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## Are You Missing the Vermont Historical Society E-News?

If you're not getting the E-News, please send your email address to [diane.campbell@state.vt.us](mailto:diane.campbell@state.vt.us).

Let her know you'd like to subscribe and start getting advance notice about events, additions to the collections and other notable news.

Many thanks to our newsletter sponsor:



## Vermont Heritage at Risk: Solutions Discussed June 24, 2009

On June 24, the Vermont Historical Society hosted the Connecting to Collections Project Summit Meeting at the Pavilion building in Montpelier. This project began in 2008, when the Vermont Historical Society (VHS), with a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Service's (IMLS) Connecting to Collections program, undertook the task of surveying the status of collections care throughout Vermont. At the Summit Meeting on the 24th, approximately 80 representatives of institutions from throughout the state—museums, historical societies, libraries, municipal offices, and probate courts—gathered to learn about the findings of this survey.

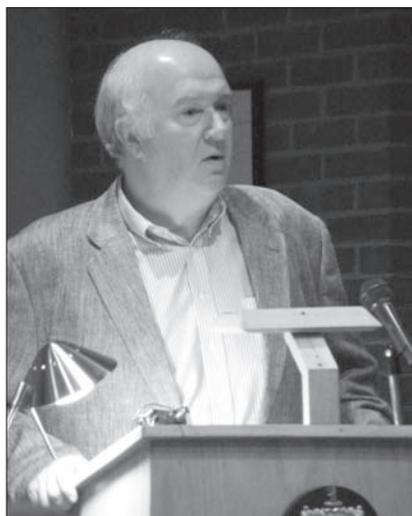
VHS Curator Jackie Calder began the meeting, expressing deep concern about the physical deterioration and destruction of our state's heritage, as well as misgivings about the loss of intellectual control (i.e., loss of the story behind the collection). Past intern for the Connecting to Collections project, Laura

Brill of the Shelburne Museum, gave a detailed overview about the survey process that began in Vermont in 2008. Of the 776 surveys sent out, over one-third were returned, giving input on the care and condition of Vermont's collections.

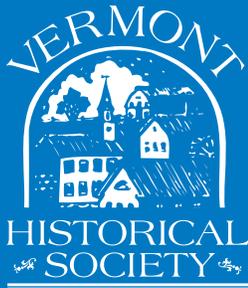
David Donath, President of the Woodstock Foundation and Billings Farm and Museum, discussed initiatives such as the potential federal program for museum block grants at the state level. He emphasized, "We need to ask government to allocate funding. Federal government involvement is a powerful stimulus for the local economy." Donath also remarked, "Now is the time to engage our communities; it is of utmost importance to let them know that our institutions are at risk. There has been record attendance at our museums statewide—our communities are supporting us now more than ever."

Speakers Lisa von Kann, Director of the St. Johnsbury Athenaeum, and Bob Joly, Athenaeum Inter-Library Loan and Exhibits Curator, gave an inspiring talk about the success in cooperatively

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*David Donath emphasized the need to ask the federal government to treat museums the same as libraries in regard to funding. "We need to ask."*



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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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## From the Director

### A Passion for the Past

**H**aving passed the landmark 100-day milestone of my tenure as Executive Director, I have gained some perspective on Vermonters, their love of history, and the role of the Vermont Historical Society in preserving the rich heritage that surrounds us. Since my arrival in mid-March, I have logged nearly 2,000 miles on the roads of Vermont, often with my wife Julie navigating from the passenger’s seat. Through these journeys and by attending conferences, dropping in on local historical societies, and meeting with heritage colleagues from throughout the state, I recognize how history is a passion that influences the lives and values of Vermonters in every way imaginable.

This passion is reflected in the well-preserved landscapes and townscapes that have inspired our travels. At the Summit on the Future of Vermont and the Vermont Historic Preservation Conference, I discovered that the preservation of Vermont’s heritage is a labor of love that is pervasive at all levels—from the state’s leadership to the grassroots efforts at towns throughout the state. The enormously important work of the local historical societies is carried out with a cheerful enthusiasm and often inadequate financial resources. In towns like Colchester, Brattleboro, Milton and Bennington, I met folks whose pride in their local heritage is lovingly reflected in the displays, programs and collections of their local societies.

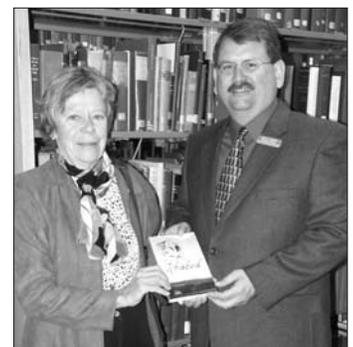
These experiences have given me much more than inspiration, however. I have recognized the vital role that the Vermont Historical Society plays in promoting the preservation of the state’s heritage. At all levels, Vermonters look to VHS for leadership, support and guidance. Nowhere was this more evident than at the recent Connecting to Collections Summit, where I facilitated a discussion among representatives from local historical societies. Though their needs are varied, this discussion defined for me the significance of our outreach efforts and the opportunities that exist for promoting the preservation of Vermont’s heritage throughout the state.

In recognition of the tremendous pride Vermonters have for the state’s heritage and the magnitude of the opportunities before us, the Board of Trustees and staff of VHS are moving forward with a positive vision for the future. While we will continue to find ways to operate with greater efficiency, the Vermont Historical Society is committed to advancing our organizational mission and developing the means to assure that we will sustain our efforts into the future.

Winston Churchill once said, “A pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees opportunity in every difficulty.” With considerable optimism, the Vermont Historical Society recognizes both the opportunities and difficulties before us. We are developing several bold initiatives that will enhance our ability to fulfill our mission and assure our continued success. The involvement and support of our members and friends will be crucial to the success of these initiatives. We wish to express thanks for the support of our members and friends and encourage your ongoing support as we bring Vermont’s past into the future.

– Mark Hudson, Executive Director

*Julie Van Camp presents VHS Executive Director Mark S. Hudson with a copy of Searching for Ichabod for the Leaby Library. The book tells the story of Van Camp’s research into the life of her ancestor, Ichabod Foster, who lived in Whiting, Vermont, during the 1790s.*



## History Day '09

Nearly 150 students from all around Vermont exhibited, wrote, performed and presented history projects at this year's History Day held on April 4th at Barre's Spaulding High School. The national theme for 2009 was *The Individual in History*.

History Day in Vermont continues to be an enriching experience for students and judges alike. Our 50 Vermont judges range from history lovers, scholars and educators. One of our judges had this to say: "What I love best about History Day is the variety of presentations and the joy intrinsic in interviewing the student presenters."

Forty-one students who received first or second place ratings were eligible to travel to Washington, D.C. to National History Day, and 26 elected to go with parents and teachers rooting them on. Two of our Vermonters received the Best of State prize: Andrew Rainville, attending Mount Abraham, won for his exhibit on John Deere, and Hannah Sturtevant of Vergennes won for her display about J. Edgar Hoover. Elle Ross from Mill River Union High School and Holly Cloutier from Black River High School ranked respectably in the top third, with Elle's paper on Margaret Sanger and Holly's exhibit entitled "Samuel Morey: A Little Yankee Ingenuity Goes a Long Way."

Taking advantage of their trip to D.C., our group watched an exciting Major League baseball game at Camden



*Senator Leahy meets with student delegates on the Capitol steps.*

Yards, a first for most students. They also met with Senator Leahy and Representative Welch on the Capitol steps. Students presented our delegates with History Day buttons and took the opportunity to have a photo with our Capitol's dome in the background.

As always, we couldn't do this wonderful project without the support we receive from our sponsors: Cabot Creamery, Cargill Animal Nutrition, The Walter Cerf Community Fund of the Vermont Community Foundation and Patricia Passmore Alley. 

## Vermont History Expo 2010

After taking a year off, plans are well under way for the 10th Vermont History Expo returning to the Tunbridge World Fairgrounds. With its very timely theme, *Back to the Land, Again! Vermont Heritage Ways for Today*, the Expo will be held on the last weekend of June, on the 26th and 27th.

Tess Taylor, who coordinates the Expo, says, "We are very excited about the possibilities that this theme offers. These days, Vermonters are going back to (while many never have abandoned) traditional ways that serve us well as we work our way through challenging economic times. Vermonters know that conservation practices, learning traditional crafts and trades, eating and buying local, helping neighbors, gardening and preserving help us lead a life of quality and satisfaction."

Local historical societies, associations and museums have lots of information and artifacts that will illustrate the theme handily. Traditional crafters and tradespeople, farmers and gardeners, and innovators using traditional methods will hold demonstrations, hands-on activities and workshops. The Vermont Historical Society is preparing to make this Expo as fun and engaging as always, and we want all of our visitors to take away even more. Our hope is that through exploring our Vermont heritage, every visitor will go home with knowledge and inspiration to add substance to their lives by living a little more simply in the Vermont tradition.

Of course it wouldn't be Expo without music, animals, parades, games, re-enactments, presentations and great food! We'll have all of that and lots more. Expo has been called "Vermont's Family Reunion." Don't miss this great opportunity to catch up with everyone! If you are interested in helping with Expo 2010, please contact Tess Taylor at 802-479-8505 or [tess.taylor@state.vt.us](mailto:tess.taylor@state.vt.us). 

Vermont History  
**EXPO** 2010  
*History's Country Fair*

### SAVE THE DATES!

#### Family Fun Workshops Scheduled for 2009-2010

**Put it on your calendar!** From October 2009 through March 2010, Family Fun Workshops will be scheduled the second Saturday each month. These hands-on themed family events will include visits to relevant exhibits at the museum, a snack appropriate to the season, and activities to develop skills and learn about the past and the present. Please watch the web site in late August for more details or call 802-828-2291.

## Twentieth-Century Vermont Photographs Flickr Online



*Drury Bobbin Mill in Essex, Vermont, as photographed by W. C. Sawyer, ca. 1900. Glass plate gift of Newport Harbor Nautical Museum.*

In October 2007, the VHS library received a fascinating collection of 223 glass plate negatives taken by Wilbur C. Sawyer of Essex, Vermont, at the turn of the twentieth century. With the help of volunteer Angela Ogle, the VHS Leahy Library has started making these images available on Flickr, the photo-sharing web site.

The Sawyer collection was donated to the VHS by the Newport Harbor Nautical Museum in Newport Beach, California. It contains numerous images documenting life in and around Essex when Sawyer was a young man in the early 1900s. Among Sawyer's images that have been loaded onto Flickr are sets that show the construction of buildings at Fort Ethan Allen in Colchester, the interior of the bobbin mill in Essex, and agricultural activities. Sawyer also photographed the Drury brickyard in his hometown, sugaring operations nearby, and numerous buildings. Yet to be scanned and shared on Flickr are photos of the University of Vermont, including an early football game, and the railroad station at Essex Junction, documenting a train wreck at the station.

Wilbur C. Sawyer was born May 8, 1887, to Frederick Parker and Francis Axa (Bates) Sawyer who owned a furniture store in Essex. He graduated with a B.S., *cum laude*

in civil engineering in 1902 from the University of Vermont, where he later taught drawing and surveying. Sawyer left Vermont to work as an engineering draftsman for the City Engineer's Office in Los Angeles and was an influential and founding member of the Los Angeles Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers. He was also a founding member of the Newport Harbor Yacht Club where he "took pictures all day long with an old box camera."

Flickr is a popular Internet site where individuals have been sharing photographs since 2004. Recently, photo repositories have begun sharing images from their collections on the site so that users can help identify photographs and make comments on images. The VHS joins repositories such as the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian Institution in putting some of their images on this site.

If you would like to help us identify some of W. C. Sawyer's images, or if you would just like to see some fascinating old images of Vermont, you can find us on Flickr at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/vermonthistory>. Anyone can view images on Flickr, but you have to sign up to leave comments. It's free and it's fun! Contact VHS Librarian Paul Carnahan at [paul.carnahan@state.vt.us](mailto:paul.carnahan@state.vt.us) with questions. 

## Scottish Heritage on Display at Leahy Library

Vermont's Scottish heritage is the subject of an exhibit in the VHS Leahy Library that runs through the end of September. This exhibit was installed in conjunction with the Society's participation in Barre's Heritage Festival at the end of July. Since this is the 110th anniversary of the remarkable statue of Scottish poet Robert Burns that stands outside our building in Barre, we have embraced Scottish heritage as our contribution to this popular city-wide festival.

The exhibit features photographs from five generations of women who married into the McLaren clan of Barnet. The launching point for this exhibit is a collection of 31 diaries kept by Luvia Somers McLaren between 1911 and 1942. Luvia and her husband Milo were both grandchildren of Scottish immigrants who settled in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom. The exhibit includes photographs of eight women who carry or



*George C. Mackie in full Scottish attire, circa 1890.*

*Scan gift of  
Joan K. Higgins.*

carried the McLaren name to the present. It was assembled in part by Duncan McLaren, donor of the diaries and grandson of Luvia.

Joining the McLaren women in the main library exhibit case are photographs of George C. Mackie, a Scot who immigrated to Barre in 1871 and became the first person to create a granite sculpture in three dimensions, or "in the round," in Barre. Mackie became a well-regarded member of the Barre granite community and built an impressive house on Washington Street, just behind where the Vermont History Center is today. Mackie's career in Barre, an urban center, contrasts with the experiences of the McLarens, who settled in one of Vermont's rural regions.

Additional materials about the Scots in Vermont on display at the Vermont History Center include a photographic portrait and letters of the Vermont artist James Hope and regalia from Barre's Clan Gordon, borrowed from the Aldrich Public Library in Barre. 

## Interact with the Vermont Historical Society on Facebook

We know that readers of this publication are fans of the Vermont Historical Society already, but now we have a new way you can participate in the VHS; you can become a "fan" of the VHS on Facebook! This spring, VHS launched a page on the popular social networking site as a way of keeping in touch with our members and attracting new members with an interest in Vermont history.

When you become a fan of the VHS on Facebook you will receive occasional messages from us on your Facebook news feed, keeping you abreast of the exciting things that are happening here. You can also make comments to our posts and interact with other fans in the discussion area.

In the past few months we have used Facebook to announce the special showing of a 1940s Vermont State Guard film, share the discovery of an interesting postcard in the library's collection, make comments on the large attendance in the museum during Vermont Days, and announce the arrival of spring and summer museum hours with the appearance of the rocking chairs on the porch of the Pavilion Building.

Another way to keep up with history news and events is by subscribing to the VHS E-News. Just go to [www.vermonthistory.org/news](http://www.vermonthistory.org/news) and sign up.

Facebook has huge potential to bring VHS members closer together. Become a "fan" online at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and start networking with people who share your love of Vermont's fascinating past! 

### WW II Artifacts Donated to VHS

Jeannine Dubuque holds a case containing the bottle she used to christen the Liberty ship SS Calvin Coolidge in World War II. As a 13-year-old girl living in Grand Isle, she led the way in scrap metal gathering for the war effort. On May 26, 2009, Dubuque donated these artifacts and memorabilia to the Vermont Historical Society. Ms. Dubuque's memorabilia and posters, flyers and photographs of Vermont's home front will be on display in the VHS museum's Snelling Room through September. 



## Legacy of Values

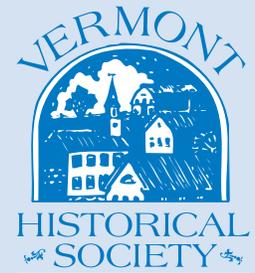
*Not all of us leave a legacy far beyond the memories of a few generations of our families. The index of the old one-volume histories of the western civilization contain about 800 names—kings, queens, popes, generals, political leaders, and writers, philosophers, and artists.*

*A recent poll, sadly, found a majority of American youth thought of Joan of Arc as Noah's wife. Our ten minutes of fame seem very transitory.*

*I believe most of us leave our legacy through strengthening institutions that project our values, what we hold important, and secure them for future generations. For that reason, Carol and I have named the Vermont Historical Society as a beneficiary of a Charitable Remainder Unitary Trust. We want to assist those who follow us to understand their heritage as part of valuing and understanding themselves, and in Vermont, the Society does that the best.*

— H. Nicholas Muller, VHS Trustee

**“I believe most of us leave our legacy through strengthening institutions that project our values, what we hold important, and secure them for future generations.”**



**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](mailto:jane.campbell@state.vt.us).

## Historic Preservation of Film



Members of the Vermont State Guard and others pose outside the museum with volunteer Fred Pond and VHS Librarian Paul Carnahan after a special screening of a 1940s Vermont State Guard film. The film, uncovered by Pond, is being transferred to digital format thanks to generous contributions from National Life Group and other supporters.

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**October 10-25, 2009**

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[jane.campbell@state.vt.us](mailto:jane.campbell@state.vt.us).



## Staff Additions

**J**ulie Nelson recently joined VHS to serve as the Marketing and Community Relations Coordinator. Working part-time, she will help strengthen the Society's visibility in our communities. Her experience includes a blend of graphic design and public relations skills. Julie was previously the marketing specialist at Gifford Medical Center in Randolph, Vermont; publishing coordinator at The Countryman Press in Woodstock, Vermont; and graphics and marketing specialist at



Julie Nelson

Heinemann Publishers in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. She currently operates a freelance graphics studio in Bethel, Vermont called Creative Ink! of Vermont LLC. Julie lives in Bethel with her Jack Russell, Allie, and two cats Smokey and Bandit. Her predecessor, Marcie Vallette, a valuable force in shaping the Society's presence using her creative talents, has moved on to a full-time position at a new organization. 

## Your Membership at Work

**Y**ou are receiving this newsletter because you have generously given to VHS, preserving Vermont's legacy. Your donation is much more than money! As you can see from the lead story on the front page of this newsletter, what you are doing is important: you are preserving historic Vermont treasures such as the old Spaulding high school building; Civil War battle flags; ski industry memorabilia; original Vermont paintings, quilts and tapestries; Vermont family documents, manuscripts and diaries; political paraphernalia; and much more!

Your donations also offer a variety of school programs, History Expo and other opportunities to audiences of all ages. In the Montpelier museum, thousands of people walk through 350 years of Vermont history each year. Thousands more delve into the Leahy library online or in Barre for genealogical and other historical research. Thanks to you, they can access over 50,000 catalogued books and serial titles, 1,500 linear feet of manuscripts, 30,000 photographs, 8,700 broadsides, 1,000 maps, and copious video, film, microfilm and oral recordings.

You love Vermont! We all do. Saving and learning about Vermont's history helps us all make important decisions about Vermont's future. Your support makes it possible—thank you! 

## Vermont Heritage at Risk: Solutions Discussed June 24, 2009

*Continued from page 1*

planning for collections care as experienced at the Athenaeum and other St. Johnsbury collecting organizations. They cited the importance of collaboration from local organizations to strengthen preservation efforts.

Brian Lindner from the Waterbury Historical Society had a cautionary tale about the Henry Jane M.D. Collection and how the Civil War surgeon's historic documents and artifacts essentially disappeared due to theft. This story was an example of how collections can be at risk at poorly funded, volunteer organizations.

The meeting concluded with Jackie Calder stating, "What we do is important to our communities and the survival of our culture since we are the keepers of its identity. We preserve the stories from the past, which guide us in the present, and give us hope for the future." She then reviewed the survey results and preliminary IMLS recommendations, which included that institutions must take action to provide safe conditions, institute emergency plans, assign responsibility for care, and provide support to allow these collections to survive.

Participants then divided into discussion groups to interpret audience reaction and ideas about how to initiate and implement strategies for collections care throughout Vermont. Clara Bruns of the Eliot D. Pratt Library spoke up: "We need to ask for funding from our towns. After all, money is allocated for town trucks to be replaced every 10 years. We're in charge of these records for far more years than that." Mary Jo Davis, Connections to Collecting advisory committee member, stated, "This is a very exciting time. This survey gives us credible evidence to go forward with validation. We have dedicated Vermonters who give of themselves for historic preservation, but by nature are hesitant to ask for help. As David Donath said, 'Now is the time to ask.'" 



*Clara Bruns (top left) stated, "We need to ask for funding from our towns."*



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## Upcoming Events

### VHS Annual Meeting, October 17, 2009

At the Pavilion, Montpelier.

**Theme:** Vermont in the 21st Century:  
How We Got Here

**Morning:** Starts at 9:30am with a short membership meeting, followed by a keynote address by Vermont author, scholar and humorist Frank Bryan. Frank will then be joined by a lively panel ready for a spirited discussion with our audience.

**Lunch:** Light fare in the Snelling Room and on the Pavilion Porch.

**Afternoon:** Filmmaker Rick Moulton will screen a "director's cut" of his film, *George Aiken: Balancing Freedom and Unity*, followed by an audience discussion with the director. The Annual Meeting will be followed by a meeting of the Board of Directors.

### League of Local Historical Societies Annual Meeting, November 6, 2009

In St. Albans. Contact Lisa Evans at 802-479-8522 or [lisa.evans@state.vt.us](mailto:lisa.evans@state.vt.us).

### Family Fun Workshops 2009–2010

See page 3 for more details.

## Mystery Photo

**INSET:** We have stumped our readers once again with last issue's mystery photo. No one was able to identify the schoolhouse in the photo that we published in our spring issue.



**T**his issue's mystery photo might be easier for some folks to identify. It shows a streetcar passing a green and a group of industrial buildings. A parade seems to be in progress. A sign on a lamp post says "city garage." Some observers have suggested that this scene might not even be from Vermont, but we're not certain.

If you can identify the location of this scene please contact the Society's librarian, Paul Carnahan, at [paul.carnahan@state.vt.us](mailto:paul.carnahan@state.vt.us) or 802-479-8508.

