

VITAL COMMUNITIES

SPRING 2011

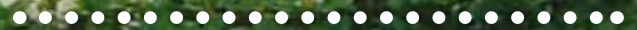
NEWSLETTER



Serving the Upper Valley region of Vermont & New Hampshire



EARLY SETTLEMENT of the Upper Valley



Discover Your
Colonial History

Transportation from
River to Rail to Cars!



VITAL COMMUNITIES

Mission:

Vital Communities engages citizens, organizations and communities in creating solutions to our region's challenges. We currently work in the following topic areas:

SENSE OF PLACE: Valley Quest

LEADERSHIP: Leadership Upper Valley, The Municipal Network, Corporate Council

TRANSPORTATION: Upper Valley TMA

LOCAL ECONOMY: Local First Alliance

LOCAL AGRICULTURE: Valley Food & Farm

Staff:

Len Cadwallader, *Executive Director*

Alison Baker, *Initiatives Manager, Local First Alliance*

Aaron Brown, *Upper Valley TMA*

Stephanie Carter, *Outreach*

Debbie Diegoli, *Valley Food & Farm*

Laura Dintino, *Valley Quest*

Stacey Glazer, *Web Media*

Deb Jones, *Valley Food & Farm*

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Photography: Pages 5–6 provided by Winter Center for Indigenous Traditions. All others: Vital Communities' staff.

Printing: Compliments of Dartmouth Printing Company of Hanover, NH.

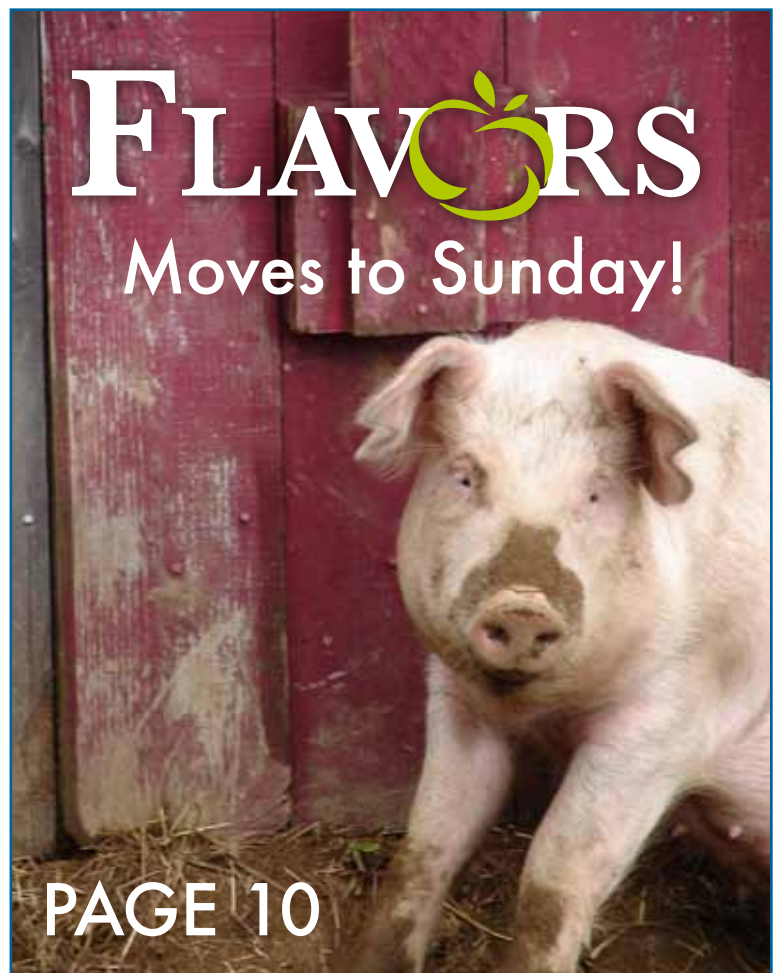
Design: Nomad Communications

What's New at Vital Communities?

NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HIRED!

The Search Committee's work has concluded and the Board of Directors is very pleased to welcome Mary Margaret Sloan as our new Executive Director. Mary Margaret is an Upper Valley resident who brings with her more than 15 years of nonprofit experience and a deep appreciation for the work of Vital Communities.

Len Cadwallader will continue as the Executive Director through June 30, 2011. Additional details about the transition will be available soon.



Windy Ridge Orchard (Petting Zoo), North Haverhill, New Hampshire.
COVER IMAGE: The Fells, Newbury, New Hampshire.



SPRING 2011

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VITALCOMMUNITIES.ORG

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COLONIAL QUEST

Discover Your Colonial History



Student gathering data from gravestone for Valley Quest project.

The 250th anniversary (UV 250) of the “Middle Grant” towns offers an opportunity for reflection and education: How did this area come to be the way it is today?

Through generous funding from the NH Humanities Council, Windham Foundation, Lane & Elizabeth Dwinell Charitable Trust, and the VT Community Fund, Valley Quest has been facilitating anniversary planning for the 12 towns (list of towns on page 6). See our website and the Valley News for updated schedules of town and region-wide events such as:

- ♦ UV 250 Super Quest: With one clue from each town, collect the letters, solve the word search, and win a commemorative patch!
- ♦ A speakers’ series of historic talks in all of the Middle Grant towns.
- ♦ Fun Run: Lebanon, NH March 19 and Hartford, VT August 6.
- ♦ Upper Valley Community Band: Norwich, VT July 1 and Plainfield, NH August 14.
- ♦ Concert on the Dartmouth Green: July 3.
- ♦ Antique Car Show: Fairlee, VT July 2 and 3.
- ♦ AVA Gallery and Art Center show featuring art of Native peoples.

Thanks to a VT Humanities Council grant, Valley Quest’s new Colonial Quest curriculum is available free—on our website. Teachers can examine early settlement history through the lens of their hometown, with curriculum driven by engaging questions:

- ♦ **WHO** were the first residents here?
- ♦ **WHERE** did the colonists come from?
- ♦ **WHEN** and **WHY** did they come?
- ♦ **HOW** was our town chartered?
- ♦ **WHAT** did the colonists do to establish this town?

The standards-based approach integrates place-based education, primary source exploration, and service learning. Students use maps and town charters to track movement and settlement; find early settlers in old burial grounds; learn more about individuals using proprietors’ records, the census, and town histories; and share their learning via a Quest. Quests completed by June 20th will be accessible to everyone in an online collection and in a printed booklet.



Discover early settlement history in Beal Cemetery, Lyme, NH.





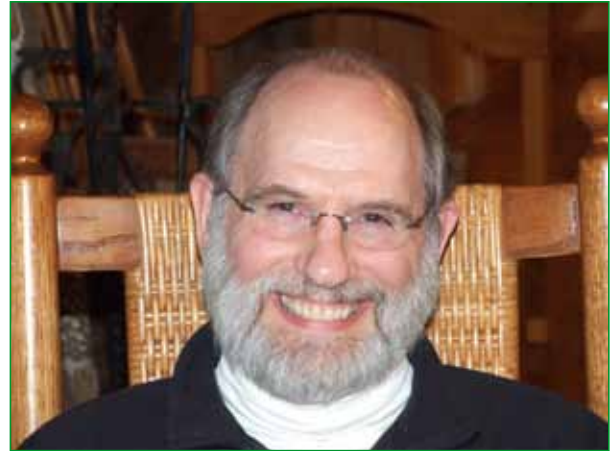
COMMUNITY LEADERS

Engage Towns in Commemoration

Peter Blodgett, Thetford's librarian and a participant in the Leadership Institute, has dedicated time and energy to events that will engage his town in the 250th commemoration of its founding. Peter is an enthusiastic collector of stories and facts about our region. He can tell you that 250 years ago this region was comprised of people with a 91 percent literacy rate, as compared to about 80 percent today. He is fond of inventions with origins in the Upper Valley, including Samuel Morey's steamboat, and he sees great opportunities in the occasion of this anniversary.

“Let's tell the stories of our region's historical personalities, who they were, what they accomplished and why they were important to our sense of place today. Let us also honor our living treasures—people who have been in our community for more than fifty years—and how they have invested their time and money and contributed to making our community what it is today.”

—Peter Blodgett



Peter Blodgett, 2010-2011 Leadership Institute Participant.

You can also be a community leader by getting involved in your town's (or neighboring town's) commemoration plans throughout 2011. Parades, band concerts, fireworks, train rides, and flotillas on the river are all in the works. One town hopes to research and share the stories of 25 important citizens from the 25 decades since 1761. Recognize your town's firsthand history by collecting the stories of the older citizens of your community.

Since 2006, nearly sixty people have experienced Leadership Upper Valley's Leadership Institute which encourages leaders and emerging leaders to share knowledge and partner together. Every year representatives of businesses, colleges, hospitals, museums, and police departments have attended monthly sessions exploring areas vital to being a leader in our region. Consider applying to be part of the Class of 2012 by reading about the Institute and registering online.





EARLY SETTLEMENT *of the Upper Valley*

By Alan Berolzheimer

This year marks the 250th anniversary of the royal charters that established many towns in the Upper Valley in 1761. The occasion offers a great opportunity to refresh our understanding of how this region was settled by Euro-Americans.



View from Pinnacle Hill in Lyme, New Hampshire.

WHO WAS HERE BEFORE?

The Connecticut River Valley of Vermont and New Hampshire was originally inhabited by various groups of Abenaki. The Alnôbak (People of the Dawn) homeland, called Wôbanakik, comprises all of both states as well as parts of northern Massachusetts, southern Québec, and western Maine. It has been the Abenaki homeland for at least 10,000 years. The Abenaki strongly resisted European encroachment into Wôbanakik. They relied on their decentralized social structure and knowledge of the land to avoid contact as they wished, but also to attack settlers who they believed were violating mutual agreements about sharing space in the region.

It only became safe for settlers to migrate up the Connecticut River Valley beyond the Brattleboro area after the British victory in the French and Indian (Seven Years) War in 1760. Fort Dummer (1724) and Fort Number 4 in Charlestown (1744) provided some protection and served as trading posts where Europeans and Native Americans exchanged goods and interacted cooperatively. But the Abenaki effectively kept the Europeans out until their French allies were defeated. New Hampshire Governor Benning Wentworth issued a charter for Bennington in 1749, but expansion up the Connecticut River didn't begin until the end of the imperial wars. Between 1760 and 1764, Wentworth chartered more than 60 towns in the region, and people began to arrive rapidly.



18th century Abenaki couple.





1920's photo of Abenaki women with local corn.

250th Anniversary Middle Grant Towns:

VERMONT

Fairlee, Hartford,
Hartland, Norwich,
Thetford, Windsor

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Canaan, Enfield,
Hanover, Lebanon,
Lyme, Plainfield

WHO CAME AND WHY?

Most of the Euro-Americans who settled the Upper Valley came from Connecticut, though many also came from Massachusetts and other parts of New Hampshire.

The desire for new land was their main motivation for migrating.

Farmlands in the older settled regions of New England were becoming less productive, and as population increased it became more difficult for families to pass along adequate landholdings to their children and grandchildren. Many people sought new opportunities on “unoccupied” land, and the Connecticut River Valley was a prime frontier. The river itself—and the network of Indian trails throughout the watershed—provided a convenient migration route.

CLUES TO OUR HISTORY

Place names are a great clue to the origins of the early settlers. You can easily trace town names from England to southern New England to the Upper Valley. Town histories and early town records indicate where in New England they came from. Many landscape features in the region have Abenaki names (Mascoma, Pompanoosuc), attesting to the culture and history of the people who called this place home long before Europeans arrived.

For many of the 35 years since I settled in the Upper Valley, Vital Communities has played a central role in facilitating our collective capacity to protect and enhance the natural, historical, and human resources that make this area such a fabulous place to live.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Alan Berolzheimer is the Project Historian and Assistant Director for the Flow of History, a history education network providing professional development services for teachers in Vermont and New Hampshire. He is also the Managing Editor of the book publishing program at the Vermont Historical Society.



From River to Rail to Cars!

The 250th anniversary provides an opportunity to reflect on just how dramatically our transportation options have changed over the years.



White River Junction train station provides daily service to and from the Upper Valley.

The first settlers to the Upper Valley came via boat on the Connecticut River, and after arrival they moved around using muscle power—their own and their horses'. By the mid-1800s an extensive canal system moved goods in and out of the northeast. Soon thereafter, Henry David Thoreau was lamenting the sounds of railroads roaring through the Massachusetts countryside.

“A century ago in New England, the approach to snow was quite different. . .

Roads were not plowed out, they were rolled down. A giant roller pulled by horses packed the surface to a fine, smooth glaze. Then the sleighs came out, with their bells . . . Wheels were laid away for the season.

—E.B. White,

The Winter of the Great Snows (1971)

Although Samuel Morey (of Lake Morey fame) invented a turpentine-fueled internal combustion engine in the mid-1820s, it would take over 100 years for automobiles to proclaim their dominance in the world of transportation. Infrastructure changed dramatically as pavement beat out water and steel.

The Upper Valley eventually got two interstates, which happen to intersect close to the formerly important “crossroads” of the Connecticut and White Rivers.

As you commemorate 250 years here, pause to consider the dramatic changes in our transportation system. Would you, like the average resident, have been able to commute more than 20 minutes each way 100 years ago? How far would you have travelled to settle the Upper Valley? What have we lost with the advent of the automobile, and what have we gained?



Consider alternate commuting options at: VitalCommunities.org/SmartCommute





CAN WE HAVE PROSPERITY WITHOUT GROWTH?



Find these and other locally owned businesses online in our *Local Solutions* directory. (And sign up your business!)

Economically, the Upper Valley of 2011 bears little resemblance to the constrained mercantilist exchanges that defined New England economies in 1761. (Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, which first made the case for free market economies, was not published until 1776). No doubt a colonial era resident would marvel at the variety of goods now available in the Upper Valley and be completely baffled by the mid-winter realities of eating fresh fruit from Mexico or watching the Super Bowl on a Chinese-made TV.

The world's goods arrive almost magically at our doorstep. As a result we are using, extracting, buying, making, selling, and trading more than at any point in history—generating wealth and increasing standards of living, albeit not always evenly.

Many recognize that with growth come personal and planetary costs. Yet what is our alternative? Here in the United States, when growth falters—as it has done recently—panic ensues, and governments are pushed to intervene as living standards drop. But to question the value of growth is deemed, in the words of economist Tim Jackson, of the U.K.'s Sustainable Development Commission, an act of lunatics, idealists, and revolutionaries.

Nevertheless, Jackson and many others today challenge us to envision “prosperity without growth”—an economy appropriately checked by ecological and environmental limits, with investment in true wealth and security for our communities and citizens.

Local First Alliance was formed both to educate our neighbors about the multifold benefits of putting dollars to work here in the local economy and to create a space for considered discourse about the state of our economy and what we as stakeholders can do about it. We comprise local business leaders, community organizations, and citizens taking up that challenge. Visit our website or call to find out more about how you can get involved with building a stronger economy and healthier communities with Local First Alliance.



Early Agriculture *in the Valley*



Before white settlers arrived, the Abenaki in northern New England had cultivated vegetables to supplement their diet of hunted, fished, and gathered wild foods. For centuries they took advantage of the fertile soil in the river valleys to plant crops such as the “three sisters”: beans, corn, and squash. European settlers changed the way the land was used, bringing livestock and European plant varieties. They cleared the land for fields and pasture, resulting in great ecological disturbance. As populations grew, so did their impact on the land.

Today, a quick look at an agricultural map of the region shows that most farms are still clustered along river valleys. Realizing that “progress” has often come at great cost, many farmers are developing ways to farm the land more sustainably. They can look back to the first peoples for ways of caring for the land, such as permaculture, companion planting, and use of natural fertilizers. Talk with our local farmers about the ways in which they are good stewards of the land and waterways.

**Valley Food & Farm helps you connect to local farms
through online resources and Flavors of the Valley.**



NOW ON SUNDAY!

10th Annual

FLAVORS OF THE VALLEY

The premier expo for locally grown food in the Upper Connecticut River Valley.

WHEN: Sunday, April 17, 2011
11:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

WHERE: Hartford High School,
Hartford, Vermont

FEES: \$8/person or \$25/family
(free for children 6 or under)

WHAT: Meet those who make our
Upper Valley food system possible;
shop for early spring and year-round
local foods; sample freshly prepared
morsels featuring foods from local
farms.

**Maximize your experience and
minimize waste!**

- ✦ Bring your own plate, cup,
and utensils
- ✦ Don't forget your checkbook
or cash for shopping
- ✦ Reusable shopping bags and
a cooler are encouraged



BUY LOCAL FOOD • SAMPLE TASTY TIDBITS • MEET FARMERS & CHEFS

VITAL COMMUNITIES



SPRING 2011 EVENTS CALENDAR

EAT AT THREE TOMATOES & SUPPORT VITAL COMMUNITIES

WHEN: Wednesday, April 13

Dinner (Lebanon 3 p.m., Burlington/Williston 4 p.m., Rutland 5 p.m.) until closing.

WHERE: Three Tomatoes Trattoria (More information at ThreeTomatoesTrattoria.com)

WHAT: Enjoy a fabulous dinner entrée, and \$1 will be donated to Vital Communities.
Enter a raffle for two round trip Cape Air tickets.

EMAIL: Len@VitalCommunities.org

FLAVORS OF THE VALLEY • NEW TIME AND DAY!

WHEN: Sunday, April 17, 11:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

WHERE: Hartford High School, Hartford, Vermont

WHAT: The Upper Valley's premier local food and farm expo.

EMAIL: Debbie@VitalCommunities.org

VITAL COMMUNITIES OPEN HOUSE & VALLEY QUEST BOXES OUT PARTY

WHEN: Friday, April 29, 4:00 p.m.–6:00 p.m.

WHERE: Vital Communities office, White River Junction, Vermont

WHAT: Everyone is welcome! Enjoy local beverages and snacks while touring the office, meeting the staff, or just hanging out. Valley Quest office will be set up so you can get your boxes ready.

EMAIL: Len@VitalCommunities.org or Laura@VitalCommunities.org

HERRICKS COVE WILDLIFE FESTIVAL

WHEN: Sunday, May 1, 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

WHERE: Rockingham, Vermont

EMAIL: Laura@VitalCommunities.org

QUEST SEASON OPENING EVENT

WHEN: Saturday, May 7, 10:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

WHERE: Montshire Museum, Norwich, Vermont

EMAIL: Laura@VitalCommunities.org