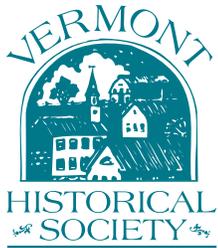


# History Connections

Vermont Historical Society

News & Notes

Winter 2010 / Volume #4 / Number 2



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

## Inside This Issue

- Love Letter to Our Volunteers
- Where Are They Now?  
Diane Kearns & Lea Sikora
- Genealogists: Note New Section on Web
- Promoting Vermont by Rail
- Volunteer at the Vermont History Expo
- New Staff
- Mystery Photo

## Public WiFi at History Center!



Connect to the Internet from your laptop or hand-held device while you visit the Vermont History Center at 60 Washington Street in Barre. WiFi (Wireless Fidelity) allows you to stay connected to the world, and access is now available at the Vermont History Center and Leahy Library.

## The Vermont Women's History Project Lives at the Vermont Historical Society!

In August 2009, the Vermont Women's History Project transitioned to its new home at the Vermont Historical Society. "It's an exciting prospect to be taking over this project that in and of itself is a fine piece of work and which has the capacity to expand and be an even more powerful tool for Vermont history research," says Tess Taylor, Director of Education & Public Programming.

In 1994, the Vermont Commission on Women developed the Vermont Women's History Project to create a new perspective on history and culture that focuses on the women of our state and their contributions. The primary goal was to develop and maintain a dynamic web site that would provide a source of information about women in Vermont. Thanks to a substantial grant from the state's ConnectVermont Project, the project was launched with the dual purpose of providing a directory of primary and secondary historical resources about Vermont women and to provide information on cultural heritage tourism activities and educational opportunities in Vermont related to women's history.

The Vermont Women's History Project was a key element in the 2006 Vermont History Expo when the theme was "Vermont Women in History." There, interviews and exhibits relating to Vermont women were captured digitally to take these stories to a wider audience.

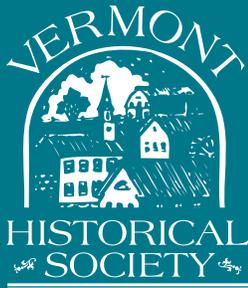
The project has created opportunities for interns and researchers to help with the process of documenting information about Vermont women by entering the subject matter onto the web site database. An expert team of historians vet this information as it is entered to ensure accurate submissions.

The Vermont Women's History Project has also created fine educational programming designed to broaden historic perspectives on women and also to guide educators in the development of more inclusive curricula. For all of these reasons, the Vermont Women's Commission's Vermont Women's History Project was presented the VHS Richard O. Hathaway Prize for Outstanding Contribution to Vermont History in 2007.



Learn from the Vermont Women's History web site

Continued on page 6



Winter 2010  
Volume #4 / Number 2

*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  
Design: RavenMark, Inc.  
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

### A Love Letter to Our Volunteers

One of the true joys of working for the Vermont Historical Society is the opportunity to become acquainted with our many dedicated volunteers. In addition to the important service they provide to the Historical Society, our volunteers inspire and enrich us through their generosity, good humor and demonstrated love of Vermont’s history. They truly are the heart and soul of the Vermont Historical Society.

Each year, our volunteers contribute over 6,000 hours of service, which is exemplary even among Vermonters, who are among the most generous in the nation. According to a recent article by the Vermont Community Foundation, Vermont ranks 9th in the U.S., with over 35% of the state’s residents offering their time to support charitable causes.

The variety of ways volunteers contribute their time to our organization is remarkable as well. The “History Helpers” are a dedicated team of volunteers who lead school groups and assist with educational programs at the museum. Front desk volunteers at the museum and the History Center are the face of the organization, greeting and assisting visitors, while also engaging in other important projects in the moments between visitors. In the library, volunteers help researchers, process archival collections, catalog books and assist in many other ways. Museum volunteers catalog and care for artifacts, while other volunteers help with mailings and other services for members. And of course, I must not forget the important work of the board of trustees and committees, whose leadership and vision guide the organization and assure its success.

While we benefit immeasurably from the many efforts of our volunteers, we also make every effort to assure that being a VHS volunteer is a rewarding experience that offers opportunities to make new friends, meet interesting people, develop new skills, and learn about the history of the Green Mountain State. We are deeply grateful to each individual who shares time, talents and energy for the benefit of the Vermont Historical Society but recognize that we may not always do as much as we should to express our thanks.

One of our ways of saying “thank you” is the annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon, that will be held this year on Monday, March 15th in the Community Room at the Vermont History Center in Barre beginning at 11:30. The grateful staff of the Vermont Historical Society will prepare a sumptuous feast that will be enjoyed in the company of friends and fellow volunteers. Our volunteers and their guests are invited to share in this wonderful experience.

To all of our members and friends, we extend an invitation to become involved with the Vermont Historical Society by being a volunteer. Your time will be well spent in service to a great organization.



*Mark S. Hudson*

Mark S. Hudson  
*Executive Director*



*Volunteers photographed on the steps of the Vermont History Center in Barre.*

## Workshops at the Museum Continue To Make History Fun

**F**amily Fun Workshops continue into the winter months featuring hands-on experiences with the past. Each workshop has featured a visit to relevant areas in the museum and a fun craft activity. *Mapping Where We Live* was the most recent topic, and children enjoyed learning about road maps and raised relief maps. Participants viewed a map created by 1820s schoolgirls and created their own compasses with needles and magnets to learn about cardinal directions such as North. The highlight of the children's day was decorating their own maps — complete with coloring Orange County. .orange.

Once again, we thank our sponsor Bob's Camera and Video Shop of Barre. Thanks, too, to Operation Military Kids, for making these workshops available for free to children of military families. The final workshop of the 2010 Series will be *The Radio Show!* On March 13th from 10:00 am until noon at the Vermont History Museum at 109 State Street. The cost is \$8 per child or \$5 for members, parents are free. Call (802) 828-2180 to register. 🇺🇸



*Special artifacts from the VHS collections are used in the Family Fun activities such as this map drawn by 1820s schoolgirls from Saxton's River.*

### We Need History Day Judges

## Vermont History Day March 27

**V**ermont History Day is an annual education program open to Vermont students in grades five through twelve and home study students ages 10 to 18. Students choose a topic related to the National History Day annual theme, which in 2010 is "Innovation in History: Impact & Change." Using their new knowledge, the students develop projects in the format of their choice: exhibits, web sites, documentaries, performances or papers.

The entries are then judged by local historians, educators, and other professionals. This year's state contest will take place on Saturday, March 27, 2010 at Spaulding High School in Barre. Please call Victoria Hughes at (802) 828-1413 if you are interested in becoming a History Day judge. 🇺🇸

## Back to the Land, Again!

**A**nticipation for the 2010 Vermont History Expo is prevalent around the state. Local historical societies, museums and cultural heritage attractions, as well as genealogists, re-enactors, and anyone who is passionate about our state's history, are looking forward to our rejuvenated premier event. This year's theme, "Back to the Land, Again: Vermont Heritage Ways for Today" is creating momentum to make this one of the most successful Expos yet!

The theme has inspired us to have more heritage animals, including the "animal power" folks working with oxen and horses. We also will be doing more with heirloom gardening. More traditional crafts and trades demonstrations will deepen visitors' appreciation for the time and care it takes to weave a shawl or the precision involved to create mortise and tenon joints.

Great music and food, history presentations, Vermont authors, kids' traditional games, and our live country auction will delight folks who enjoy a wonderful country fair that is all about Vermont history. 🇺🇸

*The Vermont History Expo, June 26 and 27, 2010 at the Tunbridge Fairgrounds. For more information, go to [www.vermonthistory.org/expo](http://www.vermonthistory.org/expo) or call Tess Taylor, (802) 479-8505.*



*Poster artwork donated by Helen Dillon of Granville. See the full color version online under History Expo: [www.vermonthistory.org](http://www.vermonthistory.org)*

## Where Are They Now?

### *Vermont's Women in History*

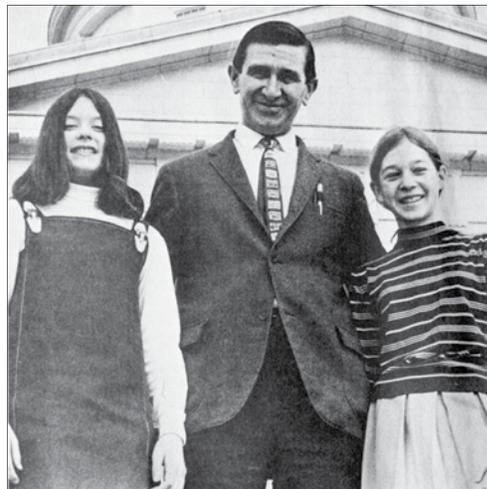
1968 was a year of dramatic social change in Vermont and elsewhere in the country. One area of great change was in the public roles of women.

Those changing roles were evident at the Vermont State House during the annual selection of high school students to serve as legislative pages.

Leading the charge for equality of women in the State House was Sergeant-at-Arms Reide B. Payne. In 1968, he took the bold move of appointing two middle school girls to be legislative pages for the first time in history. A year earlier, the legislature voted against selecting girls to serve as pages. However, they also transferred the authority to hire pages from themselves to the Sergeant-at-Arms. Payne, a Democrat from Rutland, saw an opportunity to strike a blow for women's equality and appointed two Montpelier girls to serve in the 1969 session.

Vermont's first female legislative pages were Diane Kearns and Lea Sikora, both eighth graders at Montpelier's Main Street School. The *Rutland Herald* reported that Ms. Kearns was the daughter of Administration Commissioner William F. Kearns and Ms. Sikora was the daughter of Kenneth Sikora, head of the Vermont regional office of the Federal Bureau of Public Roads.

Because of the groundbreaking role that these girls played in 1968, the Vermont Historical Society would like to add them to the database of Vermont women that we now maintain



*Reide B. Payne and Vermont's first women pages  
Diane Kearns and Lea Sikora*

as part of the Vermont Women's History Project. Where are these women now? What were their experiences as young women in the State House in 1969? What did their later lives entail? Did they go on to take on other groundbreaking roles?

If you know what became of Diane Kearns or Lea Sikora, please contact VHS Librarian Paul Carnahan at paul.carnahan@state.vt.us or (802) 479-8508 so that we can add their biographies and include them in the women's history database.

To see other women listed in the Vermont women's database, go to [www.vermonthistory.org/women](http://www.vermonthistory.org/women) and click on "Search Vermont Women." 

## Genealogy Research Tools on the VHS Website

The staff and volunteers of the VHS Leahy Library recently put several useful genealogy research tools on the Vermont Historical Society's web site. The site now includes six indices or lists that could be of use to people looking for hard-to-find ancestors in Vermont. The six lists are:

- ***Lowell, Vermont, Town Records, 1812-1834.*** Indices to a variety of documents from the town of Lowell, Vermont, including deeds, vital records, bonds, justice writs, liens, surveys and various other documents from the period. The records themselves are in Doc 567 of the manuscript collection.
- ***Marriages in Montpelier, Burlington and Berlin, Vermont, 1789-1876.*** An index to the small book entitled Vermont Marriages, Vol. 1 (Boston, 1903) available at the Leahy Library and other repositories.
- ***Marriages and Baptisms Performed by Richard Bedford, 1836-1849.*** An index to the records of a minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church working in Orange, Windsor, Caledonia, Orleans, and Washington Counties in the mid-1800s.
- ***Military Recruiting Photographs, 1944-1951.*** A list of names of people in photographs belonging to Francis Edward Abbey, who worked in northern Vermont and New Hampshire.
- ***Some Vermont Vital Records of the 19th Century.*** The transcription of index cards created by John Elliott Bowman recording deaths and marriages from various newspapers in Vermont, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts, chiefly between 1802 and 1838.
- ***Washington County Deaths, Funerals, Births & Fires.*** An index to the vital records recorded in the diary of James Henry Holmes of Montpelier between 1894 and 1911.

We hope to be adding to these resources over time, especially as volunteers work on different collections to create lists and indices. These resources can be accessed on the historical society's web site at [www.vermonthistory.org/generesources](http://www.vermonthistory.org/generesources). 

## Promoting Vermont by Rail in the 1920s

Vermont as a scenic destination for travelers, and as a source of carefully-made products for consumers, has long been a theme of public relations efforts to boost the state's economy. Today the state's tourism and marketing department uses print and electronic media to get the word out, but 80 years ago the method was something different: a special train loaded Vermont dignitaries and displays touring the Northeast, South, and Midwest.

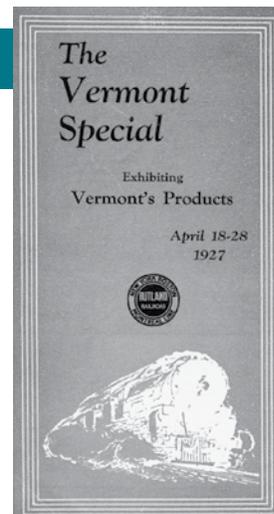
Promotional trains set out from Vermont on three different occasions in April 1926, 1927, and 1929. The state's efforts to recover from the disastrous flood in the fall of 1927 probably supplanted any efforts to plan a trip for 1928. By 1929, Vermonters were ready to go out again and trumpet the state's recovery, but by the end of that year the nationwide depression put an end to the promotional trains.

The 1926 train was dubbed the "Vermont Maple Sugar Special Train" and was organized under the auspices of the Vermont Press Association. Three of the train's baggage cars were fitted with exhibits from the Associated Industries of Vermont and one was carrying "family packages" of maple products. These packages, which were probably given away to visitors en route, contained two quarts of maple syrup, a five-pound pail of sugar, and a one-pound box of sugar candies. More than 100 Vermonters joined the 11-day excursion, which made stops in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, Cleveland, Chicago and Buffalo. Topping the list of dignitaries on the train were Governor and

Mrs. Franklin Billings, Adjutant General Herbert T. Johnson, and Edward H. Deavitt, mayor of the city of Montpelier.

In 1927, the train was bigger and better. The guest list expanded to 125 members, including Governor and Mrs. John E. Weeks, and the train was called "The Vermont Special." This time the train's itinerary skipped the cities of the eastern seaboard and penetrated deeper into the South and Midwest, stopping at Louisville, St. Louis, Davenport, St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Lansing, Michigan. The train finished its run through Canada "for the reason that lying to our north there is a large potential summer business for Vermont and the nearest large center of population to Vermont." This time the Vermonters filled all four baggage cars with exhibits; no mention was made of complementary packages of maple products.

These trains were an opportunity for Vermonters to see leaders in some of the country's major cities and to be seen by them. The visits included tours of the host cities and elaborate meals with printed programs, bountiful menus, impressive lists of attendees, and speeches. In Minneapolis,



*Brochure for the 1927 Vermont Special*

*Continued on page 7*



*President Hoover, Governor Weeks, and members of the Special Train contingent gather at the White House, April 11, 1929*

## In Memoriam

It is with great sadness that we tell you that former VHS Trustee Louise Roomet passed away recently. Her passion for history and her tireless work on behalf of preserving history and historic structures will long be remembered, and she will be missed by the many whose lives she touched with her extraordinary energy and vitality.



Louise Roomet

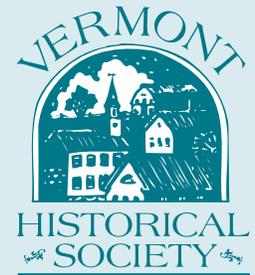
## We Did It! Thank you!

We are so grateful to the many supporters who “stretched” their generosity to help us match the \$5,000 challenge donation which matched new and increased donations dollar-for-dollar! Our deepest thanks go to Barbara and Wolfgang Mieder, whose extraordinary \$5,000 gift made this challenge possible and inspired hundreds to donate and meet the goal. Thank you all!

## Are You Interested in a New Experience?

If you volunteer at the Vermont History Expo in June, you’ll get a unique, behind-the-scenes experience of “History’s Country Fair” (and get in for free!). There are many different Expo volunteer roles, such as staffing the info booth, parade prep, helping set up tables, working with Clara’s games, surveying Expo visitors, and more.

Our museum and history center also rely on volunteers. You can welcome visitors, help with office work, or catalog library and museum collections. If you’re interested in joining our wonderful group of volunteers, please contact Diane Campbell, at (802) 479-8503 or [diane.campbell@state.vt.us](mailto:diane.campbell@state.vt.us).



Each of Us  
Leaves a Legacy.

Please include Vermont Historical Society in your estate plan or will and bring Vermont’s heritage to future generations.  
Contact Jane Campbell,  
(802) 479-8516 or  
[jane.campbell@state.vt.us](mailto:jane.campbell@state.vt.us).



## The Vermont Women’s History Project Lives at the VHS

*Continued from page 1*

On January 14, VHS and the Vermont Commission on Women celebrated this transition at the opening of a new VHS exhibit “*To Life! A Celebration of Vermont Jewish Women.*” This exhibit, created by Ann Buffum and Sandra Gartner, features 20 Vermont Jewish women in stunning graphic panels that tell each woman’s story with words and photographs. The exhibit, which will be on display through March at the VHS museum in Montpelier, also features works by Vermont Jewish women artists. The exhibit is supported in part by the Deborah Clifford Legacy Fund and the Vermont Women’s History Project.



Elora Silver, Meara Jane Kinne, and Marissa Farbman are three of the Vermont Jewish women featured in the *To Life!* exhibit

“*To Life! A Celebration of Vermont Jewish Women*” is on display at the Vermont History Museum through the month of March.

It is important to tell the stories of Vermont women for future generations. With the Vermont Women’s History Project, there is a vehicle for research and documentation – this web site is a permanent place for this important information. The Vermont Women’s History Project can be found at [www.vermonthistory.org/women](http://www.vermonthistory.org/women)



## Staff Addition



Amy Sholk

**AMY SHOLK** recently joined the VHS Development Department. She said, “I am thrilled to join the Vermont Historical Society as the Capital Campaign Assistant.” Amy recently returned to her native Central Vermont after living in New York City, where she worked in development at the Metropolitan Opera. In her spare time, Amy enjoys cooking, quilting, and music. 

## Rugg Collection Online!

**Y**ou can now see photo galleries of the Harold Goddard Rugg collection online at [www.vermonthistory.org/rugg](http://www.vermonthistory.org/rugg).

We will be adding more photographs from the VHS collection in the near future. The Historical Society is grateful to the Vermont Community Foundation for their support of the Rugg project. 

## Promoting Vermont by Rail

*Continued from page 5*



*Vermonters (left to right) Dr. L. C. Stocking, Hugh J. M. Jones of Jones Brothers Granite Co. of Barre, and Ezra W. Woodbury, aboard the 1927 Vermont Special in St. Louis*

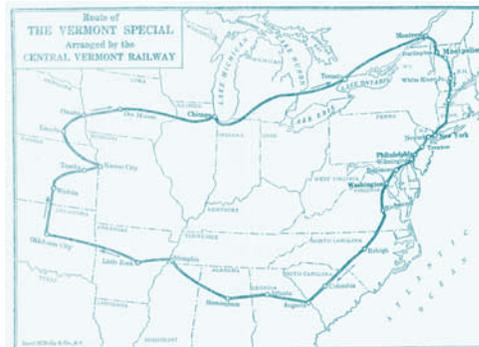
for example, the group dined at the Foshay Building, hosted by utility entrepreneur Wilbur B. Foshay. The event was attended by the governor and lieutenant governor of Minnesota, the mayor of Minneapolis, president of the University of Minnesota, a U.S. Congressman, and the president of the Vermont Association of Minneapolis.

In 1926, James P. Taylor, Secretary of the Vermont State Chamber of Commerce, told his audiences, “We have left home to acquire the inspiration that comes from meeting you and viewing what you have done through building your great industrial cities and in developing your rich agricultural areas.” He then mentioned Vermont’s products, including granite and marble, textiles and wood products, and agricultural products. He spent more time describing Vermont’s natural beauties than its commerce, adding this

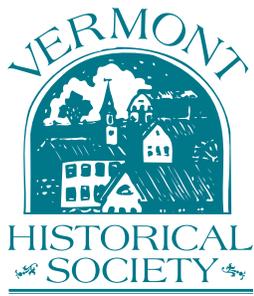
pastoral description: “Vermont is the land of living waters, an inland state set between the Connecticut River and Lake Champlain. Springs and mountain streams afford delight to the thirsty automobilist and to the eager fisherman. The curve of beauty is seen in outline of hill and mountain, in winding roads and bending rail.”

After a year off to clean up after the devastating floods of late 1927, the Vermonters took to the rails again in 1929. Under the printed map of their journey was the heading, “Vermonters ‘Choose to Run’ Over the Following Lines,” a play on Vermont Governor Calvin Coolidge’s famous 1928 statement declining to run for reelection to the presidency. The itinerary this time took them to 18 cities as far south as Atlanta, Birmingham, Memphis, and Little Rock, and as far west as Wichita, Kansas, and Lincoln, Nebraska. Again, Governor Weeks topped the list of dignitaries on the train. A highlight of this trip was a stop in Washington, D.C., where the delegation (and others) was greeted at the White House by Coolidge’s successor, President Herbert Hoover.

The 1929 trip seems to have been the last rail excursion organized to promote the state. During the Great Depression and World War II, energies were directed elsewhere. When Vermont and the rest of the country emerged from World War II, the world of marketing had changed dramatically, and other means were embraced to advance Vermont’s fortunes in the national eye. 



*Route of the 1929 Vermont Special*



Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Barre, VT  
Permit #32

**Vermont Historical Society**

60 Washington Street  
Barre, Vermont 05641-4209

## Mystery Photo

Last issue's mystery photo was recognized separately by members Margaret Lawton and Monk Ogden as "The Pinnacle" in Chester. Ms. Lawton said that her brother worked on rigging up the ski tow there in the 1930s. Once we knew the location, we found other images of this site, but most are looking down into the village; none show the ski hill.

Our new mystery photo comes to us from a descendant of Lauriston Chase of Concord. This farmhouse may be in Concord, Newark, or in some other town. If you can identify the location of this building please contact the Historical Society's librarian, Paul Carnahan, at [paul.carnahan@state.vt.us](mailto:paul.carnahan@state.vt.us) or (802) 479-8508. 



The Pinnacle, Chester, Vermont

*No longer a mystery!*

