

**Vermont Transit Company
Records, 1926-2008
Doc 610-616 & 631-633, MSA 145, 581 & 605, MSB 69, MS Size C
M Film 299-308 and Film C-32 – C-35**

Introduction

This collection documents two companies: the Burlington Rapid Transit Company from its origins in 1926 through its acquisition of Burlington Traction Company in 1929 and its cessation in 1973; and the Vermont Transit Company (sometimes referred to as Vermont Transit Lines) from its origin in 1927 through its sale to Greyhound in 1975 and cessation of operations in 2008. Included are items from several related businesses: Vermont Transit Travel Bureau (and its internal department Vermont Transit Tours) and Thompson Travel. The collection was donated by William P. Thompson in 2008 (ms. acc. no. 2008.10) & 2013, William J. McCormick in 2008 and 2010 (ms. acc. no. 2008.16) and Albert Haseloff in 2010 (ms. acc. no. 2010.9). It occupies ten document storage boxes, three archival flip-top boxes, one oversized (size C) folder, and one MSB box. It consumes approximately 13 linear feet of shelf space.

History

One cannot understand or appreciate the history of the Burlington Rapid Transit Company and Vermont Transit Company without first reading the history of the Burlington Traction Company (BTC) - see "Related Collections" below - which, at its peak in the mid-1920s, provided electric trolley service to the communities of Burlington, Winooski and Essex Junction. As the automobile, and by extension the bus, was introduced, the electric trolley, with its limiting infrastructure, became obsolete.

On February 16, 1926, the first local bus route in Burlington, the "Country Club Loop", was established by William S. Appleyard, who owned an automobile dealership on South Winooski Avenue. Calling his company the Burlington Rapid Transit Company (BRT), he received permission from the Public Service Commission (PSC) to operate a non-competitive (with BTC) bus route in the Hill Section of Burlington. Soon, when BTC failed to comply with PSC orders to expand their lines, the commission granted Appleyard permission to operate his buses in places directly in competition with the BTC.

Over the next few years, Appleyard received permission to expand to seven competitive yet successful bus routes in the Burlington area. His success, combined with the devastating flood in November of 1927 (that damaged trolley tracks and collapsed the Winooski Bridge, a main BTC route), proved to be the undoing of the BTC. In 1929, Appleyard bought the BTC in order to acquire its routes and eliminate competition. BTC trolleys operated until August 4, 1929, when, at 4 p.m., a crowd gathered at City Hall Park to witness the famous and symbolic torching of Car #5, their oldest trolley. The trolley era had ended.

Meanwhile, in 1927, Appleyard established the Vermont Transit Company (VTC), under which he operated out-of-town buses. Over the next decade and a half, Appleyard purchased existing bus lines throughout Vermont, connecting Burlington via bus to the other towns and cities of Vermont (and beyond). Towns accessed by VTC buses included Barre (1927), Rutland and Vergennes (1928), Bennington and Pittsfield, MA (1929), Portland, ME (1932), Bellows Falls, White River Junction and Claremont, NH (1935), Albany, NY (1936), St. Johnsbury and Littleton, NH (1937), Newport (1938), Chester and Springfield (1939), and Concord and Manchester, NH (1941). By 1945, VTC buses were connecting Vermonters to New York City, Boston and Montreal.

Out of the BRT bus station in Burlington, Appleyard sold railroad and steamship tickets alongside the bus tickets; starting in 1934, airline tickets were added to the list. Appleyard was one of five investors who had put money down to buy land for Burlington International Airport (the city of Burlington later bought them out), and he had purchased 500 tickets for Burlington/Boston air travel that began with a February 10, 1934 flight to Boston. (Three months later, in an event much publicized in and well documented by local media, famed aviator Amelia Earhart flew to Burlington and stayed overnight at the Appleyard's home.) In the 1940s, Appleyard also looked into the possibility of passenger helicopter service between some of the more remote Vermont cities and towns, though this never materialized.

In April of 1947, two months before his passing, William Appleyard sold BRT and VTC to his stepson, Robert F. Thompson, who had held various positions at both companies since graduating from Dartmouth College in 1934. At the same time, rules were changing regarding the sale of airline tickets, leaving Thompson unable to sell them over the bus station counter. In response, Thompson, in partnership with Appleyard's wife, formed a travel agency called the Vermont Transit Travel Bureau; this enabled them to continue to sell airline tickets at their bus station. Through the travel agency, they also ran bus tours throughout the New England region for sports events, New Hampshire beaches, fall foliage and more.

In 1970, Vermont Transit Travel Bureau became incorporated under the ownership of Robert Thompson, his children William and Sharon Thompson, and partial BRT/VTC owner Charles Irish. Within a few years, they had created a separate internal department, Vermont Transit Tours (with its own office, staff and director), to coordinate bus tours throughout New England, the United States and abroad. In 1975, William Thompson bought out the other three agency owners and changed the name to Thompson Travel, Inc. Vermont Travel Tours continued operation throughout the 1990s.

In 1973, Burlington Rapid Transit's name was changed to BRT, Inc., which became a real estate investment business. The local bus service BRT provided was undertaken by the Chittenden County Transportation Authority, though BRT maintained ownership of the bus station and leased it to the VTC. The CCTA continues to operate the local bus service today (2010).

In 1975, Greyhound bought Vermont Transit Company, though they continued to operate it as the Vermont Transit Company until 2008.

As of 2010, all of Greyhound's Vermont bus service is based out of its White River Junction hub; service in the Burlington area is now operating out of the Burlington airport. Due to declining ridership, bus service down the western side of Vermont has been terminated.

Scope & Content

As the Burlington Rapid Transit and Vermont Transit Companies grew, they went through many changes. Each of those steps is illustrated here: from the state permits to add BRT routes in the Burlington area in the 1920s and 1930s to the side businesses of the far-reaching (Florida, California – even overseas!) Vermont Transit Tours and the Thompson Travel agency many years later.

A significant component of this collection consists of financial, organizational and operational records: audits and financial reports from 1929 to 1973, articles of incorporation, deeds and leases, marketing materials, bus schedules and 82 years of newspaper clippings. There is also a vast amount of tourist information included: tour brochures from the 1950s through the 1990s, a document box full of slides from VTL-sponsored trips, mostly from the 1970s and 1980s, and another full of audio reels and video tapes from the same period.

Appleyard's interest in aviation is documented by newspaper clippings in scrapbooks. Topics include the first commercial flight from Burlington, Amelia Earhart's visit to the Queen City in 1934, and Burlington Mayor James Burke's first flight at the age of 86.

There are two separate reports included: two copies of future VTC owner R.F. Thompson's 1934 Sociology report "History of Transportation in the Small City: A Social Science Survey of Burlington, Vermont" and long-time VTL bus driver Kenneth Bessette's riotous 1995 memoirs, "Vermont Transit Lines in the Good Ole' Days." Finally, the original hand-written draft of BRT/VTC superintendent Albert Haseloff's 1929 speech entitled "How Come Bus Transportation and Why" is included.

Organization

The collection is organized in the following five series:

- I. Organizational Records
 - A. Articles of Incorporation
 - B. Minutes & Annual Meeting Notes
 - C. Stock Certificates
- II. Operational Records & Materials
 - A. Bus & Truck Operational Reports

- B. Deeds & Mortgage Certificates
- C. Leases & Maps
- D. BRT Legal Folders
- E. Equipment Records
- F. Operational Materials
- G. Legal Documents
- III. Financial Records
 - A. Reports on Assets
 - B. Monthly Financials
 - C. Quarterly Financials
 - D. Annual Financials
 - E. Audit Reports
 - F. Annual Reports to Other Agencies
 - G. Trustee Financial Statements
 - H. Miscellaneous Financial Documents
- IV. Marketing
 - A. Marketing, Timetables & Advertising Materials
 - B. Newspaper Articles
 - C. Photographs
 - D. Slides
 - E. Audio Cassette Tapes, Videotapes & Films
- V. History

Related Collections

The collection of the Burlington Traction Company, purchased in 1929 by Burlington Rapid Transit owner William S. Appleyard, is located at MSA 523. This is essential reading for students of bus transportation in Vermont.

Related VTC materials (driver uniforms, model buses, signage, etc.) are archived in the Vermont Historical Society museum collection (acc. no. 2008.25, 2008.53, and 2010.19).

Oversized photos from this collection have been removed to the photo files and are stored in Size C and Size D F-AUTO, Misc. & Other.

Inventory

I. Organizational Records

A. Articles of Incorporation

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| Doc 610:1 | BTC / BRT, Articles of Incorporation, Association & Amendments |
| 2 | BTC, Legal Documents 1926-1929, (a) |
| 3 | _____, _____, (b) |
| 4 | _____, _____, (c) |
| 5 | _____, _____, (d) |

- 18 VTC / Greyhound, Plan of Reorganization, 1974
 Doc 616:10 VTL, Trade Name Registrations, 1996-1998

B. Minutes & Annual Meeting Notes

- Doc 611:1 BTC / BRT, Minutes & Annual Meeting Notes, 1926-1944
 2a BRT, _____, 1945-1971
 2b _____, _____, 1972-2002
 2c _____, Dissolution, 2003
 2d _____, Bylaws, 1962 and 1990
 Doc 612:1 VTC, Annual Meeting Notes, 1950-1970
 2 _____, _____, 1971-1980
 3 _____, _____, 1981-1989

C. Stock Certificates

- Doc 610:21 BRT, Stock Certificates, Book 1
 22 _____, _____, Book 2
 MSB 69:1 _____, _____, Book 3

II. Operational Records & Materials

A. Bus & Truck Operational Reports

- Doc 612:4 BRT, Bus & Truck Operations, 1926-1937
 5 VTC, _____, 1929-1937

B. Deeds & Mortgage Certificates

- 6 BRT, Mortgages, Deeds & Titles, 1948-1976

C. Leases & Maps

- Doc 610:6 BTC / BRT / VTC, Leases & Property Maps
 MS Size C BRT, Blueprint, N. Winooski & Riverside Avenues, Burlington, 1946

D. BRT Legal Folders

- Doc 610:7 BRT, Vermont Public Service Board, Miscellaneous Orders
 8 _____, _____, Temporary Permits
 9 _____, _____, Certificate 1533-A, Main Line
 10 _____, _____, Certificate 1533-B, North Avenue
 11 _____, _____, Certificate 1533-C, Airport
 12 _____, _____, Certificate 1533-D, North End Loop
 13 _____, _____, Certificate 1533-E, Essex Junction
 14 _____, _____, Certificate 1533-F, Municipal (North) Beach
 15 _____, _____, Certificate 1533-G, Queen City Park
 Doc 616: 11 VTC, Certificates, 1974

E. Equipment Records

- Doc 611:3 BRT, Equipment Records, 1929-1974

MSA 605:1 VTC, Bus Equipment Lists, 1956-1998
 Doc 611:4 _____, _____, 1929-1988

F. Operational Materials

Doc 612:7 _____, Operations Materials
 MSA 851:4 BRT / VTC, Ticket Booklets
 MS Size C VTC, Agents' Manual Book Cover
 MS Size C Greyhound, Ticket Tear Map #21, 1983
 Doc 612:8 VTC, Bus Schedules, 1934-45, 1983
 Doc 616:12 BRT, Route Information, 1943-1944, plus a blank driver's Delay
 Report card (ca. 1947)
 13 VTC, Driver Seniority Lists, 1952-1999
 Doc 631 _____, Personnel Cards (NOTE: document box sealed until 2061)
 MS Size C VTL, Blank Chart Poster

G. Legal Documents

Doc 612:9 BTC / BRT / VTC, Miscellaneous Legal Documents

III. Financial Records

A. Reports on Assets

Doc 612:10 VTC, Report on Assets, 1929

B. Monthly Financials

11 BRT, Monthly Financials, 1929
 12 _____, _____, 1930
 13 _____, _____, 1931a
 14 _____, _____, 1931b
 15 _____, _____, 1932
 16 _____, _____, 1933
 17 _____, _____, 1934
 18 _____, _____, 1935
 19 _____, _____, 1936
 20 _____, _____, 1937
 21 _____, _____, 1938
 22 _____, _____, 1939
 23 _____, _____, 1940
 24 _____, _____, 1941
 25 _____, _____, 1942
 26 _____, _____, 1943
 27 _____, _____, 1944
 28 _____, _____, 1945
 29 _____, _____, 1946
 Doc 613:1 _____, _____, 1947
 2 _____, _____, 1948

- 3 _____, _____, 1949
- 4 _____, _____, 1950
- 5 _____, _____, 1951
- 6 _____, _____, 1952
- 7 _____, _____, 1953
- 8 _____, _____, 1954
- 9 _____, _____, 1955
- 10 _____, _____, 1956
- 11 _____, _____, 1957
- 12 _____, _____, 1958
- 13 _____, _____, 1959
- 14 VTC, _____, 1930

C. Quarterly Financials

- 15 VTC, Quarterly Reports to the ICC, 1938-1953

D. Annual Financials

- 16 BTC, Annual Report, 1927
- 17 BRT, _____, 1938
- 18 _____, _____, 1939
- 19 _____, _____, 1940
- 20 _____, _____, 1941
- 21 _____, _____, 1942
- 22 _____, _____, 1943
- 23 _____, _____, 1944
- 24 _____, _____, 1945
- 25 _____, _____, 1946
- 26 _____, _____, 1947
- 27 _____, _____, 1948
- Doc 614:1 _____, _____, 1949
- 2 _____, _____, 1950
- 3 _____, _____, 1951
- 4 _____, _____, 1952
- 5 _____, _____, 1953
- 6 _____, _____, 1954
- 7 _____, _____, 1955
- 8 _____, _____, 1956
- 9 _____, _____, 1957
- 10 _____, _____, 1958
- 11 _____, _____, 1959
- 12 _____, _____, 1960
- 13 _____, _____, 1961
- 14 _____, _____, 1962
- 15 _____, _____, 1963
- 16 _____, _____, 1964
- 17 _____, _____, 1965

- 18 _____, _____, 1966
- 19 _____, _____, 1967
- 20 _____, _____, 1968
- 21 _____, _____, 1969
- 22 _____, _____, 1970
- 23 _____, _____, 1971
- 24 _____, _____, 1972
- 25 _____, _____, 1973
- 26 VTC, Annual Financials, 1931-1951
- 27 _____, _____, 1952-1963
- 28 _____, _____, 1965-1980
- 29 _____, _____, 1993-1997

E. Audit Reports

- 30 BRT, Audit Reports, 1929-1934
- 31 _____, _____, 1935-1944
- 32 _____, _____, 1945-1954
- 33 VTC, _____, 1941-1959
- Doc 616:9 Greyhound, Internal Audit Report of VTC, 1984

F. Annual Reports to Other Agencies

- Doc 614:34 _____, Annual Reports to the ICC, 1938-1939
- 35 _____, _____, 1940-1942
- 36 _____, _____, 1943-1945
- 37 _____, _____, 1946-1948
- Doc 615:1 _____, _____, 1949-1951
- 2 _____, _____, 1952-1955
- 3 _____, Annual Returns to New Hampshire, 1938-1953
- 4 _____, Annual Reports to Vermont, 1941-1945
- 5 _____, _____, 1946-1950
- 6 _____, _____, 1951-1953
- 7 _____, Annual Reports to Massachusetts, 1948-1950
- 8 _____, _____, 1951-1953

G. Trustee Financial Statements

- 9 BRT / VTC, Charles Black (Trustee) Financials, 1935-1938

H. Miscellaneous Financial Documents

- MSA 605:2 VTC, Local & Joint Excursion Tariffs, 1937-1957
- 3 _____, _____, 1958-1978
- Doc 616:19 _____, Tour Revenue Sources, 1947-1949
- Doc 610:16 BRT, General Ledger (GL) Documents, 1974
- M Film 299 _____, General Ledger (GL) Microfilm, 1932-1940
- 300 _____, _____, 1941-1946
- 301 _____, _____, 1949-1954
- 302 VTC, _____, pre-1940

- 303 _____, _____, 1940-1945
- 304 _____, _____, 1945-1946
- 305 _____, _____, 1947-1948
- 306 _____, _____, 1949-1950
- 307 _____, _____, 1951-1954
- 308 _____, _____, 1954 continued

IV. Marketing

A. Marketing, Timetables & Advertising Materials

- Doc 615:10 VTC / VTL / VTT, Marketing Materials
- MSA 581:4 BRT, Printing Ink Blocks
- MSA 145:1 VTT / VTC, Timetables & Brochures, unknown dates
 - 2 _____, _____, 1933-1949
 - 3 _____, _____, 1950-1959
 - 4 _____, _____, 1960-1969
 - 5 _____, _____, 1970-1979
 - 6 _____, _____, 1980-1989
- MSA 581:1 _____, _____, 1990-1999
 - 2 _____, _____, 2000-2008
 - 3 BRT, Bus Schedules, 1947-1972
 - 4 BRT / VTC, Ticket Booklets
- Doc 610:20 VTT, Tour Brochures, 1950-1997
 - 17 _____, Bulletins & Tour Information, 1978-1992
- Doc 615:11 VTC / VTT, Bulletins, Newsletters & Brochures, 1973-1998
- MS Size C VTC, American Express New England Tour Map, 1950-1951
- Doc 615:12 Thompson Travel, Advertisements, Burlington Free Press, 1975-1985
 - 13 _____, _____, _____, 1986-1999
 - 13b Business cards, Robert F. Thompson, with holder, undated
_____, James L. Kerrigan, President of Greyhound Lines, Inc., ca.
1972

B. Newspaper Articles

- 14 VTC, Miscellaneous Newspaper Articles, 1945-1993
- 15 Thompson Travel, _____, 1992-2000
- Doc 616:1 BRT, Scrapbook, Newspaper Clippings, 1929
 - 2 _____, _____, _____, 1930-1935
 - 3 VTC, _____, _____, 1930-1936
 - 4 _____, _____, _____, 1968-1985
 - 5 Thompson Travel, _____, Airline Clippings, 1934-1935
- Doc 611:5 VTC, _____, Miscellaneous News Clippings, 1984-1986
- MSB 69:2 _____, _____, _____, 1940-1967

C. Photographs

- Doc 615: 16 _____, Photographs, Buses, June 1997

- 17 _____, _____, _____, General
 18 _____, _____, Trolleys; includes photo of August 4, 1929 BTC trolley
 burning
 20 _____, _____, Bus Stations, 1996
 MSA 605:4 _____, _____, 3-Panel Promotional Display
 Doc 616:14 _____, _____, Haseloff Scrapbook, Buses & Trolleys
 15 _____, _____, _____, Essex Junction Train Station
 16 _____, _____, _____, Buildings & Personnel
 17 _____, _____, _____, At Work & Personal
 18 _____, _____, _____, Travel & Vacation
 Doc 615:19 _____, _____, Miscellaneous
 MSA 605:5 _____, _____, Negatives & Color Separations
 Framed Winooski and Burlington Horse Railroad Company, ca. 1872.

D. Slides

- Doc 632:1 _____, Slides, Miscellaneous, #1
 Page 1: "Historical Pictures from News Clips & Old Photos"
 1930's or 1940's?
 20 slides, March 1981 (of older materials)
 Tom Haney, photographer (likely)
 Pages 2, 3: "Small Towns"
 Photos of small Vermont towns & bus offices
 35 slides, April/May 1981
 Tom Haney, photographer
 Pages 4-7: "Slides of Buses in Flower Beds"
 Buses on roadside w/ nature scenes (mountains, Lake Champlain,
 flower beds, Richmond Round Church, etc.)
 76 slides, August/October 1985, July 1988
 Tom (and Sue?) Haney, photographer(s)
 Pages 8-14: "Terminal Activities: Drivers, Package Express"
 Also: a few from around various towns and countryside
 121 slides, February/March 1981
 Tom Haney, photographer
 Doc 632:2 _____, _____, _____, #2
 Pages 1-3: "Garage: Maintenance, Cleaning & Maintenance Review"
 Burlington garage
 47 slides, February/March 1981
 Tom Haney, photographer
 Page 4: "Slides of Van"
 Vermont Transit Lines vans & passengers
 1 slide, date unknown
 Photographer unknown
 Pages 5-9: VTC "New Coach Design, June, 1997"
 Bus shots in various highway and city locations
 85 slides, June 1997
 Unknown photographer
NOTE: printed photographs of this set are in Doc 615:16

- 3 _____, _____, _____, #3
 4 _____, _____, _____, #4
 5 _____, _____, _____, #5
 6 _____, _____, Going Places Doing Things, #1 (audio reel in Doc 633)
 7 _____, _____, _____, #2 (audio reel in Doc 633)
 8 _____, _____, Quebec Today 1983, #1 (audio reel in Doc 633)
 9 _____, _____, _____, #2 (audio reel in Doc 633)
 10 _____, _____, Special Olympics 1981, #1
 11 _____, _____, _____, #2
 12 _____, _____, Williamsburg Tour 1981, #1
 13 _____, _____, _____, #2
 14 _____, _____, Pennsylvania Dutch Tour 1981, #1
 15 _____, _____, _____, #2
 16 _____, _____, ABA Energy Saver Program (audio reel in Doc 633)
 17 _____, _____, Buses, People & Travel, 1971
 18 _____, _____, Buses, Traffic, Snow & Faces, 1971
 19 _____, _____, Buses On Highway & In Snow, 1988-1997
 20 _____, _____, G.E. Move / Rutland, 1981
 21 _____, _____, Montreal Ice Follies, 1981
 22 _____, _____, Old Man of the Mountain / Morgan Horse Farm, 1981
 23 _____, _____, New York City & Bus Shots, 1980-1985
 24 _____, _____, Employees, 1975-1981
 25 _____, _____, Logan Airport, 1981
 MSA 605:6 VTC, Slideshow Request Letters, 1980s

E. Audio Cassette Tapes, Videotapes, & Films

- Doc 633 Audio & Video collection
 10 Audio Cassettes: mostly 1980s radio commercials
 1 Audio Reel (11" box): A Vermont Transit Getaway
 8 Audio Reels (7" box): Going Places, Doing Things (short version),
 Energy Saver ABA Program, Quebec Today, WCAX-TV News
 Report, July 16, 1975 (text in folder), Tour America by
 Motorcoach, Vacation Tours (reels 1 & 2), Something Special:
 Special Olympics
 2 Audio Reels (5" box): Greyhound, unlabeled
 9 Video Cassettes: Quebec Today (12 minutes), Quebec Today (master
 tape), 1983 Tour Brochure, Trade Show Presentation, WNNE
 Tour, Tour America By Motorcoach (18 minutes), Going Places,
 Doing Things (14 minutes), Something Special: Special Olympics,
 unlabeled
 1 File Folder: Text of WCAX-TV News Report, July 16, 1975
 Film C-32 _____, Greyhound Commercial, #1
 33 _____, _____, #2
 34 _____, _____, #3
 35 _____, _____, #4

V. History

- Doc 610:19 VTC, How Come Bus Transportation and Why, Albert Haseloff
Speech, 1929
- Doc 615:21 _____, Report: Transportation in the Small City, R.F. Thompson, 1934
(copy 1)
- 22 _____, _____, _____ (copy 2)
- MS Size C R.F. Thompson, ICC Enrollment Certificate, 5/26/38
- Doc 615:23 VTC, Book: VTC Stories, Kenneth Bessette Sr., (Part 1)
- 24 _____, _____, _____, (Part 2)
- 24b "Notes of Ken Bessette on his years with VTC and BRT (1930-1971)"
- 24c "Tribute to Ken Bessette" article from the *Williston Whistle*, March 30,
1994
- 24d "Vermont Transit Lines, VTL, 1927, 1975, 1976," program with
historic photographs [created at time of Greyhound purchase of VTL]
- MS Size C VTL, 50th Anniversary Poster, 1979
- Doc 615:24e *Bus Industry* magazine, VTL 50th Anniversary issue, summer 1979
Bus Ride magazine, VTL 50th Anniversary issue, December 1979
- 24f "Vermont's Big Green Machines: The Vermont Transit
Lines," by Gerald B. Fox, "History 261, Vermont Since 1920," May 1990
- 24g VTL "75th Year Celebration" 2005 Calendar
- MS Size C VTC, Bus Transportation Magazine Awards, 1940-1941
- MS Size C _____, Vermont Senate Resolution, 2008
- MS Size C _____, Poster & Postcard, The Bus Barns Project, 2001
- Doc 615:25 _____, Miscellaneous Historical Documents
- Doc 616:6 Burlington International Airport: A Pictorial History (Book)
- 7 Vermont Transit Historic Photograph Portfolio, 1983 (Book) (2
copies)
- 8 Getting There From Here: Report on VT Transportation Systems,
12/87 (Book)

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