



Wanted: Editor

After four years as our newsletter editor, Bill Budde has announced his decision to step down. Bill has contributed significantly to the professional look of our newsletter and we are indebted to him for his excellent work. Through his efforts and those of Randy Brown of Rutland, the newsletter has undergone beneficial changes in its look, content, and distribution. Bill's authorship of our member questionnaire of a couple years ago was a significant additional contribution.

Now that Bill has decided to terminate his role as editor, we are eager to learn of those who are interested and capable of taking on this im-

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President's Message *Bob Murphy*

Midsummer is here, and our minds have been distracted by things other than genealogy, such as getting the lawn mowed (between showers), attending fairs and festivities, tending the gardens, enjoying vacations, and a myriad of other fun and not so fun things. Before you know it, fall will be in the air, and it will be time to start thinking about the GSV Fall Conference, to be held this time in Vermont's fabled Northeast Kingdom. The program will be varied and interesting, covering such topics as railroads in Northeastern Vermont, the Buffalo Soldiers and newspaper research. The venue will be the campus of Lyndon State College. We hope that many of you will be able to make it and look forward to seeing you there.

The Lyndon State College locale was suggested to us by member Doug Steward, and he was instrumental in nailing down (not literally, thank goodness) one of our speakers. For that I wish to publicly thank him, and use that as an example of the kind of assistance we dearly need (and appreciate) from our members. Your help in identifying meeting locations and speakers of interest will be a welcome addition to the ideas that our small Board can come up with. Start now thinking about speakers for 2010, and a location for our Fall 2010 conference (probably in the southern half of the state). We are working on a possible joint meeting with the New Hampshire Society of Genealogists for our Spring 2010 meeting.

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What Do You Call That?

NARA and the Problem with Labels & Tags

One of the problems with research is the common agreement on what we call something. A surname can be vexing but there are often a limited number of variations for us to search. Accent variations, spelling disagreements, and regional surname variations can be searched with experience and the use of a system like Soundex.

One of the more interesting questions that has been raised on the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) website is whether labels or tags that help researchers locate information in a database should be attached by NARA staff or both NARA staff and the public at large.

When we label items in a database we begin to enter an area of research with more variation and less agreement. Classification plans have been developed that are supposed to help us find the in-

formation that is important to us, but it requires widespread agreement on the search terms. For example, the labels for a submarine sandwich include hoagie, hero, sub, grinder and probably several other regional variations. Unless someone from Kansas is familiar with variations used on the east coast or in southern California their search may miss a large number of direct references to the same type of sandwich.

Library classification systems like the Dewey Decimal and Library of Congress systems are intended to standardize the ways subjects are labeled. This is supposed to increase the likelihood that a subject or book will be successfully found when we search for it no matter where the book is located. Until recently this has worked rather well because information people

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An item of considerable interest this quarter is our need for a new newsletter editor. Our current editor, Bill Budde, feels it is time to move on to new pursuits, and having given us four years of his efforts, it is a move well earned. We will miss Bill's contributions. Please see the article elsewhere in this issue for more details on the newsletter editor position. In this age of instant internet communication and connectivity, I hope those members at a distance will not self-eliminate "due to distance from Vermont". I think the newsletter could be composed in Hawaii as well as it has traditionally been here in the Green Mountain State. So please let me know if you have an interest.

I am happy to report that the Vermont History Expo, cancelled this year due to budgetary problems, will be reinstated by the Vermont Historical Society in 2010. So if you are one of the many that have looked forward to this event (extremely popular in the past) and were disappointed in 2009, take heart. It will be back!

The GSV website continues to expand, and the offerings of research material continue to grow. I encourage all who have material that they could share to forward it to our webmistress Diantha Howard at

dhoward@uvm.edu. If you are unsure of the format that you should use, simply contact Diantha and she will be happy to guide you.

A new feature on the website is "Notes from the President". In that page I hope to be able to provide more timely information to members about things going on with your Board, as well as events that might interest you. I encourage all members to provide input and feedback to me or other Board members about anything having to do with the society and its programs. Have a gripe? Let us know. Have a suggestion? We would love to hear it. Know of a great website or other resource for Vermont genealogical research? Let us know so we can get the word out.

Finally, I would like to appeal to all of our members for submissions, both to our scholarly journal Vermont Genealogy, and our newsletter. Material for the journal should be sent to Drew Bartley (drew@yourgenealogist.com) and newsletter contributions should be submitted to Bill Budde (BillBudde60@gmail.com).

Bob Murphy
rmm@sover.net

Conferences, Lectures and Seminars

- 9 September—*Finding Your Family Roots in New England*, Worcester Chapter, Massachusetts Society of Genealogists. Details at www.massachusettsocietyofgenealogists.org/worcester
- 16 September—*Revolutionary War Records*, Massachusetts State Archives. Details at www.sec.state.ma.us/arc/arcwrk/wrlidx.htm
- 18, 19, 20 September—Genealogy, Culture and History Seminars, New Hampshire Highland Games, Loon Mountain, Lincoln, NH. Eighteenth Century Scottish Naming Practices; Genealogy—What's New and What's Lost in 2009. Email billbudde60@gmail.com for details.
- 19 September—Life in the Past Lane VI, sponsored by Friends of the National Archives—Pittsfield. Day long program held at the Williams Inn on the Green, Williamstown, MA from 8:00 am—4:30 pm. Details are available at <http://narafriends-pittsfield.org/>
- 19 September—Luncheon program, *Orphans and Orphan Trains*, Connecticut Society of Genealogists. Details available at www.csginc.org/genealogy_events_ct.php
- 10 October—*Scots for Sale—Scottish Slaves in Colonial New England*, New Hampshire Society of Genealogists Fall Meeting, Concord, NH. Details at <http://nhsog.org/>
- 11 October—*The Massachusetts State Archives Databases*, Middlesex Chapter, Massachusetts Society of Genealogists. Details at www.massachusettsocietyofgenealogists.org/middlesex
- 17 October—Annual Family history Seminar, Connecticut Society of Genealogists. Details at www.massachusettsocietyofgenealogists.org/middlesexwww.csginc.org/genealogy_events_ct.php
- 24 October—Massachusetts Society of Genealogists Annual Meeting, Framingham, MA. Details at http://www.massachusettsocietyofgenealogists.org/Annual_Meeting_2009.html
- 28 October—Lecture by the archivist of the Archdiocese of Boston, Massachusetts State Archives. Details at www.sec.state.ma.us/arc/arcwrk/wrlidx.htm
- 4–6 November 2009—The New York Genealogical & Biographical Society is sponsoring a three day research trip to the New York State Archives and Library in Albany. Registrants will be provided with three days of assisted research at the Library and Archives, plus social events. Details at www.newyorkfamilyhistory.org
- 10 November—Researching French Canadian Ancestors, sponsored by Friends of the National Archives—Pittsfield. Details are available at <http://narafriends-pittsfield.org/>

Genealogical Society of Vermont
Membership Meeting – 17 Oct 2009
Lyndon State College
Lyndon Center, Vt.

Agenda

- 9:00 a.m.: Registration
- 9:30 a.m.: GSV Business Meeting
- 10:00 a.m.: **Nathaniel Tripp** – “Northeast Kingdom Railroads”
- 11:00 a.m.: **Bill Budde** – “What’s New & What’s Lost In 2009”
- 12:00: Lunch "on your own." The LSC dining hall is available and affordable.
- 1:30 p.m.: **Stuart Smith** – “Newspaper Research in the Northeast Kingdom”
- 3:00 p.m.: adjourn

Nathaniel Tripp is a local writer who has researched the building of the railroads in the Northeast Kingdom, and the various immigrant groups recruited for the construction gangs.

Bill Budde is the current editor of the GSV newsletter, and will provide an update on new and old resources and how the stressed economy has affected access. He will look at important research sites and tools, such as netbook computers, that have both opened up research opportunities and closed off valuable material.

Stuart Smith resides in Danville. He and wife, Anne Kendall Smith, have transcribed many years’ worth of genealogical abstracts from the St. Johnsbury Caledonian.

The cost for this GSV fall conference is \$20 for members and \$25 for non-members. Reservations are required and should be sent to GSV, P.O. Box 14, Randolph, VT 05060. There will be an additional \$5 charged for people arriving without a reservation.

Here is a link to Lyndon State College which includes a map:

<http://www.lyndonstate.edu/Files/LSCCampusMap.pdf>

Editor Position

As Bob noted in his 'help wanted' note on page one the newsletter needs a new editor. As my life has changed I find I have less free time to devote to projects such as the newsletter, and I have to pass the responsibility on to someone able to give it the attention it, and GSV, deserve.

Given the growing access to current information only available through the internet, computer and internet access is important for timely news. Computer access is also important, but not necessary for preparing the copy for the printer. I've used Microsoft Publisher because of my familiarity with the program, but any good word processing program should be adequate.

Computer and internet access has also allowed us to streamline our production of the newsletter. Once the newsletter has been composed it is sent by email attachment to Staples in Rutland for the actual printing, collating and folding. This usually takes one to two days, and then it is picked up and addressed and stamped by our crack Rutland mail crew.

The latest refinement to the newsletter distribution is that we now are able to post it on our website and email it to our members that prefer an electronic to a paper copy. This saves money on our printing and postage costs, and benefits the environment by reducing the energy, trees and pollution involved in preparing and delivering the traditional hard copy.

One of the major aids to the new editor would be reader input. In particular, information about new developments, seminars, opinions and changes in the international, national and especially local genealogy would be most welcome. Currently, the best, most timely source of news on genealogy is found through Dick Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter (at http://blog.eogn.com/eastmans_online_genealogy/) and the Genealogy Guys podcasts (at <http://genealogyguys.com>). Information on upcoming meetings requires a search of several different sites hosted by local, regional, and national organizations.

Anyone interested in more detail about the editorship is welcome to contact me with questions.

Yours aye,

Bill Budde

Michigan State Library Alert!

Genealogists and genealogical organizations across the nation are alarmed at a proposal by Michigan Governor Jenifer M. Granholm to abolish the state Department of History, Arts and Libraries in a cost cutting move. The proposal is an attempt to address an estimated two billion dollar budget shortfall in the state.

The most damaging part of the proposal to genealogists is the closing and dispersal of the Library of Michigan collection throughout the state. The library houses and preserves 180 years of Michigan history and records and is widely used by researchers from across the country. The building, designed specifically to house and preserve the books, manuscripts and records documenting Michigan's past, would be renovated and used for purposes it was not designed for.

Since the proposal was first made this past summer the Michigan Genealogical Council has lobbied heavily to preserve the collection for future researchers. There seems to be some movement by the governor to modify her proposal to scatter the collection throughout the state. A large demonstration September 10th seems to have helped support the effort to protect Michigan history, but researchers across the nation are asked to support the work of the Michigan campaigners by signing an online petition sponsored by the Records Preservation and Access Committee, a joint committee of the Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS) and the National Genealogical Society.

The following is posted on the FGS website-

"Genealogists from within and without Michigan are encouraged to sign the online petition found at <http://www.PetitionOnline.com/RPAC2009/petition.html>. We then ask that you urge the members of every society of which you are a member to do likewise.

Additional background and the latest developments can be found at the web site of the Michigan Genealogical Council at: www.mimgc.org/LOM.html. They may also suggest legislators to whom individual letters might be addressed at appropriate points in the legislative process."

Free Data Available on Footnote.com

Many of the best online research sites are subscription based, but some have free areas available for research or browsing. Footnote has a number of free areas that are worth browsing. While there are some that are strictly document focused some of the more interesting areas are collections of photographs.

There are also several areas that I find both interesting and entertaining. The so-called Project Blue Book case files investigating Unidentified Flying Objects (UFO) have inspired numerous movies, magazine and newspaper articles, camp fire stories, and books over the years. Another database, available by subscription, that arouses my curiosity is the Bureau of Investigation files, the agency later renamed the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

- American Milestone Documents.
- Amistad Federal and Supreme Court records.
- Apollo Mission photos and illustrations.
- Matthew Brady Civil War photographs.
- Papers of the Continental Congress.
- George Armstrong Custer's 1867 Court martial.
- The Lincoln Assassination Papers.
- USS Arizona Memorial at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.
- 138 volumes of historical records published by the Pennsylvania State Archives.
- Captioned photographs of Presidents Calvin Coolidge, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Harry S. Truman.
- Marine Corps color and black and white photographs from Vietnam.
- Photographs of Japanese soldiers and Allied prisoners of war.
- Project Blue Book records and case files of investigations into UFO sightings.
- Vietnam Veterans Memorial every-name database.
- Woodstock Music and Art Fair images and photographs.
- World War II U.S. Air Force Photographs.

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wanted to find was often located in libraries. Access to the location of the information was through a card index, and when that failed there were trained librarians to help us find what we needed. Access was through a narrow gate that was monitored and maintained by a (hopefully) knowledgeable, accessible expert.

Electronic databases containing *manuscript* images now hold billions of ideas and pieces of information that make searching more difficult. It may be easy to search for a common term such as "coconut" in a traditional database, but machines have not been developed that can reliably read handwritten documents and construct an index.

This is where the challenge for NARA, the keeper of the historic manuscripts and documents of the United States, runs into a serious dilemma. Are the historic manuscripts to be classified by only the trained archivists or do they allow users to help in the process?

As curator of a historic Vermont collection that consists of books, photographs, and manuscripts I run into this labeling problem monthly. Our system is set up to include our book collection catalog as part of the larger library catalog. This is extremely advantageous for us—it allows our users to search the library catalog to see if we have a specific item in our restricted collection. Another advantage is that when we add new books to the collection the state department of libraries often has the detailed data ready to download into our catalog.

This saves a lot of time and reduces errors on our end, but often in our local history and genealogy material the search terms from the state are ambiguous. Case in point, a new book of photographs on a village within a town will include search terms from the state for the

village but not the larger town. Unless the village is added at the local library level, researchers are likely to miss this valuable source of local history.

Allowing the users to classify the materials in the online NARA collection is called a distributed classification method—the users of the material become partners in labeling or tagging the information used to construct the index to a manuscript. Known as a *folksonomie* as compared to a formal classification system, this informal classification system is most commonly used on websites such as Facebook.

In genealogy, and an example that NARA could look to for advice, Footnote.com makes extensive use of subscribers input to tag or label data for other researchers to use. Ancestry.com uses employees to tag or label the general or obvious information in the manuscripts on their site. This is the case in the census database that links to the image of the original document.

Footnote has taken a different approach. They use staff to label in broad terms and encourage research users to annotate or tag the fine points such as date, place, secondary surnames, etc. There seem to be two immediate advantages to this approach. First, this permits researchers with greater knowledge than the Footnote staff to add entries that will help others find critical information. Second, the researchers are thinking like other untrained researchers and asking questions framed from a common viewpoint. The end result is often more productive research.

Considering the benefits of limiting tagging to a trained staff or using the combination of trained staff and invested users I support the second option. In the long run it will result in an increased availability of information, in a form that academic and family historians will be able to use with less frustration.



GSV Publications

The society offers the following publications for purchase by our members and readers. GSV members receive a 10% discount on the purchase price. Postage and handling is extra—please add \$3.50 for the first item and \$1.00 for each additional item in the same order to the same address. Mail your checks, payable to GSV, to:

Genealogical Society of Vermont, P. O. Box 14, Randolph, VT 05060-0014

***Vermont Families in 1791, Vol. 1* is out of print.**

Vermont Families in 1791, Vol. 2. Scott A. Bartley, ed., 1997, 304 pp., hardbound. Item No. GSV 5; \$27.00 members, \$30.00 non-members.

Vital Records of Putney, Vermont to the Year 1900.

Compiled and edited by Ken Stevens, 1992, 406 pp. Item No. GSV 2; \$27.00 members, \$30.00 non-members.

Vital Records of Rockingham, Vermont and the Records of the First Church of Rockingham.

Reprinted from the 1902 and 1908 editions, indexed by Christopher T. Norris and Scott A. Bartley, 323 pp., hardbound. Item No. GSV 3; \$27.00 members, \$30.00 non-members.

Windsor County, Vermont Probate Index, 1778-1899. Scott Andrew Bartley and Marjorie-J. Bartley, compilers, 2000, 560 pp., hardbound. Item No. GSV 6;

\$45.00 members, \$50.00 nonmembers.

Index to Branches & Twigs, 1972—1995. Robert M. Murphy, ed. 2000, 572 pp., hardbound. Item No. GSV 7, \$40.00 ppd members, \$65.00 nonmembers. This is the every-name index to GSV's *Branches & Twigs*, published for 24 years in 96 issues.

Sudbury, Vermont: Transcription of Vital Records and Genealogies of Residents. Mary Ann Z. Wheeler, 2000, 416 pp., hardbound. Item No. GSV 9; \$44.55 members, 49.50 nonmembers.

A Bibliography for Vermont Genealogy, 2nd edition. John A. Leppman, 2005, softbound. Item No. GSV 10, \$9.00 members, \$10.00 nonmembers. (Mail orders should add \$1.50 for postage and handling, not the \$3.50 normally charged.)

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Want To Contact Us?

Our website is at

<http://www.genealogyvermont.org/>

News, articles and comments for the **newsletter** should be mailed to:

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142A Munn Terrace
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(802) 375-9296
E-mail: bbudde@verizon.net

Newsletter deadlines are
Dec 15 for the February issue
March 15 for the May issue
June 15 for the August Issue
September 15 for the November issue.

If you would like to **contact our journal, *Vermont Genealogy***, write:

Scott Andrew Bartley, editor
Vermont Genealogy
20 March Avenue
West Roxbury, MA 02132-2604
E-mail: YourGenealogist@aol.com

Copies of relevant **books for journal review** can be sent to:

John A. Leppman
Book Review Editor
20 Thwing Lane
Bellows Falls, VT 05101-1640

Contact Bob Murphy, President at
PO Box 14, Randolph, VT 05060-0014
rmm@sover.net

Moving? Let Us Know

Please inform GSV if you move. Send notices to Diantha Howard, 57 East Shore North, Grand Isle, VT 05458

Advertising Policy

The newsletter accepts paid advertising at \$3.00 per column inch. It must relate to genealogy, preferably Vermont, and must be received before the deadline listed above. Checks made out to GSV are sent to the newsletter editor along with the exact wording for the ad. *GSV offers no warranty on the services of advertisers.*

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Worth Mentioning

The following items are of interest to genealogists everywhere.

- The American-Canadian Genealogical Society (ACGS) and the New England Historic Genealogical Society have joined to together to make the ACGS index of Roman Catholic Church records available on line. The information for New Hampshire churches was released the week of August 17th and includes baptism, marriage and burial details. New York records were made available in June 2009, and plans include the future release of Massachusetts and Vermont records. Print and CD editions of the collections are available from ACGS at <http://www.acgs.org/research/online-catalog.html>. Copies of individual pages are available from NEHGS photocopy service at http://www.newenglandancestors.org/database_search/2220.asp.
- Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter Plus Edition for August 19th addressed a readers question about long term electronic data storage. The short answer he gave is that no media is secure— flash drives, separate hard drives, CD, DVD or old fashioned floppy disks. His recommendation is to make frequent copies of the data, at least every month, and to store copies in three separate locations. One location is an online service, one is on a physical media such as a flash drive, DVD or CD, and one is on the original drive that holds the information. Since he makes new copies of valuable data every month, or more often, there is little justification to use expensive media such as gold CD or DVD media. The old copy from last month is simply thrown away to avoid confusion.
- Print media continues to face an uncertain future with increasing costs and decreasing revenues. Dick Eastman noted that several popular genealogy magazines have ceased publication, including the venerable *Everton's Genealogical Helper* and *HeritageQuest Magazine*. *Everton's* was first published in 1947 and was sold and resurrected in 2004 under new management. It may be resurrected yet again if a new owner can be found.
- While we are on the topic of magazines, the September 2009 issue of *Family Tree Magazine* includes articles on "101 Best Web Sites for Tracing Your Roots," "Preserving Family Bibles," and "Grave Transformations," a short course on using photo editing to improve the quality of gravestone photographs.
- Names are sometimes abbreviated in older documents, or difficult to read due to fading, stains, poor penmanship and so forth. Two websites that offer a list of abbreviations that may help decipher the troublesome name are found at Free Registers, a British site (<http://www.freereg.org.uk/howto/realnames.htm>) and the Smoot Family Association website (<http://www.usgennet.org/family/smoot/oldhand/names.html>). Free Registers is also known as FreeREG. Their purpose is "to provide free Internet searches of baptism, marriage, and burial records, that have been transcribed from parish and non-conformist registers of the U.K.. " This in turn is a companion project to FreeBMD, a volunteer effort to transcribe and make available birth, marriage and death records available through the British Government Records Office (GRO).

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GSV Membership Chairperson
57 East Shore North
Grand Isle, VT 05458

All other correspondence, except for submissions and queries to *Vermont Genealogy* and items for the *newsletter*, should be sent to Genealogical Society of Vermont, P. O. Box 14, Randolph, VT 05060-0014.

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portant role. If you (and that can be a plural you) have the skills and desire to do this work, we are looking for YOU! Skills that are necessary are familiarity with desktop publishing software and the ability to transmit the finished product to a printer. (We currently send a pdf file of the newsletter to Staples in Rutland, Vt., for printing. Randy Brown picks it up from there and arranges for assembly and distribution.)

The content of the newsletter consists of some boilerplate (society publications, order form, etc.), and submissions are made by contributors (such as the quarterly President's Message, upcoming events notices, etc.). The job does not require the editing of complicated genealogical copy – that sort of thing goes into *Vermont Genealogy*. Compulsive attention to deadlines, however, is essential, as the newsletter is often the primary vehicle by which we are able to communicate with members. Knowledge of the world of genealogy and its events and issues will be an asset.

Anyone interested in working on this job is urged to contact Bob Murphy by email (rmm@sover.net) or by phone at 802-476-4328. Although the current editor lives in Vermont, residence here in the state is not necessary in this era of electronic communications.