

VERMONT



HISTORY

VOLUME 84, No. 1 WINTER/SPRING 2016



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The Journal of the Vermont Historical Society

About the Cover Illustrations

Stylish and Rare Vermont Furniture

Thanks to the generosity of J. Brooks Buxton, a member of the Vermont Historical Society Board of Trustees, the VHS recently acquired and conserved a rare set of Vermont furniture: a sideboard with matching cellaret. Until sold at auction, these pieces resided in the dining room of the Middlebury house for which they were originally designed. The stylish house was built for Horatio Seymour between 1817 and 1819 and stood as a testimony to his prominence and wealth. Seymour, a lawyer and U.S. Senator (1821-1833), lived the rest of his life in the federal style home. It remained in the hands of his descendants, the Battells and Swifts, who donated it with furnishings to the town where it is known today as the Middlebury Community House.



*Cellaret,
from Horatio
Seymour House,
Middlebury.*

Dining rooms, and the furniture made specifically for use in them, were not seen in America until the late 1700s except in the homes of the very wealthy. The sideboard displayed serving pieces on top and stored linens, silverware, and glasses inside. The cellaret had compartments for holding wine and liquor bottles. Vermont-made sideboards rarely came with matching cellarrets. A costly addition, practical Vermonters seemed to prefer sideboards, or half sideboards called lockers, with bottle drawers. The maker of this set of furniture is not known but there were Middlebury cabinetmakers who advertised the latest urban styles. Documented examples of their fine craftsmanship survives and indicate that they could have made this set that was more in keeping with Seymour's sophisticated taste.

Color photos of the sideboard and cellaret may be viewed at: www.vermonthistory.org

JACQUELINE CALDER, *Curator*

*Front cover: Sideboard and cellaret from Horatio Seymour House, Middlebury, Vt.
Back cover: Horatio Seymour House, Main & Seymour Streets, Middlebury,
Addison County, VT. Photo from Historical American Buildings Survey
(HABS VT-85), Library of Congress.*

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Vermont History Vol. 84, No. 1 (Winter/Spring 2016): v.

© 2016 by the Vermont Historical Society. ISSN: 0042-4161; on-line ISSN: 1544-3043

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