

History Connections

Vermont Historical Society

News & Notes

Winter 2013 / Volume #7 / Number 2



Since 1838

Vermont Historical Society
60 Washington Street
Barre, Vermont 05641-4209

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Provide a lasting foundation for Vermont's history.



Have your name etched into a brick that will welcome visitors in the courtyard at the History Center. Please call Amy Sholk at (802) 479-8525 for details.

Founding the Vermont Historical Society amid Era of tumultuous change 1838

Join us for an evening of history, music, and poetry as we tell the story of the decade that led to the founding of the Vermont Historical Society. This year, the Vermont Historical Society's annual Farmers' Night program held at the Vermont State House will celebrate our 175th anniversary by delving more deeply into the years that led up to its founding. Actors will give voice to the writings and songs of Vermonters who lived that history, speaking passionately on politics, religion, and social changes.

The decade from 1830 to 1840 was one of the busiest and most turbulent in American history. A little more than 50 years from the Revolution, Americans were beginning to confirm their own political, cultural, and social identity. With the passing of the Revolutionary generation, they were seeking new ideas and new heroes.

Vermont saw an economic and population boom during this time, as Merino sheep were discovered to thrive in its rocky pastures. In 1837, there were over one million sheep in the state—and that same year, the price of wool began to decline precipitously. At the same time, the opening of the American West was beginning, and many younger Vermonters succumbed to the promise of inexpensive, fertile land. One observer stated



The second State House was built to house expanded government.

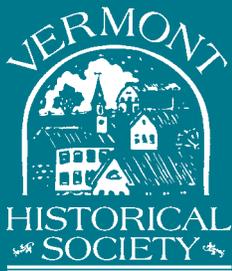
that "you will not find one in twenty who lives where his father lived or does as his fathers have done." Political infighting led to the creation of the Vermont State Senate, and the growing pains of government led to the building of a new State House.

Across the state and around the country, citizens raised their voices for reform. Politics became personal, as Andrew Jackson's

continued on page 3—

Celebrating 175 years!





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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.

Executive Director: Mark S. Hudson
Editor: Julie Nelson
Printing: Stillwater Graphics

Vermont History Museum & Store
Pavilion Building, next to State House
109 State Street, Montpelier, VT
Tuesday–Saturday 10am to 4pm
(802) 828-2291

Vermont History Center
60 Washington Street, Barre, VT
(802) 479-8500

• **Vermont Heritage Galleries, Offices & Book Nook**
• Monday–Friday 9am to 4pm

• **Leahy Library**
• Tuesday–Friday 9am to 4pm
• Wednesday 9am to 8pm
• Second Saturdays 9am to 4pm
• (802) 479-8509

• **Library admission:**
• Non-members: \$5
• Members and students: Free

One admission fee gives access to both the Vermont Heritage Galleries & Vermont History Museum:
Families: \$12; Adults: \$5
Students, children, seniors: \$3
Members & children under 6: Free
Student school groups: Free
(802) 828-2180

www.vermonthistory.org
vhs-info@state.vt.us

From the Director

Vermont Historical Society: 175 years young!

In the final hours of their 1838 session, the Vermont Legislature passed a bill creating the Vermont Historical and Antiquarian Society. It was signed into law by Governor Jenison the same day, November 5. This new organization had a slow and quiet beginning under the leadership of its founding president, Henry Stevens, who waited nearly two years to call the Society's first meeting. The constitution and bylaws adopted at that meeting defined the purpose of the Vermont Historical and Antiquarian Society to discover, collect and preserve "whatever relates to the material, agricultural, industrial, civil, political, literary, ecclesiastical, and military history of the State of Vermont."

As we embark upon a year-long celebration of our 175th Anniversary, it is notable to reflect upon how we have grown and evolved as an organization, while remaining steadfast to the original mission and ideals. Throughout 2013 we will be commemorating this milestone anniversary through public programs, publications, development initiatives and other activities, culminating in a celebratory event on November 5. We invite all our members and friends to join us as we celebrate 175 years of preserving Vermont's heritage.

As our cover story tells you, the celebration will begin with our Farmers' Night program on Wednesday, February 20. The evening will feature music, poetry, readings and drama that will help tell the story of Vermont in 1838. This event will bring the 1830s to life and provide meaningful context to the events surrounding the founding of the VHS.

In this and other newsletters in 2013, we will include short vignettes from people associated with the VHS. These articles will offer personal reflections and

interesting anecdotes from our storied past. Grant Reynolds' piece on page 3 spans 60 years—from his experiences as an award-winning essayist to his current role as a trustee and contributor to our journal.



The anniversary of our founding, November 5, will offer an opportunity to party like its 1838! We look forward to an event that will cap our year of celebration and launch us into our next 175 years.

Our 175th Anniversary offers an opportunity to reflect upon our accomplishments as an organization, provides an impetus for gathering the stories from our past, and allows us to look into the future. Members and friends of the Vermont Historical Society also can leave a lasting reminder of

The anniversary of our founding, November 5, will offer an opportunity to party like its 1838!

this anniversary year through our "Bricks of History" campaign. Your name, the names of loved ones, or the name of your organization will be remembered for years to come at the Vermont History Center when you purchase a brick that will be placed in the courtyard at the building's front entrance. Each brick costs \$175, with the proceeds placed in a reserve fund to preserve the History Center and maintain our exhibitions. Please call Amy Sholk at (802) 479-8525 for more information.

We look forward to the coming year with great anticipation and excitement. Each of you is invited to join as we celebrate being 175 years young!

Mark S. Hudson, *Executive Director*

Tumultuous . . . *Continued from page 1—*

Democratic party gave way to William Henry Harrison's Whigs in campaigns centered around personality and image. Andrew Jackson's Bank War led the country into what many historians have characterized as the worst economic crisis in American history—the Panic of 1837. In 1840, Senator Daniel Webster of

Visitors to Farmers' Night will step back in time to experience the sweeping changes and excitement of the 1830s . . .

Massachusetts, campaigning on behalf of William Henry Harrison's "Log Cabins and Hard Cider" Whig campaign, spoke at Stratton Mountain in southern Vermont. Many who attended speculated that the crowd—anywhere from 10,000 to 20,000 strong—was the largest group of people ever assembled in Vermont.

In Canada, two brief rebellions incited many Vermonters to choose sides and in some cases take up arms. Young men formed "Hunters' Lodges" and considered the Patriot War a natural successor to the American Revolution. Hundreds were arrested and some were transported to Australia. It took the intervention of the federal government to normalize diplomatic relations with Canada.

Activists campaigned for temperance, abolition, and women's suffrage. Alcohol was a constant in the lives of Vermonters—hard cider, fruit brandies, beer, and ale were drunk at nearly every social occasion. By the 1830s, however, many had begun to speak out actively against the dangers of alcohol consumption, citing the social evils of drunken and disorderly conduct. Hundreds banded together in organizations that wrote, marched, and sang—and achieved their goal. Vermont was a "dry" state from 1852 to 1903.

Slavery, America's greatest moral evil, was ended in Vermont with the writing of its constitution, and by 1804 all states north of the Mason-Dixon Line had either abolished slavery or made plans for gradual emancipation. The South's "peculiar institution" held tremendous economic sway, however, and New Englanders were at the forefront of the movement to end it. Famous abolitionists such as William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass came to Vermont to speak, and native Vermonters wrote and campaigned eloquently for the cause of emancipation.

Women, too, saw the beginnings of their own reform movement. As they campaigned for temperance, abolition, and a host of other social reforms, they discovered their own voices. In the next decade, the women's suffrage movement took off with the Seneca Falls Convention.



Harrison's "Log Cabins and Hard Cider" Whig campaign was prominently displayed on this elaborate pin.

Underlying all of the push for social reform was a series of religious revivals that swept through the northeast. Charismatic preachers such as Charles Grandison Finney, Lyman Beecher, and Jedediah Burchard held camp meetings that could last for weeks, exhorting their audiences to repent and convert in sermons that lasted for hours. Vermont was one of the most deeply religious parts of the country at that time, and many who went on to form their own religious sects—such as

continued on page 4—

This is the first in a series of vignettes to help celebrate our 175th anniversary.

I remember when . . .

I met the Vermont Historical Society for the first time in the 1940s, when I was in grade school in Montpelier. We visited the State Museum, which I believe was run by VHS even then. All I remember from that visit was the stuffed mountain lion, the last one shot in Vermont.



In the 1950s, VHS ran the Edmunds Essay Contest which drew entries from high school juniors all over Vermont. Prizes were given to the two best in each county and for the three best in the state. In 1952, I earned \$10 for winning Washington County with a paper on Berdan's Sharpshooters in the Civil War.

Contest participation by seniors was optional, but the \$100 first prize was real money in those days—so as a senior, I dug into the story of a little gunboat in Arnold's fleet that fought the British off Valcour Island in Lake Champlain in 1776. The *Philadelphia* sank during the battle, but was raised in 1938. It's now in the Smithsonian in Washington. I didn't win the grand prize for my story, but the \$75 second prize was still very welcome.

In 1956, I was writing an Honors Thesis at Bates College on a forgotten 1837 incident. Canadian militia crossed the Niagara River and burned a little ferryboat that was supporting Canadian rebels camped on a U.S. island. Over

continued on page 6—

Tumultuous . . . *Continued from page 3—*

Joseph Smith and John Humphrey Noyes—were originally from Vermont.

Amid all this change and tumult, a group of Vermonters came together to found the Vermont Historical and Antiquarian Society in 1838. Four men—Daniel Pierce Thompson, George P. Mansur, Henry Stevens, and Oramel H. Smith—envisioned an organization that was primarily a library. Though it was chartered on November 5, 1838, it was two more years before the Society held its first official meeting in October 1840.

For the next 175 years, the Vermont Historical Society pursued its mission of documenting the remarkable history of the state. Its organization and methods have evolved, as history organizations have changed from antiquarian libraries and “cabinets of curiosities” to valued community centers and first-rate educational institutions.

Visitors to Farmers’ Night on February 20 will step back in time to experience the sweeping changes and excitement of the 1830s, and celebrate the landmark founding of the Vermont Historical Society.

The Farmers’ Night event is free and open to the public at the Vermont State House on State Street in downtown Montpelier on Wednesday, February 20 at 7:30pm. 



A temperance medal declared health, wealth, happiness and long life for those who did not partake in intoxicating beverages.

New staff bring enthusiasm and new energy

The VHS Museum and Public Programs Department now has two new employees to assist with our mission.

Amanda Gustin is the new Public Programs Coordinator and Jessie Dall is the new Museum Assistant. Amanda earned her undergraduate degree at Middlebury College and graduated in 2012 from Tufts University earning a Master’s Degree



Amanda Gustin

Jessie Dall

in history and museum studies. She worked for five years as a researcher at the Mary Baker Eddy Library in Boston, Massachusetts. Amanda is responsible for VHS public programming including the Vermont History Expo, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and Farmers’ Night.

Jessie is a graduate of Mount Holyoke College and received a Master of Antiquities degree in 2008 at Christie’s Education Program in London, England. Before moving back to Vermont she worked at the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco. As Museum Assistant she will work with the museum, education, and public program staff.

Both women will be working primarily in Montpelier so the next time you’re in town, stop in and say hello. 

175 years of discovering, collecting, pers

1838: Vermont Historical and Antiquarian Society is founded by Henry Stevens, Daniel Pierce Thompson, and others.

1846: The Society’s first publication, *Deficiencies in our History*, is released.

1858: The word “Antiquarian” is dropped from the Society’s name.

1863: The Society urges towns to prepare town histories.

1869: First State funding of \$250 is received.

1870: Mrs. Moses Strong of Rutland becomes the Society’s first female member.

1872: Abby Maria Hemenway is given an honorary membership in recognition of her contributions to Vermont history.

1930: The Society’s mission expands, adding “to exhibit” to “discover, collect and preserve.”

1949: The Society begins *News and Notes*, to serve members with a non-academic interest in history.

1953: The Society’s Kent Tavern Museum in Calais opens to the public.

1954: The first meeting of the League of Local Historical Societies is held.

1957: Harold Goddard Rugg (1883–1957) donates his extensive collections to the VHS library and museum.

1971: The first major fundraising campaign raises \$112,500 to create a modern museum—a new era in public access to the collections.

1981: Deborah Pickman Clifford is elected the Society’s first woman president.

1994: VHS receives federal NHPRC grant to catalog manuscripts.

2000: VHS hosts the first Vermont History Expo.

Vermonters brought humanitarian relief to Europe

At the end of World War II, the world was in disarray. Culture and lives had been inexorably changed. Among the many issues of concern were the large number of people who had been uprooted from their homes. In 1948, the United States Congress passed the Displaced Persons Act to admit displaced Europeans and grant them permanent residence in this country. President Harry S. Truman turned to Vermonters Ugo Carusi to oversee this massive influx.

Carusi had been born in Italy to naturalized American citizens. He grew up in Barre's north end and graduated in 1919 from Spaulding High School—now the Vermont History Center. Carusi worked first for the Vermont Attorney General and then moved to Washington, D.C., in 1925 to become personal assistant to U.S. Attorney General John G. Sargent of Ludlow, Vermont. Carusi graduated from National University Law School in 1931 and worked in the Justice Department for almost 28 years, serving under eight Attorneys General.

Perhaps because of his own background, Carusi developed a specialty in immigration law. President Franklin D.

Roosevelt nominated Carusi for U.S. Immigration Commissioner, and Ugo served in that capacity from 1945 to 1947. Then President Truman gave Carusi a special appointment as chairman of the Displaced Persons Commission from 1948 to 1950. Although the Displaced Persons Act was controversial,



Ugo Carusi greeted by displaced persons in Munich, Germany, September 1948, before the first transport boat set sail for New York.

Carusi was widely praised for his work—immigrating and resettling some 400,000 people. A 1948 *Washington Star* headline called him “Guardian of the Turnstile” and a *Washington Post* headline opined, “Fate of Thousands in Hands of Carusi, Laborer for Humanity Since Age of 4.”

After his tenure with the Commission, Carusi continued to work on immigration issues, including travels to Vietnam in the 1970s to offer his expertise. Carusi passed away at his home in Washington, D.C.,

on July 21, 1994, and is buried in Rock Creek Cemetery.

In March 2012, Ugo Carusi's sister, Iole, presented the Vermont Historical Society a scrapbook that her brother compiled to document his professional career. That scrapbook is now preserved at the VHS's Leahy Library and can be used by researchers today and into the future.



Serving and exhibiting Vermont's heritage

2001: VHS Community History Partnership fosters collaborations between local societies and schools.

2002: The Vermont History Center opens, providing secure collections storage, a research library, administrative offices, and a community meeting space.

2002: Vermont History Expo wins an Award of Merit from the American Association for State and Local History.

2004: The Vermont History Museum's core exhibit *Freedom & Unity* opens. Over 100,000 people explore Vermont history in the exhibition's first eight years. VHS publishes *Freedom & Unity*, a comprehensive history of Vermont.

2005: The *Freedom & Unity* exhibit and publication win an Award of Merit from the American Association of State and Local History.

2006: VHS library introduces online catalog for researchers.

2007: The Society's innovative programs earn the Institute

for Museum and Library Services Medal, the nation's highest recognition for cultural heritage organizations.

2008: VHS conducts statewide survey of Vermont's collecting organizations, resulting in expanded offerings of workshops, technical assistance, and mentoring.

2009–2010: VHS assumes responsibility for the Vermont Women's History Project and services formerly provided by the Vermont Museum & Gallery Alliance.

2011: *Saving Vermont's Treasures* campaign surpasses its \$900,000 fundraising goal, creating three galleries at the Vermont History Center and saving the historic bell tower.

2012: Archaeology Heritage Center arrives.

VHS receives two Awards of Merit from the American Association of State and Local History.

2013: VHS celebrates its 175 year!

Did you get your copy?

Are you receiving our *Plan your future of Vermont* newsletter? This is a special newsletter designed to give you helpful information and strategies for planning your future, saving on taxes, and ensuring that your will or estate plan meets your needs and values. Some of the recent articles have included:



- How a VHS annuity can give you regular, fixed income
- What to consider before you create a will
- How you can donate your property to VHS—and still use it!
- How often you need to update your will

If you'd like to receive these bi-annual newsletters, please let us know! You can contact Amy Sholk at (802) 479-8525 or amy.sholk@state.vt.us.

History Day student attends grand opening of the National WWII Museum building

Through his participation in Vermont History Day, Luke Jackson, a student from Milton High School, earned a free trip to the grand opening of the newest building at the National WWII museum in New Orleans.

You can see Luke's "Small State, Huge Contribution" research at <http://salutetofreedom.org/vt.html>.

Vermont History Day is an exciting education program that encourages students to study history and expand their knowledge. It also provides students the opportunity to share the knowledge they have gained from their historical research by creating projects for the state contest. Vermont History Day is affiliated with National History Day.

The program is open to Vermont students in grades five through twelve and home study students ages 10 to 18.

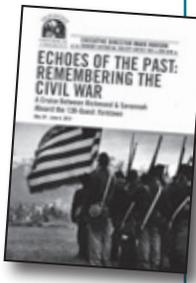
Vermont History Day will take place on Saturday, April 6, 2013 at Spaulding High School in Barre.

CRUISE

May 25 to June 4, 2013

Join VHS for this itinerary that includes cities, battlefields and historic sites of the Civil War.

Reserve now!
(800) 257-5767



Be a History Helper!

Consider helping students learn about Vermont history! Learn about becoming a History Helper at the Vermont History Museum.

History Helpers—volunteer tour guides—lead students through the *Freedom & Unity* exhibit at the museum.

To learn more, join us:

**Information session on Thursday, February 21
10:30 to 11:30 am at the Vermont History Museum
109 State Street in Montpelier**

Questions? Contact Victoria Hughes, Education Coordinator, at victoria.hughes@state.vt.us or (802) 828-1413.

I remember when . . . *Continued from page 3—*

Thanksgiving weekend, I visited the State Library which was next door to the VHS in Montpelier. I found that Vermont newspapers, in those pre-telegraph days, got their news by copying from big city papers. Nearby Canada was more interesting than distant Washington then, so I picked up a lot of information from papers like the Danville *North Star*.

I came home to Vermont in 2003 after 50 years as a lawyer in Washington, D.C. The VHS selected me as a trustee a few years later. I judged History Day exhibits several times until, in 2012, I had the chance to judge historical essays submitted for the same Edmunds Prize that I won in 1953. I now serve on the VHS Publications Committee, where we wrestle with the cost of print publication and how to adapt to print-on-demand and electronic publishing. Being on the committee gives me a chance to learn about Vermont history by reading submitted manuscripts—including those that are good but that we can't afford to publish.

I have published several articles in *Vermont History* on the 10th Vermont Infantry's service on the C&O Canal, a few miles from our former Maryland home. I have also produced two History Expo exhibits for my town of Tinmouth.

Grant Reynolds, *VHS Trustee*

Vermont's Civil War Generation— one of our three Vermont Heritage Gallery exhibits

Vermont's Civil War Hemlocks set the tone for a deeper understanding of Vermont's role in this tragic chapter of America's history.



Even the grandchildren were amazed at Vermont's intense involvement in the Battle Between the States.

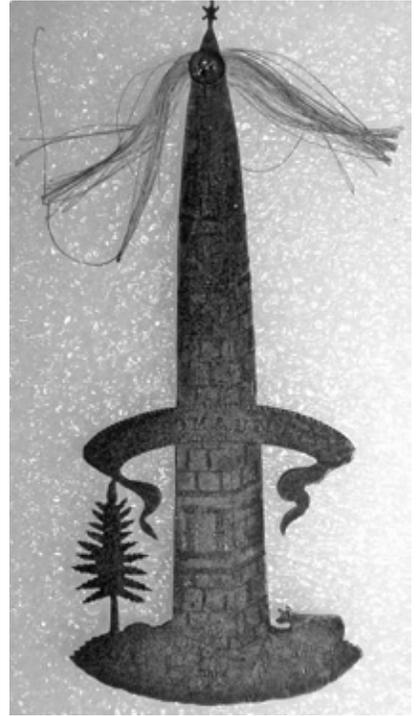


Unusual souvenir recalls a time of celebration

An unusual miniature metal replica of the Bennington Battle Monument was recently transferred from the National Park Service to the VHS museum.

Originally, the piece was thought to represent the Bunker Hill Battle Monument which is now part of the Boston National Historic Park. When looking at the piece more closely, NPS Museum Specialist Brendan Sexton saw Vermont's motto, *Freedom and Unity*, stamped in the small banner at the center. Realizing it was Bennington's Revolutionary War monument, he contacted the VHS.

The intricately decorated, three-inch-tall piece is of the monument, with the motto on the banner, and at its base are other symbols from the state seal: a cow, sheaves of wheat and a pine tree. We believe it was made as a part of a souvenir badge worn during celebrations related to the building of the Bennington Battle Monument. Which celebration is unclear, since there were a few celebrations during the monument's planning and construction. If anyone has more information or has seen a similar piece, please contact VHS Curator, Jackie Calder (jackie.calder@state.vt.us).



The Bennington Battle Monument souvenir measures three inches tall.

Be a Technogiver!

Many things we do rely on computers—to keep up with technology, we replace three to four computers each year.

A gift of \$800 will make you an official VHS Technogiver and will buy a new computer for VHS.

To become a Technogiver, please contact Jane Campbell at (802) 479-8516 or jane.campbell@state.vt.us. Thanks!



Remembering . . .

A gentleman from the WWII era who recently visited one of our new galleries sent a donation with a note that said "Thank you for the wonderful new Barre exhibit. It made me cry."

Thank you, sir, for your donation—and for reminding me that our work preserving history is so very important.

—Jane Campbell, *Director of Development*



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Vermont Historical Society

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Barre, Vermont 05641-4209

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Mystery Photo

From last issue . . .

No one has been able to provide positive identification of last issue's mystery photograph, so the location of this classic Vermont house remains a mystery.



You can participate in identifying mystery photographs between issues of *History Connections!* Become a friend of the VHS on Facebook. *It's fun!*

[www.facebook.com/
VermontHistoricalSociety](http://www.facebook.com/VermontHistoricalSociety)



The subject of this issue's mystery photograph is another residence, this one from the Victorian era. We don't know anything about this image except that it was printed at an impressive size of 10.5" x 13". The house is also of an impressive size and grandeur. It may not be located in Vermont, but we would love to know!

If you recognize this building, please contact VHS librarian Paul Carnahan at paul.carnahan@state.vt.us or 802-479-8508.

Do you recognize this?

