



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

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## Do you receive the Vermont Historical Society E-News?

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History Center!



## Envision life at the turn of the 20th century

The Leahy Library recently received a tremendous gift of 482 glass plate negatives taken by Brownsville, Vermont resident George Swallow at the beginning of the twentieth century. "This collection documents the buildings, landscape, and people of this West Windsor village in a very skilled and sensitive way," says Vermont Historical Society librarian Paul Carnahan.

The collection came to the Historical Society through a circuitous route. It was offered for sale to Vermont Historical Society trustee J. Brooks Buxton of Jericho, who recognized the importance of the collection and purchased it for the VHS. Brooks took an immediate liking to the collection and contracted with a local digital imaging company to create scans from many of the images. All that was known about the glass plates at that time was that they showed some



*George Swallow's photo of the village of Brownsville showing the Sykes House (left), owned briefly by Swallow in 1914, and the Story Memorial Hall used for town functions.*

*... I felt as though I was able to travel back in time, turning back the years ...*

Brownsville scenes; the photographer was unknown.

In April, Brooks brought the full collection of plates in their original boxes, 33 in all, and a compact disc of scans to the Vermont History Center. The library staff set to work to identify the photographer. They noticed that the inventories on many of the boxes mentioned "Carolyn," who seemed to be a young girl. A quick search of the 1900 census showed only one Carolyn in West Windsor: Carolyn Swallow, aged six. Her father was



*In front of George Swallow's general store and post office.*

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Summer 2011

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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: Julie Nelson

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](http://www.vermonthistory.org)  
[vhs-info@state.vt.us](mailto:vhs-info@state.vt.us)

## From the Director

### Teaching those who teach Vermont history

In my ongoing discussions with VHS members and friends, I often hear concern about the absence of Vermont history in classrooms across the state. This concern is particularly significant to us because we are deeply committed to being the leader in Vermont history education. While we continue to face significant challenges in bringing our state's history to every classroom in the



state, our recent accomplishments give us hope for the future of heritage education in Vermont.

With significant input from educators, we recently launched the

Vermont History Explorer website ([www.vermonthistory.org/explorer](http://www.vermonthistory.org/explorer)). Designed for 3rd and 4th grade students and their teachers, the Explorer website features reading materials, images of items in the VHS museum and library collections, and links to other sources of information about the Green Mountain State. Despite the warm welcome the site received from teachers and home school parents, we realized that it would not be enough to simply announce it and walk away.

Under the capable direction of Vermont History Education Programs Manager Victoria Hughes, the Explorer website was introduced through teacher workshops held in Barre and Springfield this spring. These workshops accompanied a series of after-school workshops for teachers that provided examples and instruction on how to use historical materials like photographs and artifacts to enhance the teaching of Vermont history.

We also are helping teachers best utilize available technology to bring Vermont history into the classroom. Recognizing that "interactive whiteboards" (IWB) are increasingly common in classrooms throughout the state, we

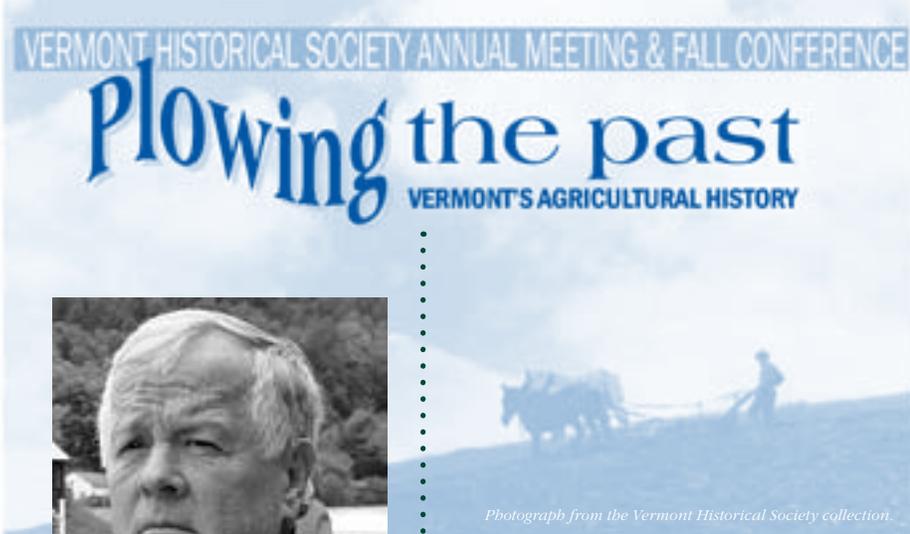


*Teachers from all corners of Vermont—from Westminster to St. Albans—attended the IWB workshop in July.*

partnered with the Vermont Department of Education to present a week-long workshop for K–12 teachers and librarians using the Explorer website as the vehicle for providing instruction on the capabilities of this emerging classroom technology. With the cooperation of St. Michaels College, we were able to offer graduate credits to educators who participated in this learning endeavor.

Rather than lamenting the difficulties associated with getting state history into the classroom, we are developing the resources needed by teachers and are providing the instruction needed to best employ those resources. We are grateful to our many partners and supporters who have made these initiatives happen, including the A.D. Henderson Foundation, the Alma Gibbs Donchian Foundation, Flow of History Teaching American History program, the Jack and Dorothy Byrne Foundation, Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources program, and the many educators throughout Vermont who have helped us understand what they need in the classroom. In these ways, the Vermont Historical Society is truly achieving its vision to be the leader in Vermont history education.

Mark S. Hudson  
Executive Director



**Roger Allbee**

September 24, 2011  
8:30 am to 4:30 pm

**P**lowing the Past: Vermont's Agricultural History is the theme for the 173rd Annual Meeting and

Conference of the Vermont Historical Society on Saturday, September 24, 2011. The event will take place at the Pavilion Auditorium at 109 State Street in Montpelier. Keynote Speaker Roger Allbee of Townsend, former Secretary of Agriculture for the State of Vermont, will give his unique view of the progression of farming in Vermont. Even before retiring from his post in 2010, Roger was writing and speaking to groups about his fascination with Vermont's agricultural history. He constantly carried worn and tattered volumes of past agricultural journals to illustrate to Senate and House committee members his points about the cyclical nature of Vermont farming and the importance of learning from that history. He now posts a blog, *What Ceres Might Say*, invoking the name of the goddess of agriculture while writing about our crops, weather and dairy history.

We will start our day with the VHS business meeting, followed by a showing of *Thanks to Vermont*, a film produced in 1950 by the Vermont Department of Agriculture, extolling the bounty of Vermont-grown produce. This film has been in

*continued on page 5—*

## You could be **Telling Your Stories**

**A**nd you will be! After you attend this year's League of Local Historical Societies & Museums Annual Meeting on Friday, November 4, you will pick up notes on *Telling Your Stories*. We are pleased to announce that our keynote speaker will be Willem Lange.

The daylong conference will be held from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm at the State House in Montpelier. It includes Lange's keynote address, business meeting, achievement awards, lunch, and professionally-led workshops relevant to the needs of the local history community and our theme of *Telling Your Stories*. The League Meeting also provides the opportunity to network and share concerns, successes and issues with peers. For more information, please contact Lisa Evans, League of Local Historical Societies and Museums Manager at (802) 479-8522 or [lisa.evans@state.vt.us](mailto:lisa.evans@state.vt.us).



**Willem Lange**

## Young Vermonters in Washington, D.C.



*Poultney Elementary School students and teacher march in the National History Day parade.*

**A**fter months of research, writing, editing, and creating, 35 Vermont students presented their papers, documentaries, exhibits, performances and websites to the judges at National History Day at the University of Maryland, College Park. Victoria Hughes, VHS Education Programs Manager, rallied the students, teachers, and their parents throughout the D.C. area, visiting museums, monuments, sites, and enjoying the National Zoo. Over 2,700 students from around the U.S. and the world participated. We are proud of our Vermont students. Congratulations all around!



*Students from Burlington High School, Mount Holly School, Proctor Jr.-Sr. High School and Wells Village School met with Senator Leahy on the Capitol steps.*

## Processing archives correctly is important

For the first time in at least a decade, the Vermont Historical Society brought the New England Archivists' well-regarded workshop on archival arrangement and description to Vermont in May. This intermediate level, full-day workshop focused on day-to-day decisions in arranging and describing archival and manuscript collections.

"In our ongoing effort to effectively serve the needs of local historical societies and museums, we hosted this workshop," explained VHS Librarian Paul Carnahan, "to assist records keepers with the fundamental elements of their responsibilities."

Over 30 people attended, from local historical societies, colleges, universities, and museums throughout Vermont as well as several other states. 

*Workshop participants actively shared their archival challenges and concerns. The workshop was well attended.*



## Envision life . . . *Continued from page 1—*

George A. Swallow, a jeweler. Her mother was "Alma," a name that also showed up on the boxes of glass plates.

A quick check of *The Heritage of West Windsor* by Erla Bear Scull (1980) informed us that George Swallow "was one of the most interesting personalities found in the records of the community." He seems to have been quite handy, repairing watches, running a printing shop, raising bees, and fishing. No mention of a photographic interest was included in the biography, but a search on Ancestry.com showed George Swallow posing with a camera. It was clear that we had identified the photographer!

Swallow lived in the village of Brownsville in the town of West Windsor where he operated a general store, was postmaster, and pumped gas. Many of his photographs show the area in the heart of Brownsville, including people sitting on the porch of his store and wagons stopped on the street. Indeed, as donor Buxton states, the collection "represents a microcosm of life in a Vermont village at the turn of the twentieth century."

Swallow (1864-1951) captured the buildings, landscapes, and activities of his community. The collection includes construction of the new civic building known as Story Memorial Hall, which was dedicated in 1915, and the Mary L. Blood Memorial Library, which had been given to the town in 1901.

The collection shows images of large groups of people gathered on top of nearby Mount Ascutney, as well as photos of a baseball game, haying, sugaring, prized livestock,

a new motor car, and the bounty from hunting expeditions. Among the images is "The McKinley Stone," a huge piece of granite that had been quarried from the base of Mt. Ascutney and was headed to Canton, Ohio, to be used as one of the sarcophagi in the McKinley National Memorial there.

Swallow also took pictures of the countryside near his home. According to Buxton, "He had a genuine feeling for Vermont topography." Upon viewing scans of some of Swallow's images for the first time, Jennifer Bodnar, a member of the board of directors of the West Windsor Historical Society, said,

*They are a treasure to behold. As I opened each image on my laptop I felt as though I was able to travel back in time, turning back the years seeing the people, the buildings and roads that made up this town and helped create it as it is today. I am particularly struck by the post office/general store which is next door to where I live and where George A. Swallow once lived. The picture was taken out of the bedroom window and a horse drawn stage-coach is pulled up to the front*

*of the post office. My bow times have changed! Thanks for sharing . . .*

The Vermont Historical Society will be sharing George Swallow's images with the West Windsor Historical Society to assure that the images have the most exposure possible. You can see a selection of these images on the VHS's Flickr photo-sharing site at [www.flickr.com/vermonthistory](http://www.flickr.com/vermonthistory). 



*Wagon in front of Brownsville store and post office as seen from George Swallow's window.*



Historic images from the Vermont Historical Society collection.

## Plowing the past . . . Continued from page 3—

the VHS archives and has been digitally restored through the library's moving images program. Roger Allbee's presentation will follow.

After a delicious buffet lunch, we will be treated to a panel discussion about Vermont's Agricultural Fairs moderated by Charles Fish, author of *Blue Ribbons and Burlaque: A Book of Country Fairs*. The panel will include fair veterans such as Euclid Farnham of Tunbridge and Rupert Chamberlin of Barton. We expect this to be a wonderful chat about fairs then and now.

Adam Krakowski, recipient of the 2010 Cate Fellowship award, based his research on hop growing in Vermont. Adam will give a presentation on his findings and give us a new appreciation for entrepreneurs of the past. After Adam's presentation, we will move on to a reception in the Snelling Room with, fittingly, Vermont beer and local food!

Please join us for a day of learning about—and celebrating—Vermont's beauty and bounty. Additional information and a registration form will be sent directly to VHS members soon. 

## 173rd VHS Annual Meeting

**8:30 to 9:30**

Registration and refreshments

**9:30 to 11:00**

VHS Annual Meeting

**11:00 to 11:30**

Movie: *Thanks to Vermont*

**11:30 to 12:30**

Keynote Speaker: Roger Allbee on *The History of Agriculture in Vermont*

**12:30 to 1:30**

Buffet Lunch

**1:30 to 2:30**

Panel Discussion, moderated by Vermont author Charles Fish:  
*The History of Vermont Agriculture Fairs*

**2:30 to 3:30**

Presenter Adam Krakowski:  
*History of Hops in Vermont*

**3:30 to 4:30**

Reception in the Snelling Room featuring Vermont beers and local foods!



Pavilion Auditorium, 109 State Street in Montpelier

## Be a Technogiver!

**Y**ou have a new way to help with collections care, education programs, fundraising, and graphic design! Many things we do rely on computers—to keep up with technology, we replace three to four computers each year.



A gift of \$800 will make you an official VHS Technogiver and will buy a new computer for VHS. You'll receive a Technogiver certificate, and we'll take care of giving the computer its updates, software and the usual amount of complaining when it doesn't read our minds! To become a Technogiver, please contact Jane Campbell at (802) 479-8516 or [jane.campbell@state.vt.us](mailto:jane.campbell@state.vt.us). Thank you!

## Did you know?

Our Homeschool Wednesday programming has been so popular that it will be expanded to both Wednesdays and Fridays this year. Parents love the fact that they can get out of the house and their children can learn from knowledgeable instructors with an exciting hands-on element. Space is limited and pre-registration is required. Call Kathleen D'Aquila at (802) 828-2180.





The 2011 Vermont Quilt Festival featured 62 VHS historic quilts in Patterns of History.



VHS curator Jackie Calder points out the features of the historic quilts. Shown here: Civil War gem from 1863 showing quotes from the Bible.

### Did you know ?

At the Vermont Quilt Festival in June, three people from the crowds mentioned that they found their ancestors (names) on our quilts!



### The joke was on Richard Currier!

This three-foot long wooden spoon was given to Richard Currier of Barre in 1884 as a "Junior Honors" award at Dartmouth College.

Richard Currier of Barre made quite an impression on the underclassmen at Dartmouth in 1884. He was the recipient of an annual "Junior Honors" award given by the sophomore class. Currier was given The Spoon which was awarded to the "fellow who was the biggest eater." The oversized spoon is inscribed on the handle with Currier's name and the date, and the bowl is painted with a cluster of grapes.

These "honors" were given by sophomores at Dartmouth from the early 1870s until the early 1900s. After graduating from Dartmouth in 1885, Currier returned to his hometown, where he went into the dry goods business. He later worked as a highway commissioner in the county, and from 1919 until 1933, worked as an assistant commissioner for Vermont State Highway Department. Currier was part of the Barre committee that built Spaulding Graded School and served in the State Legislature. Currier Park in Barre is named after his family. The spoon and a portrait of Currier were donated to VHS by David Tucker of Fortuna, California. 



In its 35th year, the Vermont Quilt Festival hosted more than 11,000 people this June. It was a true celebration of quilting—old and new. The VHS collection was well-represented with Vermont-made examples that date from the early 1800s to the late 1900s. A diverse array of materials, styles, and sewing techniques were represented, including patchwork, appliqué, embroidery, and quilts tied in cotton, wool, and silk.

### Over the top! Now what?

Thanks to many generous individuals, businesses, and foundations, we reached our \$900,000 capital campaign goal!

Please don't stop there! We still need donations! Construction bids have not been received yet and may be higher than budgeted, so we are hoping that anyone who hasn't yet donated to the campaign will still do so. If we end up with excess funds, we'll dedicate them toward future exhibits in the new galleries.

We have hired Keefe and Wesner Architects for work on the bell tower, and Black River Design for the gallery spaces (each architect has a different specialty). Shadows & Light, designers of our permanent Freedom & Unity exhibit, is working with us on the exhibit design. Construction will begin this summer and finish in mid-October 2011. The first new gallery exhibit, *The Emergence of the Granite City:*

*Barre 1890 to 1940*, will be installed this winter!

To find out how you can help, please visit [www.vermonthhistory.org/capital](http://www.vermonthhistory.org/capital) or contact Amy Sholk at (802) 479-8525 or [amy.sholk@state.vt.us](mailto:amy.sholk@state.vt.us).



### We need to hear from you!

Local historical societies and museums: please be sure to keep your contact information up-to-date. That way, you can hear from us about exciting things happening in the world of Vermont history! Check your listing today on our website under the local societies directory.

#### [www.vermonthhistory.org/localsocieties](http://www.vermonthhistory.org/localsocieties)

Be sure to let us know if your phone number, email address, or snail mail address has changed. We don't want you to miss out on historical anniversaries, local history fairs, visitors, or festivals. Stay in the loop!

Call Lisa Evans at (802) 479-8522 or email [lisa.evans@state.vt.us](mailto:lisa.evans@state.vt.us).



### In Memoriam

It is with sadness that we tell you that former Vermont Historical Society trustee Alfred Fuller passed away recently. Al served as a trustee from September 1998 to September 2002, and with gratitude for his years of service to VHS, we extend our sympathy to his family and friends.



Each of Us  
Leaves a Legacy

*When you include Vermont Historical Society in your estate plan or will, you bring Vermont's heritage to future generations. For more info, please contact Jane Campbell, (802) 479-8516 or [jane.campbell@state.vt.us](mailto:jane.campbell@state.vt.us).*



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## Mystery Photo

**T**he mystery photo from last issue has yet to be identified. One member thought it was a photo of houses to the east of the former train depot in Lyndonville, but that hunch proved to be incorrect, so the houses are still a mystery.

This issue's mystery photo is a school building with an impressive cupola on top. On the back of the photo it is identified as "South Barre, Vt., May 16, 1895," but we don't recognize this building as being in this town.

**Do you recognize this?**



**From last issue . . .**



Can anyone confirm or contradict this identification? If so, please contact the VHS Librarian, Paul Carnahan, at [paul.carnahan@state.vt.us](mailto:paul.carnahan@state.vt.us) or at 802-479-8508.

*Check [www.vermonthistory.org](http://www.vermonthistory.org) for more photographs, articles and library resources!*