

EDITOR'S PREFACE

While primary sources for genealogical research continue to proliferate online, the COVID pandemic has nonetheless restricted access to some repositories. The National Archives in Washington, D.C., as one example, has remained closed since March 2020, and with it the promise of obtaining documents for some articles originally slated for this issue.

Closer to home, Vermont researchers always benefit from the ongoing vitality of its historical societies. In September, the Pittsford Historical Society celebrated with aplomb its sixtieth anniversary. Among the one-of-a-kind original resources housed in its home, Eaton Hall, are extensive family history files consisting of correspondence, newspaper clippings, photos, and anecdotal reminiscences. Mary (Randall) Allen (1878–1968), a Pittsford native, became a professional photographer whose work dates from 1895 to the beginning of World War I. The society's holds Allen's glass negative collection and has subsequently developed many prints that bring to life a by-gone era of village life, industry, and families—families across a wide social spectrum. Alas, some identifications have been lost to history, while others hold tantalizing clues that still have a story to tell. The photo below, dating from about 1905, shows a young mother with a family of ten. From the background, they likely lived in Vermont Marble Company housing in the village of Florence. Someone one day may be able to identify this family through the sheer number of girls all born in close proximity to each other.



(Courtesy of the Pittsford Historical Society)

The society's present volunteer staff follows in the exhaustive preservation of history and genealogy established by Dr. Abiel M. Caverly's *History of the Town of Pittsford*, published in 1872. Unusual among nineteenth century genealogists, Caverly did not overlook the lives of then-recent immigrants to the community, notably families from Ireland and Québec, many of whose descendants still live in the area. Authorized by the town to send a questionnaire to every household in Pittsford, Caverly requested that recipients answer a series of specific genealogical questions about their birthplaces, parentage, grandparents, etc. Original copies of completed forms remain in possession of the society. In 1998, after two-decade effort, a team of local historians published *Pittsford's Second Century 1872–1997*, a magnificent opus that chronicles many aspects of the town. From a variety of submitted sources, the new history concludes with a detailed genealogical section of 180 pages. Descendants of immigrants from Canada are well represented, but after a century-and-a-half in Vermont, specific details about their origins had long been forgotten. Written with the cooperation of the historical society, **Shangraw, Pelkey, and Poro Families of Pittsford, Vermont** explores their identity and assimilation into a world much different than the one they left behind.

Ross D. Petty's **Titus Simons of Hartland, Vermont, and Flamborough, Ontario**, studies an early transplant from Connecticut to Hartland, Vermont, then part of New York. The American Revolution divided Titus from his father and brother of the same name. Ross details Titus Simon's arrest, trial, and imprisonment as a loyalist as well as his ultimate settlement in Ontario. Though Titus Simons has appeared in many print sources, his family has lacked complete documentation, a step the author rectifies.

Using records church records that often became the basis of some town records, Diantha Howard has compiled **Early Members of the Congregational Church of South Hero (and Grand Isle), Vermont**. Exploring these families illumines a time of migration into Vermont, and then, within a generation or two, movement west.

Avis Conley Hayden's **James Hayden, Pre-Famine Irish Immigrant** follows story of her husband's ancestor as he and his family moved from Washington County, New York, and then over the state line into Bennington County. James Hayden's twin son served in the Civil War—one never returned home. An outgrowth of the Avis's research on the Haydens, **Vermont Soldiers Who Drowned on the Transport Ship North America**, elucidates a tragic and overlooked episode eclipsed by the final months of the war.

Robert M. Murphy has contributed another valuable transcription, **School Census, 1844 to 1850, Newbury, Vermont**. Bob notes the number of students who lived with other families thus enabling them to attend school. Girls outnumbered boys. Furthermore, the pupil numbers from Newbury, around 900, is astounding compared to today's school population. And lastly, a thunderous thanks to Bob for completing the **Name Index, Volume 25**.

Michael F. Dwyer, FASG