



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### Dates to remember

**March 31 - April 3, 2005**

**New England Regional Genealogical Conference**

**Holiday Inn By the Bay**

**88 Spring Street**

**Portland, Maine**

Registration materials have been sent out to all GSV members. If you need more information or a registration form, visit the NERGC Web site: [www.NERGC.org](http://www.NERGC.org). An outstanding program of speakers, exhibits, and special events, in a great location. GSV will have a booth in the exhibit area. (Let us know if you can spare some time to help staff the booth. It's a great way to meet people, find out what they are doing with their Vermont research, and promote Vermont's resources and GSV.)

**Saturday, April 30, 2005**

**GSV membership meeting**

Current plans call for a location in the White River Junction - Hanover, N.H. area. The usual program of speakers and luncheon will be planned. You will receive a post card mailing with details later. Save the date!

**Saturday - Sunday, June 25-26, 2005**

**Vermont History Expo**

**Tunbridge Fairgrounds**

**Tunbridge, Vermont**

This annual event has become a can't-miss item on the calendar of enthusiasts of Vermont history, genealogy, and fun for everyone in the family. GSV will be there, as usual.

**Saturday, October 29, 2005**

**GSV membership meeting**

We plan to have this meeting at the Dog Team Tavern in Middlebury. More details later.

## WHAT DOES GSV

### MEMBERSHIP MEAN TO YOU

Over the past few years, the number of members in the Genealogical Society of

Vermont has decreased by thirty percent or so. This does not come as a total shock or surprise. Genealogical organizations like ours have seen similar decreases all over. The biggest reason is probably the Internet. The sort of interaction that organizations have provided - sharing information, submitting queries, just getting together - is provided in considerable degree, and much more convenience, by Web sites and chat rooms and the like.

We feel that we are still providing useful services to our members, at a cost that has not gone up in years. (By the way, we are still financially solvent, but can't stay that way if our membership numbers continue to contract severely.) Our *Newsletter* tries to keep people up to date on matters of interest to Vermont genealogists. Our journal, *Vermont Genealogy*, publishes articles that have a permanent place in the literature of Vermont family history. We are committed to preserving in it a standard of editorial quality that assures that material published in it will be regarded as a reliable source by discerning genealogical scholars. We publish special publications of book length that belong on the selective Vermont bookshelf. We still have meetings twice a year, and members attend them at well-subsidized prices. We join with a number of other organizations in sponsoring the New England Regional Genealogical Conference, an event which has gained a reputation as one of the best of its kind in the nation.

So how do we maintain membership numbers which will keep the treasury intact without (we hope) calling for an increase of dues? The first and easiest suggestion is that we provide, as a benefit of membership, access to some sort of information on the Web which one can't get otherwise. The problem with that is that we have not discovered any block of information we can supply that way which anyone would have reason to want. Ideas from you, our members, about things of this sort that we could provide will be much appreciated. We mean that. What is

there that you would like to see, and how do we get it to you? But please, avoid "I want a Web site that will tell me everything I need to know about my ancestors and always be completely reliable and I don't want to do anything to make it happen."

Another thing we can do is support the expanding number of local genealogy interest groups in the state. They serve a purpose we can't so easily do, by having frequent meetings and allowing people face-to-face contact while they work on their particular problems. (Yes, in spite of the Internet, there is still something to be said for face-to-face contact.) We try to let our *Newsletter* be a clearing house of information about such groups. We don't seem to be doing everything we might to encourage members of the groups to join and get the benefits of membership in GSV. How can we improve on that?

We continue to work on special publications, but aside from offering a discount on the price of our books, we don't use them to enhance membership numbers.

Partly responding to suggestions made by our members, we published a membership directory a few years ago, which provided cross referencing of members' interests in Vermont families. It was a modest success (although we printed far more of them

A quarterly publication © 2004  
Genealogical Society of Vermont

News, articles and comments  
should be mailed to:

Mrs. Margaret R. Jenks  
24 Mettowee Street  
Granville, NY 12832-1037  
(518) 642-1894  
e-mail: [mjenks@capital.net](mailto:mjenks@capital.net)

Deadlines for information are:  
Dec. 15, Mar. 15, June 15 & Sept. 15  
for the February, May, August and  
November issues of the *Newsletter*.

that we ended up needing); suggestions that we do that again have met with mixed reviews. Some members have been uneasy about having listings of their names and e-mail access on a publicly accessible Web site or similar data base, because of privacy concerns. We certainly would do nothing like that to anyone without their permission.

Several years ago we distributed a questionnaire to all our members asking for candid observations about what people wanted from membership and how we were doing. We took some of the suggestions to heart, and we discussed the feasibility of others which didn't look so practical. We don't plan to repeat that effort now, but consider this article an informal questionnaire and respond to us, either at our mailing address (P.O. Box 1553, St. Albans, VT 05478-1006) or via e-mail to any of the officers:

John A. Leppman, President,  
john.a.leppman@dartmouth.edu  
Robert M. Murphy, Vice President,  
rmm@sover.net  
Mary Pat Brigham, Secretary,  
marypatb@verizon.net

### Another Reply to: Claim your 15 Minutes of Fame! MY SLAVIC ANCESTRY

About 1900, as the water in the huge lake was being drawn down, a vast cemetery began to come into view. Soon, a large elaborate tomb appeared. *But whose?*

When the tomb was opened, many artifacts of an important person were exposed. *Anthropology* came to the rescue. George V. Vernadsky<sup>1</sup> says, "According to the recent examination of Jaroslav's skeleton, his cranium is not of the Nordic type; it is similar to the craniums of the Novgorod Slovenes." The examination showed a skull that is long front to back and narrower between the ears.

During the ninth Century AD the Eastern slaves were moving from their Black Sea communities to the Kiev area.<sup>2</sup>

Jaroslav's grandmother was *Malucha*, a Slav. She was the second wife of Svatislav, prince of Novgorod. Svatislav was of

Danish origin. Jaroslav was the Grand Prince of Kiev when he died on 20 February 1053/54. He married, his second wife, Ingegerd, the daughter of Olaf III of Sweden and his second wife Obortrite Princess Astrid who was living on the shore of the Baltic Sea in Mecklenburg.<sup>3</sup> The Obortrites were also a Slavic group.<sup>4</sup> Jaroslav's daughter Anna married Henri I of France.<sup>5</sup> They became the ancestors of my mother, Ruth Lucy, the daughter of Arthur Carlos Stoddard and Effie May Woodmansee of Wolcott Town, Lamoille County, Vermont.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> George V. Vernadsky, *Kievan Russia* [New Haven: Yale University Press (1947)

<sup>2</sup> *Encyclopedia Britannica* 1969 edition, v3, p.748

<sup>3</sup> Roderick W. Stuart, *Royalty for Commoners* Fourth Edition, (2002) Line 143

<sup>4</sup> *Encyclopedia Britannica* 1969 edition, v16, p.823

<sup>5</sup> Donald Lines Jacobus, *Ancestors of Obadiah and Mary Bruen TAG* (1950) v, 26, p.20

<sup>6</sup> Wolcott Town, Lamoille County, Vermont *Vital Records*

Clyde A. Bridger, King City, OR, 97224, 8 Sept. 2004, Member # 2249

### ARE GENEALOGISTS A THREAT TO NATIONAL SECURITY?

The answer to that question might have seemed in the affirmative, given the proposed language in HR10, better known as the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004. Tucked into that proposed bill was language that would have placed greater restrictions on "public access to birth certificates and information gathered in the issuance process to ensure that access is restricted to entities with which the State has a binding privacy protection agreement". The intention of this part of the proposed act was apparently to reduce the ability of people to get a certified birth record and pass it off as their own (a.k.a. identity theft, sometimes employed by would-be terrorists). However, the language went much farther, and had the genealogical community anticipating the worst. Indeed, included was the following provision: "Subject all persons with access to vital records to appropriate security clearance requirements". The

mind boggles at how that provision might have been interpreted and implemented!

Fortunately, the language that survived the legislative process, that passed both houses of congress, and was signed into law by the President last week, has been stripped of what appear to be its most onerous provisions. The law now seems to be relatively innocuous, and should not result in much of a change for genealogical researchers here in Vermont. The end result, of course, will depend on how the law is implemented. Rule making will have to occur first at the Federal level, and those rules distributed to the States. Once that happens, then the States will have to develop procedures to comply with the Federal mandates.

Proposed rules at the Federal level are usually posted in the Federal Register, and interested parties are given an opportunity to comment on the rules before they are made effective. Genealogical organizations around the country will be most interested in ensuring that the rules do not go beyond their intent to frustrate identity thieves and instead impinge on legitimate genealogical research. The Federal Register is available online at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/>. You may wish to follow the progress of rulemaking on this bill in the near future. I know I will!

Bob Murphy

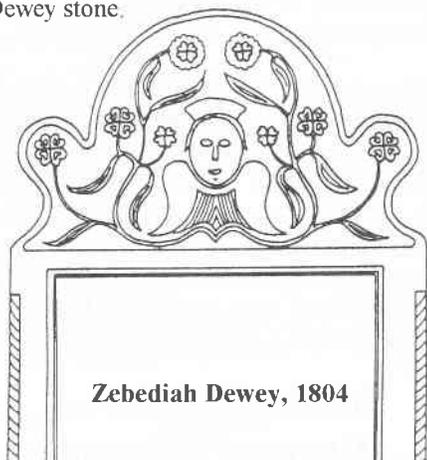
### RESEARCHING YOUR GERMAN- SPEAKING ANCESTORS?

Pal-Am is a national genealogical society for genealogists researching German-speaking immigrant ancestors from Europe and their descendants in North America. The society maintains a large library, on-line catalog, research and copy services, immigrant ancestor register, ancestor index, a quarterly newsletter, *The Palatine Immigrant* and chapter newsletters.

Palatines to America  
National Headquarters and Library  
611 East Weber Road  
Columbus, OH 43211-1097  
614-267-4700 Pal-Am@Juno.com  
<http://www.palam.org>

## TWENTY DOLLARS AND FIFTY CENTS

Enos Clark settled in Middletown, Vermont in 1790. He was a mason but also carved beautiful marble gravestones. Major Zebediah Dewey died 28 Oct. 1804 and was buried in East Poultney cemetery. Enos Clark was paid \$20.50 for the Dewey stone.



Recently I was asked: Just what could \$20.50 buy in 1804? The 1800 inventory of the general store of Rann & Sloan gives the value of many new goods. Inventories of estates of the deceased give the value of the possessions; however, most would be used goods.

Joseph Rann was born in New Hampshire in 1752, died 23 May 1800. He was buried in the East Poultney cemetery. His gravestone is of the same quality and type as the Dewey stone carved by Enos Clark of Middletown. Unfortunately the executor's accounts fail to mention the cost of the stone. Joseph Rann settled in Poultney in 1778 and married Olive, daughter of Nehemiah Howe and widow of Isaac Ashley.

Joseph Rann and a William Sloan were in partnership in a general store. When

### PAID ADVERTISING

The *Newsletter* is now accepting paid advertising at the rate of \$3.00 per column inch. All advertising must relate to genealogy, preferably Vermont genealogy, and must be received before the deadline of the issue the ad is to appear in. Checks must be made out to GSV but sent to the *Newsletter* editor along with the exact wording for the ad. GSV offers no warranty on the services of the advertisers.

Joseph died, every item in the store was listed in the inventory. The list is many pages long. [Rutland County Probate, Fair Haven District 3:222-31.]

Unfortunately, for calculating the value in dollars it was listed in British pounds, but a dollar total was included. The store inventory totaled £875-4-2 equal to \$2913.64. In 1800, one £ = 20 shillings, 1 shilling = 12 pence, one cent = 10 mills.

Because many items were worth only a few pennies, the value in many cases has been carried out to the 4th decimal place and rounded off to the 3rd place. A pound was worth \$3.3291 or \$3.33, a shilling .1665 cents and a pence .0138 cents.

The following are examples of what could be bought for a total \$20.50:

#### Clothing:

1 pair blue worsted pantaloons	\$5.66
1 pair worsted gloves	.291
1 pair ladies leather shoes	.832

Fabric & notions: [The more expensive cloth may have been imported.]

1 yard ticking	.62
1 yard linen	.499
1 Dutch blue blanket	2.87
1 yard cotton denim	.75
1 yard brown surge	.416
1 dozen pewter coat buttons	.166

#### Household goods:

1 sugar dish	.18
1 pair of candle sticks	.314
1 tea pot	.28
1 mouse trap	.114
1 dozen enameled cups & saucers	.371
1 chair	.125
1 broom	.194
1 dozen knives & forks	1.06

#### Supplies:

1 pound tea	.56
1/4 pound pepper	.09

#### Personal items:

1 Psalm book	.36
1 razor	.24
1 tooth brush	.078
1 pair spectacles	.194

**Families of Georgia, Vermont**  
Contains 86 families, 924 pages  
\$35.00 plus \$5.00 postage.  
Order from: Peter Mallett  
P.O. Box 2001, Georgia, VT 05468

#### Tools:

1 hand saw	1.56
1 carpenter's compass	.146
1 nail hammer	.353
1 iron shovel	1.058
1 iron spade	1.120
Total	\$20.50

PS. Abraham Lincoln walked miles to return a penny he had mistakenly failed to give a customer. That was a lot of money back then!

The following are a examples of other items listed in the store:

1 pair long kid gloves	.541
1 pair men's silk hose	3.593
1 felt hat	1.17
1 pair plain worsted children's hose	.833
1 white pocket handkerchief	.734
1 yard wide chintz	1.004
1 yard velvet	.862
1 yard blue flannel	.44
1 yard light broadcloth	1.897
1 yard mixed coating	2.04
1 doz. coat buttons	.076
1 yard oil cloth	.46
10 sewing needles	.022
1 pair knitting needles	.051
1 pair women's shears	.125
1 doz. shoe bindings	.125
1 snuff box	.048

### Kate Hill Kelley, Letters from Vermont Families 1850-1889

Over 200 letters penned between 1850 and 1889 to Kate Hill Kelley of Danby, Vt., by the Kelleys, Hills, Palmers, Hookers, Sweats and their allied families from Danby, Pittsford, Poultney and Wallingford, Vt., and those who migrated to Catteraugus, Chautauqua and Eric Counties, N.Y., and Black Earth, Wisc. 546 pages includes updated genealogical charts for Hill, Palmer, Sweet, Hooker, Lapham, Feltus, Eddy, Bartlett, Dow, Wheeler, and Griffith, biographies of letter writers and subjects, and complete index of all names and places.

\$46.00 plus \$4.00 shipping  
Mass. Residents add 5% (\$2.20) tax  
Includes updated addendum  
Order from Grace Hoag 116 Winthrop St.,  
Medway, MA 02053  
dghoag@comcast.net

**Cemeteries of Georgia, Vermont**  
Contains all gravestones, 362 pages  
\$15.00 plus \$5.00 postage, soft cover.  
Order from: Peter Mallett  
P.O. Box 2001, Georgia, VT 05468

10 Dutch quills	.149
1 blank book	1.75
1 ream writing paper	3.33
1 quart decanter	.67
1 steel watch chain	.39
1 pencil	.003
1 padlock	.499
1 cupboard lock	.444
1 doz. thumb latches	1.09
1 flat file	.088
1 hand saw	.055
1 keyhole saw	.124
1 gross tacks	.312
1 pair fire dogs (andirons)	1.83
1 gallon 1st proof rum	.854
1 gallon port wine	1.14
1 gallon brandy	1.165
1 drawing knife	.437
1 shoe knife	.062
1 lb. ginger	.194
1 lb. indigo	1.49
1 lb. all spice	.222
1 lb. chalk	.104
1 doz. enameled pint bowls	1.10
1 doz. soup plates	.61
1 doz. pint tumblers	.127
1 razor strap	.253

Peggy Jenks

## VHS LIBRARY TO CLOSE FOR TWO WEEKS IN APRIL

VHS Librarian Paul Carnahan has announced that the Society's research library will close for two weeks of "spring cleaning" during the first two weeks of April. The library will be closed from April 5 through April 8 and April 12 through April 15, 2005. The library will be open as usual on the second Saturday of the month, April 9, to give eager researchers a chance to do their work in the middle of this hiatus. The library will reopen with normal hours on Tuesday, April 19.

"This move is necessitated by the large amount of collections materials that have come in recently that haven't been processed," Carnahan explained. "This two-week break will give us a chance to catch up."

## MEETINGS

### SPRING VOCA MEETING

The spring meeting of the Vermont Old Cemetery Association is planned for Saturday May 7, 2005 at Hildene on Route 7A in Manchester, just south of the Dellwood Cemetery. Hildene was the home of

Robert Todd Lincoln, son of Abraham Lincoln.

Join VOCA and keep up with Vermont cemetery news. The dues are \$5 for 1 year, \$20 for 5 years. The meetings are held around the state on the first Saturday of May and October.

Are you searching for an ancestor's burial place? VOCA's publication, *Burial Grounds of Vermont* may help you find a "lost" cemetery. The book contains a page listing the known cemeteries for each town in Vermont and map page showing where each cemetery is located. The actual inscriptions are not listed. VOCA does not answer genealogical questions.

Membership includes *VOCA News*. If you know of any goings on in a Vermont cemetery, editor Robert Hooper would like to hear from you at 44 Charity St., Burlington, VT 05401, 802-862-0708 or at Hooper9999@aol.com

## NEW ENGLAND HISTORIC GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY PROGRAMS AND TOURS GETTING STARTED

This program is held the first **Wednesday** of every month, at 12 noon and 6 p.m. at 101 Newbury Street, Boston, MA. This **free** program gives an introduction to NEHGS, its services and ways to help you find your family roots, tips on how to begin your own family research, a tour of the library, and a chance to meet the library staff. Non-members will receive free entrance to the library. No registration is required.

## GENEALOGY IN A NUTSHELL

"Nutshell" classes are short (one hour) lectures on a variety of genealogical topics. They are held at 101 Newbury Street from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. on Wednesdays and repeated on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. Registration is not necessary.

## RESEARCH GETAWAY

Fulfill your dreams and your fan chart during the Spring Research Getaway, April 7-9, 2005. The three-day program offers lectures, consultations with expert

staff and time for individual research and problem solving. Multi-generational fan charts are available from the NEHGS Book Store at 1-888-296-3447.

## RESEARCH WEEK IN WASHINGTON, D. C.

March 13-20, 2005

Watch *NewEnglandAncestors.org* for further details, or email [tours@nehgs.org](mailto:tours@nehgs.org), or call Amanda Batey 1-888-286-3447

Pre-registration is required for the above programs. Contact the NEHGS Education Department, 101 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02116-3007; phone 1-888-286-3447 or 617-536-5740, ext. 226 or by e-mail [education@nehgs.org](mailto:education@nehgs.org) or visit [www.NewEnglandAncestors.org](http://www.NewEnglandAncestors.org). Click on Education, then on NEHGS Events for full information.

## THE ASSOCIATION FOR GRAVESTONE STUDIES ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

The twenty-eighth annual conference and meeting will be held June 22-26, 2005 at St. Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. This is the first international conference.

Watch [www.gravestonestudies.org](http://www.gravestonestudies.org) for further details, registration forms and pictures of past conferences; or [info@gravestonestudies.org](mailto:info@gravestonestudies.org). Conference pre-registration is required.

## THE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF VERMONT WELCOMES THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS

6506  
Gertrude P. Horridge  
PO Box 587  
East Poultney, VT 05741

email: [eaglet@sover.net](mailto:eaglet@sover.net)  
research interests: Parke/Park/Parks,  
Carpenter, Randle/Randall

6507  
Robert Warner  
1632 Chatelain Way  
Mount Pleasant, SC 29464

email: [rowarner@vt.edu](mailto:rowarner@vt.edu)  
research interests: Warner, Wagner,  
Allen, Branch

6508  
Linda Shepherd  
7 Coe Lane  
Ansonia, CT 06401

email: wondrbuckt@aol.com  
research interests: Andrews, Rowell,  
Jones, Smith

6509  
Valerie Capels  
118 Butcher House Drive  
Waitsfield, VT 05673

email: vcapels@madriver.com  
research interests: Capels, Caples, Kaple,  
Caple, Fiddler

6510  
Arlene Martell  
38150 Woodgate Lane  
Zephyrhills, FL 33541-5950

6511  
Marjorie Kennett  
HCR 72 Box 37  
Windsor, VT 05089

## ARE YOU MOVING? REPLACEMENT COPIES

Please notify the Society in advance of any address changes (including summer and winter addresses) at GSV, PO. Box 1553, St. Albans, VT. 05478-1006. Please do not send them to the *Newsletter* editor. Your copies of *Vermont Genealogy* and *The GSV Newsletter* are forwarded to you by the Post Office with additional charges to the Society if you have filed a forwarding notice with the Post Office.

We will send you replacement copies of *Vermont Genealogy* by first class mail for a small replacement fee of \$3.25 for each issue. Replacement copies of *The GSV Newsletter* will be forwarded at no charge. Thank you for letting us know of any address changes in advance. This helps keep costs down.

Janet Induni, Treasurer

## BOOK REVIEW POLICY

Books for review should be sent to John A. Leppman, 20 Thwing Lane, Bellows Falls, VT 05101. Please note the new mailing address.

### Financial Statement Fiscal Year ending September 30, 2004 (FY 2003 in shaded area for comparison purposes)

General Fund	FY 2004	FY 2003
<b>Income</b>		
Membership Dues	\$ 14,140.00	\$ 16,708.00
Computer Fund Contributions	\$ -	\$ 114.50
Permanent Fund Contributions	\$ 567.33	\$ 457.00
Fall 2002 Meeting		\$ 1,055.00
Spring 2003 Meeting		\$ 866.00
Fall 2003 Meeting	\$ 656.00	\$ 366.00
Spring 2004 Meeting	\$ 735.99	
Miscellaneous Income	\$ 29.00	\$ 15.31
Interest	\$ 308.76	\$ 652.44
NERGC Income	\$ 1,897.88	
<b>Total Income:</b>	<b>\$ 18,334.96</b>	<b>\$ 20,234.25</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Bank Service Charges	\$ 84.61	\$ 35.00
Editor's Fee (Vermont Genealogy, 4 issues)	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 6,000.00
Vermont Genealogy Postage (4 issues)	\$ 1,489.12	\$ 1,926.29
Vermont Genealogy Printing (4 issues)	\$ 9,459.22	\$ 13,386.42
Newsletter Postage (4 issues)	\$ 999.97	\$ 1,790.50
Newsletter Printing (4 issues)	\$ 2,363.13	\$ 2,457.91
Miscellaneous	\$ 8.96	\$ -
Office Supplies	\$ 242.92	\$ 344.80
Postage	\$ 341.50	\$ 646.97
Fall 2002 Meeting		\$ 1,995.67
Spring 2003 Meeting		\$ 1,652.87
Fall 2003 Meeting	\$ 1,546.36	\$ 272.95
Spring 2004 Meeting	\$ 1,696.31	
Promotional Expenses	\$ 124.09	\$ 111.00
Five Projects Grants	\$ 628.00	\$ 795.00
NERGC	\$ 1,171.00	\$ 523.32
Subscriptions (FGS, VHS, VOCA, VMCTA)]	\$ 135.00	\$ 170.00
<b>Total Expenses:</b>	<b>\$ 24,290.19</b>	<b>\$ 32,108.70</b>
<b>Excess of Income over Expenses:</b>	<b>\$ (5,955.23)</b>	<b>\$ (11,874.45)</b>

**Permanent Fund: \$20,170**  
**Emergency Fund: \$15,448**  
**Publications Account: \$34,606**  
**Checking Account: \$1,143**  
**Savings Account: \$26**

Respectively submitted,  
Janet E. Induni, Treasurer

## FAMILY REUNIONS

Announcements of family reunions must be received by the *Newsletter* editor no later than **March 15** each year to be included in the **May Newsletter**. Be sure to include date, place, name & address of contact person. Announcements received after March 15 will be used in the August *Newsletter* if they are for reunions held after Sept. 1.

## B & T BACK ISSUES

Each issue is \$2 (including postage). Currently available are: Volumes 12:5; 14:1,3; 16:2; 18:1,2,3; 19:4; 20:1-4; 21:1-4; 22:2,4; 24:1-4.

## VG BACK ISSUES

Each issue is \$5 (including postage). Currently available are: Volumes 1:1-3; 2:1-4; 3:1-3; 4:1-4; 5:1-4; 6:1-4; 7:1-4; 8:1,2,4.

Your checks should be payable to GSV and sent to: GSV Back Issues, PO Box 1553, St. Albans, VT 05478-1006.

#### Contributions to the Computer Fund

None

#### Contributions to the Permanent Fund

Martha Sturges

The board voted to discontinue the Computer fund and transfer the remaining balance into the Permanent Fund. All donations to the Permanent Fund will be gratefully acknowledged.

Please send your donations to GSV, PO. Box 1553, St. Albans, VT. 05478-1006. Please mark your check "Permanent Fund".

Janet Induni, Treasurer

### GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE ENGLAND AND WALES

On-line ordering service is now available world-wide for birth, marriage and death certificates in England and Wales. The website has been made more user friendly to reflect the services provided. See [www.gro.gov.uk](http://www.gro.gov.uk). While they provide a full range of certificate ordering services, there are substantial benefits from ordering on-line, not least the reduced cost of certificates and the automatic receipt of your order. E-mail:

[certificate.services@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:certificate.services@ons.gsi.gov.uk)

General Register Office

(England and Wales)

Smedley Hydro

Trafalgar Road

Birkdale, Merseyside

England PR8 2JD

Tel: +44 (0)870 243 7788

+44 (0)1704 569824

Fax: +44 (0)1704 550013

### GSV GRANT PROGRAM

GSV has a grant program that helps to preserve old records. One of the projects has been to microfilm the records. Recently the Putney Church Records (mostly Congregational) have been filmed.

Do you know of any old records that should be microfilmed in order to preserve the information? If so, please contact one of the officers of GSV with

details. If you have any questions, you may also contact us. Submitted by Joann H. Nichols, 110 Chestnut Street, Brattleboro, VT 05301-6579; 802-254-9554; [jnichols@sover.net](mailto:jnichols@sover.net)

### WHITEHALL, WASHINGTON COUNTY, NEW YORK 1874-1875 DIPHTHERIA EPIDEMIC

Until the diphtheria vaccine was introduced in 1923 there were up to 206,939 deaths a year in the United States from the disease. Deaths occurred at the rate of 5 to 10/100 cases due to muscle paralysis and heart failure. In 1999 there was only one diphtheria death in the US. [*Consumer Reports*, August 2001, p. 19]

Diphtheria was the most feared of childhood diseases. Some people carried the germs but did not get sick. The diphtheria germ gets its effect on the body by producing a poison known as the "toxin of diphtheria." In the United States, more than two thirds of the cases occurred in children under five, eighty percent in children under ten. Diphtheria is spread by direct contact or by a carrier. Before pasteurization of milk, infected milk spread diphtheria. Usually 2-5 days after exposure, a child will develop a slight fever, up to 102, sore throat and general illness. The congestion and growth of a membrane begins usually in the upper part of the throat or pharynx and spread down into the larynx and perhaps the nose. The membrane is a thin grayish film which thickens. There is also enlargement of the glands of the neck and increasing fever.

The swelling in the throat becomes larger, hemorrhages begin, the voice becomes high pitched and strangled and there is a fetid odor from the throat. Drowsiness is followed by delirium and the danger of death is great. When the membrane in the larynx grows in size, breathing becomes difficult and suffocation may ensue.

Before the discovery of antitoxin, thirty five percent of children with diphtheria died. In cases where the larynx was involved, ninety percent died. In the second to fourth weeks of the illness, severe

complications can develop that involve the heart, lungs, kidneys and nervous system. The usual course of diphtheria is 7-14 days. [Fishbein, Morris, *New Illustrated Medical & Health Encyclopedia*, 1975, p. 513ff]

Diphtheria is an acute, communicable disease caused by the *Corynebacterium diphtheria* bacillus; characterized by the formation of a false, adherent membrane on mucus membranes, usually of the pharynx, larynx and trachea, and rarely of the conjunctiva and vagina. Locally, the disease produces pain, swelling, and obstruction; systematically, the toxin causes fever, prostration, cardiac damage, in some cases paralysis, and often death. [Blackstone's *New Gould Medical Dictionary*, 1949, p.300.]

A typical example of the disease hit Oxford, Mass. between 1767 and 1770. Oxford lost 12 percent of its population in one of the worst diphtheria epidemics in New England history. One hundred forty-four persons died, mostly children ages two to fourteen. Richard and Mary Moore lost eight of their eleven children. [Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale*, p.12] In some cases, in the old records, deaths attributed to throat distemper, may be due to diphtheria.

The majority of the Whitehall deaths were in the first election district with 34 diphtheria deaths & 1 of croup out of a total of 52 deaths. Tuberculosis caused 6 deaths. There were 14 diphtheria deaths in the second election district out of 55 deaths, with 12 deaths due to tuberculosis, 1 due to croup.

The epidemic wiped out the children in a number of families: Murray [8 children in 12 days, the eldest survived]; Monark [6 from Sept. 10-26]; Fortin [5 from Dec. 2-6]. Two adults died, both having a young child who also died.

Vermont did not take a 1875 census, so it is unknown if the epidemic spread to the neighboring Rutland County towns of West Haven, Fair Haven and Poultney. When you find a gravestone for several children in a family dying within a few days, there is a good chance the deaths were from diphtheria.

Peggy Jenks

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