Vermont’s New Roving Archivist Program

James Condos
Vermont Secretary of State

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Background on the Roving Archivist Concept

• Not a new idea: several states have had roving archivists in the past
• Massachusetts and Vermont currently

• Roving archivists have been part-time contractors who “rove” from one historical records repository to another providing archival assistance

• Grants from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), available to State Historical Records Advisory Boards (SHRABs), can be used as start-up funds
Value of Roving Archivist Programs

• Allow state archival programs to focus on their public records responsibilities while also providing support for state historical records (private and public) across the state.

• Provide expertise at a low-cost (one single roving archivist) to multiple historical records repositories, such as local historical societies, museums, public libraries, colleges, etc.

• Streamline archival programs and services offered at a statewide level, which increases opportunities for grant-funded state projects.

BUT, to have a success program....

Roving archivists need sustainable employment and funding
Launching VT’s Roving Archivist Program

- **May 2017:** With Secretary of State (SoS) funding for a part-time temporary coordinator, Vermont State Archivist and the Vermont Historical Records Advisory Board (VHRAB) creates “Vermont Historical Records Program” (VHRP).

- **June 2017:** VHRP Coordinator requests state programming grant from NHPRC and begins dual role as temporary “roving archivist.”

- **June 2018:** VHRP Coordinator becomes a full-time *limited* service position using $40K NHPRC grant and SoS funds remainder of salary and all benefits. Roving increases and VHRP adds other services.

- **June 2019:** NHPRC extends funding for VHRP for two more years.

- **Goal for June 2021:** VHRP Coordinator becomes a full-time *permanent* SoS position and grant funds, including the $40K annual NHPRC state programming grant, are shifted to statewide archival programming services and state historical records-related projects.
Current Vermont Roving Archivist Activities

• One-on-one archival assistance with “lone arrangers” at historical societies, public libraries, colleges, museums, and other Vermont historical records repositories with single staff members
• On-site archival assessments & training sessions (41 locations to date)
• Statewide Workshops (15 to date)
  • Emergency preparedness and response
  • “How to Think Like an Archivist”
  • Grant writing
  • Digitization
VHRP Presentations at Local Conferences

• New England Archivists
• New England Museum Association
• Downtown and Historic Preservation (Vt.)
• Vermont Library Association
• Vermont Municipal Clerks’ and Treasurers’ Association
• Vermont Emergency Preparedness
• League of Local Historical Societies & Museums (Vt.)
VHRP Coordinator is MORE than a Roving Archivist

VHRP Coordinator also serves as the external liaison for the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (VSARA) and actively partners with:

• Vermont Historical Society
• Vermont Department of Libraries
• Vermont Arts Council
• Vermont Emergency Management
• University of Vermont
• Vermont Archives Network
• Vermont Suffrage Centennial Alliance
• Vermont Division for Historic Preservation
• ...and many others
And, thanks to VHRP...

- Statewide capacity for archival assistance, including emergency preparedness, now exists in Vermont:
  - Vermont Arts & Culture Disaster and Resilience Network (VACDARN)
  - New Collections Care and Conservation Alliance (CCCA)
  - Contingency contracts with disaster recovery vendors *(in collaboration with State of Vermont Procurement Office)*

- Statewide Grant-Funded Records Projects with Other Funders
  - Institute of Museum and Library Services
  - Vermont Community Foundation
  - Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership
  - Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
  - Lyrasis
For more specific information:

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