

**GREENE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2014 TO THE COUNTY OF GREENE**

The Greene County Historical Society, Inc. (GCHS) Is a not-for-profit membership organization chartered by the New York State Board of Regents as an educational corporation. GCHS operates the Bronck Museum complex (a National Historic Landmark site), the Vedder Research Library and the Greene County Historic Register. The Historic Register has over 250 houses and other sites on the Register to date. In 2014 over 3,000 people visited the Museum and Library. Our Association Day event in May to commemorate the signing of the Articles of Association in 1775, commonly known as the Coxsackie Declaration, drew about 300 people and the Heritage Craft Fair in October drew about 800 people. Our regular special events such as By The Light of the Silvery Moon, the Of Great Sorrow Dutch Funeral, the Chilly Willy Tour and the Bronck Family at Home Sunday afternoon programs are well attended. We continue to draw visitors from across the country and the world.

Public schools from both within the County and outside the County come to visit the Museum. Other Historical Societies in the Hudson Valley come for visits as well. The Museum and Library have become regular stops on Elderhostel or Road Scholar tours of the Hudson Valley. Even an engagement party was held on the Museum grounds this past year.

In addition to our regular efforts of tours, researchers coming to the Library, off site programming, and education programs we spent a great deal of time in 2014 doing restoration work on the Bronck Houses. New shutters were constructed for many of the windows on the houses and painted in appropriate colors. The trim was painted giving the Houses a new “old” look. The north interior wall of the 1685 house was rebuilt and a new leveling beam installed to repair and restore the wall. After a 6 year period of being closed for restoration that house was reopened for tours. A failing north wall in the basement of the 1738 house was also repaired. In 2015 we will undertake the repairs on the brickwork on the north exterior wall of the 1738 house. In order to do this work we will have bricks special made to the size needed and replicate the original mortar in order to meet the National Historic Landmark site standards set by the United States Secretary of the Interior. The repairs and restoration were done by Greene County contractors under the guidance of the John Waite and Associates Historic Architectural Firm of Albany.

We are still pursuing a move of a hay press to the Museum site to help interpret the agricultural heritage of Greene County and continue working on an exhibit space for the Sylvester Duncan meat wagon. Duncan operated a butcher shop in South Cairo and used this wagon for home delivery of meat around the late 1890's and early 1900's. Another part of the County's agricultural past is coming to the Museum, a cider press donated by a local man to add to our collection of farming items.

The Society continues to publish its Historical Journal quarterly, entering our 40th year of publication. In the Fall 2014 Journal we published a double journal about the Hallenbeck murder in Athens in 1914, committed by Worthy Tolley, which used Greene County court records for information about the murder trial. As part of the County's Sesquicentennial Civil War Celebrations the Society published the last in a series of four books based on the local newspaper

coverage of the 1860's. The Society continues to provide administrative support to the County Historian in his regular efforts as well as the Sesquicentennial celebration efforts.

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