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*Trustees: Theo Avent, David Byam, Carol Hansen, Marc Kimball, Betty Kinsman, Walter Martone*

## November/December 2024 Newsletter

**WE ARE OPEN ON SATURDAYS, AT OUR USUAL TIME, 1 - 4 PM. No admission charge.**  
**Closed Nov. 30; Dec. 21; Dec. 29 and Jan. 4 for the holiday weekends**

### Recent Events at the Society:

The annual meeting was held on October 19<sup>th</sup>. A business meeting was held to report on the activities of this past year, to elect members to the Board of Trustees, and to approve a budget for 2025 (after hearing an update on the 2024 budget).

Following the business meeting, Hugh Putnam presented a program based on his booklet "Women War Workers in World War 1 and Related Activities". We had a nice turnout, many who came to say hello to Hugh and Bunni who now live in Colchester, Vt.

### Coming events:

January 18, 2025 at 2:00 pm: Cori Santagate and Myric Mcbain will present "Vermonters on LuZon during World War II". It's the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Many of you will remember them from past programs, always a hit.

February 15, at 2:00 pm: We are working on a presentation about the Springfield section of the Crown Point Road with the CPR Association. We've worked closely with them as they came to us to research and plan a tour that happened in August. They'll talk about that and about a historic marker that was taken down many years ago. Efforts to have it put up again are beginning.

March 15: We will host a Quilt Exhibit for several weeks beginning mid-March. Members and Friends: If you have a quilt of any size that you'd be willing to loan us, please contact our volunteer, Linda Rousse at 802-885-5695. She is coordinating this event. We have limited space so we may not be able to accept all quilts but please be in touch. We'd love to hear from you.

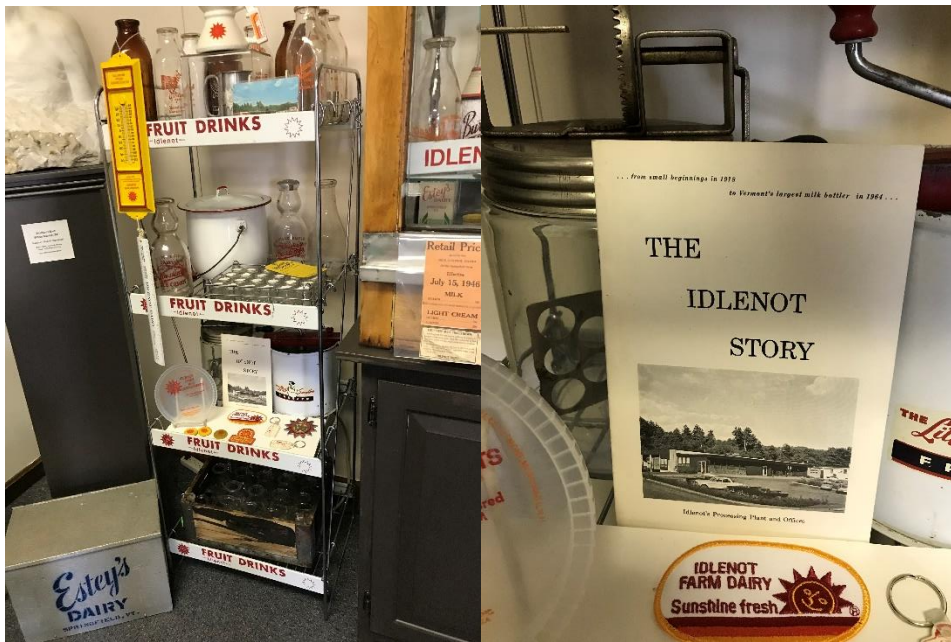
### Visit us any Saturday afternoon – why?

We have available many resources that you can use to learn your family history. We have Ancestry.com and newspapers.com and you are welcome to do research. We have many genealogy resources that you can use for research. We have Springfield High School Year Books from 1900 to some of the current years and you are welcome to look through them. We also have several history books available to you. We also have copies of the Springfield Reporters from 1900 – the present and an obituary index from 1913 through today if you want look up someone's obituary.

Come check it out. We are open Saturdays 1-4 pm (except for holidays).

Admission is free and you'll enjoy the exhibits, too.

One of our Exhibits:



Thanks to Joe Trombly and Linda Rouse for enhancing our Dairy Companies exhibit. There's even more if you stop by to view them.

## A Bit of History of Springfield Thanks to Bunni Putnam for the photos and the story

### The Randel/Leland/Ellis Block

Smith K. Randel built the two-story Randel building in 1867. Charles A. Leland came to Springfield in 1882 and purchased the stock of the Cobb & Darby Store. He continued the grocery and dry goods business and subsequently bought the building. At a later date, he added a third story to the building (if you look closely, you can see where the third floor was added). He used the upper floors as family living quarters.

It became known as the Leland Block. A closer look at the two pictures you can see that the two-story Leland building was taller than the pitched-roof, three-story Chase Building next door. Around 1904 the Chase Building, renamed the Lincoln Block, became the flat-roofed, four-story building of today.



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In 1917, LaFountain, Woolson & Co bought the building and the grocery and dry goods business from Charles and George Leland. Because the store was on the square next to the Adnabrown Hotel, the purchasers stated they planned to continue operation of the store and to use the upper floors as part of the Adnabrown Hotel, which they also owned. The plan was to connect the two buildings with an overhead passageway. That plan did not materialize and the store operation was then sold to Handy & Brown. The upper floors, where the Leland's had once lived, were subsequently used for various purposes, such as lodge rooms, boarding rooms and the like, but never as part of the hotel operation. On January 3, 1924, the Handy-Brown store was closed when the Sheriff served a collection writ for \$2,000 from a wholesale grocer in Keene.

In January 1931, the first of four movie theaters, The Capitol, opened on the right side of the ground floor of the Leland Block. This theater only lasted six months. Five years later, in August 1936, the Avon Theater opened in the same location and continued until April 1960, then it was closed for four months.

In August 1960, Ray and Eleanor Ellis, from Weathersfield, owners of the Bellows Falls Opera House and the Ludlow theater, bought the building. They would rent out the rooms on the upper floors and the shop space next door and in the basement.

The interior was totally remodeled including a new sound system and, on December 15, 1960, the new, modern Ellis Theater opened. Fortunately, the new theater was untouched by fire, just 15 feet away, on January 1, 1961 which totally destroyed the 72-year-old Adnabrown Hotel. Adna Brown, who was one of Springfield's most prominent citizens, opened "the state's most modern hotel" in August, 1892.

The Leland building was sold again in 2004 and the theater was renamed the Springfield Theater. The building suffered a bad fire in 2008, but it was restored and reopened.

Above information is from "The History of Springfield Vermont, 1885-1961" by Keith Richard Barney and from Mr. Ray Ellis.



## Join Us

Like most volunteer organizations, we are looking for volunteers to become board members, committee members or people who just want to give back a few hours a month. We are an easy-going group and everyone has their job but, needless to say, more hands can always be used. If you have some computer skills, enjoy setting up displays, or could donate one Saturday afternoon every month or two, to greet visitors, or just enjoy working with history, please give us a try. We also need help with things that don't require historical knowledge, like sorting boxes of artifacts, scanning negatives, writing thank you notes, and more. If you are available during a limited season, that's okay. Go South for the winter and can only help in the summer? That's okay.

If you'd like to come to a board meeting to meet us, email us at [sahs@vermontel.net](mailto:sahs@vermontel.net)  
We meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month at 4:00 pm.

Springfield's history is filled with so many interesting people who did amazing things, not only here but moved on to other places to make their mark. It is not just about the machine tool businesses. You'll enjoy learning.

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### *New Member\* or Donation Form*

*\*If you are currently a member, you will receive a renewal reminder in the mail.*

We are working hard to expand and protect Springfield's history, please help us.  
Checks should be made payable to SAHS and can be mailed to the address below:

SPRINGFIELD ART & HISTORICAL SOCIETY, P.O. Box 336, North Springfield, VT 05150

Individual, \$20     Family, \$35     Advocate, \$50     Sponsor, \$100  
 Benefactor, \$250

Amount enclosed is for a Donation or New Membership: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

City: \_\_\_\_\_ ST: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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