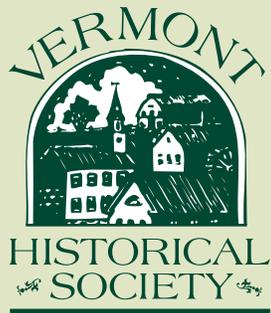


History Connections

Vermont Historical Society
News & Notes

Fall 2007 / Volume #2 / Number 1



VHS Store Goes Online

As noted in this issue's lead article, the Society's retail operations are going online. Everything that VHS sells will be available at the electronic store on our new website, with an emphasis on books. Beginning in November, the retail space at the Pavilion will be reconfigured. There will be a small store carrying a limited selection of books. The rest of the space will be used to display more of the Society's collections and to host seminars. The store at the Vermont History Center in Barre will remain unchanged.

Vermont Historical Society Launches Exciting New Website Design!

When was the last time you visited the Vermont Historical Society on the World Wide Web? If you go to your computer's Internet browser and link to www.vermonthistory.org, things will look quite different. By the time you read this article, the Society will have officially launched our newly redesigned website, and we think it looks fabulous!

The project of redesigning the VHS site has been in the works for a couple of years. Work officially began in February 2007 when a committee led by VHS Director of Community Relations Kate Paine and including Librarian Paul Carnahan and trustees Lyn Blackwell and Fletcher Proctor selected PDI Creative from Burlington for the job. Under the direction of Peter Kriff and Becca Padden, PDI has created websites for other institutions in the state, including the Vermont Department of Health and the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing. The project was made possible by generous support from an anonymous donor.

The new website utilizes modern web technology like drop-down menus and incorporates colors and design elements that have been used in recent Society publications and in the recently unveiled online version of the exhibit "Freedom and Unity: One Ideal, Many Stories." You'll notice that the new site features lots of photographs and other images, nicely complementing the same thorough information that has always been the hallmark of the Society's website.

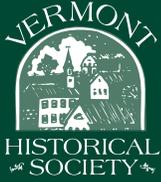
The most important feature of the site is our new electronic store, which includes all the items from the VHS Book List and more. Searchable by author and title, the VHS e-store allows you to make purchases directly online. Members will receive their membership discount on books during the check-out process. Two book titles will be featured on the home page every time you visit. They will rotate, so you'll see different book covers, which link to background and ordering information, every time you view the home page.

The new website has many advantages over the old one. The VHS site has always been very rich in content and updated almost daily, thanks to the labors of Paul Carnahan, our



A peek at the home page of the Society's newly re-designed website.

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Fall 2007

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.

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Library: Tues-Fri / 9am -4:30pm

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9am-4pm

Administrative Offices & Store:

Mon-Fri / 9am -4:30pm

Pavilion Building, Montpelier

Museum & Store:

Tues-Sat / 10am -4pm

Sundays May to October:

Noon-4pm

Museum Admission:

Families: \$12; Adults: \$5; Students, children, seniors: \$3; Members & children under 6: Free;

Student school groups: Free

Call 802-828-2180

Library Admission:

Non-members: \$5;

Members and students: Free

From the Director



A Mistaken Ratio Redux

In the summer of 1910, *Vermont Academy* in Saxtons River reprinted an editorial from the *New York Examiner*. Under the title "A Mistaken Ratio," the *Examiner* noted that Isaac C. Wyman of Salem, Massachusetts, had just left Princeton University \$10 million and Dummer Academy \$1,000. The newspaper had argued that Wyman should have reversed the sums, on the grounds that Princeton had all the money it needed while the nation's elementary and secondary schools were desperately short of funds.

Ninety-seven years later, not much has changed. Americans still tend to donate more generously to organizations and institutions that already have large endowments and financial reserves than to less prosperous schools, museums, charities, libraries, and other not-for-profits. Harvard, with an endowment somewhere around \$34 billion, raises more money every year than most of the rest of the colleges and universities in New England combined. The rich get richer, and the underfunded get more so.

The situation is the same here in Vermont. A newspaper headline that starts "\$20 Million Gift Goes to ___" is more likely to end in "Middlebury College" (current endowment about \$850 million) than it is to announce a big donation to the University of Vermont, one of the state colleges, or St. Michaels, much less to St. Johnsbury Academy, Vermont Academy, or any other K-12 school in our state.

It's time for Vermonters who care to change the ratio. Bragging rights at an Ivy League reunion may be nice, but a gift that merits only a brief mention in the alumni newsletter at Yale or Princeton can change the world for a Vermont college or nonprofit striving to make a positive statewide impact. There are too many terrific Vermont organizations doing important work on shoestring budgets for us not to direct more of our personal and corporate philanthropy to them.

The list of Green Mountain options for this generosity is as long as Lake Champlain. In education, give to UVM's Center for Research on Vermont, create a scholarship fund at the Community College of Vermont, or ask the development offices at Lyndon, Johnson, Castleton, or Vermont Technical College about supporting courses and collections with a Vermont focus. Talk to Peter Gilbert at the Vermont Humanities Council about VHC's programs, to Alex Aldrich at the Vermont Arts Council about opportunities for strengthening the arts in our lives, or to Sybil McShane at the Vermont Department of Libraries about why Vermont's libraries matter to all of us. Get acquainted with the Vermont Land Trust and the Green Mountain Club and see what your gift can do to enhance their good work.

I have to put in a plug here for Vermont's heritage organizations. Our efforts are key to maintaining the traditions and history of our state for Vermonters and Vermonters at heart, but nearly all of us struggle to make ends meet. If you care about keeping the past alive as a vibrant aspect of what makes Vermont special, then get involved with the Bennington Museum, the Preservation Trust of Vermont, the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, the state Division for Historic Preservation, the Sheldon Museum in Middlebury, or yes, even the Vermont Historical Society, and write a check for an amount you'd be proud to see in print.

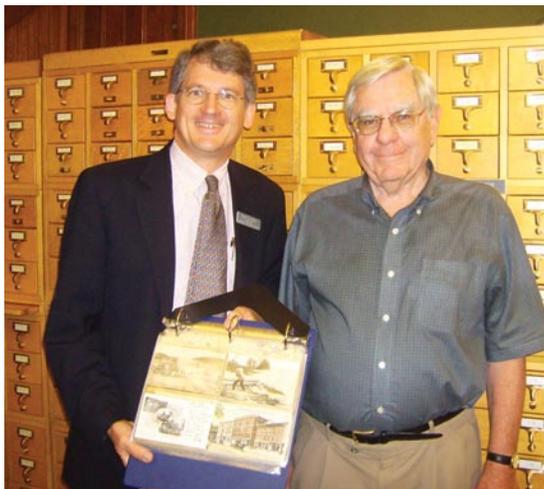
Vermonters who want to improve things here at home need to act now on that good impulse. If we do, a century from now our successors can look back at our time as one in which we got the ratio right and made a real difference in the quality of life for our generation and those that followed. 

— J. Kevin Graffagnino, *VHS Executive Director*

Postcard Collection Donated to Library

Allen F. Davis, author of *Postcards from Vermont: A Social History, 1905-1945*, recently donated his 2,091-piece postcard collection to the Vermont Historical Society library. The collection, which formed the basis of his 2002 book, will strengthen the Society's extensive holdings of approximately 14,000 postcards.

Davis's collection contains numerous "real photo" postcards, black-and-white images photographically printed on postcard stock, usually in small numbers and usually displaying excellent tonal qualities, in contrast to mass-produced cards made through the halftone process. The collection includes a rare photograph of a football game. The players are caught in action on the card that bears a 1908 Northfield, Vermont, postmark.



VHS librarian Paul Carnaban (left) receives the postcard collection from Allen Davis.

Davis, a native of Hardwick and Professor of History Emeritus at Temple University, began collecting postcards by accident. In the spring of 1983, while a visiting professor at the University of Texas in Austin, he saw a notice in the newspaper for a postcard show at one of the city's hotels. He went out of curiosity and discovered that even in Texas there were postcards of Vermont. Davis purchased a few cards and forgot about them until two years later, when he was at a convention in Minneapolis and discovered another postcard show. He bought a few more cards and became an addicted collector.

The Society's postcard collection, now enhanced by Davis's donation, is particularly interesting for the way it illustrates change over time. The

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Tuttle Card Catalog Comes to VHS

The VHS Library received a unique donation this summer when Frank Wood of Dewolfe and Wood of Alfred, Maine, delivered 32 drawers of catalog cards once used by The Tuttle Company, a used and antiquarian bookshop in Rutland. The company, founded in the 1820s by George Tuttle, a printer, remained in the same family until 1993 when Charles E. Tuttle died.

Tuttle's, located on Center Street and then on South Main Street, was one of the oldest bookshops in the United States. The business was considered a premier bookseller of Americana and genealogies. It was one of the first booksellers to issue catalogs on Black Americana. In the early twentieth century the VHS library bought a large number of titles from the the Tuttle Company, adding significantly to its Vermontiana collection.

The Tuttle family also owned a publishing company, a law book company, and a stationery company. In 1979 the bookshop was spun off from the publishing company and was known as Tuttle Antiquarian Books. When the store closed in June 2006, the Rutland Herald reported, "A Rutland institution for 174 years, Tuttle Antiquarian Books closed its doors last month—a victim of technology."

The card file that is now at the Vermont History Center in Barre was used by customers to identify books they wanted to look at. According to a long-time employee, the catalog was divided into 200 subject areas. Unlike most bookstores that encourage browsing, the Tuttle staff would retrieve books for customers based on the information found in the card catalog. The catalog thus records the inventory of this important Vermont bookseller and is an artifact of an earlier age when inventory was kept on cards instead of on computers. 📖



Caption

Federal Grant Received for Collection Preservation

The Vermont Historical Society was one of the fortunate recipients of an Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Conservation Project Support Grant for 2007. These grants help cultural heritage agencies develop a logical, institution-wide approach to caring for their collections. IMLS awarded VHS \$150,000 to purchase movable compact racks to store paintings and movable flat storage cabinets for Civil War flags. Partnering with the Vermont Department of Buildings and General Services (BGS), which is responsible for Civil War flags owned by the state, VHS was able to come up with the 100 percent match required by IMLS with in-kind staff time and money designated for flag preservation.

The \$300,000 preservation project will let VHS staff hang over 400 paintings from its collection, providing for better conservation care, easier access, and more efficient use of storage space. With more storage space available VHS was able to offer BGS a secure, climate-controlled environment to store 68 Civil War flags that have been recently conserved. Curator of State Buildings David Schutz noted, "The State's flag collection is one of our most important groups of artifacts. We have taken these tattered bits of cloth off public display at the State House, and have long needed a suitable environment for their long-term storage and preservation."

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 122,000 libraries and 15,000 museums. These highly competitive grants are an essential component of IMLS's goal of sustaining cultural heritage as a means of creating and sustaining a nation of learners. 

Postcard Collection Donated to Library

Continued from page 3

cards document transitions in Vermont history and life, for example, from horses to cars, from dirt roads to paved roads, and from open fields to forested landscape. They provide us with literal snapshots of our towns and villages frozen at different points in the past. And they show us the faces and activities of Vermonters over the past century. Taken as a whole, the Society's postcard collection presents a significant and fascinating visual record of our state's heritage. We invite you to come in for a look when you are at the Vermont History Center. 



During the summer project intern Brendon Floyd, registrar Mary Labate Rogstad, and curator Jackie Calder have been busy carefully moving collections to provide space for the new equipment which is due to arrive at the end of October. As the project nears completion next spring we will provide progress reports and more photographs. Shown here clothing storage cabinets are moved to make way for the new painting racks.

Library Winter Hours

The VHS Library, in a continuing effort to keep on top of its collections processing responsibilities, will close down for two weeks this coming winter. We will be closed from January 21 through February 1, 2008. We will reopen on Tuesday, February 5, with our usual hours.

The Vermont Historical Society Library will be closed on the following days:

- Thursday and Friday, November 22 and 23
- Tuesday, December 25
- Tuesday, January 1, 2008

The VHS Library will be open the following Saturdays:

- November 10, 2007
- December 8, 2007
- January 12, 2008
- February 9, 2008



Community History Partnership Brings Communities Together

The VHS Community History Partnership (CHP) helps communities become more connected to their own histories, and enables towns to share their stories with the rest of us. Says CHP Manager Sarah Adelman, “My hope is that through educational partnerships between schools and local heritage organizations, previously unheard stories and voices in communities across Vermont become accessible to the public.”

Without knowledge of their community’s past, young people face current challenges unaware of the foundations on which they are making decisions for the future. They are often surprised to learn that the person they thought of as “just their neighbor” is also a World War II veteran, a fifth-generation dairy farmer, or a national expert on rug hooking. Likewise, many older members of our communities have little interaction with youngsters who attend schools and play in parks that their taxes help support. As a cultural heritage organization, VHS is committed to ensuring that the history held in the memories of our elders does not get lost through neglect. A member of the Fair Haven Historical Society remarked of CHP’s role, “Commemorating the district schools is an important project for the town and town history, but it would have been overlooked were it not for the opportunity to do something special as a result of CHP.”

Since the beginning of the program in 2001, CHP has served 34 Vermont communities by facilitating the creation of cross-generational teams that investigate local history. The new project in Weathersfield, for example, is designed to help unify the community around a recent decision to consolidate two town schools into one. “Our project

will use the memories of community members and the curricula of the kindergarten and 4th grade to create a mural for the new school that tells the history of the schools in Weathersfield...Students will meet with a local artist...and together they will design a mural which will hang in the entranceway of the new school.”

In preparation for implementing these kinds of plans, CHP team members attend how-to workshops with consulting specialists.

They receive one-on-one coaching on doing primary research, taking oral histories, using history-based software, and employing documentation technology and skills. Over the past year, consulting specialists have included Gregory Sharrow, Vermont Folklife Center’s longtime Director of Education, and Joe Brooks, founding Director of Vermont Community Works.



Caption here about students above looking at historic photos...

In addition to sharing their projects with their own communities, Community History Partnership teams will share their work at Vermont History Expo 2008. Projects will also be put into a multi-media format and placed on the CHP website (vbscommunityhistory.org) so that educators and historians from across the state, country, and globe can learn from their process and projects. ♡

Vermont Historical Society Launches New Website Design!

Continued from page 1

in-house computer guru and webmaster. The new design incorporates a “content management system” that makes it much easier and quicker for updates and changes to be made to pages on the site. Department heads will now monitor and maintain their respective sections; the workload of keeping the website current and fresh will be spread among the staff.

The new web site is pleasing on the eye and easy to use. It’s a breeze to navigate through the museum, library, education, and programs sections and find information and resources. For example, a scroll and a click lead you to an artifact gallery, our new online library catalog, electronic editions of Vermont History, and professional development

opportunities for teachers offered by the Society. It’s now easier than ever to locate the latest on the Community History Partnership, Vermont History Expo, the VHS publishing program, or awards and fellowships. A News and Announcements page will post meeting and event updates and schedule changes. The History Connections newsletter will be archived on the site three months after it has been mailed to members. And, potential new members and any donors will easily be able to join the Society or make donations online.

VHS is very proud of the Internet presence and presentation we’ve developed since 1996. The redesigned website represents a huge step forward, as we take advantage of current technologies to bring you a more visually interesting site that is both easier for visitors to navigate and easier for us to create and maintain. We think you’ll like it! ♡

2007 Winners of the Richard O. Hathaway Award for Outstanding Vermont History

The Vermont Historical Society is pleased to announce two winners for the Society's prestigious 2007 Richard O. Hathaway Award. University of Vermont Library Associate Professor and Director of Research Collections Jeffrey D. Marshall was honored for his 2006 historical novel, *The Inquest*, published by Hardscrabble Books, a division of the University Press of New England. Described by the judges as "creative and skillful—clearly an outstanding and innovative project," Marshall's captivating story takes place in Burlington and at UVM in the 1830s.

The Vermont Women's History Project was honored for their work on documenting the historical achievements of a number of Vermont women in an engaging 14-minute DVD, *Strengthening the Future by Illuminating the Past*. Judith Irving, Director of the Vermont Women's History Project of the Vermont Commission on Women, accepted the award. The project resulted from hundreds of hours of filmed interviews based on research and exhibits from local historical societies throughout Vermont. The project received accolades for its "excellence as a visionary work" and for stimulating interest in Vermont women's history.

Irving and Marshall each received a \$500 prize and a commemorative plaque. The award, created in 2006, celebrates the legacy of Richard O. Hathaway, who taught at Goddard College, Norwich University, and Vermont College. Hathaway also served as VHS trustee, president of the Vermont Labor History Society, and as a scholar with the Vermont Humanities Council. The Society is raising money to permanently endow the Hathaway Award. For more information, or to make a contribution to the Richard O. Hathaway Fund, please contact Karen Stites, 802-479-8501. 



Pictured above are Jeffrey D. Marshall and Judith Irving, recipients of the Richard O. Hathaway Award.

Middlesex Wins National History Award

The Middlesex Historical Society was honored in September with an American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) Leadership in History Award during the 2007 AASLH annual meeting in Atlanta, Georgia. The competitive nomination process involves review at the state level by a team of museum professionals and historians, then at the regional level, and finally by a national committee.

Kevin Graffagnino, Executive Director of the Vermont Historical Society, noted that "This national award is a tremendous honor for the Middlesex Local Historical Society, and it exemplifies the high quality of historic work we see throughout the state. This project is indeed exceptional. It underscores the importance of historic research, and it is a tribute that is well-deserved."

The Middlesex Historical Society received an Award of Merit for the publication of the town's first written history, *Middlesex in the Making: History and Memories of a Small Vermont Town*, by co-authors Sarah Seidman and Patricia Wiley (who works as the Local Historical Societies Outreach

Manager for the VHS).

The authors, who co-founded the MHS in 1993, began by recording the memories of their town's oldest citizens. The wealth of intersecting stories revealed that townspeople on the west side of town knew almost nothing about the history of the east side of town, and vice versa. "How do you knit together a tiny, rural community bisected by a mountain?" Seidman asked. "With no town center or unifying industry, Middlesex has had a somewhat rocky 244-year history." Townspeople have sent their children to two schools, employed two road commissioners, and engaged in deeply divisive arguments over zoning that remain unresolved to this day.

The authors decided that a complete history of their community might increase awareness of residents' shared past and help unite them as they work toward a more cohesive future. Over 13 years, Wiley and Seidman interviewed 82 residents, researched primary source records, and pored over available secondary works. Their

Continued on next page

A Family Reunion Story: You Help Support Family History

The Vermont Historical Society exists entirely through the support of our members. Therefore, when we have a great success story, it's really your success. Such is the case with the Kent family visit.

In June, 17 members of the Kent family, spanning three generations, gathered together at the VHS—some from as far away as Panama!

Descendents of prominent Vermonter Dorman Kent (1875-1951), the family spent their morning in the library at the Vermont History Center researching old diaries, reminiscing over family lore, viewing old photographs, and much more. At lunchtime, they moved downstairs into the VHC Community Room to enjoy lunch, while viewing a slideshow arranged by family member Scott Kent. This slideshow turned a series of multiple choice questions into an exciting family game show with all ages shouting out answers, guesses, and laughter!

The Kent family ended their day with an enjoyable trip to our “Freedom and Unity” exhibit at the museum in Montpelier. The VHS extends a hearty thank you to the Kent family for allowing us to share in such a wonderful family gathering.

As a result of the generosity of you, our members, VHS is able to appropriately process and store all of our library collections. Your support preserves the historical documents not only of the Kent family, but of all our Vermont families and our collective past. Thank you. 



The Kent family, above, visits the VHS History Center in Barre.

Keep Vermont's heritage alive!

Members help bring Vermont's rich history to children and adults throughout the state. Members also get discounts on books and events, free admission to the library and museum, and subscriptions to the *History Connections* newsletter and *Vermont History* journal. **Please join – we need your support!**

- \$35 Institutional (libraries, historical societies, schools)
- \$40 Individual (benefits for one adult)
- \$35 Senior Individual (age 65+)
- \$50 Household (benefits for two adults & children under 18)
- \$100 Associate
- \$250 Contributing
- \$500 Sustaining
- \$1,000+ Freedom & Unity Circle

Name _____ Email _____

Address _____ Phone _____

Check is enclosed or Credit Card # _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____ CCV# _____

Please mail to: Vermont Historical Society, 60 Washington St., Barre, VT 05641 or join at www.vermonthistory.org
Please call 802-479-8503 with questions.

November 7, 2007

“Rebels in Vermont! The St. Albans Raid,” presentation by VHS Director Kevin Graffagnino at the Black River Academy Museum annual meeting, Ludlow. Dinner at 6 p.m., talk at 7 p.m. For more information call 802-228-5050.

November 10, 2007

Family Fun Workshop: Churning Butter, Sawing Firewood (ages 6-10)

On the farm, everyone needed to help with chores. As children grew, they took on more skilled tasks in the home, barn, and field. Churn butter and help get up the firewood using a two-man crosscut saw. 10 a.m.-Noon at the Vermont Historical Society Museum, 109 State Street, Montpelier. \$5 per child (\$3 for members). To register, contact Geraldine Brown at 802-828-2180 or at geraldine.brown@state.vt.us.

November 12

Veteran's Day, VHS Library, Museum, and Offices CLOSED.

November 22, 23

Thanksgiving holiday, VHS Library, Museum, and Offices CLOSED.

December 8, 2007

Family Fun Workshop: Winter Food in the Abenaki Wigwam (ages 6-10)

Learn about how the Abenaki people prepared for long winters by hunting and preserving meat, harvesting corn and wild rice, saving seed and drying berries; try out stone tools. Led by Judy Dow. See above (Nov. 10) for registration information.

December 24, 25, 31 and January 1, 2008

Christmas and New Years, holidays, VHS Library, Museum, and Offices CLOSED.

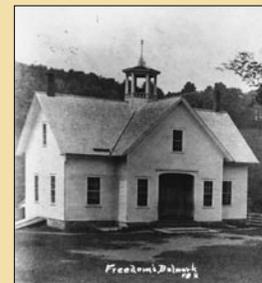
January 12, 2008

Family Fun Workshop: Quilting for Warmth & Beauty (ages 9-12)

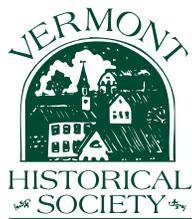
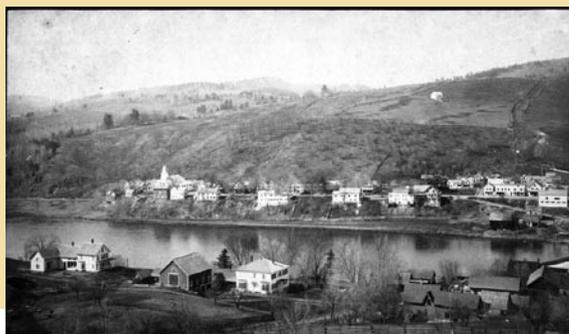
In early Vermont, most children learned to sew. Study traditional quilt patterns, piece a pattern, make a square, and prepare wool filling. Quilt products will be placed in the museum to help teach other children about quilting in days gone by. See above (Nov. 10) for registration information.

Mystery Photo

Last issue's photograph (right inset) was recognized by member Skip Flanders as a school building in North Hyde Park. He even supplied a similar photograph with an identifying caption.



This issue's Mystery Photo is a scene we think is in the Connecticut River Valley. It came in a collection that is centered in White River Junction. If anyone can identify this scene please contact the Society's Librarian, Paul Carnahan, at paul.carnahan@state.vt.us or 802-479-8508.



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