

Greece Historical Society

2025

Annual Report



Sharing our Town's Story Since 1969



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GREECE HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

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.

Docent-led tours of the museum are held on 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 2025.

MUSEUM

During 2025, approximately 400 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, so it can be assumed that we had many more. We did, however, welcome a few groups, including Greece teachers, the Athena Middle School History Club, Arcadia and Odyssey Middle Schools, Paddy Hill Elementary School, and the Friends and Fun group from the Greece Community Center.

In addition to the permanent exhibits in our museum exhibit hall, we had an exhibit on one of the original NFL teams, the Rochester Jeffersons and the formation of the NFL by Greece resident Leo Lyons. The exhibit included memorabilia, photos, and stories from the early 1920s. The exhibit was organized by **John Steffenhagen**, great-grandson of Leo Lyons. In November we opened an exhibit about the Erie Canal in Greece.



SOCIETY LECTURES AND PRESENTATIONS

Our eight monthly Tuesday evening lectures featured local historians and authors. Our presentations have again proven to be very popular with the community. During 2025 we averaged over 70 guests per program. Our programs provide high quality, professional, and entertaining history lessons. Most of the monthly lectures were held at the Greece Public Library and one was at a Central School District building. We would like to thank the GCSD and Greece Public Library 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 year's activities, a financial report, and an election of four board members.

We also conducted several Sunday afternoon programs at our museum, a grand opening ceremony for our Football exhibit, and a Holiday Open House.



The GHS Erie Canal Bicentennial Committee mapped out a variety of programs, events, exhibits, and publications to mark the 200th anniversary of the completion of the canal. Our major event was a day canal-side at Greece Canal Park on Saturday, August 16. We had two well-attended Tuesday night programs: in August a look at the building of the replica of the Seneca Chief and in September a travelogue re-creating a trip along the canal in 1840. The committee designed and wrote a booklet to distribute to people encouraging them to take a self-guided tour to places in Greece with an Erie Canal connection. In addition, there was a monthly column in the *Corinthian*, “Four Miles along the Towpath,” about different aspects of the canal’s history and an exhibit created for the museum.

CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS



In 2025, GHS was represented at the MANY (*Museum Association of New York*) annual conference in Ithaca, and at meetings of the Monroe County Appointed Historians.* Volunteers of GHS attended the 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.

**Although GHS is not the appointed historian for the Town of Greece, we regularly attend meetings of the Monroe County appointed historians.*

PUBLIC LECTURES, OUTREACH & PRESENTATIONS



There were several programs presented by our volunteers in 2025, including presentations at the Gates Historical Society, the Geriatrics Pilots Association and Legacy at Maiden Park. We also had an information table at local history events at Genesee Country Village and Museum and Homesteads for Hope.

SPECIAL EVENTS



Cemetery Tour: In October, a tour of Rochester's Riverside Cemetery was organized and conducted by volunteers **Cynthia Howk** and **Joanne Mitchell**.

Four Miles Along the Towpath: In August, the Society marked the 200th anniversary of the completion of the Erie Canal with a canal side event at Greece Canal Park. Society volunteers greeted and conversed with attendees on the towpath and at the Towpath Shelter in the park. Guests were also able to tour a packet boat, the Owasco.



National Historical Marker Weekend: National Historical Marker Weekend was celebrated by GHS on Friday April 25 as several of our volunteers were joined by **Jaclyn Wesley**, Asst. Principal, and **Shana Valerio**, Principal of Paddy Hill School, to clean and wash the Paddy Hill marker. Then followed up by cleaning the Jean Brooks Greenleaf marker at Lakeshore Country Club.

National Historical Marker Weekend April 25-27 has been designated by the William G. Pomeroy Foundation. This weekend is set aside each year to give attention to those markers that may be in need of cleaning.

Barn Tour: In November a group of GHS Volunteers were guided on a tour of five historic Greece barns, a smokehouse, and a privy and discovered what we believe is the oldest farm building in Greece.



WARREN C. CRANDELL SCHOLARSHIP

In 2025 the Greece Historical Society awarded two \$2,000 scholarships to graduating high school seniors from the Town of Greece who plan to further their education as a history or history education major or minor at a two or four-year college or university. The scholarships are in memory of **Warren C. Crandell**, who left a portion of his estate to GHS. The winners of the 2025 scholarships were **Daniel Granville** and **Amelia Kilbride**.



Warren Crandell 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 continued 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:

- Lake Shore Garden Club scrapbooks
- Barnard School 1944 class photo
- Ice harvesting tongs
- Copy of an 1865 diary from a N. Greece girl

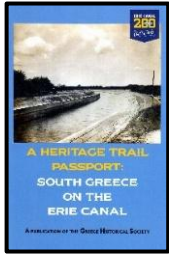
Marie Poinan and **Jo Ann Ward Snyder** continued to collect information and documentation for volume 2 of *Pioneer Families of the Town of Greece*. Other volunteers continue to document and/or photograph buildings and events.

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 tell the story of Greece. This past year we transferred a Monroe County soils map to the Local History and Genealogy Division of the Rochester Public Library.

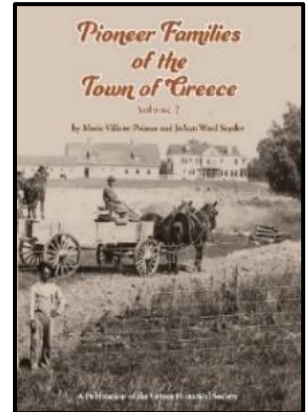
Other items that we have collected and accessioned over the years that we determined no longer fit our mission, were duplicates, or were in poor condition beyond repair were de-accessioned.

PUBLICATIONS



A Heritage Trail Passport: South Greece on the Erie Canal was published as a self-guided tour featuring 20 sites along the Erie Canal in South Greece.

Pioneer Families of the Town of Greece, Volume 2 was published in December. This book, with 238 pages and more than 1150 photos and illustrations, contains stories that highlight 50 families' contributions to the town. It was written by volunteers **Marie Villone Poinan** and **Jo Ann Ward Snyder** with input from descendants of each of these families. The book is available in our Museum Shop and through Amazon.



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 2025 we welcomed several individuals to access our archives to help complete their professional research, investigate genealogy information, or find information for upcoming books.



PARTNERSHIPS



This past year the Greece Historical Society partnered with the Greece Central School District at the School 5 Paddy Hill memorial wall dedication, where we provided material for a time capsule and helped fund a plaque noting the placement of the capsule.

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



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. Other community groups were also invited to set up information tables at the festival. 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, Northwest AARP, and GRASP.

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. Boyd 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; as funds ran out, the Greece Historical Society provided additional funds.

The project expanded and grew beyond its original scope. The project team uncovered hundreds of additional projects designed by Boyd and integrated this new-found information into their inventory and evaluation of Boyd's work.

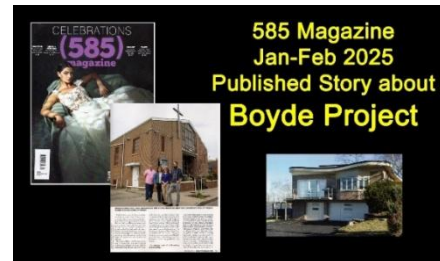
In October the written report was completed and presented to the GHS board of trustees. Data still needs to be uploaded on select Boyd projects that are eligible for the National Register into SHPO's Cultural Resource Information System (CRIS) database, and a report sent to one of the project funders (Rochester Area Community Foundation). Once the grant funded portion of the project is completed, we will explore where to go from there.



Extensive research was also conducted in creating the *Pioneer Families of the Town of Greece, 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.

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*, that had regularly featured stories about GHS and our programs, was recently sold to a new organization and has evolved into the monthly *Greece-Gates News* which has continued to cover our events and programs. In January, *585 Magazine*, a well-respected upstate magazine, featured a story about our Thomas Boyde Jr. project.



Social Media: We regularly add content to our Facebook page, which has more than 1,766 “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 2025.



Society Newsletter: In 2025, 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. After the July-Aug issue, longtime editor **Cyndie Shevlin** retired from the job and **Deborah Cole Myers** took over. Also in July we began printing some of the issues in color and plan more color print copies in the future.

New Logo: This year we created a new logo with the assistance of intern **Seth Simmons** from Bryant and Stratton College. It features our name, a photo of our historical center, the year we were established and the words “Greece New York” to eliminate any confusion with the country of Greece.



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 2025, besides general maintenance, we had a new furnace and AC unit installed, had our fire extinguishers inspected and replaced where needed, repaired a concrete walk, and removed some 30-year-old bushes.



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. In March we held a fundraiser at the local Tom Wahl's where we received a percentage of the sales.

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, with over 500 attending.

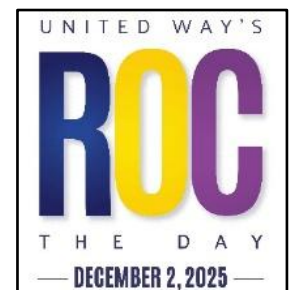


Craft Sale - On October 25, the Greece Historical Society hosted our eighth annual craft sale with 9 vendors selling their handmade crafts. Each vendor paid us a fee to display their wares. Approximately 80 people came during a five-hour period and purchased goods from the vendors and our museum shop.

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 accepted charge card purchases.

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 2, GHS participated in "Roc the Day," Rochester's United Way "Giving Tuesday" event.



VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR:

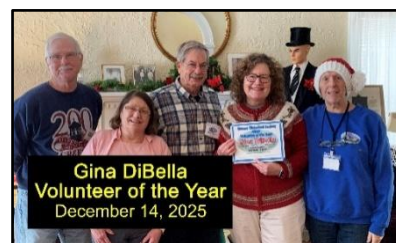


During our Holiday Open House on December 14, Gina DiBella was presented with our Volunteer of the Year award.

Gina is a longtime member of the Greece Historical Society. She started promoting GHS 20 years ago in her D&C “Greece Grapevine” column and chaired the Greece Historic Preservation Commission where, along with Gloria Latragna, she created an exhibition on Greece’s early schoolhouses.

Several years ago, she wrote grants for and worked with Bero Architecture in preparing *The Architecture of James H. Johnson* and wrote a grant to have the book published. Five years ago, she initiated, wrote grants for, and coordinated the initial publication of a recently finished work on *The Architecture of Thomas W. Boyde Jr.*, also with Bero Architecture. Last year she wrote a brief history of the former Greece School No. 5 which was placed in a time capsule at the GCS D Transportation building on Latta Road.

More recently, Gina was a member of the GHS Erie Canal 200 Committee where she helped with the booklet *A Heritage Trail Passport: South Greece on the Erie Canal*, particularly with its design and liaised with the Greece Central School District printing facility, assisted with many tasks involved in our August 16 event on the Erie Canal at Greece Canal Park, contributed articles to the *Corinthian*, and designed the story boards for our “Four Miles Along the Towpath: South Greece on the Erie Canal” exhibit.



TREASURER'S REPORT 2025

We had a very good year financially. Revenue for 2025 was \$41,100.00, 174% of expected revenue and operating expenses were \$28,300, 120% of expected expenses. Revenue was above plan due to an unexpected grant for \$10,000 from the Killian J & Caroline F Schmitt Foundation for building maintenance. This grant was spent in 2025 on our list of deferred maintenance projects, causing the operating expenses to exceed plan. Net assets increased 6.8%, reflecting the net change from investment in capital improvements, endowment fund results, and the cost of asset depreciation.

In September we initiated a “point of sale” system allowing us to accept charge payments using major credit systems including Apple Pay, Venmo and Google Pay.

A statement of financial position and/or expense/budget summary for 2025 is available to our members on request to the treasurer at 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 would also like to thank everyone who toured our museum, came to our events, purchased items from our museum shop, and joined as members.

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.

2025 Board of Trustees

William M. Sauers (*President*)
Deborah Cole Myers (*Vice President*)
Gretchen Kozlowski (*Secretary*)
Bill Peck (*Treasurer*)
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Cynthia Shevlin
David Richardson
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Pam O'Sullivan, MLS
Sandy Peck
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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/>