

# Mount Holly Community Historical Museum

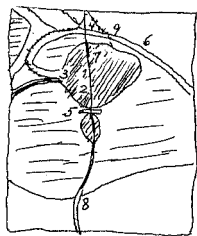
VOLUME 14 NUMBER 1 JUNE 2007

*Our mission is to enlighten our community with an understanding of our past to promote an objective vision of the future.*

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

## MAMMOTH ARTIFACTS TO RETURN TO MOUNT HOLLY

In 2006, an agreement was reached with the University of Vermont that relates to historic Mount Holly discoveries made in 1848 in the railroad bed being dug along the summit of the Green Mountains (elevation 1,415 feet). The first find unearthed by workmen for the Rutland and Burlington Railroad was a well-preserved fossil tooth weighing over 7 pounds with a grinding surface 8 inches by 4 inches. It was found in about 11 feet of muck resting on coarse gravel that separated it from the rock below. The second discovery was a section of horn or tusk, 80 inches long and 4 inches in diameter, discovered about 80 feet from the place of the tooth. The fossils were deemed to be the property of the Rutland and Burlington Railroad and were turned over by the Railroad Directors to the University of Vermont for examination, preservation and display. The tooth and tusk were examined by experts and were determined to be remains of a huge beast described variously as a fossil elephant, a mastodon and a mammoth. The adult animal would have been more than 8 feet tall, 10 feet long and would have weighed about 1.7 tons.



5 Station house  
6 Road  
7 Division of water  
--- outlet of muck bed



1 Grinder  
2 Tusks  
3 Original dividing ridge  
4 Present division of water

The map (above) of the area of the discoveries was drawn by hand in 1853 by Professor Zadock Thompson of the University of Vermont. It encompasses an area of about 35 acres at the summit.

With the exception of a 1992 visit to Mount Holly as part of the Town's bicentennial celebration, the fossils have resided at the University of Vermont since their discovery. But in 2006, Museum representatives concluded negotiations with UVM to bring the "Mount Holly Mammoth" home on permanent loan. A key factor in reaching the agreement with UVM was the availability of climate-controlled storage when the Museum's restored Perkins House building is complete.

Scientists believe that the fossils were buried at the Summit for more than 8,000 years. Their residency in Burlington will have lasted close to 160 years when they are returned once again to their Mount Holly home.

## MILESTONE YEAR FOR PERKINS HOUSE

With Phase 1 of the Perkins House restoration complete and Phase 2 underway at publication time, the Museum Board continues to plan for Phase 3, which includes interior construction for gallery, storage and work space, a handicapped bathroom and a kitchen. Also critical to Phase 3 is the climate control system essential for preservation of fragile artifacts. Phase 3 represents the culmination of the project that will adapt an old building as a new museum.

Looking back, 2006 is the year that community support blossomed and construction began. Funding, slowly cultivated, strengthened. Individual gifts and pledges, family gifts, and a major grant from the Preservation Trust of Vermont in partnership with the Freeman Foundation put the project on the path to completion in time for the Museum's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2009. All of the wonderful donors to the project are recognized in the Perkins House Honor Roll which is enclosed with this newsletter mailing. Completing funding for Phase 3 remains a challenge for the Board and the community.

Below and continued on page 2 are two photo reminders of the Museum's milestone year.



Governor Jim Douglas and Museum Chair Lory Doolittle at Perkins House Groundbreaking, May 27, 2006

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**Order Form – *Mount Holly, Its Early Days***

This 36-page book by Jim Holden is in its third printing, with additional photographs and a removable reproduction antique map of Mount Holly suitable for framing.

How many? (\$10 each) \_\_\_\_\_ Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Shipping \$ 2.00  
 TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Mail with your check payable to

**Mount Holly Community Historical Museum**

P.O. Box 17, Belmont, VT 05730  
 Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR**

With generosity from the community, support from The Preservation Trust of Vermont and the Freeman Foundation, and the hard work of the Museum Board, work on the restoration of Perkins House was begun in 2006. A groundbreaking ceremony in May was attended by Governor James Douglas, representatives of all three members of the Vermont Congressional delegation, and our state representative Alice Nitka. Phase 1 of the project was completed and funding is in place for phase 2. See more Perkins House details and photographs elsewhere in this newsletter.

A busy summer schedule for the Museum included participation in the 2006 Vermont History Expo in Tunbridge with an exhibit featuring the Perkins House model. In the annual Independence Day parade through Belmont, the Museum won a prize for authentic costumes. The second annual ARTFEST provided an opportunity for local artists to display and sell their works. FARMFEST brought together a number community organizations and individuals with produce, honey, syrup, or homemade crafts to sell. Museum programs included a discussion of 20<sup>th</sup> century settlement of the Finns in the Mount Holly area, a presentation on Mount Holly's historic barns, and a slide show on old cemeteries. There were children's classes in rug hooking and quilting. Mount Holly School students were honored for prize-winning contributions to the Creative History contest and local students presented their award-winning National History Day projects. Sonya Horton was selected as the recipient of the Museum's History prize for a graduating Black River High School senior.

As I complete my term as Chair, I extend my thanks to the community for supporting the Museum in so many ways and to the Board for their dedication and perseverance.

*Lory Doolittle, Chair*

(continued from page 1)



*Perkins House with barn under reconstruction as viewed from Maple Hill Road, May 2007*

**HISTORY OF MOUNT HOLLY  
 ORDER YOUR COPY NOW**

The Historical Museum has for sale a limited number of copies of *History of Mount Holly, Vermont by Carroll R. Tarbell*. To order, please complete this form and mail with your check payable to Mount Holly Community Historical Museum, P.O. Box 17, Belmont, VT 05730.

\$50 (plus \$5 shipping out of town – free delivery locally)  
 Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Shipping \_\_\_\_\_  
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If you are ordering multiple copies to be shipped to more than one address (\$55 each with shipping), please attach additional information.

**TO  
 LORY DOOLITTLE  
 Chair  
 2002-2007**

**We salute your outstanding leadership and  
 tireless efforts for**

**THE MOUNT HOLLY COMMUNITY  
 HISTORICAL MUSEUM**

**and the  
 Perkins House Restoration Project**

**On behalf of the Museum and the community  
 that you have inspired with your spirit and  
 thoughtful guidance**

**Board of Directors  
 Mount Holly Community Historical Museum  
 April 2007**

## MOUNT HOLLY HISTORY IS ON THE WEB



History meets technology at [www.mounthollyvtmuseum.org](http://www.mounthollyvtmuseum.org). Thanks to the considerable design talents of Amanda Smith Frank (who also serves as webmaster), the Museum site went on-line in 2006. Treat yourself to a visit and take a virtual tour of dozens of artifacts from the Museum collection, browse through past newsletters, view the architectural plans and photos documenting the Perkins House restoration progress, get information about museum events and membership, or simply get directions.

## ANTIQUÉ CHASE QUILT INSPIRES DONOR RECOGNITION REPLICÁ

During an accessioning workshop at the Museum in the fall of 2006, a Garden Maze quilt pieced in two colors only (red and white) with over 160 signatures in old style calligraphy was rediscovered in the Museum collection. The quilt predates 1900 and may have been made to honor the Chase Toy Factory owners. Museum curator, Robin Eatmon, recommended that a template be made and the names copied as they appear on the quilt.

Museum Chair, Lory Doolittle and Board member, Susan Zabransky undertook to recreate the quilt in template form, painstakingly interpreting the signatures and printing them into the appropriate blocks on the template. Several of the names had faded to the point where a high powered light with magnifier was needed. The list of names reads like a roster of town residents of the era with both individual and family names appearing.

As they worked, Susan and Lory developed the idea of creating another quilt in the Garden Maze design which will list the names of Perkins House Restoration Project donors of \$1,000 or more. Fiber artist Susan Zabransky has agreed to make the new quilt in the image of the old one. The antique and the new quilts will be hung side by side at the entrance to the restored Perkins House. The goal is to have the new quilt ready for the Perkins House Museum opening in 2009.

The Museum is always looking to expand its collection. Items of local significance about which the specific history is known are of particular interest. If you have an artifact which you would like to share with the community, please contact Curator Robin Eatmon.

## A FAMILY AT HOME IN THE HOUSE



Dennis Devereux

In November 2006, Dennis Devereux, Museum Vice Chair, was elected to the Vermont General Assembly representing Mount Holly, Ludlow and Plymouth. The last Mount Holly resident to sit in the House of Representatives was Dennis' great aunt, Maud Devereux, who held the seat from 1967 to 1969.

It is a State House tradition that numbered seats vacated by representatives who are not returning are assigned by lottery to incoming freshmen reps. Maud had held seat number 65 which was providentially available at the opening of the 2007 session. Dennis' wish was to carry on the Devereux/Mount Holly tradition in the seat. He surveyed his fellow freshman representatives, hoping no one else had a claim to seat number 65 and thought he had a good chance of claiming it. Luck was definitely on Dennis' side -- his name was drawn first in the lottery and Mount Holly is once again represented from seat 65 in Representatives' Hall.



Maud Devereux

At State House ceremonies in January 2007, forty years after his Great Aunt Maud was similarly sworn in, Dennis wore a purple shirt in honor of his mother Hazel and a tie tack that had belonged to his dad Allen. A choir of Vermont schoolchildren sang *America the Beautiful*. Dennis describes the ceremony as "moving and humbling. Not a dry eye to be seen." Congratulations to Dennis on his election and his success in continuing a family tradition of service to the community and the State of Vermont.

**Mount Holly Community Historical Museum**  
**Tarbellville Road, Belmont, VT 05730**

**2007**

**CALENDAR OF MUSEUM EVENTS**

**2007**

*Unless otherwise noted, the museum is open on summer Saturdays and Sundays from 2 pm until 4 pm and on Saturday and Sunday, October 6 and 7. Sunday program times are noted below.*

- Sat** June 30     **INDEPENDENCE DAY PARADE OPEN HOUSE.** Museum open 12-4 pm.  
**Sun** July 1     Open for browsing
- Sat** July 7     2-4 pm. **QUILTING FOR KIDS.** Ages 8 and up. Contact Judy Nevin at 259-2443 to register.  
**Sun** July 8     2:15 pm. **CREATIVE HISTORY CONTEST WINNERS – WRITINGS AND ART PROJECTS ABOUT AN HISTORICAL EVENT OR PERSON IN MOUNT HOLLY –** Mount Holly School students share their winning entries.
- Sat** July 14     Open for browsing  
**Sun** July 15     2:00 pm. **I HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN YOU. VERMONT WOMEN AND THE WESTWARD MOVEMENT.** Linda Peavy and Ursula Smith share diaries, letters and reminiscences of 19<sup>th</sup> century women who left – but never forgot – Vermont. *A Vermont Humanities Council event.*
- Sat** July 21     Open for browsing  
**Sun** July 22     **AN HOUR WITH OUR ESTEY ORGAN,** Ed Boadway.
- Tue** July 17     **Annual Meeting of Members and Pot Luck Supper.** Musical entertainment provide by Ray Dana with his antique Victrola. *Watch for a reminder postcard in the mail.*
- Sat** July 28     Open for browsing  
**Sun** July 29     **MOUNT HOLLY MEN IN THE CIVIL WAR.** Dennis Devereux.
- Sat** Aug 4     **ART FESTIVAL,** 10am - 4 pm. Village Green, Belmont. The 2-day show and sale features works by local artists and will be complemented by a local garden tour and box lunch cosponsored by the Garden Club and Community Association.
- Sun** Aug 5     **ART FESTIVAL,** Noon-4 pm
- Sat** Aug 11     Open for browsing  
**Sun** Aug 12     **BLACKSMITHING TECHNIQUES.** A demonstration by Ed Burgess.
- Sat** Aug 18     Open for browsing  
**Sun** Aug 19     **20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY SETTLEMENT OF THE FINNS IN THE MOUNT HOLLY AREA (Part II).** Mary Nortunen and Alice Suojanen.
- Sat** Aug 25     Open for browsing  
**Sun** Aug 26     12-4 pm. **FARMFEST** on the Village Green, Belmont
- Sat** Sept 22     5:00 pm. **ANNUAL FUND RAISING DINNER,** Odd Fellows Hall.
- Sat** Oct 6     **CIDER DAYS ON THE GREEN IN BELMONT.** Museum open for browsing 10 am – 4 pm.  
**Sun** Oct 7     **CIDER DAYS ON THE GREEN IN BELMONT.** Museum open for browsing noon-4 pm.
- Sat** Dec 1     **FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS WREATH AUCTION AND DINNER.** Roundhouse at Jackson Gore. Tickets and information: Doris Reiser, 259-2722.