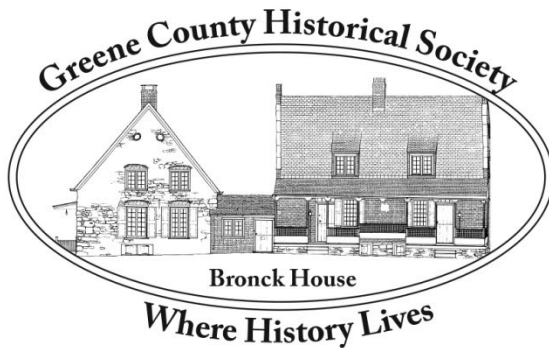




Greene County Historical Society, Inc.
90 County Route 42
Coxsackie, NY 12051

518-731-6490
www.gchistory.org

Bronck Museum
Vedder Research Library
Greene County Historical Register

Greene County Historical Society 2025 Annual Report to the Greene County Legislature GCHS President Christine L Byas

The Greene County Historical Society is dedicated to preserving and sharing the rich history of Greene County. By maintaining the archives at the Vedder Library, and operating the Bronck Museum, the Society safeguards the cultural heritage of the area through tours, educational programs, lectures, exhibits and outreach programs.

2025 was an eventful year for the Greene County Historical Society. With the retirement of David Dorpfeld in 2024, Lou Martin was elected treasurer of the Society in January and with the help of Assistant Treasurer, Jennifer Barnhart developed the GCHS budget for the year. Lou began chairing the Investment Committee to review and make recommendations on the Society's investments.

Robert Hallock, long time President of the Society, retired and was elected Trustee Emeritus. Sadly, both Bob and Ann Hallock passed away this past year after long illnesses. Vice President Jim Planck, Executive Committee Members, and Jennifer Barnhart, worked to insure that the business of the Society continued uninterrupted.

In May, at the GCHS's Annual Meeting, I was elected President, Nancy Gifford, Vice President and John Parker, Recording Secretary with Tom Satterlee continuing as Financial Secretary and Lou Martin as Treasurer. We along with board trustees immediately set to work. We knew that we needed to prioritize the work that needed to be done on the historic buildings and grounds and also find ways to fund the renovations needed.

To give the Legislature some perspective in 2023 we had hired Ken Gifford, a Landscape Architect, to develop a site plan which was completed in the fall of 2024. We hired Delaware Engineering to help us complete a Consolidated Fund Grant from NYS Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. In July of 2024 we submitted the grant. Unfortunately, we were notified in December of that year that we did not receive it. We resubmitted the application for this very competitive grant again this year but were again denied.

In June meetings after I was elected President, we decided a major fundraiser was needed. The Building and Grounds Committee had toured the grounds and noted all the repairs that were needed as well as the need to finish the Meadow Ridge Heritage Barn. With estimated costs of over \$400,000, planning began on a Fundraising Party at The Wire Event Center in Coxsackie. With the help of business sponsors from across Greene County, and the support of members of the Legislature, the Society and the public, over \$38,000 was raised. We are looking forward to holding a similar benefit in 2026.

The Society hired the Preservation Architectural firm Thayer, Riley and Wilson to advise the Society and help us prepare a NYS Cultural Arts Grant. Members of the firm

toured the Museum buildings from cellar to attic to develop a detailed list of needed repairs. Senior Project Designer, Sophia Lane, then created shovel ready architectural drawings for completion of the Meadow Ridge Heritage Barn which were required for the grant. The NYSCA Grant was submitted in early January of 2026. TRW is also preparing a Conditions Report to be included in the Historic Preservation Grant we are applying for in April of 2026.

This past year we held a full schedule of events and educational programming starting off in March with the Annual Olga Santora Lecture presented by Dr. Lawrence Howard and titled "Growing discontented: Women Patriots and the Political Rhetoric of the Founding Era".

On Association Day in May we held an Open House and invited the public to attend. Ted Hilscher, Trustee Emeritus, County Historian, Jonathan Palmer and Vice President, Jim Planck each gave their perspective on the "Articles of Association", the Village Volunteers Fife and Drum Corps performed and costumed interpreters visited with attendees throughout the afternoon.

On June 7th, we held our annual Home Tour in Athens. Despite the wet weather we had a good turnout and raised a little over \$7,000.

"Civil War Music and Mrs. Lincoln", was presented with music provided by "Veterans in the New Field" with Judee Synakowski interpreting as Mrs. Lincoln.

Several of the Society's lectures honored the 80th Anniversary of the ending of World War II. Historian Dick Muggeo spoke about "Women in World War II", the "Enola Gay Atomic Bomb Mission", "World War II Campaigns and How Greene County Reacted to the Surrenders" and "Stories of World War II Veterans".

Jim Planck discussed Greene County in the Quebec Campaign which occurred during the Revolutionary War. Another interesting program was Jonathan Palmer's, Canajoharie and Catskill Railways.

Curator Shelby Mattice presented 3 Special Curator tours titled "Cooking Before Martha", "Winter Woes", and "Bits and Pieces" with quilts from our collection.

Trustee Lex Grey entertained us with a program, "Songs of the Saloon" with period music and interesting anecdotes from the saloons in Greene County.

Our annual Heritage Craft Fair was held the first Sunday in October and thanks to the beautiful weather we had a large turnout. We added several new crafters, saw the return of the horse drawn wagon with rides for young and old alike and musicians "Running the River". We added a kid's area in the Meadow Ridge Heritage Barn with face and pumpkin painting, a candy raffle, refreshments and the music of local musician, Luke Barnhart. The day held something for everyone to enjoy.

Early in the year, the Museum Committee hired Samantha Siri as our tour guide. Samantha graduated with a bachelor's degree in history from St. John's University. Besides her tour guide duties, she prepared posters for our events and planned and organized the Craft Fair among her many responsibilities. After the museum closed for the season, she updated the GCHS website and used the Bronck Family archives to learn more about the family. Samantha began a weekly posting on our Facebook and Instagram Accounts and in January resurrected the "Good News Letter", a monthly online newsletter, that was last published during the time the Historical Society was closed during Covid. The original "Good News Letter" was written during World War II and sent to the men and women serving overseas.

Heather Bizanos, the librarian at The Vedder Library had a busy year. She supervised 10 volunteers throughout the year and managed additional resources to the collection. Heather answered many email inquiries and met with researchers looking for genealogical information. She also posted to the Library's website, Facebook, and Instagram accounts as well as the "Greene County History Group".

The Bronck Museum will be opening a new exhibit in the Barracks in the spring titled "Dr. Williard's Buggy". Doctor Williard was from Catskill and made house calls throughout the area. Doctor DuBois Jenkin's family graciously donated the carriage to the Greene County Historical Society.

Needed repairs on the Museum's buildings were completed. The porch on the 1738 was stabilized with additional repair slated for the spring. The 13-Sided Barn was painted by Kev/Mark while the Dutch Barn is scheduled for painting this spring. The Library doors were replaced, and the security system was updated. When our lawn mowing contractor failed to show up in early spring, volunteers, Art Byas and Mark Maraglio, kept the lawns mowed and completed other grounds keeping duties. After our caretakers were dismissed, volunteers were also responsible for garbage and snow removal, and a variety of other maintenance issues. We hired a cleaning service for the Library which will extend to the Museum this summer.

Throughout the spring, summer and fall, the Bronck Museum and Vedder Library welcomed over 1,000 visitors to the GCHS site. We raised over \$16,000 from Museum admissions, educational lectures, Library activities and donations.

The Greene County Historical Society would like to thank the Greene County Legislators for their support. We truly appreciate the \$37,000 grant we received from you this year. The money will help us address the serious structural issues that exist on our campus. The \$5,000 grant we receive each year helps support the operation of the Greene County Historical Society. As we have received this same amount for quite a few years, the GCHS would like to request an increase to \$15,000 next year. Thank you for considering this proposal.