



Introduction

It was once said that every cultivated man's second country was France; it can certainly be said that every American's second State is Vermont . . . The greater part of our national heritage is to be found in the record of our States. From the study of that record we can gain a renewal of our most precious possession, faith in the national ideal.

—Allan Nevins, foreword to Earle Newton,
*The Vermont Story: A History of the People of
the Green Mountain State, 1749–1849* (1983)

The Vermont Historical Society's second biennial symposium, "The Future of Vermont History in the 21st Century: Needs and Opportunities," was held on April 20, 2002, and was dedicated to the memory of Vermont historian and bibliographer, T. D. Seymour Bassett. The symposium and the following proceedings are part of the Society's ongoing effort to encourage research in new as well as underrepresented areas of the state's history and to promote an exchange of ideas among members of the academy, the public history community, and the general public.

In this volume of *Vermont History*, you will have the opportunity to review the harvest of this one-day endeavor, which was designed to review past labors, focus on current work, and explore new avenues for future examination.

In order to refine the focus of the symposium, the Society solicited the opinions of more than two dozen friends and colleagues in various historical disciplines. Using their comments, the Society planned session topics relating to *Ethnicity and Gender*, *Business and Labor*, *Vermont in the National Context*, and *Arts, Crafts and Culture* as well as a panel on *Tools and Resources for Future Research*. With the help of an enthusiastic audience, fifteen historians and museum professionals focused the discussion over the course of the day and ended with a wrap-up discussion, "What's Next in Vermont History Research?" We expect

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the results of this meeting to inform the contents of future symposia. And we also hope that, as one speaker suggested, the larger topic of the “Future of Vermont History,” will be readdressed every five years or so.

I would especially like to thank two of the Society’s staff—Alan Berolzheimer, book editor, and Amy Cunningham, director of education—for their hard work in bringing this project to fruition. Special thanks must be given to Michael Sherman for his keynote address on the current state of Vermont history. Using Tom Bassett’s 1981 bibliographical essay as his starting point, Sherman provided a coherent overview of the development of Vermont historical research over the past twenty years that set the stage for the day’s discussions.

In addition to thanking all the presenters and facilitators for their insight into the complexities of interpreting Vermont’s history, the Society would also like to recognize and express its gratitude to its own Publication and Research Committee and to the Institute of Museum and Library Services for their financial support.

GAINOR B. DAVIS

Editor’s note: This issue of *Vermont History* contains most, but not all, of the presentations at the symposium. Videotapes of all the sessions are available for viewing in the Vermont Historical Society library at the Vermont History Center, 60 Washington Street, Barre.