

Greene County Historian
Annual Report for Calendar Year 2018

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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 Catskill Daily Mail*. In addition, the editor of the weekly *Mountain Eagle* approached me about running my column. It has appeared in that newspaper since November. 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 close to 500 columns.

In 2017 I took on responsibility for ensuring the refurbishment and restoration of the 1706 Van Loon House in Athens. It is the oldest house in Athens and is owned by the Greene County Historical Society. First I reached out to the NYS Department of Corrections to obtain free prison labor for exterior work. Inmates scraped the loose paint, masonry was repaired, and a fresh coat of paint was applied. I 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. Throughout 2018 the group raised funding and accomplished a great deal on restoration of the interior. By the summer work had even reached a point where the building could be opened to public for the County-wide Fireman's Convention. I continue to work as a liaison between the ad hoc Athens group and the Greene County Historical Society.

Last year I also spent a considerable amount of time with a group working to restore the neglected Mansion Street Cemetery in Coxsackie. We have made an application to put it on the National Historic Register and should hear if it is accepted in 2019. We have also secured a New York State History marker from the Pomeroy Foundation valued at \$1,100 which will be erected in the spring of 2019. Almost \$25,000 for repair and restoration activities has been raised and 2018 progress included: tree removal; grave stone cleaning, repair and straitening; a new flag pole and access improvement.

Another project I worked on in 2018 involved the reconstruction of a late 19th century 40' by 60' barn on the Bronck House complex. The structure originally stood about five miles from where it is being reassembled and would probably not have survived another winter. When completed the barn will house a rare 1880s working hay press and provide additional event, storage and exhibition space. Throughout the year I assisted the barn committee with fund raising for the \$200,000 project. In addition to securing smaller donations, I was able to identify an individual who made a \$10,000 donation.

In 2017 I was approached by the Editor of a new magazine; *Catskill Tri-County Historical Views*. The magazine is published twice a year. 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. For the first issue which was published in the spring of 2018, I contributed a book review. For the second issue which came out in the fall, I contributed the lead article on the Clark family of Athens and Cooperstown.

In 2018 I became a member of the Coxsackie Historic District Commission. In addition I continue to serve as Chairman of the nominating committee for Coxsackie-Athens Foundation for Education. Finally, as a member of American Legion Post 166 in Coxsackie, I served as the focal point between our post and the Cairo Post in sponsoring a young man in the Legion's

Constitution Speech Contest. As of this writing, Aiden Bohem has advanced through three levels of competition and will be competing for the New York State title on March 2, 2019.

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 occur. Some of these included:

Attended and networked at Oak Hill Preservation presentation (3/1/18).
Attended lecture and networked at the Vedder Research Library (4/8/18).
Attended and networked at Civil War Roundtable lecture in Greenville (4/11/18).
Attended lecture and networked at Greenville Local History Group lecture (5/13/18).
Attended and networked at Honor a Vet Ceremony in Catskill (5/19/18).
Attended and networked the Greene County Historical Society's Patriot's Day (5/19/18).
Attended the NYS Association of Public Historians Region meeting (6/9/18).
Attended and networked at the "Living History" program in Halcottville (7/7/18).
Made presentation to the Greenville Local History Group on Dairy Farming in Greene County (7/9/18).
Organized a gravestone cleaning event at the Coxsackie Mansion Street Cemetery (7/10/18).
Attended, worked at and networked Tavern Night at the Bronck Museum (8/25/18).
Attended, worked at and networked a GCHS Heritage Craft Fair (9/30/18).
Coxsackie Historic District meeting (10/9/18).
Master of Ceremony for Coxsackie charity OWL auction (10/13/18).
Judge for the American Legion Constitution Speech Contest (10/26/18).
Attended and made presentation at the Pratt Museum Award Dinner (11/10/18).
Attended and represented position at a meeting about signage for the new Mawignack Preserve in Catskill (11/13/18).
Gave a talk on the history of the 2nd Reformed Church (11/28/18).
Attended and networked at fundraiser for the Willows in Athens (11/30/18).

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.

I continue to remain available to make presentations on Greene County History 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 in the past 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 2019, hours spent were once again in the 500-600 range.

Respectfully Submitted

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "David C. Dorpfeld".

David C. Dorpfeld
Greene County Historian
February 28, 2019

Linda Dunn
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