

Greene County Historian  
Annual Report for Calendar Year 2017

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JAN 16 2018

Greene Co. Legislature

I have continued to fulfill my responsibilities as County Historian by researching and writing a weekly history column called "Greene History Notes" which appears in the county newspaper, *The Catskill Daily Mail*. The columns help to promote an understanding of the rich history of the county and I have received many positive comments on them. Since I assumed this position in 2009 I have contributed over 400 columns. .

I have taken on responsibility for ensuring the exterior of the 1706 Van Loon House in Athens is refurbished. It is the oldest house in Athens and is owned by the Greene County Historical Society. Because of many other priorities, the exterior had been neglected and became a bit of an eyesore. In 2016 I arranged to get several windows repaired. In 2017 I reached out to the NYS Department of Corrections to obtain free prison labor. Inmates scraped the loose paint, masonry was repaired, and a fresh coat of paint was applied. I have also identified a community group that is interested in working with the society to come up with a long term use for the interior of the building. Discussions between the society and the group are ongoing.

Last year I reported that I planned to work with local people in the Village of Coxsackie to get the Mansion Street Cemetery on the National Historic Register. Because of other priorities – particularly the sesquicentennial of the Village – this project was put on the back burner. Working with the new Village Historian, the preliminary application is now done and we expect it to be submitted by the end of January.

Another major activity was my involvement with the Sesquicentennial of the Village of Coxsackie, my hometown. I helped plan all the events as well as chaired a couple of them; open houses at the seven churches in the village and a tour of the Mansion Street Cemetery. Two publications were also published in connection with the event. I was involved with both and wrote the narrative for one. All in all, it took a fair amount of my time. I think most participants found our written material complete and comprehensive and we received many favorable comments about the events. The crowning event was the Reed Street Walk in September which featured costumed actors who portrayed people who had lived there in the past. Hundreds of people turned out for this one.

This past summer I was approached by the Editor of a new magazine; *Catskill Tri-County Historical Views*. I was asked to be the County Editor for Greene County and accepted the position. Material in the magazine will promote an understanding and awareness of the historical and cultural importance of Delaware, Greene and Schoharie Counties. The first issue is due in the Spring of 2018. I am currently working on an article for the following issue.

This year KeyBank donated seven steamship models to the Greene County Historical Society. I agreed to act as the liaison between the two parties. This involved ensuring there was a place to display the models, arranging transportation from Columbia County to Coxsackie, drafting a press release and arranging an event to recognize the acceptance of the donation. The models are now on permanent display in the foyer of the Vedder Research Library.

I continued to serve as a resource for numerous individuals throughout the year and attend a number of events – particularly those sponsored by local history groups as they occurred throughout the year. Some of these included:

Made presentation to the New Baltimore Conservancy on Dairy Farming in Greene County (2/8/17).

Attended and networked at a lecture on New Baltimore by New Baltimore Historian Ted Hilscher (2/22/17).

Colloquium at CGCC to honor municipal historians in the two counties (3/30/17).

Accepted flag from the DAR for GCHC and spoke to their group (4/8/17).

Attended lectures in Catskill by Ted Hilscher and Carolyn Bennett at Patriots' Day Celebration in West Kill (4/22/17).

Attended APHNYS Region IV meeting in Eldred with three other municipal historians (4/29/17).

Invited and attended Greene County "Honor a Vet" ceremony in Catskill (5/20/17).

Gave a talk to the Adult Learning Institute on Tories in the American Revolution (5/25/17).

Participated in the GCHS's Home Tour in Greenville (6/3/17).

Attended Memorial Service and reception for Justine Hummel, long time Hunter Historian, in Haines Falls (6/24/17).

Attended and networked at a lecture by Johanna Titus on Woman's Suffrage in Haines Falls (7/14/17).

Spoke at the dedication of an historic marker at the Stanton Hill Cemetery (7/19/17).

Coordinated church open houses in connection with Coxsackie's 150<sup>th</sup> (7/23/17).

Attended talk at the Mansion Street Cemetery in connection with Coxsackie's 150<sup>th</sup> (8/6/17).

Attended History Conference at the NYS Museum for County Historians (8/25/17).

Attended and networked at the MTHS Bazar in Haines Falls (8/26/17).

Participated in the Reed Street walk in connection with Coxsackie's 150<sup>th</sup> (8/8-9/17).

Guest on radio station 90.7 WGXC, "Backtracks in Time" (9/14/17).

Attend, work and network at GCHS Heritage Craft Fair (10/1/17).

Attended, introduced speaker and networked at talk by Michael Rausch, Town of Coxsackie Municipal Historian (10/5/17).

Attended talk by Jonathan Palmer on the Thompson Street Cemetery in Catskill (10/6/17).

Attended and spoke at first meeting for the new "Tri-County Historical Views" publication in Gilboa (10/12/17).

Attended and networked at Coxsackie CAFÉ event at Birch Hill (10/20/17).

Attended and spoke at Pratt Museum Award dinner (10/27/17).

Attended and spoke at ship model donation event at the Vedder Library (11/2/17).

Attended and spoke at memorial service for Karen Deeter, former Town of Lexington Historian (11/4/17).

Represented County Historian position at Coxsackie Christmas by the River (12/3/17).

With regard to the tour of homes, for the past several years I have used my office to help the society gain financial support from local businesses. I have also been in touch with and supported activities by other historical societies from time-to-time throughout the year such as the Cairo Historical Society, the Windham Historical Society, the Pratt Museum and the Mountain Top Historical Society.

As enumerated above, I made presentations on Greene County History throughout the year. I continue to remain available to make presentations when called upon. In addition, from time to time I have served as a resource for media such as "The Hudson Valley Magazine", the

“Kingston Daily Freeman” and “Columbia-Greene Media Newspapers.” I also continue to keep in touch with town and village historians in Greene County and make myself available as a resource. I find them to be a very dedicated group. Lastly, I regularly receive phone calls and e-mails from people with research and genealogy questions. I answer what I can or provide referrals if I cannot.

Instructions for preparing this report called for me to provide a comparison of my activity for the reporting year with that of the previous year. In answer to that, I first have to say that although requests for help and services vary, the type of things I do remains fairly static except when a particular anniversary is being observed. Based on the requirements set forth by the State of New York, I feel I am performing the mission of County Historian as prescribed and achieving a high degree of operational success. In terms of time spent at my job, in 2017, I spent 586 hours doing work as Greene County Historian compared with 546 hours the previous year, an increase of 7 percent.

Respectfully Submitted



David C. Dorpfeld  
Greene County Historian  
January 12, 2018