

VERMONT HISTORY

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❖ Against the Odds: Edward Hitchcock and the Vermont Geological Survey

Robert T. McMaster

❖ Summit Preserve: The University of Vermont's Unprecedented 1859 Purchase of the Summit of Mount Mansfield

Robert A. Mello

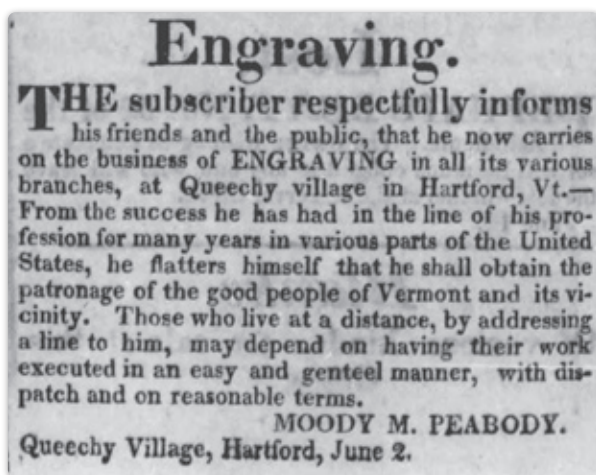
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About the Covers

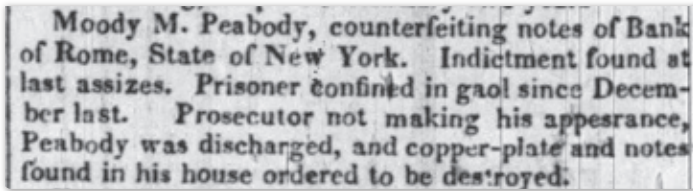
Moody M. Peabody, Vermont Engraver and Counterfeiter

What does a map of Vermont have to do with counterfeit money? The map on the front cover of this issue of *Vermont History* was engraved by Moody M. Peabody (1789-1866), who led an interesting life outside of his prolific engraving work. Peabody engraved this map in 1824 for Zadock Thompson's *Gazetteer of the State of Vermont*, the first Vermont gazetteer to include a map. One of Peabody's earlier engravings, titled "Freemason's Heart" (back cover), was published by Ebenezer Hutchinson in Hartford, Vermont, in 1820 and is currently held by the VHS Library. Peabody went on to engrave plates used for Masonic aprons, maps, charts, diplomas, landscapes, and forms, as well as working for several printers. He placed advertisements for his engraving business in Quechee, Vermont, in 1820, and by 1826 he was in New York and listed as an engraver, copperplate printer, and sometimes as a watchmaker.



Advertisement, Woodstock Observer (Woodstock, Vermont) 13 June 1820, page 4. Accessed from <https://www.newspapers.com/clippings/>, September 19, 2023.

So, how did Peabody end up arrested for making counterfeit plates of money in New York State in 1832? Counterfeiting was a prominent issue in the early United States, and in 1797 the legislature of Vermont passed a law against counterfeiting with punishments ranging from a fine to the cropping of one or both ears. It's unclear exactly just how many times Peabody was charged with counterfeiting, but according to the *Montreal Gazette*, (7 October 1841) Peabody was jailed at least once between December 1840 and October 1841 and ordered to destroy his counterfeit plates and notes.



Montreal Gazette (Montreal, Quebec, Canada), 7 October 1841, page 2. Material republished with the express permission of Montreal Gazette, a division of Postmedia Network Inc. Accessed from <https://www.newspapers.com/clippings/>, September 19, 2023.

Peabody also shows up in the Kingston (Ontario, Canada) *Daily News* in 1859 being brought to court for “obtaining goods under false pretenses.”

Moody Peabody was a talented craftsman who seems to have made the decision to be resourceful about making his skills profitable, even if it meant breaking the law. Advertisements for his engraving and printing business show up in newspapers in Canada again by 1843, so his legal trouble didn't keep him down for long. The hidden history behind this map of Vermont is only one example of the interesting tales that can be found in the collections of the Vermont Historical Society, and we invite everyone to come visit us and explore our state's stories.

JULS SUNDBERG
Metadata Librarian, Vermont Historical Society

Front cover. Map of Vermont, engraved by Moody M. Peabody for Zadock Thompson, A Gazetteer of the State of Vermont [etc.] (1824). Vermont Historical Society, Small maps: 912.743 P311.

Back cover. Freemason's Heart, engraved by Moody M. Peabody. Vermont Historical Society, Small broadsides: 366.1022 F877.



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