

# VERMONT ARCHIVES AND MANUSCRIPTS

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*This occasional section alerts researchers to the rich resources acquired regularly by Vermont's historical repositories. News of accessions and openings of processed collections, as well as longer evaluative descriptions of research collections are welcome. Please send submissions to the Editor, Vermont History.*

## Vermont in the Civil War: Web Sites and Resources for the Civil War Sesquicentennial, 1861–1865/2011–2015

As we approach the second year of the five-year commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, several institutions have developed web sites and resources for researchers of Vermont's participation in the war and the war's effect on Vermont and Vermonters. Below are descriptions of several that are currently available. In future issues of *Vermont History*, we will keep readers informed of additional resources that come to our attention.

- The enormous **Vermont in the Civil War** site, [www.vermontcivilwar.org](http://www.vermontcivilwar.org), should be on any researcher's list of Vermont Civil War online resources. In fact it is the starting place for most people.
- The official site for the **Vermont Civil War Sesquicentennial** commemoration is [www.vermontcivilwar150.com](http://www.vermontcivilwar150.com).
- The **Vermont Council on the Humanities** has a site that includes links to various resources: [http://www.vermonthumanities.org/index\\_files/civilwarhomefront.htm](http://www.vermonthumanities.org/index_files/civilwarhomefront.htm). People can sign up for the "Civil War Book of Days" (a weekly e-mail of events 150 years ago that week)

on a different page on that site: [http://www.vermonthumanities.org/index\\_files/CivilWarBookofDays.htm](http://www.vermonthumanities.org/index_files/CivilWarBookofDays.htm).

#### THE VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Vermont Historical Society has two web sites devoted to Civil War materials.

##### *Civil War Transcriptions*

Many Vermonters who fought in the Civil War wrote letters home and kept diaries describing the conditions in which they lived. The Vermont Historical Society is proud to host a vast collection of Civil War manuscripts: letters, diaries, and other documents related to the war. Here we've provided online transcripts of some of the letters and diaries in our collection, arranged by the author's last name. Access the documents at: [www.vermonthistory.org/cwtranscriptions](http://www.vermonthistory.org/cwtranscriptions).

##### *Civil War Officers Gallery*

These images were collected by the Vermont Officers Reunion Society beginning in 1869. Work on the collection continued through at least 1894, almost thirty years after the war had ended. The images were originally at the Vermont State House but now are in the collection of the Vermont Historical Society. The images capture the likenesses of 859 Vermont Civil War officers, 63 percent of the 1,363 men who served as officers during the conflict. View the images at: <http://vermonthistory.org/index.php/library/image-collections/civil-war-officers-gallery.html>.

#### VERMONT STATE ARCHIVES

Vermont's state government records provide a rich resource for researchers studying the Civil War. As the country debated the issues leading up to the war, the state's responses to national events such as the Missouri Compromise of 1820 and the Dred Scott decision in 1857 are documented in executive and legislative records. See for example, "Vermont and the Dred Scott Decision" at the State Archives "Spotlight on Records" page: <http://vermont-archives.org/research/spotlight/records.htm>.

With the outbreak of open conflict, records detail the mobilization of the state, its support of the war effort, and the service of Vermont soldiers from 1861 to 1865. Finally, the legacy of the war is chronicled in later records related to commemorations and the financial costs of the war.

The Vermont State Archives has created an online guide to its Civil War-related holdings and encourages the public to come and explore these important records. As the state and the nation commemorate the

sesquicentennial of the war, we hope that a reinvigorated interest in this critical period of history will promote research and yield new insights into these events that forever changed Vermont and the United States. Access the online guide at: [http://vermont-archives.org/research/civil\\_war/index.htm](http://vermont-archives.org/research/civil_war/index.htm).

UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT LIBRARIES'  
CENTER FOR DIGITAL INITIATIVES

*Vermonters in the Civil War Digital Collection*

Vermont soldiers in the Civil War wrote an enormous quantity of letters and diaries, of which many thousands have survived in libraries, historical societies, and in private hands. The University of Vermont Libraries' Center for Digital Initiatives' latest collection, "Vermonters in the Civil War," makes a selection of letters and diaries from the University of Vermont and the Vermont Historical Society available in a searchable database that includes images of the originals and full transcriptions.

The collection includes materials dating from 1861 at the start of the Civil War, and will grow with additional materials throughout the years of the sesquicentennial commemoration, from 2011 through 2015. The digitized materials provide a variety of perspectives on events and issues. The voices represented in the collection include private soldiers and officers, as well as a few civilians.

Subject content for the 1861 letters and diaries covers a great deal of ground. The many logistical issues involved in launching the war effort come to light in the letters of General John W. Phelps, while officers such as Lieutenant Roswell Farnham often made thoughtful observations on the events and personalities in the camps and in the field. The enlisted men occasionally described important events in detail, but more often wrote about everyday life and concerns. Eyewitness accounts of 1861 engagements at Big Bethel (June 9–10), Bull Run (July 21), and Lewinsville (September 11) reveal the motivations and expectations of the men in arms, while descriptions of living conditions, drilling, sickness, and political intrigue provide insight on the soldiers' experiences.

Visit the Center for Digital Initiatives at <http://cdi.uvm.edu> to see how the struggles of a divided nation come to life in the words of the men and women who lived through the Civil War and experienced the moments of triumph, comradeship, suffering and grief.

— PRUDENCE DOHERTY, *Public Services Librarian*  
*Special Collections, Bailey/Howe Library*  
*University of Vermont*

## CASTLETON STATE COLLEGE LIBRARY

*Conscripting Castleton: The Draft in a Northern Community during the Civil War*

Castleton State College history faculty and students in partnership with the college library have transcribed and digitized the town's Civil War enrollment roster and created a website, "Conscripting Castleton: The Draft in a Northern Community during the Civil War." The Castleton roster can be found on the college library's website at [http://www.castleton.edu/library/civil\\_war\\_roster](http://www.castleton.edu/library/civil_war_roster).

In 2007 the college library acquired the 50-page handwritten roster, which is the town's official record of the eligibility of men for service in the Federal army. Professor Andre Fleche, a Civil War scholar, and history students (now graduates) Brianna Gagne and Jake Richards transcribed the document, which can be difficult to decipher and interpret.

Fleche said, "The roster identifies more than 200 Castleton-area residents who served in the Union armies and all the military-aged men who lived in town, including those who were drafted, died, paid commutations, or relocated. This website will interest scholars, genealogists, and anyone interested in local history or the Civil War."

Library staff created web pages from the transcriptions and scanned the actual pages, so that visitors to the site can view the original roster.

Library director Sandy Duling said, "We're excited to be part of the Castleton roster project. It's often assumed that only major university libraries will undertake digitization projects. The Castleton roster demonstrates that even small libraries can make significant contributions to the preservation and distribution of our historical record."

The site contains a wealth of information about the ages, occupations, and health of men in Castleton in the 1860s. Heart and pulmonary diseases afflicted even young men. Some are noted as having "Gone West" or "Gone to Parts Unknown."

As a graduate student at the University of Virginia, Fleche worked on an extensive Civil War digital archive called "The Valley of the Shadow: Two Communities in the American Civil War."

Fleche said, "We plan to expand the Castleton site by adding information on individuals taken from the census and military service records, which will provide a rich profile of many town residents and allow researchers to make comparisons and draw conclusions about the social backgrounds of those who served, were drafted, stayed home, or paid fees."

For additional information and inquiries, contact: Andre Fleche, history professor, 802-468-6069; (May–September 2011: 802-683-0213); Sandy Duling, library director, 802-468-1396.

— ENNIS DULING, *Communications Director*  
*Castleton State College*

#### NORWICH UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

The Norwich University Archives and Special Collections unit at the Kreitzberg Library houses a variety of manuscripts, letters, photographs, and hand-written memoirs that document the experiences of our alumni, faculty, and staff in the Civil War. As the nation's oldest private military college, Norwich University produced hundreds of officers who served throughout the army's hierarchy. The personal papers of a number of these Civil War veterans can be found in our archives. Additionally, biographical files compiled by Norwich University staff include further documentation of Norwich men who served on both sides of the war.

Norwich University also played an important role in preparing the nation for war by providing military training to numerous Civil War volunteers. Institutional records, such as course catalogs, minutes of the board of trustees, and student newspapers, document aspects of this military training as well as campus climate during the Civil War. Finding aids and other more detailed information about our Civil War holdings can be found at: <http://library2.norwich.edu/catablog/civil-war/>.

— GAIL WIESE, *Assistant Archivist*  
*Norwich University Archives and Special Collections*

#### THE PEACHAM HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

##### *Draft List of Peacham Men in the Civil War*

In commemoration of the 150th Anniversary of the start of the Civil War, Peacham Historical Association (PHA) has prepared a draft list of soldiers who lived in Peacham before, during, and after the Civil War. The list together with photographs, transcripts of letters and diaries, and other materials will be published in late 2011. You may review the draft list on the PHA website: <http://www.peachamhistorical.org/?bd329370>.

To find out what other local societies have done to collect Civil War materials and put them online, use the Vermont Historical Society's links to local historical societies: <http://www.vermonthhistory.org/index.php/local-history.html>.

## THE SHELDON MUSEUM OF VERMONT HISTORY

The Sheldon Museum of Vermont History in Middlebury has commissioned an original play on Addison County people in the Civil War, based on primary sources from the Museum's archives. "Remember Me to All the Good Folks," written and staged by Joan Robinson, head of education at the Flynn Center for the Performing Arts, will be presented at Town Hall Theater in Middlebury on the weekend of Sept. 9–10, 2011, and at the FlynnSpace in Burlington, on Sunday, September 18. There are plans for touring the show elsewhere in the state and producing a video at a later date. For more information, go to the museum's web site: <http://www.henrysheldonmuseum.org/index.html>.

— JAN ALBERS, *Executive Director*  
*Henry Sheldon Museum of Vermont History*