

# A Genealogical Guide to Essential Printed Resources for Vermont

By Scott Andrew Bartley

Over the past five years of online Vermont articles, I have discussed many topics of interest to genealogists and listed published sources whenever possible. Here the goal is to discuss the sources in print for basic research. Each title is selected for its statewide coverage, although it should be noted that most records in Vermont are kept on the town level. Vermont researchers as well as libraries will find this guide to be useful when building a collection of essential printed resources on the state. Not all volumes given below are currently in print. This is not a comprehensive list; my goal is to identify the best resources and the most inexpensive versions of these resources. There are several online sources to locate out-of-print books as well as visiting your local used bookstore.

## GUIDES AND BIBLIOGRAPHIES

\* Melnyk, Marcia D., *Genealogist's Handbook for New England Research*, 4th ed. (Boston: NEHGS, 1999), pages 185-215 cover Vermont. This is the best guidebook available at the moment. I am working on a comprehensive guide that will focus solely on Vermont, but this will likely not be out until 2005. The *Handbook* features detailed maps for each New England state as well as a listing of the counties and towns with year created, parent, county (for towns), probate districts, and aliases. Wheelock in Caledonia County and Whiting in Addison County are missing from the list. Also included is information on the state's history, vital records, census, probate (by district), land, cemeteries, church records (by denomination), military records, immigration and naturalization, newspapers, court records, libraries (with larger genealogical collections by town), Family History Center, societies, periodicals, and a bibliography of books and articles.

\* *Research Outline: Vermont*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Family History Library, 1999), 31 pp., is a guide for those visiting the Family History Library (FHL) in Salt Lake City, which I recommend for anybody who can go. The introductory material is specific to the Library and its resources. The topics are the same as those in the Melnyk guide except for the outline map and the town and county lists. Unique to this guide are the subjects of record types (and where to find them), online resources (generic Vermont topics, not all items of genealogical interest), Bible records, biographies, directories, gazetteers, genealogies (mostly generic), military records (much more detailed), minorities, "native races," taxation, and town records. This item is of minimal cost and available at the FHL or through its website, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org).

\* Bartley, Scott Andrew, Vermont online articles at [www.NewEnglandAncestors.org](http://www.NewEnglandAncestors.org), 1999-2004, available to NEHGS members only. They include in-depth coverage of such topics as vital records; court system (two parts); migration; cemetery; warnings out; military records; adoption; genealogies found in town histories (five parts); research facilities (Vermont History Center; General Services and Records Center; and the Bennington Museum); newspapers; and census.

\* Hyde, Arthur L. and Frances P., eds. *Burial Grounds in Vermont* (Bradford, Vt.: V.O.C.A., 1991), 485 pp. The Vermont Old Cemetery Association (VOCA) created this guide with the purpose of identifying every known cemetery, public and private, within the state of Vermont. It is arranged alphabetically by county and then by towns within the county. If you are not sure of the county, an outline map of the state is provided, followed by an index to towns. Each county entry starts with a detailed county map showing the present borders of each town including main and secondary roads leading between the villages. There is a map of each town that shows all the roads (except those in densely populated villages) and many geographical features (parks, brooks, ponds, mountains) including the location of every cemetery. A chart gives the name of each cemetery (note that these are the current names and sometimes differ with those listed in the Vermont Vital Records Card Index, 1760-1870, produced in the early twentieth century), first and last year used, whether in current use, estimated number of gravestones, and remarks describing the condition. Under the chart is a written description of where the cemetery is located (i.e. "East side of Bowen Hill Road, on curve adjacent to a house & barn, on knoll across brook").

\* Nichols, Joann H., and Patricia L. Haslam, *Index to Known Cemetery Listings in Vermont* (Montpelier, Vt.: Vermont Historical Society, 1995), 69 pp. This is a companion guide to VOCA's survey mentioned above. This lists all known cemetery inscriptions that were published and a few manuscripts in major repositories. It also includes the typescripts done by the Vermont chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

\* Leppman, John A., *A Bibliography for Vermont Genealogy* (St. Albans, Vt.: Genealogical Society of Vermont, 2000), 66 pp. Leppman has created a bibliography designed specifically with the genealogist in mind. The sections cover how-tos, bibliographies, and guides; periodicals; general histories; pre-statehood histories; state papers; almanacs, directories, etc.; census; military; educational institutions; religious organizations; government/legislature; collected genealogies and biographies; counties; towns; and maps and atlases.

## **GENERAL HISTORY AND GENEALOGY**

\* Hemenway, Abby Maria, ed., *The Vermont Historical Gazetteer*, 5 vols. (various publishers, 1867-1891) and Index (Rutland, Vt.: Tuttle Co., 1923). This is mentioned because it is the seminal work on Vermont history. It covers every county except Windsor (the town of Andover was published separately). It is no longer available in print and used copies start at \$250 and go to \$550. There have been several attempts at electronic versions usually using Acrobat Reader. NEHGS released a CD-ROM version of the *Gazetteer* in 2003, and a new and improved version will be available soon. This will be the only reasonably priced version of this work. These volumes are a half-century of work on Hemenway's part to get local historians to write about each town in the state, a feat never done before or ever repeated. Much of the history comes from the memories of the elders of the town who were either early settlers or the children of the settlers. It is the type of work that is to be used wisely. Much of the information contained within these volumes cannot be otherwise documented. Sometimes, this will be the only source of information on your ancestor.

\* Bartley, Scott Andrew, ed., *Vermont Families in 1791*, 2 vols. (Vol. 1, Camden, Me.: Picton Press, 1992; Vol. 2, St. Albans, Vt.: Genealogical Society of Vermont, 1997), 281 + 304 pp. These two volumes represent 233 out of 14,983 households enumerated in the Federal census of 1791 (often wrongly stated as 1790). Each sketch starts with all information known on each head of household, followed by a list of all children - with their vital records - and grandchildren by name and a single vital record that connects them (I like to call this 2½ generations). Each fact has been cited. This series will go far to document the early period in Vermont. Even with two volumes, there are many inter-marriages.

## **STATEWIDE RECORDS**

\* Swift, Esther Munroe, *Vermont Place-Names: Footprints of History* (Brattleboro, Vt., 1977; rep. Rockport, Me., 1996), 705 pp. This is the authoritative source on geographic names used in Vermont. It is arranged alphabetically by county and then by town. Each sketch starts with the incorporation of the town and a brief history. The author describes how the town was named and discusses all the hamlets and areas within the town.

\* Rollins, Alden M., comp. *Vermont Religious Certificates* (Rockport, Me., 2003), 303 pp. Vermont was unique in allowing the town-supported church to be the denomination of the majority. All others were free to worship in the church of their choice. Each resident had to support the town church unless they had a certificate from a minister saying the person was already supporting his own church. This is a list of the surviving certificates from across the state. If your ancestor does not show up in this volume (and you have verified that that town is included within), then your ancestor went to the town-supported church.

\* Rollins, Alden M., *Vermont Warnings Out* (Camden, Me., 1995, 1997) in 2 volumes, 430 + 594 pp. Vermont warnings out cover from 1769 to 1787 and 1801 to 1817. The earlier records are sparse as there was no requirement for them to be recorded in the town books. Most persons warned out during this time were poor and transient. Records for the second period contain more complete information, as the town clerk was required by law to record it. The people warned out in the second period were not necessarily poor and most likely did not move out of town. A person or family could only be warned out within the first year of moving to a town. Once established, they were citizens of that

new town. Many early settlers moved around a great deal, and this is one of the few records that help track these movements.

\* Family Tree Maker, Family Archives CD #454, *Census Microfilm Records: Maine, New Hampshire, & Vermont, 1850* (Utah, 2000), five CD-ROMs. Though technically a federal record, this covers the entire state (plus two more states). This census is important, as it is the first to enumerate the entire family. This CD contains a head-of-household index linked to an image of the census page. There are very few records in Vermont that are accessible on a statewide basis. Almost all records are on a town level.

\* Stilwell, Lewis D., *Migration from Vermont* (Montpelier, Vt., 1948), pages 64-246 + 11 pp. This is the quintessential study on Vermont migration. It provides valuable insights into the great role that out-migration played in Vermont's early history. This first appeared as volume 5, no. 2 of *Proceedings of the Vermont Historical Society* (1937).

\* Nuquist, Andrew E., and Edith W. Nuquist, *Vermont State Government and Administration: An Historical and Descriptive Study of the Living Past* (Burlington, Vt., 1966), 644 pp. This volume is not necessarily for the average genealogist. It is mentioned here as the source for information on how the government functions, past and present.

## MISCELLANEOUS

\* Membership in the Genealogical Society of Vermont. This keeps you abreast of the current happenings in the state and its genealogical endeavors. Members receive a quarterly newsletter and the journal *Vermont Genealogy*.

\* Membership in the Vermont Historical Society. Members receive a newsletter, and the quarterly journal *Vermont History* in exchange for their support of the largest historical and genealogical library in the state.

\* DenBoer, Gordon, and George E. Goodridge Jr., *New Hampshire - Vermont Atlas of Historical County Boundaries* (New York, 1993), 216 pp. This guide helps the researcher know which county a particular town was in at a particular time. It is essential to know the county for any court records.

\* Fisher, Carleton Edward, and Sue Gray Fisher, comps. *Soldiers, Sailors, and Patriots of the Revolutionary War Vermont* (Camden, Me., 1992), 622 pp. This list is compiled from a number of published sources for those men who served from Vermont; were born, married, or died in Vermont; performed civil or patriotic service; and all who were on the pension rolls of Vermont. Most entries give name; state of service; company of service; place and year of birth, marriage, and death; residences of those who moved around; wife's first name; pension number; and all sources listing the man.