

EDITOR'S PREFACE

History matters: On 11 July 2021, a ceremony outside Sunderland, Vermont's Town Hall marked the 200th anniversary of the death of Lucy Terry Prince, born in Africa and brought as a slave to Rhode Island. Lucy and her family lived in Sunderland during the last three decades of her life. Widely known in her lifetime as a published poet, Lucy has been the subject of past published scholarship. In our lead article, Sunderland resident Avis Conley Hayden expands the footprint of Gretchen Gerzina's book, *Mr. and Mrs. Prince: How an Extraordinary Eighteenth-Century Family Moved Out of Slavery and Into Legend*, with **Widow Lucy Terry Prince and Her Heirs of Sunderland, Vermont**. Avis literally walked in Lucy's footsteps in her quest to locate the long-forgotten plot of land that Lucy's husband had been promised as an original proprietor, a tale of complex legal entanglements. Avis also probes town records as a way of analyzing how a predominantly white community treated its families of color. Lucy Prince's acclaim did not prevent her family from sinking into poverty or suffering the sting of prejudice. In tracing Lucy's descendants through four generations, this study underscores the various racial designations that persisted in United States records through the early twentieth century. Especially poignant is the episode of Lucy's great-grandson, who fought for the freedom of slaves in the Civil War but in his old age was swindled out of his pension by an unscrupulous person with whom he boarded. Avis hopes to discover as-yet undocumented descendants of Lucy's granddaughter Lucinda Johnson.

Vermont Families in 1791 have long been a research initiative of the Genealogical Society of Vermont. In the first of two published sketches in this issue, Dinatha Howard documents **John and Nathaniel Waldron of Hartland, Vermont**, brothers from Bristol, Rhode Island, who moved north. Some members of this family maintained close ties with their Bristol families, such as Nelson Waldron who retired to Windsor, Vermont, after a stint as the captain of a whaling vessel. Other descendants moved from rural Vermont to industrial cities of Massachusetts.

In a similar vein, William Paul Bishop has contributed **Daniel Bishop of Richmond, Vermont**. Second- and third-generation members of this family were pulled westward including a Chicago magnate and California miner-turned-rancher, ancestor of the author. Newspaper articles, obituaries, and findagrave.com citations filled many gaps in the Bishops' cross-country migration.

Louise (Mercure) Smith, of Waterbury, Vermont: An Orphan's Lost Heritage culminates twenty-five years of my research on this posthumous child of a Civil War soldier. Her early death and a vanished husband left their six children with a blank slate of family history. Moreover, her Mercure surname, readily recognizable among a French-speaking community, became garbled as Murcrae and McRae. Use of DNA evidence conclusively linked Louise's father to her grandfather in what

would have remained only a speculative conclusion based on circumstantial evidence.

The late Patricia L. Haslam, an intrepid genealogist, left us with several unpublished works, among them **Reconstructing the 1890 Census: Johnson, Lamoille County, Vermont**. Her efforts remind us of the value of town and city directories as well as Grand Lists to locate individuals who might have otherwise slipped through the cracks.

Archivist Mariessa Dobrick has explained and transcribed another unique source: **Genealogy Gem in the State Archives: Court of Confiscation**. This compilation by name and town lists 155 Vermont seized properties of those who remained loyal to the British Crown during the American Revolution. Proceeds from these sales benefited the cause of independence. Mariessa points out that some of these names may be the only evidence of a loyalist's link to Vermont during a time of social upheaval.

John A. Leppman has transcribed a primary source from his personal collection: **Marriages Performed by Rodolphus Dewey of Royalton, Vermont, 1812–1829**. Many of these marriages were not listed in Vermont Vital Records.

George W. Varney concludes his article from the spring 2021 issue, **Silas, Hazen, and Denison Danforth, Brothers of the Northeast Kingdom and the Eastern Townships of Québec**.

Scott Andrew Bartley has once again collected for us a bibliography of Vermont genealogical articles in **Seen Elsewhere in 2020**.

Thanks to Robert M. Murphy for the hours spent in assembling the **Name Index** for this issue.

In my first Editor's Preface for the Fall 2015 issue, I wrote, "We have yet to tell the many fascinating and compelling tales about those families who made Vermont their new home, and how ethnic research presents its own set of challenges." Over the last six years, the journal has published a variety of articles that have broadened its scope. Thank you to everyone who made this happen. As I envisioned my retirement from teaching and assuming the editing of *Vermont Genealogy*, I expected to have unlimited time for this endeavor. Sometimes our best laid plans pull us elsewhere. An unexpected and exciting opportunity beckoned in my own community to accept the call as Pastor of the Pittsford Congregational Church, founded in 1784. With the new rhythms and responsibilities of each week, I must regretfully step down from editing this journal. Working on *Vermont Genealogy* has been a rewarding and fulfilling chapter in my life. Of course, there are more Vermont stories I hope to tell as time permits.

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