

NEWS

VERMONT HISTORY

A Publication of the Vermont Historical Society

Spring 1996





MYSTERY PHOTO

This photograph came to us with several others taken by St. Albans photographer Will D. Chandler. We are hoping that one of our readers might recognize this dance floor.

Identified

Several readers identified the November-December mystery photo as a Quechee scene, with the Parker House and Simon Pearce Glass the prominent buildings.

FRONT COVER:

Photo from the Vermont Writer's Project (WPA), ca. 1930s. The caption reads, "Collecting sap. The orchard would be improved by the removal of some of the beeches. Taken by Barstow."

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GAINOR B. DAVIS, Editor
ELLEN McKAY, Production

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preserve, and display items that tell the history of
the state.

Membership in the Society is open to all interested
individuals and institutions. Annual dues: regular—
\$30; senior citizen/student—\$25; life member—\$600.
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FROM THE PRESIDENT

This issue of *Vermont History News* is the last using this format. Beginning in June you will receive a quarterly newsletter focused on the activities of the Vermont Historical Society that we hope will keep you better informed about your organization.

When the Board of Trustees knew the search for a new director was imminent, we decided that after ten years it was time to reassess the job description. The Board recognized that the Society's director must possess a triad of abilities: leadership, management, and scholarship in the field of history. As the difficulties the Society faces change over time, so does the balance among the abilities required of the director. For the coming decade, the Society must anticipate changing interests, expectations, and needs of its stakeholders and increasing competition for scarce resources. In this environment the qualities of energetic and visionary leadership will be paramount.

It is with great pleasure and excitement for the future that we welcomed Gainor B. Davis as our new director on February 1, 1996. Ms. Davis brings to the job strong management and fundraising skills, as well as experience working with an impressive list of major histori-

cal organizations, museums, and universities. Ms. Davis has demonstrated skills in planning and implementation and team building, and has eagerly accepted challenges. In addition, Ms. Davis has completed her doctoral work in American history at Temple University and is presently finishing her dissertation.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the search committee, who brought diverse experience and opinions, much good humor, and extraordinary insight to a very challenging process. They are Mary Bort, David Donath, Richard Hathaway, Patty Klinck, Peter Mallary, Ellen McKay, and Steve Terry.

I also want to thank the staff, who provided the candidates with the information and perspective that can come only from those who see an organization from the inside.

Be sure to watch the pages of the new newsletter, where you will see reflected the enthusiasm and excitement of the Society as we continue to improve our ability to bring you the history of Vermont.

Dorothy R. Mitchell

FROM THE DIRECTOR

I remember all those family vacations to national historic sites--Jamestown, Williamsburg, Mystic, Deerfield. For my father, history was a second vocation, and the job of educating his three daughters about history a major part of that pursuit. In addition to the "grand" sweep of history, we were made aware of our local history and our genealogy.



Under my father's guidance, we toured Gettysburg's battlefields, toting blue-covered volumes of Matthew Brady's Civil War photographs, and discovered the name of our great-grandfather on the Pennsylvania Battle Monument. My father made history come alive. He passed the information on to us so that we understood and appreciated that we Davises were part of American history.

It is this love of history, passed on from father to daughter, that brought me to the Vermont Historical Society. The Society's motto, *Non Pro Nobis Laboramus* ("we do not labor for ourselves"), was crafted by men who, like my father, understood the importance of history to critical thinking, who

believed that a knowledge of history provides a context for daily life.

Today the usefulness of studying history is constantly questioned. However, more than 2,000 years ago, Roman statesman Marcus Tullius Cicero provided an answer that is still relevant to this contemporary question of why we should continue to learn about our past:

History is the witness that testifies to the passing of time; it illumines reality, vitalizes memory, provides guidance in daily life, and brings us tidings of antiquity.

As the Historical Society "labors" to collect and preserve the documents and artifacts of Vermont history, it must continue to incorporate these resources into the publications, exhibitions, and educational programming that it offers the public. During my tenure as director, I want to make sure these outstanding assets are creatively used to acquaint both native and visitor alike to the uniqueness of Vermont's history as well as Vermont's place in the American historical panorama. With increased public outreach will come the financial stability so important to allowing the Society to fulfill its mission.

Gaior B. Davis

NEWS & NOTES

Society Hosts First-Ever Fundraising Special Event

"Treasure Vermont" is the title of a special evening the Society will host on Friday, May 24, 1996. Patrons to the event (\$50 per person) will meet guest speaker Tersh Boasberg at a pretalk cocktail party to be held in the Victorian Lobby of the Pavilion Building. While enjoying hors d'oeuvres and drinks, guests will also participate in a treasure hunt in the museum, where one lucky person will win a treasure chest filled with Vermont products and artisan-made items.

Mr. Boasberg, an attorney specializing in environmental and historic preservation law, has been at the forefront of efforts to protect significant historic sites from encroaching development. He led a successful campaign to stop construction of a shopping mall on the Manassas Battlefield in Virginia. He is counsel to the Brandy Station Foundation in Culpeper County, Virginia, which successfully battled an extensive industrial development and Formula One automobile racetrack that would have destroyed the sites of the largest cavalry battle of the Civil War and Union Army encampment of 1863-1864. He is an inspiring speaker, much sought after for his views on conservation, architecture, zoning, and land use.

Cochairs for the event are Mimi Baird of Woodstock and

Virginia C. Wood of Stowe. Other committee members include Kate Campbell (Starksboro), Hope Green (Colchester), Ann Hallowell (Burlington), Thelma Hewitt (Woodstock), Patricia Klinck (Montpelier), Carol Todd (Northfield), Delinda Syme (Norwich), and Alice VanTol (Stowe). A number of Vermont businesses and corporations will help underwrite the event.

Proceeds from this special event will go toward the Society's annual fund campaign.

Hope Campaign Surpasses Half-way Mark

The \$40,000 campaign to purchase a rare Civil War painting by artist James Hope is still moving along. Currently owned by a descendant of Norwich University graduate Colonel Charles B. Stoughton, the painting is entitled *Winter Quarters of the Vermont Brigade in Front of Fredericksburg, Virginia, 1862-1863*. This extraordinary work of art has been displayed around the state in order to heighten interest in the campaign and the Society. Invitation-only events have been held in Rutland, Greensboro, Putney, Manchester, and Stowe, where guests were treated to a close-up look at the painting and author Howard Coffin's comments about Vermonters in the Civil War.

Each event has been a tremendous success thanks to the work of many volunteers and friends of the Society. To date, approximately \$27,000 has been raised.

New plans are currently being made for events to be held in Chittenden County and at Norwich University. At a dinner cohosted by the University, Mr. Coffin will discuss Norwich graduates who served in the Civil War. The dinner will be held on Friday, September 20, 1996, at the Milano Ballroom on the Norwich campus. Call the Society for additional information on how you can not only help us close this campaign but have a wonderful evening at the same time!

Local Historical Societies Gather for Annual Meeting

Join us in Woodstock this year for the annual League of Local Historical Societies meeting. It's an opportunity for colleagues to meet and exchange ideas on how all of us accomplish our goals of preserving our communities' histories.

This year's meeting, scheduled for Saturday, April 27, will take place at the Woodstock Historical Society and the Billings Farm and Museum. This program is made possible through major support from the Marianne G. Faulkner Foundation with

additional support from NYNEX. The focus of the meeting is Vermont's agricultural heritage. Charles Fish, author of the 1995 book *In Good Hands: The Keeping of a Family Farm*, will present the keynote talk entitled "Of Documents and Memory: Discovering a Past." Morning workshops presented by Gregory Sharrow of the Vermont Folklife Center and Bob Benz of the Billings Farm and Museum will center on documenting local farm communities and caring for collections of farm implements. Participants will have an opportunity to see the Vermont Folklife Center's exhibit "Making and Remaking the Vermont Farmstead," which will have moved to the Billings Farm and Museum after having opened at the Historical Society's museum.

The program will also include the presentation of awards of recognition to local societies for recently completed projects. You will soon receive more information about the meeting. We hope you and your colleagues can attend.

If your organization would like to host an annual meeting of the local historical societies in future years, please let us know. The opportunity to see firsthand what organizations around the state are doing is one of the pleasures and benefits of this annual get-together.

CALENDAR

Museum hours

Tuesday-Friday, 9:00-4:30;
Saturday, 9:00 a.m.-4:00;
and Sunday, noon-4:00.

Library hours

Tuesday-Friday, 9:00-4:30;
Saturday, 9:00-4:00.

Business hours

Monday-Friday, 9:00-4:30.
Closed major state and
federal holidays.

Museum exhibits

"All the Precious Past":
Treasures from the Collection,"
through December 1996.

"Peeking Through the Keyhole:
Vermont Homes and Domestic
Life," April 23-June 16.

April 27

"Vermont's Agricultural Heritage,"
League of Local Historical
Societies Annual Meeting
(see p. 7), Woodstock.

May 24

"Treasure Vermont" special
fundraising event (see p. 6),
Montpelier.

May 30

Memorial Day.
Society closed.

**VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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