

Greene County Historian  
Annual Report for Calendar Year 2020

RECEIVED  
APR 29 2021  
Greene Co Legislature

This year was a year like no other I have experienced. Maybe the 1918 Spanish Flu was worse, but this has been pretty bad.

As in the past I spent 2019 responding to inquiries via letters, emails, texts and phone calls. I attempt to satisfy these requests or direct them to an individual or a group that can be of further assistance. My direct face-to-face contact with individuals and groups has been very limited for most of the year.

I have also 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* and the weekly *Mountain Eagle*. 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 500 columns.

Due to the pandemic, in an attempt to keep in touch with members, the Greene County Historical Society started a weekly electronic newsletter called the *Greene County Good News Letter*. I have been a regular contributor to this publication as well.

Throughout 2020 I continued to act as the liaison between the Greene County Historical Society and a local community group in Athens working to restore the 1706 Van Loon house on Route 385. The building is owned by the society. The group raised funds and accomplished a great deal on restoration of the interior. The building has been open to the public for several community events over the last three years.

Last year I also continued to spend a considerable amount of time as co-chair of a group working to restore the neglected Mansion Street Cemetery in Coxsackie. We made an application to put it on the National Historic Register and late this year it was accepted. In 2019 we also secured a New York State History marker from the Pomeroy Foundation valued at \$1,100 which has been erected. Progress over time has included: Tree removal, grave stone cleaning, repair and straightening; a new flag pole and access improvement, and a start on replacing the fencing on the street side of the cemetery.

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 the spring 2020 edition I contributed an article on the 1813 murder of Sally Hamilton in Athens.

In a normal year I attend a number of events – particularly those sponsored by local history groups as they occur. This did not happen this year.

After 11 years I have decided to step down as Greene County Historian as of December 31, 2020. I telegraphed this move when I asked the County Legislature to create the position of Deputy County Historian in 2019. The position was filled by Jonathan Palmer, Archivist at the

Vedder Research Library in Coxsackie. He was named Greene County Historian effective January 1, 2021. I am confident that Jonathan will do a great job and comes with numerous skills that will lead to his success

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 2020, hours spent were in the 600-700 range.

Respectfully Submitted,

David C. Dorpfeld  
Greene County Historian