



GREENE-DREHER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

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—
Peggy Bancroft Hall
465 South Sterling Road
South Sterling, PA 18460

Mailing

P.O. Box 176
Greentown, PA 18426
www.greenedreherhs.org
info@greenedreherhs.org

Mission

To preserve, protect and promote the history of Greene and Dreher Townships and to assure that this legacy is passed on to future generations.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The publishing of our Annual Report is a comprehensive way for the Greene-Dreher Historical Society as well as its members to take stock of the year past and all that was accomplished. Beginning with our Spring Soup Luncheon in April, we were able to return to a pre-pandemic level of activities in 2023.

Our Local History Lecture Series covered a variety of topics including the Lenape and notable people and artists. We again provided guided tours of local historic sites, which has proven to be popular with members as well as those new to the area. In addition, we hosted an inaugural event with a bus tour to the historic Hudson Valley.

We continued our outreach into the community by hosting a booth at the Canal Festival in Hawley hosted by the Wayne County Historical Society. On a more local level, we participated in both the Greene-Dreher-Sterling Fair and the Local History Day at Promised Land State Park.

Our Museum and Collections Committee once again had an exciting year. Approximately 200 artifacts were accessioned and catalogued, and more than 150 photographs were added to our archive. We began implementing a three-year Plan to improve the storage capacity of the barn. With the guidance of member volunteer and project manager Roger Altemier, interior stairs were added for easier access to the second floor storage area, and the exterior overhang was enclosed to provide more space for our growing collection of farm equipment.

The digitization and translation of the Hopedale Moravian Church correspondence from 1836 to 1878 was completed. This was done in partnership with the Moravian Archives in Bethlehem and the majority of the project was funded through a grant from the PA Historical and Museum Commission.

Our Cemetery Preservation Program continues to care for abandoned cemeteries within our townships. The grounds are maintained by volunteers participating in our Adopt-A-Cemetery Program. These endeavors are supported by donations and targeted fundraising activities.

When drafting our annual budget, both short-term and possible long-term expenditures are taken into consideration. This year we had several very successful fundraising events, including our second Plant Sale. It far exceeded our expectations as did many of our annual events.

We continue to be mindful of the financial health of our organization as the majority of our income comes from our membership. We have been fortunate to receive sizable monetary gifts from generous donors, for which we are grateful.

It is because of the loyal support of our members, Business Partners, volunteers and donors that the Society continues to succeed and move forward.

—Carla Smith, President

MUSEUM AND COLLECTIONS

The Historical Society collects objects that relate to the history of the Greene-Dreher area—items that were created here, reflect the history of our residents over time, or have a connection to an important event or prominent person. Our permanent collection includes artifacts, photographs, archives and a library of early books, ledgers, genealogies, pamphlets and other publications.

About 200 items were accessioned and catalogued in 2023, including machinery from the toy factory operated by F.A. Madden & Son in the 1930s. We plan to preserve these items with the highest standards of care so they will always be accessible to the public.

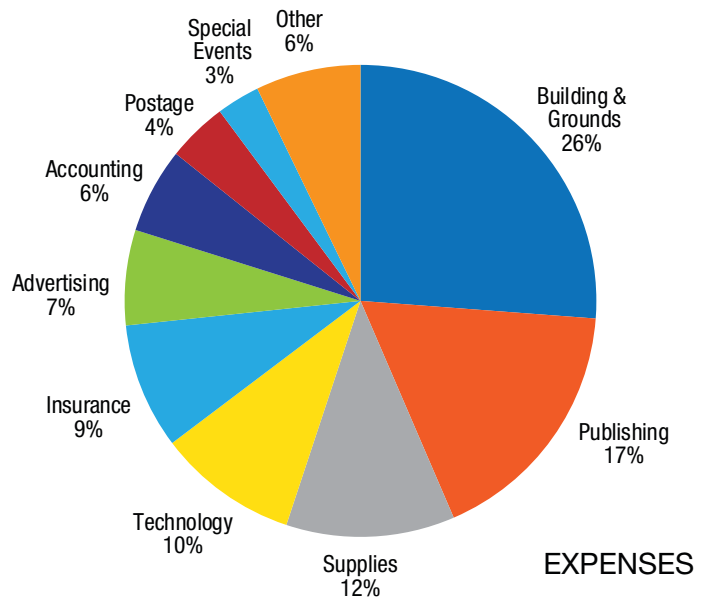
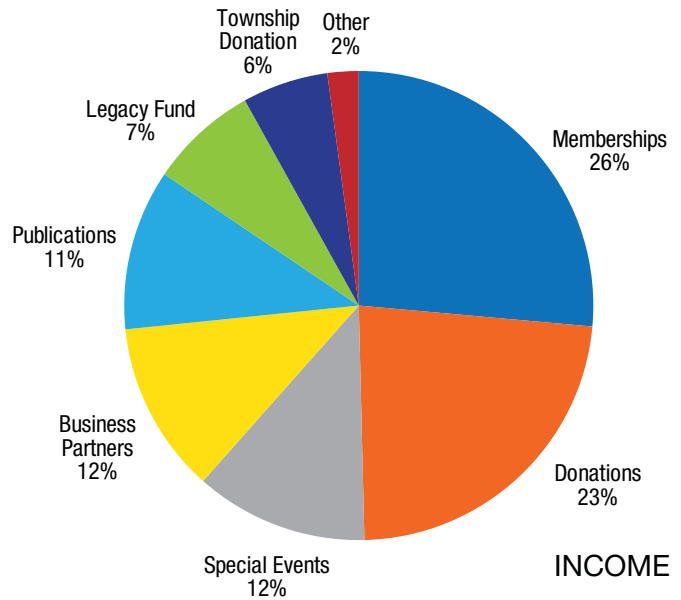
We share our collected objects through rotating displays and exhibits at Peggy Bancroft Hall and Museum. One of our new displays this year, “Pocono Vacationland — 1930–1940,” was displayed at the GDS Fair where it generated a great deal of interest. The large-format poster features a hand-drawn 1930s map of the Lake Wallenpaupack region and photographs of more than a dozen local boardinghouses from that period. It now hangs in the meeting room at Peggy Bancroft Hall.

Knowing that more and more information is being sought online, we have begun implementing strategies to digitize some of our archival resources to make them more accessible to the public. In 2022 we received funding from the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission under their Archival Records Care grant to digitize the correspondence of the Hopedale Moravian Church from 1836 to 1878. In collaboration with the Moravian Archives in Bethlehem, approximately 700 pages of correspondence, most written in German, were scanned at high resolution. Transcriptions and translations of all of the letters were completed this year, and in 2024 the files will be made available to the public via the Pennsylvania Power Library

CEMETERY PRESERVATION

Several years ago the Society established a special Cemetery Preservation Fund supported by donors as well as targeted fundraising activities. We use these funds to operate a Cemetery Preservation Program for four abandoned cemeteries—Gilpin, Hazelton, Wolfe, and Kiptown Cemeteries. Their grounds are maintained on a regular basis by volunteers with our Adopt-A-Cemetery Program. As restorations are completed, rededication ceremonies are held—Kiptown Cemetery in 2022 and Gilpin Cemetery in 2023. The Society also publishes a booklet about all of the cemeteries in the Wallenpaupack Valley, which includes a map for a driving tour.

FINANCIALS



Income—As in previous years, the majority of the Society’s income was derived from membership dues and public support, including generous donations from individual members and Business Partners. Most of the remaining income came from the sale of our publications and other fundraisers. In addition, we received a \$2000 grant from Brookfield Renewables U.S. for an outdoor interpretive sign at the Ledgesdale Recreation Area.

Expenses—The largest expenditure this year was for Buildings and Grounds and the improvements to our agricultural barn, followed by the publishing of our quarterly newsletter. The ongoing preservation of four historic cemeteries is an important part of the Society’s work, and this expenditure is offset by donations to the GDHS Cemetery Preservation Fund.

TELLING OUR STORIES

Founded in 1982 the Historical Society preserves and celebrates the rich history of Greene and Dreher Townships in the Wallenpaupack Valley. We believe that the stories of the people who lived here and their cultural and economic experiences are worth remembering and preserving for tomorrow's generations. This year we expanded our focus to shed light on the Lenape people, on whose land the first European settlers built their homes and farms.

PUBLISHING

As part of its mission, the Historical Society maintains its own publishing program. The publications we make available add much to our knowledge and understanding of Greene-Dreher history. They include a quarterly newsletter mailed free to our members, as well as books and articles available in both print and digital format.

Echoes from the Greene Hills — Our newsletter keeps members and others abreast of recent happenings and upcoming events at the Historical Society. Available in print or digital format, it contains announcements about the Society, its programs and activities, recent additions to its collections, spotlight on volunteers, new members, Business Partners, and other highlights. *Echoes* also features "Stories from the Past," a selection of carefully researched articles written to inform and entertain readers who are interested in the history of Greene-Dreher and its region. The articles, submitted by our members, cover all historic time periods and a variety of topics, and are illustrated with photographs and images from the Society's archives. The articles have sparked many memories and conversations which, when shared with the editor, are published under "Member Musings."

Print media — Three outdoor interpretive signs were designed and produced to highlight historic sites in the area. Two panels were produced in cooperation with PennDOT and will be installed at the Mill Creek Bridge in South Sterling where they will tell the story of the gristmills and other early industries that operated at that site from the mid-1800s to the 1920s. The third outdoor sign was funded by a grant from Brookfield Renewables and will be installed at Ledgedale. The Society also produced a large-format poster showing the history of a commercial building on Main Street for its current owner.

Digital media — Articles about local history are on our website, and video recordings of recent presentations have had hundreds of views on our YouTube channel.

Facebook — With more than 800 engaged followers, our Facebook page keeps members and friends up-to-date on what's happening at GDHS and connected with each other and the community.

PROGRAMS

The Society resumed its normal schedule of in-person programs this year. In addition to guest speakers, guided tours of five historic sites made history come alive for participants and expanded outreach to new audiences. In spring we hosted the "Rededication of Historic Gilpin Cemetery," which brought people from as far away as Indiana. This year's Local History Lecture Series opened with "The Past and Present of the Lenape in Pennsylvania" by Adam DePaul, Storykeeper for the Tribal Council of the Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania. The series of eight talks was held at the museum in the fall and included such topics as "Geological and Geographical Influences on the Local Economy;" "Jennie Brownscombe: Wayne County's Artist;" "The Life and Influence of Marie Zimmerman;" and "Notable People of Pike and Wayne Counties."

A highlight of our regular monthly programs was the workshop, "Replicating Ancient Artifacts," given by computer engineering students at Wallenpaupack High School. The students had recently completed a special project for the Historical Society using 3D printing technology to replicate items from our collection of Lenape artifacts. The reproduction projectile points were then painted by local artist Sondra Rosenthal and will be displayed at a new exhibition at South Elementary School in Newfoundland. Other topics included "The Civil War in Northeast Pennsylvania," and "Grave Matters: The Dark Tales of Edgar Allan Poe."

Another way we increase awareness of our organization is by being involved in community events. We participate in the annual Canal Festival hosted by the Wayne County Historical Society, the Greene-Dreher-Sterling Fair, founded in 1915, and Local History Day at Promised Land State Park. These events attract thousands of visitors each year, and they serve as a venue for showcasing GDHS and Greene-Dreher history.

Since 2020 our increased use of technology has enabled us to serve a wider audience. Selected programs are simulcast to reach participants who are unable to attend in person. Several presentations have been video recorded and are available to be viewed on the Society's YouTube channel.

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Akers Family Reunion
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Your Gift, Your Legacy

To ensure our future financial stability, the Historical Society established a Legacy Fund in 2020. The fund is managed by the Wayne County Community Foundation. You can leave a lasting legacy to the GDHS Legacy Fund by making a donation in memory of a loved one, or by simply naming the Historical Society as a beneficiary on any of your assets, such as a life insurance policy or IRA, or through a will or trust. Planned Giving allows you to set up financial instructions that support the charities you believe in and ensure that they will continue to have a positive influence on the community far into the future. Certain types of Planned Giving may have the additional benefit of reducing estate taxes, taxes paid on capital gains and federal income tax. For more information about the GDHS Legacy Fund, please contact us at info@greenedreherhs.org.