



Greece Historical Society P.O. Box 16249 Greece, NY 14616 (585)225-7221

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GREECE HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2016 ANNUAL REPORT

The Greece Historical Society was formed in 1969 and received its absolute charter from the New York State Department of Education Board of Regents as a not-for-profit 501(c)3 corporation on November 21, 1974. Concerned and interested community volunteers of various backgrounds and education lend their talents to govern the organization as the Board of Trustees.

The all volunteer Society's purpose is to collect, preserve, research and share local history with the community. We strive to provide the community with an awareness of the past, an appreciation of the present, and a vision for the future, giving a sense of "roots" and a greater feeling of belonging.

To accomplish its purpose the Society offers:

- public programs
- articles about local history
- group and school programs
- docent led museum tours, especially to school groups and scouts
- resource materials and books to area schools and libraries
- a resource library at our History Center
- special events
- a web site and Facebook page informing people of upcoming programs and events
- DVDs, videos and Power Point shows of various history subjects, sites and architecture
- a museum shop selling a variety of local history books

Beginning in the mid 1970s the Greece Historical Society shared space with the Town of Greece Historian in a Town owned house on English Rd. In 1988, with the encouragement of then Town Supervisor Don Riley, the former home of Gordon Howe, Greece Town Supervisor for 26 years and former Monroe County Manager, was donated, to the Society by Wegmans for their use and the office of the Town Historian. The 1855 farm house has been restored by the Society and sits on a one acre parcel of land leased from the Town of Greece on the Greece Town Campus. It was the first building on the campus, which now includes the Town Hall, Town Justice Court, Public Library, Community & Senior Center a nearly complete new Police Headquarters and other recreational amenities.

The house, which is owned and maintained by the society, contains the Society's administrative offices, research library, museum shop an exhibit hall wing and until 2015 the office of the Town Historian. It is not part of the Town government and receives no funds from the Town of Greece.

Docent led tours are held Sunday afternoons from 1:30 to 4:00 p.m. or by appointment. Office hours are Monday and Tuesday mornings from 10 a.m. to noon, or by appointment. Special events exhibits and programs are held throughout the year.

The following is a report of the activities of the Greece Historical Society for 2016:

MUSEUM EXHIBITS



Besides maintaining and updating the permanent exhibits in the Museum's Newcomb Hall, we started the year with an exhibit on "Early Settlers and Agricultural Families." In June we opened our major exhibit for the year: "Hometown Sports of Greece, New York" focusing on 30+ sports figures of Greece who have made an impact on sports. The exhibit was spread over large portions of the house and museum.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Tuesday Evening Lecture Series - Our eight monthly Tuesday evening lectures featuring local historians, authors, and humanities scholars have again proven to be very popular with the community. During 2016 we averaged 85 guests per evening. Our programs have earned a reputation throughout the region for providing high quality, professional and entertaining history lessons. Besides Greece residents, our guests regularly come from Victor, Henrietta, Hamlin, Chili, Spencerport, Irondequoit, and the City of Rochester. The monthly lectures are held at the Greece Public Library. We would like to thank library director Cassie Guthrie and her staff for being so supportive and accommodating to our needs.





Sunday Programs at the Museum - During 2016, the Greece Historical Society hosted informal programs on Sunday afternoons in the museum. These programs were varied with the intent to interest a wider variety of people and ages. The programs included book reviews, stories of local farm families, personal experiences with Norman Rockwell and the making of the first atomic bomb.

Vintage Baseball Game - On May 14 The Greece Historical Society hosted its first 19th century baseball exhibition game. The game, presented by the Rochester Baseball Historical Society, was played in the spirit and style of the Victorian era. The contest featured barehanded players dressed in replica vintage baseball uniforms representing established Rochester teams from the period.



Cemetery Tours



Continuing an offering we started in 2015, the Greece Historical Society conducted several monthly tours of Holy Sepulchre Cemetery. The public learned about some notable Rochesterians interred in the oldest section of this historic 1871 cemetery, including Patrick Barry, "Rattlesnake Pete," Colonel Patrick O'Rourke, Mother Hieronymo O'Brien, and James Cunningham.

VISITORS

During 2016, approximately 800 visitors signed our museum guest book. We are sure that more than half the visitors did not sign in, so it can be assumed that we had well over 1,600 visitors, possibly 2,000.

Besides for individuals and families, we conducted free tours for nearly 500 children from five Greece Public and private schools, and one City School. The Greece Arcadia History Club and the Friends & Fun group from the Town of Greece also toured the museum.



COMMUNITY EDUCATION

The Greece Historical Society continues to provide free local history information to museum visitors, students of Greece Central Schools, private schools, home-schooled children, and scout groups. We have also assisted a number of students with projects and/or papers.

GHS ON THE ROAD



During 2016 Members of the Greece Historical Society presented programs at dozens of venues including the Greece Kiwanis, Greece Rotary, Greece Community and Senior Center and various clubs and historical societies. We conducted tours at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery. We also had a information table at the Dewey Avenue Neighborhood festival. The GHS is also participating with other organizations in The Rochester Area Suffrage Centennial Alliance (RASCA). We also conducted a class comparing suburban and city living to students in the City School District.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT



During 2016 members of Greece Historical Society attended the Museum Association Annual Conference in Lake Placid, NY-with funds provided by a grant from the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA). Volunteers also attended, at their own expense, the New York Family History Conference in Syracuse, a War of 1812 Symposium in Oswego and a Woman's Suffrage conference in Seneca Falls.

COLLECTIONS

This past year, in keeping with the Collection Management Policy, Greece Historical Society volunteers have continued to organize the museum's collections. They completed work on the children's clothing, hat, and undergarment collections, photographing and cataloguing them in our museum database software PastPerfect. The volunteers at GHS will continue to inventory the objects in the museum in order to have a complete catalog of the collections.



COLLECTING & PRESERVING OUR HISTORY

Our volunteers sorted and arranged hundreds of photo's, letters, news articles etc. by William Aeberli. Interviewed two families that once rented the Beatty-Howe house in the 1960's. Flattened, identified and put a large collection of photo's (circa 1917 to early 1980's) in protective binders that came from the George Weidman estate (co-owner of the Elmheart Hotel). Sorted other slides from various sources and arranged them in binders for future scanning. Scanned many newspaper articles loaned from Jack Kemp's collection, most dealing with or relevant to the general Charlotte-Greece history. Scanned hundreds of photos from the McShea and Odenbach families.



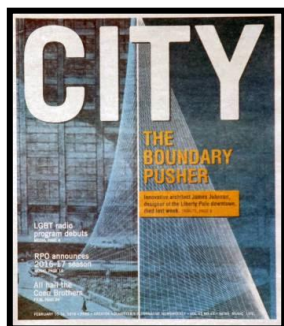
RESEARCH

Currently volunteers are investigating the history of the Underground Railroad in Western New York and the role Greece residents played in getting fugitive slaves safely to Canada. An exhibit that will open in June of 2017 will explore the local connections—station houses and conductors who lived in Greece. Concurrently, volunteers are also researching the Charlotte Political Equality Club, a very active group of Greece women, which helped secure the passage of woman's suffrage in New York State on Election Day, November 1917. An exhibit to mark the 100th anniversary of that historic event will open at the museum in September 2017.

Also, ongoing research continues into notable Rochesterians buried in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery as we hope to offer a new walking tour of sections on the west side of Lake Avenue next year in addition to the two tours we conduct on the east side of Lake Avenue.

In the past year Greece Historical Society volunteers have also interviewed and collected stories and photographs of Greece farm families, including the McShea, Thayer and Lemcke families

SHARING INFORMATION



During 2016, the Greece Historical Society supplied requested photos and/or information to the *Democrat & Chronicle*, *585 Magazine*, *City Newspaper*, Channel 13, the Landmark Society of Western New York, and to several free lance writers. We provided historical information to a number of phone or e-mail inquiries, plus many walk-ins. We assisted a number of students with information for their project papers and were instrumental in connecting a Greece family with relatives from out of state.

In 2016, the governance committee completed work on an Image reproduction policy and a Publishing policy. These policies were presented and approved by the Board of Trustees.

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In 2016 the Greece Historical Society expanded its bi-monthly newsletter, the "Corinthian," to a monthly publication, averaging eight pages. Each edition contained Society information about events and activities and contained a local history story by Alan Mueller. It is mailed to all the members and made available on our web site. For the first time we also began selling ad space to help defray the cost of this newsletter.

Greece Historic Preservation Commission - The Greece Historical Society provides information to the Greece Historic Preservation Commission and one GHS trustee is a member of that commission.

Preservation League of NYS Grant - The Greece Historical Society has received two grants totaling \$14,000 to conduct a cultural resource survey of existing buildings designed by Rochester architect James H. Johnson.

The Preservation League of New York State, in partnership with the New York State Council on the Arts, presented the Greece Historical Society with a \$13,000 Preserve New York grant on Monday, October 24. In September, The Landmark Society of Western New York awarded the Greece Historical Society a \$1,000 grant to help supplement the Preserve New York grant.

The Greece Historical Society will use the entire grant funds to hire Bero Architecture PLLC of Rochester to complete the project. The goal of the survey is a multiple property documentation form which could help lead to State and National listing for Johnson's buildings.

James H. Johnson (1932-2016) was an innovative architect who gave the Rochester and Western New York region some of its most distinct structures, including Rochester's Liberty Pole, St. John the Evangelist Church in Greece, Temple Sinai in Brighton, and the Mushroom House in Perinton. Mr. Johnson passed away in February.

PUBLIC RECOGNITION



Marie Poinan - Our very active volunteer Marie Poinan's love of history, her contribution of several booklets on the local area, and the many public programs she has conducted made her the ideal person to be honored with the Greece Chamber of Commerce's 2016 "History" award. This was the fourth recognition award given to a GHS volunteer by the Greece Chamber in the past four years. Others were Lorraine Beane, Lee Strauss, and Alan Mueller.

Museum Association of NY Award - At the annual conference for the Museum Association of New York, the Greece Historical Society was awarded a Certificate of Commendation for the "Our Town in World War II" project. The project was submitted in the category of "Engaging Communities" and was one of only fifteen awards given out and one of only two in the Finger Lakes Region of New York.



Congresswoman Slaughter - We were honored with a visit by U.S. Congresswoman Louise Slaughter on Sunday afternoon, December 18. She spent well over an hour touring the museum and talking to everyone who was there and telling us about her love of history and her childhood memories of growing up in Kentucky. She expressed her admiration for all the volunteers at Greece Historical Society who keep our community's history alive and even stayed to enjoy some homemade cookies. It's a real pleasure when our elected officials show an interest in history and express admiration for the work their volunteer constituents do. We certainly appreciated her kind words.



BOY SCOUTS

For the past several years we have sponsored Boy Scout Venturing Crew #1910. The group has used our house as a meeting place. They were a tremendous help at the Strawberry Festival.



PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

It is imperative that the Greece Historical Society maintains a relationship with professional and community organizations. The following are the organizations that the Society is a member of, or has a working relationship with: The Association for Public Historians of New York State, Greece Chamber of Commerce, Landmark Society of Western New York, Museum Association of New York, and the Rochester Regional Library Council.



We also maintain a close co-operation with local historical societies, especially the Charlotte Genesee Lighthouse, and meet regularly with local historians.



COMMUNICATION & PROMOTION

The Rochester *Democrat & Chronicle*, the *Greece Post*, *City Newspaper* and *GreeceNewsNY.Com* magazine featured the Greece Historical Society in several articles and columns during the year. Tom Sawnor appeared on Channel 10 TV news with Rebecca LeClair to promote the "Hometown Sports" exhibit, TimeWarner News covered the opening of "Hometown Sports" and WROC Channel 8 featured our Scanning day.



Our Facebook page has over 560 "friends" and a monthly e-mail blast is sent to over 670 people. A new updated web page was created this year and went live in September. Our monthly newsletter, the "Corinthian," is mailed to all our members, distributed at the museum and at our monthly programs, and is available on-line.

TECHNOLOGY



Sound Clip Player - One of our newest volunteers, Wally Rust, donated a "Sound Clip Player" that he built for use in the museum. The player currently has seven sound clip excerpts taken from radio broadcasts during World War II. The clips include Franklin D. Roosevelt's "infamy" speech before Congress

Internet - Until July 2016 and for nearly 10 years, the Town of Greece graciously gave us internet access. We now contract with Frontier for our own access with no change in our e-mail address.

Web Site - After many years we changed our webpage to the newly created www.greecehistoricalsociety.org

FUNDRAISING

Funds come from membership dues, donations, an occasional grant, sales in our museum shop and fundraising events, including this year:



Strawberry Festival – Our annual Strawberry and Dessert Tasting Festival included six area vendors offering samples of their dessert products, entertainment, and information displays from several local non-profit organizations. Unfortunately a road closure for one hour, the weather, and a first time Town permit fee severally affected both attendance and our profit. We still consider it the Town's best neighborhood festival.

Pasta Dinners - We hosted two successful pasta dinners in 2016. Each was attended by over 100 of our members, friends, neighbors, and local elected officials.



Craft & Book Sale - On November 26, in conjunction with Small Business Saturday, the Greece Historical Society held a Craft and Book sale with over 10 vendors selling their books and handmade crafts. Each vendor paid us a fee to display their wares. Over 75 came and purchased goods from the vendors and our museum shop.

Museum Shop - Our museum gift shop continues to sell books and other items to museum visitors. New this year is a large 1902 map of the Town of Greece.

Also new this year, a selection of our books are offered for sale in the Friends of the Greece Public Library book store, "Second Hand Prose."



TREASURERS REPORT FOR 2016

This is the first year that we did not receive funds from the Town of Greece for Town Historian services. This represented 25% of our income in 2015. For 2016 we established an austerity budget and undertook additional fund raising efforts to fill the gap. These new efforts were successful. Our revenue was expected to be \$16,000 without extra fund raising, it was actually \$25,000. However, this extra fund raising involved much extra work on the part of many society members to raise the additional money.

As you might expect it was harder to keep spending on budget. Our operating budget was \$16,000 and we actually spent \$20,000. Everything we need seems to be increasing in price. Even so we increased our cash balance in 2016. Year end 2015 we had \$18,000 in the bank, 2016 we have \$24,000. The Society is in good shape financially, however additional efforts have to be made for fund raising on an on-going basis.

You may have also seen in the Corinthian that we received a grant of \$13,000 from the Preservation Society of New York to conduct a study of local architect James Johnson's work. We also received \$1,000 from the Landmark Society of Western NY for the same purpose. These funds are in our accounts, but are not included in the above numbers. All of it is committed to pay for the study which should be completed in 2017.

VOLUNTEERS

2016 Student Assistance-Interns

Andrew Easterly, a graduate in American History with a masters in Library Science, recently has been employed by such agencies as the CIA in Washington, DC as an information analyst. Home in Penfield waiting for a new position, he has graciously volunteered his time and talents to help build up and organize our computer files on local history. He has scanned old photos, articles, and archives, organizing them into files, and he has searched the internet to find images we can use for our exhibits. He was invaluable in researching historical facts and images. He also has accessioned the books in our reference library, organizing them into easily retrieved sections. He is currently working full time. We appreciated all of his help.

Hannah Chhibber has a degree in archaeology from U of R and York University in England. She will continue her studies at George Washington Un. to attain a master's degree in Museum Studies this summer. Hannah has been a co-registrar for the society's collection. She handles the accessioning of artifacts, photographs them, and stores them in archival materials – a time consuming project. She also helps with exhibit planning for 2017. She recently assessed the children's clothing and boxes of petticoats, camisoles, and pantaloons. Some date back to the era of the Civil War.

Andrea Maples, a student at the SUNY Brockport, worked on cataloging and organizing some of the clothing in the Museum's collection. Andrea is an energetic student, majoring in History, Anthropology, and Business Management, with a minor in Museum Studies. She is hoping to continue her work to obtain more of the technical skills that will help her find a place in a museum.

K'Shawn Kindred is our newest volunteer, he is a Senior at Greece Olympia H.S. During his Jr. year, he was enrolled in AP Global Studies. As a Senior, he is currently taking Citizens in Action classes and completed the requirements for his Community Service at our facility. He has stated that he would like to stay on to help us whenever he can. His plans are to continue his interest in History by attending Finger Lakes Community College in the fall of 2017.

Calibri (Body)

Volunteer of the Year - It has been our tradition to honor each year one outstanding volunteer who has contributed greatly to the Greece Historical Society. This year we honored Kathie Firkins. Kathie has been our lead docent for many years and also our education coordinator. She coordinates school and group tours and frequently visits schools to tell students about the history of Greece. This year she was also on the Sports exhibit committee.



Thank You! - It takes countless volunteers to run our organization. Some may loan us a treasured heirloom, repair a broken light fixture, help with a single event or guide visitors through our museum on Sunday afternoons. Still others of our loyal volunteers spend hundreds of hours during the year to keep the place going. With so many volunteers throughout the year, it is just impossible to list everyone, especially with all the help we received in 2016.

Exhibits, events and projects each took many hours of volunteer time. Let's not forget the many school and scout tours that were conducted by several retired teachers from our education committee. Then there were our Sunday docents and Sunday program presenters, the museum shop committee, finance committee, the marketing committee, the governance committee, the regular Monday morning group, the people helping to photograph, scan and inventory our collections, and our Board of Trustees. We also can't forget the Greece Garden Clubs who maintain our gardens.



Vital to any not-for profit organization is the tireless dedication, energy and support of its volunteer board of trustees. Our nomination committee is always on the lookout to fill vacant positions with individuals interested in joining this dedicated team.

Thank you to our volunteers, members and community for your continued support in preserving the past for the future !

2016 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

William M. Sauers (*President*)

Sandy Peck (*Vice President*)

Paula Smith (*Secretary*)

Bill Peeck (*Treasurer*)

Cynthia Shevlin (*Newsletter Editor*)

Ruth Curchoe

Betty Tudisco

Tom Sawnor

Gregg Redmond

Pam O'Sullivan

Donald C. Newcomb (*Honorary Trustee*)

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "William M. Sauers", is written over a horizontal line.

William M. Sauers
President