

Brattleboro- The Defining Decades, 1870-1920 Exhibit Guide

Vermont Historical Society & Brattleboro Historical Society

There are several parts to this exhibit. You may start wherever you like.

Brattleboro 1870 - 1920

Welcome to Brattleboro, Vermont

1. Brattleboro is at the confluence (2 rivers coming together) of these two rivers? List them both by their Native names and English names.

2. The first permanent English settlement in Vermont was located in Brattleboro. What is its name?

You will find artists' drawings of the fort in this exhibit. Make your own drawing of it. If you'd like to make a special effort, do a pen & ink drawing when you have time & send it to the Brattleboro Historical Society.

Each of the following sections of the exhibit has information panels & photos in flip charts. To complete everything, you will need both.

Geography & Transportation

3. How large a town is Brattleboro compared to others in Windham County?

4. Can you find Brattleboro & put it on your map?

5. Make a written description of Brattleboro's location?

6. Rivers were highways in the days of early river travel but were replaced by what in the 1840s?

7. Can you find an image of Brattleboro's train station in this exhibit? Can you make a sketch of it or take a photo of it with your phone?

8. What was Eugene Feritier's job?

9. Brattleboro is described as a crossroads for multiple roads. What are the road numbers?

10. Where is Brattleboro's RR line? Is it along the river? Through the center of town?

11. Write evidence here that some people did not want the trolley in Brattleboro.
12. What did Bigelow Boats do?
13. Find the bridges that Brattleboro had(s). Make a sketch of YOUR favorite.

Fun Facts - Geography & Transportation

1. Describe these things?
 - A. Island Park
 - B. P.T. Barnum
 - C. Largest logjam
2. What happened to Brattleboro's population from 1870 - 1920?
3. What did the construction of the Vernon Dam do to Brattleboro?
4. Can you find the Vernon Dam on your map?

Industry & Commerce

1. What company appears to be Brattleboro's most famous?
2. How did Brattleboro's farmers cooperate with one another?
3. From the photos in Industry & Commerce.....

Who ran the Millinery shop?

Did Brattleboro have a cotton mill?

Where would you go to find Crocker's Best Flower?

If you wanted some jelly in Brattleboro, what company looks best able to supply your needs?

From the photos of the Estey Organ Company, it appears that you would need something other than a truck to deliver the organs. What is moving the organs in the photos?

Fun Facts - Industry & Commerce

1. What world famous composer had an Estey Organ?

2. Brattleboro is the home for registered Holstein cows for where?
3. What Brattleboro company became the largest independent foot ware wholesaler in the United States?

Downtown & Main Street

1. Of what notoriety (makes it so well known) is Brattleboro's Brooks House?
2. What proof is there that Brattleboro had a vibrant religious presence?
3. Technology changed Brattleboro at the end of the 19th Century. What evidence is there of this?
4. How do the photographs of Brattleboro's Main Street compare with your Main Street?
5. Livery service is mentioned. Do you know what that is? Can you find out?
6. The photographs show that the Brooks House was used for many things over many years. What uses can you find?
7. If Brattleboro were deciding to modernize, would you lobby the town to keep the Brooks House or tear it down. Write your argument to support your position.

Fun Facts - Downtown & Main Street

6. What U.S. President came to Brattleboro in 1902?
7. There's a famous clock on Brattleboro's Main Street today. Who put it there & when?
8. How many bricks were used to rebuild the Crosby Block after the 1869 fire?
 - A. If you piled them up, one on top of the other, how high would they go?
 - B. If you piled them up end to end, one on top of the other, how high would they go?
9. The display says that 'Jubilee' Jim Fisk was 'laid out' for public viewing.
 - A. What does that mean?

B. When you get back to school/home, see what you can find out about Jubilee Jim. We think you will find him quite interesting!

Arts & Culture

1. When did moving pictures come to Brattleboro? How does this compare with your town?

2. List the visiting entertainers & local artists mentioned in the display.

- A**
- B**
- C**
- D**
- E**
- F**
- G**
- H**
- I**
- J**
- K**

3. Now, join with others to divide up the list to see what you can report back to your group after you have had time when you leave the exhibit.

4. There looks to be a larger & patriotic gathering on Brattleboro's Main Street in one of the photos. What was going on to attract so many people?

5. Pick one of the photos from the chart titled 'ARTS & CULTURE' that features 'Visual Artists', 'Writers and readers', 'Outdoor recreation, and Amusement park and fairs'.

A. Pick 2 types of entertainment from this panel that you wish were still here.

B. What would you say if you met Rudyard Kipling, Mary Wilkins, Jim Fisk?

C. Have you ever seen live ski jumping?

D. What would you expect to see and do at Island Park?

- E. What do you see happening at the Valley Fair in the photo?**
- F. Where was the Masquerade Ball held?**
- G. Did you see the theater in the Town Hall? Describe it.**
- H. Put a check mark next to each of these that played at the Auditorium in Brattleboro.**
 - John Philip Sousa and His Band**
 - Macbeth**
 - Abraham Lincoln**

Fun Facts - Arts & Culture

- 6. Do you know what a team of horses is? If yes, describe them here:**
- 7. The item about John Phillips Sousa says he played at the Auditorium in Brattleboro. Can you find a photo of the Auditorium and sketch it now?**
- 8. Does a horse & buggy ride up Mt. Wantastiquet sound like fun? Where is Mt. Wantastiquet in relation to Brattleboro?**
- 9. Helen Modjeska and Mark Twain were both in Brattleboro. Were they there at the same time? Can you find out who they are?**

Clubs & Organizations

- 1. This is a list of organizations in Brattleboro between 1870 & 1920. Take a moment to go through the list and compare it with your town today. How many of the clubs and organizations are in your town? Which ones would you be interested in joining?**

The Floor Map

The compass rose is located on the right side of the map. Looking at the compass rose, in what direction is the Connecticut River from Brattleboro's Main Street?

Using the Scale of Feet, how many feet long is Crosby's Block on Main Street?

What is the name of the Brook that flows into the Connecticut River?

The Brattleboro Jelly Mill was located on which street?

The Baptist Church is located in the north, south, east or west portion of the map?

What heat and power source did the EP Carpenter Company use to run its building?

What year is represented on this map?

What were the names of the two railroads that ran along the east side of Brattleboro?

Propose a reason why there are four reservoirs located near the downtown area. What was their purpose?

After looking at the map, how is your town similar and/or different from Brattleboro? Give three examples.

The Artifacts

Model Train Station -

This is a scale model of Brattleboro's train station - today, the Brattleboro Museum and Art Center. The station is located near downtown and Main Street, next to the Connecticut River. It was important for transportation of passengers and freight. This model is built by Doug Cox, who is also a violin maker in Brattleboro.

Estey Reed Organ -

The Estey Organ company was the world's largest manufacturer of reed organs, and the only company to produce reed, pipe, and electronic organs at the same factory.

You really should 'have a go' at playing this organ. Here is how:

Sit on the bench facing the keyboard.

Put your feet on the pedals and pump them gently. This will fill the bellows with air. Pressing keys on the keyboard sends air from the bellows through metal reeds, causing

them to vibrate and make sound. Keep pumping, like you are slowly riding a bike, to keep the bellows full enough to make sound.

If you stop pumping and keep playing, what happens?

The organ knobs are called stops, and allow the performer (that's you!) to get a variety of sounds from one organ.

If you would like to view a short video of how the Estey organ is played by someone who knows how, you can do it here:

Ned Phoenix demonstrates the Estey J.J. model organ

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mFnSN8ea0zM>

And the Model H (this will be of particular interest to musicians & music educators)

<https://youtu.be/IEzLhhVYPQg>

The Floor map -

An 1896 Sanborn Fire Map, showing downtown Brattleboro. Fire maps are fun to look at because they are very descriptive. Every building is identified and the map conveys a tremendous amount of information. You will find some activities to go with the floor map in another section of this guide.

Dairy Bottles -

This is a collection of various bottles used by Brattleboro dairies. The book of milk tickets was a way to keep track of payments when milk was delivered - directly to your door.

Pipe Organ Tools -

A collection of tools used by workers at the Estey Organ Company in the production of pipe organs. The company produced over 3,000 pipe organs.

Books -

One of the major industries in Brattleboro was printing and publishing. Brattleboro also attracted authors. Take a close look at [The Jungle Book](#). It is signed by Rudyard Kipling, who lived on the edge of Brattleboro. The other book is a story by Charles Dickens, sort of. He never finished it, but Brattleboro printer Thomas Powell James said he channeled Dickens' spirit to ghostwrite an ending.

Chairs -

These chairs from the original Brooks Library on Main Street.

Toys -

S.A. Smith was a maker of carriages and toys in Brattleboro. On display is one of these toys and a catalog in which it is advertised.

Take a postcard! Brattleboro Historical Society's gift to you.

Comments on the exhibit and/or the Guide are welcome at:

<https://brattleborohistoricalsociety.org/>

histsoc@sover.net

Get In Touch

Email:

histsoc@sover.net

Phone:

802-258-4957

Address:

Brattleboro Historical Society

230 Main Street, #301

Brattleboro, VT 05301-6392