
VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2025 Annual Report

July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025



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AND TREASURER
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Sarah Copeland Hanzas,
Sec. of State

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Barbara Mieder, *Williston*

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Stephen Perkins, *Williston*

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*The Vermont Historical Society was chartered in 1838 by an act of the Vermont Legislature.
It is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit membership organization, governed by a board of trustees.*

VOLUNTEERS

Our unending gratitude to the volunteers who make our work possible:

Jan Albers	Ernie Drown	Annika Linnea McGinn
Janet Ancel	Abraham Dunne	Mike McRaith
David Austin	Karen Ericson	Barbara Mieder
Judeen C. Barwood	Debbie Fiske	Don Miller
Jane Belcher	Mary Lou Fitzgerald	Aly Morrison
Allison Belisle	Marjorie Garfield	Lori Morse
S. Crocker Bennett, II	Peter Gilbert	Melinda Moulton
Jordon Blow	Peter Griffin	Kathleen O'Connor
Marianne Book	Carol Harris-Shapiro	David Olsen
Marcia Bosek	Audrey Hartel	Cyrus Parker
David Braun	Victor Henningsen	Fred Pond
Randy Brock	Penrose Jackson	Wright C. Preston
Rep. Mollie S. Burke	Stephen Kidder	Nancy Remsen
Jennifer Burnett	Sklyar Knoop	Beck Rosenbaum
Joseph Byrne	Rep. Kate Lalley	Kay Schlueter
Joanna Caswell	Talia Lesham	Dawn Schneiderman
David Chambers	Brian Lindner	Justina Soltys
Kate Cipolla	Carl Lisman	Roger Stone
Sarah L. Copeland-Hanzas	Melody Mackin	Darcie Tredwell
Catherine Delneo	Benni Marques	Sydney Washburn
Katie Dipalma	Anthony Marro	Nathan Youmans
Lisbeth Dodd	Dick McCormack	Cara Zimmerman

**The following people had gifts
made to VHS in their memory:**

Dean Batt	J. Warren McClure
George F. Beecher	Ted and Sidney Morse
Filipino civilians	Leo O'Brien
Nicholas R. Clifford	Jim Reardon
John J. Duffy	Nelda G. Rossi
Francis Favreau	Michael A. Sherman
Morris Gould	Harry Abel Way
Maude Legru	Louise V. Webb
George and Elvira Maniatty	Buddy Yett

**The following people had gifts
made to VHS in their honor:**

Jan Albers
Nathan Hemmer & Megan Lea
Kenny Lindner
Barbara & Wolfgang Mieder
Hubert Norton
Stephen J. Perkins
Roger & Kit Stone
Perry Waite
Brett Walker & Steve
Wetherby

President's Report



One of the great joys of being involved with the Vermont Historical Society is the opportunity to see all the different ways Vermonters experience their history. This year, I've handed out prizes to volunteers who have put in decades at their local historical societies and judged projects done by middle schoolers for Vermont History Day. I've seen hundreds of participants beam as they shared their historical enthusiasms.

At the VHS, we believe that understanding history changes lives and builds community. Through COVID and floods, our dedicated staff and board never dropped the ball. In 2025, the natural challenges have been replaced by man-made ones. Across the country, museums, historical societies, libraries, and other beloved cultural institutions have seen their grant money dry up or be eliminated. When the hatchet fell, we had two major grants outstanding from the IMLS (Institute of Museum and Library Services). We were lucky to be able to bill the COVID-19 oral history book just in time to be reimbursed. Our wonderful Activating 21st Century Local History Training Program, which was helping local historical societies to learn how to assess and improve their collections, suddenly faced closure, and we faced laying off a first-rate employee who had been hired to help. Two loyal VHS donors stepped in with funding to keep the project going through the fall. We are deeply grateful for those who so generously stepped up. As of this printing, a court injunction has reinstated payments, but the future of that grant is tenuous at best.

Despite this challenge, the VHS has accomplished great things this year, including:

- The biggest Vermont History Day ever! In April, over 330 students participated at our roomy new site at St. Michael's College. They did papers, performances, exhibits, websites and documentaries on a broad range of subjects and eras. I love judging them, because our team gets to ask them questions about their projects. Some are nervous, some are ebullient, all are earnest and engaged.
- Our new Research and Exhibition Gallery at the History Center in Barre had its grand opening in October. It lets us show more of the 30,000 objects in our collection on a rotating basis. Deepest thanks are due to our collections team and Steve for their months of work on this project.
- Our Activating 21st Century Local History Training Program continues for the time being, as noted above. It has been a huge success, teaching local historical society members the professional standards to organize their collections.

- We published a book that I suspect will become more and more important as time goes on. *Life Became Very Blurry: An Oral History of Covid-19 in Vermont*, edited by Garrett M. Graff. Drawing from over 100 oral histories taken by our staff, Graff illuminates several themes that emerged from their experiences on the pandemic. I've heard people say, "I'm not ready to read about it yet." If that's you, get your copy now and squirrel it away. You'll want it someday.
- The Vermont History Museum in Montpelier hosted one of its most successful exhibits ever, *For the Love of Vermont: The Lyman Orton Collection*. It featured important works of art on Vermont themes, at once beautiful and thought-provoking.
- Vermont Eats is our annual dinner featuring the food, music, and stories of a Vermont immigrant group. This year's feast honored the thousands of Vermonters with French-Canadian heritage. The food was catered by the culinary arts students at the Green Mountain Technology and Career Center in Hyde Park, under the direction of Chef Sean Morrison. The students came to the Vermont History Center to research French-Canadian foodways and created a superb dinner for all of us. The food was accompanied by Sugar in the Pan, fiddling from four young women, and stories from Bill Schubart.

As we come into our country's 250th anniversary, our vibrant organization has carefully accumulated resources to keep going, but we must also cope with the instability of losing the kind of federal funding that enables us to sustain existing projects and propose new ones.

Membership has never been more important. Please consider raising your level of membership—just go up a notch—if you are able. If you have a business, we would love to have more business members. Our archives and object collections are full of stories of Vermont business past and present that you can help to preserve and promote with a business membership. We also appreciate the many LLHSM (League of Local Historical Societies & Museum) members we have at the VHS. You create community all over the state and add to our pride in Vermont's heritage.

All our members are appreciated and valued, never more than in these rocky times, when funding sources have been diminished. Our dedicated, creative staff will continue to do all the things they do so well, never more than in the upcoming 250th year of our precious democracy. Hey, the VHS has survived pandemics and floods, and we will survive the funding drought, too... with your support. Thank you all for everything you've done, and do, for us. We are so very appreciative.

Best wishes to you all,
Jan Albers, president

Director's Report



Over the past fiscal year, VHS hosted engaging programs, worked on meaningful projects, and confronted complex challenges head-on. The upcoming fiscal year – 2026 – encompasses the 250th commemoration of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. For Vermonters, this semiquincentennial provides a chance to reflect on 250 years of history while thinking about our state's unique place in the union and our early exclusion from the grand democratic experiment.

Over the next two years, Vermont Historical Society will examine the triumphs, struggles, and unfinished business of our nation's history through a Vermont lens.

Throughout the remainder of 2025 and the first half of 2026, an exhibit at the History Museum contemplates how Vermont illustrated its past and present for consumption by the broader world. The newly opened Research and Exhibition Gallery at the Vermont History Center provides access to over 1,500 artifacts, grouped along themes meant to inspire critical thought around our nation's 250th birthday. Students and local societies will come together through our statewide "All in Vermont" project, a platform and curriculum kit that encourages students to go deep into local history and connect it to national events.

Our flagship student program, Vermont History Day, grows and expands every year. Hundreds of students will develop projects that focus on our nation's first 250 years. As a young learner – I will demurely decline to share the year – I participated in this program, and it put me on a path of interest and discovery that persists today.

Throughout the year, our staff, along with scholars and students from throughout the state, will work on a project entitled "50 for 250." We will comb Vermont Historical Society's vast collections for 50 artifacts that tell 250 years of Vermont stories. These artifacts will form the backbone of a beautiful book, an exhibition, digital experiences, and in-depth programs – all to kick off on July 4th, 2026.

Your membership and your support are what make exciting plans like this possible. Thank you for your donations of time, materials, and charitable dollars. I am so grateful that you have chosen to partner with us on collecting, preserving, and telling Vermont's story.

– Steve Perkins, director

Online Annual Report sections:

List of members

List of donors

Award and fellowship winners

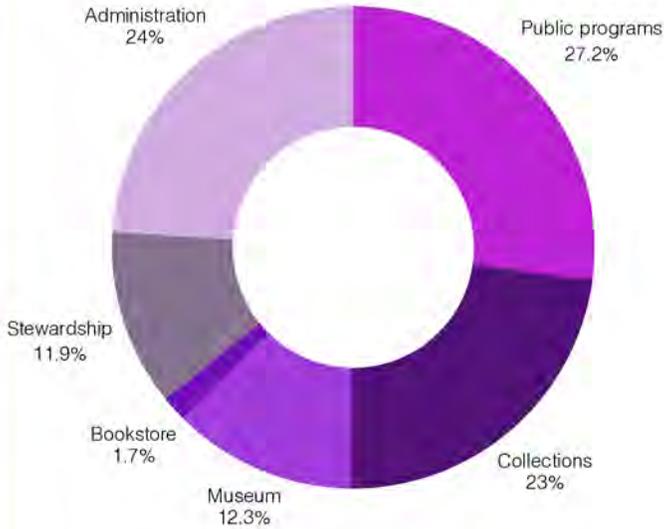
Visit

vermonthistory.org/annual-reports/

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

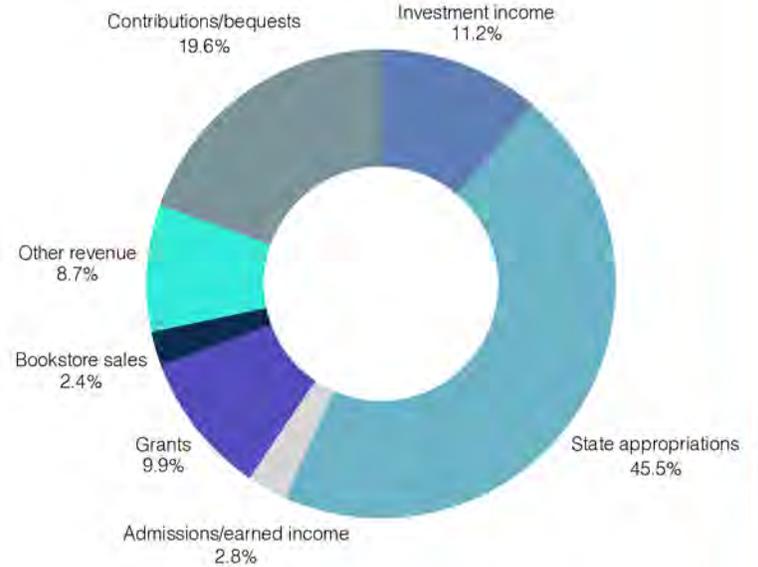
Expenses

\$2,694,711



Revenue

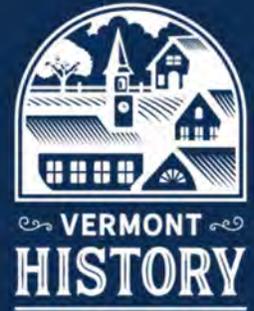
\$2,633,349



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Assets	FY 2025	Liabilities	FY 2025
Cash	\$706,172	Accounts Payable	\$101,526
Other Current Assets	\$541,688	Short-term Liabilities	\$425,539
Investments	\$2,923,903	Mortgage Payable	\$832,317
Property Plant and Equipment	\$10,048,763	TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$1,359,382
Depreciation	\$(4,209,277)	Beginning Net Assets	\$9,991,167
Total Property Plant & Equipment	\$5,839,486	Change in Net Assets	\$20,082
TOTAL ASSETS	\$10,011,249	ENDING NET ASSETS	\$10,011,249

VHS *by the numbers...*



1,950 Objects on exhibit

1,399 VHS member households

619 Reference & scanning requests

1,400 Objects inventoried or acquired

1,867 Students in History Day programs

202,881 Pageviews on Vermont History Explorer

33 Resources added to the Active Collections Online Resource Center

25 250th planning grants for LLHSM

15,767 Visitors to Vermont History Museum

1,116 Copies of VHS books sold

827 Newly catalogued library items

Activating 21st Century Local History

In October 2024, VHS kicked off the Activating 21st Century Local History Training Program. VHS is working with a cohort of five organizations from around Vermont to develop advanced skills by approaching their work within an “Active Collections” framework, which prioritizes holding only objects that are tied closely to an organization’s mission so as to revitalize collections and prioritize quality over quantity.



This program helps volunteers and staff at local historical societies establish priorities, right-size their collections, and energize their community engagement strategies. The pilot cohort has made great progress towards this goal over the past 10 months with regular cohort meetings, advice from our advisory committee, and on-site work with cohort members.

One cohort organization found a trove of previously uncatalogued objects. Those objects have now been accessioned and will help tell the story of a local man’s service in World War II. Another cohort organization has introduced their board members to the Active Collections concept of tiering, a framework for assessing essential details about their collections.

In June 2025, VHS staff and cohort members were invited to speak on an Active Collections panel at the University of Maine. During a breakout session, we heard from volunteers at small local history organizations across Maine who are facing many of the same challenges we face in Vermont.



VHS’s new Online Resource Center will help local historical societies and small museums everywhere to make strides towards accessible, manageable, and usable collections. This collection of knowledge can be accessed by Vermonters, as well as people far beyond Vermont’s borders.

Education Programs

In the summer of 2024 and winter of 2025, Vermont Historical Society Service and Outreach staff piloted two educational programs at the Kellogg-Hubbard Library.

During the winter session on architecture, children played a game where they identified if a building is located within the state of Vermont based on the architectural style. They quickly ruled out the Mediterranean villa and recognized the Cape Cod house, yet they struggled with the Italianate house. An inquisitive student pointed out the flat roof: "How would you clear off the snow?" After identifying the different architectural styles, students put their skills to the test by creating their own houses out of graham crackers, icing, and candy.



In the summer, VHS piloted a revitalized version of Mystery Artifacts, where young learners handled some of the objects in our educational collection. With little to no prior knowledge of the objects, they used contextual clues from the artifact itself to find out what it was used for. "It's too hot for a fryer," an observant student noted as they pinch open a metal soap saver. It looked like something in a kitchen, but there was no insulation to protect a person's hand.

Our recent library programs allow VHS staff to reach new educational audiences and age ranges, and they allow us to focus on specific topics related to local history. Summer 2025 we are expanding outreach for these programs to other libraries around the state.

The Vermont History Center

The Spaulding School building holds over 100 years of stories, reflecting the granite industry in Vermont, immigration and population trends, and educational reform. Built in 1891 and designed by architect Lambert Packard, the Spaulding School marked a significant period of growth for the city. Eventually, however, Barre's educational needs outpaced the capabilities of this space, and students moved to new facilities. For a period in 1995, a century after the Spaulding School

was built, it stood vacant. That's when the Vermont History Center's chapter began. Seeking to expand services and collections storage, the Vermont Historical Society purchased the building in 1996. Renovations converted second floor rooms into the Leahy Library, the first floor into offices, and the basement into storage. The Vermont Department of Libraries and the Vermont Archaeology Heritage Center also found homes within these walls.

Vermont History Day

With the help of generous donors who offset registration fees, there was a distinct uptick in Vermont History Day participation this year. On its face, History Day encourages students to practice the skills of historians, but History Day's effects reach beyond the bounds of the classroom. 330 students glimpsed into the realities of college life while participating in Vermont History Day while on St. Michael's College campus.



The 45 students who traveled to National History Day befriended students from across the U.S. and abroad, comparing their lived experiences. Students supported



one another's performances and projects, not because they had to but because they could, and represented the Green Mountain State with pride. Wide-eyed, curious, and present, all the students walked away with the understanding that though they are rooted in Vermont, they are not only a part of history but a contributing member in the wider world. They traveled by metro and car to walk the mall, visited treasured museums and national landmarks, and met with our US Congresswoman on the Capitol steps.

This past year, we opened the Research and Exhibition Gallery, bringing to fruition a long-held vision for this space. Student choruses from Barre joined us for the grand opening, tying together the building's educational history with its present role as a place for research, discovery, and community. Most recently, we renovated the lobby with the help of students from ReSource YouthBuild to create a welcoming space for visitors. The Spaulding School building continues to bring stories of the past into today's Vermont History Center.



Collections

While we continue to inventory our existing museum holdings, we are uncovering possibilities for expanding our collection of Vermont stories. One gap in our collections that we discovered last year is Nordic skiing. Last fall, Vermont Historical Society was honored to receive generous gifts from two Vermont champions.



Trina Hosmer discovered Nordic skiing as a student at UVM and went on to be part of the first US Women's Nordic Ski team at the 1972 Sapporo Olympics. Hosmer shared with VHS remarkable memories of her

journey to and at the Olympics, and she donated her 1972 Olympics racing bib to our collection. Its printed canvas surface, with woven cotton side ties, shows the simple and clean design favored by the US Women's Ski Team in 1972. The woven cotton shoulder straps are still looped to shorten the bib for Hosmer when she wore it, and the side ties show the same creases and curls from being tied and untied for races.

At the same time, Ben Ogden shared a group of objects from his own Nordic competitions. In 2022, Ogden competed in the Beijing Olympics in February, then returned to the US to compete with the UVM Nordic Ski Team at NCAA Championships in March. It was an incredible season for Ogden, Team USA, and the UVM Ski Team, and out of that year's uniforms Ogden donated a bib from both major races, his Team USA racing suit, and the Madshus skis he used in both events.

Alongside Hosmer's printed canvas bib now reside two modern printed Lycra bibs, the stretchy fabric ideal for accommodating different athletes' physiques rather than the undyed canvas and cotton ties used in 1972. The vibrant colors of Ogden's bibs and the intense graphic design of his full racing suit for Team USA complement the slender, bright red skis. Madshus is a favorite brand among competitive Nordic skiers, and Ogden bought this pair locally as he geared up for what turned into an unforgettable 2022 season.

Together, Ogden and Hosmer's thoughtful donations show the stylistic and technical progression of Nordic ski gear worn by Vermonters over the past half-century.

Research and Exhibition Gallery

As in any museum or history organization, most of the VHS collection is kept stored away for its own safety. Over the years, we have pursued many ways better to share our collection with the public, and in the first design plans for the Vermont History Center, a space was considered for “open storage,” a way to provide broader access without a full exhibit.

In pursuit of that initial vision, several years ago VHS applied for funding through the Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) program, which is colloquially known as earmarks. Senator Sanders approved our project and moved it forward to final funding for a total of \$210,000. We were able to begin work on a new space that we called the Research and Exhibition Gallery (REG).



The federal funding matched a capitol grant from the State of Vermont, as well as private donations, that revitalized our aging HVAC system. Over the winter and spring of 2024, Donnegan Systems, Inc., installed shelving, drawers, and painting racks in the exhibit space that realized an updated vision of open storage. We were not emptying our storage space into the gallery, but lightly curating objects based around themes of the 250th anniversary of the founding of America. To preserve the element of discovery core to the idea of open storage, we made the catalog records for all items in the REG public and linked a QR code to each shelf and drawer, so that visitors can dig in and form their own connections and ideas about items on display.



In the fall of 2024, we opened the Research and Exhibition Gallery with much fanfare, exhibiting 1,500+ objects from our collections and providing a beautiful and flexible space for school programs, in-depth object examination, and thinking about the themes of 250 years of American history.

Vermont Historical Society: Getting ready for the 250th

Education

All in Vermont: Students and local historical societies create a map of local history.

Vermont History Day: Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History

Vermont History Explorer: Platform for students to understand the 250th.

Programming

LLHSM: Support for local historical societies & museums as they prepare for the 250th.

Ethan Allen Film: VHS is the fiscal sponsor.

Public Programs: Speakers and programs for the 250th.

Vermont History Museum

Illustrations of History: How we pictured history.

50 Vermont Objects: Objects that tell Vermont's story.

Local History Gallery: The 250th in our towns and villages.

Collections and Library

Research and Exhibition Gallery: documenting and photographing items in our open-storage gallery.

Library: Cataloging items and special collections.

VermontHistory.org

The logo for Vermont History is enclosed in a dark green rounded rectangular border. At the top, the word "VERMONT" is written in a bold, dark green, serif font, flanked by decorative scrollwork. Below it, the word "HISTORY" is written in a larger, bold, dark green, serif font. A horizontal line is positioned below the word "HISTORY".

VERMONT HISTORY

Connecting You to Vermont's Story Since 1838

The Vermont Historical Society is a nonprofit organization that operates the Vermont History Museum in Montpelier, the Vermont History Center in Barre, and the Leahy Library in Barre; educates Vermont's schoolchildren; provides support to Vermont's local historical societies; publishes books of historic interest; and offers programming throughout the state and beyond.

Chartered in 1838 by the Vermont Legislature, the Vermont Historical Society's purpose is to reach a broad audience through our outstanding collections, statewide outreach, and dynamic programming. We believe that an understanding of the past changes lives and builds better communities.

The utmost care has been taken in preparing this report. Occasionally, however, errors do occur. We apologize if this has happened and ask that you notify us with any inaccuracies or omissions.

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