



HISTORY CONNECTIONS

Vermont Historical Society News and Notes

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History Connections is published
by the Vermont Historical Society.

The Vermont Historical Society engages both Vermonters and “Vermonters at Heart” in the exploration of our state’s rich heritage. Our 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.

Executive Director: Steve Perkins

Vermont History Museum and Store

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In The Galleries

History Museum Special Exhibits

A Stitch in Time

We all know the phrase “History repeats itself.” We hear it applied to politics, wars, and large social movements, but what about the small things?

In our new rotating exhibit, *A Stitch in Time*, the Vermont Historical Society will explore how your fashion choices today are informed by the fashions of history. Each rotation will feature two historical garments from the collection and one modern garment, showing that there’s really no such thing as a new, original trend—all modern fashions are inspired and informed by history.

This exhibit’s latest rotation is perfect for the coming winter season: three ski boots that illustrate the evolution of the footwear and how the sport has changed with time. **On view through June 2024**

Calvin Coolidge: Vermont’s President

August 2023 marks the centennial of Calvin Coolidge’s arrival in the oval office, following the death of President Warren G. Harding. To explore the legacy of his life and administration, the Vermont Historical Society is hosting an exhibition from the Calvin Coolidge Presidential Foundation, which tells the story of Coolidge’s life and work in an innovative graphic exhibit.

Calvin Coolidge: Vermont’s President will be displayed in the Vermont History Museum’s Jackie Calder Exhibit Gallery, and features specially commissioned graphic illustrations of key moments in Coolidge’s career, accompanied by text explaining the context and impact of those moments. Artist Paul Rivoche (*The Forgotten Man: A New History of the Great Depression*) provided the illustrations for the exhibit. **On view through June 2024.**

Fancy Goods: Hats and Fashion Accessories, 1850-1950

Fancy goods were designed to appeal to taste or fancy rather than what was essential. The primarily ornamental fashion items in this exhibit document what residents of Middletown Springs considered fancy goods. The approximately 30 items, which date from 1850 to 1950, were donated to the Middletown Springs Historical Society collection by local families. **On view through February 24, 2024.**

History Center Special Exhibits

Icons and Oddities

Vermonters have always been keen to reuse and recycle. For this newest iteration of *Icons, Oddities, and Wonders*, VHS staff sought items from our collections that show hundreds of years of clever adaptation and thoughtful reinvention.

Visit the gallery during Library open hours.

Events

Want to learn more about upcoming events and programs?
Visit the calendar at vermonthistory.org/calendar

Military Connections

Thank you all for your concern, words of support, and donations this summer and fall as we at the Vermont Historical Society navigated the recovery from July's flooding. As you all know, the Vermont History Museum was able to reopen in mid-October and we are excited to welcome members, guests, and school groups once again. As we move into the holiday season, consider supporting VHS through gift purchases at our museum store. We have an excellent selection of books about Vermont's history, including many of our own publications.

Over the past year, we have focused these issues of *History Connections* around a central theme. This winter we offer several articles that delve into the military contributions of both Vermonters and the Vermont Landscape.

Last winter I had the unique opportunity to visit two missile silo sites in Vermont for our television program *This Place in History*. Growing up during the Cold War, I thought I had a pretty good conception of the military emplacements here in the northeast and I had no idea that Vermont, as well as a number of towns across the lake in New York housed Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles. PR & Guest Services Coordinator Andrew Liptak's article will shed more light for our readers on this topic.

As our education team works with teachers around the state to understand the unique needs of Vermont students, we have been continually adding to our online

site: VermontHistoryExplorer.org. Museum Educator Danielle Harris-Burnett created a new unit about the Buffalo Soldiers and their time at Fort Ethan Allen, and she reflects on some of this content for you here.

Juls Sundberg, our former Metadata Librarian

(who recently left for a library position not far away at Goddard College) looks at a diary that was recently donated to the Leahy Library from a Burlington man who served in the Second World War. And Director of Collections and Access Amanda Gustin examines a special item in our collection: a rug owned by a member of the Grand Army of the Republic rug that spells out his service during the Civil War.



This winter we offer several articles that delve into the military contributions of both Vermonters and the Vermont Landscape.

As has become tradition, please shop from our seasonal book list. Plenty of new books about Vermont history hit stores this year, including our very well-reviewed book by author Mercedes de Guardiola, *Vermont for the Vermonters: The History of Eugenics in the Green Mountain State*. We also have a short Q&A with Mercedes about the book and its origins.

Enjoy Vermont's magical winter season and we hope to see you soon.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Perkins'.

Steve Perkins, *Executive Director*

Above: A powder horn in VHS's collection.



Buffalo Soldiers } *in the Green Mountain State*

By Danielle Harris-Burnett

In 1863 the U.S. Army established the first official all-Black military regiment, the 54th Massachusetts Infantry and subsequently formed the 9th and 10th Cavalries in 1868. Due to their role in westward expansion, these cavalries were known as the Buffalo Soldiers. Throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, the 10th Cavalry served in a variety of other conflicts, including the Spanish-American War (1898) and Philippine-American War (1899-1902).

The US military began integrating units starting in 1948. Since then, the Buffalo Soldiers have come to represent the legacy of multiple all-Black regiments. The formal recognition of all-Black regiments created a shift in public consciousness. The Buffalo Soldiers were simultaneously able to generate authority from their job and change public perceptions around race relations. Each of

these intersections is key to our understanding of the time the 10th Cavalry spent in Vermont between 1909 and 1913.

The 10th cavalry arrived in Vermont on July 10th, 1909. The *Bennington Banner* announced their arrival, “Colored Cavalry Arrives at Fort Ethan Allen: Eleven Troops of 10th Regt. Quartered at Post, Anxiety in the Vicinity.” They were the first all-Black regiment posted at Fort Ethan Allen in Winooski, Vermont. The 10th Cavalry’s arrival more than doubled Vermont’s Black population. Many Black Vermonters moved away from the state between 1890 and 1900. But racial tensions in and around the fort received further fuel from sensational journalism in local newspapers around the state, in articles that insisted the 10th cavalry would increase Vermont’s crime rate.

While segregation was never formally adopted in Vermont, white Burlington residents tried to introduce restrictions in the city’s street cars after the 10th Cavalry arrived. Lucius Bigelow, a former journalist, wrote an

impassioned letter to the people in the *Burlington Free Press* in July of 1909 stating, “a northern man, who wants a Jim Crow car in Vermont is either a vulgar brute or a silly snob.” Fortunately, Burlington streetcar companies did not cave to these calls for segregation. While there is an extensive collection of articles documenting the unit’s arrival, each one has a glaring omission. We do not have many surviving records of how members of the 10th Cavalry felt about this day-by-day analysis of their arrival in Vermont.

From 1909 to 1913, the 10th Cavalry became recognizable figures in Vermont public life. They participated in state parades and took part in sporting events with Norwich University and private sports clubs around the state. These events became microcosms for Vermont’s racial inequities in the early 20th century, documented by local reporters. The papers cheered the efforts of Vermont teams when they won but cried foul if the 10th Cavalry beat them. A 1911 article in the *Barre Daily Times* reported sourly that the soldiers won, “through a fluke,” and mentions a return game at the fort.

Outside of the public’s scope of interest, married members of the 10th Cavalry became homeowners and renters around Winooski and Burlington. In 1910, census records show that only 26% percent of Black Vermonters were women —many of whom moved with their husbands in the 10th Cavalry. During their time in Vermont, the 10th Cavalry and their families were socially isolated. White diners walked out of restaurants in Burlington and Winooski.

In November of 1909, Sam Dobbins became president/bartender for the Hiawatha Club in Winooski, Vermont. The Hiawatha Club functioned as an improvement society for the 10th Cavalry and other Black Vermonters in Winooski. The club became integral to the 10th Cavalry’s community. However, it was short-lived. In February of 1912, the clubhouse burned to the ground. Dobbins and several other inhabitants escaped the fire, along with the cash register. James Polk, a member of the 10th Cavalry, died in the fire. Dobbins did not reestablish Hiawatha after the fire. He went on to serve in World War I, and as a post commander of the American Legion.

A handful of soldiers, such as Dobbins, made Vermont their permanent home. But in 1913, the 10th Cavalry

received transfer orders from Fort Ethan Allen to Fort Huachuca in Arizona. The 10th Cavalry had a tremendous impact on Vermont’s racial relations. As the first all-Black regiment stationed at Fort Ethan Allen, the 10th Cavalry’s motions became topics of media interest to Vermonters. In addition, the 10th Cavalry established a close-knit community network of Black Vermonters within Winooski and Burlington. In 2009, members of the Buffalo Soldiers 9th and 10th Cavalry National Association visited Fort Ethan Allen to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the 10th Cavalry’s arrival in Vermont. The time that the Buffalo Soldiers spent in the state represents a shift in Vermont’s racial relations. Vermont was not an exception to the bias and tensions that the 10th Cavalry experienced in other states. However, primary sources from 1909-1913

The Buffalo Soldiers were simultaneously able to generate authority from their job and change public perceptions around race relations.

tell us precious little about how the soldiers felt about their time stationed in Vermont.

In our educational programs at the Vermont History Museum, it is the lack of sources surrounding the 10th Cavalry’s time in Vermont that drives our instructional strategy. Over the summer, we completed work on our newest Hands-on History program, *The Buffalo Soldiers: Life in the 10th Cavalry*. Students

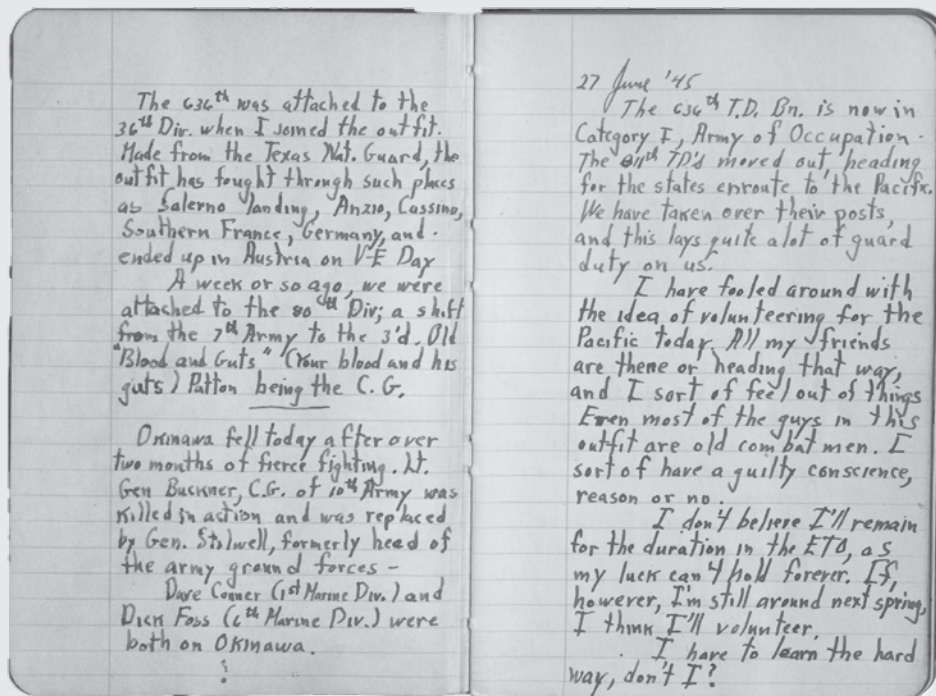
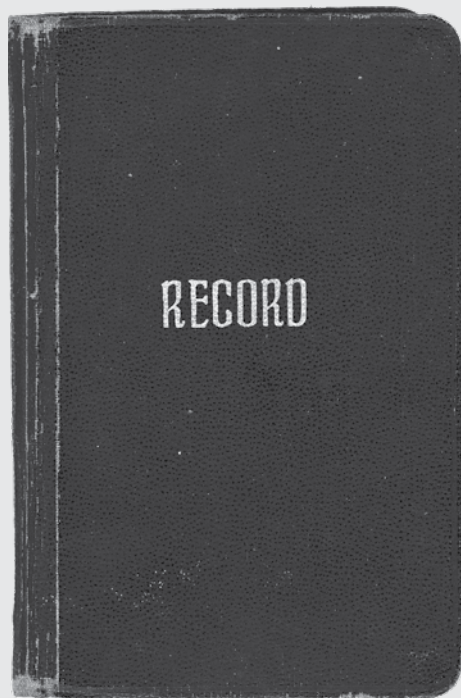
rotate between four stations focusing on: Vermont’s population changes, the Cavalry’s role in public life, building community, and the legacy of the 10th today. Students use the resources at each of these stations to answer a core question: How can we use sources to learn about parts of history that are intentionally left out or forgotten?

We wanted to give students the opportunity to explore how important it is to analyze perspective in historic sources. In this program students can explore how the intersections of race, military status, and socioeconomics create a holistic picture of the 10th Cavalry’s time in Vermont. We are excited to include this period of Vermont state history in our Hands-On offerings, and hope students will gain meaningful experience analyzing primary sources on the soldiers.

Want to learn more? Read ‘The Buffalo Soldiers in Vermont, 1909-1913’ from the Vermont History Journal: https://vermonthistory.org/journal/73/07_Work.pdf

Photo facing page: The 10th Cavalry’s arrival at Fort Ethan Allen more than doubled Vermont’s Black population.

“...the war certainly has split us up, but there will be a day of reunion. The tales we can exchange,



WARTIME RECORD: John Twitchell's WWII diary

By Juls Sundberg

On August 15, 1945, the Second World War came to an end when Emperor Hirohito announced that Japan had accepted the Potsdam Declaration, guaranteeing his nation's formal surrender. At 6 AM on the same day across the world in Germany, a young Vermonter named John Twitchell recounted hearing the news over the radio, noting that “very few guys whooped or hollered, just discussion of points and possible discharge.” A little over a month later in an entry dated September 21, 1945, he wrote “well, the war is just about over, excepting the final formalities... I have absolutely no idea when I shall get out, but doubt it will be within the next year.”

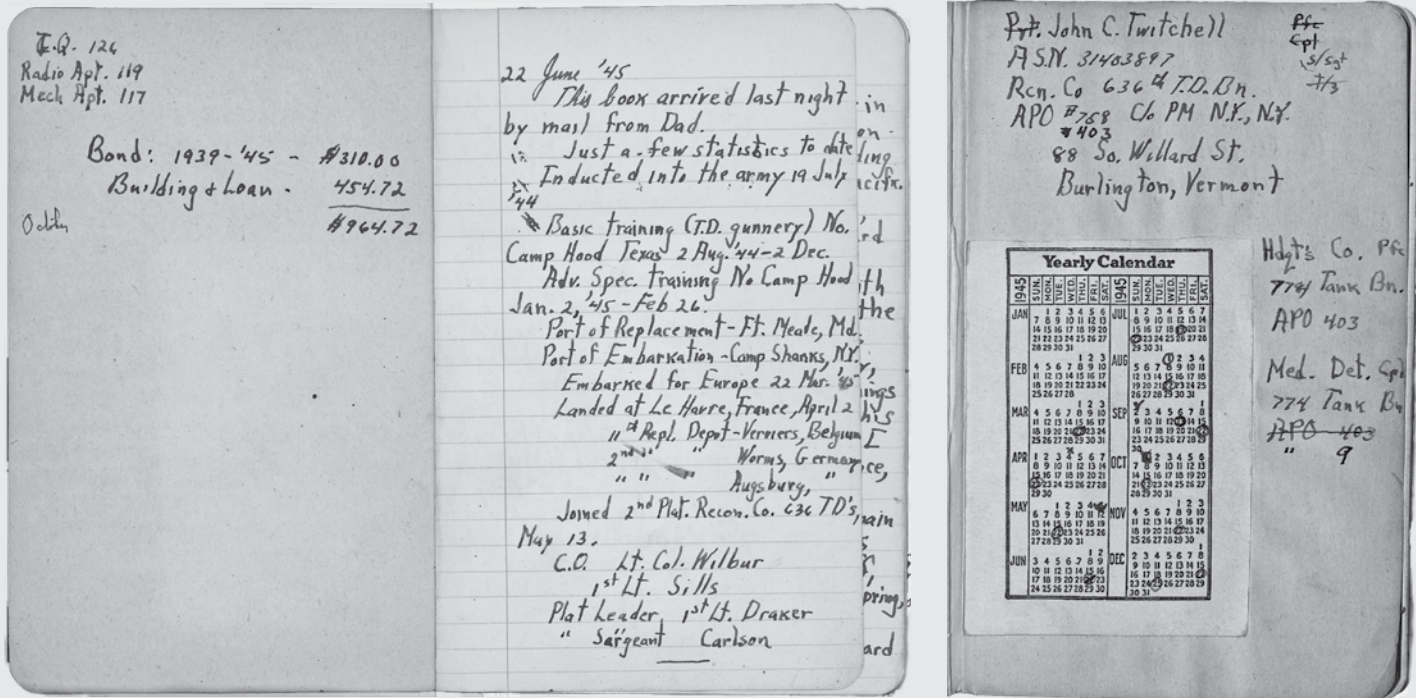
Born in 1926 in Burlington, Vermont, Twitchell came from a long line of Vermonters who served in the military. His father, Dr. Emmus George Twitchell, had served as captain in the medical corps in France during the First World War, while his grandfather Marshall Harvey Twitchell, was a private in the 4th Vermont Regiment during the Civil War.

Twitchell joined the US Army in July 1944 after graduating from Burlington High School. In his time there,

he was the editor-in-chief of the 1944 Oread, the school's yearbook, was First Lieutenant in the school band, a member of the school's Latin Club, performed in the Senior Play, and participated in the school's basketball, track, and baseball teams, and was Class Tax Collector. His classmates voted him both “Done most for school” and “Most Likely to Succeed” at the end of the year, and his time in school was obviously important to him. In an entry dated January 10, 1946, he wrote: “Before I forget, I got my ‘Oread’ last night. Gosh! It was good to read it again. It sort of helps to relive the days at BHS again.”

In his initial entry dated June 22nd, 1945, Twitchell writes that his father mailed him the diary and ran down his time in the service starting in July 1944: he went through basic training at Fort Hood in Texas (now named Fort Cavazos) in August, underwent specialized training in January 1945, and departed for Europe in March. After landing in France, he was sent to Belgium and then Germany. Along the way, he provided sporadic updates on the lives of his friends and family: Dan, Bill, Jack, Bob,

and the times we'll have doing it, will be something to look forward to, "après la guerre."



Lewie and more, accounts of the letters he received from his loved ones, and updates about his movements and fellow soldiers at the tail end of the war.

Following Germany's surrender to the Allied powers in May 1945, Twitchell was nostalgic about returning home and leaving his comrades behind, writing in an entry dated June 23rd that "the war certainly has split us up, but there will be a day of reunion. The tales we can exchange, and the times we'll have doing it, will be something to look forward to, "après la guerre."

While in the Army, Twitchell was promoted to the rank of sergeant and after his discharge from the service in July 1946, he returned to Burlington to study at the University of Vermont, graduating in 1950 and returning to earn his M.D. in 1953. From there, he started a family and set up a private practice in the Queen City from 1957 to 1971, before joining the Given Health Care Center, helped to create what became the University Health Center, and taught as an associate professor of medicine at UVM. He died in May 1983.

In 2022, Twitchell's daughter Nancy donated the diary to the Vermont Historical Society, where it's now preserved along with the papers of his grandfather, Marshall. She explained to VHS that her father "once

told me, 'Intelligence is just a matter of caring,'" and that "He had a great sense of humor. He thought Burlington, with the lake and mountains, was the perfect place to raise kids [and] he loved telling us about our family history and our genealogy. He said he would have been a history teacher or an accountant if he hadn't become a doctor."

Wars are often defined by their larger defining events: the strategies and battles that carry one side or another to victory, the horrific losses that pile up, and the effects that linger in the decades and centuries that follow. Those wars are fought by individuals, and in his diary, Twitchell documented his excitements and worries, his thoughts on how the war was proceeding, and what he planned for his future when he returned home. The book is an excellent snapshot into one Vermonter's experiences as a soldier and his thoughts about the conflict he was part of. On March, 1946, he closed the booklet out with an apt line: "Grandma was waiting at the door and, at last, I had come all the way... Ah! I'm tired."

Read John Twitchell's entire diary: https://vermonthistory.org/documents/findaid/MSA_958_06-Twitchell-WWII-Diary.pdf

Above: Pages from John Twitchell's Diary.

“Vermont for the Vermonters”

The Vermont Historical Society’s latest book-length publication sheds light on a grim chapter in the state’s history. Author **Mercedes de Guardiola** explains how she wrote the book and what she hopes we can learn from it.

Interview by Andrew Liptak

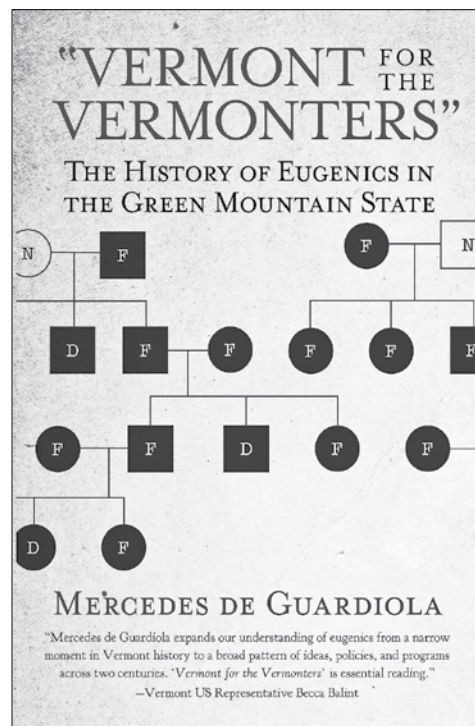
First off, can you introduce yourself to our readers?

I’m a historian of eugenics with a current focus on Vermont’s history of the movement, particularly policies of child health and welfare, mass institutionalization and deinstitutionalization, sterilization, and family separation. I first began my research at Dartmouth College and have continued my research since—it’s been about seven years, so pretty exciting to finally see it published!

I first shared a portion of my work in *Vermont History*, but felt very strongly readers would benefit more from seeing the contextualized history standalone book rather than a series of articles. Currently, I’m based in New York and work in open innovation consulting across subjects such as Lyme disease diagnostics, suicide prevention, and adult education technology.

When did you first learn about Vermont’s eugenics movement, and what motivated you to pursue the topic at Dartmouth?

The history of eugenics has always been a point of interest to me, even before I became aware of the name—it’s really not a term that’s well-known in America. Understanding eugenics is key to understanding so many parts of our history, from the development of healthcare to public welfare, as well as what we’re seeing today with



communities’ distrust in the medical system and the lack of long-term mental health treatment.

At Dartmouth, I was taking a seminar on American history and had been planning to write a senior thesis on Nazi Germany. My teacher suggested I look at American eugenics, which was the basis of Nazi policies; it was the first time I’d ever heard what the field was called.

Vermont was proposed because the records were available—that’s not the case in many states, and later it became apparent that some critical records here are still inaccessible—and it appeared that there were gaps in the public understanding of that history.

How did you come to publish your article with *Vermont History*, “Segregation or Sterilization”: Eugenics in the 1912 Vermont State Legislative Session” and how did that lead to you testifying before the Vermont state legislature?

Following several talks my senior year and a significant public interest in the subject, the editor of *Vermont History*, Michael Sherman, invited me to submit my research for publication. Choosing the selection was difficult: It’s a lengthy history and much of it is difficult to tackle within the confines of an article, but the 1912 campaign under Governor Mead offered an opportunity to open new discourse on the state’s history of eugenics.

As one of the few historians on the topic, the state legislature afterwards asked me to testify on this history and the wide range of public policies that resulted. Today, much of the public understanding of Vermont eugenics is limited to the 1931 sterilization law; in my testimony, I laid out the expansive policies put into place and the legislature’s role in supporting or enabling them at the time.

How did you decide to publish this as a standalone book?

One of the major problems in understanding the United States’s history of eugenics is the lack of research and available information. Though there is significant and growing interest in the subject, these issues have led to a great deal of misreporting and misunderstanding of what occurred. My goal in publishing a standalone book was to help readers understand the broad history of eugenics—including why it developed with such strong support and the impact we can see today.

What does “Vermont for the Vermonters” bring to our understanding of the movement? What new things did you learn while researching it?

“Vermont for the Vermonters” regrounds the history of eugenics into the state’s larger history. When I first started my work, two questions stood out to me: Why did eugenics emerge in Vermont, and why did so many Vermonters believe that eugenics was a necessary, humane solution to social issues?

The short answer is personal conviction, but in limiting ourselves to that we lose sight of the bigger picture that led to personal conviction. In looking further back, I was able to see how failing systems of healthcare and public welfare, coupled with preexisting beliefs on human worth, exploded into support for eugenics. Looking at the contextualized history demonstrates the patterns of issues that can lead to eugenics—regardless of time or place—while Vermont’s unique development of eugenics demonstrates how eugenicists thought, as well as the often illogical nature of the movement.

What do you hope Vermonters and readers will take away from “Vermont for the Vermonters” after reading it?

Why Vermont eugenics happened. That’s the question I get asked most of all, whether it’s from survivors and their families or people who have only just heard of it. “Vermont for the Vermonters” is a look at how social elites in positions of authority—from those at the heights of legislature and academia to officers in small towns—actively sought to rid their world of people they decided were their inferiors on the basis of socioeconomic status, race and ethnicity, and ability, and built a social construct of the “superior” human race to do so. It’s not an easy part of our history in America, but history shouldn’t always be easy. It’s also my hope that this book will spur further research—there’s still much of the history we don’t know, particularly regarding the extent to which private organizations carried out eugenics.



Author Mercedes de Guardiola

Understanding eugenics is key to understanding so many parts of our history, from the development of healthcare to public welfare....

Read “Segregation or Sterilization: Eugenics in the 1912 Vermont State Legislative Session: <https://vermonthistory.org/journal/87/VH8701SegregationOrSterilization.pdf>”

The Cold War's Front Lines *in the Green Mountain State*

By Andrew Liptak

In the fall of 1962, the world reached the closest point to the start of a nuclear war that it has ever experienced: the Cuban Missile Crisis. The confrontation between the United States and Soviet Union was the product of an escalating strategy of deterrence and for many was a confirmation of the dangers that nuclear weapons posed to the world at large. While the incident took place in the middle of the Caribbean, Vermont and upstate New York had their own roles to play.

When the U.S. dropped a pair of nuclear bombs on Japan in July 1945, it brought the Second World War to a close but ushered in a new era of warfare at the same time. In the years that followed, the U.S. and U.S.S.R established networks of intercontinental ballistic missile launch sites in a tit-for-tat game of deterrence. If one launched a missile, the other could respond in kind. This strategy of mutually-assured destruction (MAD) was theoretically designed to hold the other in check, because the consequences of such a conflict would be too destructive.

Vermont and upstate New York were part of that strategic network. Once the site of British invasion during the War of 1812, Plattsburgh, New York became the home to a sprawling military base that quartered and trained soldiers through the wars that followed. As tensions rose in the aftermath of the Second World War, the U.S. Air Force took over the base and repurposed for use as a hub for a number of strategic bombing units. With the introduction of Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) to the country's arsenal, the Air Force designated Plattsburgh as one of four installations to house the new SM-65 Atlas missile, which could deliver a nuclear warhead anywhere in the world.



The base was the focal point in a ring of twelve missile silos dug into the ground in New York (Ellenburg, Mooers, Champlain, Brainerdville,

Dannemora, Redford, Riverview, Au Sable, Lewis, and Willsboro) and Vermont (Alburgh and Swanton). Each silo extended deep into the Earth and included a control room from which a crew would oversee the missile and its operations. When ordered, the crew would fuel the missile and run through checklists to confirm its readiness, then raise it to the surface, where they'd wait for confirmation to launch the vehicle into the sky.

That moment almost came in 1962. To undercut the US's arsenal, USSR Premiere Nikita Khrushchev ordered the secret deployment of dozens of short-range missiles to Cuba, where they could strike at much of North America. When an American spy plane discovered the arrival of the missiles in Cuba on October 14th, it prompted President John F. Kennedy to order a naval blockade of the island nation and to raise the US readiness level to DEFCON 3 on October 22nd.

Construction on Plattsburgh's missile silos had largely been wrapped up by the spring of 1962: members of the 556th Strategic Missile Squadron had been assigned to the base and begun training and drilling. In April, the base took delivery of the first Atlas F missile followed by more in July. According to John Stone and Jeff Stephens in their book *History of the 556th Strategic Missile Squadron*, the Swanton silo was the first to undergo a Propellant Loading Exercise on September 13, 1962, which "would have been the earliest of ANY missile from the 556th SMS that would have been capable and ready to launch," they write.



“By the end of the month 10 missiles had been received by the squadron.”

With Kennedy’s quarantine and alert order on October 22nd, the Swanton and Ellenburg silos were the first to be ready and go onto alert status. On the 24th, the military moved to DEFCON 2 status, and two more sites, Alburgh and Willsboro went into alert status. “There was an unusual bee hive of activity on the top side of [Alburgh],” recounted Master Sergeant (retired) Harold “Don” Wamsley in *History of the 556th Strategic Missile Squadron*, “The crew commander was very busy on one of the phones. He reached into a large bag he always carried, and handed me a pistol with holster and belt. I was told to put them on, and then go into the silo and ‘guard’ the guidance control console until I was relieved.” He remained there until he was relieved when a targeting team arrived at the silo and a warhead was installed.

The tension caused by the geopolitical crisis was palpable elsewhere in Vermont. On the 23rd, the *St. Albans Daily Messenger* reported that the area was a “flurry of activity” following Kennedy’s announcement of the quarantine, with a number of jets landing at the Burlington, explained by one unnamed member of the Vermont National Guard that they were part of a Strategic Air Command maneuver.

Meanwhile in Montpelier, two members from the 556th Strategic Missile Squadron helped explain

the tense situation to Vermonters. According to the *Times-Argus* of Montpelier and Barre on the same day, Captain William Bernstein and Master Sergeant James Marshbourne flew by helicopter to meet with members of the Montpelier Rotary. In their presentation, they explained that the Plattsburgh base was “the only missile base in the east,” and reassured them that “none of these missiles could be fired accidentally.” Bernstein touted the abilities of the missile crews, showed off a model of the Atlas missile, and explained its launch procedures to the crowd.

The Cuban Missile Crisis came to an end on October 29th, when the USSR announced it would pull back its missiles, and the US removed batteries of shorter-range missiles from Turkey. The missiles in the north country would remain for another three years: the Atlas class of missiles were eventually surpassed by more efficient ICBMs, and with their departure, the missile silos of New York and Vermont were shut down.

The missiles they once carried did end up serving a useful purpose: brought to California, they were eventually used to test equipment for the space program. Their presence demonstrated the reach of the Cold War and the US’s nuclear strategy and served as a vivid reminder that nuclear warfare was not a far-off concept.

Above and left : Photos of the Alburgh ICBM missile site.

Special Collection:

Grand Army of the Republic Rug

By Amanda Kay Gustin

When wars come to an end, veterans in the United States have often formed fellowship organizations. In 2023, we're familiar with groups such as the American Legion or Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), but in nineteenth century Vermont, the dominant fraternal veteran's organization for Civil War veterans was the Grand Army of the Republic.

Founded in April 1866 by Dr. Benjamin F. Stephenson Illinois less than a year after the end of the war, the GAR – as it was most commonly known – brought together Union veterans of the Army, Navy, and Marines. At its peak in 1890, the organization boasted nearly 500,000 members and 10,000 posts nationwide.

The first GAR post in Vermont was organized in St. Johnsbury on October 23rd, 1868. GAR Posts usually assumed the name of a deceased local veteran or other important figure in the war, and thus, the St. Johnsbury post was known as “Chamberlain,” while Chittenden’s Post 116 (the last founded in Vermont) was named “A.P. Noyes.” At least one GAR post in Vermont was integrated, including Black veterans in community alongside the white veterans they had not been permitted to serve with during the war itself.

The GAR functioned as a connector organization for Civil War veterans and their families – auxiliaries included the Women’s Relief Corps, Ladies of the GAR, and Sons of Union Veterans. Members attended frequent local, regional, and national gatherings to honor the casualties of the Civil War, the service of veterans, and to advocate politically for a number of issues.

The Vermont Historical Society’s records of the Grand Army of the Republic are voluminous, including published books and pamphlets, original records, personal reminiscences and manuscripts, medals and ribbons from reunion gatherings, and more.

One particularly interesting object is a cotton and wool hooked rug that belonged to Harvey S. Powers of Lyndonville. Powers enlisted in Company A of the 9th Vermont when he was sixteen years old and was very

active in his local post of the GAR after the war.

He was deeply committed to the GAR and belonged to several posts based on his location, including the Colonel Preston Post in Wells River and the Chamberlain Post in St. Johnsbury. At the end of his life in 1939, he was serving as

the commander of the entire Vermont GAR – which had dwindled to few members by that time.

The rug’s maker is unknown – past researchers have speculated it was a female family member – but it is replete with symbolism that celebrates Powers’s service. At the top, though faded with time, are his regimental identifiers: “Co. A” and “9 VT.” At the bottom are upside-down hearts, the symbol of the 24th Army Corps, and “24 AC.” The hearts are blue, signifying the third division of the 24th Corps, and have the numeral 2 in them – for the 2nd Brigade of that division.

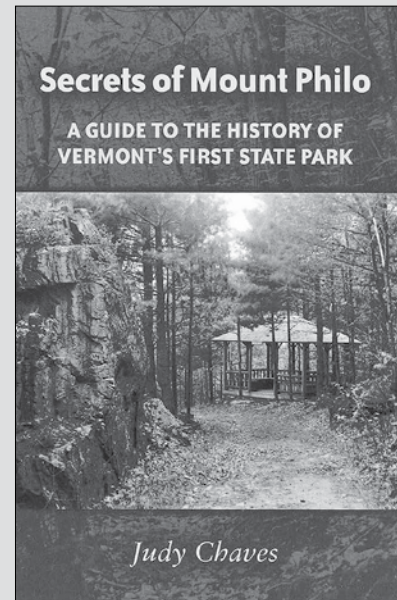
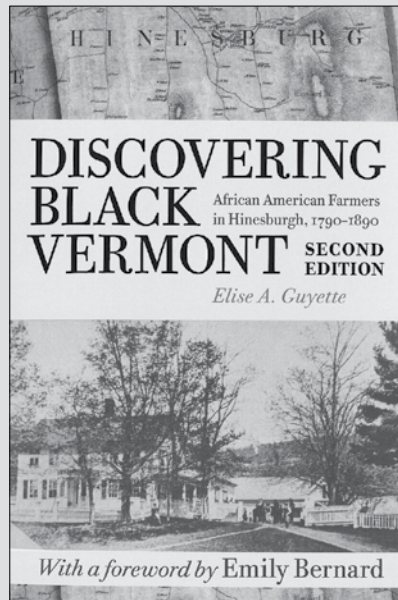
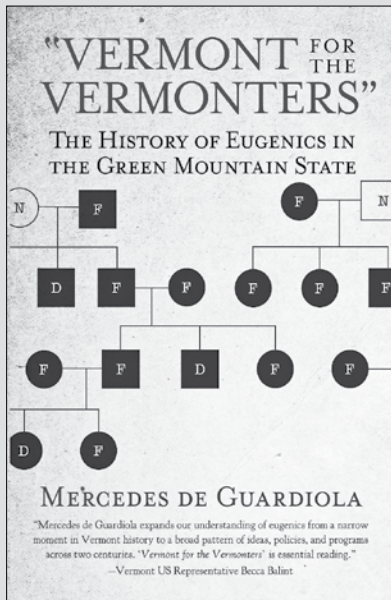
Nationally, the GAR dissolved in 1956 after the death of its last member. Its successor organization, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, continues its work to document and honor the sacrifices of Union soldiers in the Civil War.





Booklist 2023-4

Featured VHS Publications



“Vermont for the Vermonters”: The History of Eugenics in the Green Mountain State

By Mercedes de Guardiola

In *Vermont for the Vermonters: The History of Eugenics in the Green Mountain State*, Mercedes de Guardiola examines how the state’s eugenics movement emerged out of the public policies of the nineteenth century and led to state-sanctioned programs of institutionalization, sterilization, family separation, and education aimed at the most vulnerable Vermonters. Exploring the social and political legacy of the movement, de Guardiola brings new scholarship and context to one of Vermont’s darkest chapters.

Paperback, 284 pages, \$22.95

Discovering Black Vermont: African American Farmers in Hinesburgh, 1790-1890

By Elise A. Guyette

Elise A. Guyette tells the story of three generations of free African Americans building a life and community

in northern Vermont in the years following statehood. By piecing together fragments of historical information—tax and estate records, journals, diaries, and the like—the author recovers what is essentially a lost world and establishes a framework for using primary sources to document a forgotten past. The book is an invaluable resource for those conducting local history research and will serve as inspiration for high school and college students and their teachers.

Paperback, 218 pages, \$22.95

Secrets of Mount Philo: A Guide to the History of Vermont’s First State Park

By Judy Chaves

In 2024, Mt. Philo State Park will turn 100 years old, and in this guidebook, Judy Chaves explores the past and present Mount Philo, site of Vermont’s oldest state park. It’s full of detailed information with photos and maps in a convenient take-along size.

Paperback, 113 pages, \$19.95

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Portrait of a Forest: Men and Machine

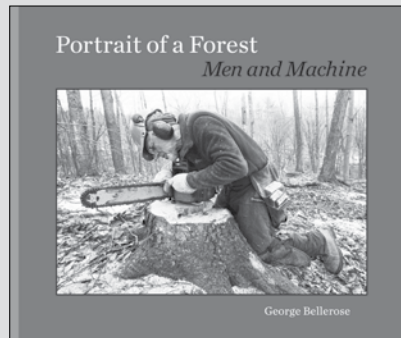
By George Bellerose

Over the past 250 years, the Vermont landscape has been shaped by the farming and forest communities. As Vermont has urbanized, we have lost a deep understanding and appreciation of the importance of our forest and farming communities.

Today's forest and forest products industry faces many challenges—forest fragmentation, global competition, invasive species, climate change, an aging workforce, and loss of infrastructure.

A healthy forest is a multi-generational responsibility. To be good stewards of the land is this generation's challenge. *Portrait of a Forest: Men and Machine* through day-in-the-life photography and wide-ranging interviews helps us understand the people and policies that will determine if we meet that responsibility. Winner of VHS's Richard O. Hathaway Award in 2023.

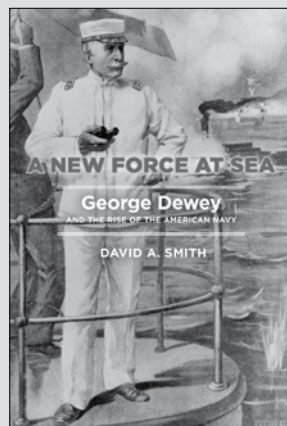
Paperback, 304 pages, \$26.95



A New Force at Sea: George Dewey and the Rise of the American Navy

By David A. Smith

A New Force at Sea tells the story of one of the most important officers in the U.S. Navy between the Civil War and World War II. Born in Montpelier, Vermont, George Dewey attended the still relatively new U.S. Naval Academy, graduating in 1858. He served with distinction in the Civil War in the Union Navy, saw a significant amount of action in the Mississippi River and along the Atlantic coast, and was singled out for his leadership



and bravery by his superior officers. In the wake of the war, Dewey remained in the Navy as an officer, but the American people were generally uninterested in any role their nation could play in the broader world and the Navy languished.

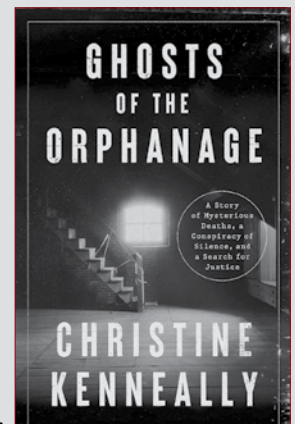
Hardcover, 376 pages, \$44.95

Ghosts of the Orphanage: A Story of Mysterious Deaths, a Conspiracy of Silence, and a Search for Justice

By Christine Kenneally

For much of the twentieth century, a series of terrible events—abuse, both physical and psychological, and even deaths—took places inside orphanages. The survivors have been trying to tell their astonishing stories for a long time, but disbelief, secrecy, and trauma have kept them from breaking through. For ten years, Christine Kenneally has been on a quest to uncover the harrowing truth. Following clues that take her into the darkened corners of several institutions across the globe, she finds a trail of terrifying stories and a courageous group of survivors who are seeking justice.

Hardcover, 384 pages, \$30

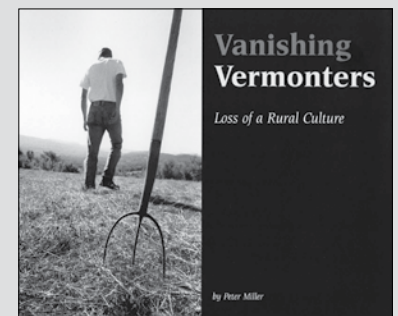


Vanishing Vermonters: Loss of a Rural Culture

By Peter Miller

Vanishing Vermonters: Loss of a Rural Culture, is the newest and most important of Peter's five books on his home state. He recorded 23 Vermonters on how they cope in one of the most expensive states in the Union. Includes 168 pages and 91 photographs that display life in Vermont rather than its iconic beauty.

Paperback, 168 Pages, \$24.95



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