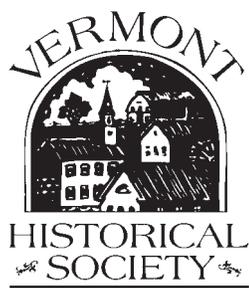


History Connections

Vermont Historical Society

News &
Notes

Fall 2013 / Volume #8 / Number 1



Since 1838

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

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**New exhibit
at the Vermont
History Museum**

LANDSCAPE
CHANGE
PROGRAM

**Interpreting
the Interstates**

*Featuring photographs
about before, during, and
after Interstate construction.*

*See page 5
for more information.*

Leading up to a year of celebrating Vermont artists . . .

Hunt family collection demonstrates how art tells the story

Works of art from our past communicate emotion, fashion, technical skill, and even social standing.

In 2014, the Vermont Historical Society will explore the impact and accomplishments of Vermont artists. In February, we will regale Farmers' Night attendees with *World War I Music and Poetry*. During March, we will highlight *Vermont Women in the Arts*, and in June we will celebrate Vermont artists and artisans at our ever-popular Vermont History Expo in Tunbridge!

Also, the VHS recently acquired portraits and papers from one of Vermont's earliest and most influential artistic families—the Hunt family of Vernon and Brattleboro. These art and manuscript collections provide a richness and depth that give perspective on earlier times in Vermont.

Only Vermont town named by a woman

The portraits in this collection are of Jonathan Hunt (1738–1823) and his wife, Levinah (Swan) Hunt (1749–1834) of Vernon, Vermont. The portraits, painted by Charles Lyman (1778–1814), nephew of Levinah Swan Hunt, are on page 6.

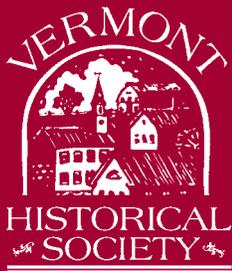
Jonathan Hunt was the second Lieutenant Governor of Vermont (1794–1796) and son of an early landowner. When the Vermont General Assembly instructed Hunt to change the name of the town he represented from Hinsdale to Huntstown, he demurred. He asked his wife, who suggested Vernon, making it the only Vermont town said to be named by a woman.

The papers concern two later generations of Hunts. Jonathan and Levinah had a son, also named Jonathan (1787–1832), who had large landholdings and became a three-term Congressman from Vermont. The collection contains business and political papers, including



Mrs. Jonathan Hunt and her children, from a daguerreotype taken in Paris about 1848. Back, L to R: Jonathan and William; front, L to R: Richard, Jane, Mrs. Hunt, and Leavitt.

continued on page 3—



Since 1838

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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 Museum & Bookstore

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

Vermont History Center

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

Vermont Heritage Galleries, Offices & Book Nook
Monday–Friday 9am to 4pm

Leahy Library
Tuesday–Friday 9am to 4pm
Wednesday 9am to 8pm
Second Saturdays 9am to 4pm
(802) 479-8509

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

One admission fee gives access to both the Vermont Heritage Galleries & Vermont History Museum:

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

Seasons of change



As the last leaves fall from the maple tree in front of the History Center, I am reminded how autumn is always a time of transition—throughout Vermont and at the VHS. Our annual meeting in September was a transitional occasion, as we expressed our thanks to two departing trustees and welcomed two new members to the board.

For more than 40 years, Nick Muller has expressed his passion for Vermont's history through tireless service to our organization. Beginning in 1972, he has served multiple terms as an officer and trustee—totaling 22 years on the board. He was editor of *Vermont History* for nearly a decade in the 1970s and 80s, contributes his writings frequently to the journal, and is prolific in his ongoing study of Vermont's early history. He has been unwavering in his support of my leadership of the VHS, offering either a "pat on the back" or a "kick in the pants," depending on what I needed at that moment. At their July meeting, the VHS Board of Trustees approved a resolution designating H. Nicholas Muller III an Honorary Board Member.

I am certain the phrase "a gentleman and a scholar" was created to describe



Bill Wilson and Woden Teachout join the VHS trustee team, and we welcome their expertise.

Victor Swenson. As the founding director of the Vermont Humanities Council, Victor has long been a leader within our cultural heritage community. His departure from our board after six years of service leaves a significant void. He imbued our meetings with wisdom and optimism, while gladly



lending his considerable abilities to our development efforts.

In this important moment of transition, we are very pleased to welcome two new trustees. Middlesex resident Woden Teachout brings her lively enthusiasm to the board.

As a professor at Union Institute & University, her research and writings explore the intersection of history, politics and patriotism. Woden also is engaged in explorations on the teaching of history.

Bill Wilson's decades of service to the academic community and numerous Vermont nonprofits also will be beneficial to the VHS. Following a long career teaching international relations at St. Michael's College, he has remained involved in educational endeavors and local history projects in his hometown of Underhill, where he has served as Town Moderator for over 20 years.

All of us at the Vermont Historical Society extend our hearty thanks to Nick and Victor for their dedicated service and offer a warm welcome to Woden and Bill.

Mark S. Hudson, *Executive Director*

A hearty thanks to Nick and Victor for their dedicated service.



Wonder how Vermont Historical Society collections make a difference?

historic



pre-renovation



renovation!



In 2013, the Leahy Library supplied a historic photograph of the Island Pond Opera House to the Preservation Trust of Vermont. That photograph was used to restore the facade of the building, bringing a dramatic change to one Vermont community. Eric Gilbertson, field representative for the Preservation Trust, reported that the townspeople were pleased with the results. Whether historic postcard, illustration, or photograph, these items from the VHS collection can transform the way people look at the present and the past.

Hunt family collection . . . *Continued from page 1—*

contracts for building Hunt’s house in Brattleboro in 1821.

Early sketchbooks reveal artistic talents

Jonathan Hunt died of cholera, leaving his wife with five children to raise. The collection documents her initial struggles with this responsibility and her eventual move to Europe with her children. The family’s 1840s European sojourn is documented in journals kept by the eldest child, Jane Maria Hunt (1822–1907). One of Jane’s sketchbooks reveals her early artistic talents which would only be recognized later in life. (See sample above right.)



Visual arts include architecture and photography

Three of Jane’s brothers also had artistic talents. The oldest, William Morris Hunt (1824–1879), became the leading painter of mid-19th century Boston, while their brother, Richard Morris Hunt (1827–1895), became a leading New York architect, responsible for many of that city’s iconic buildings such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art. A third brother, Leavitt (1831–1907), became a photography pioneer and one of the first people to document the Middle East.

continued on page 6—

This is the final story in a series of vignettes to help celebrate our 175th anniversary.

I remember when ...

Little did I know that volunteering for the VHS would lead me to the White House and a handshake with First Lady Laura Bush! Five years ago, I stood with Director Kevin

Graffagnino and President Sarah Dopp to receive a National Medal awarded to the VHS by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). One of only 10



Marilyn Blackwell

institutions nationwide, the VHS was honored in 2007 for its innovative programs, connections with local communities, and impact upon people’s lives. As part of the ceremony, I had a chance to tell my personal story about the VHS in the company of other awardees.

It all began on a beautiful summer day in 1971, when I first walked into the Pavilion Building in Montpelier looking for the library. An escapee from Manhattan, I had been living in Vermont only a few months, but I had run aground in my job search. “At least I could put myself to use for some worthy organization,” I surmised, but I had no idea what I would do.

Librarian Peggy Abbott, a short, gray-haired woman who greeted every visitor with a ready smile, quickly put me to work answering research questions for visitors and responding to the overflowing pile of letters seeking answers about Vermont’s history and family genealogy. I soon learned that

continued on page 6—



In October, Paul Carnahan and Marjorie Strong made their debut in offering webinar instruction for 37 participants who wanted to learn more about using archival collections for genealogical research. This webinar was part of Archives Month and was produced by VHS Public Programs Coordinator Amanda Gustin.



The panelists for the VHS annual meeting *Colleges, Communes & Co-ops* proved forceful and invigorating even today as they discussed how political issues formed their lives in Vermont in the '70s. Here, Roz Payne discusses her life producing, editing and distributing short films as part of the original *Newsreel* collective.

Witness the terror of Civil War battles



Come see the full color version of the Charles Andrus' panorama depicting the scene in 1862, when Union soldiers had their first big victory, capturing the city of New Orleans. You can view it in person at the Vermont History Center in Barre.

Vermont Public TV wins Hathaway award

Vermont Historical Society Executive Director Mark Hudson presents the Hathaway award to (L to R) VPT producer Dorothy Dickie, content manager Kathryn Scott, and (far right) VPT board member Jim Wyant.



Our Annual Meeting and Fall Conference was the scene of congratulatory praise for a documentary produced by Vermont Public Television (VPT). This year's prestigious Richard O. Hathaway award went to VPT for their masterful and engaging documentary *Little Jerusalem* about the unique history and vitality of a Jewish community in Burlington, Vermont.

Little Jerusalem is about Jewish immigrants from neighboring villages in rural Lithuania. During the late 19th century, they settled in Burlington, a bustling port amid countryside that reminded them of home. The documentary is rich with archival images and features powerful interviews with descendants of the original settlers. A DVD of *Little Jerusalem* is available in our online store: vermonthistory.org/shop. Be sure to get your 15% member discount!

The annual Hathaway Award goes to an individual, group or organization making an outstanding contribution to the field of Vermont history. This award is dedicated to the memory of Richard O. Hathaway, whose lifelong work teaching Vermont history was an inspiration to his colleagues and to the many students he taught and mentored. 

“And then the tent blew down . . .”
You can now read the words of
24 Civil War soldiers online

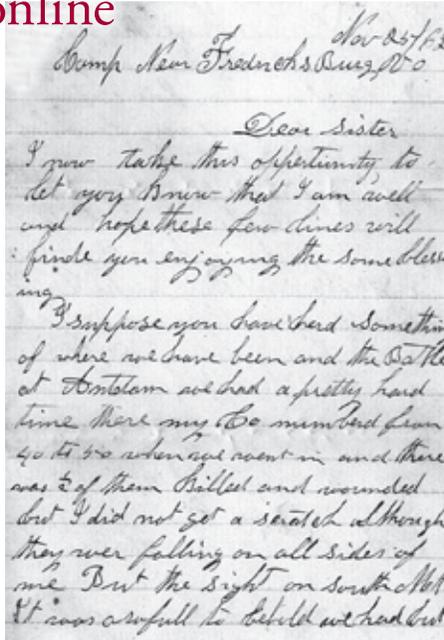
Our library staff and volunteers have completed transcribing and scanning 15 collections of Vermont Civil War letters for the University of Vermont’s Center for Digital Initiatives (CDI). This three-year collaborative project with the UVM Department of Special Collections makes the words of over two dozen soldiers available and searchable to anyone with an Internet connection.

The VHS project involved numerous volunteers, ranging in age from high school to 92 years old. They carefully transcribed each of the 860 letters, making sure to preserve the misspellings, line breaks, and page breaks. Many of the letters were difficult to read because of the adverse conditions under which they were created, including one in which the tent blew down during the letter’s composition. Some required consultations with several readers to ascertain the words that had been written.

After the letters were transcribed, we scanned them at a high resolution, and UVM students coded the transcriptions to make them highly searchable. The scans, transcriptions and indexes were then loaded side-by-side onto UVM’s CDI website, where special software makes them accessible to users.

Marjorie Strong, VHS assistant librarian, said “This type of work is very detail-oriented and took a lot of time, but the end result is wonderful for researchers.” In addition to the 15 VHS collections, the website also includes eight UVM collections, giving researchers a broad range of Civil War resources.

This project was made possible by untold volunteer hours and funding from the Flow of History, a history education network. To view these letters and truly experience the war, go to cdi.uvm.edu and choose “Vermonters in the Civil War.”



Come see how
Vermont Interstate
Highways changed
our landscape



Interpreting the Interstates is an exhibit aimed at understanding how the construction of the Interstate Highway system changed Vermont’s culture and landscape.

Opening to the public on October 29, 2013 at the Vermont History Museum, the exhibit features photographs from the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration taken between 1958 to 1978.

Vermont History Museum admission gives access to this fascinating look into the past. (Free for members.)

Library takes
time to catch up!

The Leahy Library at the Vermont History Center will close for two weeks this winter to help the staff catch up on processing and other administrative chores. The library will be closed January 20 to 31. While not sufficient to eliminate the library’s backlogs, this annual two-week hiatus has become an important time for the librarians to whittle away at the piles of processing that develop throughout the year. The library will reopen on Tuesday, February 4.

SAVE THE DATE!
June 21 & 22, 2014
Contact Amanda Gustin
for more information
at (802) 828-2180
or amanda.gustin@state.vt.us

Vermont History EXPO 2014
History's Country Fair

.....
Artists and Artisans: Vermont’s Creative Heritage
.....

Hunt family collections . . . *Continued from page 3—*



Levinah and Jonathan Hunt portraits

Richard's 1844–46 journal and a pocket diary from 1861 that includes three pencil sketches are also in the collection.

Later generations conducted extensive genealogical research—

especially the grandson of Richard Morris Hunt, also named Jonathan Hunt (1893–1943). This research was part of the acquisition and is available to researchers at the Leahy Library. You can find a description of the Hunt collection at vermonthistory.org/documents/findaid/HuntFamily.pdf.

Looking forward to more art in 2014

The VHS will weave Vermont arts into the fabric of 2014. In March, we'll collaborate with the Vermont Commission on Women to present a program on Vermont women artists. And we are anticipating exciting revelations from local historical societies as they present artists from their own towns in conjunction with this year's Expo theme: "Artists and Artisans." For more info, go online: vermonthistory.org/calendar.



I remember when . . . *Continued from page 3—*

most people who thought they were related to Ethan Allen were not, whereas those who claimed their ancestors had fought in the Civil War eventually found them in our archives.

Seeking clues in local town histories captured my imagination, so much so that I began researching the history of East Montpelier, where my husband and I had found an old farm to restore. I helped organize a local society there and later served as a coordinator of local historical societies for the Vermont Historical Society.



Lyn Blackwell and Kevin Graffagnino accept the IMLS award in the White House from First Lady Laura Bush and IMLS Director Anne-Imelda Radice.

The library not only served as my headquarters for research, but it also attracted other scholars, none of whom was more fundamental to my education about Vermont history than Edward A. Hoyt. Known to all as "Mr. Hoyt," he occupied a tiny cubicle in the back of the library, but his knowledge about the state was hardly insignificant. Having served as editor of Vermont State Papers in the 1950s, he began tutoring me, not only about the various debates in Vermont history, but also about how to think historically. It wasn't long after co-authoring a history of East Montpelier that I enrolled in UVM for a graduate degree and a future of writing and teaching history.

As I related my story at the IMLS ceremony, I began to realize how much the VHS merited the institute's National Medal. Throughout my long association—as a volunteer, an employee, and more recently as a trustee—the VHS has nourished my intellectual curiosity and clearly helped me forge a strong link with my new community.

—Marilyn S. Blackwell 



GIVE . . . and save on taxes

If you are 70½ or older and have a traditional IRA, you can support the VHS with an "IRA charitable rollover."

You may exclude up to \$100,000 from your gross income by directing those funds from your Individual Retirement Account (IRA) to the Vermont Historical Society.

Take advantage of this option and receive a charitable deduction by asking your IRA trustee to make the contribution directly to VHS, rather than counting your distribution as income and then transferring it.

To take advantage of the rollover, you must take action before January 1, 2014.

Call Jane Campbell for more information at (802) 479-8516.



Each of Us Leaves a Legacy

“Dear Bill Doyle,

We have known each other for many decades, and we have often toiled in the same vineyard. An endowment in your name that encourages Vermont youth to discover some of the joy you and I have found in our history will touch the generations that of necessity must follow us. I have sent the Vermont Historical Society a donation to your fund, and I hope others will do as well. ”

—H. Nicholas Muller

Learn how you can help, too. See back page.

History in the coming seasons

2014 winter programs

“The Problem with Slavery in Vermont, 1777-1810” with Harvey Amani Whitfield
Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Monday, January 20 at 12:00 noon
Vermont History Museum, 109 State Street, Montpelier

Monday, January 20 at 7:00 pm
UVM campus, Memorial Lounge, Waterman Building

Commemorate Martin Luther King Jr. and hear UVM professor Amani Whitfield as he examines the persistence of slavery in early Vermont.

World War I in Music & Poetry: Farmers’ Night

Wednesday, February 26 at 7:30 pm
Vermont State House, 115 State Street, Montpelier

Begin the new year commemorating the arts with harmonies and melodies from the Great War. Poetry readings will complement the musical offerings.

Vermont Women in the Arts
Vermont Women’s History Program

Wednesday, March 12 at 12:00 noon
Pavilion Auditorium, 109 State Street, Montpelier

Reception follows at 1:00 pm
Vermont History Museum, Snelling Room, Montpelier

VHS will partner with the Vermont Commission on Women to bring you more art—with a focus on female artists and artisans in our state.

2014 Undergraduate Research Forum

Wednesday, April 23 at 4:30 pm
Vermont History Center, 60 Washington Street, Barre

Students from around the state will present their findings about Vermont history. The work done by these undergrads showcases the fascinating research being done today at Vermont colleges.

Be sure to check our calendar of events for the latest lineup of programs, workshops, and 2014 Vermont History Expo details:

vermonthistory.org/calendar

Be a Technogiver!

You have a new way to help with collections care, education programs, fundraising, and graphic design!



All rely on computers—to keep up with technology, we replace three to four computers each year.

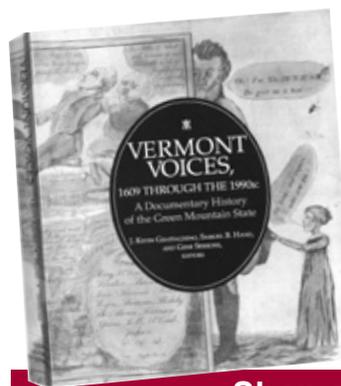
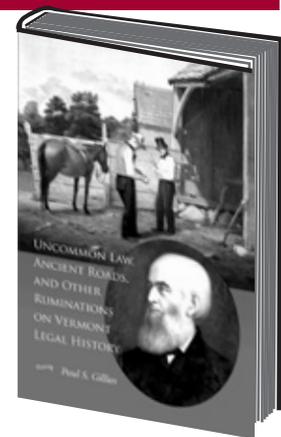
With an \$800 gift, you'll be an official VHS Technogiver! We will send you a Technogiver certificate, and we'll take care of buying a computer, installing updates, software, and the usual amount of complaining when it doesn't read our minds! To become a Technogiver, please contact Jane Campbell at (802) 479-8516 or jane.campbell@state.vt.us. Thank you!

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Now you can help students learn Vermont history in an exciting way!



The William T. Doyle Vermont History Day Fund supports Vermont History Day. This exciting education program encourages students to explore a historical topic and present their research at a statewide competition. History Day is open to students in grades 5 through 12 and home study students ages 10 to 18.

Contributions to the William T. Doyle Vermont History Day Fund will help ensure support for this essential program. To learn more, go online to vermonthistory.org/doylefund or call Jane Campbell at (802) 479-8516.

Senator Doyle wins president's award

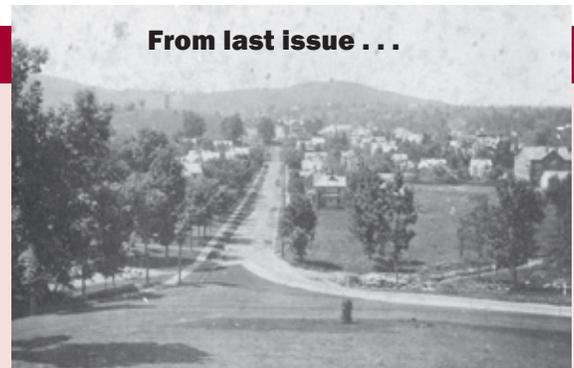


VHS President Laura Warren presents Bill Doyle's award for heroic history efforts!

Senator Bill Doyle was presented the President's Award at the Vermont Historical Society's annual meeting in September. In recognition of his lifelong preservation of Vermont's history through community documentaries, professorship at Johnson State College, History Day judging, active engagement with the VHS and other heritage organizations, and many other heroic history efforts, the Vermont Historical Society also set up the William T. Doyle History Day Fund. (You can learn more at the left.)

Mystery Photo

Member Tom Hughes of Middlebury recognized last issue's mystery photograph as a scene in his hometown. The view is looking northeast on College Street from St. Mary's Catholic Church with Twilight Hall on the right.



From last issue . . .

Do you recognize this group?



This month's mystery photograph is a little different than most of our past mysteries. It is an undated group of men, probably government officials or business leaders. Do you recognize anyone in this group? If so, please contact VHS librarian Paul Carnahan at paul.carnahan@state.vt.us or at (802) 479-8508.

You can participate in identifying mystery photographs between issues of *History Connections!* Become a friend of the VHS on Facebook. *Try guessing!*

[facebook.com/
VermontHistoricalSociety](https://www.facebook.com/VermontHistoricalSociety)

