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Hours:

Research Room, 230 Main St.
Th. 2-4, Sat. 10-12

History Center, 196 Main St.
Th. & Fr. 2-4, Sat. 11-3
Gallery Walk 4-8

Trustees 2013-2014

John Carnahan
Chip Cummings
Karen Davis
Jude Fitzgerald
Patricia Griffin
Richard Langlois
Don Long
Elizabeth McCollum
Kevin O'Connor
Joe Rivers
Dianne Shapiro

Newsletter compiled by:
Lee Ha

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Our Annual Meeting Draws over 50 People and New Trustees are Elected

A lively crowd of more than 50 people gathered at the History Center on Sunday, November 17, for the annual meeting of the membership of the Brattleboro Historical Society. In her welcome, president Barbara George noted that last year's meeting was held in the same space before

it became the History Center and she invited all to appreciate the changes.

The membership approved the minutes of the 2012 meeting and Barbara distributed the financial statement with the annual report. In the absence of treasurer Don Long, Barbara explained that this year's bottom line is negative because the board of trustees made the decision to invest about \$20,000 of the cash reserves into the creation of the History Center.

The main item of business was to elect new trustees. New to the board and elected for a three-year term are Jude Fitzgerald, Elizabeth McCollum, and Joe Rivers. Jude Fitzgerald and his family moved from California to Brattleboro in 1997. Over the last decade and a half, he reports, "I have developed a strong interest in, and curiosity about, local history. I am excited

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Guest speaker Richard Michelman, co-author of *Before Our Time*, evoked plenty of nostalgia with his memories of growing up in Brattleboro. (Photo: Lee Ha, 2013)

BHS has a New Website!



The screenshot shows the website's homepage. At the top is a navigation bar with tabs for Home, History Center, Stories, Resources, Photos, About, Gift Shop, and Contact. Below this is a 'Welcome' section with a paragraph about Brattleboro's history. To the left is a sidebar with a search bar, email address (histsoc@sover.net), phone number (802-258-4957), and mailing address (230 Main Street #301, Brattleboro, VT 05301-2880). On the right is a 'Featured Photo' section showing a photo of the Wells Fountain with the caption 'Wells Fountain 1917' and a link to the photo library.

Thanks to MuseArts for their diligent work on getting our new website up and running. Check out www.brattleborohistoricalsociety.org if you haven't had a chance to yet. You'll be pleasantly surprised by the change, especially the ease with finding photos and information. We update it with local events of historical interest and will be adding photos and content as time permits for our volunteers. ☺

At the Research Room:

For perhaps the first time ever the BHS research room and office is being staffed 20 hours per week, thanks to a trainee from the Vermont Associates Program. Daniel Guadalupe began working for BHS in late October and is now processing the mail and email, paying bills, filling

orders, assembling mailings, doing collections cataloging, staffing the History Center, and helping visitors. He is paid for his time by the Vermont Associates Program, which is a federally funded program to retrain workers over 55 by placing them in non-profit organizations to learn new skills.

Dan comes to us from a career in social work, including 12 years on the staff of the Brattleboro Retreat. He is a trustee of the First Baptist Church and is on the board of the Pastoral Counseling Center. A former Brattleboro resident, he now lives in Newfane with his family. ♡ -Barbara George

Then and Now



In our previous newsletter we asked if anyone knew the location of the house above left. BHS lifetime member Paula Sagerman, historic preservation consultant, responded and to our delight has written the following description of her findings. Thank you, Paula. (Photos: L - C.L Howe, 1890s. R - Lee Ha, 2013)

I love mystery photos and am fairly familiar with Brattleboro's historic houses, so I put the BHS newsletter on the passenger seat of my car with the intent of driving around a bit in search of the mystery house. While coming home from a long trip and not thinking about the photo, I was driving down Western Avenue and it was almost like the house jumped out at me! I later noticed that there were several other houses in the vicinity with the same design, but this one is the most intact.

The Robustus* Farnsworth House is a well-preserved example of a vernacular adaptation of the Italianate style of architecture. The 2 ½ story front-gable, sidehall plan house was a common form built in Vermont during much of the nineteenth century, and in

the 1860s and 1870s, this basic form was embellished with Italianate details such as those found on the Farnsworth House: cross-gabled massing, scrolled eave brackets, bay windows, molded window cornices, paired narrow windows, and porches with chamfered columns and jigsaw-cut brackets and valances. The "continuous architecture" of the property, with outbuildings such as a kitchen ell, wood shed, and barn attached in a continuous row, was also common in eastern Vermont during the second half of the nineteenth century. The intact Western Avenue streetscape enhances the historic character of the Farnsworth property.

Robustus H. Farnsworth (born about 1815) lived in the house with his wife Elizabeth M. "Maria," a professional dress and cloak maker, and their

daughter Nellie. Farnsworth was a carpenter and house builder, so it is likely that he not only lived in the house but constructed it as well. It is also possible that he constructed the several other houses on Western Avenue and elsewhere in Brattleboro that have a similar appearance to the Farnsworth House.

**The sign at the house reads: "Robustus," but the 1883 city directory uses the name Roburtus, and the 1880 census uses the name Robert. ♡*
- Paula Sagerman

(Note: The Farnsworth home, 185 Western Avenue, is currently owned by Allan and Marilyn Gill and we thank them for allowing us to include this article in our newsletter.)

At the History Center:

Update

BHS is pleased with the number of visitors to the History Center thus far. Since opening in June, we have had well over 100 visitors per month, coming from all the local towns and as far as Arizona, California, Florida, Hawaii and Washington, and many states in-between. We've had visitors from India, England and France as well.

People often stop in to see what it's all about, stating that they hadn't known Brattleboro has a History Center. So if you are inclined to spread the word, please do!

Also, if you are available to volunteer at the History Center to answer questions, please contact us at BHS (802)258-4957. Thank you for your support.

An Estey Home in Miniature

In May of this year, Trustees and volunteers began searching Historical Society collections for artifacts to display in our new History Center museum. During the hunt, we located a rare antique dollhouse of exceptional craftsmanship and provenance.

According to Historical Society records, workers at the Brattleboro Estey Factory created the miniature house from wood scraps left over from building their magnificent organs. *It is unknown exactly when the dollhouse was made or for whom.* One credible theory says these craftspeople built the tiny home for the children at the one-room Estey School.

Painted white with a dark green roof, the little structure is a classic Vermont farmhouse; its singular feature being a wide porch extending the entire front of the house, complete with a hand-turned railing and an intricate lattice-

work foundation. The inside consists of four large square rooms and a steep stairway in the living room going up to a second floor bedroom.

These long ago artisans constructed the miniature with beautiful

hardwoods held together by tiny nails and fixtures. The furniture was built as carefully as the house (including a hand-carved dining table and chairs.) Unknown hands expertly sewed the mattresses, pillows, curtains, and duvets. There is old-fashioned wallpaper throughout and a carpet in the living room. For a unique twist, the house is open for play on both sides, not through the front or back.

Although this "little" Old House is solid and skillfully constructed, there is age-related wear and tear. We hope to one day have it professionally restored. Nonetheless, if you would like to see our tiny treasure as is, it is now on display in the History Center museum.

If you or someone you know has more information on our miniature mystery, please call, email or stop in at the Historical Society. We would love to hear from you! ♡

-Patti Griffin



Interior bedroom and living room in the Estey Doll House. (Photo: Lee Ha, 2013)

Prescriptions 100 years ago

The History Center displays a pharmacy log from pharmacist Wilfred E. Root of Main Street. It is a compilation of prescriptions by local doctors, including Dr. Grace Burnett. From January 1914 to 1915, these are some of the items you will see prescribed: **Cocaine, Heroin, Cinnamon water, Aspirin, Elixir of Bromide, Elixir of Celery, and Belladonna.**

One visitor was a pharmacy technician who told me the handwriting of doctors has not changed much over the last one hundred years. Come in and poke through it yourselves. Who knows? Maybe you will cure what ails you. ♡

BHS Photos Line the Walls of our Municipal Center

Long time Town Clerk Annette Cappy requested from BHS some historical photos of Brattleboro to display on the walls of the first floor of the Municipal Center. If you have not seen them, it is worth a trip to see the display she created which line the walls from the Town Clerk's office through to the stairs. Each image is labeled, it's a trip back in time! (Photo: Lee Ha, 2013)



Gifts From You!

Since our last newsletter the following items have been received by the society: a Beers Atlas, map, the Centennial edition and several copies of newspaper supplements regarding World War II by Carol Bryant of Putney. Several boxes of plans, maps and blueprints from the Gannett family and office furniture for the new History Center from Diane Shapiro. Items from the Brattleboro Ski Patrol from Charles Cathcart and 10 first day covers, a box of postmarks and a small box of 35mm negatives from Bill Fleming.

Vicki Roach donated Canal Street School items including photos, notebook and Reformer clippings. We received a box of Camera Club Documents from Mary Miller for the Brattleboro Camera Club and a 3 ring binder of 1950s railroad photos from Gary Mitchell. Walt and Mary Harrington gave us several items of historical interest, and Chuck Cummings gave donated a book of sculptures by Janet Schroeder.

We received 2 scrapbooks of news clippings from the late 1800s through 1910 from Vera Deyo via He-

lene Henry and Connie O'Masta donated a collection of W.T. Rawleigh ephemera. Stanley Lynde donated an apprenticeship booklet from Estey Organ. A 1924 Brattleboro High School Dial was left at our door. The Southeaster Vermont Welcome Center donated a large up to date copy machine and even delivered it to our Research Room for us. Richard Michelman donated photos and more, see Annual meeting article for details.

Thank you to everyone who continues to help our collection grow and our office run more smoothly. ♡

Visiting Brattleboro Historical Society

BHS office and research room is located at 230 Main Street on the third floor of the Municipal Center, a historical Brattleboro landmark on its own. We have hundreds of postcards, thousands of photographs, volumes of books, newspapers, maps, diaries and even large collection of billheads and letterheads. Come in with your questions and projects, volunteers are avail-

able to help you find the information for which you are searching. This part of our collection remains in the History Room at the Municipal Center at this time. We are open Thursdays from 2-4 and Saturdays from 10-12, or by appointment.

Brattleboro History Center is located at 196 Main Street, in the Masonic Center. Here we display our

many artifacts in changing displays. Do you have a collection you'd like to display? We'd be glad to offer you the space and help you set it up. Just contact us for details.

Please visit us at the History Center year round, on Thursdays from 2-4, Fridays from 2-4 and Saturdays from 11-3, Gallery Walk Fridays we are open from 2-8. ♡

Do you recognize this house?



BHS has a file called 'unknown photos' which volunteers and visitors occasionally peruse and try to identify. I looked through it recently and found several houses with which I was familiar and could identify, but most I could not. This is one of our still unidentified photos. A young girl stands beside the house, could that young girl be you or a relative? If you have any information regarding this house, please contact us at histsoc@sover.net or 802-258-4957. (Photo: BHS Photo Collection, date unknown)

—Lee Ha

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to discover more of our history and lore by involving myself hands-on at BHS. I am eager to support the BHS first and foremost by helping with the move to the Main Street location and by contributing my thoughts and ideas to furthering the growth of BHS." He teaches in Bennington.

Elizabeth McCollum has been a volunteer at BHS since 2011. At the Research Room she answers emails, helps visitors, and is the collections cataloging guru. She has designed several of the exhibits at the new History Center. She graduated from Marlboro College with a degree in Victorian History and Costume Design and also studied history at University of California, Santa Barbara. Locally she has participated in numerous theater productions, especially as costume designer and manager. A recent interest is genealogy research.

Joe Rivers is a social studies teacher at the Brattleboro Area Middle School. He grew up in Bennington and received his Master's in Education

from Castleton State. He and his family have lived in Brattleboro for 20 years, during which time he has been interested in the origins of Brattleboro and the history of the high school site. This has led to pursuing the stories of the Abenaki, Fort Dummer, the Connecticut River, the railroad, Vernon Dam, Island Park, the Civil War camp and hospital, and the Valley Fairground, topics he shares with his students. A current project is to introduce fellow social studies teachers to historical societies in Windham County.

Nominated from the floor, also for a three-year term, was Kevin O'Connor, who first served as a trustee at the founding of BHS more than 30 years ago while he was a high school student. He now works for the Rutland Herald, with Brattleboro as his beat. He is very active with local organizations, especially Brattleboro Goes Fourth.

Current trustees Richard Langlois and Karen Davis were re-elected for three-year and one-year terms respectively. Board secretary Lee Ha and president Barbara George

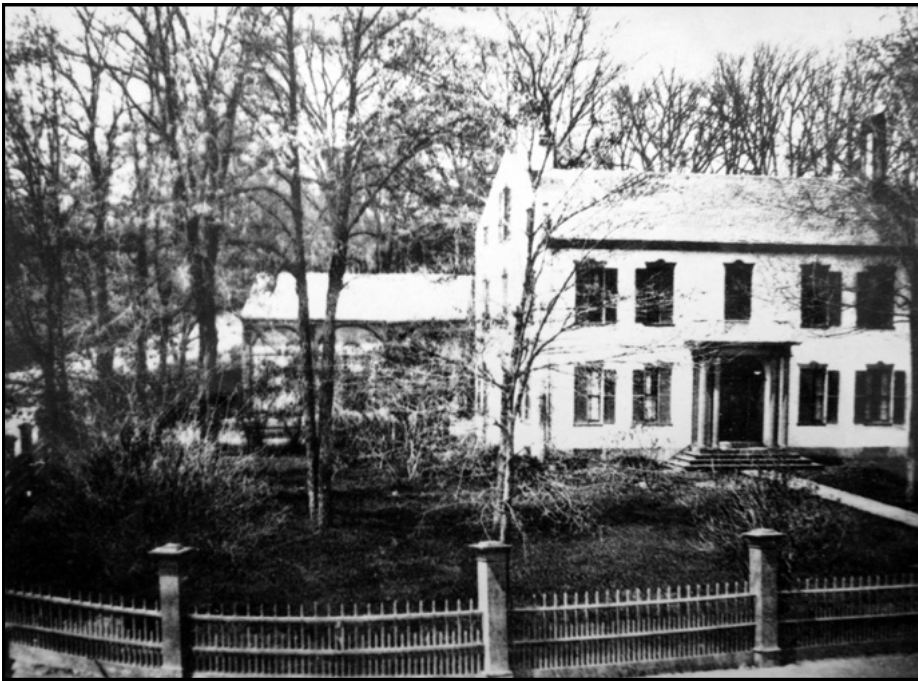
are both retiring as trustees but expect to continue as volunteers. Barbara thanked Lee for her service. The board thanked Barbara for her service and presented her with a book about Vermont history. There can be a maximum of 15 trustees and they can be appointed by the board during the year, so if anyone is interested there are still four slots available.

Richard Michelman was our speaker this year. He reminisced about Brattleboro gone by and described his collecting career and the many antique and auction businesses that have existed in the area. At the end of his speech he donated numerous items to BHS and also invited the audience to look at his large collection of rare stereographic views.

Richard surprised BHS with donations from his own collection. He gave us many beautiful old photos and ephemera, including a stack of Brattleboro Woman's Club Yearbooks, as well as a large vessel engraved to B.F. Bingham for his service with Brattleboro High School, dated July 1, 1871. Thank you Richard! ☺

It Hasn't Always Been Pliny Park

Our community outdoor gathering place, on the corner of High and Main Street, has shown us many faces throughout the development of Brattleboro. Currently the attractive Pliny Park, built in 2002 at this major intersection shows little resemblance to the original description we have. According to the Vermont Phoenix, Brattleboro's first physician, Dr. Gardner H. Hall had his office in a small building on the corner of High and Main Streets which he also used for a drug store. That building burned in 1797 and subsequently the corner was known for years as "Dr. Hall's Garden."



The first record of anything after Dr. Hall's garden, comes to us from Mary Cabot's, Annals of Brattleboro, stating that in 1820 the Honorable Jonathan Hunt and his wife bought the land (which went well up High Street) and apparently had to tear down wooden structures on the property to build their unusual house. The Hunt home was the first brick house in Windham County and attracted sightseers for its unusual building material. William Morris Hunt (b.1824) and Richard Morris Hunt (b.1828) were born in the home and went on to study in Europe becoming world renowned in their fields, William – artist, Richard -architect. (Photo: BHS Photo Collection, date unknown)



Shortly after building his home, Hunt built a wooden building directly on the corner for his law office as seen in a later photo. Jonathan Hunt was in the U.S. Congress from 1827-1832 and in 1830, Daniel Webster, while visiting the Hunt's in Brattleboro, planned his speeches for the great Webster/Hayne debate in that very law office. This little building also served as an insurance office and an Express Office as seen in this photo and before it was removed in 1872 it was used as a paddy shanty! (Photo: BHS Photo Collection, Mid 1860s)

Mr. Hunt died in 1832 while still in office, but Mrs. Hunt owned the property through at least 1856, according to Brattleboro maps. The Baptist Church was built in 1867 and our records show that in 1869 George Howe owned the home on the corner. George Hooker bought it before 1895 and died in 1902. (Photo: BHS photo collection, 1880s)



When it became apparent that buildings were expected to replace the serene, tree-shaded estate, townspeople urged the town officials to make the land surrounding the house into a park. James M. Tyler of the VT Phoenix wrote regarding the future of the corner property: "Can this property be secured for a public park? The statute is probably broad enough to give the town authority to buy it for that purpose, but it is doubtful whether a vote could be obtained in view of the town's present indebtedness and the high cost of living." (James M. Tyler of the VT Phoenix, Oct 6, 1916) (Photo: Benjamin Crown 1916)



By 1920 the corner was void of trees and a Ford Sales and Service Garage filled the space directly on the corner of High and Main Streets. On the grounds behind the mansion rose the substantial Manley Garage and apartment building on High Street. All the land was formerly part of the Hunt/ Hooker estate, but the mansion itself remained. Notice the roof and chimneys of the house behind the Ford garage. (Photo: Benjamin Crown, 1921)



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During the 1920s the house was no longer a single family residence. It took on several enterprises, including an undertaker, a restaurant, and a chiropractor's office. Before it was demolished in 1928/29 St. Michael's School used it for temporary classrooms until their school on Walnut Street was completed. (L.R. Brown photo, With Interest Volume VI:4:11, 1929)



The Hunt/Hooker mansion was torn down in 1929 to make way for the 'Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company' (1929-1939) and Montgomery Ward Store (1929-1975). Currently Windham Flowers and the Brattleboro Area Chamber of Commerce are located in the A&P building, while Brown and Roberts Hardware Store occupies the former Montgomery Ward building. The corner service station, built in 1920, changed hands many times throughout the 1920s and 30s and included several taxi services, an information booth and even the Red Cross for a brief time. (Photo: Benjamin Crown, early 1930s)



In 1971, Dunkin Donuts and its parking lot replaced the service station that occupied this corner for many years. The Manley Apartment building still stands prominently seen behind Dunkin Donuts and a large mural of old time Brattleboro, painted by local artist Terry Sylvester, adorned the outside wall of the old A&P, next to the parking lot. (Photo: Bob George, 1999)



In 2003, the Thai Bamboo Restaurant was built and the corner became a public park, not exactly what the town had in mind nearly 100 years prior, but still a nice area. Named Pliny Park for Pliny Burrows, a long time active resident of Brattleboro. Mr. Burrows was a merchant (established Burrows Sports Shop), original Town meeting representative, and longtime member and volunteer of the Fire Department. (Photo Lee Ha, 2013)

Brattleboro Historical Society Out and About



BHS Municipal Center display case, just outside the Town Clerk's office. This is an ever changing display often set up by board member Karen Davis. Stop by and check it out! (Photo: Lee Ha, 2013)



Vermont Antiquarian Booksellers, Annual Book and Ephemera Fair, BHS table, August 11, 2013. Left to Right: Volunteers Elizabeth McCollum and Harriet Ives, BHS board President Barbara George, setting up our table of items for sale. (Photo: Lee Ha, 2013)



The Windham County History Fair in Newfane on August 17, 2013 was a grand success on a gorgeous summer's day. The well attended fair featured displays from most of the local historical societies, and other history related organizations. We were entertained with period music from an authentic, restored Estey Organ and a local band. Left to Right: BHS Board Vice President, John Carnahan is seen here with Secretary Lee Ha and Board Member Chip Cummings. (Photo: friend of BHS, 2013)

Malcolm Moody's West Coast Adventure

In 1883, less than 40 years after the railroads began, a local banker, Malcolm Moody, decided to take a trip across the country to visit a cousin in Oregon.

As many travelers did, and still do, he immortalized his journey in a diary. Starting from the moment he leaves Brattleboro, Mr. Moody begins to record what he sees outside his "[rail] car" window. Drama occurs almost immediately, as his train passes the site of a terrible train wreck just past the Hoosac tunnel outside of Greenfield. Burned cars and freight litter the side of the tracks.

A suitably dramatic beginning to a long and eventful trip for Mr. Moody, a Massachusetts native, but who had been living in Brattleboro for some time. He was a widower with an 8 years old daughter named Dora, who was being cared for by her grandmother while he was gone. He was quite well-to-do, being an Assistant Treasurer at the Vermont Savings Bank, whose offices were at the corner of Main and Elliot street, where the People's National Bank is now.

Also according to his diary, he was an active member of the Knights Templar society. He makes many mentions of meeting other "Sir Knights" on his travels, and when he gets to San Francisco, there seems to be a convention of the society at one of the hotels there. He does not attend, but he does use his membership to get himself discounts on his travels.

While in Salt Lake City and Ogden, Utah, where he stops for a couple of days on his way to the West Coast, he runs into several former Vermont natives, including a young man who had attended Col. Miles School, also known as the Burnside Military School by the Cold Spring on Upper Dummerston Road. Sadly, the name of the young man is not legible in the diary, but it looks something like "Weigh" or possibly "Leigh".

What stands out about Mr.

Moody is his fascination with the flora and fauna of the West. He dwells a lot on the fine views of mountains and oceans, stops to pick a flower by the railroad track while stopped at a station in the Rocky Mountains, and is constantly bowled over by the abundance



Malcolm Moody (Photo: C. L. Howe, 1880s)

of fruits and grains and decorative plants and trees in California. Particularly, he seems to love the idea that strawberries are available year-round in the West.

He describes many of the towns in Northern California and Oregon that he travels through. The cousin that he travels to see in Oregon, turns out to be the newly elected Governor of Oregon, who lives in a town called the Dalles, when not building his new governor's mansion in Salem. Moody is travelling through country that was still quite new to many Americans back in the more settled areas, and he delights in the wild yet beautiful country he finds himself in.

A particularly interesting passage is his description of the local Native Americans fishing for salmon in the waters of the Columbia river:

"We found a large Indian camp here, catching salmon that they were curing for their winter use,

by smoking drying or salting. They were taking the salmon then with their spears, standing on the rocks near the edge of [the] stream, their keen eyesight would see Mr. Salmon and arrest his progress up the stream by [their] 2-pronged wooden spears."

Mr. Moody makes his way eventually back down to San Francisco, describing his visit to the famous Cliff House in Golden Gate Park (long before there was a Golden Gate Bridge.) But soon it is time for his return journey, mostly uneventful, but for the brief mislaying of his trunk full of deer antlers and other souvenirs left behind in Ogden, Utah, so that he must reroute to Omaha, Nebraska, to pick it up.

There is a sweet interval in Ohio when he meets up with some of his relatives, but soon he is back in Brattleboro, full of stories and with gifts for his young daughter and his mother-in-law. Five or so years later, after at least two more journeys, out to the West Coast, this time taking in Southern California, Mr. Moody ends up buying a house in Pasadena. Originally intended as a winter house, by 1890 he packs off his daughter and his mother-in-law to live there permanently.

His daughter Dora ends up going to Stanford University a few years later and meeting a handsome young medical student, she marries him, and they have a daughter, Rhona. In 1986, Rhona Williams, decides to send our Historical Society boxes of memorabilia from her mother's life, which includes some of her grandfather's things, including a copy of the diary.

So with her gift, the Moody diary comes full circle back to Brattleboro, where it began. ♪

-Elizabeth McCollum

Getting to Know our Collections: Lewis R. Brown Color Billboard Photos

Volunteer Ryan Stratton has been busy scanning and thus digitizing more of the negatives and slides in our collection. One such collection contains only 27 color slides taken by Lewis R. Brown from 1943-1944. Billboards were popular at the time and we are thankful LR Brown took initiative to photograph them. In the late 1960s billboards were banned from Vermont roadways, the first state in the nation to do so. 🐉



Annual Appeal Raises over \$3,000

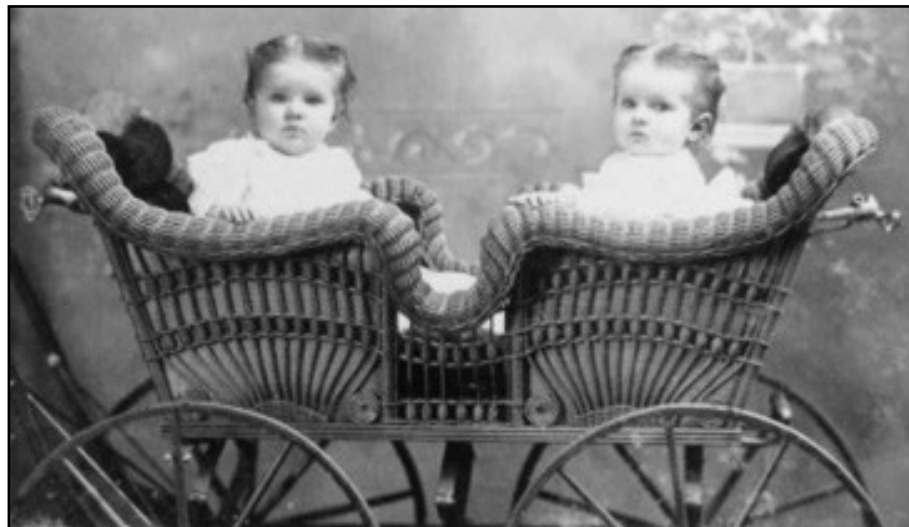
As of the printing of this newsletter, our annual appeal has received \$3,230. Thank you to all who have donated to our new History Center. If you have not yet visited the History Center, we hope you make it to 196 Main Street, to see what your generous donations have helped to create. Since the last newsletter we have received additional donations from John Beirne, Karen Davis, Lynette Hamilton, Walter and Mary Harrington, Addison and Adelaide Minott, Grace Newcomer, Francis and Gail Speno and Josephine Dillback. Thank you!



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The Yearly twins, Beatrice and Gertrude, are as surprised as we are that it's time to renew your membership!

You will find the new membership renewal envelope for 2014 in this newsletter and we hope you will take time to update your membership to keep this newsletter arriving in your mailbox. We appreciate each and everyone of you and your generosity in supporting Brattleboro Historical Society.

Photo: Beatrice and Gertrude Yearly were born in 1894. In 1923 Beatrice (R) married Lewis R. Brown, local photographer (see page 11). Beatrice was the first woman to practice law in southern Vermont and to be elected Town Grand Juror and later Justice of the Peace in Windham County. She also served as Probate Judge from 1948-1964. Clearly a well respected woman, Beatrice passed away in 1978. (Photo: Wellman, 1895)