

# HISTORY

CONNECTIONS

## Preserving Moments in History

Pg. 3

National History  
Day Recap

7

Exhibit  
Collaborations

9

New School  
Programs

10





VOLUME 13 - Number 3

*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  
Printing: Accura Printing

## Vermont History Museum & Store

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

Families: \$20; Adults: \$7  
Students, children, seniors: \$5  
Members & children under 6: Free  
Student school groups: Free

## Vermont History Center

60 Washington St. Suite 1, Barre, VT  
(802) 479-8500

Tuesday–Friday & Second Saturdays  
9am to 4pm

Wednesday Evenings (Library Only)  
4pm - 8pm

Library admission:  
Non-members: \$7  
Members and students: Free  
(802) 479-8509

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

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

# Director's Note

by Steve Perkins

Oh how fast the Vermont summer fades to autumn glory! We’ve had a wonderful time this summer presenting outreach and programmatic events throughout Vermont. Our newest publication, *Repeopling Vermont*, by Paul Searls has led to fascinating community conversations regarding population growth and decline in our state and how we market ourselves and define our communities, for-better-or-for-worse, historically and into the future. In areas where we haven’t presented direct programs, libraries and historical societies have partnered to read and discuss the book on their own using a guide produced by VHS and the Vermont Department of Libraries. This project continues to prove how historical understanding leads to community growth and civic understanding.

We have also spent a lot of time visiting local historical societies in their own back yards, leading a series of conversations to better understand local society needs throughout the state. We have asked how best can the Vermont Historical Society support local societies and how best can local societies collaborate with each other? We have also delved into the question of “why local history?” How can we make the best case possible for the support of historical study, historic preservation, and history programming? The answers have been fascinating and thought provoking – covering topics as diverse as preservation of place to the growth of an engaged and informed populace who can understand that they all contribute to the history and future of their community.

I look forward to expanding on many of these conversations and providing some possible projects and initiatives at our annual meeting on September 29th - See you there!

Steve Perkins  
Executive Director

# IN THE GALLERIES

## History Center Exhibits

- *Icons, Oddities & Wonders*  
New objects on display in August
- *The War of Ideas: Propaganda Posters from the Vermont Historical Society Collection*  
Open through October 25
- *Myths & Legends of the Connecticut River*  
Opens November 1

## History Museum Special Exhibits

- Local History Gallery: *Norman Rockwell's Arlington: America's Home Town*  
Through January 2020
- Calder Gallery: *Sports in Vermont*  
Through October 2019
- National Life Gallery: *The Vermont Brand*  
Through January 2020

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<b>August 23</b> 10am	<b>Local History Engagement Session</b> Manchester Community Library
<b>August 28</b> 7pm	<b>Community Conversation: 20th Century Development &amp; Progress</b> Bennington Free Library
<b>September 6</b> 10am	<b>Local History Engagement Session</b> St. Albans Museum
<b>Sept. 11 &amp; 12</b> 1pm	<b>History for Homeschoolers: Back to Class, Education in Vermont</b> Vermont History Museum, Montpelier
<b>September 14</b> 1pm	<b>Vermont History Trivia</b> Vermont History Museum, Montpelier
<b>September 17</b> 6:30pm	<b>Community Conversation: 20th Century Development &amp; Progress</b> Brooks Memorial Library, Brattleboro
<b>September 19</b> 12pm	<b>Third Thursday: New discoveries and insights in Vermont Archaeology</b> Vermont History Museum, Montpelier   Speaker: Jess Robinson
<b>September 28</b> 12pm	<b>Local History Engagement Session</b> Waterbury Historical Society
<b>September 29</b> 12 - 1:30pm	<b>Freedom &amp; Unity Luncheon</b> Capitol Plaza, Montpelier
<b>September 29</b> 2 - 3:30pm	<b>181<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting</b> Capitol Plaza, Montpelier
<b>Oct. 9 &amp; 10</b> 1pm	<b>History for Homeschoolers: Harvest Time, Food and Farms in Vermont</b> Vermont History Museum, Montpelier
<b>October 17</b> 12pm	<b>Third Thursday: What Say You, Elder? The Life and Lore of Rev. Daniel Field</b> Vermont History Museum, Montpelier   Speaker: Adam Boyce

# Preserving Moments in History

by Paul Carnahan

We all recognize that books and paper deteriorate over time. At the Vermont Historical Society, we slow down that process by controlling heat and humidity and by handling collections carefully. It is a rare instance when we send an item out for professional conservation, but sometimes we come across items that call out for professional help.

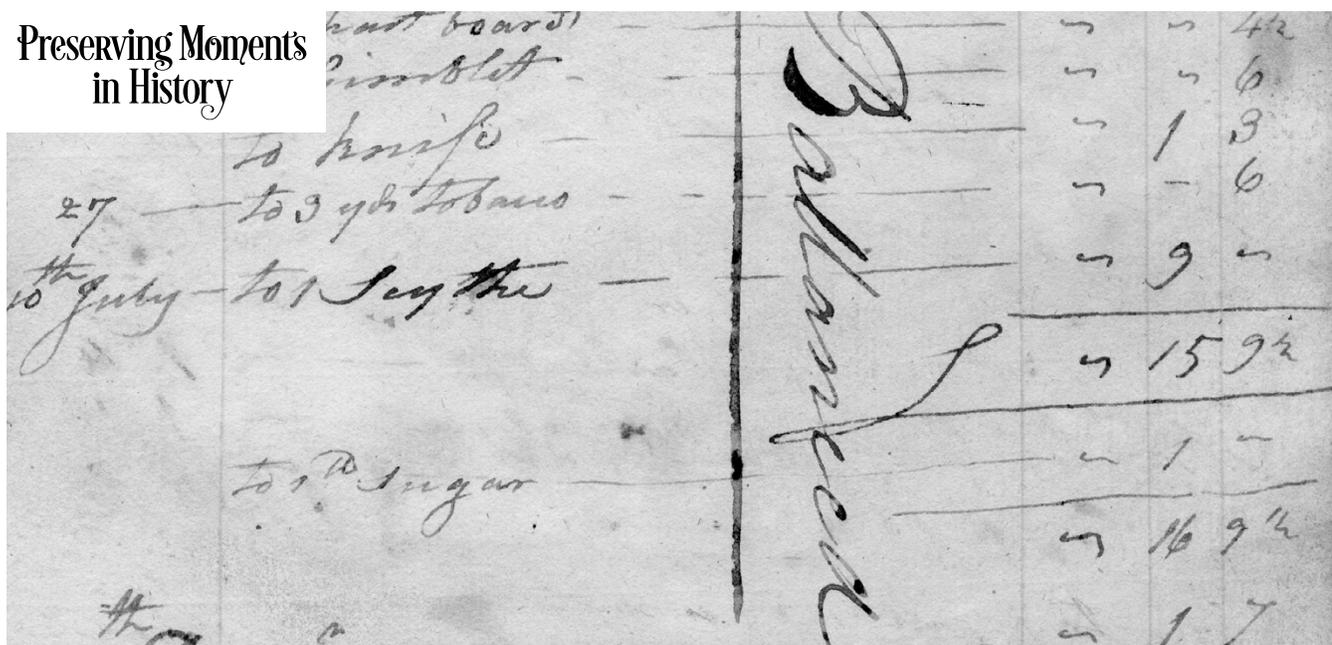
One such item came to our attention last year when a patron was using account books that had been damaged during the infamous 1927 flood. These books, twelve in number, some dating from Vermont's republic period, are now stored high above the flood plain in Barre in a box that is part of the James Whitelaw collection, waiting for a day when we have the resources available to conserve them. These volumes have severely warped leather boards and cockled pages covered with fine silt. We generally discourage patrons from using these items because of their fragile condition and their propensity to create adverse respiratory reactions, even 90 years after the flood.

When our patron had finished looking at the books he said, "You know, something really should be done about these books ... and they aren't all James Whitelaw's account books." After we discussed the situation a bit, he agreed to help conserve one volume. We chose a volume that seemed to be from Middlebury and took it to the Northeast Conservation Center (NEDCC) in Andover, Massachusetts.

Jonathan Brewster, D.D.	
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## Preserving Moments in History



There, after careful examination, the conservator determined that the Manchester volume was actually two volumes bound together. She produced estimates for conserving each volume separately. We reviewed the proposals and chose to conserve the smaller (and less expensive) of the two volumes.

This spring the carefully conserved account book, and its unconserved partner, arrived back at the Leahy Library in Barre. The conservators had disbound the smaller volume and then washed each page in ethanol and filtered water to remove the silt deposits and discoloration on the pages. They alkalized (deacidified) the leaves in a calcium carbonate bath, strengthened the pages with a 2% solution of gelatin, and mended major tears using Japanese paper and starch paste. We opted not to have the volume rebound, so the conservators placed the 81 leaves in eight buffered folders and stored them in a custom-fitted phase box. The result is a stable, protected and very useable account book.

Now that we can open the account book safely, we are learning more about this remarkable early piece of our history. This is the account book of an unknown merchant, probably in East Arlington, during the period 1796-1797. Merchants in this period extended credit to their customers, so this book contains detailed listings of goods sold to customers along with payments eventually received for those goods. The book documents a sophisticated barter economy. For example, a tailor

named David Parsons purchased cloth and thread and then paid off his debt “by making suit cloths.” This account book demonstrates how the regional economy worked. At least eight accounts were paid off by customers hauling goods to Lansingburgh, a village of Troy, New York.

Account books such as this also provide an insight into popular fashion tastes of the late eighteenth century. Page 36 shows that widow Susannah Barns purchased calico and “bandano.” The latter was a printed silk handkerchief produced in India. The customer above her on page 36, Andrew Hawley, purchased lace, silk, flannel, “sarnet” (probably sarcenet, a thin silk cloth used for linings), and chintz along with sundries, molasses, and tea. Several customers purchased “nankeen,” a Chinese plain-weave cotton that was usually of a naturally yellowish hue.

The conservation of this account book was made possible by the generosity of member Skip Duett and by the Richard J. Fowle Fund, which was established 47 years ago to acquire and maintain “books and manuscripts antedating 1861.” These two individuals did their part to conserve Vermont’s economic and social history, but there are still account books in our vault that were damaged by the 1927 flood that need conservation before they can be easily used by researchers. Contact the development office at (802) 479-8525 to learn more about supporting conservation projects.

# MYSTERY PHOTO



Does anyone recognize this village scene? This stereographic view was taken by Carlyle Goodrich of Plainfield, VT, in the 1870s. Goodrich worked in central Vermont, traveling as far north as St. Johnsbury and as far south as Royalton, but he may have ventured further. Unfortunately, the directional sign at the crossroads at the right edge of the image is not facing the photographer. If you can identify this photograph, please contact VHS Librarian Paul Carnahan at [paul.carnahan@vermonthistory.org](mailto:paul.carnahan@vermonthistory.org) or (802) 479-8508.



Last issue's mystery photo stimulated some guesses but no positive identifications. One guess was that it was the Sam Daniels manufacturing plant in Hardwick, but as far as we can tell the Sam Daniels building did not have multiple small dormer across the roof as is shown in this photograph. Pending additional information, this wintry scene remains a mystery!

# NATIONAL HISTORY DAY 2019

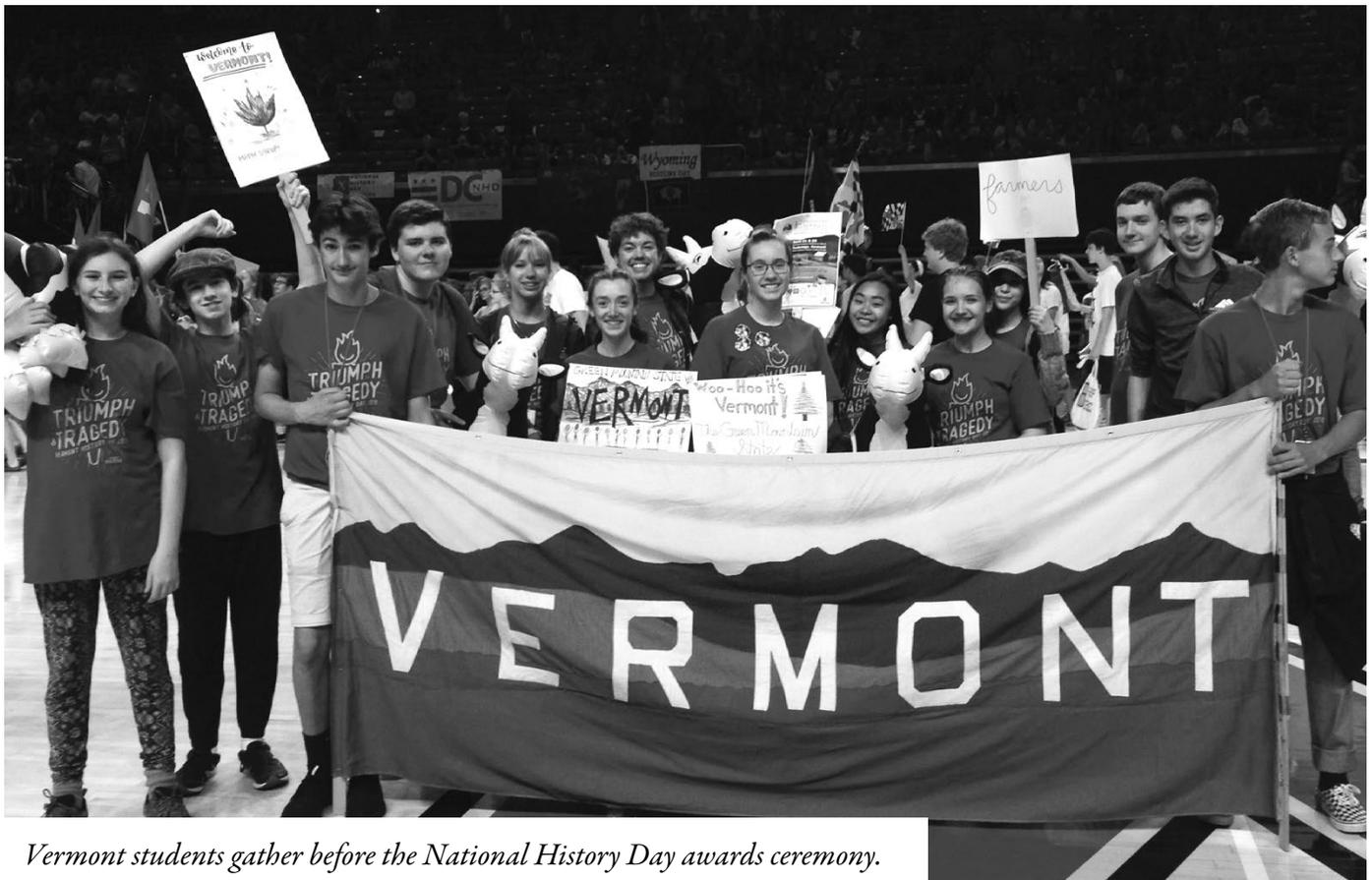
**48** Vermont students recently competed at National History Day in College Park, Maryland. Representing nineteen schools, the students presented projects about a wide range of history topics, including Nellie Bly's investigations, the Challenger Space Shuttle, the Brattleboro Retreat Tower, and the Vikings. Noah Samuelsen from Main Street Middle School in Montpelier won "Best of Vermont, Junior Division" for his documentary entitled "The DC-10 Story: How a Dangerous Reputation Changed a Billion Dollar Enterprise." Stella Murdock and Kaleb Wright from Milton High School won the "Best of

Vermont, Senior Division" for their website "The Romanov Dynasty: Leading Russia to Tragedy." Gräe Frechette, a student at U-32 in East Montpelier, presented their exhibit about "The Tragic Triumph of Magnus Hirschfeld" at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, an opportunity offered to one exhibit per state. Katie Kelley, a student at St. Paul's Catholic School in Barton, represented Vermont at the National Endowment for the Humanities Day on the Hill. Katie shared information with Vermont's congressional delegation about her History Day paper on "The Murder of Emmett Till: How a Major Tragedy Helped Spark the Civil Rights Movement in America" and

how she was inspired by her visit to the National Museum of African American History and Culture during NHD 2018. Other students explored many museums and historic sites around Washington, DC, and made the most of opportunities not available in Vermont. VHS is proud to coordinate the Vermont History Day state contest and the winners' participation in National History Day. The students learn content and skills as part of the program, but also learn that the study of history can open doors to new adventures. Thank you to the sponsors who supported the Vermont History Day contest and year-long educational program.



*Vermont students and VHS education manager, Victoria Hughes, visited Senator Patrick Leahy at the US Capitol on a gorgeous summer day.*



*Vermont students gather before the National History Day awards ceremony.*

# THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!

## **Vermont History Day Partner**

George W. Mergens Foundation  
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## **Oak Level**

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Northfield Savings Bank  
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UVM Department of History  
UVM Historic Preservation Program  
Vermont Mutual Insurance Group

## **Birch Level**

Charles Martin  
Robert Hull Fleming Museum  
Shelburne Shipyard  
Vermont Federal Credit Union

## **Spruce Level**

Washington Electric Cooperative, Inc.

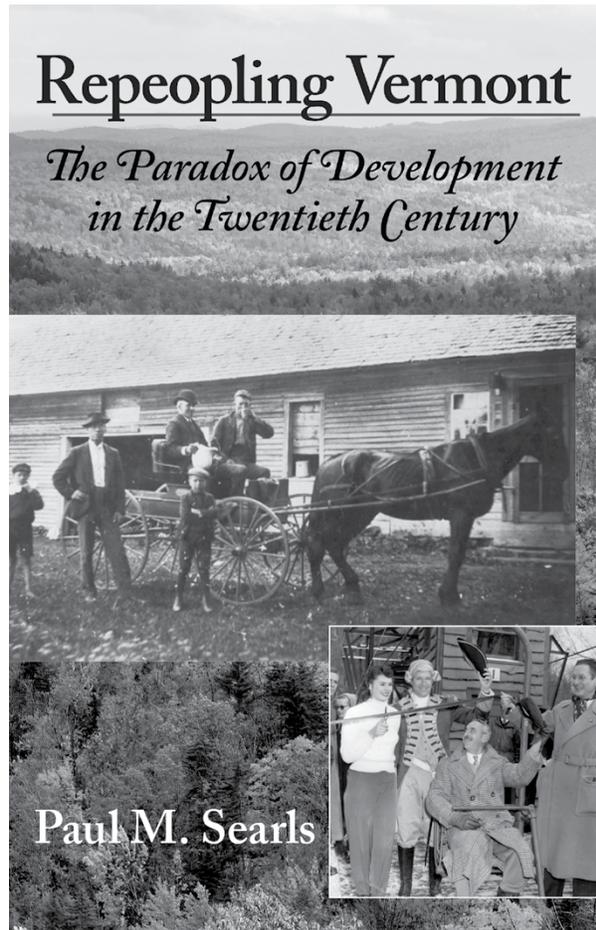
And a special thank you to the sponsors of our special prizes.

# COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Following the publication of *Repeopling Vermont: The Paradox of Development in the Twentieth Century*, the Vermont Historical Society has been traveling around the state to host author talks and community conversations on the themes of the book. Paul Searls's book is a deep examination of questions of development, immigration, economic strategy, and long-term planning for Vermont's future as practiced in the twentieth century. Attendees have the opportunity to use the lessons of history and discuss their own ideas for their community's future. How do we balance the natural, physical landscape and the human one? What should a twenty-first century Vermont economy look like? How do we create and sustain community on the small and large scale?

Join us at one of our already scheduled Community Conversations around the state – and if your historical society or library would like to host its own, download our program guide at [vermonthistory.org/community-conversations](http://vermonthistory.org/community-conversations).

This programming was made possible by grants from the Vermont Humanities Council and Northern Vermont University.



## 2020 VISION

### SEEING THE WORLD THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

Vermont has long been the home of innovative thinkers and problem solvers. As part of statewide group exhibition initiative centered around the theme of “Technology”, organized by the Vermont Curators Group, the Vermont Historical Society is inviting local historical societies and other heritage organizations to participate in a crowdsourced exhibition about innovation and technology in Vermont. VHS will produce the framework for the exhibit, augmented by crowdsourced objects, photographs, and archival materials that represent technological innovation throughout Vermont. Whether clever local devices or nationally-patented leaps forward, objects can be a useful way to understand the drive to make life better

and easier through technology, as well as how industry and innovation changed over time.

The exhibition will be on view August 2020 through January 2021 in the Local History Gallery at the Vermont History Museum in Montpelier. VHS will be hosting associated webinars beginning in August to help organizations who may be thinking of participating. The application for submitting objects and archival materials will be available in November 2019.

Please reach out to Eileen Corcoran ([eileen.corcoran@vermonthistory.org](mailto:eileen.corcoran@vermonthistory.org)) or Amanda Gustin ([amanda.gustin@vermonthistory.org](mailto:amanda.gustin@vermonthistory.org)) with any questions.

# NEW SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Each year, almost 5,000 students, teachers, and chaperones visit the Vermont History Museum in Montpelier. In addition to a self-guided tour of the *Freedom and Unity* exhibit, teachers can now select one of four Hands-on History guided programs to enhance the students' field trip to the museum. The new programs engage students in the exploration of primary sources and

artifacts from the Vermont Historical Society collections. Through the investigation of historical documents like maps, Civil War soldier letters, and census records, students have the opportunity to be historians and explore how Vermont and Vermonters have changed over time. The pilot program in the spring of 2019 tested all four offerings with multiple groups, leading to refinements in the

lessons before the formal launch for the 2019-20 school year. Thank you to the new and returning volunteers who are helping to develop and teach the programs. Contact Victoria Hughes at [victoria.hughes@vermonthistory.org](mailto:victoria.hughes@vermonthistory.org) or (802) 828-1413 to volunteer or register for a program.



Records from our digital archive, [DigitalVermont.org](http://DigitalVermont.org), are now available to be discovered by the researching public on the Digital Public Library of America, or DPLA. Our records, along with those of our partner institutions in the Green Mount Digital Archive, went online in early June. DPLA aggregates records from databases across the country and currently boasts over 34 million records.

The Vermont effort was led by Middlebury College, and, in addition to the VHS, included the Vermont Department of Libraries, the Vermont State Archives, and the libraries of Norwich University, the University of Vermont, and St. Michael's College. The 57,000 items from Vermont include Thomas Easterly's earliest known photographs of Vermont, The VHS's 1970s counterculture project, selected Vermonter's Civil War letters, The Helen Hartness Flanders Ballad Collection, Porter Thayer's photographs of Vermont rural life at the beginning of the 20th century, and 20 years of *Out in the Mountains*, Vermont's only LGBT newspaper.

The Digital Public Library of America can be found at <http://dp.la>.



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## CHARITABLE IRA ROLLOVER: **Turn Mandatory into Meaningful**

The charitable IRA rollover has returned for good, thanks to legislation signed in December 2015 that made this popular giving opportunity permanent. The rollover is a convenient, tax-efficient way for donors who are at least 70½ years old to support VHS.

Consider this giving example to better understand how the Charitable IRA Rollover works:

Helen Rogers, age 72, has a traditional IRA, and her required minimum distribution is approximately \$30,000. If she receives the distribution, it will be taxable at her marginal tax rate of 35 percent. Through a charitable IRA rollover, Helen can instruct her plan administrator to transfer \$30,000 to the Vermont Historical Society as a charitable gift, and the \$30,000 will no longer be included in Helen's income. Helen can also choose to direct a portion of the required minimum distribution or a greater amount not to exceed \$100,000 towards supporting collections preservation, statewide outreach, educational programming, research, publications, scholarships or areas of greatest need.

To learn more, please contact Kate Olney, Director of Development, at (802) 479-8525 or [kate.olney@vermonthistory.org](mailto:kate.olney@vermonthistory.org).



*"This is truly a situation where everyone wins-VHS, of course, but also you, since you are avoiding a tax penalty, and making a gift you would have made anyway. Try it; you'll like it!"*

– Sarah Dopp,  
VHS Honorary Trustee