

# Frontenac Historical Society and Museum

www.frontenacmuseum.org

Spring 2026

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178 Cayuga Street, P.O. Box 338, Union Springs, N.Y. 13160

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## 2026 PROGRAMS ANNOUNCED



### **Frontenac Museum Open House to Celebrate the 2026 Season** **Saturday, May 16th at 1:00-4:00pm**

Our Open House brings new exhibits for you to view. The Genealogy Room has been relocated and now presents a welcoming space for research. The Thomas Eldred Military History Room has been refurbished with a new fresh look. We also have two new exhibits—one on the Lehigh Valley Railroad with a photo of Agent James McGrath wearing his LVRR jacket. The other, on Americana, was mounted in honor of America 250!



### **Summer Song Birds with Stephen Kress, PhD** **Sunday, June 14th at 7:00 pm**

Stephen Kress, PhD, noted ornithologist, will share information on our Cayuga Lake summer songbirds. Cayuga Lake vicinity is home to many colorful songbirds that nest during summer months. Learn more about their songs, family life, and nesting habits. Dr. Kress will also share tips on how to improve backyard habitats to make gardens inviting and safe places for birds.



### **Allen Hopkins, Folk Musician—America 250 Celebration in Song** **Sunday, July 19<sup>th</sup> at 7pm**

Allen Hopkins will share information on traditional American Roots music based on historical themes. He will focus on music with roots in the American Revolutionary period, from its roots in old English to the military and war-related songs of the 19th and early 20th centuries. In looking at the past through song and stories, we are reminded that we have come through difficult times in the past to find a better and more hopeful country.



### **Hidden History: The Cayuga County Poorhouse/Annual Meeting** **Sunday, August 9<sup>th</sup> at 7pm**

Speaker Diana (Dee) Katovich, PhD, will discuss what happened to people who were poor, disabled, elderly, or infirm in the days before social safety nets. In 1824, the NYS Legislature passed a law stating that every county was responsible for building a place to care for people who did not have the means to care for themselves. The Cayuga Co. Poorhouse in Sennett remained in operation until 1940. Who were the people who lived there?



### **Music of the 60's and 70's with Joe Sarnicola** **Sunday, September 13th at 7pm**

Joe Sarnicola will present a program of songs from the 60's and 70's, sharing the history of the songs. The 60's and 70's were transformative decades in music featuring rock, pop, soul, folk and disco. Music from this era not only shaped popular culture, but also reflected social movements, from civil rights to anti-war protests. Joe plays the guitar and ukulele and stated that he will dress the part!



### **Christmas Sing-Along with Geoff Clough** **Sunday, December 13th at 4pm**

Geoff Clough of G&L Music Studio in Baldwinsville plays your favorite songs of the season with unique arrangements and shares a bit of history and trivia, as well. It's sure to get you into the spirit! Bring your voices and enjoy Christmas refreshments of hot chocolate and Christmas cookies. A snowstorm last year prevented this program, but Geoff willingly agreed to re-join us this December!

## CELEBRATION OF 4TH ANNUAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

As part of this year's Women's History Month, the Frontenac Museum chose to recognize and honor four women who own and operate thriving businesses in the area.

In prior years, we have honored mothers and grandmothers in the area whose lives serve as role models, women who play often unrecognized roles in the community, namely the women of the **American Legion**, as well as **Chris Shattuck** who keeps the community informed about events and activities in the community via the Happenings in the Village of Union Springs on Facebook, as well as Pat **Kimber** who has been the glue that keeps the Frontenac Museum relevant and active, and **many area women who have served in the various branches of the military.**



**Kathleen Ganley** is owner/operator of **Healing Grounds**, located in the center of Union Springs village. Kathleen's initial vision was to create a warm, friendly nook for people to gather, share music, laughter, and friendship. When that vision did not materialize, she turned back to her medical and wellness training and became a physical therapist, specializing in the health and wellness of people in rural areas. Kathleen practiced physical therapy at Roswell Cancer Institute, DeGraff Hospital, and a school for a total of 13 years. She was a visiting therapist at Children's Hospital for 14 years. As her family grew, she operated a mission for women and children in Uganda working with the Auburn Rotary. In her store, she sells women-made products from Africa, as well as locally made products.



**Nicole Hodges** is owner/operator of **Union Springs Supermarket**, where she started work in 1988, filling several positions until taking ownership in 2020. Having a local supermarket, Nicole continued the history which helps identify the village. Nicole welcomed Frontenac volunteers selling raffle tickets in front of the store. It is a busy spot to sell tickets as local regulars and after-school students flow into the market. The market is known for its meat department with quality cuts and prices that are competitive with large chains. With the help of her husband Steve and other family members, the Union Springs Supermarket continues to thrive.



**Kelli Morgan**, owner and operator of **Morgan's Half Acre Produce**, started her career by selling sweet corn and pumpkins at her parents' farm in Unadilla. She came to Union Springs in 1992, following her graduation from Cornell and marriage to Bill Morgan. From selling Morgan's famous sweet corn in the corner of a parking lot, she has grown the business which is known throughout the region for high quality fresh seasonal fruits, vegetables, baked goods, plants and more. Kelli grows 90% of the vegetables sold at the store. Over the years, the three Morgan children have all grown up picking and selling the produce, learning from their mother the value of hard work. In Kelli's own words, "Taking care of the land we make our living from is a joy, and we love what we do and that we get to share that with our customers."



**Kailey Nolan** is the owner of **Wildflower Creek Flower Farm**, located at 1260 Spring Street Road in Cayuga, NY. Kailey had an opportunity to achieve her goal of having a roadside stand in which she and her children could grow and sell flowers and vegetables. With no experience at either, Kailey studied and researched growing and marketing flowers and produce. The results are beyond anything she ever dreamed of. She has taken the success of her roadside stand, becoming an art and educational center for learning. Throughout the summer, Wildflower Creek Flower Farm provides classes for kids and adults, photo shoots, weddings, and other social events. The business has evolved based on the expressed needs and interests of the community. It is a thriving example of the environmental and cultural interests of rural communities.



## OPEN HOUSE TO CELEBRATE THE 2026 SEASON

Please join us on Saturday, May 16th from 1-4pm, as we open for our 2026 season. We will be hosting an Open House with great refreshments and new, interesting exhibits for you to view. The Genealogy Room has been relocated and now presents a warm and welcoming space for research. The Thomas Eldred Military History Room has been completely refurbished with a new and fresh look. You will be amazed at the effort which has gone into this room to make the exhibits easier to see and to follow the story of local involvement in the military.

We also have two new small exhibits: One on the Lehigh Valley Railroad with some pretty nifty photos, including one of Agent James McGrath wearing his LVRR jacket, which is on display right next to the photo. The other, on Americana, was mounted in honor of America 250! and is designed to invoke an understanding of what symbolizes the sense of Americana.

### Frontenac Museum ANNUAL MEETING 2026

The Annual meeting for 2025 will be held at 6pm on August 9, 2026, at 178 Cayuga St., Union Springs, NY 13160. Members present will be asked to vote on approving changes to the Constitution and By-Laws of the Frontenac Historical Society.

Copies of the updated Constitution and By-Laws will be available upon request. Many of the changes are wording and renumbering. The major changes in The Constitution are increasing annual membership dues from \$10 to \$15 (single) and \$15 to \$20 (family), changing the annual membership meeting from August to June. The By-Law changes include defining a quorum for a board meeting and the annual meeting and changing the officers' term from one (1) to three (3) years.

## YATES PAINTING



This painting of Frontenac Island by William Henry Yates, which was generously donated to us by Ken Harris, has been a favorite of visitors to the Frontenac Museum. But years of dirt, smoke, and aging varnish have obscured the familiar image. The artwork is now in the hands of Westlake Art Conservation Center, and we are hoping that the results will be more like the second AI image!

## GRATEFULLY RECEIVED A GRANT FROM PLEASANT ROWLAND FOUNDATION

We are grateful to the Pleasant Rowland Foundation for a grant which enabled us to purchase several items for the museum. First, two new 6-foot display cases for the Thomas Eldred Military History Room, one of which was needed to replace one which literally fell apart in front of our eyes! Fortunately, no one was injured, and the Foundation saved the day for us.

The National Parks Standards for museums which are housed in converted structures, such as the Frontenac, state that "all exterior windows should be covered". The Pleasant Rowland grant has enabled us to not only improve our solution, but also convey local history. Through its generosity, we were also able to create four window panels for the Union Springs Room. Each panel is an enlargement of early photos: the interior of the Doremus Drug Store showing a young LaVerne Doremus, the LVRR station interior showing Agent Michael McGrath and Operator H.L. Hickey, the interior of the Backus Bank and a very early scene of downtown Union Springs. Please check these out during our **Open House on May 16th.**

## A VISIT TO WESTLAKE CONSERVATORS

**On March 31**, the Curating Team visited renowned Westlake Art Conservation Center in Owasco. The purpose of this visit was two-fold. First, the team is pursuing a grant from the Greater Hudson Heritage Network for the conservation of a William Henry Yates painting of Frontenac Island which was generously donated to us by Ken Harris. The painting was a wedding gift from Vernie Yates, daughter of the artist, to Ken's parents, who lived next door to Vernie.

The NYSCA/GHHN Conservation Grant Program is made possible with funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, with the support of The Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature. In the past, the Frontenac was fortunate to receive a grant from the Greater Hudson Heritage Network for the conservation of the Andersonville Prison lithograph which is on view in the Thomas Eldred Military History Room. Rafael Shea, an Aurora resident, gave us a review of the conservation needs of our painting and was quite interested in not only its provenance but also that both the artist and the scene were local. The painting has been entrusted to them for a thorough examination and will provide the required detailed written condition report and photography which will support the need for proposed preservation treatment of our painting. Fingers crossed that we will receive good news of the grant approval next fall.

We were also treated to a wonderful tour of the conservation labs by Bob Nethercott, who formerly worked for General Products in Union Springs. During the tour we observed up close both paper and painting conservators at work. Many questions were asked and answered. Their new facility is expansive and offers the latest in high state conservation tools and techniques.



Curators Linda Albrecht, BJ Bellen, Jennifer Soucy, Conservator Rafael Shea, Pat Kimber, Linda Kabalac, and Karen Shockey discuss the painting of Frontenac Island while visiting Westlake Conservators,



A painting to be restored must be carefully examined and a treatment plan is proposed. The right half of this portrait has been carefully cleaned.



## **NEW YORK STATE HISTORY**



2026 will mark the 250th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, the foundational document of the revolution that occurred between 1775 and 1783 and resulted in the creation of the United States of America. The territory of what is now the State of New York played an immense and vital role in both the Revolutionary Era and the subsequent 250 years of American history.

A recent show on an area NPR station in Rochester (WXXI) and (89.5) in Geneva on "Connections with Evan Dawson" on March 26, 2026, focused on the importance of preserving local history. The program began with a statement that in a recent study, "only 18% of four-year colleges require a foundational course in U.S. history or government. That could help explain why American students fare so poorly on history exams". The program can be heard on Dawson's website.

New York is unique in mandating a public historian in every city, town, village, or borough, as established by state law in 1919. These historians are responsible for documenting, preserving, interpreting, and sharing local history. In this case, the word unique means not only the first, but one of only two states with such a requirement, Connecticut being the second, and as one of the radio speakers claimed, "copied us".

**The Frontenac Historical Society** is proud to be part of the network of local museums in NYS. **Community museums like ours serve as the custodians of the shared heritage, offering insights into the past and fostering a sense of belonging and identity.**

While national history focuses on presidents, wars, and major events. Local history preserves the everyday experiences of ordinary people. Without the work of local museums and historians, their stories vanish if they have not been recorded and preserved. Genealogy lives in local history, which provides context for those otherwise forgotten stories. Local history plus genealogy is the foundation of community and individual history, shaping identity and preserving heritage. Exploring local history by visiting a local museum, through your town historian, or genealogical work can create a stronger sense of community and even of personal identity. Discovering what, where and when your ancestors lived, can uncover surprising patterns that may be evidenced in your own and your children's lives. It explains why the people who work with a local museum like ours do what they do – and want to share that pleasure and passion with visitors.

**October has been designated National Family History Month.** Rachel Coleman, a nationally known educator and author of the book "How Families Shape Our Identity", says that it can be a powerful antidote against adverse experiences that we face today, giving us a stronger understanding of who we are and motivating us to deepen our roots for generations to come. She wrote this in 2017. Engaging in local history fosters a sense of belonging and empowerment, leading to civic engagement, essential to the citizens in a democracy like ours, all of which makes it even more important in 2026. Visit/Contact/Support Your Local Museum. Engage and support your local town and municipal historians who can be contacted through town and village offices.



## THANK YOU NANCY DOWNEY

On November 27, 2025, we lost Frontenac's first and long-time Curator, Nancy Downey. While she enjoyed many outside interests, her love of history drew her to the Frontenac where she spent an enormous amount of time and energy as our first, and for many years the only curator of our collections. Nancy's love of history, antiques and genealogy was reflected in the wonderful and comprehensive displays she mounted in our exhibit rooms. She was a lifelong member of Eastern Star, and her work with the Union Springs chapter of Rainbow earned her their high honor, the Grand Cross of Color. She volunteered for many local organizations including Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, and Rod & Gun Club while assisting her children and children's friends where needed. After retiring, she moved to Florida to be closer to her children, Keith, Kerry and Kraig. We are deeply indebted to Nancy for the countless hours she gave to the Frontenac. Her touch is still felt today.

## DO-SI-DOCENT, ANYONE?

A docent (guide) is an integral part of our museum family. This person is a volunteer ambassador who opens the museum door for visitors who then can explore and learn about the historical treasures contained within. These artifacts are carefully cared for and organized into both permanent and rotating exhibits by the volunteer curating team. All that a docent needs is a smiling face and a welcoming demeanor. Information about the rooms is listed at each doorway. Stumped by a question (s) from visitors? Obtain their contact information, and a knowledgeable person will get back to them. Written instructions are given beforehand to the docent. The museum is open Saturdays and Sundays from 1pm-4pm from mid-May through mid-October. Will you consider donating three hours of your time to perform this rewarding task? For further information, or to volunteer, please call Jean Lanning at 315-889-7240, or the museum at 315-889-7273.

Docents that have volunteered so far for this season are: Linda Albrecht, Marilyn Baader, Linda Banker, BJ Bellen, Pat Deller, Carol Fearon, Melissa Gray, John and Pat Kimber, Dale Katovitch, Jean Lanning, Deb Lewis, Claire Morehouse, Tom and Joan Parsnick, Meta Riester, Eric Rosenkrans, John and Jean Sevier, Bud Shattuck, Karen Shockey, Jennifer Soucy, and Scott Zippel.

## CURATING CORNER



**Curator Linda Kabelac** applies her keen organizational skills to the careful sorting and cataloging of *Union Springs Advertiser* issues, ensuring each edition finds its rightful place in the museum's historical records. Her dedication brings structured order and renewed vitality to the newly remodeled **Genealogy Room**, transforming it into a welcoming space for researchers and visitors eager to explore local family histories.

## WHY SHOULD I BECOME A MEMBER?

Membership in the Frontenac Historical Society and Museum helps to honor and to preserve local history. As a member of Frontenac, through active participation and support, you help to continue our legacy of historic preservation, honoring local history while developing a sense of pride in and enriching our community. Please consider becoming a member! Contact the Museum at 315-889-7273 or frontenac178@gmail.com for further information. You will be pleased that you did!

## JOIN THE FRONTENAC HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Membership is key to our museum. We rely on members to help the Society run programs, maintain the museum, building and grounds, conduct research and store and preserve local history, artifacts and documents.

To make a special memorial gift, please contact the museum at **315-889-7273**.

### Membership Dues:

**Individual Membership \$10**

**Family Membership \$15**

**Additional Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**Total: \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**Please create my/our membership in the Frontenac Historical Society for 20 \_\_\_\_\_**

**Name: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Address: \_\_\_\_\_**

**City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Zip \_\_\_\_\_**

**Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Mail Gifts to: Frontenac Museum, PO Box 338, Union Springs, NY 13160 OR**

**Access our website: [www.frontenacmuseum.org](http://www.frontenacmuseum.org) and donate thru PayPal.**

**The Frontenac is a qualified not-for-profit 501© (3) organization and your contributions may be tax deductible. The membership year runs from January 1—December 31.**

## CAN YOU IDENTIFY ANY OF THESE VISITORS TO WASHINGTON DC IN 1936?



### DAVIS DESCENDANTS JUMP INTO ACTION

In December, the Frontenac Museum received the donation of the Union Springs Class of 1936 group photograph taken while on their senior class trip to Washington DC. This framed photo was found in the attic of museum member Patty Myska's home. As none of the students were identified, we reached out to our membership for assistance. The relatives of class member Frances Underwood Davis jumped into action, readily identifying their aunt and mother. Many emails passed fast and furious between the family members and, as a result, several students, faculty and chaperones were identified. We are grateful to Marcia Brown (daughter of Francis Underwood Davis) and her cousins Jay Wetherby, Jerry Wetherby, Judy Wetherby (wife of Jay), Steve Wetherby and Sally Otis who all joined in the project. Their enthusiasm was energizing and fun to follow. We thank them for helping to keep our local history alive.

If you can identify anyone in the photo, please let us know via email: [frontenac178@gmail.com](mailto:frontenac178@gmail.com) or 315-889-7273.



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