

WINTER 2026

THE ARCHIVE

Preserving Esperance's history for future generations



COOKIES, CAROLS, AND COMMUNITY

Christmas in Esperance arrived on a sunny Saturday, December 6th, with crisp temps in the 30s and a whole lot of holiday spirit. The Museum's library was overflowing, and we mean overflowing, with every kind of cookie imaginable, all lovingly homemade by our volunteers. Alongside the cookies were tables packed with handmade gifts: crocheted items, ornaments, Christmas pins, delicious mini breads, and of course, lush poinsettias.

The raffle table was bursting with donated items from our generous members and supporters. Prize baskets included tools, appliances, food baskets, a homemade cake, and even a drone.

Nearby, guests gathered in the Presbyterian Church to enjoy carols by the piano, a cozy moment that ended with a heartfelt rendition of Silent Night. This year also marked the debut of our brand-new Eastman's Cheese House T-shirts, and they were a huge hit. Folks loved the nostalgic design and the little piece of local history they could take home with them. By midday, several sizes were already running low.

We were absolutely blown away by the attendance. At times, it was standing-room-only in the library, with a line forming outside as folks waited to come in. It was one of those days that reminded all of us why Christmas in Esperance is such a beloved tradition, it's as much about shopping as it is about reconnecting.

Sandy Farah put it best when she shared one of her favorite moments of the day: "Seeing Nicki after many, many years. Sherry (my sister) and I used to babysit her and Brian. Faith (her mom) used to babysit me. I love Esperance and all those wonderful kids I grew up with! So blessed!"

Days like this remind us why Esperance is such a special place. Thank you to everyone who baked, crafted, donated, sang, volunteered, shopped, and visited. We're grateful for you, and we can't wait to do it again this year.

CALENDAR

May 25, 2026

Memorial Day: Museum opens for the season. Watch for the Historical Society in the parade!

May 31, 2026

Capturing Their Pasts - A Veteran's Oral History. My Heroes - Their Stories presented by Gary Ford.

June 7, 2026

Centennial of US Route 20. 2025 Highlights of cross-country trip by Scott Barton

June 14, 2026

Not Your Grandmother's DAR by Dianne Rizzo

Events are subject to change. Please follow our Facebook page for the latest updates.



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

REMEMBERING HUNTER'S GARAGE ON MAIN STREET



JACK ALLEN, T.V. SHOP, MAIN ST. ESPERANCE.

Many in our community were saddened to hear that the building once known as Hunter's Garage, located on Main Street, burned on Monday, November 10. Thankfully, no one was hurt, though it was a total loss.

Ken Jones shared, the building was once used by Duane Barton to house the first ambulance, later became a TV repair shop run by Jack Allen, and even served as an auto parts store.

Brenda Hewett remembered, “*Jack’s wife Fran was my first babysitter when my mom worked at the Post Office. Our first Zenith color TV came from Jack—what excitement seeing that peacock in full color for the first time! Ron Vandenburg also ran his well-drilling business from that building. We neighborhood kids spent many winters climbing up and down the hill behind it to ice skate on the pond that my grandfather, Kneland Hewett, owned.*”

Sandy Farah added, “*And for a very short time, it was a second-hand bookstore run by, I believe, Randy Brown’s older brother. I bought a copy of The House of Seven Gables there.*”

Sandy also recalls many fond memories of skating on Brenda’s grandfather’s pond.

Even after the fire, it’s clear the building left its mark on everyone. We’re grateful to the firefighters for their quick response, and most of all, thankful that no one was injured.



REMEMBERING MAXINE CHRISTMAN

President Ken Jones informed the Board of Directors that Maxine Christman passed away on January 10 after a battle with cancer, saying, “Maxine and Rick have been friends of mine for many years.”

Maxine worked at the cafeteria at a local school and, after retirement, did some lay preaching, including at the Presbyterian Church in Esperance. She was also a reenactor and had an interest in textiles. In the summer of 2025, she presented a program to the Historical Society on the Code Talkers of WWII, and Rick assisted with our Soup and Stroll walking tour.



REMEMBERING KATHIE ROCKWELL

President Ken Jones informed the Board of Directors that Kathie W. Rockwell passed away on January 11 after a long illness. Ken noted that Kathie served as an officer of the Historical Society and as Town Historian before him.

Kathie was a lifelong Esperance resident who served the community in many roles, including Town Clerk and Tax Collector, and was active in town and county politics. She was also Treasurer of the Braman Corners Union Cemetery for many years. Kathie enjoyed crocheting, following NASCAR, and sharing her time and talents with the community she cared deeply about.

A NOTE THAT MADE US SMILE

We loved this note Brenda Hewett sent us, and we thought you might enjoy it, too!

To all the wonderful Christmas elves at the museum. Think of you all often, and Esperance will always be "home" to me!

Merry Christmas and wishes for a healthy, peaceful 2026 to all!

Keep the lights on for me!

Brenda Hewett

YOUR MEMBERSHIP MAKES A DIFFERENCE

As you know, members are the backbone of our mission to preserve Esperance's history.

Your support helps us preserve artifacts and offer educational programs and events throughout the year.

If you haven't already, please take a moment to renew your membership. We're counting on your continued support again this year.

Thank you, and we can't wait to see you at one of the exciting events we have planned in 2026!

PEOPLE, PLACES, AND MOMENTS OF ESPERANCE

We loved this trip down memory land Dennis Serafen included with his membership, and we thought you might enjoy it, too!

Pleased and surprised to see my thoughts published. Here are some people and places I'll always remember.

Ernest Dorn - still farming with horses.

Frances Polgreen - what a kind, gentle, loving lady.

The color changing Hot Point sign in Conover's front yard!

Hewitt & Sons Oil Truck delivering warmth on cold winter days.

Listening to school closings on WGY.

Fishing in the Fireman's Pond.

Alton Madison's Mobil Station.

Jake's Barber Shop and the array of tonics that made you slick and sweet smelling.

Bea Hewitt at the Post Office.

Ernie and Ruth Tree and Tree Haven.

Fireman's Pancake and Sausage Supper.

Dime-a-Pie Suppers.

The terrible tar truck accident between the church and Miers Store.

Watching buildings float under the bridge - 1955 flood.

Dennis Serafen