

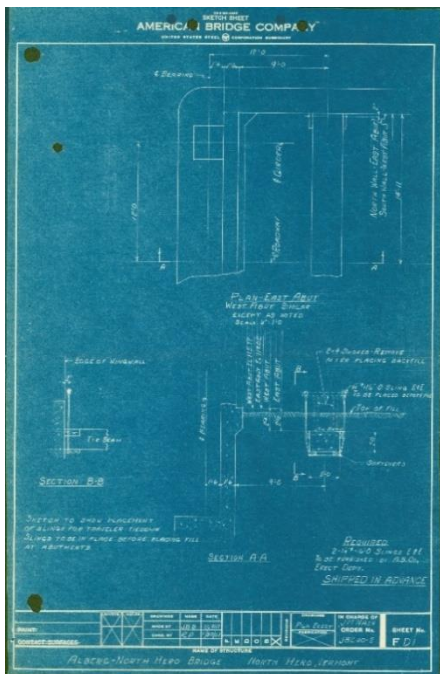
Keeping Appraised

Newsletter of the Vermont State Archives & Records Administration

Office of the Vermont Secretary of State

VSARA Acquires Historic Bridge Photos and Plans

This fall, VSARA brought in several cubic feet of records from the Agency of Transportation relating to the Historic Bridge Program. This accession included several boxes of photographs of bridges, the majority documenting the decades from the 1950s through the 1990s. These photographs capture many styles of bridges, including covered, moveable, and metal truss, from towns all over the state.



Plans for Alburg-North Hero Bridge, 1951
[courtesy of VSARA]

Additionally, VSARA received a large cabinet of plans, maps, sketches, and books relating to the design and construction of historic bridges throughout the state. With records dating to as early as 1897, this series will prove to be a valuable resource for historians.

The photographs have been

incorporated into a larger collection of Agency of Transportation photographs, series A-082. This collection documents nearly one hundred years of road and bridge planning, construction, and repairs. The maps and plans are still being processed, but if you are interested in accessing this collection, call us at 802-828-2308 or [email](mailto:VSARA@state.vt.gov) VSARA's Reference Room. For more details about Vermont's Historic Bridge Program, please visit <http://historicbridges.vermont.gov/>.

The addition of the photographs to the existing series of Transportation photographs is a good reminder to the fact that many of the State Archives' collections are not static. Sometimes new historic records are discovered, or new records are created that get transferred into an existing record series in VSARA's custody. Collections that researchers are interested in may have new material added since your last visit, so it can be worthwhile to check [our database](#) or consult with Reference Room archivists to see if there have been any additions.

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Former Bartonsville Bridge, ca. 1978 [courtesy of VSARA, series A-078]

Records Beware: The Rusty Paper Clip

In the world of archival records, paper clips are not our friends. Those handy metal fasteners along with their similar counterparts — the staple, the brad, and the straight pin — can be breeding grounds for rust. This results in damage to the attached records, either mechanically through puncture marks and wrinkles, or chemically through stains and brittleness.



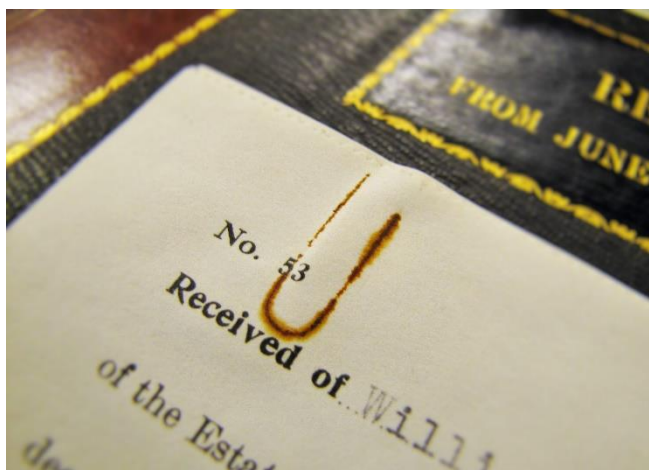
Paper clip corroded with rust, found while processing records [courtesy of VSARA]

It is best practice to remove metal fasteners before putting documents into long-term storage. However, if removing the fastener will cause damage to the documents, leave it in place.

A paper clip can be removed by gently prying it open. Place the longer side of the paper clip on a flat surface, hold it in place through the paper, and carefully bend the short side of the paper clip up. If the paper clip is severely rusted, it may first have to be loosened from the paper by gently scraping through the rust layer before prying the clip open.

A staple remover should never be used, as the teeth can pull and rip the paper. The safest way to remove a staple is to set the stapled papers on a flat surface with the staple prongs facing upward. Carefully pry open one prong at a time, then turn the papers over and gently remove the staple, pulling the straightened prongs through the puncture holes.

Of course, there will be times that we want to keep some of our records together because they are related. Have no fear — there are ways to keep documents together and still avoid the rusty paper clip. There are plastic clips available that will not rust, although they could still wrinkle fragile paper.



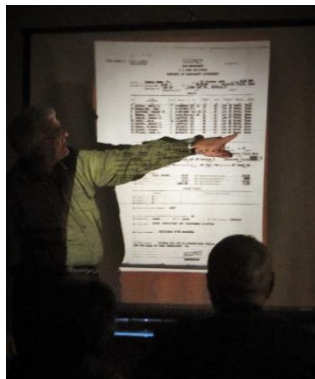
Lingering rust stain on probate court document [courtesy of VSARA, series PRO-ERP-003]

One way to avoid that wrinkling is by folding a piece of durable, acid-free card stock over the group of papers and placing the plastic or coated metal clip over the protective card stock. Another way to avoid the wrinkling is by not using paper clips at all, and instead grouping documents together within acid-free folders or polyester sleeves.

For tutorials, diagrams, and other helpful information on the removal of fasteners from historic documents, please see Preservation Leaflet 7.8 from the Northeast Document Conservation Center:

<https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/preservation-leaflets/7.-conservation-procedures/7.8-removal-of-damaging-fasteners-from-historic-documents>.

Thanks to All Who Made Vermont Archives Month a Success



Brian Lindner gives talk on the Camel's Hump bomber crash of 1944 [courtesy of VSARA]

In October, VSARA hosted two open houses featuring tours, presentations, and exhibits as part of American Archives Month. Both were well attended and we'd like to take this opportunity to thank the speakers and visitors who helped to make these great days.

First, Brian Lindner spoke on the history of the Camel's Hump bomber crash of 1944. His talk included an engrossing old-fashioned slide show, wreckage from the crash site, and detailed histories and stories of each crewman on board.

Then, to get visitors into the Halloween spirit, Jason Smiley spoke about the Eddy Family of Chittenden, Vermont, who became world-renowned in the 19th century for their spirit medium talents. His presentation was accompanied by an exhibit of records held by the State Archives, *Governing the Supernatural: The State of Vermont takes on Spiritualists, Mediums, and the Uncanny*. The exhibit showcased the different ways in which the supernatural intersected with government practices, including the incorporation of spiritualist societies, slander cases in Vermont courts, and commitments to the Vermont State Hospital.



VSARA exhibit, "Governing the Supernatural" [courtesy of VSARA]

With nearly 100 attendees at these two events, as well as other co-sponsored events, we were able to reach both new and familiar researchers, young and old, to illustrate the importance of archival records and the wide range of research that they can provide. The records in the State Archives vaults are always available to researchers through our Reference Room, open Tuesday through Friday, 9AM to 4PM.

Save the Date!

Vermont History Expo—June 18th & 19th, 2016

The Vermont History Expo is a biennial summer tradition hosted by the Vermont Historical Society at the Tunbridge Fairgrounds. The upcoming expo focuses on the power of water in Vermont history. Come and learn about everything from famous floods to favorite swimming spots, presented by nearly 150 different history and heritage institutions, including the Vermont State Archives. For more information, please visit <http://vermonthistory.org/visit/events-calendar/vermont-history-expo>.

On This Day in History

Significant dates in past Vermont winters range from the very beginnings of Vermont, through the state's temperance movement, to the discovery of the true nature of snow.

1777 (Jan. 15) – A General Convention met at Westminster and declared that the district of land now comprising Vermont was a state or government distinct from the colonies of New York and New Hampshire. This was the beginning of the Vermont Republic, which lasted until statehood in 1791.

1865 (Feb. 7) – Wilson Bentley was born in Jericho to parents Edwin and Fanny. Wilson would become known as "Snowflake" Bentley, the first to photograph snowflakes and discover their unique qualities.

1903 (Mar. 3) – Statewide prohibition of liquor manufacturing ended in favor of a local option, largely because of the budding tourist industry. The measure was passed by voters in a referendum vote on February 3rd. This would remain in effect until 1916, and later was replaced entirely by national prohibition.

Contact Us

Have research questions?

Contact the VSARA Reference Room!

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Visit our website!

<http://www.sec.state.vt.us/archives-records/state-archives>