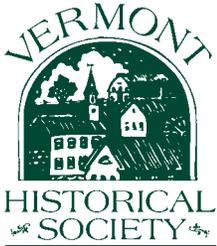


CHistory Connections

Vermont Historical Society

News &
Notes

Spring 2011 / Volume #5 / Number 3



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

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Subscribe and start getting
advance notice about events,
additions to the collections
and other historical news!

Public WiFi at
History Center!



Won't you open the door?

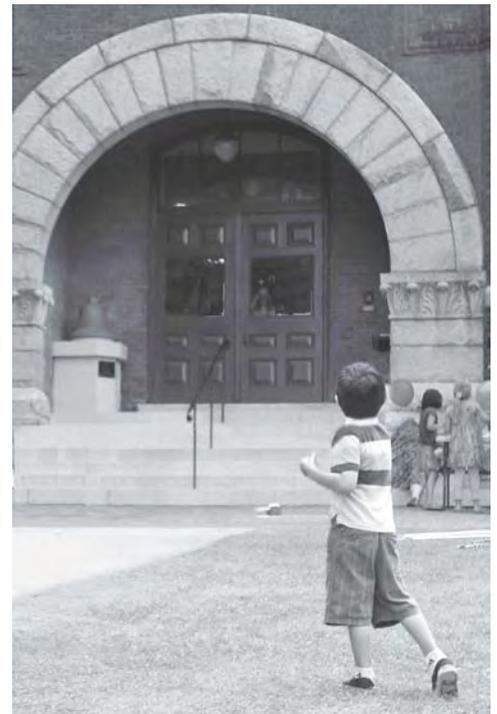
You can be one of the many people helping us open the door to the treasures in our collections, and bringing to light significant themes within Vermont history.

This summer, the Vermont History Center will have an exciting project underway, as we begin construction on three exhibition galleries on the Center's first floor, providing space for changing public exhibits on Vermont's heritage. Each exhibit will be accompanied by public programs for schoolchildren and adults across the state. These exhibits in Barre will be in addition to the Vermont History Museum's permanent exhibit, *Freedom and Unity*, located in Montpelier.

The creation of the new galleries is part of the *Saving Vermont's Treasures* capital campaign, which was launched to the public on March 4. The campaign will also save the History Center's bell tower, a distinctive feature of the building, which urgently needs repairs and stabilization.

Whether it is a quilt, a granite chisel or an aged photograph, each artifact from the past tells Vermont's story, helping us understand

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**We need your help—
only \$70,000 left to go!**



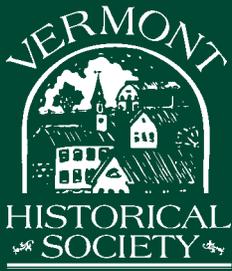
Margaret "Margot" George

The legacy of Margot George

Each of us, by how we live our lives and what we do for future generations, leaves a legacy. In Central Vermont, few have left a more meaningful legacy than Margaret "Margot" George. Her passion for history was expressed through her work as a staff member of the Vermont Historical Society, her passionate leadership within Montpelier's historic preservation community and the generous gifts she left to cultural heritage organizations in Central Vermont after her passing in December 2008.

The Vermont Historical Society is honored to be one of

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Spring 2011

Volume #5 / Number 3

History Connections is published four times a year 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: Mark S. Hudson
Editor: Julie Nelson
Printing: Stillwater Graphics

Vermont History Center
60 Washington Street, Barre, VT
802-479-8500

Administrative Offices & Store:
Monday–Friday 9am to 4pm

Library
Tuesday–Friday 9am to 4pm
Wednesday 9am to 8pm
Second Saturday each month
9am to 4pm
802-479-8509

Library admission:
Non-members: \$5
Members and students: Free

Museum & Store
Pavilion Building
109 State Street, Montpelier, VT
Tuesday–Saturday 10am to 4pm
802-828-2291

Museum admission:
Families: \$12; Adults: \$5
Students, children, seniors: \$3
Members & children under 6: Free
Student school groups: Free
802-828-2180

www.vermonthistory.org
vhs-info@state.vt.us

From the Director

Planning for the forks in the road

As a student of the teachings of Yogi Berra, I see the wisdom of the quote below. Life comes at us quickly, and we must be ready to respond to changing circumstances. At the foundation of our actions, however, must be a thoughtfully developed plan. When I arrived at the Vermont Historical Society two years ago, I was fortunate to inherit a strategic plan that has guided our organization through difficult times, and through a period of growth and change. Created over a two-year period, the current five-year plan went into effect in the middle of 2008. With the VHS now approaching the plan's final two years, we have an ideal opportunity to assess our progress.

“When you come to a fork in the road . . . Take it.”



The plan's vision statement challenges us to **“set the standard for statewide work in Vermont history,”** a principle that gives inspiration to everything we do; its four goals and accompanying strategies provide a concise blueprint.

Toward meeting the goal of **being the statewide leader in K-12 education for Vermont history**, we have demonstrated outstanding progress. Our initiatives to bring Vermont history resources into the classroom and train teachers to use these resources have been a resounding success, with the Vermont Explorer website (www.vermonthistory.org/explorer) serving as the pinnacle of our progress in this area. (See story on page 5 of this newsletter.)

Our adoption of the Vermont Collections Care Program, leadership in the development of emergency planning initiatives, and the expansion of the League of Local Historical Societies & Museums reflect our commitment toward attaining the goal of **being the leader in delivering field services to local history organizations in Vermont.**

At the core of our programs and services are the collections. Toward meeting the goal of **protecting our collections and enhancing accessibility to them**, we continue to make enormous strides. Recent projects and initiatives have resulted in improved care for our paintings,

quilts and film collections. With a variety of digital resources, including photo galleries and online exhibitions, we are sharing both museum and archival collections with a global audience.

In a related way, the development of new gallery spaces at the Vermont History Center will enhance accessibility to collections, while also promoting achievement of the third goal, which encourages us to **continue the development of the center in Barre for collections, exhibits and programming.** Through the *Saving Vermont's Treasures* Capital Campaign and ongoing collaborations with state agencies for shared use of space in the center, this goal is rapidly being achieved.

The final goal of **building a strong fiscal foundation** addresses the current and long-term financial health of the organization, which has been a challenging proposition, especially in the current economic climate. With mixed results we have continued to seek efficiencies in our operations, develop new forms of financial support and implement strategies toward the elimination of our capital debt. Our recent success with the capital campaign and significant progress toward reducing the remaining debt give us hope for the full attainment of this goal.

Though our challenges remain significant, I am very pleased to share with you notable successes in achieving our mission, fulfilling our vision and attaining our goals. As Yogi would say, “If the world were perfect, it wouldn't be.”

Mark S. Hudson
Executive Director



Now you can search Civil War letters and diaries online

“My life is at my country’s disposal and if possible should be given ten thousand times ere I’d be ruled by tyrants and *much less traitors.*”

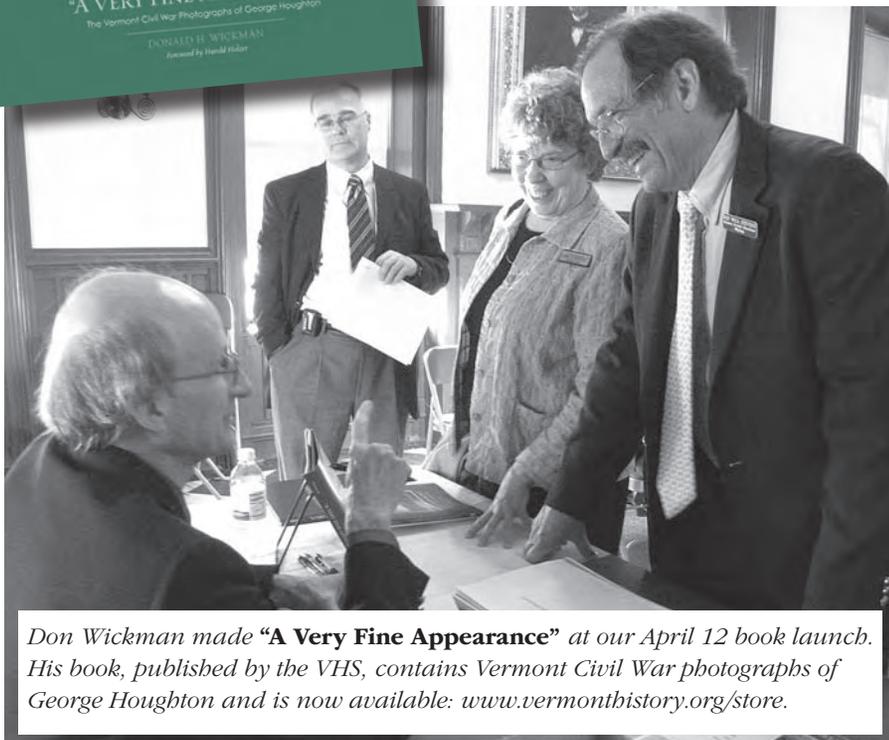
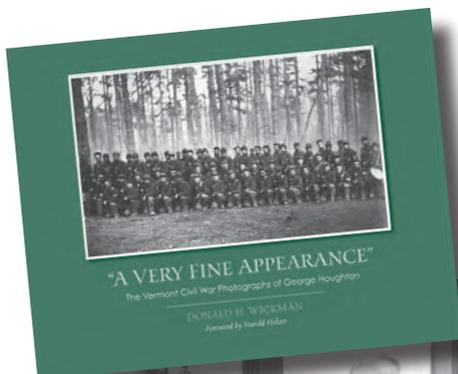
So wrote Joseph L. Perkins, a medical student at the University of Vermont, shortly after the outbreak of the Civil War in April 1861. Vermont soldiers wrote a tremendous number of letters and diaries, of which many thousands have survived in libraries, historical societies, and private hands.

Now, 150 years after the outbreak of the war, the Vermont Historical Society’s Leahy Library and the University of Vermont Libraries have joined together to make available online the writings of some of Vermont’s Civil War soldiers. This collaborative project makes the words of dozens of Vermont soldiers available in a searchable database that includes images of the originals and full transcriptions. The database, called *Vermonters in the Civil War*, is part of UVM’s Center for Digital Initiatives and is available at <http://cdi.uvm.edu>.

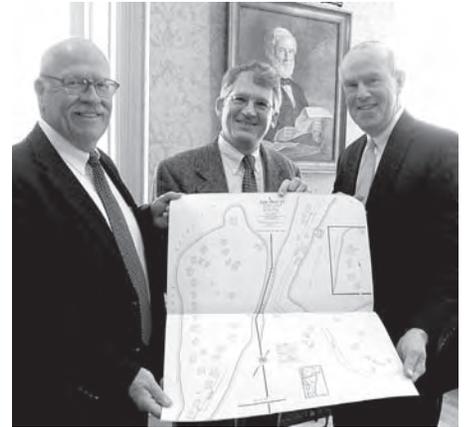
The collection includes materials dating from 1861, at the start of the Civil War, and will grow with additional materials throughout the years of the sesquicentennial commemoration (2011 through 2015). The digitized materials provide a variety of perspectives on events and issues. The voices represented in the collection include privates and officers, as well as a few civilians.

Currently the database holds 216 letters, organized into 23 soldiers’

continued on page 6—



Don Wickman made “A Very Fine Appearance” at our April 12 book launch. His book, published by the VHS, contains Vermont Civil War photographs of George Houghton and is now available: www.vermonthistory.org/store.



No risk here!

The Vermont Historical Society recently received a collection of Sanborn Fire Insurance maps donated by the Vermont Mutual Insurance Group in Montpelier. Dating from the early 1900s, these maps show building footprints as a way of designating fire insurance risk in urban areas in Vermont and across the nation. Paul Carnaban, Vermont Historical Society librarian (middle), accepts the maps from Thomas Tierney, Vermont Mutual’s Chairman, President and CEO (right), and William Catto, Chief Operating Officer (left).

James P. Taylor photos online

James P. Taylor (1872–1949) was the grand old man of modern Vermont tourism. In 1909, he organized the Green Mountain Club and started building its Long Trail. At heart, he was an organizer and promoter. His talents were put to work at the Vermont State Chamber of Commerce, where he worked from 1922 until his death in 1943.

The VHS has held Taylor’s papers since 1950. Leslie Rowell, a student in the archival program at Simmons College, is putting them on the Society’s Flickr photo-sharing site.

The collection is particularly strong in photos of billboards, road beautification efforts, aviation and Green Mountain Club activities. More are being added daily!

View James P. Taylor’s photographs at www.vermonthistory.org/taylor.



Two organizations leave genealogical research legacy

Two Vermont genealogically-oriented heritage organizations went out of existence last year. Both organizations, the Society of Daughters of Colonial Wars in the State of Vermont and the Vermont Society of Colonial Dames, deposited their records with the Leahy Library of the Vermont Historical Society and made financial contributions to support the operation of the library.

The Vermont Society of Colonial Dames was founded on October 25, 1898, in Montpelier, Vermont, “to perpetuate the memory of the men and women who were founders of our Nation, by collecting and preserving records and relics of Colonial days, to the end that future generations may know and emulate their brave deeds.”

The Vermont Society was independent of the National Society of Colonial Dames which limited its membership to descendants of residents of the original 13 colonies and did not include Vermont. The organization was proud of its independent status and attracted many prominent members, especially wives of Vermont governors and politicians.

The Vermont Society of Colonial Dames had a long and productive relationship with the Vermont Historical Society library. Starting around 1913, the organization began

donating money to the library to buy genealogy books. In 1954, the group’s own library came to the VHS and took its place on the shelves alongside the VHS’s books. The books are still designated by red stickers on the spines and attractive bookplates.

The Colonial Dames have continued to donate funds to purchase books for the library, especially the American Genealogical-Biographical Index, a 226-volume set that came out gradually over a period of over 40 years. In 1998, the organization made a special effort in celebration of its 100th anniversary to buy books for the library.

The Society of Daughters of Colonial Wars in the State of Vermont was a newer, smaller organization. The national organization was founded in 1932, and the Vermont society wasn’t incorporated until 1960. It was open to women who were descended from ancestors who assisted in the establishment, defense and preservation of the American colonies. In 2004, there were 27 members of the Vermont organization.

The legacy of both organizations will be their financial contribution to the Vermont Historical Society. These funds will be used to buy materials that support genealogical research through acquisitions for the VHS library. 

Initial exhibits at the Vermont History Center



Service and Sacrifice: Vermont’s Civil War Generation*—in commemoration of the 150th Anniversary of the Civil War, we will feature the spectacular photographs of George Houghton and the famed 150-foot long Civil War panorama by Charles Andrus.



The Emergence of the Granite City: Barre 1890 to 1940—with objects from the VHS collections and items from other local collections, this exhibit will explore Barre’s development from a small town to a diverse city, with a particular focus on the extraordinary changes that occurred as a result of immigration and industrialization in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.



Icons, Oddities, and Wonders: Stories from the VHS Collections—this exhibit will feature a distinguished selection of artifacts that reveal and represent the best, the worst, the weirdest, and sometimes the most wonderful stories.

* Supported in part by the Vermont Humanities Council and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

... open the door *Continued from page 1—*

what it means to be a Vermonter and providing context for facing the challenges of today and tomorrow. The initial exhibits planned at the Vermont History Center are shown at the left.

To accomplish all this, we need to raise a total of \$900,000. With over \$825,000 in pledges and donations in hand, less than \$75,000 remains to be raised! We are depending on donations from individuals, businesses, foundations and organizations. This is an exciting opportunity—you can be one of the many people helping us open the doors to the many treasures in our collections and bringing to light significant themes within Vermont history.

To find out how you can help *Save Vermont’s Treasures*, please visit www.vermonthistory.org/capital or contact Amy Sholk at (802) 479-8525 or amy.sholk@state.vt.us.

The Vermont Historical Society would like to acknowledge grants from the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation, the Vermont Humanities Council and the Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of the Interior, the Vermont Humanities Council or the National Endowment for the Humanities. The Vermont Historical Society does not discriminate against any person in regard to their race, color, sexual orientation, national origin, disabilities, religion, age, or sex. 

Teachers and Students: Vermont history just a click away!



The Vermont Historical Society is proud to announce a new website about Vermont history. The colorful, interactive site is designed to make learning about Vermont easy and fun for children in elementary school. Documents and artifacts from the VHS collections are featured prominently on the pages. You can visit the site at www.vermonthistory.org/explorer.

Many Vermont children study our state's history when they are in third or fourth grade. Over the past two years, we have surveyed and met with educators across the state to learn what they needed to help students learn about Vermont history. Their responses revealed a lack of materials available for the students to read and use. Home study educators also expressed a need for resources about Vermont history, as homeschooled students are required to learn about Vermont every year.

With help from PDI Creative Communication of Burlington and an advisory committee of educators, we developed

a website that is easy to navigate, focuses on real artifacts and historic documents, and can be used by students, teachers and parents. VHS is hosting several professional development workshops for teachers related to the site in upcoming months.

Some of the highlights of the site include over 150 historic images and documents, census records for Vermont towns (1791-2010), and many articles about Vermont history written on a fourth grade reading level. Some of these articles are from the *Green Mountaineer* magazine, published by VHS in the 1980s. We will continue to add new materials to the site throughout the year.

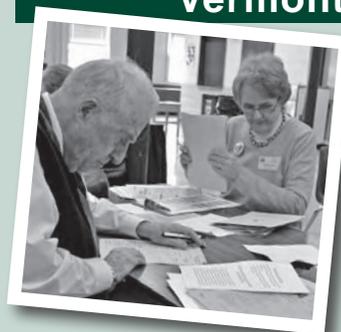
This website is part of the Vermont Historical Society's commitment to being the statewide leader in K-12 education for Vermont history. We are grateful to the A.D. Henderson Foundation, the Flow of History, the Alma Gibbs Donchian Foundation, and the Jack and Dorothy Byrne Foundation for their funding of this project. 



With Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Vermont Commission on Women, the VHS honored Vermont women veterans at a March 23 event acknowledging their military experience with day-long programs and a legislative resolution.

Vermont Women's History Project

Vermont History Day 2011



Students of all ages explore history!



Quilt Festival: Patterns of History

June 24, 25, 26



With a combined total of more than 400 quilts at New England's oldest and largest quilt event, this year's Vermont Quilt Festival will feature nearly half of the more than 150 quilts in the collection of the Vermont Historical Society. The 2011 festival will be held at the Champlain Valley Exposition in Essex Junction on June 24, 25, and 26.

The VHS quilt collection dates from the late 1700s to the late 1900s. A diverse array of materials, styles and sewing techniques are represented in the collection including patchwork, applique, wholecloth, embroidered and tied in cotton, wool and silk. The majority are documented as Vermont-made examples. The stories associated with many of these quilts add to the rich social and cultural fabric of the state, particularly women's roles.

Celebrate the art of quilting—new and old—put the date on your calendar now! Call (802) 872-0034 for more information.

Supported in part by gifts from Bronze Sponsor: Kim and Judi Loewer; Supporters: Grakles Crafts & Antiques, Hope Johnson, Susan Lavalley (VHS Curator Talks Underwriter), Linda J. Lees, Elisha P. Renne, Diana Senturia, Frances Watson Werner, and Ms. Marcia S. Wheeler (in memory of Velma Wheeler); and Friends: Donna Bister, Lynn A. Bonfield, Jill Morgan Fritz, and David and Carol Walters.



Search Civil War letters *Continued from page 3—*

collections; 15 of the collections are from the Vermont Historical Society. The VHS letters were transcribed by numerous VHS volunteers, including several students in a class at Spaulding High School. The transcription project is being supervised by VHS Assistant Librarian Marjorie Strong.

Perkins and more than 34,000 other Vermont men enlisted to fight for the preservation of the Union, for honor, for adventure, and for the abolition of slavery. The struggles of a divided nation come to life in the words of the men and women who lived through the Civil War and experienced the moments of triumph, comradeship, suffering, and grief.

Margot George *Continued from page 1—*

the organizations that Margot remembered in her will. In accordance with her wishes, these funds will be used to care for the Vermont History Center, a building she loved. Margot was pleased that the VHS took on the challenge of restoring and preserving this Central Vermont landmark, but understood well the ongoing effort required to maintain a historic building of this size.

We are particularly honored to know how important the Vermont Historical Society was to Margot. For nearly a decade, from 1974 to 1983, she served as assistant to the VHS director. In this role, she carried out many initiatives and projects for the VHS, most notably events held in celebration of the U.S. Bicentennial in 1976. Many years after her tenure at the VHS, she would proudly remark that being a former VHS employee was an important part of her personal heritage.

Margot's very generous gift of \$75,000 has been used to establish a reserve fund to promote the preservation and maintenance of the History Center. A recent bequest of \$5,000 from the estate of Lucien Bolduc has been added to this fund, with additional contributions from our members and friends encouraged.

Our deep and ongoing appreciation is extended to Margot George for her commitment to historic preservation, her service to the VHS and the wonderful legacy she leaves for the benefit of future Vermonters.

Did you know ?

The sword presented to Capt. Marshall Harvey Twitchell by his regiment in 1865—the 109th U.S. Colored Regiment—will soon be on exhibit in the Barre Heritage Gallery at the Vermont History Center. Construction starts this summer.



It's easy!

Search for Vermont vital records online

Vermont genealogists and other researchers were pleased to discover this winter that a significant number of Vermont vital records have been added to two online databases, one free and the other commercial. Having access to this information from remote sites will facilitate greater research in Vermont history.

Familysearch.org, a free online database, now includes indexed scans of the Vermont vital records index cards for the period 1871–1908. The Church of Latter Day Saints, which maintains the site, hopes to broaden its coverage of Vermont vital records to the period 1760–1954. Presently the database includes over a million records which previously had only been available on microfilm at various repositories in the region, especially at the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (VSARA) in Middlesex.

In addition to the Vermont vital records, *Familysearch.org* also has mounted three Vermont-specific databases that were created by the church to aid in searching: births and christenings, 1765–1908; death and burials, 1871–1965; marriages, 1791–1974. They also have put up Vermont probate files, 1791–1919. The *Familysearch* site also includes scans of early Vermont land records and militia records, although they have not yet been indexed and so are not searchable.

A second genealogy site, *Ancestry.com*, now includes Vermont birth, marriage, and death records for the period 1909–2008. Almost 3 million records from VSARA and the Vermont Department of Public Health are included in this commercial database. Although researchers now have to pay to access these public records, there are plans afoot to make these records available to Vermonters through the state's *myVermont.gov* website. 



Each of Us
Leaves a Legacy

*Please include Vermont Historical Society
in your estate plan or will and bring
Vermont's heritage to future generations.*

*Contact Jane Campbell,
(802) 479-8516
or jane.campbell@state.vt.us.*

Upcoming Events

The Vermont Historical Society will be participating in several history fairs and festivals around the state this summer. Each of the events listed below features exhibits, entertainment, presentations, demonstrations and food. We hope you'll join us!

Saturday, June 25, 10am-3pm
**The Annual Vermont Fun Festival
at the Fair Haven Welcome Center**

Route 4, Fair Haven
Contact Cindy Roberts: fw.center@state.vt.us
(802) 265-2210

Saturday, July 16, 10am-4pm
**The Washington County History Fair
at the Pavilion, Montpelier**

109 State Street, Montpelier
Contact Teresa Doyle: my65.vw@hotmail.com
(802) 454-7328

Saturday, August 13, 10am-4pm
**The Windham County History Fair
on the Green, Newfane**

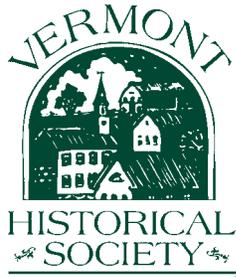
Contact Laura Wallingford-Bacon:
info@historicalsocietyofwindhamcounty.org
(802) 365-4148

Saturday, August 20, 9am-4pm
**The White River Valley History Fair
at the South Royalton High School**

Contact Nancy Woolley: Woolleyvt@myfairpoint.net
(802) 767-4453



Saturday & Sunday, June 11 & 12
Vermont Days at the Vermont History Museum
FREE ADMISSION for NON-MEMBERS, too!
109 State Street, Montpelier
Call for more information:
(802) 828-2291



Vermont Historical Society

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Mystery Photo

Last issue's mystery photo with its perfectly formed elm tree in the center attracted a lot of attention. Although several people identified the image, member Robert Wimble of Moretown recognized that the exact same image was used in *Vermont is Where You Find It* by Keith Jennison (1941). There, the scene is identified as Elm Tree School in Enosburg.

We now have a location for the Fall 2010 mystery photograph, too. Mary Fregosi of Proctor noticed that the image is from the northern part of her town, looking across a meadow and the Otter Creek towards the hills of Chittenden. Sally Ogden told us that the area is known as the "Garden of Eden."



From last issue . . .



From Fall 2010 . . .

Do you recognize this?



This issue's mystery photo is a tight cluster of wood frame houses. If anyone recognizes this village grouping, please contact VHS librarian Paul Carnahan at paul.carnahan@vhs.state.vt.us or (802) 479-8508.

Check www.vermonthistory.org for more photographs, articles and library resources!