



# THE VERMONT SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL CELEBRATION TOOLKIT

The Vermont Historical Society, Vermont Department of Tourism & Marketing, Vermont League of Cities and Towns, Vermont Division for Historic Preservation and other partners want to assure that your town will have a memorable and meaningful 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration.

Town clerks, local historical societies, libraries, schools and civic organizations can join together for exciting and enjoyable events.

This toolkit is designed to offer ideas and assistance in creating a commemoration that will be a success.



Between 1749 and 1764, Bennington Wentworth, the First Royal Governor of New Hampshire, issued 129 township charters in present-day Vermont. Most were issued during the years 1761-1764, with over half of those issued during 1761. On July 20, 1764, King George III issued an Order-in-Council declaring the Connecticut River as the boundary between the colonies of New York and New Hampshire. The order ended Wentworth's grants in Vermont's and led to disputes between New York and the people in these areas over the validity of Wentworth's charters. Residents in the "Grants" defended their ownership of these lands, sometimes violently, against the claims of New Yorkers. One such group, formed in the Bennington area, became known as the Green Mountain Boys, whose leadership included Ethan Allen. Eventually the matter was settled and the "Yorkers" ceased their claims upon the "Grants."

During the next four years, the following towns will observe the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the charters issued by Bennington Wentworth:

## 1761

*Addison · Andover · Arlington · Barnard · Bennington · Brandon · Bridgewater ·  
Bridport · Brunswick · Castleton · Cavandish · Chester · Clarendon  
· Cornwall · Danby · Dorset · Fairlee · Ferdinand · Glastenbury ·  
Granby · Guilford · Guildhall · Hartford · Hartland · Killington · Leicester ·  
Ludlow · Maidstone · Manchester · Marlboro · Middlebury · Mount  
Tabor · New Haven · Norwich · Panton · Pawlet · Peru · Pittsford ·  
Plymouth · Pomfret · Poultney · Reading · Rupert · Rutland ·  
Salisbury · Sandgate · Shaftsbury · Sharon · Sherburne · Shoreham  
· Shrewsbury · Somerset · Springfield · Stockbridge · Strafford ·  
Stratton · Sunderland · Thetford · Tinmouth · Tunbridge ·  
Wallingford · Weathersfield · Wells · Weybridge · Windhall ·  
Windsor · Woodstock*

## 1762

*Averill · Bloomfield · Bristol · Charlotte · Ferrisburgh · Hinesburg  
· Lemington · Lewis · Monkton*

## 1763

*Barnet · Berlin · Bolton · Burlington - Colchester · Duxbury · Essex · Fairfax · Fairfield -  
Georgia · Highgate · Huntington · Jericho · Lunenburg · Middlesex · Milton · Moretown ·  
Newbury · Orwell · Peacham · Ryegate · Shelburne · Sheldon · St. Albans · St. George · Sudbury ·  
Stowe · Swanton · Topsham · Townshend · Underhill · Waterbury · Westford · Whiting · Williston  
Worcester*

**1764**

*Corinth · Hubbardton*



## OVER A DOZEN GREAT IDEAS

*To assist you in planning your celebration, we offer these ideas,  
with suggestions of organizations that might offer assistance:*

- Research all that is known about your town's early history – perhaps the first hundred years. Sponsor a program with your local library to share this information. Your local historical society and the library of the Vermont Historical Society can help you with your research. ([www.vermonthistory.org](http://www.vermonthistory.org))
- Commission a work of art that expresses something important about the history and culture of your town. The Vermont Arts Council or a local art center can be of assistance. ([www.vermontartscouncil.org](http://www.vermontartscouncil.org))
- Develop an historic walking tour of your town. It might focus upon the founding of your town or a particular aspect of its history. Several examples of walking tours in Central Vermont can be found at [www.central-vt.com/visit/walktour](http://www.central-vt.com/visit/walktour). Your local historical society and the library of the Vermont Historical Society can help you with your research. ([www.vermonthistory.org](http://www.vermonthistory.org))
- Work with your local librarian to choose a book relating to your town that can be the focal point for a town-wide reading and discussion program. The Vermont Humanities Council offers a catalog of reading and discussion programs that might engage your community. ([www.vermonthumanities.org](http://www.vermonthumanities.org))
- Handcraft an anniversary-themed quilt square for the Vermont League of Cities and Towns' *Town Fair Quilt Project*. With the theme "Cities and Towns—Working Together, Making a Difference," the quilt includes squares from over sixty Vermont towns. Will yours be next? ([www.vlct.org](http://www.vlct.org))

- Adopt an archeology site. Study historic maps of your town to determine what buildings and structures existed at one time but no longer exist today. Conduct research on those sites and document your findings. The Vermont Division for Historic Preservation can assist you with this and other archeology projects. ([www.historicvermont.org](http://www.historicvermont.org))
- Create a flyer, pamphlet or book that tells the story of your town's founding and subsequent history, or update an existing published history. Your local historical society and the library of the Vermont Historical Society can help you with your research. ([www.vermonthistory.org](http://www.vermonthistory.org))
- Hire a composer to write a celebratory composition for your town's anniversary and have it performed at a commemorative event. The Consortium of Vermont Composers can help you find the right person for your town. ([www.vermontcomposers.com](http://www.vermontcomposers.com))
- Preserve or restore an important building or landmark in your town. Caring for a monument or public building provides a way for your 250<sup>th</sup> commemoration to leave something important to the future. The Vermont Division for Historic Preservation ([www.historicvermont.org](http://www.historicvermont.org)) and the Preservation Trust of Vermont ([www.ptvermont.org](http://www.ptvermont.org)) can assist you.
- Create an exhibit about the founding of your town that can travel to schools, businesses and public buildings in your town. Your local historical society and the library of the Vermont Historical Society can help you with your research and may have photographs, maps and other information that can be used in your exhibit. ([www.vermonthistory.org](http://www.vermonthistory.org))
- Nominate an important building or district in your town to the National Register of Historic Districts or conduct a survey of the historic properties in your town. This is a great way to recognize the architectural heritage of your town, while also helping to preserve it. The Vermont Division for Historic Preservation can offer guidance for these projects. ([www.historicvermont.org](http://www.historicvermont.org))
- Have a poet write a poem about your town. The Poetry Society of Vermont may be able to help you identify the right poet for your town. ([www.poetrysocietyofvermont.org](http://www.poetrysocietyofvermont.org))
- Join with other towns celebrating their 250<sup>th</sup> in your region to create bicycle or driving tours. Vermont Bicycle Tours can help you plan your bike tour ([www.vbt.com](http://www.vbt.com))

- Develop a video documentary of the history of your town. Your local historical society and the library of the Vermont Historical Society can help you with your research. ([www.vermonthistory.org](http://www.vermonthistory.org)).
- Create a time capsule that will be opened in 50 or 100 years.
- Invite your local newspaper to do a special supplement with articles and images from your town's past.

### Marketing Assistance from the Vermont Dept. of Tourism & Marketing

- Plan early and tell the Vermont Department of Tourism & Marketing what you are doing. It may be that travel writers will be interested in including your events. In some cases, deadlines are as much as 1 year ahead – it is never too early to plan! It's never too late, either, when it comes to on-line publications. Contact Catherine Brooks, Cultural Heritage Tourism Coordinator, with your information. [Catherine.brooks@state.vt.us](mailto:Catherine.brooks@state.vt.us) or (802)828-3289.
- Post your events, programs, and exhibits on Vermont's tourism website, [www.VermontVacation.com](http://www.VermontVacation.com). This website features the Vermont Travel Planner– the state's most comprehensive listing of lodging, dining, attractions, recreation, shopping and calendar of events. In the past year, The Travel Planner received an average of 209,000 page views per month. Additionally, VDTM distributes events posted on the Vermont Travel Planner Calendar of Events to more than 50 other websites, magazines, newspapers, radio and television stations in Vermont and throughout the Northeast. To post your events, visit <http://www.vermontbusinessregistry.com/EventsWelcome.aspx>
- Don't forget your local attractions, cultural venues, and dining and lodging businesses. Recent tourism research tells us that many Vermont visitors are coming from the convenient drive-time region for short stays, and that they are looking for bargains. In support of Semiquincentennial events, urge local businesses to partner with lodging businesses to offer lodging packages that can be marketed on VermontVacation.com. For package ideas, see what your peers are doing at <http://www.vermontvacation.com/TravelPlanner.aspx>, or contact Christiane Skinner at [Christiane.skinner@state.vt.us](mailto:Christiane.skinner@state.vt.us) or (802)828-5905.
- For assistance with press – including a Vermont Press list with contact information, and tips on building a press packet – visit [http://www.vermontpartners.org/htm/marketingvt\\_pr.asp](http://www.vermontpartners.org/htm/marketingvt_pr.asp).