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Nation's Highest Honor Awarded to Vermont Historical Society

Vermont Historical Society is one of only ten organizations to receive the 2007 National Medal for Museum and Library Services, the nation's highest honor for community service provided by museums and libraries. The annual award, made by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) since 1994, recognizes institutions for outstanding social, educational, environmental, or economic contributions to their communities. In addition to the medal, VHS will receive a \$10,000 grant. "This is a remarkable achievement for the Society," noted Executive Director Kevin Graffagnino. "We were delighted when we heard the news, and we're grateful to Senator Sanders for nominating the Society."

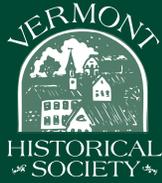
"I nominated the Vermont Historical Society for this award in part because the Society does an excellent job preserving Vermont's rich history," said Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT). "But it does far more than preserve the past. It uses its exhibits to connect present-day Americans, and in particular the citizens of Vermont, with the traditions of our wonderful state. Groups across the nation can learn from the Society's innovative outreach program connecting people with their history. The Vermont Historical Society is, and should be, a model for bringing the fruits of research to the general public, and reaching out beyond museum walls to make sure our common heritage is available to all."

"The Vermont Historical Society continues to provide a tremendous public service to Vermonters and communities throughout the state. Their continued commitment to making Vermont's rich historical traditions accessible to so many Vermonters, young and old, is truly remarkable," said Representative Peter Welch (D-VT). Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) noted that "As a Vermonter, I am extremely proud of the services that the Vermont Historical Society provides to our state. This award is well deserved, as it commends the Society for its exemplary work in preserving Vermont's heritage."



Governor Jim Douglas stopped in to congratulate VHS on receiving the IMLS award. He was welcomed (left to right) by Director of Education and Public Programs Tess Taylor, Museum Curator Jackie Calder, Development Coordinator Jane Campbell, and Executive Director Kevin Graffagnino.

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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.

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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



Tuttle Endowment Will Benefit All Vermont

The death of Reiko Tuttle in April 2006 and the subsequent closing of Tuttle Antiquarian Books were sad events. Mrs. Tuttle was a gracious, generous woman whose philanthropy supported a wide range of worthy Vermont charities and causes. With business roots that went back to 1832, Tuttle Antiquarian Books was a destination for generations of American bibliophiles who delighted in combing the shelves for hidden treasures in Americana, Vermontiana, family history, and other fields.

A new initiative is under way to commemorate and perpetuate the Tuttle legacy. The Freeman Foundation, long a major force on the Vermont cultural heritage scene, has issued a challenge grant to the Vermont Historical Society in memory of Reiko and Charles E. Tuttle, Jr. The grant will establish an endowment for support of the VHS library's efforts to collect and make accessible books, maps, manuscripts, pamphlets, newspapers, photographs, and other sources on our state's past. VHS has been collecting Vermont history since its 1838 founding, and the Society library is a significant resource for all Vermonters interested in their family, local, and state heritage.

A VHS Tuttle endowment is an appropriate tribute, since the family and the Society have deep connections. Charles E. Tuttle, Sr. worked closely with VHS in the early decades of the 20th century, supplying hundreds of pieces of choice Vermontiana to fill gaps in the library collection. When the 1927 Flood devastated Montpelier and inundated important VHS holdings, Mr. Tuttle drove over from Rutland to direct the salvage operation on irreplaceable historic materials that would otherwise have been lost. His efforts were the key factor in minimizing damage to the VHS collections, and VHS trustee Dorman B. E. Kent reported, "It was fortunate indeed that he came to Montpelier." Charles E. Tuttle, Jr. maintained those VHS ties during his career as an international publisher with interests in Japan and Vermont, and when he and Reiko retired to Rutland they strengthened their commitment to the Green Mountain State through Tuttle Antiquarian Books, involvement with the Vermont Antiquarian Booksellers Association, and other good work here.

The Freeman Foundation's challenge grant asks the VHS to raise a total of \$25,000 in matching contributions within the next year, and we are eager to reach that goal, which is in addition to our annual fundraising goal. If you or anyone you know might be interested in helping us meet this challenge, please contact Jane Campbell at 802.479.8516 or jane.campbell@state.vt.us.

A new endowment for the library will allow VHS to enhance its collecting program and to build upon such areas of strength as 18th-century Vermont, the Civil War, local and county history, historic photographs, maps, genealogy, industry, transportation, agriculture, social history, and other threads in the tapestry of Vermont's heritage. Thousands of researchers, from Vermont schoolchildren writing their first social studies papers to distinguished scholars researching Green Mountain aspects of national history, use the VHS library every year. The members of Vermont's 197 local historical societies call on the library whenever they begin work on new projects in their communities, and Americans with Vermont roots come from all over the country to trace their ancestry at VHS. The Society library is an important resource for all Vermonters and Vermonters at heart who appreciate the role that our history and traditions play in the quality of life here.

Charles and Reiko Tuttle epitomized Vermont's tradition of making a difference without fanfare or self-congratulation. As generations of Tuttle did before them, they made Vermont a better place through their community work and their generosity. The Freeman Foundation initiative offers a way to honor that legacy and to benefit Vermont now and in the future. The Vermont Historical Society is grateful to the Foundation for this opportunity, and we look forward to hearing from Vermonters who want to help VHS bring it to fruition.

– J. Kevin Graffagnino, VHS Executive Director

VHS Library Dedicated in Honor of Senator Leahy's Parents

U.S. Senator Patrick J. Leahy, his wife Marcelle, and his sister Mary came to the Vermont History Center on Monday, November 5, 2007, to dedicate the Vermont Historical Society's library in honor of Leahy's parents, Howard and Alba. It will now be known as "The Howard and Alba Leahy Library of the Vermont Historical Society."

Senator Leahy has been instrumental in securing funding for the renovations of the Spaulding building which houses the library. The Society wanted to name the library for Leahy but he preferred it be named for his parents. Leahy's father was a Montpelier printer and avid amateur historian. At the naming ceremony, Leahy said that when his children had questions on their history homework their grandfather would inevitably know the answer.

Leahy's paternal grandfather, Patrick J. Leahy, was a Barre stone carver who died in his 30s from silicosis contracted from breathing stone dust. His son, Howard Leahy, was never able to finish at Spaulding High School, the building that now contains the library named in his honor, because he had to work to support his mother and sister. As a parent, Howard Leahy made sure that his three children received a full education. His daughter, Mary, continues the family interest in education by leading Central Vermont Adult Basic Education.

Alba Leahy was a first-generation Italian American. Her father was a stone carver from South Ryegate who also suffered from silicosis. Howard Leahy died in 1984 at age 83; Alba Leahy died at age 86 in 1996. Senator Leahy said of his parents, "They lived and breathed history. They would have been so happy to see this."

The Society's library has been located in the Spaulding building since July 2002, when Senator Leahy was on hand for the ribbon cutting with Barre mayor Harry Monti, VHS President Peter Mallary, and VHS Director Gainor Davis. It is the eighth location for the Society, which in the 1960s was located in Montpelier at 133 State Street, across the street from the Leahy family home and printing shop at #136. "It is an honor for the Vermont Historical Society to have its library named after the Leahys, who were such pillars of the Central Vermont community," noted Kevin Graffagnino, VHS Executive Director. "For years to come, when people use the library for academic, genealogy, or other research on Vermont or New England history, the legacy of the Leahys, a symbol of the many family businesses that shaped Vermont, will always be present."

Photos of the dedication ceremony can be seen on the Society's web site at vermonthistory.org/leahy. 



U. S. Senator Patrick J. Leahy looks at an exhibit case in the newly named Howard and Alba Leahy Library. Joining him are VHS First Vice President Laura Warren of Richmond and trustees Victor Swenson (left) of Johnson and Addison Minott (right) of Guilford.

Library Winter Hours



The Vermont Historical Society 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 VHS Library will be open on the following Saturdays:

January 12
February 9
March 8
April 12
May 10



Exhibit Commemorates 80th Anniversary of 1927 Flood

Eighty years ago this fall Vermonters experienced one of the most devastating natural disasters to hit the state: the 1927 Flood. Vermonters, usually on the lookout for flooding in the spring when melting snow swells rivers and streams, were caught by surprise by an autumn flood.

It had been a wet October that year. Rivers were swollen and the ground was saturated when a tropical storm pushing up the Atlantic Coast collided with a storm moving northeast out of New York State and dumped 7 to 9 inches of rain on the state over a period of three days, November 2-4. In Montpelier the waters crested at 12 feet above street level in the morning of November 4; in Barre, seven people drowned including Lt. Governor Hollister Jackson; and in Waterbury 20 people died and water was 18 feet high on Main Street. When it was all over 84 people had died and \$30-\$40 million of damage (in 1927 dollars) had been inflicted on the state.

To mark this history-changing event, the VHS library has mounted a small display of photographs and documents from the 1927 Flood. Included in the display are representative photographs of flood damage from Winooski, Bolton, Montpelier, Barre, Proctor, Rutland, Gaysville, and Enosburg. The exhibit also includes single-sheet copies of the *Montpelier Evening Argus* and *Barre Daily Times* issued under adverse conditions on November 5, when the extent of the damage was just beginning to become apparent. The exhibit also contains several documents including a list of known dead issued on November 6 and a poster from the State Board of Health on disease prevention.

During the dedication of the VHS library on November 5, 2007, Senator Patrick J. Leahy mentioned that his parents told him that during the 1927 Flood a photographer floated down State Street in Montpelier, tied up his boat to the family's second-story window, and took pictures of the raging waters from their roof. Subsequent searches of the library's photo files uncovered four photographs of the floodwaters



This scene, believed to have been taken from the roof of the Leahy family home, shows water rushing down State Street. The corner of the National Life Office Building can be seen at the right of the photograph.

in Montpelier that must have been taken from the roof of the Leahys' home.

The 80th anniversary of the 1927 Flood has also been marked with the publication of a new book on the state's recovery written by former VHS President Deborah Pickman Clifford and her husband, Nicholas R. Clifford. *"The Troubled Roar of the Waters": Vermont in Flood and Recovery, 1927-1931* was published by the University of New Hampshire Press/University Press of New England. 

Web Extras:

- To see photos of the 1927 Flood that are on display in the VHS library, in addition to the photos that were taken from the Leahys' roof, visit the Society's web site at vermonthistory.org/flood.
- To read VHS Librarian Paul Carnahan's account of the 1927 Flood go to vermonthistory.org/vignettes.
- To order a copy of the Cliffords' book, go the VHS online store at vermonthistory.org and click on "Store." 

Nation's Highest Honor Awarded to VHS

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"As the primary source of federal funding for the nation's libraries and museums, the Institute of Museum and Library Services is proud to honor institutions that have dared to set high goals for community service and to attain them," said Dr. Anne-Imelda M. Radice, IMLS director. "These museums and libraries have listened to their communities, heard their needs, and responded. They make a real difference."

The Vermont Historical Society has a long tradition of leadership and public service, supporting Vermont's local historical societies and publishing little-known aspects of the

state's history. In recent years, the Society has launched a number of ambitious programs to bring Vermont's heritage to the general public. "Many people don't realize how cutting edge our state historical society is," stated Sarah Dopp, Society president. "The annual Vermont History Expo, the award-winning museum exhibit in Montpelier, the school programs, the online library catalog and exhibits—they are all quite innovative," stated Dopp. "Other states often see VHS programs as models they can duplicate."

"This award honors the work of many people, including volunteers, employees, local societies, trustees, and our donors," Graffagnino said. "The VHS will schedule an event to pay tribute to their outstanding achievement." 

League of Local Historical Societies Thrives

“**H**eritage Happens Here: Building Blocks for Thriving Communities,” the third annual joint meeting of Vermont’s League of Local Historical Societies and the Vermont Museum and Gallery Alliance, took place on November 2, 2007, at the historic Middlebury Inn and other locations in downtown Middlebury. The daylong event, attended by over 100 people, featured a keynote address by the new Executive Director of the Vermont Folklife Center, Brent Björkman, who spoke on “Ethnography as Engagement: Dynamic Tools for Sharing and Preserving Community and Local History.” Björkman’s talk focused on his work as a public folklorist and how the techniques of ethnography can be adopted by local historians to assist in gathering and telling community stories.

The meeting included the presentation of 12 local historical society achievement awards. This awards program recognizes and encourages the efforts of local historical societies in collecting, preserving, and sharing the history of their communities. The following awards were given out this year in seven categories:

Historic Preservation:

- Milton Historical Society for its “Remembering Our Cemeteries” preservation project.

Exhibits and Museum Techniques:

- Chittenden County Historical Society for its “Bicycling Then and Now” Vermont History Expo 2007 exhibit.
- Grafton Historical Society for its museum textile room project.

Publications and Oral History:

- Randolph Historical Society for the publication of *Randolph, VT 1777-1927: Its Discovery, Creation & Development*.

Educational Outreach:

- Black River Academy Museum for its “Perspectives of World War II” student project.

- Wallingford Historical Society for programs on geology and botany of Wallingford presented by Dr. Lynn David Hebert.

Society Operations:

- Montgomery Historical Society for its digital Internet presence project.

Individual Achievement:

- Marijke Dollois (Montgomery Historical Society) for her membership program.
- Arleen Huesman (Vernon Historians) for digitization of photo albums of the Vernon Hydroelectric Dam construction from 1907-1924.
- David Perrin (Chittenden County Historical Society) for donation to the VHS of coin silver and creation of artistic case to house the collection.

Lifetime Achievement Awards:

- Bill Branthoover of the Montgomery Historical Society.
- Kathy Wendling of the Woodstock Historical Society.

Eight workshops were offered in the afternoon, centered on the theme of bringing history to our communities in an engaging way. They included: “Lost Ski Areas GPS Camp,” “2+2=6: Creative Approaches to Marketing Partnerships,” “Finding Your Town’s Civil War Sites,” “Becoming Web-Wise,” “Working with Hazards in Your Collection,” “Exhibiting Africa: Design Challenges & Opportunities at Middlebury College,” “Insurance Challenges for Museums & Historical Societies,” and “Collecting the Recent Past,” presented by Vermont Historical Society Curator Jackie Calder.

The conference also featured tours of the Vermont Folklife Center’s new headquarters, and the Henry Sheldon Museum. A “Showcase of Ideas” at the Middlebury Inn displayed many innovative programs and projects from museums, local historical societies, organizations, and vendors from throughout the state and New England. 

History Day 2008: Conflict and Compromise

Vermont History Day, an event that annually brings middle and high school students from all over the state together to express their interest in history, will be held on April 5, 2008. Each year, History Day judges are treated to student papers, performances, exhibits, and documentaries that are tied together by a theme set by the National History Day committee.

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The 2007 Vermont delegation enjoyed their trip to the National History Day finals in Washington, D.C. last spring.

The First Television Broadcast in Vermont?

Claiming a first is always controversial, but the Vermont Historical Society recently acquired a television that reportedly received Vermont's earliest broadcasts on July 28, 1948, from the top of Burke Mountain.

The early Hallinger television with a 7-inch screen was carried to the top of Burke Mountain by George Dilley of St. Johnsbury. Dilley, a local radio shop owner, climbed the mountain with his wife and three sons hoping to see the Boston Braves play the Pittsburgh Pirates. Plugging the set into power from a police emergency shed and using a non-directional antenna, he was able to receive a picture—but it wasn't the Braves. Instead a trapeze act came on the screen as the family heard the play-by-play from the baseball game. Dilley realized that Boston's WBZ-TV and WRGB, in Schenectady, New York, both broadcast on Channel 4. The Dilleys were seeing a circus televised from Schenectady while hearing the Boston Braves game.

Getting television reception in Vermont was news and accounts from both the *Caledonian Record* and the *Boston Herald* reported the event as an experimental effort by



VHS recently acquired this early Hallinger 7-inch television set, which reportedly received the first broadcast in the state in 1948.

Dilley. David Dilley, three years old at the time, brought the auction sale of his father's television to the attention of VHS staff, and sent copies of the newspaper's accounts as well as his mother's diary entry for the day. If anyone has other stories about early television in Vermont we'd love to hear them, or send an e-mail to museum@state.vt.us.

New Museum Programs Staff

The Department of Education and Public Programs has been improved by the addition of a new shared position of Museum Education Programs Assistant. VHS is very fortunate to have Steve Bosserman and Polly Bentley fill this position with their combined complementary skills. Steve has been part of the museum team as a weekend attendant since 2006 and Polly is a seasoned librarian and educator.

Their duties include stewardship of the museum and the reorganized bookstore, as well as attending to museum visitors and our volunteers. Polly and Steve are on duty Tuesdays through Fridays at the Pavilion.



Steve Bosserman and Polly Bentley share the new position of Museum Education Programs Assistant.

History Day 2008

Continued from page 5

The theme for 2007 was "Triumph and Tragedy," and 167 students from 14 Vermont schools presented on various topics ranging from Ethan Allen to Eminem. Spaulding High School in Barre was the site for 32 Vermont students to learn that they were eligible to travel to Washington, D.C., and present their project along with students from many other states.

In 2008 the theme will be "Conflict and Compromise."

For the first time, students are allowed a new category: website design. In addition to the opportunity to compete in the nationals, there are close to twenty sponsored prize categories available to participating students. They can win cash or scholarships for work on specific topics that range from architecture and civil liberties to baseball and women's studies. The Vermont Historical Society is proud to be the state organizer of this fun and enriching educational event.

Marcie Vallette Joins Marketing Team

Marcie Vallette has accepted the half-time position of Marketing/Community Relations Coordinator. Originally from the Boston area, Marcie took a hiking trip in Vermont in the mid 1980s and enjoyed the Vermont experience so much that she decided to settle in the Mount Mansfield area. Marcie comes to us with a background in web design, management, graphic design for pre-press, journalism, editing and marketing. Her nonprofit background includes working in development and marketing at the Vermont Studio Center. She has also taught art to children and adults in public school and in private settings. Vallette's undergraduate degree is in fine art, and she has a Master's degree in education. She lives in Johnson and continues to paint and to exhibit her artwork regionally. 

Your Gift to Future Generations

As a member of Vermont Historical Society, you understand how important it is to preserve and explore Vermont's heritage. You can help ensure that our proud history is also available to tomorrow's Vermonters, through a planned gift to Vermont Historical Society.

A planned gift can be as simple as a sentence in your will or a charitable trust. Some methods generate income for you during your lifetime, as well as supporting VHS. The legacy you leave can make an important difference to Vermont.

Depending on current tax laws, a charitable gift may reduce the estate tax burden on your heirs. Please consult a financial advisor or attorney to ensure that your decision is best for your situation. For more information on any type of donation, please feel free to contact Jane Campbell, 802-479-8516 or jane.campbell@state.vt.us.

Give the Gift of History

Another way to support VHS is to "Give the Gift of History" with historical books, maps, and children's stories available at our online store at www.vermonthistory.org.



W'Abenaki Dancers to be Featured on Farmers' Night

VHS once again welcomes the fabulous W'Abenaki Dancers as the featured performers for Farmers' Night 2008, Wednesday, February 20 at 7 p.m. at the State House. The 19-member troupe was formed in 1992, learning traditional Abenaki dances from a master teacher from the Odanak Reservation in Quebec. More than just a performance, the W'Abenaki Dancers interpret the meaning and symbolism of their dances for the audience. They have danced widely across Vermont and New Hampshire, including for Farmers' Night in 2002. Please join us for a rousing evening of song and dance.



January 29, 2008

Annual Legislative Reception, with Prof. Frank Bryan of the University of Vermont, who teaches American politics and public administration and is the author of *Yankee Politics in Rural Vermont*, *The Vermont Papers: Recreating Democracy on a Human Scale*, and *Real Democracy: The New England Town Meeting and How It Works*. Lola Aiken will be honored at the event. 5:30 p.m., Snelling Room, VHS Museum, Montpelier.

February 9, 2008

Family Fun Workshop: A School Day in 1880 (ages 6-12)

One-room schools used to educate children all together, from age 5 to about 14. We'll study, practice our writing, take a geography lesson, and have a spelling bee—even have recess and snack. 10 a.m.-Noon, VHS Musuem, Montpelier. To register, contact Geraldine Brown at 802-828-2180 or geraldine.brown@state.vt.us.

February 20, 2008

VHS Presents Farmers' Night at the State House

The W'Abenaki Dancers perform social dances, in traditional dress and with interpretation. 7 p.m., free.

March 8, 2008

Family Fun Workshop: The Early Printer's Apprentice (ages 13-15)

Experience the early form of learning on the job: an apprenticeship! We'll visit the earliest printing press to come to Vermont and learn about other presses over time as we study the craft of setting print with a true master printer of today. A simple noon meal will be provided, then we'll set and print your piece on a 20th-century press. 10 a.m.-2 p.m., VHS Museum, Montpelier. To register, contact Geraldine Brown at 802-828-2180 or geraldine.brown@state.vt.us.

April 5, 2008

Vermont History Day

Spaulding High School, Barre. Junior high and high school students from around Vermont present history projects following the model of National History Day.

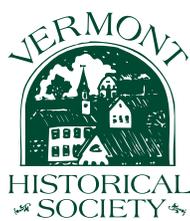
Mystery Photo

Last issue's Mystery Photo was quickly identified by several VHS members including Judy Barwood, David Mayhew, Paula



Sagerman, Elaine Hinckley, and Jeff Moreno, several of whom had personal connections to this image and the buildings in it. The scene is of Hartford Village. The photo was taken from the south side of the White River looking over the river and into the village. The road running parallel to the river is now Route 14. The hill in the background is now populated with homes.

This next Mystery Photo is an urban scene. We are not sure where this rushing stream and nearby hotel are located, but if you can identify the spot please contact the Society's Librarian, Paul Carnahan, at paul.carnahan@state.vt.us or 802-479-8508.



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