

GREENE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2013 TO THE COUNTY OF GREENE

The Greene County Historical Society, Inc., a not for profit educational corporation chartered by the New York State Board of Regents, operates the Bronck Museum complex, the Vedder Research Library and the Greene County Historic Register. Tours of the Bronck Museum complex begin in May and end in mid-October except for some special events before the opening and after the closing. Outreach programs are done all year long – in schools, senior centers, at civic groups meetings, etc. The Library is open year round except for two weeks at Christmas time. In 2013 an estimated 2,700 people either visited the Museum or attended the outreach programs. The first Museum visitors in 2013 were from the Netherlands and the last Museum visitors of the season were from England. Another estimated 1,000 people availed themselves of the Vedder Research Library services. In addition to the Netherlands and England the Museum and Library drew visitors from other nations such as Bermuda, Brazil and Canada; and from the US. Visitors came from Maine to California, and from Texas to Wisconsin, representing 19 states. This information is drawn from the visitors sign in log but many visitors do not sign in. Many of the out of state visitors stay in the county overnight or longer while they visit the Museum and Library. The Museum's special events drew capacity crowds for the tours featuring the basement of the 1663 house, the Light of the Silvery Moon event, the 350th birthday party for the house, the Heritage Craft Fair, the Of Great Sorrow late October funeral, and our Chilly Willy tours in mid November. The Museum opened a new exhibit, The Ice Harvesting and Ice Industry Exhibit, in 2013 in the Barrack space, formerly a dog kennel. Another new exhibit, on the Duncan Meat Wagon from South Cairo, is planned for the Barrack space for 2014.

In 2012 the 1663 and 1685 Bronck Houses were re-pointed and in 2013 the Dutch doors in the houses were repaired and painted in appropriate historic colors. In 2014 we hope to put historical appropriate shutters on the 1663 and 1685 house windows and complete the restoration work on the 1685 House for a spring 2014 reopening. Re-pointing of the 1738 brick house is planned as well as renovation work on the basement wall. A hay press from a local farm will be installed in the 13 sided barn.

In 2013 the Society hired a new Librarian, Linda Hunt, who has extensive experience as a research librarian and has worked in historic sites. Linda, who resides in Greene County, has done a great job for the Society and the Library to date. In January 2014 a survey map of the route of the Catskill Mountain Railroad was acquired for the Vedder Research Library. This map is 25 feet in length and covers the entire route of the railroad from Catskill Point to Palenville. This is an excellent example of the Society's efforts to preserve historic documents of the County's past.

The Society cooperated with the Pratt Museum and the Mountain Top Historical Society to curate a special exhibit to celebrate the Katterskill Clove. Each site had an exhibit and the Society had a display of Katterskill Clove art by Benjamin B. G. Stone, the Catskill artist and Hudson River School painter, as well as exhibit cases with Stone's personal items from his Civil War activities. A special program included Stone's depiction of various Greene County vistas was presented by Society Vice-President Jim Planck.

The Society also cooperated with Greene County Judge George Pulver to create an exhibit for the County Courthouse rotunda area.

The Society operates with a mostly volunteer base, but we do employ a full time Curator, a part time Operations Manager, a part time Librarian, a summer Museum Assistant, and a husband and wife team of live in caretakers for a total payroll of approximately \$100,000. All are local people. We make every attempt to deal locally with purchases and local contractors for our restoration work.

The Society appreciates Greene County's assistance in its efforts to preserve and interpret the history of the County.