

# History Connections

Vermont Historical Society

News & Notes

Spring 2013 / Volume #7 / Number 3



Since 1838

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

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**Provide a lasting foundation for Vermont's history.**



Have your name etched into a brick that will welcome visitors in the courtyard at the History Center. Please call Amy Sholk at (802) 479-8525 for details.

*New partnerships, new ideas, sharing the significance of the past*

## Working with others, we bring more Vermont history to you!

**F**or the spring and summer of this year, our calendar is filled with innovative programs and activities that are the products of new collaborations and initiatives.

Along with the Montpelier Grange, dozens of Vermont farmers and other visitors, we welcomed the exhibition *Plowing Old Ground: Vermont's Organic Farming Pioneers* to the Vermont History Museum on March 16. The exhibit features stunning black and white photographs by John Nopper, accompanied by Susan Harlow's eloquent profiles of visionary farmers who inaugurated a new agricultural era in Vermont during the last half-century. The exhibit continues through August.

In April, we premiered the *Undergraduate Research Forum*, where scholars from Middlebury College, Lyndon State College and the University of Vermont shared their research on Vermont history. We look forward to continuing this partnership with Vermont colleges to encourage scholarship about our state's history, bring more historical research to the public, and promote an awareness of our resources that support this research.

Throughout the month of June, the VHS will join members of the newly formed Barre Cultural Alliance, including the Aldrich Library, Barre Historical Society, Barre Opera House, and Studio Place Arts, to deliver pro-

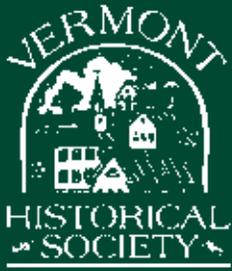


*Plowing Old Ground features stunning images and stories about visionary Vermont farmers.*

grams around the common theme of "Children's Literature."

We will kick off the month-long community exploration on June 1 with an exhibit at the History Center featuring the 1840s drawing books of Bishop John Henry Hopkins and his son, John, Jr. From 10:00 am to 1:00 pm children of all ages may try their hand at replicating the colorful images of the drawing books. At 2:00 pm curator

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*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 Museum & Store

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

#### Vermont History Center

60 Washington Street, Barre, VT  
(802) 479-8500

• **Vermont Heritage Galleries,  
Offices & Book Nook**  
Monday–Friday 9am to 4pm

• **Leahy Library**  
Tuesday–Friday 9am to 4pm  
Wednesday 9am to 8pm  
Second Saturdays 9am to 4pm  
(802) 479-8509

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

**One admission fee gives access to both the Vermont Heritage Galleries & Vermont History Museum:**

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

▶ **See our new web site!**  
[www.vermonthistory.org](http://www.vermonthistory.org)

[vhs-info@state.vt.us](mailto:vhs-info@state.vt.us)

## From the Director

### We heard you!

**D**uring the past year many of our members and friends shared their thoughts about the Vermont Historical Society as part of a year-long planning process.

Through focus groups, interviews and surveys you told us what you liked and, at times, what you did not like. You informed us about our programs and services, while also helping us understand how well we are communicating with you. Most importantly, you offered thoughtful ideas and suggestions about the future of the Vermont Historical Society. To each of you who participated in this way I am grateful and wish to share a single message in return: We heard you!

In January, the VHS Board of Trustees approved a new strategic plan that will guide our organization through the next five years. Entitled *Towering Achievements*, the plan defines our vision and values and prescribes actions to address the five critical issues you helped us identify:

- Statewide Impact,
- Public Awareness,
- Utilization of Technology,
- Financial Sustainability, and
- Preservation and Accessibility of Collections.

Although we are still engaged in the creation of a framework for the implementation of the plan, efforts are well underway to take on these challenges. During April and May, Jackie Calder, Amanda Gustin and Laura Brill from the VHS Museums and Public Programs Department took to the road for a series of regional forums with representatives from community heritage organizations

to better understand how we can be of service to these groups and extend our impact throughout the state.

In early April we released the next generation of web sites that will enhance our ability to promote VHS programs and services, share more VHS collections and historical content, and improve our capacity to generate revenue through e-commerce. I am grateful to the staff members who made up our core web team—Jane Campbell, Paul Carnahan, Victoria Hughes, and Julie Nelson—

for all of the hard work and thoughtful compromise that has resulted in a world-class web site for the VHS. Thanks also to the individuals and foundations that supported this process. See for yourself at [www.vermonthistory.org](http://www.vermonthistory.org).

Finally, as our cover story conveys, the Vermont Historical Society is developing new partnerships and opportunities for collaborations in the communities where our facilities are located and with entities statewide.

In the coming weeks and months you will enjoy experiencing other changes and advancements that are occurring through this planning effort. To see the plan in its entirety, please visit [www.vermonthistory.org/plan](http://www.vermonthistory.org/plan).



• I wish to share a  
single message:  
• We heard you!

Mark S. Hudson, *Executive Director*



## Mark your calendars now! Second Saturday Gallery Talks start in July

Each month, beginning on July 13, 2013, VHS will host a series of presentations on themes, objects, and historical events represented in our Vermont Heritage Galleries. The galleries will be open from 1:00 to 4:00 pm, and talks will begin at 2:00 pm each second Saturday. Programming is free with admission—which means it's free for VHS members! Remember, the Leahy Library is open to researchers all day on each

second Saturday, so you can come for research in the morning and enjoy a gallery talk in the afternoon. See page 4 for the complete lineup or contact Amanda Gustin at (802) 828-2180 or [amanda.gustin@state.vt.us](mailto:amanda.gustin@state.vt.us).

## Did you notice ?

Our web site needed a major software update, so at the same time, we re-designed it to help you find information more easily.

Please let us know what you think! Also, please consider making a donation to help us top off the fundraising for this project. You can donate at [www.vermonthistory.org/donate](http://www.vermonthistory.org/donate) or contact Jane Campbell at (802) 479-8519 or [jane.campbell@state.vt.us](mailto:jane.campbell@state.vt.us).

We hope you'll check back often, as we're continually adding new information about programs, exhibits, and collections.

*Many thanks to the Schultz-Blackwell Trust and other donors whose generous help launched the new site. We are very grateful to the team at 4Web Inc. for their redesign and the needed software changes.*



## What do you think?

*This is the second in a series of vignettes to help celebrate our 175th anniversary.*

## I remember when ...

### What's in these boxes?

There were times during my 10 years as director of the Vermont Historical Society when I thought that the logo for the organization should be Albrecht Dürer's "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse." In September 1985, my first month at the Society, a hurricane roared



*Michael Sherman  
1993*

into New England. It blew itself out before reaching Montpelier, but taught us a lesson about having a "disaster plan."

The saddest moment of my tenure was in December 1988, when our museum curator, Philip Elwert, fell from a ladder at his home and died.

There was also the asbestos abatement fiasco in 1988. It was the 150th anniversary of the founding of the VHS and we were in exile: museum closed, the library operating in the basement of the Pavilion Building, and administrative offices three floors above. That year a storm flooded roads on the day of the annual meeting. I spent the early hours of the morning setting out pails and nervously eyeing items stored for asbestos abatement.

Fire alarms—usually false—went off periodically during the post-asbestos refurbishing. Each time, we cleared the museum and library, shut down computers, grabbed the cash box, locked up, set up guard duty to protect the

*continued on page 6—*



## SAVE THE DATE! June 21 & 22, 2014

Contact Amanda Gustin for more information at (802) 828-2180 or [amanda.gustin@state.vt.us](mailto:amanda.gustin@state.vt.us)

.....  
**Artists and Artisans: Vermont's Creative Heritage**  
.....

# The Vermont Historical Society links to Vermont's past with history programs and outreach for today

Continued from page 1—

Jackie Calder will deliver a presentation about the Hopkinses and the drawing books they created. Exhibits, performances and other programs will take place at venues throughout Barre during June. We are excited to be a part of this cultural rejuvenation in Barre and look forward to ongoing collaborations with these community partners.

With the businesses and organizations of *Montpelier Alive!* we will swing open the doors of the Vermont History Museum during special events in June and July. In conjunction with Art Walk on June 7, we will offer free admission from 4:00 to 7:00 pm. The museum also will join in the community's July 3rd festivities with historic children's games on the State House lawn and free admission throughout the day.

These are but a few of the ways we are collaborating to reach new audiences through dynamic new programs. Please visit our online calendar at [www.vermonthistory.org/calendar](http://www.vermonthistory.org/calendar) to learn more about these and many more events coming soon!



Children can replicate the colorful images of Hopkins June 1 at the Vermont History Center.



Plowing Old Ground exhibit open until August



### 2013 Gallery Series

Vermont Heritage Galleries  
60 Washington Street, Barre  
open 1:00 to 4:00 pm  
Talks at 2:00 pm (30 to 45 minutes)

**July 13, 2013**

*Vermonters at Gettysburg*—Paul Zeller, author

**August 10, 2013**

*The Champlain Glassworks: A Roller Coaster Ride for Burlington's First Manufacturing Company (1827-1850)*—L. Diana Carlisle

**September 14, 2013**

*Italian-American Stoneworkers in Vermont*—Ilaria Brancoli-Busdraghi, Middlebury College

**October 12, 2013**

*Vermonters at Cedar Creek*—Howard Coffin

**November 9, 2013**

*Major Valentine's Swedes*—Paul Searls, Lyndon State College



**From upper left:** *The Plowing Ground* exhibit opened with huge success on March 16. **Middle:** Two women enjoy the stories from remarkable Vermont women journalists during our Vermont Women's History program. **At top right:** These were the featured *Vermont Women in Journalism*: (left to right) Rickey Gard Diamond, Terri Hallenbeck, Nina Keck, Anne Galloway, and Kristin Carlson. **Lower left:** The Jazz Age marked a distinct turning point in history for these two teens at Vermont History Day 2013. **Above middle:** The Vermont Heritage Galleries provided the backdrop for a History Hunt designed to show off our three galleries to Central Vermont Chamber members. **Bottom right:** Laura Brill, VHS community outreach coordinator, talks with Chuck Haynes at the volunteer appreciation luncheon.

## Know someone who has made an outstanding contribution to the field of Vermont history?



Richard O. Hathaway

The Vermont Historical Society is now accepting nominations for the 2013 Richard O. Hathaway Award.

The annual Hathaway Award goes to an individual, group or organization recognized as making an outstanding contribution to the field of Vermont history. Projects may include, but are not limited to, publications, exhibits, works of art, documentary films,

radio programs, web sites, and dramatic works that were completed, released or published in 2012. The award is accompanied by a \$1,000 cash prize. For more information and a nomination form, please visit [www.vermonthistory.org/hathaway](http://www.vermonthistory.org/hathaway).

## Now there is someone new to help support our league members!



Laura Brill

Laura Brill is now the Community Outreach Coordinator, a position which includes management of the League of Local Historical Societies and Museums. Laura has an undergraduate degree in art conservation and art history from the University of Delaware and a graduate degree in the same subjects from New York University. Before her current position, Laura was part of the Vermont Connecting to Collections Project at VHS, and she has worked at several museums including the Shelburne Museum and Colonial Williamsburg. She is editing the League e-newsletter, so please send event announcements to her, along with any questions or comments about collections care.

She can be reached at (802) 479-8522 or by email [laura.brill@state.vt.us](mailto:laura.brill@state.vt.us).

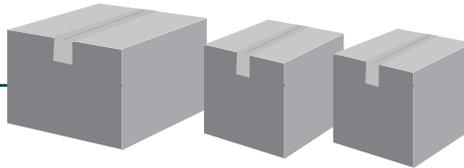
## I remember when . . . *Continued from page 3—*

collections, and evacuated. Once there was a real fire: a spark from a welder's torch ignited a barrel of electrical insulation. Fortunately, the only ill effects were some smoke and foul-smelling air.

There was the recession of 1991. The Society had to give back some of its previously appropriated state funds and took a 25 percent cut for the coming year. I had to let go three members of a staff of 12 and all the rest of us took pay cuts with reduced hours.

And then there was the flood of March 11, 1992. An ice jam on the Winooski River turned downtown Montpelier into a chilly Venetian canal. I ferried to work on a motorized duck blind. Former staff members, friends, spouses, members and friends of the Society, even several state legislators who were stranded at the State House, miraculously showed up and formed a chain gang to help the stalwart and unflappable staff. Then the lights went out. We found the flashlights in our emergency box and kept going. Six hours later we locked up and went home (no loss to the collections). It was about that time that I thought about adopting Dürer's woodcut as the VHS logo—or as my personal escutcheon.

That flood had unexpected consequences. Making a virtue of near disaster, we orchestrated the reinstallation of the



collections, enlisted the high school for help, and called in the press. Another chain gang passed the books and manuscripts back to storage. During a pause in the action, one high school student turned to me and asked, "What's in these boxes?"

I looked at the label on the one he was holding and told him: "That one has letters written by Calvin Coolidge to his father." The boy was stunned. "Calvin Coolidge? The president?" he asked, almost losing his grip on the box. "He wasn't president then," I said, "just a college student." The boy almost fainted. All of a sudden this remote, historical figure was real—literally had weight. In his hands that young man held the daily musings of a man he knew only by reputation. He was speechless; awed. Can you imagine a teenager awed by the past? It was one of the best days of my career as a historian.

—Michael Sherman

*Michael Sherman was director of the Vermont Historical Society from 1985 to 1995. He is co-author with Gene Sessions and P. Jeffrey Potash, of Freedom and Unity: A History of Vermont (2004) and is editor of the Society's journal, Vermont History. A version of this account appeared as part of an article, "Museum Memoirs" in NEMA News 23:2 (Winter 1999).*

# Preserving history for new generations

## If you want to:

## Then you can:

## And your benefits will be:

Make a quick and easy gift to VHS.

Simply write a check or donate online at [www.vermonthhistory.org/donate](http://www.vermonthhistory.org/donate).

An income tax deduction and immediate support for VHS.

Defer a gift until after your lifetime.

Put a bequest in your will or personal trust (cash, specific property, or a percentage of the remaining assets).

An estate tax deduction and the ability to benefit from your assets during your lifetime.

Maximize your heirs' inheritance while helping VHS.

Name VHS as the beneficiary of your retirement plan—IRA, 401k or 403b; leave other assets to family.

Reduced estate and income tax for your heirs.

**Here's an easy reference chart for you!**

Avoid long-term capital gains tax.

Give VHS appreciated stock or certain bonds you've owned at least a year.

A charitable tax deduction and avoidance of capital gains tax.

Make a large future gift with little cost.

Give VHS a life insurance policy you no longer need.

Current and possibly future income tax deductions.

Secure a fixed and guaranteed income and avoid market risks.

Establish a Charitable Gift Annuity.

A charitable tax deduction and guaranteed income.

Create a hedge against inflation over the long term.

Establish a Charitable Remainder Unitrust.

A charitable tax deduction and a variable income stream for life or period of years not to exceed 20.

Avoid capital gains tax on the sale of your home or other real estate.

Give all or a percentage of the property to VHS.

An income tax deduction and elimination of some or all capital gains tax.

Create a charitable gift while continuing to enjoy your home.

Give your home, vacation home or farm to VHS while retaining use of the property for life.

A charitable deduction and a reduction in estate taxes, if applicable.



*If you'd like to receive our bi-annual newsletters to learn about strategies for planning your future, please contact Amy Sholk at (802) 479-8525 or [amy.sholk@state.vt.us](mailto:amy.sholk@state.vt.us)*



**FREE ADMISSION  
to the  
Vermont History Museum  
& Vermont Heritage Galleries  
for all active-duty military  
personnel and their families.**

Ask about the Blue Star Museums discount May 27 to September 2, 2013. Call (802) 828-2291.



## In memoriam . . .

Honorary VHS Trustee Sanborn Partridge, perhaps our longest serving member, passed away on January 13.

Sandy had been a member since his father gave him a life membership in 1938 for doing a good job on an honors thesis about forces that shaped Vermont in the years prior to statehood. Sandy was one of the "Young Turks," a group of dynamic young Republican and Democrat legislators who crossed party lines to promote change in the state in the early 1960s. A collector of early Vermont coins, Sandy donated an outstanding set of Vermont coppers to the VHS. He will be missed by his friends at the Vermont Historical Society and many others throughout the state.



Since 1838

**Vermont Historical Society**

60 Washington Street  
Barre, Vermont 05641-4209

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**From last issue . . .**



## Mystery Photo

**L**ast issue's mystery photo elicited several responses, but we have been unable to identify this particular building. One reader thought the house might be in Gorham, New Hampshire, but our friends across the river could not make a positive identification.

**Y**ou can participate in identifying mystery photographs between issues of *History Connections!* Become a friend of the VHS on Facebook. *It's fun!*

[www.facebook.com/  
VermontHistoricalSociety](http://www.facebook.com/VermontHistoricalSociety)



**F**or this month's mystery photograph we have a crowd scene with a building on a hill in the background. This was found amongst a collection of postcards that included scenes from Stockbridge, Rochester, Randolph, and Brandon.

Does anyone recognize this scene?

If you can tell us what is happening here, please contact VHS Librarian Paul Carnahan at [paul.carnahan@state.vt.us](mailto:paul.carnahan@state.vt.us) or at (802) 479-8508.

**Do you recognize this?**



**PLEASE NOTE:** the Leahy Library will be closed at 4:00 pm on July 3 and closed all day July 4 for Independence Day festivities.