young artist from Nunda went on to capture some of the most famous images of the Civil War and the Transcontinental Railroad? Visitors to the Nunda Museum this year can explore both stories through two brand-new displays.

The Dalton Depot exhibit features one of the Society's newest artifacts. The original "Dalton" station sign hung on the Erie Railroad depot for several years before the building was torn down in the 1960s. Created by NHS member Tom Burt, this display also includes artifacts, photographs, and historical information that bring this important local landmark back to life.

Andrew J. Russell grew up in Nunda and began his artistic career here in the 1850s. By the time of his death, he had become one of the foremost photographers of the Civil War and the Transcontinental Railroad. A new display in our main museum room tells his remarkable story and highlights his talents as both painter and photographer.

Be sure to visit the Museum to see these two new exhibits, along with our *Childhood Memories* exhibit, the "Take a Seat in History" display and several other new additions!



See [www.nundahistory.org](http://www.nundahistory.org) for updates:  
everything happening at the Society, our Gift Shop, and  
the History Room with ways to explore Nunda's history, and more.  
Visit Often! This is Your Historical Society

## 2026 Members

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Jeremiah & Susie Axtell  
Michael Bauer  
Duane & Rosemary Bennett  
Yvonne M Bennett  
George Blood  
Ethan Boss  
Trish & Tom Brady  
Alberta Brown  
Bruce Buchinger  
Thomas & Dee Dee Burt  
Kimala Butler  
James Byrnes  
Thomas & Barbara Byrnes  
Jerilyn Clark  
Diane Congdon  
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Phil & Avis Cox  
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Ivan Davis  
Melissa Mallaber Davis  
Gail Diemoz  
Joseph DiPasquale  
Robert & Peggy Ellsworth  
Alberta Essler  
Frank & Linda Foley  
Marge Foose  
Christopher Foote  
Theron Foote

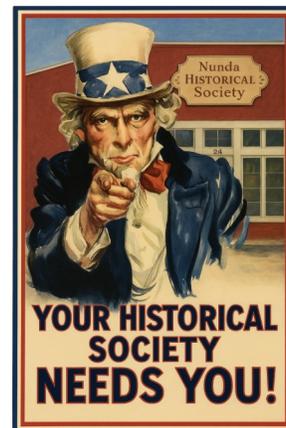
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Glenda & Kenneth Weaver Jr.  
Carl & Carol Weber  
Isabelle R. Weir  
Norman Wetterau  
Kimala Wheeler  
Jean Wilkins  
LeRoy & Theresa Wood  
Charles Woolever  
Eleanor Wright  
Mickie Young

We make every effort to keep our member list up to date... Is there an error we didn't catch? Is your name spelled correctly? Is your name missing from the list and you already sent in your dues?

Please let us know: contact Tom Cook at [tscook@rochester.rr.com](mailto:tscook@rochester.rr.com) or 585-465-0971.



Would you like to share some of your childhood memories of Nunda and the surrounding area? Here are some questions that may help you remember! What are your favorite memories of elementary school? What games did you like to play? What was your after-school routine in junior high or high school? What do you remember about your favorite stores? What were your favorite television shows growing up? How did you first earn money as a kid? What were your chores when you were young? You will find more questions and memory prompts in our Childhood Memories Exhibit!



The Nunda Historical Society hosted a visit from the Marjorie Dieter Mastin Historical Society of Canaseraga on November 4th 2025

Find us on Facebook! @nundahistoricalsociety

# NUNDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Nunda, NY 14517-0341

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*Nunda Historical Society Museum & Rose Shave  
Gallery are open 10 am - noon on Tuesdays,  
2-4 pm, on 1st and 3rd Sundays  
March through November,  
and at other times by arrangement.  
Call : (585) 468-5420 or (585) 465-0971*

## AMERICA



## *Celebrating Our Place in America's Story*

In 2026, the United States marks the 250th anniversary of its independence, a milestone formally called the *Semiquincentennial*. The Nunda Historical Society has chosen **America 250 - Celebrating Our Place in America's Story** as our theme for the year because this national anniversary is also a local one. America's story was not shaped only in famous halls and battlefields, but in villages like Nunda, in homes and schools, farms and factories, churches and cemeteries, and in the everyday lives of ordinary people responding to extraordinary times. Our history is not separate from the nation's history; it is part of it.

Throughout 2026, the Society will explore and highlight that local story through a wide range of programs, activities, exhibits, and events. From early settlement and industry to reform movements, childhood, community life, and service, we will look at how national ideas and events were experienced here. And how people from this community, in turn, helped shape the larger American story. Our full schedule appears inside this newsletter, and we invite you to join us as we celebrate not just 250 years of independence, but Nunda's lasting place within America's unfolding story.

*Our Mission: The Nunda Historical Society collects, researches, preserves, interprets, and promotes the history, heritage, and culture of the area of western New York in and around the Town of Nunda and educates the public through its collections and programming.*