



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

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GREECE HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2017 ANNUAL REPORT

The Greece Historical Society was organized in 1969 by Greece Town Historian, Virginia Tomkiewicz with the encouragement of Town Supervisor Fred J. Eckert who became a charter member. The Society 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 tours of our museum, 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 our 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 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 2017:

MUSEUM EXHIBITS



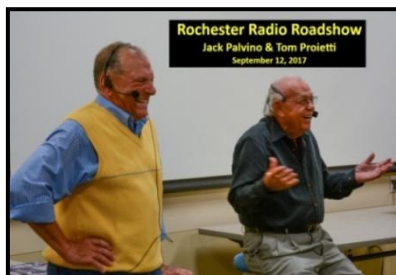
Besides maintaining and updating the permanent exhibits in the Museum's Newcomb Hall, we created two new exhibits in 2017, "The Underground Railroad" and "Winning the Vote: The Women of Greece." We upgraded a Town historical map exhibit and in November we hosted a State wide traveling exhibit on the Erie Canal sponsored by a Humanities New York Action Grant.



We also continued through August our "Hometown Sports of Greece, New York." The exhibit focused 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 2017 we averaged 75 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, 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 - During 2017, the Greece Historical Society hosted several informal programs on Sunday afternoons. These programs were varied with the intent to interest a wider variety of people and ages in local history. The programs included the story of Buckman's Dairy, the Barns of Greece, Baseball Artifacts, Historic Signs in Upstate New, and a book review about grieving in cemeteries.

Scanning Day - For the second year in a row we hosted a free public scanning day. Several professional firms set up shop in our center and allowed the public to scan prints, negatives and slides. Photo restoration was also provided.



VISITORS

During 2017, approximately 700 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 1,400 visitors, possibly 2,000.

Besides individuals and families, we conducted free tours for over 450 children from Greece Public schools, private & home schools, and one City School. Groups such as the Greece Arcadia History Club, scout groups, and a Henrietta Senior group also toured the museum.



GHS ON THE ROAD



During 2017 members of the Greece Historical Society presented programs at the Charlotte Branch Library, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, Honeoye Falls Historical Society, Greece Community and Senior Center, St John's Church, and others. We had an information table at the Dewey Avenue Neighborhood festival and participated with other organizations in The Rochester Area Suffrage Centennial Alliance (RASCA) and the Rochester Regional Library Council.



As a community service project members representing the Greece Historical Society participated in a Greece Rotary project to help assemble meal packets to be distributed to children in third world countries.

On December 4, 2017, Kathy Firkins and Bill Sauers visited the City of Rochester School District's Dr. Walter Cooper Academy School #10 second grade classes to explain to the children the difference between city and suburban living and to talk about their recent visit to our museum.



STAFF DEVELOPMENT



During 2017 members of Greece Historical Society attended the Museum Association Annual Conference in Lake Placid, NY. Volunteers also attended, at their own expense, the New York Family History Conference in Syracuse, and met with other area museum professionals.

COLLECTIONS

This past year, in keeping with the Collection Management Policy, Greece Historical Society volunteers have continued to organize the museum's collections, photographing and cataloguing them in our museum database using 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

During the past year we have made a serious effort not to collect items and artifacts that do not meet our mission or for which we do not have adequate space or a proper way to store them. We have, however, accepted several unique local history books, several items from World War I that were owned by a Greece resident, a Hotel DeMay baseball jersey and jacket (*the historic Hotel DeMay was demolished this past November*) and a original painting of the old Greece Town Hall by a former GHS member.



RESEARCH

This past year our volunteers headed by Maureen Whalen investigated the history of the Underground Railroad in Western New York and the role Greece residents played in getting fugitive slaves safely to Canada. This resulted in an exhibit which opened in June. Concurrently, volunteers researched 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 opened 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. We are also engaged in a continuing project researching previous Greece Supervisors.

PUBLICATIONS

Although the Greece Historical Society did not publish any books or research material in 2017, our members created and self published two local history booklets which we marketed and sold in our museum shop. Jane Grant published her book on "Barns of Greece" and Maureen Whalen and Marie Poinan published "Winning the Vote - the Women of Greece" which supplemented our exhibit on woman's suffrage.



GOVERNANCE

In 2017, the governance committee has continued to re-write or create various policies for the society. In 2017 the committee completed work on an ad sales policy and developed descriptive tasks for various committees. These policies were presented and approved by the Board of Trustees.

SHARING INFORMATION



During 2017, the Greece Historical Society supplied requested photos and/or information to the *Democrat & Chronicle*, 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.

The Greece Historical Society also continues to provide free local history information to museum visitors, students of Greece Central Schools, private schools, home-schooled children, and scout groups.

A local community action group "Save the DeMay" was organized to promote the preservation of a local historic hotel known as the Hotel DeMay. The Greece Historical Society supplied historical information about the building and its history to that group.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Greece Historic Preservation Commission

For many years the Greece Historical Society has provided information to the Town of Greece Historic Preservation Commission and one GHS trustee was a member of that commission. That Commission was dissolved by the Town in January 2017.

Preservation League of NYS Grant - In 2016 The Greece Historical Society received two grants totaling \$14,000 to conduct a cultural resource survey of existing buildings designed by Rochester architect James H. Johnson.

The Greece Historical Society is using the entire grant funds to pay 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.

The project is on-going and is expected to be completed in 2018.

PUBLIC RECOGNITION



Gina DiBella - One of our members, Gina DiBella was honored with the Greece Chamber of Commerce's 2017 "History" award. This was the third History recognition award given to a GHS member by the Greece Chamber in the past three years. The two others were, Marie Poinan, 2016 and Alan Mueller, 2015.

Congresswomen Louise Slaughter - In December 2016, Congresswomen Louise Slaughter visited our museum and spent over an hour with us. In January we received a thank you letter from her complimenting us for the work we do for the community. It is gratifying to know that our elected officials appreciate the commitment and dedication of our volunteers.



Institute of History, Archaeology and Education - In June Peter Feinman, president of the Institute of History, Archaeology and Education and a well-known NYS History advocate, featured the Greece Historical Society in his NY History Blog (<https://ihare.org/2017/06/20/regents-leadership-needed/>) in an article titled "What Are History Societies Doing and What Can the Regents and Governor Do to Help Them?" He suggests that tax payers dollars support organizations like the Greece Historical Society. He also states that "there is little appreciation or even awareness (*by the State government*) for the numbers of people who collectively attend lectures through their local history societies.....Remembering the Lyceums and circuit Chautauquas that barnstormed the country in years past, people still like to be with other people in a social and intellectually stimulating setting that reaffirms community identity."

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 Rochester Genealogy Society, and meet regularly with local historians.



COMMUNICATION & PROMOTION



Public Media - The Rochester *Democrat & Chronicle*, the *Greece, Chili, Gates Post*, *City Newspaper* and *GreeceNewsNY.Com* magazine featured the Greece Historical Society in several articles, calendar items and columns during the year. In September, Maureen Whalen appeared on Spectrum News promoting the "Winning the Vote" exhibit. Local TV Station WHAM Channel 13 attended our annual strawberry Festival and broadcasted live during the event.

Society Newsletter - In 2017 the Greece Historical Society's newsletter "The Corinthian" was published monthly except for a combined July/August issue averaging eight pages. Each edition contained Society information about events and activities and a local history story by Alan Mueller. It was mailed to all the members and emailed to local elected officials and other historical societies. It is also available on our web site and distributed at the museum and at our monthly programs. For the second year we have sold ad space to help defray the cost of this newsletter. In 2017 we also began a new postal mailing system which has resulted in a considerable saving.



Social Media - We regularly add content to our Facebook page which has over 715 “friends.” A monthly e-mail blast is sent to over 750 people, and we have an active web site,



TECHNOLOGY



Sound Clip Player - One of our volunteers, Wally Rust, built and donated a “Sound Clip Player” which describes various scenes in our Native American mural and an account of the earliest residents of Greece at Kings Landing.

Video Screens - Alan Mueller and Joe Vitello created an interactive map which identifies the origins of local street names. Using raspberry Pie technology we have two tablet size screens telling various stories about the Erie Canal and World War I.



BUILDING MAINTENANCE

Like any property there is always something to fix, update or replace. This past year we changed the lighting system in the museum exhibit hall and attic and changed many of the lights to LED. The front steps have been rebuilt, gutters were professionally cleaned, some outdoor lighting has been replaced and minor adjustments have been made to our heating system.



TREASURERS REPORT FOR 2017

2017 was another successful year financially for the Society. Revenue was \$22,000.00, above expectation due to excellent turnouts at special events, and unanticipated generous donations. Expenses were \$19,000.00 for the year, which was under budget. We saved \$1,200.00 dollars by using a new US Post office mailing process for the Corinthian Newsletter. While this process required some extra work on the part of volunteers, it resulted in a significant decrease in expenses for the Newsletter. Business insurance cost was decreased by \$200.00 due to the Society changing insurance carriers. Some additional expenses occurred for the building in 2017: upgrade and repair to the emergency lighting both inside and out, repair of the front steps, and some furnace repairs. Effectively for 2017 our bank account increased by \$3,000.00

FUNDRAISING

Funds come from membership dues, donations, an occasional grant, sales in our museum shop and fundraising events.



Strawberry Festival – Our annual Strawberry and Dessert Tasting Festival included six area vendors offering samples of their dessert products, entertainment, information displays from several local non-profit organizations and the Channel 13 Weather Van.

Pasta Dinners - We hosted two successful pasta dinners in 2017. Each was attended by nearly 150 of our members, friends and neighbors.





Craft Sale - On November 11, the Greece Historical Society held a Craft sale with several vendors selling their handmade crafts. Each vendor paid us a fee to display their wares. Over 50 people 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.

A selection of our books are offered for sale in the Friends of the Greece Public Library book store, "Second Hand Prose," and two independent book stores in the area.



State Education Grant - We received one grant this year from the NYS Education Dept for \$1,000.00 to support our educational school tours and to help fund our lecture program. These programs were previously funded by the Town of Greece historian contract which ended last year.

VOLUNTEERS

Student Assistance - **Hannah Chhibber** has a degree in archaeology from the University of Rochester and York University in England. Hannah has been a co-registrar for the society's collection. She handled the accessioning of artifacts, photographed them, and stored them in archival materials. She also helped with exhibit planning for 2017 and a number of fundraising activities. She recently assessed the children's clothing and boxes of petticoats, camisoles, and pantaloons. In August, she left to attend George Washington University to pursue her masters in Museum Studies.



Volunteers of the Year - It has been our tradition to honor each year an outstanding volunteer who has contributed greatly to the Greece Historical Society. This year we honored two members who have worked as a team, Joe Vitello and Arnie Amering, as our volunteers of the year. Joe and Arnie have been our "go to" guys for the past few years. From changing light bulbs, baking cookies, or building exhibits, we can always count on these two dedicated volunteers



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, it is just impossible to list everyone, especially with all the help we received in 2017.



Exhibits, events and projects each took many hours of volunteer time: the exhibit teams who spent countless hours researching and installing new exhibits; the many school and scout tours that were conducted by several retired teachers from our education committee; then there were our Sunday docents; the 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 and the local businesses who sponsor our events and advertise in our newsletter.



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 supporters from the business community, our volunteers, members and friends for their continued commitment to preserving the past for the future!

2017 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

William M. Sauers (*President*)

Tom Sawnor (*Vice President*)

Paula Smith (*Secretary*)

Bill Peeck (*Treasurer*)

Cynthia Shevlin (*Newsletter Editor*)

Ruth Curchoe

Jack Wallenhorst

Gregg Redmond, Esq.

Pam O'Sullivan

Sandy Peck

Deborah Whitt

Donald C. Newcomb (*Honorary Trustee*)

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

William M. Sauers
President

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