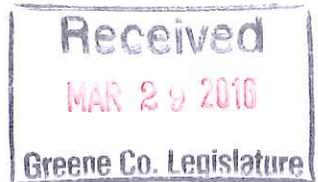


2015 GREENE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.  
ANNUAL REPORT TO GREENE COUNTY



The mission statement for the Greene County Historical Society, Inc. is contained in its incorporation by the Charter from the NY State Board of Regents in 1929. The object of this Society shall be the preservation of historical matter relating to the history of the County of Greene in particular and New York State in general and to create an interest in all matters of historical information; collect, receive and preserve, and safely keep historical records, documents, books, paper, maps, manuscripts, letters, journals, relics and things which may establish or illustrate the history, growth and progress of the County of Greene and its surroundings. And to establish a museum therein for their preservation; to suitably mark places of historic interest in the county; to receive gifts in its name, of property and any nature, including real estate; to acquire by purchase, property, including real estate, in its name for one or more purposes of its organization, and to hold and manage the same under the sanction and direction of the Society, by direct vote, or due authorization to its officials. @

- § In 2015 the Society has received several paper items from various sources for its collections, including such items as paper materials and ice tools dealing with the ice industry in Greene County; photos of former heavyweight champion Mike Tyson and his time in Greene County with Cus and Camile D=Amato; diaries, photo albums and paper items from the late Phillip Goodwin and Jean Albright families (Goodwin was the last US Congressman from Greene County and his daughter Jean Goodwin Albright was a past President of the Society); an Uncle Sam costume worn by the late Lou Hoyer of Coxsackie and a ritual costume from the Felix Rebekkah Lodge in Coxsackie.
- § The Bronck Museum in Coxsackie, a collection of houses and barns, the oldest of which dates to 1663, has been undergoing renovations and restoration under the guidance of John Waite and Associates historic preservation architects, who specialize in Dutch colonial architecture. We have completed work on the north interior wall of the 1685 house, the north interior basement wall of the 1738 house and the north exterior wall of the 1738 brick house, which included new windows, frames and sashes. In 2016 we will be working on the south interior wall of the 1685 house and the south exterior wall of the 1738 house. Although our architect is located in Albany County, our restoration contractor is from Greene County.
- § The Historical Register Committee of the Society continues to add sites to its register of historic places in the County now numbering over 250 sites.
- § In December 2016 the Society purchased 1.6 acres consisting of the site of the former Lincoln Auction Barn property to improve the view of the Museum site from Route 9W, and which was prior to 1939 a Bronck property.
- § The Society had masters level graduate students from the University of Delaware Winterthur Program. The Program is designed to prepare graduates for museum curator positions. The graduate students were researching Clark Fox Pottery from Athens, particularly inkwells. Both the Vedder Research Library and the Bronck Museum have collections of Clark Pottery material. The Museum has two inkwells in their collection and there is one at the Smithsonian and one at

Winterthur. Their paper on the inkwells will be published in the Society=s Quarterly Journal in 2017.

§ A book on Francisek Polak, a Czech national who testified at the United Nations on Russian war crimes during WWII, was received. The author, from Czechoslovakia, had been searching for a picture of Polak and a copy of his testimony before the UN. The Society=s Vedder Research Library was able to provide him with a copy of the testimony and a member of the Society took a picture of Polak=s image on his tombstone in Cocksackie for use in the book. The author indicated he had searched the UN archives which did not have a copy of the testimony.

§ The Society continues to publish *Greene County History: A Quarterly Journal* containing local history articles, now in its 40<sup>th</sup> year - almost 160 journals to date. Also published is *The Messenger*, a twice a year publication for members with news of The Society.

§ Society employees and members have done programs for local schools and community groups, as well as doing programs in both Columbia and Albany County in 2015 to help commemorate the end of the Civil War and the Lincoln Funeral Train coming through NYS.

§ In addition to its regular tours from May through October, the Society also celebrated Association Day in May to commemorate the signing of the Articles of Association in 1775 in Cocksackie to show their support for the actions against the Crown in Boston. In August there is a special night event @By the Light of the Silvery Moon@ with a story teller, music, refreshments and a moonlight walk on the grounds. In October the Heritage Craft Fair with music, crafters, and food draws between 800 and 1,200 attendees to the site and special tours for @A Great Sorrow@ a program on funeral services in Dutch colonial times is also well attended. In November about 100 people per year over a two day period attend the @Chilly Willy@ tour of the cold houses and preparations for winter and the holiday celebrations of St. Nicolas (Dutch) and St. Lucia (Swedish).

§ Our Curator presented programs in Greene County as well as Albany and Columbia Counties. Our Curator was also invited to attend a seminar in Jonkopping, Smoland, Sweden at the Jonas Bronck Center, as an expert on Pieter Bronck, Jonas= brother or cousin. The event was cancelled at the last minute unfortunately, but the recognition of the Society=s expertise was nice.

§ The Society has been working with the Mountain Top Historical Society and the County Economic Development and Planning Department to place the large scale model of the Catskill Mountain House nearby the site of the Original Catskill Mountain House. It is felt that this would be a tourist attraction for the Katterskill Corridor and help draw more visitors to Greene County. This working relationship has been instrumental in opening new opportunities for both Societies.

In comparison to last year=s report, for 2014, our overall attendance was down slightly because we did not get the Kingston School 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders in 2015 and a couple of Tour groups cancelled at the last minute. We continue to work on the hay press and the Duncan Meat Wagon exhibits.