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Greene Co. Legislature

**GREENE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.  
REPORT TO GREENE COUNTY FOR 2017 YEAR**

In 2017 we increased attendance at the Bronck Museum and Vedder Research Library by over a 1,000 visitors. Our outreach programs, going out into the community, also increased, going out into Greene County as well as surrounding Counties. We had great attendance at Pieter Broncks 400<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party (700+) and the Heritage Craft Fair (1,200+) which are free admission days. Over 200 paid visitors (children were free) came to board the Dutch replica ship *Onrust* at the Coxsackie Riverside Park and many more came just to see the replica ship.

A local miniatures expert was hired to do restoration work on Palenville's Egbert Saxe's scale model of the Catskill Mountain House. The restoration work drew the praise of the grandchildren of Mr. Saxe who came from the western part of New York State to see the completed work.

In the Fall of 2017 at the Heritage Craft Fair we opened a new exhibit in the Barrack area to accompany the Ice Industry and Ice Harvesting Exhibit. The Sylvester L. Duncan meat wagon, originally in South Cairo, exhibit was opened featuring the wagon and a life size figure of Sylvester beside his wagon. Street views of Athens, where he delivered meat, compose the three sides of the exhibit and a panel in the front gives information on the meat wagon and Mr. Duncan. We have begun planning a new exhibit on apples in Greene County. Also in the works is new signage for the inside and outside of the 13 sided barn.

The Vedder Research Library had an open house in November to have local author, John Ham, present his book on the West Shore Railroad and to view the recently restored map of the Catskill Mountain Railroad roadbed. It shows elevations, grade crossings and property owners along the roadbed from Catskill Point to Palenville. The map is approximately 20 feet long by 18 inches on graph paper. We had purchased the map from a Catskill antiques dealer in 2015.

In October we had a second major addition to our collections: a gift from Key Bank of 6 models of Hudson River boats made by F. Van Loon "Fluffy" Rider formerly of Coxsackie. These models were commissioned by National Commercial Bank, predecessor to Key Bank, for their former branch in Athens. After the branch office was sold to National Bank of Coxsackie, the models went to Hudson and then into long term storage. It should be noted the Maritime Museum in Kingston and the Smithsonian have "Fluffy" ship models in their collections.

In 2016 we purchased the former Lincoln's Auction Barn property at the intersection of Route 9w and Pieter Bronck Road. This property had been Bronck property until 1939. As part of an Eagle Scout project, the property was cleared of weeds and small brush. The Eagle Scout also built three benches for the site, using an antique bench from the site as a pattern. In the fall of 2017 the property was cleared giving a clear view into the Bronck Museum site from 9W. A barn from the late 1800s early 1900s date of the former auction barn was dismantled and will be placed on the property. It will house a hay press donated to us several years ago.

Our new Librarian Archivist is in the process of properly archiving our Library collections and providing more digital access over the internet indicating what our collections contain, which they can then come and use for research purposes. A local person, the Librarian Archivist brings a Masters Degree in Archival Science from SUNY Albany and a good knowledge of local history to the position

Our new caretakers have been in place since August, and we had been without caretakers from September of 2016. We had planned to have the positions filled before that but a frozen pipe

burst in the upstairs bathroom of the caretakers house causing great damage in the first floor area. Using a local restoration firm from Catskill we were able to provide a newly renovated residence. The caretakers have been working hard and the building and grounds are showing the results.

Our restoration efforts on the Bronck Houses over the past few years have been well received by visitors to the site. We still have work to do, but the site gets good comments for the well kept condition and well done restoration work.

We have begun work on the Hunter Education Center to renovate the building and use it for small group workshops and Society meetings. A barn to house our hay press donation has been removed from its site on Route 81 and is being readied to be erected on the former auction barn lot.. The re-purposed barn will be used to view the hay press as well as for bathroom facilities, storage and open space for events, lectures, sales, etc. Fund raising for the barn is in process.