

GREECE HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2024 ANNUAL REPORT



Sharing our Town's Story Since 1969



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By definition, a historical society is an organization dedicated to preserving, collecting, researching, and interpreting historical information or items. Unlike many other states which recognize cultural agencies as nonprofit private businesses, New York State sees them as educational organizations. Chartered historical societies in New York like the Greece Historical Society are a significant part of our educational system, are incorporated under Education Law, are subject to the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York and are recognized as a member of the University of the State of New York.

The Greece Historical Society (GHS) 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.

With the retirement of the Town Historian Virginia Tomkiewicz in 1995, the Town of Greece contracted with the Greece Historical Society to provide the space and services of the Town Historian. In 2016 the contract ended, and the Town Historian's office was moved to the Greece Public Library.

The all-volunteer Society's purpose is to preserve, collect, research, and share local history with the community. Concerned and interested community volunteers of various backgrounds and education lend their talents to govern the organization as the Board of Trustees. 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:

- a historic house and museum with rotating exhibits
- print and digital articles and publications about local history
- public programs and special events
- docent led tours of our museum
- a reference library at our History Center
- presentations on various history subjects, sites, and architecture
- a museum shop with a selection of local history books and items
- help with personal research
- a website, Facebook page and YouTube channel

Beginning in the mid-1970s, the Greece Historical Society shared space with the Town of Greece Historian in a Town-owned house on English Road. 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 sold to the Society for \$1.00 and moved by Wegmans to its present site for our use and the office of the Town Historian.

The circa 1855 farmhouse was restored by the Society and sits on a 1.25-acre (300'x182') 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, Police Headquarters, and many recreational amenities including an enlarged Community Center, now called "The Center at Greece Town Hall," and a new large skateboard park.



The house, which is owned and maintained by the Society, contains the Society's administrative offices, research library, museum shop, and an exhibit hall wing that opened in 1998. The Society is not part of the Town government and receives no funds from the Town of Greece. As per the lease agreement, the Town continues to cut the grass and plow the driveway. For nearly three years the Town has taken over the driveway and parking lot for use as a staging and parking area for the construction of the expansion of the Center and a skate park. In November the town completed the first phase of paving the parking lot. In the spring the Town plans to finish the parking lot with a top coat of asphalt.

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

The following is a summary of the activities of the Greece Historical Society for 2024.

MUSEUM VISITORS

During 2024, approximately 300 visitors signed our museum guest book. We are sure that many of the visitors did not sign in, especially at events like the craft sale and book sale, so it can be assumed that we had many more. Due to an adjacent town construction project our parking lot was either muddy or gravel until mid-November when the first phase of paving was completed; we are sure attendance was affected because of that parking situation. We did, however, welcome a few school groups, including Greece teachers, the Athena Middle School History Club, and the Friends and Family group from the Greece Community Center.



EXHIBITS

In addition to the permanent exhibits in our museum exhibit hall, we had an exhibit on Paddy Hill School, a school first established in 1839; a baseball exhibit curated by a member of the Rochester Baseball Historical Society; and an exhibit on 20th century toys.



SOCIETY LECTURES AND PRESENTATIONS

Our eight monthly Tuesday evening lectures featured local historians, authors, and humanities scholars. Our presentations have again proven to be very popular with the community. During 2024 we averaged over 50 guests per program. Our programs provide high quality, professional, and entertaining history lessons. The monthly lectures were held at a Greece Central School District building. We would like to thank **Dave Richardson**, and GCSD Superintendent **Kathleen Graupman** for being so supportive and accommodating of our needs.

Our annual meeting was held at the Greece Central School District Transportation building which included a recap of the past years activities-

We also conducted several Sunday afternoon programs at our museum: a grand opening ceremony for our Baseball exhibit, a program by the Rochester Theater Organ Society, an exercise in Stonework Play (an activity using stone creativity to tell stories), a Holiday Open House, and a celebration honoring two of our outstanding volunteers,



CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS



In 2024, volunteers of GHS attended two APHNYS, day long meetings and a Rochester Genealogical Society annual daylong session. In addition, several of our volunteers participated in webinars offered by the Rochester Public Library, Rochester Regional Library Council, and the New York State Archives. In October GHS hosted a meeting of Monroe County Appointed Historians.

SPECIAL EVENTS

In September, a Holy Sepulchre Cemetery tour was organized and conducted by volunteers **Maureen Whalen** and **Joe Vitello**.



In April GHS held a special day honoring two of our outstanding volunteers, **Marie Poinan** and **Maureen Whalen**.

PUBLIC LECTURES, OUTREACH & PRESENTATIONS

There were several programs presented by our volunteers in 2024, including presentations at: The Center at Greece Town Hall, the Parma Community Center, the Local AARP, Bethany Church, and the Parma Greece United Church. We also had an information table at a Local History event at Genesee Country Village and Museum, and a Senior Day at the Mall.



SCHOLARSHIP

The Greece Historical Society announced a \$2,000 scholarship in memory of **Warren C. Crandell**, who left a portion of his estate to GHS. It will go to a graduating high school senior from the Town of Greece who plans to further their education as a history or history education major or minor at a two or four-year college or university. The winner of the scholarship will be announced in Spring 2025.



Warren was a World War II Navy veteran and a retired high school teacher. He was an enthusiastic amateur historian and attended many programs at the Greece Historical Society. He passed away in 2021 at age 95. The bequest he left to the Greece Historical Society will be used to honor his memory by paying it forward to graduating seniors who show the same enthusiasm he had for learning.

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

This past year we have made an extensive effort to inventory and re-organize our entire collection of artifacts.



COLLECTING & DOCUMENTING OUR HISTORY



During the past few years, we have made a serious effort to only collect items and artifacts that meet our mission of telling the story of Greece and for which we have adequate space or a proper way to store them. A few new acquisitions included:

- Marionette doll handmade by a Greece student in 1934
- A Frear Chevrolet souvenir
- A Barnard Fire Department commemorative plate from 1977
- School District documents relating to new school openings.

Marie Poinan and **Jo Ann Ward Snyder** continue to collect information and documentation for an upcoming volume 2 of *Pioneer Families of the Town of Greece*, while others continue to document and/or photograph buildings and events.

SHARING WITH OTHERS

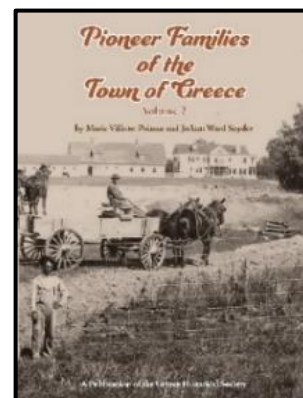
Occasionally our Society acquires or is offered items that do not meet our mission or that we cannot properly care for. With storage space at a premium and keeping in mind the cost of caring for these items, we insist that any object or document we acquire will help to tell the story of Greece. This past year we transferred a bound volume of *Moore's Rural New Yorker* for 1863-1865 to the Local History and Genealogy Division of the Rochester Public Library.

Other items that we have collected and accessioned over the years that we determined no longer fit our mission, were duplicates, or were in poor condition beyond repair were de-accessioned.

PUBLICATIONS

Work continues on volume 2 of *Pioneer Families of the Town of Greece*, with an anticipated publication in the Spring of 2025. This new book will contain vignettes and photos that highlight each family's contribution to the town and is written by volunteers **Marie Villone Poinan** and **Jo Ann Ward Snyder** with input from descendants of each of these families.

We also reprinted the book *Barns of Greece* by Jane Grant which was out of print for a couple years.



PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS & NETWORKING

It is imperative that the Greece Historical Society maintains a working relationship with other historians and professional, educational, and community organizations.

The Society is a member of the Association for Public Historians of New York State, Greece Regional Chamber of Commerce, Landmark Society of Western New York, Museum Association of New York, and the Rochester Regional Library Council.



The Society also has a close relationship with the Greece Central School District, the NYS Historian, and the NYS Archival Partnership Trust along with other local historical societies, especially the Charlotte-Genesee Lighthouse and the Hilton Parma Historical Society. Several GHS volunteers also meet regularly with local historians and are members of other historical and genealogical societies and professional organizations.

PUBLIC ACCESS TO OUR ARCHIVES



During 2024 we welcomed several individuals to access our archives to help complete their professional research, investigate genealogy information, or find information for an upcoming book.

PARTNERSHIPS

This past year the Greece Historical Society has partnered with other community organizations, including the Sons of the American Revolution in a grave marker dedication ceremony and the Greece Central School District School 5 at the Paddy Hill memorial dedication. Several members worked on events for other historical organizations, including the Parma Hilton Historical Society, Holy Cross Church, and the Charlotte Genesee Lighthouse.



HISTORIC PRESERVATION

In the Town of Greece, Historic Preservation falls under the purview of the Town Planning Board. While not part of the Town of Greece government, GHS continues to monitor local preservation issues. One of our volunteers has a master's degree in Historic Preservation and GHS is a member of the Landmark Society of Western New York.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

In March, we hosted an outdoor Girl Scout cookie sale. We also gave them the opportunity to sell drinks and cookies at our annual strawberry festival. Our strawberry festival also invited community groups to set up information tables. The groups included: Charlotte Genesee Lighthouse, Western NY Federation of Square & Round Dancers, Greece Public Library, Daughters of the American Revolution, Honor Flight, Greece Ecumenical Food Shelf & Clothing Closet, Lifespan, Colonel Patrick O'Rorke Memorial Society, and GRASP. GHS also purchased a brick in support of North Greece Fire Department's First Responder memorial.



RESEARCH PROJECTS



In the fall of 2020, the Greece Historical Society contracted with Bero Architecture to conduct a Cultural Resource Survey of the work of Thomas W. Boyde Jr., Rochester's first African American architect. Initially funded through grants from the Preservation League of New York State/New York Council on the Arts and the Rochester Area Community Foundation, the Greece Historical Society provided additional funds.

The project continues to expand and grow beyond its original scope. The project team uncovered hundreds of additional projects designed by Boyde and integrated this new-found information into their inventory and evaluation of Boyde's work. They hoped to gain access to even more drawings and materials, but after several unsuccessful attempts, concluded it wouldn't be possible at this time. More recently a small cache of additional drawings was uncovered by the Boyde family. The project team hopes to be able to review these drawings if time and funds allow.

In June a final draft of the historic resource survey and its project database was submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Due to staff turnover in Albany, the review of the draft survey has been delayed, but the project team hopes to have informative feedback from SHPO soon and will conclude final editing of the survey in early 2025.

Extensive research was also conducted in creating the upcoming *Pioneer Families of Greece New York, Volume 2* and authoring several local history stories in our newsletter. Additionally, volunteers at the Greece Historical Society helped several individuals and organizations this past year with research involving individual history questions. With our network of other historians and organizations we were able to assist others in finding the information they needed that was outside the Greece area.

PUBLIC RECOGNITION

We are proud and honored that in April the Greece Historical Society received a proclamation from the Town of Greece recognizing the dedication of our volunteers that have enriched our community through educational programs exhibits and preservation efforts. The proclamation was signed by the Greece Town Supervisor William D. Reilich.

COMMUNICATION & PROMOTION



Public Media - Unfortunately, local print news has become almost nonexistent, and we depend more and more on social media. One local monthly magazine, the *Greece News*, regularly features stories about GHS and our programs. In February *Greece News* featured a cover story about our Thomas Boyde project. In November we were interviewed for a story that will appear in *585 Magazine* in January.

Social Media - We regularly add content to our Facebook page, which has more than 1,720 “followers.” A monthly email blast is sent to over 800 individuals and organizations. Greece Historical Society also has an active website which includes current news, a calendar of events, an archive of past newsletters, historical articles, and a collection of videos of past programs on our YouTube channel which generated 3,219 views in 2024.



Society Newsletter - In 2024, the Greece Historical Society's newsletter, *The Corinthian*, was published monthly except for a combined July/August edition. Each issue, with 6 to 8 pages, contained Society information, photographs about events and activities, and a local history story. It was mailed to all members and courtesy copies were emailed to local elected officials and other historical societies. It is also available on our website and distributed at our museum.

BUILDING & PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

Because we own our historical center and receive no financial government support, we are responsible for all maintenance, repairs, upgrades etc. Like any property, there is always something to fix, update, or replace. In 2024, besides general maintenance, we had a new furnace installed, our AC checked, had our fire extinguishers inspected, replaced exhibit hall lighting with more efficient bulbs, and an old garden was professionally upgraded.



FUNDRAISING

Fundraising is a necessary part of every non-profit organization. Our income comes from an endowment fund, fundraising events, membership dues, donations, an occasional grant, and sales in our museum shop. We receive no monetary funds from the Town of Greece.

Annual Strawberry Festival - Because of adjacent Town construction in close proximity to our leased area, the town offered us the use of the pavilion on the town campus for the third year. The event was a huge success, despite the intense heat, with over 400 attending.



Craft Sale - On October 26, the Greece Historical Society hosted our seventh annual craft sale with 10 vendors selling their handmade crafts. Each vendor paid us a fee to display their wares. Approximately 70 people came during a five-hour period and purchased goods from the vendors and our museum shop.

Museum Shop - Our museum gift shop continues to sell local history books and other items to museum visitors. A selection of our books is also offered for sale on our website. This year for the first time, we offered for sale a custom jigsaw puzzle of our museum.



Sale of Ad Space - For the ninth consecutive year, we have sold ad space in our newsletter, the "*Corinthian*," to help offset the cost of printing while illustrating community support for the Greece Historical Society from local businesses.

Roc the Day - On December 3, GHS participated in "Roc the Day," Rochester's United Way "Giving Tuesday," event.



Pasta Dinner – For the past several years we have held two Pasta Dinner fundraisers each year at the Barnard Restaurant and Party House. With their closing and no other place available that could accommodate us, we have cancelled this event until we find a new venue.

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR:



Sandy Peeck Peck is a member of the board of trustees, is on the Society's Finance and Audit Committees, and volunteers in the Gift Shop. As she is the second volunteer on the finance team, it allows us to maintain separation of duties between the person recording the deposits in the finance system and the person counting money received by the society and depositing it in the bank. As a member of the Audit Committee, she greatly assisted that committee in conducting the 2023 internal audit in February of 2024. Sandy is the main person processing bank deposits on a periodic basis. Always responsive in getting the deposits in quickly at the end of the month and monitoring any buildup in volume of financial transactions, she facilitates mid-month or weekly deposits during the membership drive to keep cash on hand to a minimum and maximizing the interest income on our accounts. She volunteers in the gift shop at least once a month or more if necessary and contributes ideas on items to sell with the gift shop manager. Sandy also regularly volunteers to head up ticket sales for the Strawberry Festival and other fundraising events.

TREASURER'S REPORT 2024

We had a very good year financially. Operating revenue for 2024 was \$24,600, 102% of expected revenue and operating expenses were \$18,100, 75% of expected due to lower property maintenance, utilities expense and office operational expenses. Net assets increased by \$112,000, reflecting the net change from investment in capital improvements, endowment fund results, the cost of asset depreciation and a new donation from the Warren Crandell estate.

A statement of financial position and/or expense/budget summary for 2024 is available to our members on request to the treasurer at email greecehistoricalsociety@yahoo.com.

Thank You! We depend on many volunteers to run our organization. Some may loan or donate to us a treasured heirloom, repair a broken light fixture, help with a single event, conduct research, or guide visitors through our museum. Still others of our loyal volunteers spend hundreds of hours during the year to keep the place going. With so many it is impossible to list everyone by name but be assured we truly appreciate all the great work they do for the Society.

We also can't forget the **Lakeview Garden Club**, who maintain some of our gardens, and the local businesses who sponsor our events and advertise in our newsletter.

Thank you to our supporters from the business community, our volunteers, our members, the elected officials who encouraged us, and to all our friends for your continued commitment to preserving the past for the future! Whether it is through publications, programs, exhibits, or online content, we strive to tell the story of our Town of Greece. To keep sharing these stories we rely heavily on the support from community members like you. With your support, the Greece Historical Society will continue to seek innovative ways to preserve and share the history of our town.



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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

2024 Board of Trustees

William M. Sauers (*President*)
Bridget O'Toole, Esq. (*Vice President*)
Gretchen Kozlowski (*Secretary*)
Bill Peeck (*Treasurer*)
Cynthia Shevlin (*Newsletter Editor*)
Ruth Curchoe
David Richardson
Gregg Redmond, Esq.
Pam O'Sullivan, MLS
Sandy Peck
Deborah Whitt, CLU, ChFC
Robert Cunningham, MLS



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William M. Sauers" written over a horizontal line.

William M. Sauers
President

**If you are not a member of the Greece Historical Society,
we encourage you to join and help support your
town's historical society. Membership information
is available on our website at
<http://greecehistoricalsociety.org/join-us/membership/>**

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