

GREENE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.
A Private not for profit educational corporation
Chartered by the NYS Board of Regents in 1929
2022 ANNUAL REPORT TO GREENE COUNTY FOR THE YEAR 2021

Compared to 2020 and COVID the Greene County Historical Society (GCHS) did far better in 2021. In 2020 we opened the Library and Museum in July for 2 days a week with outside tours of the Museum only and limited visitors to 8 per tour. For the Vedder Research Library 2 per morning and 2 per afternoon for 2 days a week.. No lectures, one special event, the Heritage Craft Fair, held outside only with social distancing and face masks required, limited visitors, only the bare essentials. In 2020 we held our Annual Meeting in the Vedder Research Library socially distanced and masked with only Trustees attending. The 2021 year ended with a breakfast brunch at a local restaurant with about 35 attending our Annual Meeting, and on-Trustees in attendance. Financially in 2020 we did alright thanks to cost cutting measures and a \$25,000 grant to keep staff on the payroll.

The Greene County Historical Society found ways to open safely for visitors in 2021. Museum visitors were required to make reservations in advance, with limits of eight per tour, three tours a day. Walk ins were allowed if space were available. Most days the Museum was open, Wednesday thru Sunday, there were tours booked, many fully booked. With a limitation of 8 per tour, and three tours a day at the Museum, our attendance was down. We would normally take about 12 to 15 for a tour, but with COVID, for the health safety of our Curator and the visitors we purposely limited visitors. We had one group tour, the reunion of 29 people who had served on the submarine Carp. They had come to Albany and booked a day at the Museum followed by a lunch picnic at Catskill Point. The reunion visitors came from all over the US, as did regular visitors from Arizona, California, Connecticut, Colorado, Florida, Massachusetts, Montana, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, Vermont and Virginia. Foreign countries represented were Belarus, Kenya, Netherlands, Pakistan, and Russia. There was one school tour with 8 12 year old girls from a private school in Columbia County. For the Library, reservations were required as well, generally with two reservations for the morning and two for afternoon three days a week and by special appointment. Visitations were good for both venues.

Financially the Society did well, but not as good as in non-Covid years. By watching our spending and our investments doing well we ended the year with our 2021 budget in the black. Some of that was due to some large donations, postponing some maintenance such as painting due to rainy conditions, and not filling some positions which we had budgeted for.

Our collections increased in 2021 both in the archival materials donated to the Vedder Research Library and the items donated to the Bronck Museum. The Museum received such items as former Assemblyman Bill Brady's childhood sled; a signature quilt from the Coxsackie; a chamber pot from the Hotel Katterskill; and textiles, ceramics and militaria from the Van Vechten Hamill family. The Library received such items as a large paper collection from the Van Vechten Hamill family of Catskill and Wisconsin, including several items from the Elmendorf family; geneological papers from the late Jane Freese; and albums of school memorabilia from Grandview School in Catskill.

Our special events started slowly in June, but picked up as 63 visitors enjoyed "By the Silvery Moon" a full moon evening of entertainment; about 60 for a talk on "Buccaneers, Bootleggers and Pirates of Greene County", 400 to 500 visitors for our Heritage Craft Fair in October, and finally 8 tours over three days for "Chilly Willy" in November with 67 paid reservations and 64

attendees. A total of almost 1,100 visitors came for the 2021 year. Although scaled down, our public outreach continued. Zoom presentations for Cairo Durham 7th graders were done on "General Greene" and "Greene County in the 20's and 30's". One lecture program was done in December on the "Anniversary of Pearl Harbor". In person lectures were limited to the Athens Garden Club about "Athens in the 40's", and two appearances at the Catskill Rotary and one at the On-ti-Ora Chapter of the DAR meeting. A *Good News* letter featuring articles on local history and images of items or photos in our collections was emailed regularly during the COVID pandemic, reminiscent of George Bagley's *Good News* letter for GI's from Greene County during WW II. Our 45th year of a *Quarterly Journal* continued to be published 4 times a year with scholarly articles about local history. We awarded our 13th Annual Raymond Beecher Scholarship of \$1,000 to a Coxsackie Athens senior for her essay on local history.