
Inside this issue

Spotlight: Education.....	2
This Day in History	3
Roving Archivist.....	4
Featured Tweet	4
Digital Records.....	5
From the Vault	6
Upcoming Events	6

Keeping Appraised

New Accession: Records of *Vermont Life*

This past summer marked the end of an era as *Vermont Life* magazine ceased publication after seventy-two years. The magazine was a hallmark of Vermont

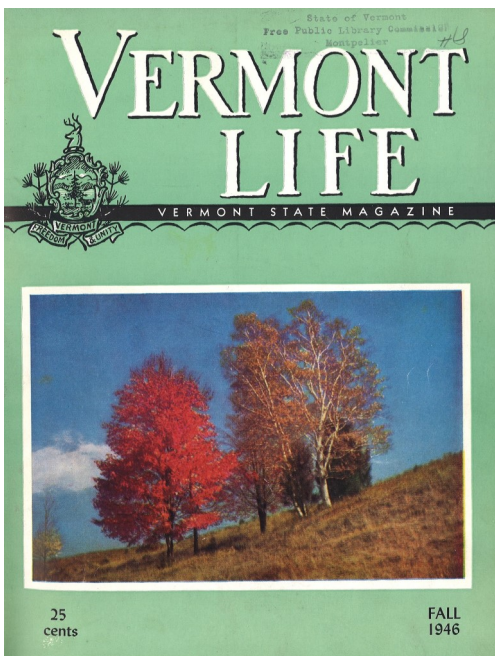
featuring lush photography of fall foliage, ads for maple syrup and folksy stories that tempted tourists

to Vermont's Green Mountains. The final issue was published in the summer of 2018, marking the end of the magazine's long tenure. Its story began in 1946, when it was launched as a state publication by the director of the Vermont Historical Society. Eventually, it became its own business without sustaining appropriations, under the stewardship of the Agency of Commerce and Community Development.

While we are sad to see the end of *Vermont Life*, we're pleased that copies of the magazine issues dating back to 1947, indexes to the magazine, and calendars will be preserved in the Vermont State Archives, along with production records for issues in recent years and administrative records and staff correspondence relating to the publication. Perhaps most interesting to researchers will be the series of scrapbooks that capture newspaper clippings about the magazine and photographs of staff in action in the various office locations the staff occupied over the years.

The beautiful photography in *Vermont Life* magazine presented an image of Vermont to the world beyond that established those iconic

images of our state – the Fall foliage, pristine ski slopes and white church steeples. VSARA has long held photographs and negatives from the production of the magazine and we are pleased to now bring in these additional publications and records that will provide more context for researchers. These records are available for research in our Reference Room, and *Vermont Life* issues have been made available [online](#) through the efforts of Middlebury College.



The first issue of Vermont Life magazine, Fall 1946. [Courtesy VSARA, series LIB-002]

Spotlight on Records: The Commission to Investigate the Education System

“Under our Constitution schools must be competent in number and in instruction convenient for the youth, a sovereign duty of the commonwealth to all its youth...With the changes in the social and economic life of the people that have occurred since the founding of the state, these fundamental requirements of law respecting schools have been to some degree overlooked, and present defects in the system of public schools are due almost wholly to the failure to adapt such requirements to modern conditions.”

Report of the Commission to Investigate the Educational System and Conditions of Vermont, pg. 5

Vermont is no stranger to considering improvements and changes to the state’s schools. As the state continues to discuss school district mergers in the news, we can also look back to over a century ago to when Governor Allen Fletcher recommended that a commission be established to investigate the reorganization of the entire state’s educational system. Following his recommendation, the General Assembly passed a resolution in 1912 to establish the Commission to Investigate the Educational System and Conditions of Vermont.

The Commission decided to complete a comprehensive survey of the schools and higher education in Vermont, hiring the Carnegie Foundation to run the investigation. The final report of the commission was published in 1914 and emphasized needed improvements in education policy. The report recommended consolidation of elementary schools, the creation of junior high schools, and the development of a high school curriculum focusing not only on college preparation, but a better general education program. The report also recommended that teacher training be moved from Normal Schools to the college level and pressed for the dissolution of special school districts and a more unified education system. The result of the report was Act 64 of 1915, which incorporated many of the recommendations of the commission, including a small appointive State Board, the election of a Commissioner to be paid by the State, and a centralized education system.

Learn more about the Commission and its investigation by researching their [records](#), or by viewing our [online exhibit](#) of other related records.

VSARA Hellos and Goodbyes

This March, we said goodbye to archivist Bethany Fair, as she left for a position with the Federal Government. During Bethany’s years at the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration, she left a lasting mark on our operations, projects, and spirit. Bethany was crucial in expanding our presence on social media, launching our first Halloween spooky story tour, processing several significant collections, and helping countless researchers in our Reference Room. It’s difficult to adequately express how much she brought to our team, and though we will miss her profoundly, we know that she’s destined for greatness on the Federal stage, and look forward to seeing all that she will accomplish.

[Continued next page]



Archivist Bethany Fair on her last day in the Reference Room, sporting Vermont-themed flair. [Courtesy VSARA staff]

[Continued from page 2]

With Bethany's departure, we have a new face in our Reference Room! Records and Information Management (RIM) Specialist Andrew Rais will now be joining our reference team to help assist patrons with their research. Andrew has been a part of VSARA's RIM unit for about a year, working with public agencies to develop their records management programs. This role has allowed him to tap into his historical and archival training on a daily basis. But beyond academic and professional training, history, research, and connecting others to information are among his personal passions, so he is excited to have the opportunity to assist with reference services. When you next stop by to do your research, make sure to say hello and welcome to Andrew!

And, we also welcome Will Dempsey as VSARA's Administrative Services Director. Will's new role will be providing strategic support to the State Archivist, budgetary development work, implementing standards and controls and collaborating with staff on the administration and delivery of services. Will joined VSARA from the Vermont Agency of Digital Services (ADS) where he was an Information Technology Manager, focusing on enterprise operational functions. Prior to joining ADS, Will worked for the Agency of Human Services (AHS) in the Secretary's Office in information technology.

So with all of us here at VSARA, join us in welcoming our new faces and sending well wishes (and lots of flair) to Bethany in her new adventures!

On This Day in History

This issue looks at lesser-known, local-interest reports in newspapers across the state.

1859 (Mar. 4) - A local farmer from Rockingham reports on his personal measurements of snow taken over the winter, and states in the *Bellows Falls Times* that his farm had received over 6 feet.

1919 (Apr 23) - The *Essex County Herald* reports on the return of Raymond Christie, a young man of Island Pond. Christie came home after nearly a decade, having lived overseas with an uncle and then serving nearly two years in the trenches of World War I.

2009 (May 18) - The University Mall in South Burlington is evacuated for about an hour because of a leaking natural gas meter, as reported in the *Burlington Free Press*.

On the Road with Vermont's Roving Archivist



Grant writing workshop at the Brooks Memorial Library in Brattleboro. [Courtesy VSARA staff]

Follow along with Rachel Onuf, Coordinator of the Vermont Historical Records Program, on Twitter [@rovingarchivist!](#)

Greetings and welcome to what will be a regular column, focusing on the work of the Vermont Historical Records Program. One of my roles as Coordinator of the VHRP is to visit historical records repositories around Vermont, offering technical assistance and practical advice. I would have thought that winter would mean that requests for visits from the roving archivist would have slowed – not so! In the first two months of 2019 I have visited five historical societies and one town clerk in five different counties. I assessed the quality of collection storage in vaults, an unheated historic house, and a storage shed; discussed how to use local collections in a high school history course; and reviewed the great work an assistant town clerk has done since taking an emergency preparedness workshop at VSARA last year.

I also teamed up with Joy Worland of the Department of Libraries to offer a grant writing workshop at five locations around the state. We were inspired by an Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) opportunity designed specifically for small and rural libraries and worked closely with applicants as they developed some terrific collaborative “community memory” projects. We know of at least three groups from Vermont who submitted proposals. We are rooting for them!

Upcoming events include a daylong workshop on “Caring for Historical Records” at the New England Archivists Conference in Burlington on April 4th and the second meeting of the large group that is developing an emergency preparedness and response network for Vermont’s performing arts and cultural heritage repositories. Future columns will go into more detail about the evolution of this network and other exciting statewide initiatives. Stay tuned...and get in touch if you are involved with a cultural heritage organization and could use some assistance. The roving archivist’s services are FREE, thanks to federal funding and the Vermont Secretary of State.

For more information about the [Vermont Historical Records Program](#) (VHRP) contact Coordinator Rachel Onuf at rachel.onuf@vermont.gov or 802-828-2204.

Quote of the Quarter:

“Since we’ll be known in life and time throughout this whole great nation, we’ll merit such a crown sublime by worthwhile legislation.”

-From the Song of the OWLS (Order of Women Legislators), 1945

@VTStateArchives Featured Tweet



Did you hear the one about the guy from Arizona who was accidentally invited to an 80s themed, skiing bachelor party on a mountain resort in Vermont? Well, he made it to the party and the story went viral! We had to join in the fun by sharing our 1980s skiing publications from the [Tourism and Marketing Department Records!](#)

Follow along with us on Twitter [@VTStateArchives!](#)

The More You Know

Vermont state-level vital records up to 2008 and newspapers up to 1923 are available for research online, free for Vermont residents.

All you need is a free account through the MyVermont.gov portal to begin! Instructions for setting up access are available through our website:

<https://www.sec.state.vt.us/media/51380/AncestryVermontFAQ.pdf>

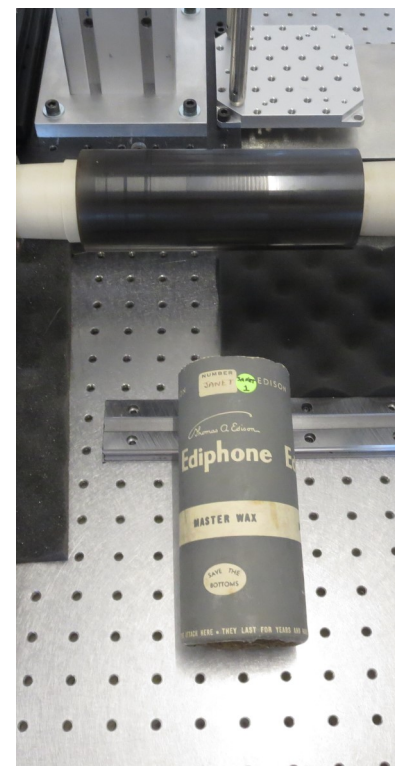
Hunting Rare Bits: Digital Recordkeeping & Preservation

In December 2018, the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration contracted with the Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) to digitize nine Ediphone wax cylinder audio recordings from the Women’s Reformatory in Rutland, Vermont. The Women’s Reformatory was established by Act 216 of 1921 and was in operation until 1970. Though we’re not certain, an educated guess based on factors like the Reformatory’s opening and the time period during which wax cylinder recordings were in wide use it is estimated the recordings were made between the years 1921-1940.

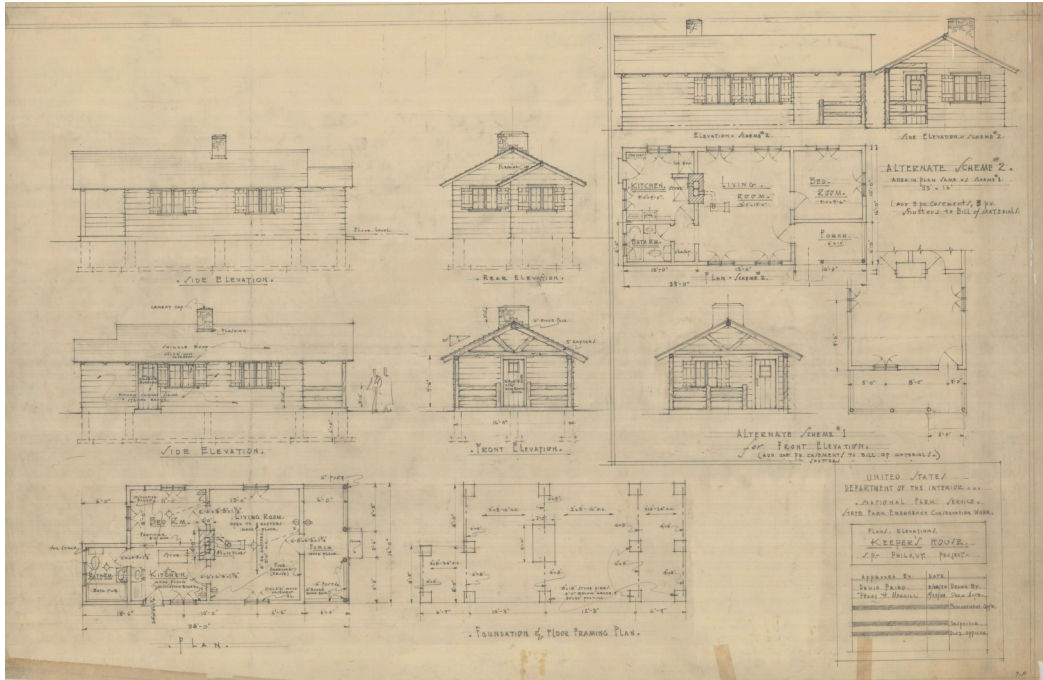
The recordings have been in VSARA custody for some time but, due to the obsolescence of the format, the content of the recordings remained a mystery. Without the means to acquire the proper playback equipment, the only option to discover what was hidden within the cylinder’s grooves was to send them to be digitized.

Unfortunately, the cylinders are somewhat worn and thus the quality of the recordings are generally poor. On a couple of the recordings a child’s voice can be heard singing. We hope to digitally enhance the recordings with the goal of making them easier to decipher. The digitized recordings are now available through [VT Re•tain](#).

Ediphone wax cylinder awaiting digitization process. [Courtesy NEDCC staff]



From the Vault



This is a section of a design plan for the groundskeeper house at the Mount Philo State Park, drawn in 1934. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) did much of the work for the park, and much of it still stands today. There are lots more designs like this one, evidence of CCC work in Vermont, and much more in the Land and Facilities Management records of the Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation ([FPR-006](#)).

Contact Us!

1078 US Route 2, Middlesex
Montpelier, VT 05633-7701
Phone: (802) 828-2308
Email:
sos.archives@vermont.gov

Visit our website:
[http://www.sec.state.vt.us/
archives-records/state-
archives](http://www.sec.state.vt.us/archives-records/state-archives)

Follow us on Twitter:
[@VTStateArchives](https://twitter.com/VTStateArchives)



Upcoming Events with VSARA

Be It Remembered: Researching Vermont Court Records

Saturday, April 6, 3:15 PM—New England Regional Genealogical Conference, Manchester, NH

Join VSARA's own archivist Mariessa Dobrick as she discusses court records in Vermont and how they can be used in genealogical research. For more information, please visit: <http://www.nergc.org/>.

Collaborating Towards New Directions in Digital Preservation

Wednesday, May 1, 9:00 AM—Best Practices Exchange, Columbus, OH

VSARA Senior Archivist Rachel Muse and Digital Records and Information Specialists Nick Connizzo and Zack Whitaker will be presenting on their approach to, implementation of, and lessons learned with new digital processing workflows. For more information, please visit: <https://bpexchange.wordpress.com/2019-conference/2019-schedule/>

The Battle of Shelburne—Thursday, June 20 6:00 PM

Vermont Agency of Transportation Archaeologist Brennan Gauthier will discuss his research involving the lesser-known Revolutionary War Battle of Shelburne. Doors open early at 5 PM for a behind-the-scenes tour of the archives and special exhibit, followed by the presentation at 6 PM. Free and open to the public.