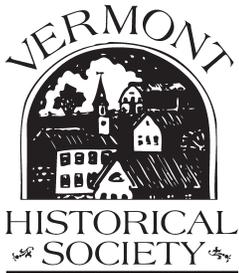


History Connections

Vermont Historical Society

News & Notes

Spring 2015 / Volume #9 / Number 3



HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Since 1838

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

Inside This Issue

- Half century of service
- Marjorie Fisher Q & A
- Making It Right
- Hathaway award deadline
- Do we still need women's history?
- Textile tips
- Legacy of caring exhibit
- Eileen Corcoran

Collecting Vermont stories from recent years: While it's on your mind...

Historical societies are recognized for collecting "ancient" documents and artifacts from our distant past. People visiting the Vermont Historical Society enjoy seeing Ethan Allen's shoe buckles, Thomas Jefferson's signature on the document that admitted Vermont to the Union, and paintings of early landscapes. These items are important for understanding our collective past, but many historical societies are also documenting the recent past as a way of preserving memories for future generations. These efforts create the foundations of future historical scholarship and understanding.



The staff of the Green Mountain Chronicles receives a grant from New England Telephone in 1987. Left to right, standing are Mark Greenberg, P. Jeffrey Potash, Eleanor Ott, and Gene Sessions; seated are Mary Kasamatsu, VHS Director Michael Sherman, and David Usher of New England Telephone.

Green Mountain Chronicles

One such effort was undertaken by the Vermont Historical Society in the late 1980s in celebration of its 150th anniversary. Called the *Green Mountain Chronicles*, the project created a radio series that told the history of Vermont in the 20th century using archival sound recordings and interviews. The episodes can be heard today on the Society's website at www.vermonthistory.org/gmchronicles.

The project was conducted by Mark Greenberg, Mary Kasamatsu, and Eleanor Ott, who interviewed over 40 individuals and

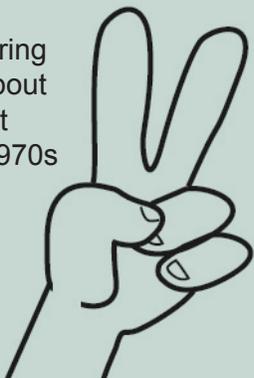
created 52 five-minute broadcasts. The interviewers were assisted in research and interpretation by historians P. Jeffrey Potash of Trinity College, Gene Sessions of Norwich University, and Michael Sherman of the Vermont Historical Society.

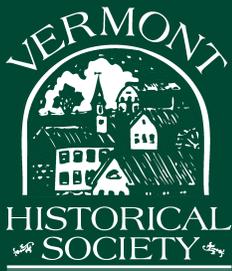
Our understanding of the recent past is richer because of the work conducted by this team 30 years ago. At that time, the interviewers spoke with people whose memories covered the breadth of the

continued on page 3—

Were you there?
vermonthistory.org/vt70s

We are discovering more about Vermont in the 1970s





Since 1838

Spring 2015

Volume #9 / Number 3

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

A half century of service . . .

In 1990, Madeline Kunin was Vermont's Governor, the state's population was 566,615, and Vermont's heritage was in the spotlight as people throughout the Green Mountain State prepared to celebrate our statehood bicentennial a year later. In that year, the Vermont Historical Society welcomed two new staff members whose impact upon the organization would be significant and enduring.

Curator Jacqueline Calder arrived in February 1990, following eight years as curator of collections at Historic Cherry Hill, a historic house museum in Albany, New York. Under Jackie's leadership, VHS museum collections have grown considerably, adding many objects of great significance to Vermont's heritage.

She was instrumental in the development of the Vermont History Center in Barre and oversaw the transfer of museum collections from the Pavilion Building in Montpelier. *Freedom and Unity: One Ideal, Many Stories*, our core exhibition at the Vermont History Museum, was produced through Jackie's creative vision and comprehensive understanding of Vermont history. More recently, she curated the exhibitions in the new galleries at the History Center and is collaborating with other VHS staff members to deliver innovative programming—including the Vermont in the 1970s project.

Jackie was followed in July 1990 by Librarian Paul Carnahan, a Brattleboro native who had been developing computerizing reference programs at Brandeis

University. Paul's technical skills, his training as a librarian, and his love of Vermont history have served the VHS well over the

past quarter century. Under Paul's leadership, VHS developed a world-class research facility, with rich collections and a strong commitment to public service.

Like Jackie, Paul was deeply involved in the creation of the Vermont History Center and managed the transfer of the library from Montpelier. He has spearheaded numerous projects to digitize the library's resources and has labored for decades, with often inadequate resources, to advance the automation of library records.

We celebrate Jackie and Paul's 25 years of service to the VHS by reflecting upon their dedication and significant accomplishments. I am hopeful that each of you in the VHS family will join me in congratulating them.

Mark S. Hudson, *Executive Director*



We celebrate Jackie and Paul's 25 years of service to the VHS!



Marjorie Fisher donates to the future of history

Former Spaulding High student Marjorie Fisher recently donated generously to the Vermont Historical Society. We are always grateful for contributions that continue our work and reinforce our mission. Marjorie's legacy will continue beyond her lifetime, preserving Vermont history—now, and for future generations. We recently interviewed Marjorie to find out more about her inspirations and vision for Vermont history.



1. What inspired you to be so generous to the Vermont Historical Society?

I think it is important for people who attended school in Barre to remember their town/city. SHS (Spaulding High School) was where many of my family members—multiple generations—attended school, so seeing the restored building/grounds brings back happy memories.

2. What are your best memories of Barre and Spaulding High School?

I remember the horses drinking out of the fountain in the central park in the center of Barre (in front of the Congregational Church). I wish we could have kept them. I also liked getting out of school early to work at the Paramount.

3. In general, why do you think history is important?

It teaches the next generation and gives us all something to be proud of or learn from.



Marjorie (Hatch) Fisher, class of 1956, Spaulding High School, Barre.

4. How do you think your personal history in Barre and Vermont influenced your life?

The hard work ethic of Vermonters has always been part of my life. Maple syrup, granite, and craftsmanship all have left an impression on me. 

You can help preserve Vermont history—call Jane Campbell at (802) 479-8516.

While it's on your mind . . .

Continued from page 1—

20th century. For instance, the team spoke with Catherine Robbins Clifford, one of a group of three women who hiked the Long Trail on their own in 1927; with Perry Merrill about building the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s; and with former Governor Philip Hoff about race relations in the 1960s. These were touchstone events in the history of Vermont and the VHS. By being proactive, VHS collected information from people who lived through these events.

Several of the topics explored within the *Green Mountain Chronicles* are still being discussed today. School consolidation was addressed in one episode—

during which two former teachers and two former school administrators talked about the social and educational advantages of one-room schools.

Listen to episodes from the *Green Mountain Chronicles* on our website.

The “back to the land” movement, which the VHS is now studying in greater

depth, was addressed briefly in another episode, during which the interviewers spoke with residents of Packers Corner in Guilford and New Hamburger in Plainfield.

The Vermont Historical Society's foray into presenting 20th-century history for radio listeners was funded in the 1980s by the Vermont Council on

the Humanities and Public Issues and New England Telephone Company.

Speaking about the not-so-distant past

With our latest venture—the Vermont in the 1970s project—the VHS's efforts at documenting the late-20th and early-21st centuries continue as we collect photographs, posters, books, t-shirts, food packaging, and clothing from the 1970s. Get involved by calling Jackie Calder at (802) 479-8514 if you have insights or artifacts from the decade of the 1970s.

The Vermont in the 1970s project is funded in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (Grant #MA-10-14-0279-14). 

Applications due by July 15 Hathaway award applications due for 2015

The Vermont Historical Society is now accepting nominations for the 2015 Richard O. Hathaway Award. This annual award goes to an individual, group, or organization recognized as making an outstanding contribution to the field of Vermont history. Projects may include, but are not limited to, publications, exhibits, works of art, documentary films, radio programs, websites, and dramatic works that were completed, released, or published in 2014.

The Hathaway 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.

Recent recipients of the award have included Howard Coffin for *Something Abides: Discovering the Civil War in Today's Vermont* and Vermont Public Television for the documentary *Little Jerusalem*.

The award is accompanied by a \$1,000 cash prize. Nominations must be received by July 15, 2015. For more information, please visit www.vermonthistory.org/hathaway.



Richard O. Hathaway

Vermont History Journal Making It Right: inspires donation to VHS

When VHS Librarian, Paul Carnahan, opened his email in-box in late February, he discovered a message with the subject line “Letters of John Wilmot.” The author of the email, Maurice “Mo” Richard of Rancho Cordova, California, had discovered an article from *Vermont History* on the Vermont Historical Society’s website, and it had connections to his family.

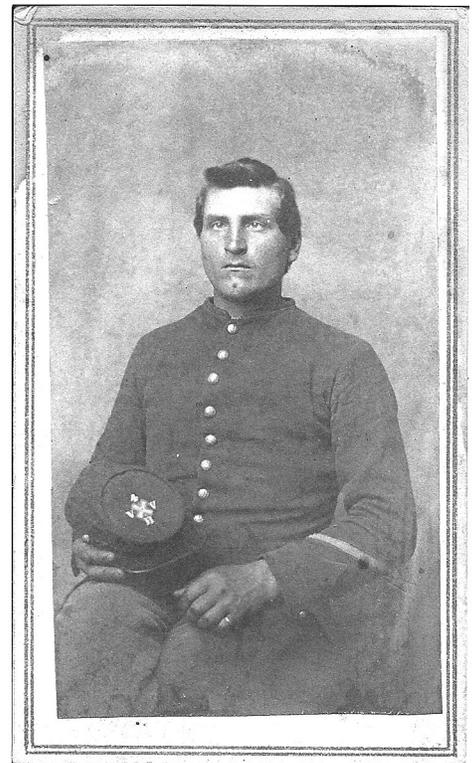
The article “Making It Right: the Civil War Letters of John Wilmot,” by Marjorie J. Strong and Paul G. Zeller, contained transcriptions of letters written by Thetford Civil War soldier John Wilmot. In one of John Wilmot’s letters dated April 14, 1864, he wrote that he was sending home two photographs of himself.

Mr. Richard’s wife, Donna Patterson Richard, is a descendant of John Wilmot’s older brother Bushrod Wilmot. After reading the article, Mr. Richard remembered that his wife’s grandmother had passed down a group

**You never know
where history
can lead you . . .** of family
photo-
graphs
including
some of

the Wilmots. He searched through the collection and discovered one of Corporal John Wilmot of Company H, 4th Vermont Infantry Regiment, in uniform. The photograph was probably taken in February 1864—two months before John Wilmot was mortally wounded in the Battle of the Wilderness.

In his email to the Vermont Historical Society, Mr. Richard offered to share a copy of the photograph if



Corporal John Wilmot of Company H,
4th Vermont Infantry Regiment, c. 1864

there was any interest. Of course, there was definitely interest!

The next month Mr. Richard emailed again stating that he and his wife, son and daughter had a family meeting and decided that they would donate the original 151-year-old photograph to the Vermont Historical Society so that it could be reunited with the letter and made available for future generations.

The Wilmot photograph was received on March 20, 2015, and is in excellent condition. The family is looking for a photograph of John Wilmot’s wife, Saphronia, and daughter, Rohessie, who figure prominently in the “Making It Right” article in *Vermont History*.

To read the original article, go to vermonthistory.org/journal/81/VHS8101MakingItRight.pdf. 

Scenes from our
Community Conversations
about
Vermont in the 1970s



70s



Were you there?
vermonthistory.org/vt70s



INSTITUTE of
Museum and Library
SERVICES

*This project was made possible
in part by the Institute of Museum
and Library Services.
(Grant #MA-10-14-0279-14)*



Our annual Vermont Women in History panel discussion made for great conversation.

Do we still need women's history?

That was the provocative question for panelists at the Vermont Historical Society's annual women's history program presented in conjunction with the Vermont Commission on Women. Does a separate women's history track make sense anymore? Doesn't it just continue to marginalize women's role in the past?

Panelists Dr. Felicia Kornbluh, director of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies at the University of Vermont, Holly Allen, assistant professor of American Studies at Middlebury College, and independent historian Lyn Blackwell explained how the practice of women's history has changed. Today it encompasses the history of gender, sexuality, and gender identity.

Integrating women into the main narrative is not just a matter of inserting female heroes into the text. The history of black and Latina women, for example, is different from that of white women. Blackwell also noted that

major turning points in the history of women and gender are not necessarily the same as those marking male achievements through politics or war.

Dr. Kornbluh insists that concepts of masculinity and femininity are important factors in shaping human behavior and public policy. Human

beings are "messy," she explained, and need to be more fully understood within the context of the way gender shaped their times. All agreed that the subfield is still important for developing new knowledge

and expanding students' understanding of gender as a force in history.

After a lively Q&A session, a member of the audience exclaimed, "Whew! You know it's been a good conversation when you wish it had gone on twice as long."

The VHS has recently redesigned the Vermont women's history database to provide easy access for research (www.vermonthistory.org/women).

... a good conversation ... when you wish it had gone on twice as long."

Caring for your textiles

Textile tips for you!

- Minimize exposure to light, especially ultraviolet radiation. Light damage is cumulative and irreversible.
- Provide a stable environment, with low relative humidity, and avoiding extreme fluctuations in environmental conditions.
- Keep items clean, utilizing proper covers and enclosures, to help prevent pest and mold damage.
- Use appropriate and archivally-safe storage materials procured from reputable suppliers.
- Avoid stressing the fibers, such as by folding, over-handling, hanging a textile without proper support, or vigorous cleaning.

For more information, visit <http://www.conservation-us.org/> (American Institute for Conservation)



In April, local historical organizations and members of the public attended presentations by Conservator Sarah Stevens, who discussed tips and best practices for storing, cleaning, and keeping heirlooms secure and looking great for future generations. The talk was hosted by VHS and funded in part by a Historic New England Community Preservation Grant.

Scenes from March 28: Leadership & Legacy Vermont History Day 2015



Thank you to our History Day sponsors!

**Johnson Family Foundation Fund
National Life Group Foundation
Cargill Animal Nutrition**

Walter Cerf Community Fund of the Vermont Community Foundation
William T. Doyle History Day Fund

Co-Sponsors:

Miller Realty Group, U-32 High School, and Washington Electric Co-operative

Kurn Hattin Homes for Children New exhibit: A Legacy of Caring

Reverend Charles Albert Dickinson, a native of Westminster, VT, created Kurn Hattin Homes as a secure place to live, go to school, and grow up to become happy, productive adults. Reverend Dickinson believed that young children in need could be cared for in a nurturing rural setting rather than the urban childcare institution which existed in the 1800s.

You won't want to miss this new exhibit at the Vermont History Museum in Montpelier. See the story and learn about the significant trends in the fields of childcare, education, and social services since the turn of the 19th century.



Since 1894, Kurn Hattin has helped thousands of disadvantaged children and their families by offering a safe home and quality education in a nurturing environment. *The exhibit was developed by Kurn Hattin in association with Rapt Creative, using the newly re-organized archives at Kurn Hattin, and it will be on loan to the VHS until October.* 

Local history organizations— Meet Eileen Corcoran!

Our new community outreach coordinator for Local Historical Societies and Museums has hit the ground running! With over six years of experience with museums, historical societies, and other cultural organizations, Eileen has a deep familiarity with the issues surrounding collections care and management, capacity-building, and sustainability for nonprofits. Keep her updated about your history organization contacts and events.



Eileen works part-time; you can reach her at the Vermont History Center in Barre at (802) 479-8522 or by email: eileen.corcoran@state.vt.us. 

Calendar of Events

May 2015 • All month long!

Lamoille County Free-for-all

If you live in Lamoille County, you can get in free to the Vermont History Museum in Montpelier or the Vermont History Center in Barre. Curator's tour of Vermont History Museum on May 16 at 11:00 am. On May 20 at 6:00 pm, director's tour of behind-the-scenes collections at the Vermont History Center in Barre.

Thursday, May 21, 2015 • 12:00 to 1:00 pm
Vermont History Museum, Montpelier

Third Thursday: Stories in Stitches

Ellen Thompson from the Green Mountain Chapter of the Embroiderer's Guild of America presents examples of samplers made by girls in Vermont between 1791 and 1840. Listen to the stories these samplers have to tell. Bring your bagged lunch and learn more about Vermont history.

Tuesday, July 7, 2015 • 6:30 to 9:30 pm

Vermont Mountaineers Baseball

Sure to be a hit! Make your own history at the ball field in July. Details on our web calendar.

Saturday, July 11, 2015 • Talks at 2:00 pm

Second Saturday Gallery Talks

You know you loved last year's series. Put the dates on your calendar now—through November.

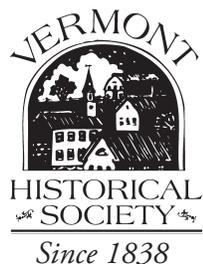
July 25 and 26, 2015 • all weekend long!

Barre Heritage Festival

Free admission to the Vermont Heritage Galleries at the Vermont History Center in Barre. Clara's Games and more children's activities on the front lawn. See the *Granite City* exhibit and more—free!

Watch our calendar for Local Historical Societies and Museums' summer sessions as well as a possible fall painting workshop. Questions? Call Eileen Corcoran at (802) 479-8522.

You can always find more
on our website:
vermonthistory.org/calendar
or call (802) 479-8500



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

Vermont Historical Society
 60 Washington Street
 Barre, Vermont 05641-4209
Return Service Requested

Mystery Photo

This issue's mystery photograph is a railroad station underwater during the 1927 flood. Unfortunately, we don't know what town is shown here. The back of the card, which was not mailed, says "This is the way we looked here Nov. 4th." Let us know if you can help! Contact Paul Carnahan at paul.carnahan@state.vt.us or at (802) 479-8508.



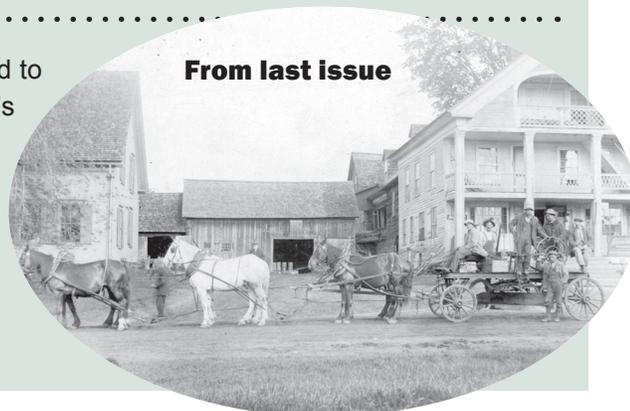
Do you recognize this?

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



facebook.com/
 VermontHistoricalSociety

Several people tried to identify last issue's mystery photo, but we were not able to make a positive identification. More ideas are still welcome!



From last issue