

**Vermont Guernsey Breeders Association  
Records, 1914-1963  
MSA 756**

## **Introduction**

This collection contains the records of the Vermont Guernsey Breeders Association from its founding in 1914 through 1963 as well as information about its founder, Herbert T. Johnson. The collection was given to the Vermont Historical Society by Catlin Fox of Leicester, Vermont, in 2016; it had previously belonged to Louise Adams, a long time secretary of the association, who lived in Leicester. The collection is housed in one narrow archival flip-top box and consumes .25 linear feet of shelf space.

## **Agency History**

The Vermont Guernsey Breeders Association was founded in 1914. Herbert T. Johnson apparently sent out questionnaires to prospective members on February 19, 1914. As a result of positive response, Mr. Johnson sent out a letter on April 9, 1914, calling for an organizing meeting to be held on April 23 at the Pavilion Hotel in Montpelier, Vermont. No organizing documents exist in this collection, but the original, typewritten list of members contains 26 names. By 1959, there were 119 members and the Association was run by an eight-member executive committee. The collection does not contain any minutes. The organization still exists today (2016) but the donors suggest that it is much smaller than in its heyday.

## **Biographical Note**

Herbert T. Johnson, organizer of the Vermont Guernsey Breeders Association, was born the son of Harriet Avery and Thomas Johnson, at Stonecliff Farm in Bradford, Vermont, on January 27, 1872. The owner of Bradford's Stonecliff Farm, he was a dairy farmer, a breeder, and an alumnus of Bradford Academy. He married Myra Luella Burbeck (1876–1951) in 1895 and their children included Ruth Burbeck Johnson Tompkins (1898–1982), Thomas Herbert Johnson (1902–1985), and Edward Carleton Johnson (1904–1928).

Herbert Johnson enlisted with Company G (the “Bradford Guards”) of the 1st Vermont Infantry Regiment in 1889. He was promoted to captain of Company G in 1896 and served with his regiment at Camp Thomas near Chickamauga, Georgia, at Rossville, Georgia and at Fort Ethan Allen during the Spanish-American War. Johnson retired from service in the Vermont National Guard with the rank of colonel in 1914.

Following his retirement, Johnson remained active in the Vermont State Guard (a volunteer home guard). He was appointed acting Adjutant General of the State of Vermont in 1917 and was elected to this post in 1919. His tenure as Vermont’s Adjutant General saw the construction of 12 new armories in the state, the modernization of the Vermont National Guard following World War I, and the Guard’s response to the flood of 1927. He was also an active member and one-time president of the Adjutants General Association of the United States

(AGAUS). Johnson served as Vermont's Adjutant General until his retirement due to ill health in 1941. He was also briefly Vermont's Director of Selective Service at the start of World War II.

Herbert T. Johnson died at the Vermont State House on November 4, 1942 and is buried in Bradford, Vermont. In 1945, the Vermont National Guard Headquarters in Colchester was renamed Camp Johnson in his honor.

### Scope and Content

This collection contains the letters that Herbert T. Johnson received back from breeders in response to his 1914 survey. It also contains membership lists spanning 1914 to 1957 and booklets produced by the organization, especially those for the "Parish Show" (1946-1963) and various sales events (1914, 1921, 1954-1955). The organization was strong enough that it published a two-page newsletter, *Vermont Guernsey News*, in 1955 and 1958. Sometime in the 1950s, the organization printed an attractive 4-page brochure to encourage 4-H club and FFA members to raise Guernseys.

The collection includes a photocopy of a photograph of a group of people that has been labeled in a modern hand, "Breeders' Summer Meeting, Stonecliff Farm, 1910, 125 present." This may be a mislabeled photograph of the first meeting in 1914 or of a later meeting that was held at Mr. Johnson's farm in Bradford.

The collection also includes some photocopied biographical information about the organization's founder, Herbert T. Johnson.

### Inventory

- MSA 741:01 Letters written to H. T. Johnson about forming the VGBA, Feb. 1914.
- 02 \_\_\_\_\_, March-April 1914
- 03 Membership lists, 1914-1957.
- 04 *New England Guernseys*, 1948, 1950, undated.
- 05 *Vermont Guernsey News*, Feb. 1955, July 1955, Feb. 1958.
- 06 VGBA Sales list, 1914, 1921.
- 07 Booklets, VGBA Parish Show, 1946, 1952, 1954-1956, 1963.
- 08 Booklets, Green Mountain/Vermont Sale, 1954-1955.
- 09 Booklets, *Vermont Guernseys*, 1955, 1961.
- 10 Miscellaneous
  - Flyer, "Opportunities open to boys and girls with Guernseys," no date.
  - Photocopy about Herbert T. Johnson
  - Bradford Historical Society bulletin about Johnson and early aviation
  - Photocopy of photograph of Breeders' Summer Meeting, Stonecliff Farm, 1910 (date correct?)

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