



GREENE-DREHER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

2020 Board of Directors

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

The past year, 2020, was certainly unlike any other we have seen in the recent past. Sadly, the Greene-Dreher Historical Society had to cancel the majority of our events and meetings; however, we took the opportunity during this forced pause to look forward and make significant and concrete plans for a bright future. In the spring the Board convened to discuss our goals for the coming years, devising a Strategic Plan that will serve as a road map for much of what we hope to accomplish in the coming years. Our newly launched YouTube channel and our enhanced website are both a result of this plan.

While in many ways it was a quiet year for the Society, our members and volunteers continued to play an integral part in our organization, always at the ready to lend a hand, whether it be to bake a bread, assist with roadside cleanup or catalog items in our collections.

A cherished member, the late Tom Berger, gifted the Historical Society with a sizeable donation that was the impetus for the start of our Legacy Fund. We also launched a successful Special Appeal to assist us with this year. Once again, when asked, our members answered—thank you!

Publications will always be one of our hallmarks. While 2020 brought an end to the journal, we answered that with our expanded newsletter, *Echoes from the Greene Hills*. We also released a second edition of *One-Room Schools in Greene and Dreher Townships* containing additional information and photographs.

Our Board of Directors experienced changes this year as well. While we said goodbye to our dear friends Jill Porter and long-tenured president Jeanne Brown, we were pleased when LaAnna resident William Dunn agreed to serve with us.

All in all, I believe 2020 marked a successful, albeit unusual, 40th Anniversary year for the Greene-Dreher Historical Society. As you read through this report, we hope that you will take pride in all that we accomplished—just in a different way!

We look forward to an equally successful 2021, a year in which we anticipate being able to offer a few of our programs and signature events. We hope that our members, both near and far, will be able to participate in some manner.

We look forward to seeing and hearing from all of you!

—Carla Smith, President

CEMETERY PRESERVATION

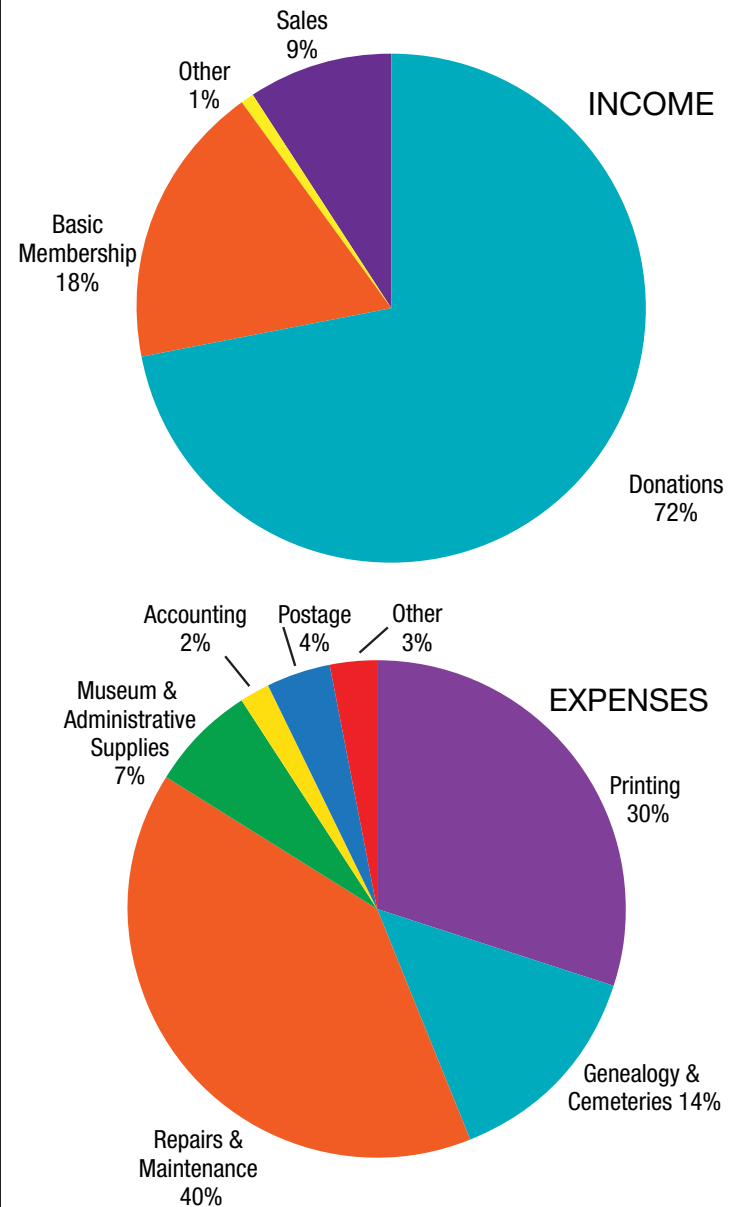
Cemeteries are among our most valuable archaeological and historic resources. They are evidence of the early settlement patterns and economic development of the region. They reveal the social relationships and religious influences of those who lived here, and many times they represent the only reminder of an influential person, family or group. Of the ten cemeteries within our boundaries, six are no longer active and do not have cemetery associations to provide perpetual care. The Society operates a Cemetery Preservation Program for five of the six abandoned cemeteries—Gilpin, Hazelton, Wolfe, Simonstown, and Kiptown Cemeteries. The challenge of documenting, restoring and preserving these sites is one of the most complicated endeavors that we have undertaken. Volunteers with our Adopt-a-Cemetery Program continued to care for the grounds on a regular basis. Specialized work was done to remount and stabilize damaged stones and remove unwanted and overgrown shrubs and trees. In coordination with the Wallenpaupack Area High School, Ruth Altemier and Bernadine Lennon trained student volunteers on how to clean grave markers. The work done by seniors Polina Patushenko and Gabby Troch at the Gilpin and Hazelton Cemeteries helped them fulfill their requirement for community service hours.

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We are grateful for the loyal support of our 2020 Business Partners

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FINANCIALS



Income—In addition to membership donations, the Society was the beneficiary of major donations to its Publishing Fund and Cemetery Preservation Fund. In early summer 141 members responded to a one-time Special Appeal.

Expenses—The largest expenditure was for repairs and upgrades to the kitchen at Peggy Bancroft Hall, specifically to make it handicap accessible. The Society's publications were the second highest expenditure.

MEMORIAL DONATIONS

The Society received Memorial Donations in tribute to members who died from December 2019 through 2020:

Sam Conklin Bliss Ireland Edward Zawislak

TELLING OUR STORIES

For the past four decades the Historical Society has preserved and celebrated the rich history of Greene and Dreher Townships and the Wallenpaupack Valley. We believe that the stories of the people who lived here and their cultural and economic circumstances and experiences are worth remembering and preserving for tomorrow's generations. When the pandemic forced us to close our museum and cancel plans for on-site programming, we sought new ways to narrate their stories and engage our members and the public. By expanding our website and social media, we successfully transitioned into online activities and maintained high levels of interaction throughout the year. It seems now that these temporary measures might in fact be the building blocks of a new future.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Echoes from the Greene Hills—The Society made the decision to merge its quarterly journal, *The Greene Hills of Home*, published since 1984, with its newsletter to create a single publication, *Echoes from the Greene Hills*. In addition to covering Society news and events, the expanded newsletter will feature articles of historical interest and, in the tradition of the journal, invite members to contribute personal stories and family histories.

One-Room Schools in Greene and Dreher Townships—This second edition by Diane Smith and Bernadine A. Lennon, published in November 2020, tells the story of our first schools from the early 1800s to 1932 when the last one-room school closed. Hundreds of photographs, records, documents and school-day souvenirs chronicle the evolution of our rural educational system over a 100-year period. Enriched by the numerous personal accounts of students and teachers recorded in diaries, memoirs and oral histories, this beautiful and unique book is a treasure trove for family historians.

GDHS website—With in-person events canceled, we expanded our online presence in order to deliver educational programs and historical content straight into people's homes. The website is an easy way for members to stay connected to Greene-Dreher's past, and we posted wonderful photographs and interesting articles that all visitors would find informative and entertaining. New features include:

- "From the Collection"—showcases interesting and unique objects on display in the museum
- Virtual exhibitions—organizes a collection around a particular theme, anniversary or celebration
- "Telling our Stories"—features oral histories and first-person accounts of long-time residents
- Founding Families—focuses on early settlers
- Slideshow galleries of historic photographs

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Social Media:

- YouTube—GDHS created its own YouTube channel in order to engage our audience using both audio and visuals. Our "History at Home" series includes four video presentations to date, and we plan to continue to create new content in 2021. With more than 100 views in just a few weeks, it has proven to be an effective means of reaching a wider and younger audience.
- Facebook—With 651 followers, an increase of 23 percent from the previous year, our Facebook page is an effective way to engage our members and friends and keep them up-to-date on new initiatives, fundraisers, current events and helpful resources.

In-person presentations:

- "1955 Flood – Cause, Impact and Mitigation" by Bernadine Lennon, Wallenpaupack Historical Society
- "Native American Artifacts of the Wallenpaupack Valley" presented by Richard Poirier and Russ Cramer at Peggy Bancroft Hall

MUSEUM & COLLECTIONS

With the museum closed and new exhibitions on hold, the Collections Committee focused its time and attention on accessioning and cataloging objects, archives and photographs, and on the proper storage of these items. Older displays were dismantled to make way for new exhibitions being planned for 2021. With the assistance of experts on Native American artifacts of the Eastern Archaic and Woodland Periods, we were able to interpret our small collection of stone tools and projectile points found along the Wallenpaupack in the mid-1900s. We are grateful for this recently donated collection and for the many other significant donations—each item is another piece in the fabric of our social history and helps us understand the people who lived here and formed the community we share today.

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