

EDITOR'S PREFACE

In 1919, filmmaker D. W. Griffith chose the vicinity of White River Junction, Vermont to shoot his latest movie, *Way Down East*, “A Simple Story of Plain People,” as its preamble states. Notwithstanding the title suggested Maine, Griffith believed that Vermont represented one of the last Yankee bastions in America, a place where people lived by a strict code of Protestant values. A few years later, when John Coolidge administered the Presidential Oath to his son Calvin in Plymouth Notch, Vermont, it reinforced the image of the state as one comprised mainly of descendants from eighteenth-century pioneers. Then, and now, that presumption does not accurately reflect the demographics of Vermont. Though, on the surface, the aggregate population of about 350,000 from before the Civil War through the middle of the twentieth century seems static. A closer examination of the data, however, reveals that as many native-born Vermonters left New England, their places were filled by immigrants from as close as Canada and from as far away as the Ottoman Empire. While many fine genealogies about families have appeared in print concentrating on families here for more than seven generations, 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 sets of challenges.

With the Genealogical Society of Vermont’s affirmation of this scholarly journal as a worthwhile endeavor, I would like to reflect upon why I have agreed to act as *Vermont Genealogy*’s Editor. It’s a very exciting time for genealogists. Whoever would have thought that television programs about people seeking their lost roots would become part of the prime-time mainstream? Genealogy has moved into one of America’s most popular avocations. The internet is a portal that has increased exponentially the amount of information that can be accessed with one computer click. Sound genealogical research, nevertheless, means just that—each fact in a family tree must be documented through a credible source. Not everything in print, on screen or on a library shelf should be taken as fact without critical analysis. The internet has its limitations of evanescence—what’s posted today may be gone tomorrow. A print journal remains a permanent way to provide sources of information unique to Vermont, to showcase research studies, to assemble disparate pieces of information, and to illumine the life and world of our forebears. And it also provides a measure of quality control that what is printed is worth reading.

Most genealogists want to ensure that their years of labor and the products they have produced will live on in a new generation. “Digital immigrants,” like me, need to be reminded that “digital natives,” born into a world of instantaneous electronic communication, may not enjoy, as I do, reading genealogical journals cover-to-cover—especially those unrelieved by any kind of graphic. Well-chosen illustrations do create visual interest in articles and invite readers to partake of the contents. That is why this issue features the number of illustrations it has. An engaging research article goes beyond a recitation of facts. Writing a genealogical article that appeals

to a wider audience only takes place through an ongoing dialogue between the author and editor. Achieving a finished product, therefore, requires a considerable investment of time and effort. Now I know firsthand the hours my predecessors, Drew Bartley and Jonathan Stevens, spent in their craft and maintaining *Vermont Genealogy*'s high standards.

Our membership knows that we are currently a year behind in production. Articles are already in the queue for the next issue, and that is encouraging. With ongoing contributions from our members, as well as from others dedicated to Vermont history and genealogy, I endeavor to move towards publishing the issue in the same calendar year as its heading. When I retire from full-time teaching within the next couple of years, on-time production will be the norm.

This issue of *Vermont Genealogy* has diversity in its scope and presentation of articles. Ruth Burt Ekstrom's **Three Bound-Out Boys and Their Sisters: Cromacks of Colrain, Mass. and Bennington, Vermont** takes us on a fascinating study of what happened to one family when the early death of their father plunged them into crisis. James P. Cassarino's **William Griffith (Gwilym Caleffrwd): Slate Baron and Bard of Poultney, Vermont** not only highlights a Welsh immigrant's contribution to Vermont industry and culture, it also draws upon the contributor's knowledge of Welsh music. Carol Deuel Sundeen takes an original approach to interpreting siblings in **A Trio of Artists: The White Brothers of Reading, Vermont**. Her work reminds us the striking difference among children of the same parents, raised in the same environment. Todd Farmerie vividly evokes the political and cultural world of early Vermont in **Episodes in the Life of Anthony Haswell: Postmaster of the Vermont Republic**.

Within **Additions and Corrections**, the story of **Edwin White of the 98th N.Y. Infantry** emanated from a case of mistaken identity in two men of the same name. Helen A. Shaw revisits **Cynthia, Widow of Asa Stearns of Dover, Vermont: A Case Study in Assessing Evidence**. Twenty years after Cynthia's debut in print, the conclusion to her story is now fully told. Maintaining a long and well-established tradition of *Vermont Genealogy*, John A. Leppman continues to engage us with his **Book Reviews and Notices**.

In launching my first issue, I thank two of my friends who have contributed significantly to my growth as an editor. First, to Cherry Fletcher Bamberg, FASG, for my on-the-job training with *Rhode Island Roots*. She has patiently taught me to distinguish among a hyphen, m-dash and n-dash as well as the nuts and bolts of properly formatting a genealogical article. And to Joseph C. Anderson II, FASG, a new member of the Genealogical Society of Vermont, for his support, encouragement, and proof-reading acumen. He also has provided the index to *Vermont Genealogy*, 20.2.

As we contemplate our next issue, please consider sharing a work-in-progress with me. All articles begin as mustard seeds and only grow with nurturing.

Michael F. Dwyer, FASG
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