

## Vermont Roadside Historic Site Markers

The Vermont Historic Site Marker program commemorates facts, persons, events, and places prominently identified with the history of the nation, state, or region. The text for each proposed marker shall be reviewed and edited by the manager of the marker program and the staff of the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation (VDHP) and shall be approved by the Vermont Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) and State Historic Preservation Officer.

Please review the Criteria for Evaluation of Roadside Historic Sites Markers.

### PROCEDURE FOR DEVELOPING MARKER TEXT

**Research and Write the Roadside Marker Text.** Research the topic by consulting multiple primary and secondary sources. Documentation supporting the topic and text proposed is required as part of the submittal. Text should follow the “Highway Marker Writing Style.” It is often helpful to seek assistance from local and regional historical associations and governmental entities in researching and writing the proposed text; staff of VDHP is also available to assist. Changes will be proposed by VDHP staff to ensure text meets the program criteria and accepted writing style; edited text will be forwarded for applicant’s approval.

### Roadside Historic Site Marker Writing Style

To ensure stylistic consistency among state markers, VDHP staff will revise and edit draft texts. The goal is to provide as much accurate and interesting information as possible in a limited space. Applicants can help by following these suggestions when writing their drafts.

- Spell out numbers less than 10, otherwise use Arabic numerals (one, two, etc., but 10, 237, 10,000, etc.).
- Do not use honorary titles such as Mr. and Mrs. but do use and abbreviate occupational titles and ranks (the Rev., Col., Maj. Gen., Dr., etc.).
- Do not use commas before or after Jr., Sr., II, etc. (e.g. Joseph Smith Jr. founded the Latter-Day Saint movement).
- Write nicknames as follows: Wilson “Snowflake” Bentley. On first use, give a person's full name as he or she used it or as it is best known (e.g. Frederick Billings, Maria von Trapp, Chester A. Arthur), but on subsequent use only the last name. The familiar use of first names alone is not recommended.
- Markers are intended to present historically accurate information as objectively as possible. Therefore, markers will not editorialize or assign value judgment to events or people. Unless there is sufficient documentary evidence to establish authenticity without question, no “firsts” or other superlative terms will be used.



- As markers are intended to be permanent features of the landscape, please also avoid making observations in the text about current conditions of buildings or land.
- The text should be submitted with the understanding that it will likely undergo further editing and revision by VDHP staff in consultation with the applicant or original author.
- Please remember that the marker may be read from a moving vehicle, so it is best to put the most important information at the beginning.

It is better to be a little longer than shorter when submitted the first drafts to allow for editing. VDHP staff is ready to assist with editing.

**Work with VDHP to Revise or Refine the Marker Text.** Before submitting text for approval to the ACHP, a review committee composed of members of the ACHP, VDHP, and selected historians will review the proposed application. Any major questions about the topic or text that arise will be discussed with the applicant, including further documentation, if necessary. If changes to the text are warranted, VDHP staff will work closely with the applicant, or the applicant’s author, to produce a mutually agreed upon text. Because VDHP and the ACHP bear the ultimate responsibility for what appears on a marker, they reserve the right to edit a text for accuracy, clarity, brevity, and thoroughness.

**Please be aware that a marker’s text must be limited to 765 characters** (letters and spaces).

Final text will be restricted to 765 characters. This includes the title bar, spaces, paragraph breaks, and letters. It does not include the ownership block at the bottom: “Vermont Division for Historic Preservation—[year].” For example, the underlined text for the Achsa W. Sprague marker includes 763 characters.

**Achsa W. Sprague**  
**Spiritualist and Reformer**

**Achsa Sprague (1827–1862) was born and lived in Plymouth Notch, teaching in the stone school by age 12. At 20, she contracted a mysterious disease and spent seven years bedridden, waking one day miraculously cured. Attributing recovery to “angelic powers,” she became a trance medium and lectured on Spiritualism throughout the United States and Canada. Sprague was a prolific author of Spiritualist articles, prose, poems, and letters through “automatic writing,” which she claimed was controlled by worldly energies. She supported women’s suffrage, prison reform, and the abolition of slavery. Sprague died at age 34 and is buried in the Plymouth Notch Cemetery. Her tombstone is engraved with her verse, “I Still Live.”**

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Continuation of the text on the opposite side of the marker is an option in some cases to tell a longer story or break up the context.

**Final Decision of the ACHP.** VDHP will provide an applicant with advance notification of when the marker will be presented to the ACHP at the appropriate meeting. The meeting is open to the public and applicants may attend. VDHP will notify the applicant of the ACHP’s findings and any related comments. Once a text is approved, VDHP will send the applicant a copy of the final board-approved text.

All applications should be submitted 60 days before to the ACHP meeting.



## PROCEDURE FOR IDENTIFYING MARKER LOCATION

**Suggest a Suitable Marker Location.** VDHP retains ownership and maintenance responsibility for the marker. Therefore, placement on public land or a highway/town right-of-way is preferred as near as possible to the site it marks, at least 200 feet from the nearest adjacent sign. If it is to be installed on private land, owner consent is required at the time of the application submittal and a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) must be signed prior to production of the marker. VDHP and VTrans staff will evaluate the proposed location based on its historic association with the marker subject and public safety. Ultimately, VTrans or the town garage will have the final determination in approving and selecting the location based primarily on traffic safety if it is to be placed in a state or town right-of-way. Be sure in your application to specify the highway route number and the physical site (e.g., U.S. Route 7, 0.2 miles south of Interstate 89) and indicate the location on a street or highway map accompanying the application. **Photographs and a map of the location must be provided.**

Markers will not be placed on a curve or hill in such a place at which a slowing car could cause a traffic hazard. There should be a minimum of 500 feet visibility; 1200 feet is desirable. Wherever possible the marker will be placed at a pull-off where an automobile will be able to park completely off the traveled portion of the highway. The pull-off should be 10 feet wide and between 200 and 400 feet long. The sign should be placed approximately 4 feet back from the pull-off.

Owners of the property, including town and city managers, must be consulted prior to submittal of an application for clarity of topic, verification of facts, and concurrence for the placement of the marker. **Recordation of this collaboration must be provided.**

**Location Approval.** VDHP is responsible for applying for the necessary permits required for installation.

For markers on a state right-of-way: VDHP shall coordinate with Agency of Transportation (VTrans), which is responsible for approving the site location in consultation with VDHP. VTrans will install the marker.

For markers on town/city right-of-way: VDHP shall coordinate with town or city managers and town garages to determine the most appropriate location of the marker. Most town garages will install the marker.

For markers on private property: VDHP shall work with owners, who must sign a Memorandum of Agreement prior to the installation.

- **Property owners are responsible for picking up and installation of the marker.** VDHP shall provide detailed directions on the installation.
- **Applicant is responsible for contacting DIG SAFE to ensure the does not interfere with underground utilities.**

**Manufacturing and delivery of the Marker.** VDHP will arrange for production of the marker with the foundry. Markers will be delivered to our offices at National Life in Montpelier. Applicants can work with VDHP if another delivery location is preferred; a cost to applicants may be applied in these cases.

**Casting and delivery take approximately 120 days once the foundry has been notified by VDHP.**



Installation shall be coordinated by VDHP and depends on the location (i.e.: state right-of-way, town right-of-way, or private property). If a marker is to be installed on private property, it is the responsibility of the applicant to pick up the marker and pole at National Life.

**Schedule Unveiling Ceremony.** The process for ordering and manufacturing markers is determined by several factors including the workload of VDHP and VTrans, the schedule and agendas of the ACHP, and manufacturing and shipping delays arising at the foundry; thus, VDHP cannot be held responsible for meeting local deadlines for any planned dedication event. For that reason, if a sponsoring organization or individual desires to hold an unveiling ceremony, VDHP should be notified and consulted well in advance about the schedule to coordinate with the foundry and arrange installation. The applicant should only fix scheduling of a ceremony after VDHP and the foundry can confirm a realistic shipping date for a marker.

The marker's applicant/sponsor will arrange publicity for unveiling ceremony in cooperation with VDHP.

Please complete the [Roadside Historic Site Marker Application](#) online or in print. We accept applications via email or direct mail to our Montpelier office. For questions or inquiries regarding the application, you may email [ACCD.historicmarkers@vermont.gov](mailto:ACCD.historicmarkers@vermont.gov).

