



# Newsletter of the Genealogical Society of Vermont

Volume 17, Issue 4, Whole No 68.

[www.genealogyvermont.org](http://www.genealogyvermont.org)

November 2010

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## Help Index Vermont Records!

Many GSV members have expressed a desire to assist the society on a variety of projects, but lamented that they were located too far from Vermont to be of much help. Now there is a way those with internet connections can participate in a very important project that will be of immense value to all researchers of Vermont families.

One of the projects currently under way at the LDS FamilySearch website is the indexing of Vermont's earliest vital records, beginning in 1760. You can be part

of this project by logging on to <http://www.familysearch.org/> and clicking on the "Index Records" tab near the top left of the screen. Then click on "Volunteer", and you will be on your way to assisting in very important work.

I recently learned of this opportunity through our VG editor, Drew Bartley. I signed right up and have found the exercise to be both easy and rewarding. When you sign up for a project (VT Vital Records is just one of many available), you will be able to download batches of

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Vital Records Report Legislative Changes

About a year ago Bob Murphy and several others representing the interests of genealogists, met with Richard McCoy, Public Health Statistics Chief to discuss the development of legislative changes with regard to access to birth and death certificates.

A letter dated October 26, 2010, from Richard McCoy to Bob Murphy, advised him that the report has been completed, and it was released the week before. A copy of the

report, *Access to Birth and Death Certificates: Recommendations for Legislative Changes*, is available at:

[http://www.healthvermont.gov/admin/legislature/documents/VitalRecords\\_legislative\\_recommendations\\_091310.pdf](http://www.healthvermont.gov/admin/legislature/documents/VitalRecords_legislative_recommendations_091310.pdf)

The letter continues:

*(Continued on page 2)*

20 records. You will see images of the original records on the screen and all you have to do is to record what you see. Try it, and I think you will like it!

*Bob Murphy*

The Editor's 2¢: I also volunteered for this project. Whenever I can volunteer to transcribe, abstract, scan, proofread or index records that could possibly contain information pertaining to my ancestors or their lives, my hand goes right up. I have never regretted it. Even if the documents have no direct information on my ancestors, I always learn things about language usage of the time, and local laws and religions. I get practice with handwriting styles and abbreviations, too. Also, you don't have to be connected to the internet while you index the batch.



*(Continued from page 1)*

"In addition to providing a summary of the current status of the Vital Records Office, the report provides a review of laws and regulations that affect the operations and efficiency of these activities and potential directions for desired statutory changes. Two main concerns are raised in the report:

**Modernization:** The Vital Records Office has encountered challenges in the existing statutes related to modernization and the use of technology to meet its growing responsibilities and to provide optimal customer service to Vermonters. There are significant changes required for the processing, storage, and issuance of birth and death certificates in order to comply with the requirements of agencies while continuing to serve the public. In addition, our locally-issued certificates are being refused by some states and federal agencies until Vermont modernizes its systems and business processes.

**WELCOME TO OUR  
2010-2012 OFFICERS**



**PRESIDENT:** *Jonathan W. Stevens*

**VICE-PRESIDENT:** *Carolyn L. Adams*

**SECRETARY:** *Stephanie W. O'Rourke*

**TREASURER:** *Jane Belcher*

**Security & Privacy:** Currently, any party has unlimited access to Vermont birth and death certificates, with no tracking or purpose required. This allows anyone from within or outside of the U.S. to obtain a certified copy of a birth or death certificate, which may then be used to obtain U.S. passports, driver's licenses, federal benefits (e.g., Medicaid), and for a variety of other purposes. This is a significant threat to the security and privacy of Vermonters, and there are reasonable steps that can be taken to limit access to these legal documents.

We plan to work with legislative sponsors to introduce a bill in the upcoming session that will address the recommendations contained in the report. "

Richard H. McCoy  
Public Health Statistics Chief  
Vermont Department of Health

*We're Growing!*  
WELCOME OUR  
NEW MEMBERS



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### *Ramblings of an Ex-President*

Greetings. The air is getting crisp, and fall is on its way. Time to spend more time inside – much research to be done!

As a volunteer at the Vermont Historical Society, I meet a lot of folks researching their family's history. Amazingly, I sometimes hear comments like, "Oh, my husband/wife has already completed his/her genealogy." Completed! That sounds quite final. I'm not sure I know what that really means. I suspect it means he/she has followed his/her surname back as far as he/she can, and has declared victory

and moved on with life.

I don't think (rather, I know) that my research into my family history will ever be complete. Think of the number of lines to follow! Ten generations back, there are more than 1000 lines to trace. That's enough research for 10 lifetimes.

Imagine that someone actually completes research on all 1000 lines (i.e., gets all the info on the direct line of ancestry, proving those relationships. Does that represent completion? At genealogical conferences over the years, I have seen a couple of displays where an individual has assembled a fan chart showing all (or nearly all) of his ancestry back ten generations. It's really quite impressive, and might legitimately be a worthwhile goal for a genealogist. But to my view, it is rather cold all by itself. A bunch of names and dates.

What makes genealogy or family history research so interesting for me is the discovery of more than the birth, marriage and death dates. It also includes insights into the lives of those individuals, who were real people just like you and me. Where did they live? Why did they move? What challenges did they face in life, and how successful were they at meeting them? These are questions, the answers to which, will challenge any genealogist for a lifetime. I won't live long enough to complete my quest for such knowledge.

As time goes on and more and more genealogical information is made more easily available (typically, on the internet), the answering of some of my questions will get a little easier. However, the trips to historical libraries and other repositories will not end, as there is much information there that will probably never be "uploaded" to a website. Who, for instance, will be scanning or transcribing all those diaries, bible records, store account books, letters and more?

Think I'll go and do a little more research! Happy Autumn!

September 2010

*Bob Murphy*

## Interesting Discovery

In nearly every family from the northeast, there is a tradition of Native American blood in the family line. Records involving Native Americans are very rare. A surprising discovery, however, awaited me as I was transcribing genealogical data from an early Bradford newspaper, the Vermont Family Gazette. The 19 Jul 1848 issue included this marriage notice.

Married, in Williamstown, July 5th, by Rev. E.C. Payne, Jadson Kash a Gance, of the Mohegan Tribe, Mohegan, Ct., to Miss Margaret Louisa Annance, of the Abanaque Tribe, St. Francis, C.E

## EDITOR'S CORNER



Its All Hallows Eve again, which is my favorite time of year. What genealogist wouldn't love a holiday that celebrates ghosts and tombstones?

Here's a very "witchy" tidbit I came across in one of my favorite sources for genealogy news, Dick Eastman's Newsletter (<http://www.eogn.com>):

*Originally published online on Thursday, November 4th, 2010 © Richard W. Eastman*

*We all have occasionally plugged computers into a wall power socket. Now the latest Jack PC from Chip PC Technologies doesn't just plug into the wall, it IS the plug in the wall. The computer is built into the space normally devoted to a wall power socket.*

## The JACK PC



*The RISC processor is not PC compatible but does run a version of Linux and should be able to run some other operating systems. It is capable of driving two monitors at the same time and also has built in wi-fi wireless networking. In the picture below [see original online article], you can see several monitors and keyboards on a desk, all apparently plugged into power outlets. However, the so-called power outlets are actually the computers.*

*What's next? A wrist computer for Dick Tracy?*



Speaking of ghosts and all things spooky, I bet you've heard the theme from *Twilight Zone* play in your head at some point during your genealogical searches. I believe that some of our ancestors find amusement looking down and watching us scratch our heads at the assortment of red herrings they've scattered to frustrate and confuse their nosy descendants. I also believe that some of our familial ghosts are rooting for us, and have orchestrated a variety of serendipity we may experience if we're lucky. And if we allow ourselves to follow hunches, twisted paths, and family

(Continued from page 4)

stories that certainly sound like tall tales or a badly written dime novel.

On a road trip to my father's hometown I decided to exit off the interstate and travel the roads that existed in the time before his mother met his father. They lived, as the crow flies, 100 miles apart – but crows can fly over the Adirondack peaks, Lake Champlain and the wildest part of the Green Mountains. Without wings or fins, the distance was daunting in those days. My route took me down the main street of the tiny lakeside town where my grandmother had been born. Luckily, I didn't blink and I spotted a sign for a Visitor's Center. I was past it as soon as I saw it, but I turned the car around at the next road and went in to investigate.

A middle-aged woman manned the tables with brochures for local sights and attractions and welcomed me warmly. I explained I was just "passing through" but that my ancestors had lived in the town for several generations. When I mentioned the family name, she smiled and her face lit up. "Are you related to old Annie McAuley?", she asked. I told her she was my great-grandmother's sister. Annie was a town character, it seems, and I discovered she lived even longer than her nonagenarian sister, and was still active during this woman's adult life. In fact, her descendants still lived on the old family land, to which she gave me directions.

I contacted the second and third cousin still living there. The Genealogy Gods were smiling on me – both relatives were genealogists! We have become very close and do indeed *feel* like family for some reason. I knew virtually nothing about that branch of the family tree before we met. Now I can point to bushes and perennials in my garden that were tended by Annie herself, gifts I cherish which my cousins have shared with me.



## The Mailbox



In regards the "Warning to Researchers at Vt. Archives" and "ownership" of town records published in our August Newsletter:

It occurs to me that retrieving microfilmed town records and sending these back to the town is backward thinking. It is a safety measure to locate duplicated records off-site, preferably at VARA. And will Vermont Towns also contact the Family History Library, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, to return such films back to these towns? Are there other libraries which have microfilmed records of Vt. towns?

Not sure to whom my comment should be directed at the Town level. A State newsletter?

Just a comment on this "Warning" in case others send their comments.

Thank you.

Pat Haslam, Charter member #78



**WANT TO CONTACT US?**

Our website is at

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

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Newsletter deadlines are:

Dec 15 — February issue  
Mar 15 — May issue  
June 15 — August issue  
Sept 15 — November issue

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Send copies of relevant books for journal review to:

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Book Review Editor  
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A Quarterly Publication of the  
**GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF  
VERMONT**

ISSN 1087-4550

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extend to 1845 and church records from 1773 to 1839. New is an indispensable index of nearly 1,000 names.

**Georgia, Vermont Vital Records.** Peter S. Mallet, ed., 1995, hardbound. Item No. GSV 4; \$27.00 members, \$30.00 nonmembers. This volume presents all births, baptisms, marriages, deaths and burials recorded in the town. All the civil books were transcribed as well as the records from the Georgia Plains Baptist Church, Congregational Church, and Methodist Church of Georgia and North Fairfax.

**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. This is a comprehensive index of all files in the Windsor County Probate Court Districts—Windsor and Hartford. The records cover the period from the earliest 1778 records through the end of the nineteenth century, more than 20,000 probate files. The files are indexed by the name of the major party in the case, place of residence, probate district, type of record, year, and probate record volume .

**Index to Branches & Twigs, 1972–1995.** Robert M. Murphy, ed. 2000, 572 pp., hardbound. Item No. GSV 7, \$58.50 members, \$65.00 nonmembers. This is the every-name index to GSV's Branches & Twigs, published for 24 years in 96 issues. The 180,000 entries include every genealogically important name mentioned in every issue. Separate sections of this work list the coverage of each Apple Orchard installment, and provide a full author and title index to book reviews. Branches & Twigs included large quantities of information of interest to family historians.

**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. This book is a comprehensive transcription of census and vital records for Sudbury, plus carefully compiled genealogies of families. This book is among the very best genealogical resources about a Vermont town. This is a cooperative publication between GSV and Picton Press.

**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.) This is a new edition of A Bibliography for Vermont Genealogy was released in April 2005. It includes more listings than the first edition, most published since 2000. It is keyed to Drew Bartley's Genealogies Found in Vermont Histories (Vol. 10, no. 1 of Vermont Genealogy, also designated GSV publication number 10.).

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