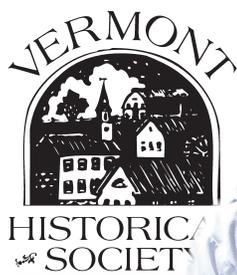


# History Connections

Vermont Historical Society

News & Notes

Spring 2016 / Volume #10 / Number 2-3



Since 1838

Vermont Historical Society  
60 Washington Street  
Barre, Vermont 05647

## Inside This Issue

- Listen to the voices
- Vermont Romance
- Cate award
- Three Musketeers

## Listen to the voices

Vermont in the 1970s update, page 3



*It's on Father's Day weekend, so bring your whole family!*

## Vermont History Expo 2016

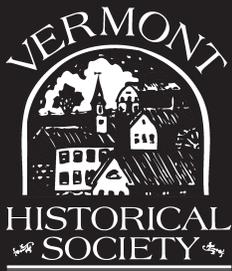
Vermont History Expo is down-home fun whether you are 8 or 88! We are tickled pink that the Tunbridge World's Fairgrounds will come alive as a celebration of Vermont's history with fun for the entire family. On Father's Day weekend, June 18 and 19 from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm, the Vermont Historical Society will make a huge splash with the theme H2O: The Power of Water in Vermont History. Storytellers, artists, musicians, history organizations, authors, crafters, animals, and genealogists complete this history-filled extravaganza! This year, we look forward to the addition of Let's Go Fishing activities from the Vermont Dept. of Fish and Wildlife.

For over a decade, the Vermont Historical Society has organized the Vermont History Expo, a weekend festival showcasing and engaging thousands of Vermonters with their state's history. This event is unique in the United States and has been established as an exciting biennial event.

### Historical exhibits

Visitors will find many exhibits about the effects of water throughout Vermont history. Snow and ice have made Vermont a winter sports capital and each Vermont town can boast

*continued on page 5—*



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*History Connections* is published 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: Steve Perkins  
Editor: Julie Nelson  
Printing: Stillwater Graphics

**Vermont History Museum & store**

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: \$7

Members and students: Free

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

Families: \$20; Adults: \$7

Students, children, seniors: \$5

Members & children under 6: Free

Student school groups: Free

[www.vermonthistory.org](http://www.vermonthistory.org)

[info@vermonthistory.org](mailto:info@vermonthistory.org)



*Steve Perkins and Senator Doyle celebrate Vermont’s birthday, tasting cider and cake.*

# Why?

The wide steps leading up to a beautiful, deep porch beckoned on that hot, muggy, summer day. The imposing paneled doors with their worn, brass knobs opened into a room of marble floors, thick moldings, and high ceilings.

Dominating the center of the lobby, staring out at me with passive indifference, inspiring thoughts of a misted boreal landscape, stood a real catamount. The object of my 8-year-old dreams was there before me in all of its stuffed and mounted glory! Rolling out beyond the cat was what seemed like an infinite number of

brass and glass cases with the whole story of Vermont spelled out in shoe buckles, musket balls, and bits of lace. Little did I know that 30 (or so) years later I would be lucky enough to serve as the executive director of this place—the Vermont Historical Society.

As I reflect on this organization, I think about the excitement that drove me as a child to explore the culture, heritage, and landscape of my home state. Yes, the old objects were neat to look at, the musty papers intriguing with their nearly indecipherable script, and old cellar holes inviting to any young child; but it was the stories that really captured my attention.

Stories, the narrative of our culture, gave the answer to that singular child’s question of “why?” As an organization we set up those stories with the study of who, what, where, and how—the facts of history; but to make it come alive, we must take that leap of fantasy into the why. This is what excites me.

“The challenge and excitement going forward is to focus on the why.”

The Vermont Historical Society was created by the legislature of the State of Vermont in 1838 to collect and preserve the who, what, where, and how. The challenge and excitement for us going forward is to focus on the why. Why is Vermont such a special place? Why do the people who live here, visit here, and dream of being here feel this unique

bond? I look forward to reflecting those stories, be they 200 or 2-years-old, to new and old audiences alike. The stories we tell describe our personal culture and by sharing, bind us to our community, defining the shared Vermont of our future.

In communications to come I will let you know how we plan to better serve existing audiences and grow new audiences with both onsite initiatives in Montpelier and Barre—and programs in your own back yard.

As I wrap up this note, I look forward to welcoming a fresh group of student historians to Vermont History Day—commiserating with them about the nerves that I felt as a student presenting my project for this very same event—and encouraging them to tell their stories to our communities throughout the state and the nation.

I thank you for your interest in—and support of—this venerable institution. I look forward to working with you to tell Vermont’s story in exciting and innovative ways in the future.

Stephen Perkins, *Executive Director*

# Listen to the voices of those who were there

by Julie Nelson

**T**he threat of hippies invading Vermont took place while I was still in junior high school. As a 13-year-old growing up in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont, I remember dressing rebelliously in tattered, kneeless jeans, topped by a peasant blouse and a raggedy headband, complete with a peacock feather perched upon my forehead. At that time, I didn't realize that the "hippie" image implied less of a fashion statement and more of an indication of one's political views.

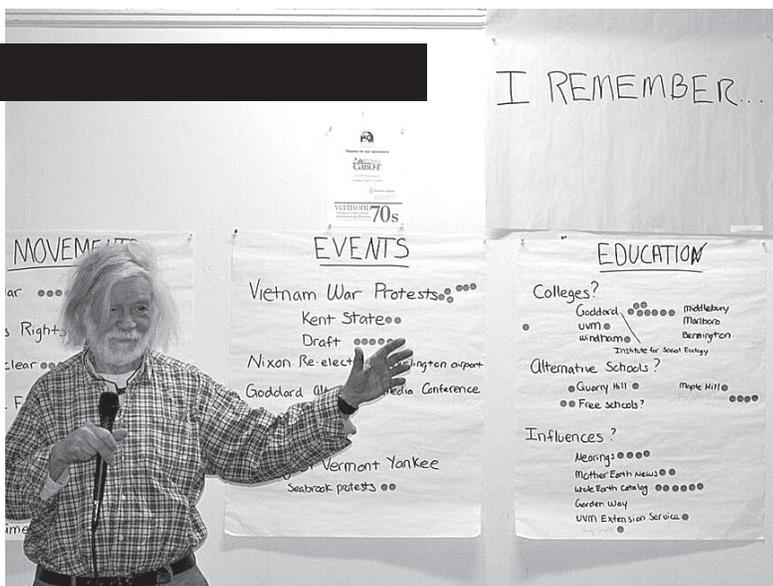
This writer vividly recalls her father's reaction to these hippie intruders, "Kick them out! Freeloaders."

"You don't have to look too hard to find that many people in Vermont today are divided on the changes that occurred in the 1970s," says Amanda Gustin, VHS

public program coordinator. "Many people believe that the '70s were a deeply controversial time, and that the influx of new people ruined the state forever."

Our research has found a deep-seated undercurrent. "Kick them out!" was not an uncommon reaction. News stories in 1971 covered Gov. Deane Davis reacting to the rumors that 50,000 hippies would converge upon Vermont. The governor reassured the public, "... the so-called 'Hippie influx' is causing mounting concern ... the young transients go about their business in a self-sufficient, peaceful manner, although their habits and appearance may not be to our taste."

At a recent VHS Third Thursday Luncheon, VHS Trustee Jill Mudgett urged attendees to listen to the voices of those who were there in the 1970s.



Peter Schumann, founder of Bread and Puppet Theater, spoke at the Plainfield Forum at Goddard College in 2015.

"Across the U.S. there was radical change in the 1970s, and the state of Vermont witnessed much of it because of the influx of counterculture," remarked Curator Jackie Calder.

Communes, actually only a small—though very visible—part of this change came to represent aspects of this transition:

- There were writers, artists, and dancers at places like Packer's Corner in Guilford and Mad Brook in East Charleston.
- Back-to-the-land farms, at the forefront of the organic food movement, were created at Earth Works, Heifer Hill, and Frog Run.
- There were spiritual and religious groups like Tail of the Tiger in Barnet.
- Collectives and communes like Mount Philo, Maple Hill, and Pie in the Sky worked to affect political change.
  - The Redbird lesbian separatist collective gave voice to the growing Womens' and Gay Rights' movements.

Jackie related, "Active in Burlington, this last group painted the city park cannon balls pink to make a

*continued on page 6—*



**W**hat began as a discovery that the 1970s era was historically undocumented, became a two-year project at the Vermont Historical Society to collect artifacts and stories relating to counterculture and its long-term influence on Vermont.

In 2010, VHS Curator Jackie Calder wanted to tell the story of Vermont co-ops by creating an exhibit at the Vermont History Expo. She discovered that most co-ops that still survived in Vermont were founded in the 1970s.

Then in 2012, VHS worked with writer Susan

Harlow and photographer John Nopper to create an exhibit at the Vermont History Museum in Montpelier titled *Plowing Old Ground: Vermont's Original Organic Farming Pioneers*. The relationship between commune members, food and consumer co-ops, and the Vermont organic food movement resurfaced.

In 2015, our Vermont in the 1970s project began, made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Watch for our upcoming exhibit at the Vermont History Center in Barre: [vermonthistory.org/vt70s](http://vermonthistory.org/vt70s)

## Weston Cate Fellowship applications due

Every two years the Vermont Historical Society awards the Weston A. Cate Fellowship that supports research in any aspect of Vermont history. The recipient is expected to complete research and writing on his or her topic by creating a final product, typically an article for publication in *Vermont History*.

The fellowship was created in honor of Weston A. Cate, Jr., director of the Vermont Historical Society from 1975 to 1985.

For more information about the Cate Fellowship and application, please visit [vermonthistory.org/awards](http://vermonthistory.org/awards). Application materials must be received by the Vermont Historical Society by May 31, 2016. 

## *A Vermont Romance: melodrama restored!*



*A Vermont Romance: a window view of Vermont people and landscape one hundred years ago.*

This extraordinary piece of Vermont folklore, *A Vermont Romance*, is the first feature film to be shot in the state. Scenes were filmed in Burlington, Grand Isle, Newport, St. Johnsbury, White River Junction, Rutland, Chester and Bellows Falls. Both a romance and a scenic tour of Vermont, it tells the tale of Dorothy, a country girl who befriends a rich girl and two city gents who are out for a drive in the country.

The film has recently been redigitized and restored by the Vermont Historical Society, the Bissell Foundation, and the Vermont International Film Foundation (VTIFF). Silent film veteran composer, Bob Merrill created a new musical score to enhance the enjoyment of this film.

Showing this summer throughout Vermont: the Haskell Opera House in Derby Line (May 22) and at Chandler in Randolph (June 3). More info and venues at [vtiff.org/vermont-romance](http://vtiff.org/vermont-romance). 

Showing this summer throughout



Your legacy is our future.

You can enrich the lives of countless people and create a powerful memory.

Let us help you find creative strategies to meet your personal charitable goals.

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Vermont maple sugaring scene from Vermont Historical Society collections.



*Jon Soule from Quechee, Vermont, portrays Chevalier Francois-Gaston Levis. At Expo, he will be highlighting the importance of Vermont waterways throughout the 18th century.*

## Expo 2016 . . .

*Continued from page 1—*

of a beloved community swimming hole or covered bridge.

## Crafters and artisans

From timber framing to hooking rugs and spinning wool, crafters and artisans will show visitors how their ancestors did it, linking past to present. Tunbridge World's Fairgrounds is well known for Antique Hill, and Vermont's history comes to life right there in the spotlight.

## Living Historians

Experience daily life and duties of soldiers from Vermont covering more than 300 years of history.

## Music and entertainment

Expo attendees will find music and entertainment at two different stages. There will be dancing and delight as Ed Larkin Contra Dancers and other favorites return to liven Expo with tunes from the past.

## Family Fun

With games and child's play on both Saturday and Sunday, the whole family can feel young again. Let's Go Fishing and the special Science of Water tent will be a big splash for all. Don't miss the parades!



## Heritage Animals

And speaking of parades, many heritage breed animals will be shown with demonstrations of Morgan horses, pigs, sheep, cattle, poultry, and more.

## Genealogy

Genealogy resources abound with expert historians ready to guide you below the surface and dig deeper into archival sources. The Vermont Historical Society's Leahy Library staff will be on hand to help!

## Authors & Presenters

Sara Rath, author of the Vermont Historical Society's newest book *Seven Years of Grace*, will be a featured speaker.

Other presentations by authors and historians at Expo will highlight Vermont's history—illustrating an incident, a historical figure or fascinating place, or simply tell the story about a way of life in Vermont.

Questions? Contact Amanda Gustin, our Expo coordinator at [amanda.gustin@vermonthistory.org](mailto:amanda.gustin@vermonthistory.org) or (802) 828-2180. 

Watch for weekly updates!

**[vermonthistory.org/expo](http://vermonthistory.org/expo)**

*Clara's Games:  
having a ball at  
History Expo  
in 2014!*



# Vermont History Day 2016



Vermont History Day featured the work of over 200 students from across the state.



Some students created exhibits to interpret the theme of Exploration, Encounter, Exchange in History.

## In memoriam

We are sad to note the passing of Carol Todd, former VHS trustee (9/1995 to 9/2000). We appreciate her commitment to the Board during the Capital Campaign and as Governance Committee Chair.



*The hippie influx caused major concern for many Vermonters, causing Governor Deane Davis to make a reassuring public statement.*

action. Amanda Gustin relayed, “Vermont’s economy was already shifting away from agriculture to IBM-type corporations and ski industry moguls. It’s causation versus correlation—these invaders simply accelerated a national trend.”

Jackie told the Third Thursday crowd that Leslie Rowell and Kate Blafson interviewed Vermonters who were there in the 1970s. She said, “These voices take us back to discover why there was such a lasting impact.”

Leslie recounts a tapestry of interweaving and powerful moments during interviews, such as those with Vietnam veterans who put their lives on the line but later felt betrayed by their own country’s purposes for being in the war.

As part of the Vermont ’70s project, VHS held community conversations throughout the state in the spring of 2015. At a Burlington forum, we heard many stories as quoted by the Burlington Free Press. “The hippie generation is not just drugs, sex and rock ‘n’ roll,” stated Ann Taylor. “What I truly love is that we were involved politically, back to earth. We care about nature. We understand the wellness concept and what that is.”

Aging members of the counterculture generation talked proudly of working to develop the People’s Free Clinic in Burlington. Operated by volunteer doctors and staff, it grew into the Community Health Center. They also spoke of starting a food cooperative that grew into City Market, a women’s health center, and a biweekly statewide newspaper.

“It was a great time, and it’s nice to see that a lot of what we all started has carried through . . . And I think it changed Vermont,” said Jennifer Kochman, a founding board member of the Vermont Women’s Health Center.

What we do know for sure is that the state was changed forever. VHS is still researching those changes but there is no doubt of their impact. Jackie reports, “Once we started our focus on the 1970s counterculture it opened the doors to more discoveries that connect to the social, cultural and economic infrastructures of Vermont today.”

*That 13-year-old is your 50-something editor now and Vermont’s offbeat counterculture has become more the expected. Even Bernie Sanders notes this mainstream behavior: “Many of my supporters are very familiar with drum circles.” Some say our nostalgic vision of Vermont never actually existed. It did for some and still does for many today.*

Listen . . .  
Continued from page 3—

statement for WAR, the Women Against Rape help center.” This crisis center still exists today as HOPE Works.

Some believe that the state was saved by these newcomers who brought invigorating new ideas, radical politics, and a dedication to community

# Following the trail of The Three Musketeers today!

by Julie Nelson

“She was a no-frills-kinda girl in the 1920s—who aspired to personal freedom with no boundaries to stop her.” Such was the grandmother of Cara Clifford Nelson. In 1927, Catherine Robbins Clifford hiked the Long Trail with Kathleen Norris and Hilda Kurth, a.k.a. “The Three Musketeers.” They were the first women to hike the entire length of the Long Trail.

In a recent interview, granddaughter Cara Nelson explained the legacy of her grandmother’s adventure as it affects her world today, “I am not afraid to look beyond. I use the resources that I have at hand. This applies to my hiking of the Long Trail, it applies to my company Swift Trek. I am not afraid to challenge myself.” Swift Trek Web Solutions’ motto is to “create websites that compel visitors to interact and come back for more.”

Her son Carl, who hikes with Cara, has gained skills and self-assurance along the pathway as well. He learned from similar hardships that beset his great grandmother. At 10 years old, he hiked through rain and flash flood season. He marveled at the sense of timelessness, “When we’re on the Trail, we never eat lunch at noon.” After overcoming fear of strangers, he learned from an experienced hiker that you have everything you need on your back, and you progress on your own time. The Long Trail keeps its own time frame. He and his mom learned survival mode by fording raging waters: “Focus on where you’re going.”



*Cara and Carl Nelson admire the view from atop Killington Mountain.*



*Never quite so happy! Never quite so glad!*

*“The Three Musketeers”: Catherine Robbins, Hilda Kurth and Kathleen Norris at the Canadian line August 25, 1927 (from Catherine Robbins’ scrapbook).*

Grandmother Clifford taught Cara—who then taught Carl—that if you need strength to get through hardship, “Sing!” Along the trailside, choruses of “Stand by Me” have helped them stride through a strenuous journey.

*In March we celebrated Vermont Women’s History Month with a close-up look at courageous Vermont women. The Vermont Historical Society, Vermont Commission on Women, and the Green Mountain Club presented Reidun Nuquist and Green Mountain Girls: Women of the Long Trail. We hope you continue to share our trail of choice, learning from the path of Vermont’s history.*

## New faces at VHS

*Steve Perkins,  
Executive  
Director*



*Kristin Dodge,  
Development  
Director*

*Tori Hart,  
Development  
Manager*



*Ramsey Blair,  
Guest Services  
Coordinator*



**Yes! You like your  
Vermont History . . .  
and we’re saving trees.**

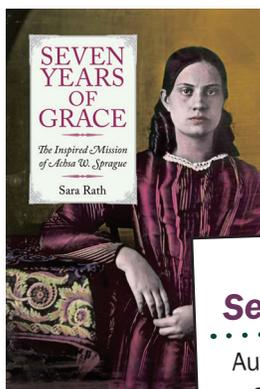
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Please contact Diane Campbell  
if you have any questions:  
[diane.campbell@vermonthistory.org](mailto:diane.campbell@vermonthistory.org)



Since 1838

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

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Get your copy of  
**Seven Years of Grace**

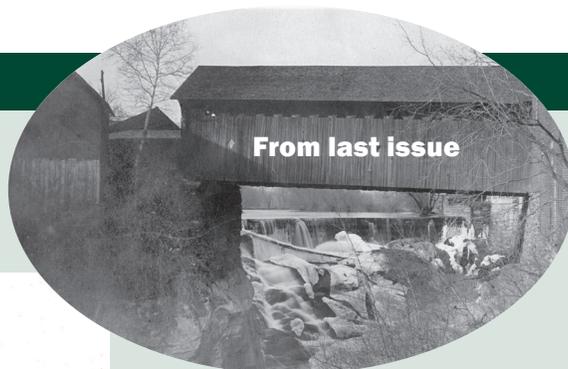
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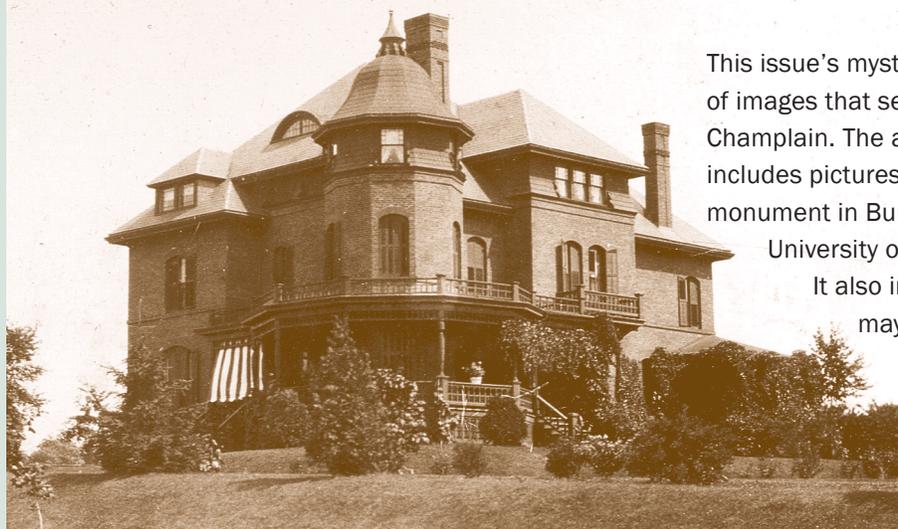
## Mystery Photo

Last issue's mystery photo of a covered bridge over a rocky brook was not recognized by any of our readers.

.....



## Do you recognize this?



This issue's mystery photo comes from a photo album of images that seem to be from both sides of Lake Champlain. The album, from an unidentified family, includes pictures of Fort Ticonderoga, the Ethan Allen monument in Burlington, the Billings Library at the University of Vermont, and several water scenes.

It also includes this magnificent home, which may be in Vermont or New York.

If you can identify this, please contact VHS Librarian Paul Carnahan at (802) 479-8508 or [paul.carnahan@vermonthistory.org](mailto:paul.carnahan@vermonthistory.org).