Three years ago we lost one of the true champions of Vermont history with the passing of UVM Professor Emeritus Samuel B. Hand. As a professor at the University of Vermont and President of the Vermont Historical Society, Sam’s legacy at both institutions has been meaningful and enduring. Generations of UVM students attribute their abiding interest in Vermont history to their experiences in his classroom, and his contributions to the scholarship on the subject are vast.

Annual series features new research

In recognition of his contributions to both institutions, the Vermont Historical Society and the Center for Research on Vermont at UVM are collaborating to present the annual Sam Hand Lecture Series. These lectures will feature new research on topics of interest to Prof. Hand, including history, political science, law and the judiciary.

The inaugural lecture in this annual series will be held on Tuesday, October 20 at 7:00 pm in UVM’s Waterman Lounge. Historian and author Gary Shattuck will present research on opiate use in Vermont in the 1800s. While much has been written about Vermont’s 19th-century efforts to control and prohibit the consumption of alcohol, the accompanying rise in opiate use has received little attention by historians.

Opium use in Vermont, c. 1800

Gary Shattuck’s new research reveals that opium abuse was rampant in the state and grew considerably during the second half of the century, due in large measure to the state’s focus upon temperance, escalation of patent medicines containing opiates, and complicit medical and pharmaceutical professions overmedicating the population in unrestrained fashion. The surprising story of Vermont’s early problems with addiction provides useful context for understanding...
As evidenced by a series of retirement parties I have attended in recent years, it seems Vermont is experiencing significant changes on our cultural heritage landscape. Three individuals, each of whom led statewide institutions for many decades, have departed to enjoy well-deserved rest in retirement.

It began in 2012, with the retirement of Gregory Sanford, Vermont’s “larger than life” state archivist for 30 years. When he was hired in 1982 as editor of state papers, Vermont was the only state that did not have an archives. Over the next three decades Greg built Vermont’s archives and records management program through determination and a commitment to the belief that the past has important lessons for us today. Following in these enormous footsteps, Sanford’s successor, Tanya Marshall, has distinguished herself as a leader in the field who is taking on the challenge of integrating records management with archives.

Last summer we wished Giovanna Peebles well as she retired after nearly 40 years as Vermont’s first state archaeologist. At a retirement party held here at the Vermont History Center, I remarked on the vastness and diversity of people whose lives she had touched through her work. Like Gregory, Giovanna built Vermont’s archaeology program from the ground up through persistence and a special quality I refer to as “Giovannanness.” Her efforts culminated in the relocation of the Vermont Archaeology Heritage Center to our facility in Barre in 2012, a partnership that epitomizes what public/private partnerships should be.

Most recently, we gathered in the Cedar Creek Room to honor John Dumville, who ended his 35-year career as operations chief for Vermont’s state-owned historic sites last winter. During this time, John demonstrated his love of Vermont history by initiating projects to restore and preserve the state’s historic landmarks and developing local partnerships that allowed these hallowed sites to be more than static structures on the landscape.

In retirement, John tells me he is perfecting his ability to say “no” to new responsibilities, though he assures me he can never turn down an offer to help the VHS. We take great comfort knowing these sites will be cared for under the capable leadership of former assistant state curator Tracy Martin who began in this position in late June.

To Gregory, Giovanna and John we express our gratitude for all you have done to preserve and share our state’s rich heritage and extend our best wishes for the many enjoyable years of retirement that lie ahead. At the same time, we extend a helping hand to Tanya, Jess and Tracy as you build upon the good work that preceded you.

Mark S. Hudson, Executive Director
Following the trail of the infamous Matthew Lyon

As many genealogists know, following the trail of family history can be labor-intensive and slow. Many endure long hours with manuscripts, letters, and computers. A lucky few are able to hit the road to find out more about their relatives. Sometimes that road leads to the Vermont Historical Society.

The Leahy Library staff recently met four such adventurous women from Alabama who made the trip to Barre to find more information about the tumultuous Vermont political figure Matthew Lyon (1750-1822).

Shirley Williams of New Hope, Alabama, a fifth great-granddaughter of Matthew Lyon through his son James, her two daughters and a granddaughter included Vermont as part of the family history trek. They arrived in Barre after stopping in Woodbury and Fairhaven, Connecticut, and also toured through Arlington, Vermont. They were excited to find books and documents attesting to Lyon’s legacy in Vermont.

The visitors were shown a bill of sale signed by Lyon; a letter from Lyon to Andrew Selden of Bennington, in which Lyon criticizes the Sedition Acts and enumerates the reasons that the approaching war with England is a mistake; and a copy of the report of the Judiciary Committee of the 23rd U.S. Congress, in which the committee overturned Matthew Lyon’s conviction under the Alien and Sedition Acts as unconstitutional, and refunded the fine levied against him to his heirs.

Congratulations to 28 Vermont students at National History Day!

On June 18th, awards were presented at National History Day (NHD) at the University of Maryland in College Park, MD. Nearly 3,000 middle and high school students presented their work related to the 2015 theme, Leadership and Legacy in History.

Victoria Hughes, NHD Coordinator from the Vermont Historical Society, is pleased to announce that the 28 students from Vermont had a great time presenting their projects to the judges and exploring Washington, D.C. Emily Rooney from Vergennes Union Middle School won the U.S. Constitution prize for her exhibit The Legacy of the Unstoppable Bradwell. The winners of the Best of Vermont Awards were Lilianna Ziedins from Crossett Brook Middle School and Ben Ward from Montpelier High School.
In memoriam

We are sad to note the passing of Terry Griswold, former VHS trustee (1991–1993) and generous donor. We appreciate her years of dedication and commitment to the goals of the VHS.

New email addresses

As of June 1, 2015, all email addresses at the Vermont Historical Society have changed. To contact us, please use first name dot last name @ vermonthistory.org.

Please call (802) 479-8500 with any questions.

Provide a lasting foundation for Vermont’s history.

Have your name—or a loved one’s—etched into a brick that will welcome History Center visitors for years to come!

Your personalized brick in the courtyard of the Vermont History Center in Barre will help preserve the former Spaulding school and maintain VHS exhibits for a donation of $175 per brick.

Please order by August 31 at vermonthistory.org/bricks or call Jane Campbell at (802) 479-8516.

Alan Weiss says . . .

I was a history teacher and had a great love for U.S. history. I taught at Northfield High School and became president of the Northfield Historical Society.

As I was changing my estate plan, I decided, “What better way to use my assets than for an organization that will be here forever?”

We are very grateful to Alan for his generous pledge to preserve Vermont history for future generations. Please contact Jane Campbell at (802) 479-8516 or email jane.campbell@vermonthistory.org if you would like more information about including VHS in your will or estate plan.

vermont 1970s counterculture and its lasting influence

Interviewers hit the road to bring us stories from the 1970s

Interviewers Kate Blofson and Leslie Rowell have started their travels around the state—meeting, listening to, and recording people and their stories about 1970s counterculture and its influence on Vermont.

Kate is a beekeeper and community media organizer with training in oral history. She recently completed a place-based oral history project about the lower Winooski River Intervale for an M.S. in Natural Resources at UVM, and is working with the Greenhorns on an oral history project about the Grange. Kate now lives on the Huntington River in Richmond. She believes in the power and possibility of stories.

Leslie is a librarian and archivist living in West Glover. She works at the Orleans County Historical Society, Brown Library at Sterling College, and the Bread and Puppet Theater. A Goddard College graduate, Leslie was involved with organic farming and organizing farmers markets in the 1970s.

We’re looking forward to sharing the many stories they will be gathering. This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Alan Weiss

Kate Blofson

Leslie Rowell

Your NAME HERE

Alan Weiss

Kate Blofson

Leslie Rowell
Interns learn how to preserve the unique character of Barre, Vermont, for you to see

Thanks to our interns, Michelle Johnstone and Clarke Haywood, the Barre History Collection will soon be ready for public exhibit and researchers alike. Michelle comes to us with a B.A. in history from Worcester State University. She is enrolled in the Historic Preservation Graduate program at UVM. Clarke is a graduate of Norwich University and has a B.A. in history and a B.S. in secondary education. He resides in Northfield.

Since 1915, Barre citizens have collected objects that tell the story of a small town growing into the “Granite Center of the World.” Thousands of these archival documents, photos, business records, photographs, paintings, and uniforms have recently moved to the Vermont History Center in Barre from the Aldrich Library. The collection will now be housed in an environmentally-controlled storage area—and eventually brought to the public with an exciting new exhibit!

To make this possible, Clarke and Michelle are hard at work, and the Vermont Historical Society needs to raise $18,000 to fund internships and conservation materials. If you can help, please contact Jane Campbell at (802) 479-8516 or jane.campbell@vermonthistory.org.

With painstaking care, Clarke prepares records for the VHS database.
SAVE THE DATE!
September 26, 2015

Vermont Historical Society
Annual Meeting
& Fall Conference

Wild & Woolly:
Animals in Vermont History

This year, the focus will be on the importance of animals throughout Vermont’s history, as drivers of economic, social, cultural, and political change. Hope to see you there!

Vermont History Museum
Pavilion Building • 109 State Street
Montpelier, Vermont
(802) 828-2180

Put it on your calendar!
June 18 & 19, 2016

H2O: The Power of Water in Vermont History

Contact Amanda Gustin
for more information at (802) 828-2180
or amanda.gustin@vermonthistory.org
Elements of Success
Basics & Beyond

The League of Local Historical Societies and Museums (LLHSM) Annual Meeting will take place on October 30, 2015, in Burlington. This meeting is the largest yearly gathering of local history and museum professionals in the state.

The theme of “Elements of Success: Basics and Beyond” illuminates how, working with purpose and passion, organizations can utilize a good foundation as a springboard to growth and success. The meeting will include a keynote address by Stuart Comstock Gay, President & CEO of the Vermont Community Foundation; presentation of the annual LLHSM Achievement Awards; conference sessions on a variety of practical topics; and plenty of opportunities to network. Contact Community Outreach Coordinator Eileen Corcoran at eileen.corcoran@vermonthistory.org or (802) 479-8522 for more information.

September is Archaeology Month
Mammoth Discoveries

Did you know? Woolly mammoths once roamed Vermont. For our Second Saturday Gallery Talks, AOT Archaeologist Brennan Gauthier will discuss the discovery of a mammoth tooth and tusk in 1865 in Mount Holly. He will talk about theories developed at the time to explain the bones, as well as what we know now after 150 years of archaeological and scientific progress. These specimens of extinct animal life tell a remarkable history of ages long past. See listing at right for details about this Second Saturday talk.

Calendar of Events

Saturday, September 12, 2015 • 2:00 pm
Vermont History Center, Barre
Second Saturday: Mammoth Discoveries
Brennan Gauthier is the featured speaker as we celebrate Archaeology Month.

Saturday, September 26, 2015 • 9:00 am
Vermont History Museum, Montpelier
Vermont Historical Society Annual Meeting: Animals in Vermont History
From Merino sheep to the Morgan horse, Vermont has been the pastoral setting for a variety of creatures.

Saturday, October 10, 2015 • 2:00 pm
Vermont History Center, Barre
Second Saturday: Counterfeiting and Forgery in Vermont
Archivist Mariessa Dobrick tells the stories of artistic criminals and their colorful crimes.

Tuesday, October 20, 2015 • 7:00 pm
UVM Waterman Lounge, Burlington
Sam Hand lecture series
The inaugural tribute to Sam Hand, dean of Vermont historians and former president of VHS.

Friday, October 30, 2015 • daylong conference
1st Congregational Church, Burlington
League of Local Historical Societies and Museums Annual Meeting
We will look at the essential elements for a nonprofit heritage organization’s success. A must-attend event for small history organizations! Call Eileen Corcoran for registration information at (802) 479-8522.

Saturday, November 14, 2015 • 2:00 pm
Vermont History Center, Barre
Second Saturday: Mountain Brew
Author Tim Matson will share his high-spirited guide to country-style homebrew from the 1970s.

Questions? Please call Amanda Gustin for more information at (802) 828-2180, except where noted.

You can always find more on our website:
vermonthistory.org/calendar
Last issue’s mystery photograph generated a record number of responses: we tallied at least 20 positive responses. As many people recognized, the image is of the Rutland Railroad station in Proctor during the 1927 flood. Several buildings to the left in the photograph survive today. VHS member Real Parras was the first to identify the scene.

This issue’s mystery photograph comes from the scrapbook of John C. Sherburne (1883-1959), of Randolph, Vt. Sherburne served as the chief justice of the Vermont Supreme Court from 1949-1955. This photograph is dated June 1917, but we don’t know where the building is located. If you can help, contact Paul Carnahan at (802) 479-8508 or paul.carnahan@vermonthistory.org.

NOTE: Several people also tried to identify our previous issue’s Greek Revival building photograph donated by the Glover Historical Society. There has been no confirmed identification yet. One person thought the building might be in New Hampshire, which is a real possibility.