

C History Connections

Vermont Historical Society

News &
Notes

Summer 2010 / Volume #4 / Number 4



Vermont Historical Society
60 Washington Street
Barre, Vermont 05641-4209

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Public WiFi at
History Center!



Vermont Historical Society Annual Meeting

History will be heating up with the Vermont Historical Society's Annual meeting this year! The title of our mini symposium is "Blizzards, Foliage, Floods and Mud: Vermont History for All Seasons." Our keynote speaker is cartoonist Jeff Danziger, who will talk about the finer points of Vermont weather through the wit and wisdom of the Teeds. Burr Morse, Vermonter of many generations, maple producer and storyteller, will then bring us tales of weather in the woods. And finally, weatherman Roger Hill will share how weather incidents affected the course of Vermont's history.

The day begins with coffee, refreshments

and a book sale put together by VHS Librarian Paul Carnahan, who always comes up with something for everyone. From there we go on to the business portion of the VHS annual meeting which includes announcing recipients of this year's Cate Fellowship, Ben Lane Awards and the Richard O. Hathaway Award.

Speakers Burr Morse and Jeff Danziger are followed by a buffet lunch. Roger Hill rounds out the day with his presentation.

We hope to see you at the Vermont Historical Society Annual Meeting!

VHS members will receive additional information and registration materials soon. 

Blizzards, Foliage, Floods and Mud: Vermont History for All Seasons

The Vermont Historical Society Annual Meeting

Saturday, September 25, 2010, 8:30 am – 2:15 pm

Vermont History Museum, 109 State Street, Montpelier

Woodstock House of an Year 1844



The program will feature a book sale, VHS annual meeting, and presentations by Burr Morse, Jeff Danziger and Roger Hill. The cartoon above is a Jeff Danziger commentary on Vermont weather.



Summer 2010

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History Connections is published four times a year by the Vermont Historical Society.

The Vermont Historical Society engages both Vermonters and "Vermonters at Heart" in the exploration of our state's rich heritage. Our purpose is to reach a broad audience through our outstanding collections, statewide outreach and dynamic programming. We believe that an understanding of the past changes lives and builds better communities.

Executive Director: Mark S. Hudson
Editor: Mark Collier
Printing: Stillwater Graphics

Vermont History Center

60 Washington Street, Barre, VT
802-479-8500

Administrative Offices & Store:
Monday–Friday 9am to 4pm

Library

Tuesday–Friday 9am to 4pm
Wednesday 9am to 8pm
Second Saturday each month
9am to 4pm
802-479-8509

Library admission:

Non-members: \$5
Members and students: Free

Museum & Store

Pavilion Building
109 State Street, Montpelier, VT
Tuesday–Saturday 10am to 4pm
802-828-2291

Museum admission:

Families: \$12; Adults: \$5
Students, children, seniors: \$3
Members & children under 6: Free
Student school groups: Free
802-828-2180

www.vermonthistory.org
vhs-info@state.vt.us

From the Director

Saving Vermont's Heritage: Preservation and Partnership



In prior newsletters I have sung the praises of the important efforts carried out by Vermont's local heritage organizations. I also have expressed my deep satisfaction with the guidance and assistance the Vermont Historical Society has provided these organizations through the League of Local Historical Societies, the Community History Project, Vermont Alliance for Response, Connecting to Collections and other initiatives. Soon these collaborative initiatives will be joined by the Vermont Collections Care Program, a vital service previously administered by the Vermont Museum and Gallery Alliance (VMGA).

For over 25 years, VMGA aided Vermont's museums, galleries and historic sites through programs that advanced professional practices, fostered cooperation and promoted the value of these cultural organizations. Since 1992 the centerpiece of this effort has been the Collections Care Program. Despite their considerable record of success over the years, VMGA was confronted with financial challenges that made the continuation of this and other VMGA programs impossible. Last winter, members of the VMGA board appealed to us to explore how we might carry these important services forward into the future.

In consultation with VMGA members, VHS staff and board and others interested in the future of this program, we developed a plan that will allow for the Collections Care Program to be incorporated into our League of Local Historical Societies program. At their Annual Meeting in March, the membership of VMGA endorsed the plan and voted to dissolve the Vermont Museum and Gallery Alliance. Since that time, we have been working on the details of this transition and look forward to announcing program specifics at the League's Annual Meeting on October 29 in Bennington.

To promote the care and preservation of collections at Vermont's cultural institutions, we are committed to providing the following services:

- **Mentoring Program:** matching the skills of museum professionals with specific needs at cultural organizations. In my discussions with staff at the state's larger museums, I have been thrilled at their willingness to be of service to organizations in need.
- **Workshops:** providing practical knowledge and skills that will promote the responsible management and care of collections. One held recently at the Vermont History Center on the care and storage of oversize archival materials demonstrated the need for these practical, hands-on experiences.
- **Lending Library/Online Resources:** sharing reliable information on collections care and other important aspects of managing cultural organizations. We look forward to building upon the resources assembled by VMGA and providing online access whenever possible.
- **Archives:** preserving and sharing the institutional record of VMGA.

Although Vermont's local historical societies play a critical role in preserving and telling the story of their community's past, we recognize that other types of museums are vital as well. To assure that the needs of Vermont's diverse cultural heritage organizations are served through this program, the League of Local Historical Societies will become the League of Local Historical Societies and Museums.

We are deeply honored to have this opportunity to be of service to Vermont's heritage organizations and are grateful to the board and membership of VMGA for the trust they have placed in us. Stayed tuned for more details about the Vermont Collections Care Program.

Mark S. Hudson
Executive Director

National History Day 2010

This year, 32 Vermont students, eight teachers, 27 parents & siblings and two Vermont Historical Society staff braved hot, steamy weather to participate in National History Day in Maryland. They stayed on the top floor of an un-air-conditioned dorm. It was 95 degrees inside the building!

Our students did a great job demonstrating their understanding of history—and representing Vermont. Congratulations go to Newton Rose and Noah Schmidt in the category of “Outstanding Vermont Entry, Senior Division” for their project *Vermont Interstates: The Roads to Change*. Newton and Noah attend Black River High School in Ludlow, and their teacher is Sue Pollender.

For the “Outstanding Vermont Entry, Junior Division,” the honor went to Evan Myers for *The Telescope—Bringing Reality into Focus*. Evan attends Vergennes Union Middle School, and his teacher is Karen Myers.

The most memorable moments for the group during their trip were their visits to Senator Leahy in the Russell Building and Senator Sanders in the Dirksen Building, and traveling through the underground tunnel connecting the buildings.

We are proud to be able to provide support to Vermont students and enjoy seeing them get excited about history! 



New and Improved Family Fun!

Over the last seven years, the Vermont Historical Society has produced Saturday morning workshops for kids and their parents, tying aspects of the *Freedom & Unity* exhibit with a program and activity. Families enjoyed relating to the past with a hands-on experience. Starting in September, we are expanding from a handful of workshops into offering three distinct museum activity programs.

The first is **Crafty 2nd Saturdays**. These workshops will be held the second Saturday of every month from 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm in the Snelling Room at the Museum. Families are encouraged to drop in and participate in the activities and stay as long as they like. Each activity commemorates a point in the Vermont history timeline: from making a fort out of popsicle sticks celebrating the Green Mountain Boys’ raid on Fort Ticonderoga, to noting Snowflake Bentley’s birthday by designing and decorating snowflakes.

This Saturday series is free to all who drop in to participate. Our regular museum admissions will apply if participants also want to tour the museum’s *Freedom & Unity* exhibit.

Another new series is **School Vacation Fun**, which will run on school holidays as a great way to have something a little different and fun to do. These workshops for children 6-12 years of age and their accompanying family members will match activities with a trip to parts of the museum. They can visit the Abenaki wigwam and learn what a child’s life would have been or study the railroad and see what a difference it made to Vermont’s history. These tours will then be accompanied by related activities.

Using the same model as **School Vacation Fun**, we are introducing **Home School Wednesdays**. Designed to coincide with the time that home schooling happens, we are offering a series of eight classes that join learning about Vermont History



with a related activity.

Both **School Vacation Fun** and **Home School Wednesdays**

are for children ages 6-12 and accompanying adults. Space is limited; pre-registration is suggested. Fees are \$5

per student, \$3 if a VHS member; three or more children, and family members will be charged at the member rate. 



For details on museum workshops, please visit www.vermonthhistory.org/familyfun.

Films Digitized with Bissell Grant

Forty people gathered in the Tunbridge Library on a pleasant Saturday evening in June to view three recently digitized films from the collections of the Vermont Historical Society. Designed as an entertainment break at the half-way point of the Vermont History Expo, the event showcased the ongoing work of VHS volunteer Fred Pond and the John M. Bissell Foundation of Stowe to digitize 12 of the historical society's films.

Three films chosen for the June event reflected the theme of this year's Expo: "Back to the Land, Again." "Windy Wood Orchard," shows the Smith family as they develop an apple orchard in Barre from the 1930s through the 1950s. A second home movie shows scenes from an active "gentlemen's farm" in Northfield, owned by Norman and Eleanor Appleget from the 1950s through the 1970s. This film also shows large machinery clearing land and building the Interstate Highway through Northfield. The third film, "Thanks to Vermont," was a marketing film produced by the Vermont Development Commission and Department of Agriculture, highlighting the various sectors of Vermont agriculture in the early 1950s, all contributing to a bountiful Thanksgiving meal.

These films are representative of a dozen films being digitized with support from the Bissell Foundation. They are a small portion of over 150 films in the Historical Society's collections, and they were chosen to supply researchers and filmmakers with a selection of information and images on several aspects of Vermont life: traditional enterprises, new

industry, tourism, and city and rural life. Although the VHS film collection is stored in carefully controlled conditions for long-term preservation, they cannot be used by filmmakers or the public because of their outdated film format. Digitization to formats that can be used on modern DVD players and computers is imperative for continued access to these images.

Before sending a film out for professional conversion to digital format, Pond sought the best possible master copy for each film. This led to collaborations with the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration, the Putney Historical Society, and private collectors. Once returned to the VHS from the digitization contractor, the original films are stored on plastic "cores" in our climate-controlled vault. The digital copies are stored on computer hard drives, ready for downloading by filmmakers. DVDs can also be made for historians and interested Vermonters. Finally, many of these are available by webstreaming in the "Moving Images Collections" section of the VHS web site.

The VHS has now transferred about 1800 gigabytes of film footage to digital media with support from the Bissell Foundation, and another 332 gigabytes with private donations and operating funds. 

Additional information about the VHS project to preserve moving images can be found at www.vermonthhistory.org/films.

Educational Outreach

Become a History Helper!

Do you like working with kids? Are you interested in history? History Helpers lead guided tours of the Vermont Historical Society's permanent exhibit, *Freedom & Unity: One Ideal, Many Stories*. The VHS will hold an information session on becoming a History Helper on Wednesday, September 8th from 1:00 pm-2:00pm at the Museum in the Pavilion Building at 109 State Street in Montpelier. Please join us for light refreshments, and learn what being a History Helper is all about! Questions? Call Kathleen D'Aquila at 802-828-2180. 

57th Annual Vermont League of Local Historical Societies Meeting & Conference

The Annual League of Local Historical Societies meetings are popular with our local historical societies for the networking and information opportunities these all-day conferences provide. In recent years, the League meetings have been held in different locations around the state to take advantage of regional offerings. This year, the meeting and conference will be held at the Bennington Museum on Friday, October 29th. We chose the title "Crafting Collaborations" to coincide with the main exhibit at the Bennington Museum. *State of Craft* is a two-fold presentation of the history of the last 50 years of the Vermont crafts community, produced by the Vermont Crafts Council.

State of Craft program and exhibit organizers will talk about their process for selecting and presenting the pieces in the exhibit as well as discuss the importance of objects to local history.

There will be morning and afternoon breakout sessions that will include tours and informational workshops. *Please contact Lisa Evans at (802) 479-8522 or lisa.evans@state.vt.us for more information or to register for your space. Additional information and registration forms will be sent to local historical societies in September.* 

A Very Fine Appearance: The Vermont Civil War Photographs of George Houghton

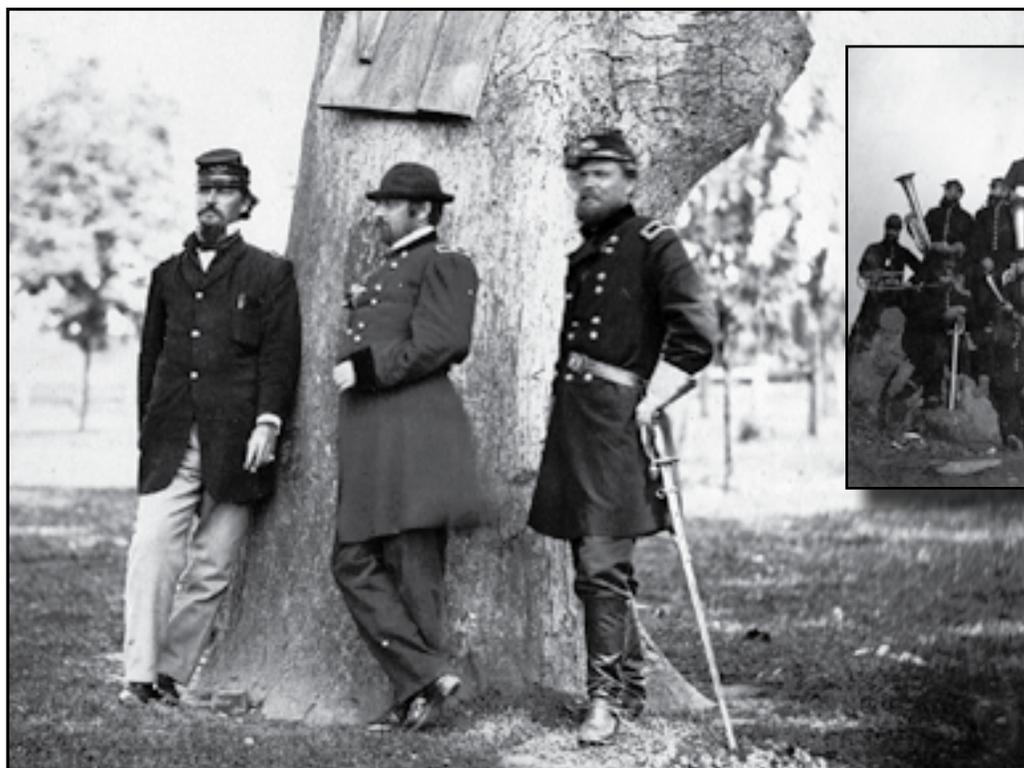
In commemoration of the 150th Anniversary of the Civil War, the Vermont Historical Society will be publishing a collection of over 120 images of Vermont Civil War photographer George Houghton. With the publication of this collection of Houghton photographs, we have an opportunity to bring to light scenes encountered by Vermont soldiers during the Civil War.

Travelling from his studio in Brattleboro, George Houghton accompanied Vermonters into the field, documenting their experiences at Camp Griffin in Northern Virginia during the fall and winter of 1861-62, on the Virginia Peninsula during McClellan's campaign in the spring and summer of 1862, and along Virginia's Occoquan River in the winter and spring of

1863. Each image is accompanied by an excerpt from a personal diary or letter, official records or other sources from the period that provide additional insights into a soldier's life in the field.

"*A Very Fine Appearance*" reflects years of research by historian Donald H. Wickman, who also has written a biographical essay of Houghton that accompanies the photographs. An introduction by Harold Holzer provides additional context about photography during the Civil War.

We hope to have "*A Very Fine Appearance: The Vermont Civil War Photographs of George Houghton*" in bookstores later this year. 



Regimental Band, 4th Vermont Volunteers, Camp Griffin

Generals Hancock, Smith and Newton

From the Director

A Special Note from the Executive Director

The Board of Trustees and I wish to thank our members who have been so gracious in understanding the need for our recent dues increase. We especially thank those who renewed at the new rate before the June 30 deadline. The support of all of our members is important and we are deeply appreciative of each of you!

We also are pleased to report that the IRA Charitable Rollover has been extended through the end of 2010. This

provision allows individuals who are 70½ years of age and older to donate up to \$100,000 from their Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) to public charities without having to count the distributions as taxable income. We are hopeful that our members and friends who can do so will consider making a contribution to the Vermont Historical Society through the IRA Charitable Rollover. Please consult with your financial advisor before making a contribution. 

Museum News

RIGHT: Vermont Emergency Management provided Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) for some of the group on May 21 and 22, including the use of fire extinguishers.



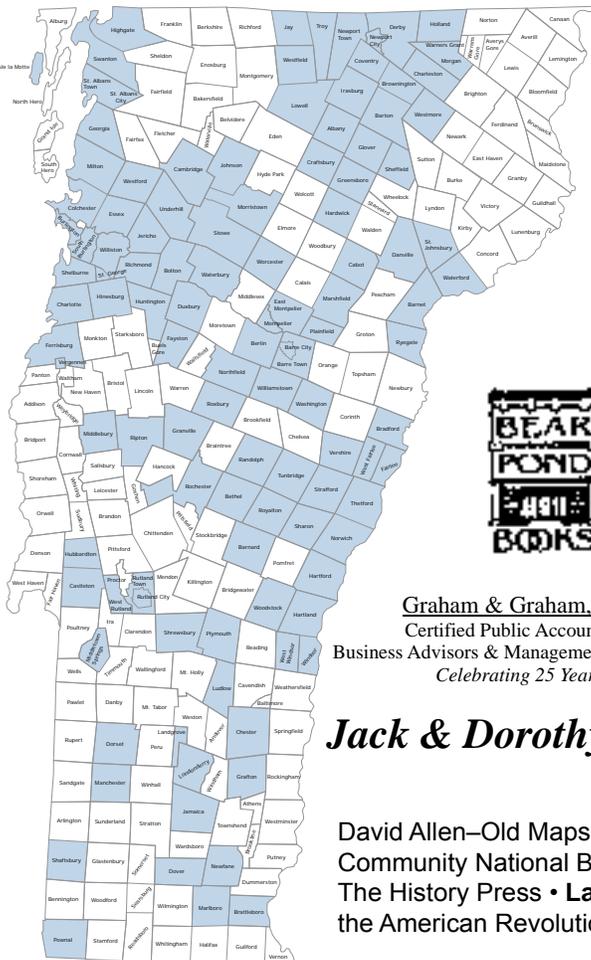
ABOVE: Staff and volunteers from archives, libraries, museums, historical societies, and historic sites gathered on May 17 for a workshop on emergency response, funded by Heritage Preservation's Alliance for Response program.



ABOVE: Hello and goodbye to our summer interns! Many thanks to Kirsten Barger, our Development Intern and to Morgan Eaton, our Library Cataloguing Intern. Thanks, too, to Brooks Buxton, for his generous underwriting of our summer library internship!

Development News

Expo participants came from throughout the state!



Many thanks to our Expo 2010 sponsors:



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the American Revolution • H. Brooke Paige • Spaulding Press • Vermont Technical College

Home Front and Battlefield: Vermont and the Nation in the Civil War

April 12, 2011 will mark the 150th Anniversary of the firing on Fort Sumter and the start of the Civil War. In recognition of Vermont's significant role in the war effort and the tremendous sacrifice of Vermonters to save the Union, organizations throughout Vermont are collaborating on a statewide commemoration of the Civil War Sesquicentennial. The Vermont Historical Society has been leading this planning effort and will play an important role throughout the multi-year commemoration.

On August 11, 2010, Governor Jim Douglas announced the formation of the Vermont Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission, chaired by VHS Executive Director Mark Hudson. The commission's efforts will focus upon the development of a few signature events, as well as the coordination and promotion of events that will be occurring throughout Vermont during the next five years.

The planning committee has created a framework for the statewide commemoration, with themes for each year that

might guide the development and scheduling of events in Vermont. The committee hopes as well that this framework will promote cohesion and help to maintain public interest and enthusiasm throughout all five years. These annual themes are:

1861/2011: The Year When Democracy Was Tested

1862/2012: The Year of Higher Moral Purpose

1863/2013: The Year of the Citizen Soldier—War, Politics and the Home Front

1864/2014: The Year of Suffering and Perseverance

1865/2015: The Year of Reckoning and Reckoning Deferred

Organizations from throughout Vermont are invited to participate. Additional information about events and programs at the Vermont Historical Society and throughout Vermont will be posted in upcoming newsletters and on the VHS website. 

Upcoming Events

Crafty 2nd Saturdays

*Second Saturday of Each Month • 1:00 pm-3:00 pm
Vermont History Museum, 109 State St., Montpelier*

Crafty 2nd Saturdays: Each features an activity commemorating a point in the Vermont history timeline. For information call (802) 828-2180 or e-mail kathleen.daquila@state.vt.us.

Blizzards, Foliage, Floods and Mud

*Saturday, September 25, 2010 • 8:30 am – 2:15 pm
Vermont History Museum, 109 State St., Montpelier*

VHS Annual Meeting & Conference: Join us to explore how weather has affected the course of Vermont's history. For information call (802) 479-8505 or e-mail tess.taylor@state.vt.us.

Crafting Collaborations

*Friday, October 29, 2010 • 8:30 am - 5:00 pm
Bennington Museum, 75 Main St., Bennington*

Vermont League of Local Historical Societies & Museums 57th Annual Meeting & Conference

If you love all things history, don't miss this conference! Workshops on Glass Plate Negative Conversion, Historic Paint Color Selection, Correct and Safe Artifact Labeling, PastPerfect, Working with a Conservator, and Small Scale Publishing. Keynote presentation; local historic tours; annual awards presentations. For more information contact Lisa Evans (802) 479-8522 or lisa.evans@state.vt.us.

Home School Wednesdays

*October 13, November 10, December 8
1:00 pm – 3:00 pm*

Vermont History Museum, 109 State St., Montpelier

A series of eight classes that join learning about Vermont history with a related activity. Pre-registration is suggested. For information call (802) 828-2180 or e-mail kathleen.daquila@state.vt.us.

School Vacation Fun

*October 22 & December 29-30 • 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm
Vermont History Museum, 109 State St., Montpelier*

Workshops for children 6-12 years of ages and their accompanying family members will match activities with a trip to some part or parts of the museum. For information call (802) 828-2180 or e-mail kathleen.daquila@state.vt.us.



Don't forget to visit us on Facebook for more news and announcements!



Vermont Historical Society
60 Washington Street
Barre, Vermont 05641-4209

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Mystery Photo

Several astute readers recognized the church in our last issue's mystery photograph as the Methodist Church in the center of Plainfield. Dale Barlett, Chris Bellamy, and Ralph Howe all contacted us to identify our ca. 1909 photograph. A similar view can be seen in *The Town of Plainfield, Vermont: A Pictorial History, 1870-1940*. The church still stands today, although a Colonial Revival portico added in 1927 changes its appearance somewhat.



Does anyone recognize this patriotic parade scene? The buildings in the background may provide clues. This image is on a postcard that came with a manuscript collection from Roxbury, but we are not sure if the image is from that town or a neighboring town.

If you know, please contact VHS librarian Paul Carnahan at paul.carnahan@state.vt.us or (802) 479-8508.



Check www.vermonthistory.org for more photos, articles and library transcriptions.