



# Montpelier Historical Society

## Stories Of Montpelier Film Now Available

The Montpelier Historical Society is pleased to announce that DVD copies of *Stories Of Montpelier*, a short documentary film depicting life in the city over the first half of the 20th century, can now be purchased for \$15. The society is in the process of working with area merchants to make the film more widely available

The film is the result of a collaboration between editor/producer Vince Franke of Peregrine Productions in Waterbury, and Senator Bill Doyle and the students in his Vermont History and Govern-

ment class at Johnson State College.

Vintage photographs of the city and its people are interspersed with on-camera interviews with life-long residents of Montpelier, who recount special memories from their childhood growing up in our state capital.

Also, due to popular demand, a second screening of the film will take place on **Wednesday, March 4 at 7:00 pm** at the **Kellogg-Hubbard Library.**



## Annual Membership Drive: Help Our Society Thrive!

As the new year gets underway, the Montpelier Historical Society is launching this newsletter along with our annual membership drive. We are very grateful for your membership during this past year, and we hope that we can count on your continued support and

engagement. Some highlights of our activities are noted here, and we hope to offer a number of programs for the community in the coming year. The membership renewal form is on page 3. Please note that this year we are making an effort to incorporate email addresses wherever

possible. As always, new members are welcome, so please feel free to distribute copies of the membership form to anyone who may be interested in joining the Society.

### Montpelier Historical Society Board of Directors

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# Model State House: A Parade Favorite Once More

One of the major activities of the Montpelier Historical Society over the past several years has been to ensure the restoration and secure housing for the “Model State House”, a much loved icon of Montpelier’s historical landscape. Many current residents of Montpelier may remember seeing this scale replica of the state capitol building in Toy Town on Lower State Street, where it was housed for several decades from the 1930s to the 1970s, but many might not be aware of the history of the model, which reaches back to an event in 1929 that represented a significant moment in Vermont’s history.



In the summer of 1929, the neighboring states of Vermont and New York began planning a combined celebration for an historic event: the Champlain Bridge, linking Addison, Vermont with Crown Point, New York for the first time, was nearly completed. Cities and towns from both states began preparations for the dedication of the bridge, which would include speeches by prominent politicians and an elaborate parade of decorated floats. In Montpelier, a group of citizens began planning their city’s part in the parade, and soon made the decision to build a wooden replica of the State House. A.G. Baird of Montpelier, a well-known local builder, became the general contractor for the project, and he employed a group of talented local carpenters to build the replica to scale.

The dedication of the Champlain Bridge took place in August, 1929. Close to 40,000 people turned out to see the parade, and the ceremony was attended by Governors John Weeks of Vermont and Franklin Delano Roosevelt of New York. The two symbolically clasped hands in the middle of the bridge. A young man from Ferrisburg filmed it all with his 16mm camera, and so captured rare footage of Franklin D. Roosevelt standing during the ribbon-cutting ceremony. This film has been preserved and is now part of the archives of the State of Vermont.

After leaving Toy Town, the Model State House found its way to many locations and many owners, but after a long odyssey, and years of weather-related damage, the replica has been restored with the help of the local Kiwanis and ownership is now with the Montpelier Historical Society. Since its latest restoration, it has appeared at the Vermont History Expo at the Tunbridge Fairgrounds, and in several parades around Vermont, including last summer’s Fourth of July parade in Montpelier.

## Fun Facts: Model State House Statistics

The Model State House is:

- ◆ Over 15 feet long
- ◆ 8 feet wide
- ◆ 12 feet high
- ◆ Weighs 2 thousand pounds

The Model State House is not an exact likeness of the real building:

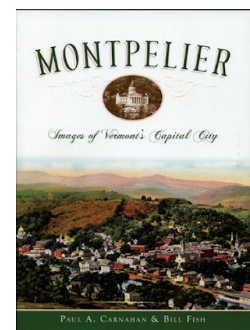
- ◆ The Greek revival portico on the front of the State House appears on both sides of the replica, so that it can be viewed from either side of the road in a parade.
- ◆ The window trims and roof cornices are not faithfully reproduced because such a reproduction would have required custom fabrication that was not possible with the stock mouldings available.
- ◆ The cupola on the replica has only eight window bays, while the real building has twelve

## Historical Society Director Co-Authors Book

For a delicious dip into the pictorial history of our city, be sure to pick up a copy of *Montpelier: Images of Vermont’s Capital City*. This delightful paperback is co-authored by Montpelier Historical Society Director Bill Fish and Vermont Historical Society Librarian Paul A. Carnahan. It is a delightful compilation of photos and narrative, depicting the growth of Montpelier in chapters related to its civic, economic and religious development, as well as rarely seen illustrations of Dewey Day celebrations and the almost-forgotten Blanchard Opera House. The book is available at local stores, at the Vermont Historical Society store at the Pavilion, and at Amazon.com.

*On the main pass through the Green Mountains [Montpelier] is cupped in wooded hills and lines the banks of peaceful streams.*

- WPA Guide to Vermont, 1936



# Wanted: Vermont Monsters (Champ Need Not Apply)

Celebrated Vermont author Joe Citro is working on a new book, and he needs our help.

As a self-described chronicler of the “just plain weird”, Citro has entertained legions of fans with his tales of ghosts, mysteries, curses, and general historical oddities found throughout his native Vermont. The Montpelier Historical Society recently received a message from Citro requesting assistance with the research for a new book he is planning on Vermont Monsters, and he isn’t interested in the usual suspects. As he noted in his message, “I’m looking for critters more obscure than Champ, Memphre, or Bigfoot.”

So far, his research appears to have yielded a few interesting examples. “I have the story of a 300-pound leech supposedly living in a pond in Sharon. And a ‘swamp monster’ said to hang out in St. George.”

Citro clarifies that he’s not looking for polished narratives. “I’m not asking you to take the time to write the story, just alert me to what might be hiding in your local woods, sky and lakes. Or possibly suggest folklorist[s] or yarn spinner[s] I might talk to. These might be the sorts of tales you heard when you were a kid sitting around the campfire.”

If you’ve got a legend or scary story to pass along,, be in touch with Joe at [jacitro@burlingtontelecom.net](mailto:jacitro@burlingtontelecom.net)



## Montpelier Historical Society

### 2009 Membership Form

Join or Renew Your Membership Today!

Please send in this form (or a copy of it) with your dues payment

Membership Dues = \$10.00

Please mail payment to:  
Montpelier Historical Society

P.O. Box 54

Montpelier, VT 05602

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank You For Your Support!



## WINTER NEWSLETTER

Montpelier Historical Society  
P. O. Box 54  
Montpelier, VT 05602

Email: [October.28@comcast.net](mailto:October.28@comcast.net)

*The Montpelier Historical Society is organized for charitable and educational purposes including, but not limited to, the acquisition, exhibition and preservation of artifacts including heirlooms, mementos, books and manuscripts of regional history, more specifically:*

- 1.) to collect and preserve evidence of the history of Central Washington County, with particular attention to Montpelier;*
- 2.) to provide leadership in local history education and opportunities for local research;*
- 3.) to serve as a resource for local historical concerns; and*
- 4.) to provide a forum for public study and discussion of current issues which have a bearing on the history of the City and the region.*

## Share Your Heritage Contribute to the Montpelier Historical Society Collection

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The Montpelier Historical Society exists, in part, to create a home for historical materials that focus on the city's rich heritage. Montpelier residents Alan and Joanne Blakeman are generously contributing their time to receive items into our collection and catalogue them.

If you have mementos, documents, photos or artifacts that you would like to contribute to the Society's collection, please be in touch with them either through the Montpelier Historical Society at P.O. Box 54, Montpelier, VT 05602, or by email at **[october.28@comcast.net](mailto:october.28@comcast.net)**

If you have photographs that you would prefer not to part with, the Society has a scanner, and we would be happy to create an electronic copy for the collection and return the original to you. At this time, we are particularly interested in gathering photographs depicting interior scenes of some of the historic homes and public buildings in Montpelier.

