



# UVM HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM  
HISTORY DEPARTMENT - WHEELER HOUSE - BURLINGTON, VERMONT

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## ROKEBY MUSEUM RECOGNITION EVENT

BY BARBARA BOSWORTH



A major success story of the University of Vermont Historic Preservation Program was celebrated when students, faculty, and members of the larger Vermont preservation community gathered at Rokeby Museum in Ferrisburgh on April 27. Home to the Robinson family from 1793 to 1961, the farm complex is a National Historic Landmark because of the family's well-documented work for the Abolitionist movement before the Civil War.

Before touring the site, the students and their professors Thomas Visser and Robert McCullough had lunch with the Rokeby staff. Jane Williamson, the museum's director (a 1993 graduate of the UVM preservation program), discussed the process of gaining National Historic Landmark designation for the museum. Extensive archives make the Rokeby one of the country's best-documented historic sites related to the Underground Railroad and the Abolitionist movement, and the farmhouse still contains the Robinson family's possessions.

Members of Rokeby's board of directors, employees, supporters, and volunteers later joined the UVM group for an event looking back at 30 years of partnership between the museum and the university. Professor Visser called the

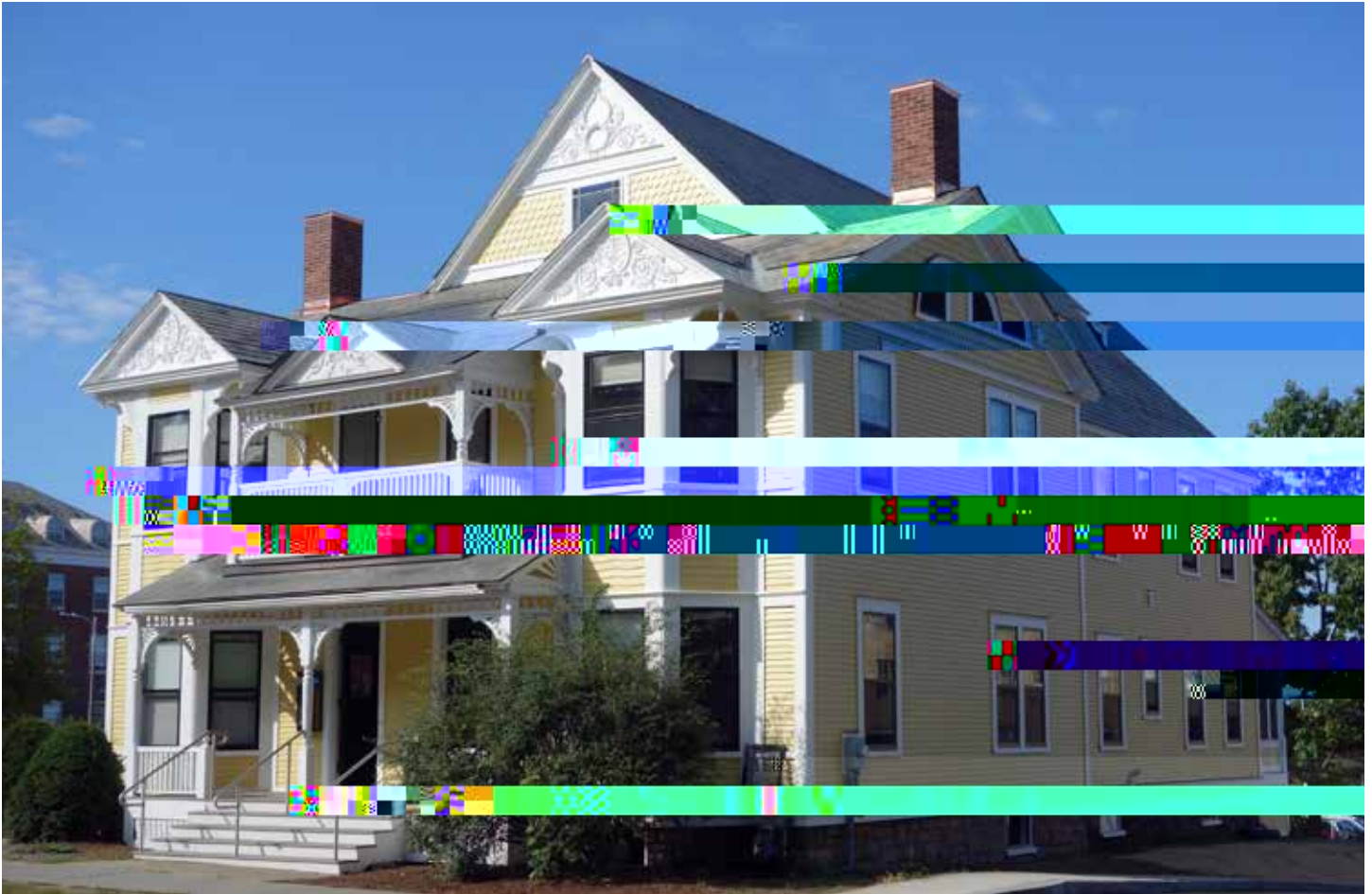
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## GREETINGS FROM WHEELER HOUSE

Welcome to the 2016 edition of the UVM Historic Preservation Program Newsletter.

With this year marking the fiftieth anniversary of the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act by the United States Congress, it seems only suitable to reflect a bit on the history of preservation in America. But as we celebrate the anniversary of the collective efforts that established this important legislative milestone, let us not forget one profoundly influential American-Canadian preservation leader born a century ago in 1916, the late Jane Jacobs.

# NICHOLSON HOUSE RESTORATION RESEARCH



*Nicholson House after restoration*

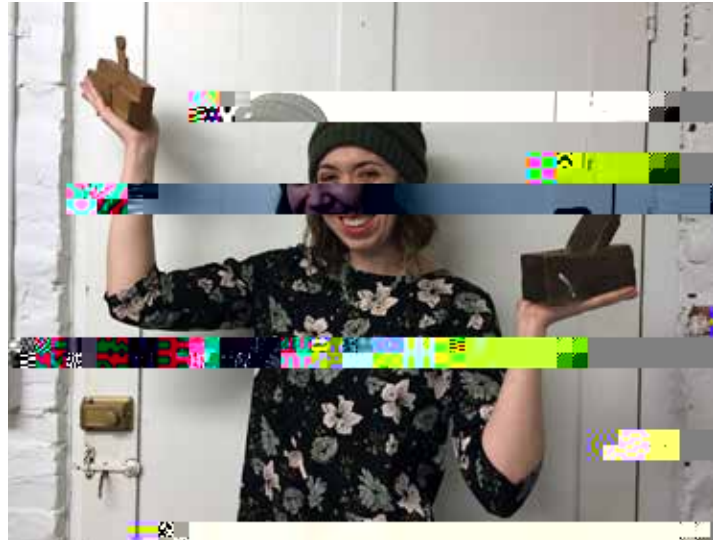
Long covered with white aluminum siding, the exterior of the historic Nicholson House on the University of Vermont campus has been restored to its historic colors with research assistance by UVM historic preservation students and faculty. At the request of the UVM Physical Plant, students in Professor Visser's Architectural Conservation I course sampled accessible exterior surfaces as a class project. By examining numerous cross-sections of paint samples under digital and UV microscopes in the UVM Historic Preservation Lab, they determined that the base coat of paint on the clapboards was originally a yellowish ivory, trim and porch

elements were white, and window sashes were black. Physical and photographic evidence suggested that these colors were applied after the original circa 1809 Federal-style house had been greatly expanded in the 1890s with new porches, balconies, bay windows, and a large rear addition. With approval of the color scheme by the UVM administration, contractors working with UVM Physical Plant and Smith Alvarez Sienkiewicz Architects removed the old aluminum siding, replaced damaged clapboards, installed a new ADA access ramp, and repainted Nicholson House with its historic colors during the summer of 2016.

William Grenier (above) interned in summer 2016 with the Western Center for Historic Preservation (WCHP) in Moose, Wyoming. His primary responsibility was to work as a craftsman with the WCHP preservation field crew. The



Liz King (above) spent her summer interning with Greater Portland Landmarks in Portland, Maine. Her primary responsibility was conducting an updated survey of the Oakdale suburb, which developed between 1880 and 1930 and features a broad range of architectural styles. 367 buildings, 251 garages, and 16 barns were documented by Liz and a second intern over ten weeks. In addition, she worked on nominations for Landmarks' 2016 Preservation Awards program and accompanied the advocacy director on several easement inspections, helping to document maintenance issues through notes and photography. Overall, her internship was a great opportunity to learn in-depth about preservation in another New England city and to get a feel for the day-to-day operations of a non-profit organization.



Jessie McNabb (above) interned at Shelburne Museum in Shelburne, Vermont. Shelburne Museum has 39 exhibition buildings, the majority of which are historic and were moved to the site by its founder, Electra Havemeyer Webb, to house her extensive folk art collection. The original vision for the museum is captured by Electra's description of it as a "collection of collections." This includes an inventory of antique tools that are not currently on exhibit due to lack of documentation and vision for interpretation. Jessie's main project was to research and begin documentation for approximately 600 wooden planes that are part of this collection. This included reconciliation of prior documentation; evaluation and identification of plane type, age, maker, and condition for the museum's database; and numbering and storage for each plane. As Shelburne Museum often relies on volunteers and the tool inventory is a long-term endeavor, Jessie created a "plane guide" to assist non-experts in identifying basic plane form and function to continue documentation of Shelburne's tools.



For his summer internship Dan Rhode (left) worked for the Montana Preservation Alliance documenting one-room schoolhouses in rural Montana. This task had him traveling to remote corners of the state to document these historic buildings and sites. He also performed historic masonry work and volunteered with the National Park Service to mothball buildings in Glacier National Park. One of the most surprising moments of his summer was when he spoke before the Missoula City Council to argue for the preservation of an important building in the downtown district. Working with a preservation non-profit has encouraged him to see the role historic preservation can serve in all communities, large and small.

# HISTORIC HARRISVILLE & BELLOWS FALLS FIELD TRIP

BY AUSTIN WHITE


On Saturday, October 8, Professor Robert McCullough's "History of American Architecture" class trekked bright and early to visit three case studies of preservation. The groggy-yet-eager students piled into the van full of coffee, snacks, and banter, eagerly awaiting the treasures that they were about to experience.

The Rockingham Meeting House, a late-Georgian building constructed between 1787 and 1801, is Vermont's oldest extant public building, and one of a few New England meetinghouses whose condition has remained virtually unchanged. Its character-defining features include ornate classical detailing, box pews, gunstock posts, and an original soundboard above the pulpit. The adjacent burial ground contains fantastic examples of folk art slate gravestones, a burial vault, and a shed housing an 1880s hearse.

Just up the road is the Bellows Falls Downtown Historic District, now serving as a model for reuse and redevelopment. Bellows Falls is in the midst of a renaissance by taking advantage of its varied architectural and cultural resources, specifically on Canal Street. Blocks have been (and continue to be) restored and repainted, and cafes, art galleries, and thrift boutiques have set up shop. Art studios occupy space

former warehouses, and local artists have made their mark with funky paintings on boarded windows, stenciling, and an apartment building accented in bright purple, pink, and green.

The final stop was Historic Harrisville, a mid-19th-century mill village located east of Keene, New Hampshire. Founded as a textile complex shortly before the Civil War, Harrisville is an unusually well-preserved New England mill village. It was a working industrial center until 1970, when its owners turned the business into a non-profit dedicated to maintain the historic mill and other village buildings. Its most prominent feature is Cheshire Mills, a large, beautiful p~ NZE



museum and the UVM program “partners in preservation.” He gave a visual presentation “in recognition of the Rokeby Museum’s outstanding accomplishments in historic preservation, conservation research, and heritage education.” Research and technical assistance projects by UVM faculty and students have contributed to the site’s preservation over the past three decades.


Board member Dean Leary, former director Karen Peterson, former Vermont State Historic Preservation Officer Eric Gilbertson, and others reflected on the museum’s



**HISTORIC NEW ENGLAND FIELD SCHOOL**

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On September 12, 2016, the UVM Historic Preservation Program welcomed Catherine LaVoie, chief of the Historic American Building Survey (HABS), who came to speak with UVM students at Wheeler House and at Rokeby Museum. Catherine discussed the history of the HABS program and its contributions to the field of preservation, as well as its relevance today. HABS was established in 1933 as a unique agreement between the public entities

*Left to right: William Grenier, Ben Haley, Dan Rhode, Liz King, Professor Thomas Visser, Jessie McNabb, and Julia Grey on a field trip at Shelburne Museum*

Barbara Bosworth grew up in Bristol, Rhode Island, and graduated from the University of Texas in San Antonio with a B.A. in English. Before entering the historic preservation program, she worked for newspapers as a reporter, for museums and non-profits, and was a mural painter. Barbara interned at Lake Champlain Maritime Museum in the nautical archaeology conservation lab in 2015. This past summer she received a grant to participate in Vanishing Treasures Program preservation workshops at the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

William Grenier was born in Connecticut. He later moved to Baltimore to attend the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA), where he majored in photography. While in Baltimore, his lifelong curiosity for history began to develop into a professional career. William first worked as a technician restoring historic masonry structures. He then became a carpenter, contracted to work on historic buildings, structures, and sites. Unexpectedly, William's work began to involve designing, advocating for, and planning the adaptive renewal of historic industrial and community spaces within

Baltimore. A naturally inquisitive person, William had a passionate, unquenched desire to expand his knowledge in the field of historic preservation, which led him to enroll in the UVM Historic Preservation Program. William is unsure where he will land after graduation, but he hopes to be involved in construction, planning, and advocacy projects.

Julia Grey is from northern Delaware, and completed her undergraduate degree in cultural anthropology from the University of Richmond. In between college and graduate school, she worked both in the corporate and non-profit sectors. Her work with New Americans and traditional

**B**en Haley grew up in South Hadley, Massachusetts. He received a B.A. in history from Bates College in 2006 and an M.A. in modern history from the University of Durham, England, in 2008. While in college he interned with two historical societies in western Massachusetts: the Connecticut Valley Historical Museum in Springfield and Historic Northampton. During the summer before beginning the M.A. program in England, he was a museum assistant at the Porter-Phelps-Huntington Museum in Hadley, Massachusetts. Upon completing his first graduate degree, Ben moved to New York, where he worked for World Monuments Fund (WMF), an international non-profit historic preservation organization. He spent seven years working in communications, and for his last five years he was head of the department, in charge of publicizing the organization's work around the globe and copyediting all of the organization's publications, among other duties. Working at WMF exposed him to the world of historic preservation in the US and around the world, and after seven years in New York, decided to pursue a degree in the field. Upon graduation from UVM, Ben hopes to stay in the northeast and wonders whether to pursue his love of architectural history with a Ph.D. or to find a job.

**L**iz King grew up in a historic district in Haverhill, Massachusetts. Her interest in preservation started when her family constructed a sensitive addition to their 1750s Cape home, and was piqued further when a major part of the nearby Danvers State Hospital was demolished for apartments. Liz graduated in 2011 from Massachusetts College of Art and Design with a B.F.A. in graphic design and has found her design background complements her preservation education well. During the spring semester, she researched shotgun house neighborhoods in Louisville and Lexington, Kentucky, and the efforts to reinvest in those buildings and communities. After graduation, she hopes to work in New England in either the non-profit or public sector.

**J**essie McNabb grew up in Glenside, Pennsylvania. She received a B.A. in philosophy from Temple University in Philadelphia in 2010, with a focus on existentialism. While in college she worked as a writing tutor and as a social work research assistant. After graduating Jessie worked for the Yellow Pages, the excruciating boredom of which caused her to flee to Ireland in 2012 to work on organic farms and in horse stables. Jessie returned to the Philadelphia area in 2013 and soon after moved to Burlington to work for UVM as a research assistant in the psychiatry department. She began taking historic preservation classes and decided to pursue the degree. After graduation Jessie plans to move to Philadelphia, where hopefully historic preservation jobs are a plenty.

**D**an Rhode grew up in Missoula, Montana, and spent summers visiting old ghost towns and exploring abandoned buildings. He graduated from Southern Oregon University in 2007 with a B.S. in anthropology and began work as an archaeologist. He spent five seasons on the resource management staff at Zion National Park, where he was exposed to historic preservation first-hand and worked on crews helping to preserve historic and prehistoric structures. After further work as an archaeologist for other national parks and national forests he decided to go back to school to pursue his professional interest in historic preservation. He hopes to take the knowledge he learns at UVM and apply it to the ever-expanding role that preservation is playing out West.




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revival style by the famed New York City architecture firm of McKim, Mead, and White, Ira Allen Chapel has hosted commencements, lectures, and other campus events for nearly 90 years.

Gabrielle Fernandez's project is on the 1926 Central Fire Station. Its progressive design incorporated the latest firefighting technology and when completed was the most advanced firefighting structure in Burlington. This building was, for the 1920s, a remarkable achievement, one that fostered pride among city residents.

Emma Haggerty is researching Memorial Auditorium on the corner of South Union and Main streets, designed in 1926 by Frank L. Austin. Memorial Auditorium has hosted numerous performances, sporting events, and conventions, bringing people from all over New England through its doors. Long-deferred maintenance on the building leaves its future uncertain.

Adrienne Dickerson is researching Burlington City Hall. Built in 1928, a year before the stock market crash, construction of the new city hall was a point of substantial contention at the time. Plagued by opposition from those wishing to

preserve the existing city hall building and spurred on by the community's need for a larger facility more able to suit the needs of Burlington, the turbulent story of the new city hall mirrored that of the growing community it represented.

Jake Collins is researching the Burlington Middle School, now known as Edmunds Elementary School. Constructed in a time when the need to support a family drew students to Vermont's burgeoning industry, the middle school aimed

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