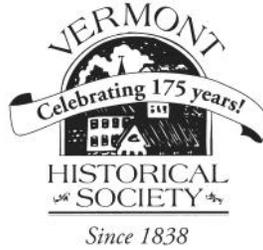


TOWERING ACHIEVEMENTS

Vermont Historical Society
Strategic Plan
2013-2018





January 25, 2013

Dear Friends,

The Board of Trustees and staff of the Vermont Historical Society are pleased to share with you our aspirations and most thoughtful contemplations about the future of Vermont's past. This document is the product of more than a year of activities, including consultation with members and colleagues, discussions among VHS committees and staff, and introspection by our leadership. The plan was endorsed by the VHS Board of Trustees on January 25, 2013.

Through the vision statement, we have broadly defined our organization as we imagine it evolving over the next five years. Our statement of values and ideals establishes the parameters of this process and the strategic priorities provide a roadmap for attaining our aspirations. In the final stage of this planning process staff and committees of the VHS will create a working plan that will define the specific actions and resources required to attend to our strategic priorities.

Our sincere thanks are extended to the many members and friends of the Vermont Historical Society who informed this planning process through their participation in focus groups and response to surveys. Ultimately we exist to be of service to you, so your ideas and involvement in this process have been essential.

VHS Strategic Planning Steering Committee,

Laura Warren, President

Mark Hudson, Executive Director

Vision Statement

Through its rich collections, dynamic programming, effective outreach and resolute leadership, the Vermont Historical Society endeavors to preserve the past, inform the present and promote Vermont's shared legacy to the future.

Statement of Values

Stewardship

The Vermont Historical Society is committed to providing the highest level of care for the historical treasures it holds in the public trust.

Authenticity

The Vermont Historical Society provides genuine links to the past through well-documented collections, accurate interpretation and reliable scholarship.

Ingenuity

The Vermont Historical Society applies its limited resources in innovative ways to maximize the effectiveness of its programs and the efficiency of its operations.

Collaboration

The Vermont Historical Society is a valued partner with cultural heritage organizations, educational institutions and the State of Vermont.

Inclusivity

The Vermont Historical Society serves the broadest possible constituency through statewide outreach and programs that reflect Vermont's diversity.

Engagement

The Vermont Historical Society invites the involvement of members and individuals as active participants in our exhibits and programs, and as contributors of objects and memories that help weave the stories of the state's past.

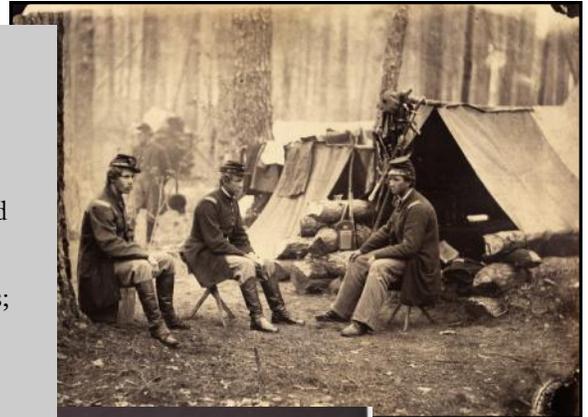


Who We Are

Collections

Historical collections are at the core of everything we do. Museum and library collections provide tangible links to our past and document all aspects of life in the Green Mountain State.

- ◆ Museum Collections include fine and decorative arts, textiles, tools and equipment, domestic articles, military objects and much more.
- ◆ Library Collections include over 50,000 cataloged book and serial titles; 30,000 photographic images; 1,500 linear feet of manuscripts; 10,000 broadsides and maps; thousands of individual items of ephemera and assorted media resources.



Exhibitions

Citizens, students, heritage tourists and thousands of others engage with Vermont's heritage each year through exhibitions at multiple venues:

- ◆ Our award-winning core exhibition, *Freedom & Unity*, provides an immersive experience through 350 years of Vermont history.
- ◆ Changing exhibitions at the Vermont History Center explore themes of importance to Vermonters and showcase the rich collections of the VHS.
- ◆ Traveling and off-site exhibits bring the museum experience to people throughout Vermont. Online galleries make our stories and collections accessible to a global audience, day and night.

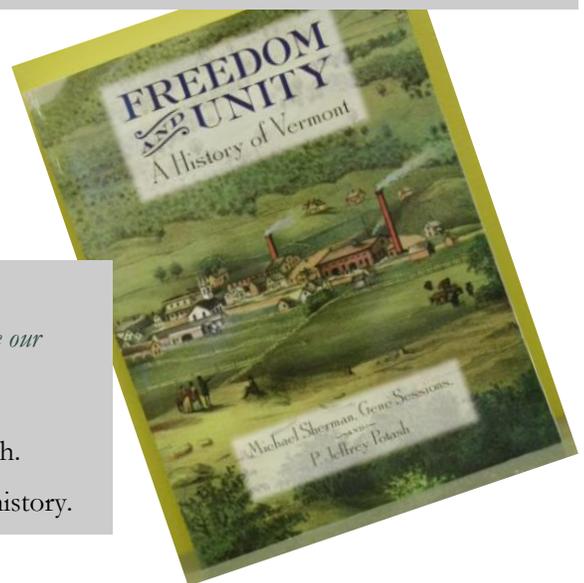


Research Services and Publications

A skilled staff assists researchers, students, genealogists and others as they explore our vast library and archival resources, many of which are available online.

Our research services also support the publishing programs of the VHS:

- ◆ *Vermont History*, our semi-annual journal that presents the latest research.
- ◆ Book publishing, producing new titles on assorted topics in Vermont history.



What We Do

Public Programming & Outreach

The needs and interests of diverse audiences are met through activities that engage, entertain and enrich:

- ◆ Vermont History Expo, our signature event that presents Vermont history in a lively county fair atmosphere;
- ◆ Annual programs on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and Farmers' Night that combine lively performances and rich historical content;
- ◆ The Women's History Project, examining the important role of women in Vermont History;
- ◆ Annual Meeting and Conference, a day-long exploration into our heritage;
- ◆ Traveling speakers and workshops that bring stories and resources to communities throughout the state.



Educational Programming & Outreach

To aid and promote the teaching of state and local history in Vermont schools, we provide a variety of resources and services:

- ◆ Vermont History Explorer, an award-winning educational web site;
- ◆ Museum tours and programs, provided by skilled tour guides;
- ◆ History for Homeschoolers, monthly programs that combine a museum experience with engaging activities for Vermont's growing homeschool population;
- ◆ Vermont History Day, a statewide competition that promotes individual and group explorations for middle and high school students;
- ◆ Classroom resources, including activity kits and books;
- ◆ In-service training for teachers, offering enriching opportunities designed to advance skills and knowledge needed to teach history.

Community Heritage Outreach

Over 200 community heritage organizations rely upon the VHS for assistance through:

- ◆ League of Local Historical Societies and Museums, providing networking and technical assistance through an annual meeting, workshops, and a weekly e-newsletter;
- ◆ Collections Care Mentoring Program, matching the skills of trained professionals with the needs of community organizations;
- ◆ Vermont Cultural Heritage and Art Recovery Team, promoting community-based emergency planning for cultural organizations.



Critical Issues

Statewide Impact

Working with its many statewide partners, the VHS will effectively reach beyond its facilities into all regions of the state by doing the following:

- ◆ Broaden participation in existing statewide initiatives, including Vermont History Expo, professional development opportunities for educators and activities of the League of Local Historical Societies and Museums;
- ◆ Create a set of program offerings for delivery at local historical societies, public libraries and other organizations statewide in order to meet the needs of a variety of audiences;
- ◆ Participate in heritage-related events in communities throughout the state, including festivals, expositions and commemorations.



Public Awareness

Recognition of the importance of Vermont's history and an appreciation of the role of the VHS in preserving the past are critical for promoting active engagement today and advancing ongoing support into the future. VHS will better inform all Vermonters about the programs, services and our vital mission through the following initiatives:

- ◆ Expand our visibility in state and regional print and electronic media outlets by providing useful content for recurring media programs;
- ◆ Integrate social media marketing into all aspects of VHS programming and operations;
- ◆ Develop partnerships with other cultural organizations and attain reciprocity with local historical societies and museums to promote VHS programs and services;
- ◆ Participate with other organizations in the communities where VHS facilities are located to develop a unified cultural identity that establishes the Vermont History Center and the Vermont History Museum as “must see” attractions in the region.



Strategic Priorities



Utilization of Technology

The rapid development and evolution of technologies applicable to the programs and operations of the VHS require constant adaptation and an institutional commitment to technical advancement.

This will be accomplished through the following:

- ◆ Implement a plan and guidelines for social media engagement;
- ◆ Create an annual technology plan, addressing individual and institutional requirements for hardware, software, and networking capabilities;
- ◆ Complete upgrades to VHS web site, including integration of ancillary web sites;
- ◆ Develop and deliver publications in electronic formats;
- ◆ Train staff to deploy and optimize utilization of technology.

Financial Sustainability

In order to fulfill its current obligations, promote its continued growth and ensure its future viability, the VHS will take these steps toward the realization of its long-term financial sustainability:

- ◆ Eliminate structural operating deficits through a combination of revenue enhancements and the management of expenses;
- ◆ Eliminate or significantly reduce the capital debt remaining from the initial development of the Vermont History Center;
- ◆ Exceed the fundraising goal of the *Vermont Forever Endowment Campaign* and continue efforts to enlarge the endowment and the building reserve fund through a continued focus upon planned giving and major gifts.



Preservation and Accessibility of Collections

VHS collections are at the core of everything we do. The VHS will fulfill its perpetual obligation to care for collections and make them accessible through the following actions:

- ◆ Expand efforts to provide access to collections online and in digital formats;
- ◆ Create standards and protocols for the digitization of all formats and types of VHS collections;
- ◆ Engage in long-range collections management planning.

**VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY
STRATEGIC PLANNING STEERING COMMITTEE**

Laura Warren
President

Mark S. Hudson
Executive Director

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Collections Committee Chair

H. Nicholas Muller III
Treasurer and Finance Committee Chair

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.

Vermont History Center
60 Washington Street
Barre, VT 05641



Vermont History Museum
109 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05609

www.vermonthistory.org