VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2020 Annual Report July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020



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The Vermont Historical Society was chartered in 1838 by an act of the Vermont Legislature. It is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit membership organization, governed by a board of trustees.

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THANKS to all our volunteers, who generously donated amazing

amounts of time, talent, and energy on behalf of the Vermont Historical Society. Because of you, we have the impact and outreach of an organization twice our size.

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The arrival of the pandemic in March made this a very unusual year for the Vermont Historical Society. However, the staff of the VHS under the leadership of our excellent Executive Director, Steve Perkins, adapted smoothly, and the Society continued to fulfill its mission of engaging both Vermonters and "Vermonters-at-heart" in the exploration of our state's rich heritage, albeit in a vitual manner for the past six months.

Before the arrival of the pandemic there were many exciting things happening. Here are just a few: The VHS published Paul Searls's book Repeopling Vermont, and in conjunction with the Department of Libraries we organized community discussions around the state. We restored the Bacon banjo and sponsored a Banjo Afternoon program in Montpelier where Vermont banjo players entertained the audience on their own banjos before giving the Bacon banjo a try. The Snelling Room at the Pavilion underwent restoration. It now has on exhibit many of the portraits from our extensive collection along with a written guide for visitors to learn about both the artists and the Vermonters portrayed. The Snelling Room also houses an exhibit on the multiple statues of Ceres, which have long adorned the top of the capitol building. Other new exhibits this year have focused on Myths & Legends of the Connecticut River, the Long Trail, new Icons and Oddities chosen by staff members, Norman Rockwell's Arlington: America's Home Town (sponsored by The Canfield Gallery and The Russell Collection of Vermontiana, of the Martha Canfield Memorial Free Library in Arlington), and The Dames and The Sheldon Relic Chair (sponsored by the Vermont Folklife Center, National Society of Colonial Dames of America in the State of Vermont, and Middlebury College).

Our rich exhibits have all been accompanied by rich programming organized by our Program Manager, Amanda Gustin. She is also responsible for our other successful programs such as Third Thursday lectures and Vermont trivia, and she has been the driving force behind efforts to document the COVID-19 pandemic for future historians.

We continue to work with local historical societies throughout Vermont. Last year we sponsored "listening sessions" around the state to get feedback on how we can best help those societies fulfill their own missions. These have resulted in several virtual roundtables which have proven to be very popular. Local societies have come to rely on the excellent guidance provided by Eileen Corcoran, our Community Outreach Manager.

Education is a key part of our mission. School visits to the *Freedom and Unity* exhibit in Montpelier, as well as homeschool classes at the Pavilion, under the leadership of

Victoria Hughes, our Museum & Education Manager, were on track to set record numbers until schools closed in March. At that point, she focused her energies on online resources for students. The ever-popular Vermont History Day was scheduled to take place in April with a record number of participants signed up. We transitioned to a virtual competition with a smaller number of students, but everyone - students and judges alike - were appreciative that they could still take part.

The closure of the library meant that fewer patrons came in person, but the library staff, under the leadership of Librarian Paul Carnahan, transitioned smoothly to helping patrons online. Fewer patrons meant that library staff were able to work on a backlog of cataloging and other projects. Likewise, our Collections Manager, Teresa Greene, made good use of the quiet days at the History Center, working diligently in the basement of the building cataloging and weeding the collection of duplicates and unrelated materials.

All our activities require monetary support, and for that we are grateful to the State of Vermont. We are also lucky to have a gifted Director of Development in Tori Hart. Under Tori's leadership we sponsored our second Freedom and Unity Luncheon last September, and later in the fall we unveiled a new Donor Panel at the Pavilion to honor our many generous members.

This has definitely been an unusual year for the VHS, but despite the obstacles the pandemic has presented, we have continued with our mission of preserving the past, informing the present, and promoting Vermont's shared legacy for the future.

It is my pleasure to report that all is well at the Vermont Historical Society. For that I would like to thank the donors, the staff, the Board of Trustees, the State of Vermont, and our many volunteers who make it all possible.

Sincerely,

Barbara Mieder, President



It seems very odd to sit down and write an introduction to our Fiscal Year 2020 Annual Report. As with most of us, the summer and fall of 2019 seem to be a distant memory of another time and place. The global pandemic and the many impacts on our lives, communities, businesses, and jobs has been all-consuming. Please forgive me if I dwell on the second half of our year, but Vermont Historical Society's response to a rapidly shifting paradigm has been commendable.

Much of the first half of our year was spent gathering information, listening to our community, and creating plans for programs, exhibits, and initiatives. As we rolled into 2020, staff were looking forward to our major Catamount exhibit, new and exciting initiatives around local society support, and fun celebrations like VT Eats! The Italian Experience in Barre. The complete closure of our physical locations quickly ended these plans and forced us to think deeply about the service we provide our community and how to do that in a remote, and often virtual way.

Our strategic plan offered great guidance to us in this journey. The four goals all laid out specific strategies for providing access to collections, support to local societies, compelling programs, and vital guidance to our school-age children. With the pandemic healthresponse forcing us to work remotely, we were able to focus on new initiatives and revisit lagging projects that needed attention.

I am so proud of all that we accomplished I cannot even begin to enumerate the successes in this brief introduction. The following report summarizes the numerous activities we undertook throughout the year under each of our strategic goals. Our audience grew and changed in many meaningful ways – participants joined us from throughout the U.S., volume of participation grew by a factor of 10, and those interacting with our programs and product presented as much more diverse in culture and age. Whether we wanted to or not, we became a leader in our industry, providing a clearinghouse for operational and response information as well as model reopening and management plans for our field. Like most other sectors of our economy we had to do this with highly restricted resources. Fundraising event income and earned revenue from our museum and store disappeared for more than a quarter of our year. Thank you to our donors and members who continued to support our good work. Your contributions along with the timely receipt of competitive relief grants helped VHS weather the first part of this storm. We will be seeing the impacts on our budget and operations for years to come and are working actively to plan for a multitude of eventualities. Your continued support is critical and we will rely on your membership and donations to allow the society to continue our service to Vermont.

I look forward to facing the changes to our field headon; leading the conversation as we contemplate permanent changes to operations, programs, and exhibits as well as fundamental issues of diversity, inclusion, community and voice. Thank you again for your ongoing and generous support.

Warmest Regards,

Stephen Perkins, Executive Director

FY 2020 Unaudited VHS FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Statement of Activities

Revenue

	FY 2019	FY 2020
Contributions and Bequests	490,051	566,726
State Appropriation	1,036,819	984,956
Investment Income	142,191	98,072
Admissions, Fees and Earned Income	44,920	37,839
VT History Bookstore Sales	44,676	33,753
State and Federal Grants	1,320	60,828
Other Revenue	191,134	191,134
TOTAL REVENUE	1,951,111	1,973,309

Expenses

	FY 2019	FY 2020
Public Programs	146,313	340,464
Library	326,253	303,198
Membership	288,305	276,435
Museum	251,756	282,085
Administration & Finance	365,849	430,451
Development	192,705	158,053
Education	276,441	197,110
League of Local Historical Societies	166,383	59,730
VT History Bookstore/Guest Services Museum	84,684	57,519
VHS Publications	37,127	54,369
TOTAL EXPENSES	2,135,816	2,159,414

Depreciation of capital assets allocated across expense lines. Total depreciation for FY19 was \$256,721 and for FY20 was \$254,864. Operational revenues and expenses were balanced each year.

Balance Sheet

Assets

	FY 2019	FY 2020
Cash	333,497	482,504
Other Current Assets	411,662	386,551
Investments	2,247,287	2,254,802
Property Plant and Equipment	9,403,119	9,452,328
Accumulated Depreciation	-2,653,606	-2,870,108
Total Property Plant & Equipment	6,749,513	6,582,220
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	9,741,959	9,706,077

Liabilities

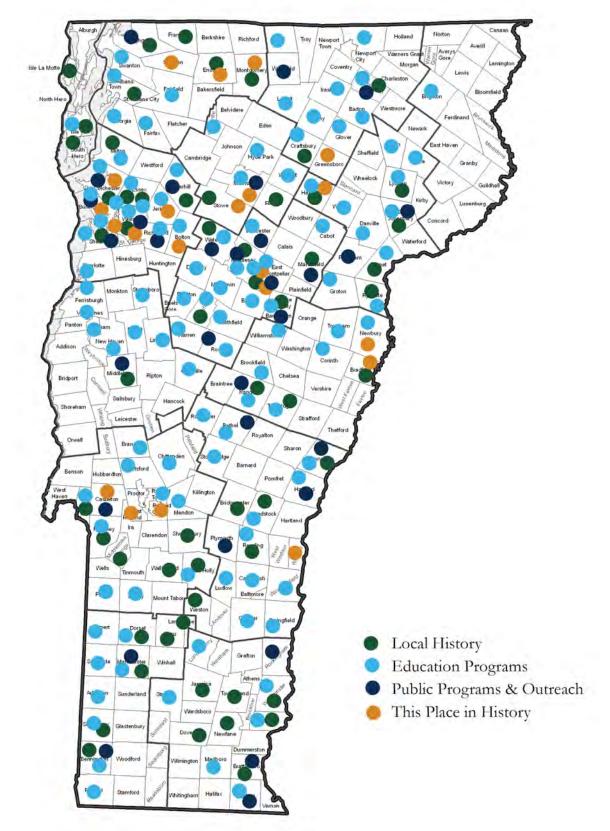
	FY 2019	FY 2020
Accounts Payable	77,674	76,419
Short-term Liabilities	129,152	320,705
Mortgage Payable	1,148,343	1,108,268
TOTAL LIABILITIES	1,355,169	1,505,392

Net Assets

	FY 2019	FY 2020
Beginning Net Assets	8,571,495	8,386,790
Change in Net Assets	-184,705	-186,105
ENDING NET ASSETS	8,386,790	8,200,685

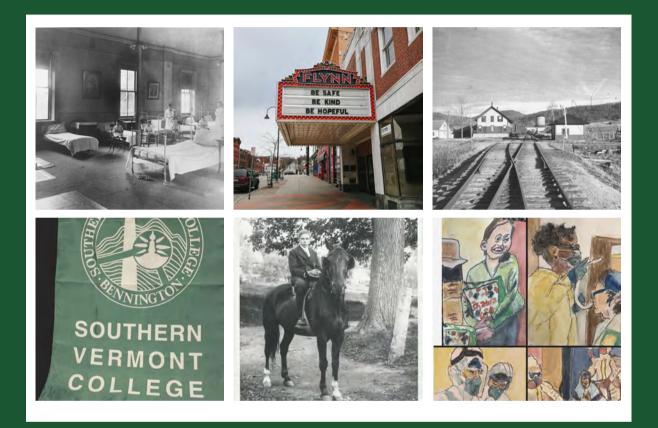
VHS Statewide Impact

FY20 (July 2019-June 2020)



Strategy One:

Provide Vermonters and Vermonters-at-heart the resources to access Vermont's rich historical Collections from anywhere in the world.



2,327 new titles added to online catalog; 435 images added to Digital Vermont, our online digital archive; 316 items crowd-sourced on our COVID-19 digital archive; 144 items redesigned for the Vermont Women's History Database; 1,425 images added to VermontCivilWar.org; 200 pieces of correspondence from Vermont Equal Suffrage Association (1919-1920) added to CDI.uvm.edu; 25,000 digital records converted from PastPerfect to new collections management software, CatalogIt; 13% of collections inventory completed.

Strategy Two:

We will recognize and support local history efforts; understanding that local societies are an integral part of sharing and preserving Vermont's story.



7 local history engagement sessions, accompanying survey, and report to the field; 8 LLHSM Achievement Awards given; 11 scholarships awarded for NEMA Annual Conference in Burlington; 3 exhibit planning and production webinars held for Technology 2020 crowdsourced exhibit; 3 exhibits opened in the Local History Gallery (*Norman Rockwell's Arlington, The Dames*, and *The Sheldon Relic Chair*); 8 virtual roundtables; and over 30 organizations directly assisted via advice and site visits.

Strategy Three:

Vermonters will increase their knowledge of our state's past and understand how their unique experience impacts and shapes this ongoing narrative. Guests will enrich their visit through deeper understanding of Vermont and its people.



2 books published (*Repeopling Vermont* and *The Rebel and the Tory*);
2 webinars on "Moderating Difficult Conversations"; 5 community
conversations hosted across the state, informed by *Repeopling Vermont*;
to additional community conversations held by partner organizations;
Banjo Afternoon program, 2nd Freedom & Unity Luncheon; 9 Third
Thursday lectures; 4 exhibits opened; 5 Before Your Time podcast
episodes; Green Mountain Chronicles relaunched; 9 Vermont Trivia
nights; 6-week "Introduction to Museum Work" class piloted.

Strategy Four:

To build resilient and connected communities, students will understand Vermont's history and its place in the broader world.



500 students and parents participated in History for Homeschoolers (inperson and virtual); photo booth installed in *Freedom & Unity* exhibit; 321 students engaged in hands-on-history programs; 7,381 people visited the Vermont History Museum, prior to March closure, including 1,800 students on field trips; 167 students with 113 projects participated in virtual Vermont History Day; 49 student competed in National History Day; 7 weeks of Vermont History content provided for Good Citizen Challenge's Coronavirus Challenge; 100+ educational resources added to VHS website. We are deeply grateful to you, our many donors and members, who help preserve Vermont's rich history, so each generation can learn from the legacy of our past. Your generous contributions provide the critical support needed to host public programs, educate students, present exhibits, publish unique stories, and preserve and share Vermont's treasures.

The Legacy Circle is comprised of individuals who share a love of learning, a sense of wonder about Vermont and a commitment to ensuring our cultural and scientific heritage is passed to future generations. By supporting the Vermont Historical Society through an estate or life income gift, these individuals have recognized the timeless value of VHS's work and the enduring place it has in Vermont history.

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The 1838 Society, named in honor of the organization's founding year, recognizes loyal individuals, families, and organizations based on their lifetime giving of \$5,000 or more to the Vermont Historical Society. Members of the 1838 Society are among a timeless cadre of philanthropists who envision a future of infinite opportunity for VHS.

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The Freedom & Unity Circle celebrates and recognizes the commitment and generosity of individuals, families, and organizations who give at a leadership level. Recognition in the Freedom & Unity Circle begins with an unrestricted pledge or cash contribution of \$1,000 or more. These gifts provide critical, immediate-use funds for VHS's public programs, educational initiatives, exhibit support, and areas of greatest need.

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The Circle of Friends recognizes those individuals and organizations who have made unrestricted and/or restricted contributions to the Vermont Historical Society during the year, totaling less than \$1,000.

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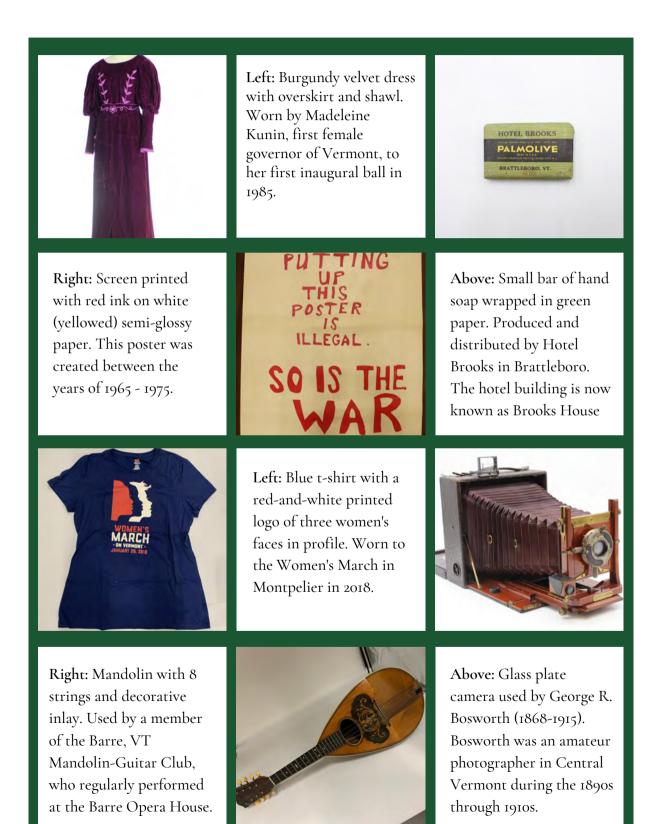
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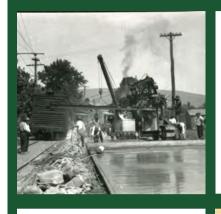
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Left: Laying concrete road surface in Bennington, 1921. This was one of the first hard-surface roads in Vermont. As of 1923, only 45 miles of paved roads had been created in the state.



Right: Proud workers at Danby Quarry pose with the largest single piece of marble removed from their quarry, bound for Washington. D.C. Date unknown.



Above: Campaign brochure introducing U.S. Senator Winston Prouty's wife to the voters in his 1964 reelection campaign. He won a 2nd term and was reelected again in 1970.



Right: Mary Jane Bosworth (center), granddaughter of Central Vermont amateur photographer George R. Bosworth, and other descendants, donated a collection of over 850 glass plate negatives to VHS. Left: This poster represents Vermont's effort to market skiing to the general public in the 1950s, using a new approach of bold, contemporary graphics.





Above: One of over 800 architectural drawings for over 265 projects by Donald McKnight, a selftaught architect from Barre. His buildings often show a modernist flair, but he designed in many styles.

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The utmost care has been taken in preparing this report. Occasionally, however, errors do occur. We apologize if this has happened and ask that you notify us with any inaccuracies or omissions.

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