



Journal of the Vermont Society of Land Surveyors
Volume 54, Number 2 | Summer 2023

The Cornerpost

Searching for Family (and Property Lines) in the Old Country

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Lessons from Monadnock

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The Cornerpost

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EDITOR

Birgit McCall

ART DIRECTOR

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SUBMITTING MATERIALS

Send any materials to:
Email: birgit@vsls.org
Vermont Society of Land Surveyors
P.O. Box 248
Montpelier, VT 05601

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Have you ever contributed to *The Cornerpost*? Its success depends on all of our members. Please consider making a contribution to an upcoming issue. Send your articles, news and photos to birgit@vsls.org. Everything is welcome that may be of interest to your fellow surveying professionals.



ON THE COVER

Paul Hannan, L.S., sent in this photo of the Cliffs of Moher after a recent trip to Ireland. The cliffs are located on the west coast of Ireland, along the country's famous Wild Atlantic Way. After snapping the photo, Paul noticed the yellow survey marker along the trail. The visit was part of Paul's exploration into his family roots, which you can read more about on page 6.

If you have an interesting photo for the cover of an upcoming issue, please send it to birgit@vsls.org.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

VSLS PRESIDENT
RANDY OTIS, L.S.



“Despite the high cost of inflation, there really has never been a cheaper time to get into GPS, expand your equipment and your education, and encourage the next generation to give surveying a try.”

As hard as it is to believe, summer is almost over and change is in the air. Some of that change has been the cost of everything going up. The dreaded inflation, for the first time, is a real issue for me – not only in my personal life, but also as the president of VSLS. We are committed to keeping the costs down for the membership, and we’ve had many conversations toward that goal, working with the venues that host our seminars, exploring virtual options for some of the continuing education seminars, as well as working with the speakers. So far, we have been able to keep costs marginally better than our neighboring states.

The theme of change that is on my mind this month started as I worked on ordering some supplies for the crew. I honestly haven’t bought one of those big yellow survey umbrellas in years, but they used to be easy enough to find if you were willing to pay the large asking price for them. Despite the power of the internet, I could not find one for sale or in stock anywhere. I kept finding discontinued or backordered ones, at the few places that still showed it at all. I decided to google other items from early in my career, a Suunto compass, a square pop level with built in 90-degree prism function, and a flat scale – all to no avail. It seems these things are going the way of my old plumb bob, or dare I say, field book.

Yet with the change that I was surprised to see, there was hope: new cheaper waterproof tablets, compass apps, and even a tribrach of questionable quality for less than \$70, brand new. While the old names I trust and once depended on are now shockingly expensive

thanks to inflation, the global economy was offering up a reflectorless total station for a mere \$2,100 brand new, which was unheard of 10 years ago. Perhaps a discount brand might take a crack at making a cheap robotic total station to lower the barriers to starting your own survey business.

Change is definitely hard, change is feared, and the change I fear is a future without enough surveyors. Yet I am optimistic, as I see the pay rates for all the trades across the board going up, including land surveying. There are options for online schooling, even a master’s degree in the Northeast that didn’t exist when I first got into the old profession of land surveying. Despite the high cost of inflation, there really has never been a cheaper time to get into GPS, expand your equipment and your education, and encourage the next generation to give surveying a try.

As for the society, we have a seminar planned in Killington this year for Friday October 6, and I’m hoping for a good turnout of folks, especially those I haven’t seen in a while. I encourage members to bring non-licensed staff with you. And please bring ideas on how we might make it more appealing for non-licensed surveyors to attend. We will have a business meeting at lunchtime, and I’d love to hear from you either in advance or during the meeting. 🍷

Sincerely,

Randy Otis

VSLS PRESIDENT

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A photograph of a stone wall in a green field under a cloudy sky. The wall is made of large, grey, irregular stones and runs diagonally across the frame. The field is lush green, and the sky is overcast with grey clouds.

Searching for Family (and Property Lines) in the **Old Country**

BY PAUL HANNAN, L.S.

Until I dove into tracing my Irish roots, it never occurred to me how many occupational skills genealogists and surveyors share. Perhaps that's most true in colonial states like Vermont, where our quest for original property descriptions routinely has us cross checking 18th and 19th century vital records to understand an enigmatic deed call for, say "bounded East by my great uncle's farm." But even attention to details and dates required in almost any of our research puzzles bears close kinship to the follow-every-lead nature of genealogical pursuits. Still, my roots-tracing efforts over the last year or so drove the cross-discipline benefits home in spades in an unforeseen manner ... read on!

"Our Irish forebears must have thought they'd died and gone to heaven when they first dipped a plow into even the boniest of Vermont soils. Stone walls are EVERYWHERE in Ireland, and they dwarf ours in height, breadth and length."

In 1972, a few years before I ever cracked a dusty land record tome, I spent a month in Ireland with a college pal, having first briefly queried my near-100-year-old great aunt, Mamie, about her parents' origins on the Emerald Isle. All I recall learning at that point was: "Strokestown, County Roscommon."

Seeking my relatives on that trip half a century ago was a half-hearted endeavor consisting mostly of enquiring in the pubs of Strokestown if anyone knew of any "Hannons." (I recently learned that my grandfather changed the spelling to Hannan, but never got to ask him why.) Several times the answer we got was...cue Irish lilt... "Well, there's Canon Hannon, but he's from Athlone," as if to say Athlone – barely 28 miles away – could not possibly be the source of my family's ancestry. Not much success from those queries, but to our delight, the mere possibility that I might be a lost son of Strokestown was often good for a pint-on-the-house.

Fast forward a few decades and a few acquired research skills later, I picked up the genealogy thread anew. I'm enough of a do-it-yourselfer (and I guess a cheapskate) that, for the most part, I've eschewed paying sources like Ancestry.com to do my work for me. I made an exception to that DIY frugality when I learned that a rather targeted resource existed for County Roscommon called Roscommon Roots. For a modest fee, they take whatever information you can provide about your connections to the County and produce a report after having perused birth, death, marriage, and baptismal records – the latter often being the most fruitful source. Sadly, many records were lost in a June 1922 bombardment and fire in Dublin's Public Records Office related to the long-running Irish struggle for independence, but many remain in local repositories.

From U.S.-based death records, I had learned my great-grandmother's maiden name as well as her parents' names and the fact that they too were from County Roscommon. She was a Farrell, a name considerably more common than Hannon, but fortunately her

father's given name was Garrett – not so common. As a result, Roscommon Roots was able to generate some good detail on my great, great grandfather, specifically where he lived and farmed in the mid-1800s, and there's where the surveying connection really came to the fore.

Between 1853 and 1865, literally every identifiable land parcel in Ireland was surveyed with sufficient detail to create a set of maps known collectively as Griffith's Valuation. In addition to the graphic depiction and alpha-numeric coding of each parcel, a database of who owned what parcel and who leased each parcel was developed. Irish landownership by that time had been concentrated in the hands of relatively few, mostly English, large estate owners. But these estate owners depended on the revenue and work of numerous lessees. Griffith's Valuation is, therefore, a remarkably comprehensive cadastral record of mid-19th century Ireland, and critically, as I subsequently learned, the database is searchable by name and county.

It is impossible to overstate the magnitude of Richard Griffith's undertaking and the impressiveness of the result. We New Englanders think we have rocky soils, and it's true that we have some pretty impressive and long-lasting stone walls to help the surveying community in our boundary retracement work. But our Irish forebears must have thought they'd died and gone to heaven when they first dipped a plow into even the boniest of Vermont soils. Stone walls are EVERYWHERE in Ireland and they dwarf ours in height, breadth and length.

Moreover, Ireland is virtually frost-free, such that Frost's "Mending Wall" doesn't resonate quite as accurately there.

*Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,
And spills the upper boulders in the sun;
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.*



"I had this nostalgic notion that it would be a delight to stand in a meadow farmed by my great, great grandfather over 160 years ago."

Paul Hannan points to the map from Griffith's Valuation, showing Garrett Farrell's leased parcels.

So, yes, with boundless, intact stone walls as guides, Griffith's survey field crews would have had little trouble identifying the parcels to survey, but the sheer number of small fields to survey and catalog must have been nearly overwhelming. After searching Griffith's, Roscommon Roots sent me the map at right, showing Garrett Farrell's leased parcels identified as 1A, 1B, 1C, 8 and 9 as gleaned from the database excerpt shown above it.

Last fall, and again this spring, I journeyed to Ireland in hopes of diving a bit deeper into the family and specifically to see if I could locate Garrett's land on the ground. I sometimes say I'm a land surveyor in order to feed a bad habit I have: farming. In fact, we sold our Belted Galloway beef cows just before the fall trip as we wind down our farming, so the phrase has lost its ring of truth somewhat. Nonetheless, I had this nostalgic notion that it would be a delight to stand in a meadow farmed by my great, great grandfather over 160 years ago. Just one problem seemed to stymie my aspirations: that map, with all its remarkable detail, was nevertheless not georeferenced and lacked sufficient ties to any current day landmarks for me to navigate to those leased parcels.

The International Brotherhood (pardon the patriarchy) of Surveyors to the rescue! To my knowledge there isn't really an IBS – but knowing what helpful folks we surveyors are, I felt certain that if the tables were turned, I would happily help someone locate a 19th century Vermont map in 21st century space if asked. So, I googled "Land Surveyors, County Roscommon, Ireland" and sent a "cold" e-mail to Conlon Consulting in Roscommon Town. It generated, a day and a half later, a response from Eddie Conlon with exactly what I needed.

Vermont is blessed with a wealth of aerial imagery to the point where I had adopted an "exceptionalist" attitude toward our resources. Nobody has the quality and quantity of publicly available imagery that we do, right?

Well, Ireland does. Eddie Conlon clued me in to the fact that the (free!) site where one can access Griffiths' Valuation maps and searchable name database (<https://askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation/>) also has the phenomenal capability to overlay the 1850s vintage Griffith's map onto modern ortho-photography. Combine that feature with a "slider" that allows either vintage or modern map to be moved to the surface while still seeing the alternate map in the background and I was set to go find Garrett Farrell's farmland.

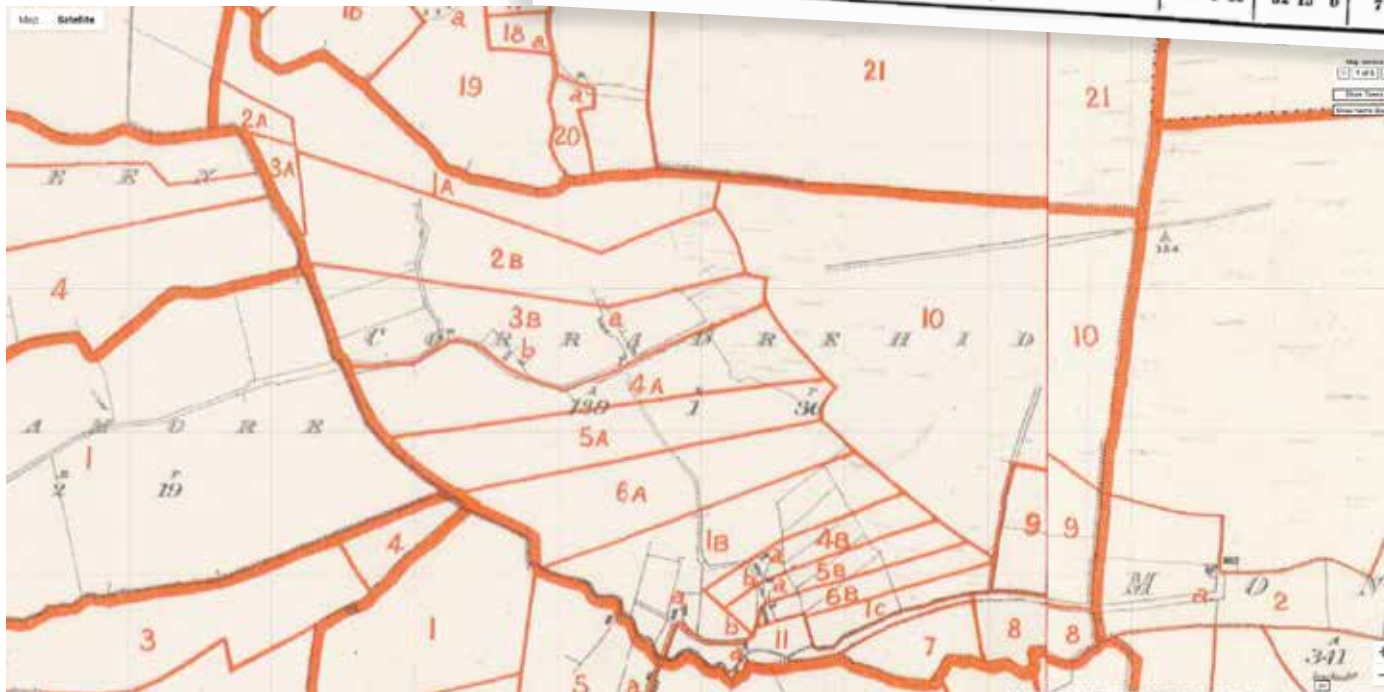
The fact that the old maps are not georeferenced means that the registration between the two layers is not perfect, but it's not hard to see the intent of the old map on the ground – or the ortho-photo today. As you can see in the image at right, today's field lines have changed hardly a whit from 1857. So calling up the site's maps on a tablet with GPS capability closed the link between 1857 and April 2023 to the extent that the photo above shows me imagining Garrett turning his cattle into the meadow in front of me.

Maybe you have to be Irish to get misty-eyed over stuff like this – we Irish do have a reputation for ready tears – but I freely admit this experience struck a chord deep in my ancestral core. Land surveying at the crossroads of genealogy! Pretty cool. 🌿

Paul Hannan is a licensed land surveyor and a retiring farmer in Calais, Vt. You may reach him at: vermontlandsurveyor@comcast.net

At right, an excerpt from the Griffith's Valuation database showing Garrett Farrell's leased parcels identified as 1A, 1B, 1C, 8 and 9. The 1850s vintage map below shows leased parcels in County Roscommon. At bottom, the map is superimposed onto modern orthophotography.

1 A	Garrett Farrell, .	Gilbert Mahon, .	Land.	13 2 28	6 15 0		
1 B	John Murray, .	James Murray, .	House, office, and land.	9 3 27	5 5 0	0 15 0	13
2 A	Thomas Morahan, .	Gilbert Mahon, .	Land.	1 3 20	0 15 0		7
2 B	John McIvor, .	Same, .	Land.	0 0 13		1 0 0	1
3 A	Patrick Garican, .	Same, .	House and land.	1 0 20	0 15 0		7
3 B	Thomas Morahan, .	Same, .	Land.	11 2 32	0 5 0	0 10 0	1
4 A	James Murray, .	Same, .	House, office, and land.	1 1 0	1 0 0		8
4 B	Patrick Murray, .	Same, .	Land, office and garden.	11 1 15	0 0 0	1 0 0	0
5 A	Mary Dempsey, .	Same, .	House, office, and land.	0 1 25	0 5 0	0 10 0	7
5 B	Patrick Murray, .	Same, .	House.	10 1 30	5 10 0		0
6 A	Patrick Murray, .	Same, .	Land.	2 0 20	1 0 0	1 0 0	0
6 B	Patrick Murray, .	Same, .	House, office, and land.	8 3 30	5 5 0	0 15 0	0
7	Patrick Murray, .	Same, .	Land.	2 2 35	1 5 0	1 0 0	7
8	Garrett Farrell, .	Same, .	Office and land.	0 0 5	5 0 0		1
9	Mary Dempsey, .	Same, .	Land.	2 1 39	1 0 0	0 10 0	1
10	Garrett Farrell, .	Same, .	Land.	2 2 10	1 0 0		1
11	Garrett Farrell, .	Same, .	Land.	2 1 21	1 0 0		1
	Gilbert Mahon, .	In fee, .	Land.	4 3 30	0 10 0		0
	John Taylor, .	In fee, .	Land (log).	39 0 0	0 10 0		0
		Gilbert Mahon, .	Land (waste).	1 3 0	0 15 0		0
			House and land.	0 3 10	0 10 0	6 5 0	0
Total, .				139 1 36	52 15 0	7 5 0	60 0



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Will We Ever Defeat the Neighborhood Bloodsucker?

New research may someday be harnessed to make humans immune to Lyme disease.

BY BENJAMIN J. MCCALL

Among the many occupational hazards of land surveying is the risk of contracting Lyme disease after being bitten by the Ixodes scapularis tick. These blood suckers are often called deer ticks, because their preferred blood meal is from deer: they cannot progress through their life stages (from larva to nymph to adult) without a blood meal from a deer.

Intriguingly, however, deer don't seem to be susceptible to Lyme disease, which is caused by a bacteria named *Borrelia burgdorferi*. So the ticks don't acquire the Lyme disease bacteria by dining on deer – instead, they get infected with those bacteria when they feed on mice or other small rodents (presumably when there are no deer handy).

How is it that deer are immune to Lyme disease? This question has recently been tackled by a team of scientists at the New England Center of Excellence in Vector-Borne Diseases, which has received \$10 million from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for research aimed at preventing and reducing diseases carried by ticks and mosquitoes here in New England.

The researchers gathered blood serum from white-tailed deer in a semi-captive herd at Auburn University in Alabama. These deer had not been exposed to ticks,

or Lyme disease bacteria, so they would not carry any antibodies from previous infections that would protect them from the disease. The researchers grew the *Borrelia* bacteria in the laboratory, and added the serum. As Stephen Rich, the senior author a recent article in the journal *Vector-borne and Zoonotic Diseases*, exclaimed, “Lo and behold, it killed the bacteria. Whatever it is in the deer that’s killing the germ is part of the innate immune system, a part of the immune system that precedes antibodies.”

Could this new research be harnessed to make humans immune to Lyme disease, like the white-tailed deer? Doing so would first require a better understanding of how the deer blood is able to neutralize the bacteria. “We’d like to determine if it’s something we can induce in humans,” Rich says. “Or maybe we could use this somehow to our advantage to reduce the incidence of Lyme disease in the wild.”

In the near term, however, the best we poor land surveyors can do is treat our clothing and gear with products containing 0.5% permethrin, and doing a daily tick check to extract any ticks before they have a chance to infect us! 🦋



Other Tick-bits



Toss 'em in the dryer!

The best way to kill ticks on your clothes (if you don't use permethrin) is to throw your DRY clothes in the dryer on HIGH heat prior to washing. It takes only 6-10 minutes on high in the dryer to kill 100% of ticks and nymphs. If clothing is damp, longer drying times may be necessary. Ticks can survive for up to 72-hours underwater, so your washing machine isn't going to hurt them, especially if you wash in cold water. If you wash in super hot water (it must be 130 degrees F or higher), that will kill them. If you wash your clothes in cold or warm water, you will need 55 minutes on high heat or 85 minutes on low heat in the dryer to kill all ticks (air fluff just makes them dizzy).



Beware of static electricity!

A new study suggests ticks can be pulled onto human and animal hosts via static electricity. The amount of static needed to lift a tick was well within the estimated amount of electricity that humans and other animals create by rubbing up against grass blades while walking through a field; the higher charges humans carry could theoretically pull ticks several centimeters.

Monadnock

Like many other land surveyors, I was lucky to learn many of the ins and outs of the profession from good mentors with whom I worked. In my case these included my father and my older brother, Jon. Recently I was reminded about a particular mountain that proved to be a surveying classroom for me.

Most New Englanders are somewhat familiar with Mt. Monadnock in southwestern New Hampshire. It is reported to be one of the most-hiked mountains in the world, with over 125,000 people ascending its trails each year. Geologists and geomorphologists from around the world know of it, since its name is used to describe a whole class of mountains formed when isolated subterranean plutons or “stocks” become stand-alone mountains through the glacial removal of their overburden.

Its name is believed to have descended from an Abenaki word something like *manonadenek*, meaning “smooth” or “isolated mountain,” from the root word *aden*, meaning “mountain.”

Far fewer people are aware of a mountain with the same name and similar origins in northeastern-most Vermont, in the township of Lemington, rising abruptly 2,100 vertical feet from the Connecticut River at its eastern foot.

When we were youngsters, our father, a forester and veteran of the 10th Mountain Division, would hike the 2.5 mile trail with us to access the abandoned steel fire tower at its summit, with its commanding views of the Northeast Kingdom, the White Mountains, and the Canadian “Monteregian Hills” rising like islands from the plains of the St. Lawrence River valley to the northwest. We’d inevitably stop to admire the bronze Coast & Geodetic



“When we were youngsters, our father would hike the 2.5 mile trail with us to access the abandoned steel fire tower at the summit, with its commanding views of the Northeast Kingdom, the White Mountains, and the Canadian Monteregian Hills.”

Survey tablet, stamped “Monadnock 1959,” centered in the ledge beneath the tower before ascending the vertigo-inducing stairs up to the look-out itself. If prompted, Dad would describe the vast series of triangles geometrically connecting mountaintops and towers across the country, and remind us that this was a triangulation “station” which was entirely different from a “benchmark” of known elevation that you’d find in the valleys. (To this day, I have to stifle myself from correcting hikers at mountain-tops when I hear them say, “Look Honey, here’s the benchmark.”)

On one such outing to the tower, Dad mentioned that he had “owned” it for a short time. “You did?” “Why didn’t you keep it?” He explained that the tower, its cabin and a little land around them had been conveyed to him, only briefly, as a “straw man” by a state agency; then he conveyed it in turn to the paper company for which he worked. “Oh. That’s cool,” we said. “What’s a straw man?” What followed was not the last lecture I would receive on real estate law, title, deeds, and so forth. And, you can be sure, very little of that knowledge remained lodged in my 11-year-old head.

Good Deeds and Bad

Just a few years later, as a teenager, I would hear of other straw deeds used in a more sinister land transaction on Mt. Monadnock. In the late 1970s the state began its state-wide tax-mapping program. The Department of Property Valuation & Taxes contracted its first round of state-wide orthophoto-mapping and offered incentives to towns to develop tax parcel maps using those rectified aerial images as base maps. Since the U.S. then appeared to be on the verge of following the rest of the world into the metric system, the state chose the scale of 1:5000 for the majority of the mapping, which resulted in the rather awkward scale of one inch

equaling roughly 417 feet for those of us not using metric scales – but that’s another story.

Somehow the Town of Lemington (population 87 per the 2020 Census) received some grant money with which to prepare tax maps and hired a local New Hampshire man to get it done. The tax-mapper proceeded to analyze the town’s grand list, matched deeds to the listed properties, and plotted the deeds as best he could while overlaying them on the base maps. In the course of his labors he inevitably found a number of gaps and gores, including what seemed to him to be a totally unclaimed 50 or 60 acres on the west flank of Mt. Monadnock! Then, as I recall the story, he wrote a somewhat-vague metes and bounds description of the parcel and inserted it into a quit-claim deed from himself to his wife. To further muddy the waters, his wife executed a second deed from herself to the both of them as tenants in common. Having spun this flimsy web of documents he apparently felt safe to insert his own name in that “empty” space on the tax map. All seemed harmless enough until he turned in his draft tax maps for the townspeople to inspect and approve.

The very first person to clap eyes on the draft was, of course, the town clerk. “That’s funny. I don’t see the town forest on here.” “And,” she may have said to the map-maker, “I didn’t know that you owned land on the mountain, too.” I don’t know what legal trouble, if any, that mapper got into, but his reputation was definitely shot in the nearest counties of two states.

Undivided We Stand

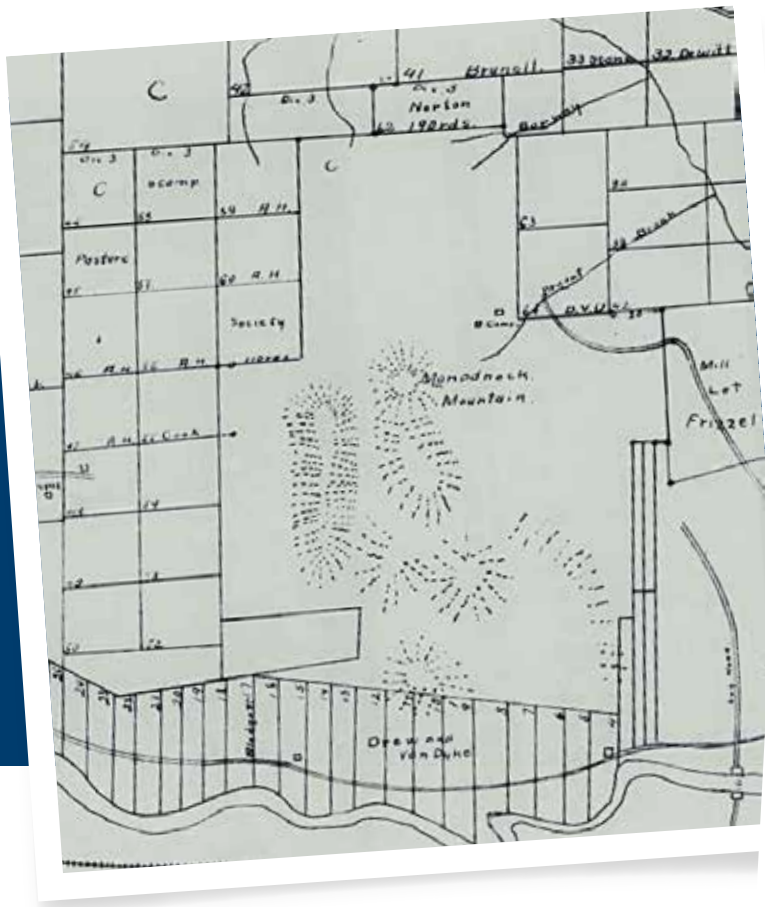
Our wayward tax-mapper, however, wasn’t the only person to get flummoxed by the land records and deed descriptions on Monadnock. It probably didn’t help that the Lemington clerk’s office, in an abandoned one-room schoolhouse, was only open about six hours each week. Unless one lived fairly nearby, it must have been tempting to decide early-on



The fire tower atop Monadnock Mountain in Lemington, Vt.
Photo by Bruce Katz.

**2,100
vertical
feet**

Height of Monadnock Mountain from its base at the Connecticut River



← FIGURE 1 – LOTTING MAP

↓ FIGURE 2 – SURVEY TABLE

NE	SE	SW	NW	C	T	L
66½				25	-	2 8½
18¼				12	8	8 Spruce
11				12	8	6 8½
75				15	1	5 Beech
27½	21	5	9			Beech

that one had done “enough” research. When its proprietors initially divided the township (a New Hampshire Grant in 1762) into 25-acre river-front lots, and larger 60 and 130 acre lots, even they realized it was not economically feasible to survey the mountain into tidy rectangles. So, the town’s lotting map looked somewhat like the Figure 1 with its regular rows of rectangular lots terminating near the foot of the mountain. The bulk of the mountain was left un-surveyed and labeled as “undivided lands” on the lotting plan. “If someone wants some of that”, reasoned the town fathers, “they can survey it themselves!” Nearly 200 years later, it came to pass that a licensed land surveyor “from away” was re-surveying one of the 60-acre lots at the mountain’s foot. He correctly determined from the records that his client’s lot was bordered on one side by “Undivided Lands.” Somehow unfamiliar with the history of land tenure in this part of the New World, he confidently, and incorrectly, labeled the abutter on that side as “Lands of the United States of America.”

Tally-ho

Another year my brother and I were both working as technicians for our dad, at least when we weren’t in school or ski-bumming. He had turned us loose in the land records to research a different woodlot on the east flank of Monadnock, overlooking the Connecticut River. The controlling deed, written sometime during the 1860s, used an unorthodox form of description. After the usual preambles and a description of

the Point of Beginning was hand-drawn a table of courses and distances in a matrix looking something like Figure 2.

Even my brother and I were savvy enough to decipher the compass bearings and to realize that “C” and “L” must stand for “chains” and “links.” What in the world, though, could “T” stand for? We brought the hieroglyphics to Dad and invited him to solve the “T” question. Dad leaned back in his chair, re-lighting his pipe for the umpteenth time, then looked dubiously into its bowl to determine if it was smoldering properly. “Tally” he finally said. “T” is for tally.” Pulling an old Gunter’s chain from a bottom drawer, he pointed to the small brass tags dangling from some of the 7.92” links by thin wire. Much the size and appearance of a dog’s license tag, each tally mark had a unique pattern of teeth or notches. Some tags were missing from this particular chain, but they had hung after every tenth link of the hundred-link chain, so a surveyor would never need to count more than five links to know where he was on its 66-foot-length. Armed with this new knowledge, and likely wondering why the 1860 surveyor couldn’t just use decimals, we went back to plotting the deed description from this rebus-puzzle of a deed.

Stakes & Stones (and Broken Bones)

It may or may not have been that same woodlot, but definitely was on the the same mountainside, where we were searching for any remaining physical evidence of lot lines and corners. Using compasses and accounting for changes in



“Even my brother and I were savvy enough to decipher the compass bearings and to realize that “C” and “L” must stand for “chains” and “links.” What in the world, though, could “T” stand for?”

← FIGURE 3 –CHAIN WITH TALLY MARKS

magnetic declination, we tried to walk the same lines that had been surveyed a century before, examining the most mature trees for possible old blazes. Measuring crudely with a 200-foot fiberglass “drag-tape” we would stop at intervals where a deed had alleged there to be “a stake and stones.” I had long known that surveyors in those parts would customarily mark corners with an axe-hewn wooden post, surrounded, when possible, with a pile of stones. The stones would not only help the post stay upright in shallow soils, but would last long after a post might rot away completely.

Approaching the prescribed distance, we scanned the trees and hillside with twice the intensity, each hoping to be the person to find the corner, or at least the cluster of extra tree-blazes known as “witnesses” that would direct us even closer to the corner. But here the mountainside was covered with stones; literally a huge pile of rocks – and no stakes!

Searching the suspect area in ever-widening circles, we stopped to inspect any unnatural-looking configuration of stones. Suddenly Dad was on his knees reaching elbow-deep into a crevice and pulling out decades of fallen leaves and forest litter. His hand finally emerged, clutching a piece of rotting wood. Upon close inspection we could still see axe marks on the remains of the pointed end of an old wooden post, which had survived in the oxygen-starved layer of soil beneath leaves and rocks. A few days later my brother and I would return, re-mapping the evidence we’d found with more precise equipment.

At that time we still marked many woodland corners with wooden corner posts. An axe-hewn wooden post allowed us room to carve, with a hand-tool known as a timber-scribe, the

lot and range numbers as well as owners’ names down each face, so woodsmen and others could tell which property or lot corner they had come across. Customarily, we’d add the date and even our initials where there was room. And, of course, we would pile stones around the post for all the reasons mentioned above. One summer day back on Mt. Monadnock, we had erected such a post and were piling stones around it. I’d toss a 20-pound stone down the hill to Jon, then he’d stack it on the pile. Toss a stone; pile a stone. Toss a stone; pile a stone. Toss a stone; toss a stone... Jon gave a yell! A few minutes later I was, somewhat guiltily, fashioning Jon a sling from my flannel shirt.

We decided work was done for that day, plodded down the mountain and drove to the nearby hospital in Colebrook, NH. In the emergency room, a young doctor eventually inspected Jon’s hand and said, “Yup, it’s broken alright. You’d better go to the hospital.”

Our heads comically swiveled around, looking at the ER’s walls until the doctor said, “Oh, I mean a real hospital. I’ll call the orthopedic surgeon in Lancaster.” Soon we were back in our little truck, heading south the 35 miles to Lancaster, and hoping that when we got there we wouldn’t be sent another 80 miles down-river to Dartmouth-Hitchcock. 🏥

Tim Cowan was raised in the Northeast Kingdom and now lives in Vergennes, Vt. He’s a licensed land surveyor employed by Civil Engineering Associates in South Burlington. You may write to him at tcowan@cea-vt.com.

Licensing

With (and Without) a Degree

» BY KNUD E. HERMANSEN, P.L.S., P.E., PH.D., ESQ.

This is the sixth article I have prepared in the series offering thoughts on professional practice and education. In this article, I wish to review survey licensing requirements. I have noted that a graduate of a surveying course of study will likely seek multiple state survey licenses. More practitioners seek multiple state licensing than when I started my surveying practice.



It is common for four-year surveying graduates to be licensed in two or more states. I know of one individual licensed in more than a dozen states. As I look back on fifty years of surveying practice, over that time, I have held licenses to practice surveying in six states.

While the reader is probably aware of their state licensing requirements, a review of licensing requirements nationwide is appropriate. Requirements for licensure among states vary.

Licensing Requirements Across the U.S.

More than 25% of states require some formal education in order to be licensed. Not all of these states require a surveying or geomatics degree. The most stringent academic requirement found for licensure exists in states that require a surveying or geomatics degree from an ABET accredited program. Some states relax this standard slightly

by not mandating an ABET accredited surveying or geomatics degree. Relaxing academic restrictions even more, some states accept any four-year degree with a certain number of surveying credits. Next in academic laxity is a state allowing any four-year degree without specific surveying credits. Some states will permit a two-year surveying or geomatics degree with a certain number of surveying courses. Finally, a number of states continue to allow licensing by experience only. Two-years of experience is a minimum requirement coupled with education. The norm for experience among states appears to be four-years of experience coupled with education. More experience is required when there is less formal education.

It stands to reason that a person wishing to pursue licensure as a surveyor with the widest possible opportunity for employment and licensure in the United States should meet the most

stringent state requirement for licensure. The person casting a wide net for employment or licensing should obtain an ABET accredited four-year surveying or geomatics degree. There are several universities in the United States and foreign countries with excellent programs that are ABET accredited. Some offer accredited surveying degrees entirely through distance education. Individuals can achieve an ABET accredited degree without leaving their state.

This wide diversity of pathways allowing surveying licensure reveals differing opinions nationwide and within state societies as to what should be the requirements for licensure in a state. The issue has been firmly settled in some states. It is a source of great debate in others. This article is not intended to create controversy in states that have had the controversy and settled the requirements.

A person who does not have a degree

“The wide diversity of pathways allowing surveying licensure reveals differing opinions nationwide and within state societies as to what should be the requirements for licensure in a state. The issue has been firmly settled in some states. It is a source of great debate in others.”

or possesses a degree not accepted in a state of their residency or employment can always seek licensure in another state should they wish to show professional achievement. Of course, I must stress that a person working in one state holding a survey license in another state cannot necessarily provide surveying services in the state where they work. The surveyor must hold a license in the state in which services are offered or performed.

I would also caution that in many states, holding a valid survey license to practice in the state is not sufficient. The person must also hold a certificate of authorization (COA) or similar business license or work for a firm that does hold a COA in the state. I have seen many disciplinary citations issued to out-of-state firms that incorrectly believed that they could provide services in a state by simply having an employee licensed in the state. I would also caution that the out-of-state firm must often pay income taxes to the state and in some case the municipality in which they performed their services and received payment. A most frustrating time in my past was when a municipality in a state I was not a resident demanded I pay an income tax on a small fee I received for services completed in that municipality. Had I been aware, I would have refused the services or doubled my fee to cover the frustration and time to do the extensive paperwork involved in paying the tax.

I would also like to dispel some misconceptions that surveying must be thought of as a “lesser” profession or not a profession at all because individuals can be licensed without formal education in the professional field. I suppose some judges or legislatures feel and have ruled otherwise. Their position allows them to have an opinion that establishes the definition in that state. It is a fact of life that an opinion of a person in power means more than an opinion of some other person.

The fact is there are other professions that surveyors work alongside that permit licensure without a formal education. Washington, Vermont, California and Virginia allow an individual to become a member of the bar

without graduation from a law school. Wyoming, New York and Maine allow individuals to be members of the bar without a juris doctorate (J.D.) degree so long as the individual has at least some law school courses. Not all states require an engineering degree to become a professional engineer. Some states permit engineering experience alone to qualify for licensure.

Should States Require Formal Education?

I am sure that some individuals reading this article will wonder what my opinion is regarding a requirement for formal education in order to obtain a survey licensure. I have five degrees and taught in a four-year surveying program for more than thirty years. My background would suggest I am a strong advocate for a degree requirement. Yet surprisingly, I am not in favor of mandating education in order to become licensed. My first surveying licensure was obtained based on my surveying experience alone. There is no question that I learned more about surveying by obtaining my B.S. degree. I also learned a lot more about surveying when obtaining my M.S. degree followed by my Ph.D., and, lastly, my law degree. The fact that I learned more about surveying upon attaining each degree, doesn't mean each degree should be required for licensing.

My opinion is that an individual that passes the fundamentals of surveying exam, professional surveying exam, and state specific exam has the knowledge necessary to competently practice surveying. Competent practice demands a minimum level of knowledge - not retention of all knowledge possible. A degree will instill the information in less time, with a better understanding, and with more extensive knowledge. Yet, an intelligent individual, through self-study, and extensive experience can also gain the minimum level of knowledge for competent practice. I believe the important point is whether the individual has the knowledge, not the way the knowledge was acquired. Some of the best surveyors I have ever met or followed had no formal education or a two year degree only. 🌍



25%

**Percent of states
that require
formal education
for licensure**



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Survey Prior to Settlement

Exploring the roots of survey law in the United States

BY DONALD A. WILSON, L.S., RPF
LAND BOUNDARY CONSULTANT

Back in 1996, I designed a seminar entitled “Early Colonial Law,” which I presented several times at various locations, believing that discussing the roots of the court system would lend insight into how we do things today. At that time, I was interested in the earliest boundary case in the nation, both in time and location. I was astounded to find that the earliest boundary litigation was not where I had expected, in the very earliest [organized] states or colonies. I wondered why, and recently, 27 years later, I found my answer. I acquired a copy of *American Boundaries* by Bill Hubbard, Jr. and skimmed selected paragraphs searching for relevant information suitable for a book I was working on.

According to Hubbard, the time of the earliest settlements across the breadth of the eastern part of the continent, “as a thrown-together society, America was, even then, a litigious place.” Per capita, “in the eighteenth century, there was an equal proportion of people who called themselves lawyers, and a large portion of their business came from boundary disputes between abutting landowners. There was hardly an American landowner in the 1780s who had not been involved in some dispute, litigated or not, over land ownership. The disputes occurred all across the nation, but more frequently in the South and the middle states, less so in New England. The reason why New Englanders went to law less frequently was because the northern states had generally adopted a principle that has come to be called ‘survey prior to settlement.’”

English settlers sought the ideal land tracts they were used to: those that consisted of a combination of woods, open fields, and grassy meadows, allowing them space to procure firewood and building supplies, areas for growing crops and raising animals, and water for animals, fishing and hunting. With the East Coast being similar to England, they settled where they could find like conditions, whereas in the southern and middle colonies, farmers were largely left free to carve out random areas that would likewise have the promise to have like conditions. This latter procedure resulted in confusion and litigation of boundaries. New England, by contrast, was founded on a strong belief of governmental control over settlement.

Hubbard details the procedures for dividing the land. For favors rendered or money paid to colonial governments, proprietors would be granted all the land within a newly created township whose borders were surveyed by the governments, often overseen by an appointed Surveyor-General. The proprietor’s task would then be to subdivide the township, granting small tracts, known as lots, to people who would settle and farm there, often reserving a sizeable tract for himself and his heirs. Surveyors would then measure out and stake lands according to existing conditions and topography such that the three ideals expected land uses could be fulfilled. By mapping

each of the tracts by distance and bearing, there would be no gores, no overlaps, and no ambiguity about who owned a piece of land.

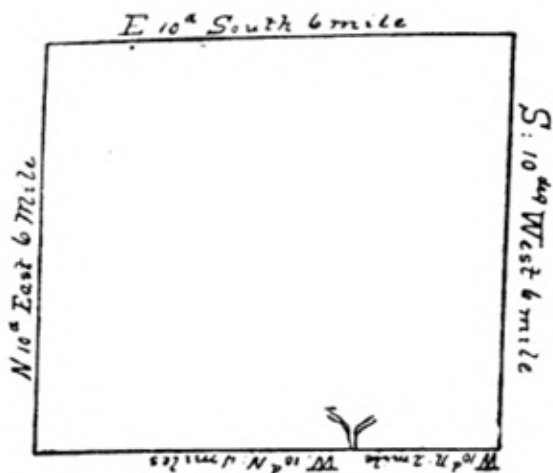
Origin of the 6-mile Township Concept

Going through an evolution between the mid-1600s and the late 1700s, the shape of the township proceeded from new townships being established next to previously established ones, to consideration of location, size, shape and orientation. After some trial and error, by the late 1600s, New England had settled on a township approximately 6 miles square as the ideal. When Massachusetts set up the new town of Concord in 1635, the mandate was that it be square, not oriented to the cardinal directions but tilted to follow features in the local landscape.

However, the 6-mile township was not the definite model, and “squareness” was just one of the considerations. When other factors, such as prior borders, coastlines, or river courses seemed relevant, townships would be given other shapes with no thought of having fallen short of an ideal. By 1635, squares were an expedient alternative, but not yet a model. Through the mid-1600s, New England governments continued to plant new townships, reaching a total of seventy-two by 1692, with square ones gradually coming to dominate. By the late 1600s, big changes took place when farmers headed for the fertile lands of the Connecticut River Valley. New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Connecticut readily complied, mostly because settlement tended to repel the claims of New York. The Connecticut River runs nearly north-south, readily making a boundary causing settlement to complete a “ladder” of townships. In 1761, Governor Benning Wentworth ordered an unprecedented 68 new townships to be laid out, all of them 6 miles square. In the area around Hanover, New Hampshire, the western line of this grid tends toward the east using the river as one of the lines, but in the area of Bennington, Vermont, the river, consequently the grid, runs almost exactly north-south, thus producing 6-mile townships aligned to the compass points.

The First 6 x 6 Township Oriented to the Cardinal Directions

Bennington, Vermont, holds the distinction of being the first square township oriented to the cardinal directions. Granted by Governor Benning Wentworth in 1749, “All that Tract or Parcell of Land Scituate Lying & being within our Said Province of New Hampshire Containing by Admeasurement Twenty three thousand & forty Acres which Tract is to Contain Six Miles Square & no more Out of which An Allowance is to be made for high ways & unimprovable Lands,



Plan copied from Batchellor

A Plan of a Town Ship of Six mile Square Lying in his Majesties Province of New Hampshire Laid Out by Mathew Clesson Surveyor Abraham Bass John Hooker Ezekail Foster & Sam^l Calhoon Chainmen in Pursuance of an order from his Excellency Benning Wentworth Esq Governour of Said Province to Coll William Williams Lying Six miles North of the Province Line that was run by Mr Richard Hazzen between Said Government and the Province of the Massachusetts Bay and Twenty Miles East of Hudsons River (Viz) beginning at a Crotched Hemlock Tree Marked W: W: Six miles Due North or at a Right Angle from Sd Province Line Said Angle Commencing at a White Oak Tree in Said Line Marked M: C: J: T: which Tree is Twenty four Miles East from Hudsons River Allowing one Chane in Thirty for Swagg (which Allowance is made thro the whole following Survey) and from Said Hemlock Tree W: 10^d North four Miles to A Stake & Stones from thence E: 10^d South Six Miles to A Stake & Stones and from thence South 10^d West to A Stake & Stones and from thence West 10^d North Two Miles to the Hemlock first Mentioned which Survey was made November 1749.

—Mr. Mathew Clesson Survey^r

by Rock, Ponds Mountains & Rivers One thousand And forty Acres free According to A Plan & Survey thereof made by our Said Governour's order by Mathew Clesson Surveyor returnd into the Secretarys office And hereunto Annexed Butted and Bounded as follows Viz—Beginning at A Crotched Hemlock Tree marked W:W: Six miles Due North of A White Oak Tree Standing in the Northern Boundary Line of the Province of the Massachusetts Bay Twenty four Miles East of Hudsons River Marked M:C:J:T: and from Said Hemlock Tree West Ten Degrees North four Miles to A Stake & Stones which is the South West Corner and from Said Stake & Stones North Ten degrees East Six miles to A Stake & Stones which is the South West Corner and from Said Stake & Stones North Ten degrees East Six miles to A Stake & Stones which is the North West Corner and from Said Stake & Stones East Ten Degrees South Six Miles to A Stake & Stones which is the North East Corner And from thence South Ten degrees West Six Miles to a Stake & Stones which is the South East Corner & from thence West Ten degrees North two Miles to the Crotched Hemlock First mentioned—”

The far-reaching historical significance of this is that it set the stage for the development of the rectangular system of the entire western part of the United States (plus a little more, east of the Mississippi River). When the West was apportioned into 6-mile-square “Congressional” Townships, as they were sometimes called, seldom did the Township become a unit of government. Governor Wentworth’s grants to proprietors, however, were intended to become real towns, with real units of government. Almost all of them did, and even though some of the borders have changed since, the original 6-mile grid can still be seen on maps—one of the few places in the United States where this occurs. 🌳

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February 17, 2023 • 6 p.m. • Zoom Video Call

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 P.M. In attendance were Randy Otis, Paul Hannan, Keith Vanlinderstine, Lisa Ginett, Mark Day, Becky Gilson and our Administrator, Birgit McCall. Absent: Nate Yager. We were also joined by Joe Flynn.

Joe Flynn on OPR and the State of Vermont

Joe had several issues to discuss with the VSLs Executive Committee. The first item being discussed is Joe's work with NCEES on the proposed revisions to the tests provided to the entire United States pursuant to a more divisional approach to testing. The NCEES had put out a Professional Acknowledgement Study to many state surveying societies to ask for input in what surveyors do day to day per region. There were initially five divisions being reviewed: Core, Boundary, Mapping & Science, Incidental Drainage and Public Lands. The study was designed to see what currently practicing surveyors think are the most important areas to test on. The NCEES wants to create exam divisions that enough people would take in order to be worth putting in the effort to create the exams. There was not enough support for Incidental Drainage, so that has been removed from consideration. Core and Boundary will be one exam. The NCEES decided that the Core and Boundary exam had enough questions about topographic surveying, so it was not worth having a separate test on Mapping & Science. Public Lands will have its own division, but it will not be part of testing in Vermont.

There will be two exams: Fundamentals of Surveying will still be given nationally. In Vermont, we will also test on PS Core & Boundary combined with 85 questions with 15 pre-test questions to be randomly shuffled in. This will be six-hour seat time, like the current PS with no Public Lands. This will be similar to the current NCEES testing in Vermont. We will not need to change any statutes in state due to these testing changes. The Board of Land Surveyors will review the State of Vermont test, pull out any redundancies and add in some state-specific questions. We all agree that a take home State of Vermont test does not protect the public, and Randy will draft a letter to the Board and the OPR about our doubts as to the current process.

The group had discussed with Joe earlier the problems with the current Vermont test, which since Covid has been a take-home test with no oversight. The test is the same now as it was three years ago. Although Joe and the Board have repeatedly attempted to get new questions into the Vermont test, he states that "it is not going well." We have a new OPR representative and council as well as a new Secretary of State, all total unknowns to the Board. Joe has asked that VSLs add its weight to the Board's request for new questions, etc. He is putting together a panel discussion on the issue for the April VSLs Seminar to field some discussion. Due to changes in the technology that surveyors use today, there is a need to review the rules. Mark commented that he sees a need for more regulation on topographic work in order to protect the public. Joe is hoping that the NCEES will create a task force to review licensing topo mapping. Joe notes that he will be done on the Board in 2024 and wonders who will replace him.

We briefly discussed the 25% increase to our licensing fees. There has been some leaning from OPR for the Board of Land Surveyors to become an advisory board, which would take away much of the Board's power over the profession.

Secretary's Minutes

Minutes for the Executive Committee meeting for January 19, 2023 were reviewed. The motion to approve the minutes was duly made and seconded, and the vote was unanimously: to approve the minutes of the January 19, 2023 Executive Committee meeting.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer's report for the January 2023 to February 10: total income for period was \$16,765.06, total expenses were \$12,326.22, leaving a net income of \$4,438.84 and a bank total of \$53,675.15. Kelly will now be a 1099 provider and her expense will be shown in the budget as a line item of consulting fees. Birgit has attempted to get hold of North Country in order to get the VSLs funds invested as we had agreed at the end of last year, but so far her emails have not been returned. Membership renewals have slowed down, only trickling in.

Administrator's Report

Birgit met with the Program Committee to continue planning the Spring Seminar, which will be held at Lake Morey on April 14. The planned morning speaker, Kevin Bagwell of the International Boundary Commission, had to cancel his attendance. Dan Martin, NOAA/NOS/ NGS will present for four hours in the morning, partially on the U.S. Survey foot. Mike Burnor, Survey Support Engineer of Sitech Northeast, will present for one hour in the afternoon, and then the Panel Discussion on the impact of new technologies will take place.

Birgit reminded us that Kelly needs any entries for "The Cornerpost" soon. So far Birgit has received a cover photo but no articles. Birgit needs to figure out a budget for cost of the Spring Seminar and then will check in with Randy and Keith before setting the final fees. Birgit has the February e-news ready to go but is hoping that the Spring Seminar can be firmed up before it is sent out. It was noted that next year will be the 60th anniversary of VSLs and it was suggested that we celebrate the event by a joint meeting with NHSLA. The group liked the idea. Randy will talk to some of the NH members. Perhaps we could have the meeting somewhere in the West Lebanon, N.H. area.

Other Business

We received an email from a STEM club in New Jersey. They love our website. They asked us to add a website link from our site to "titlemax.com." Birgit will send the link around so that we can all review it and decide whether to add the link.

There being no other business the meeting adjourned at 6:56 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Ginett, VSLs Secretary

March 16, 2023 • 6 p.m. • Zoom Video Call

This meeting was held via Zoom. The meeting was called to order at 6:03 P.M. In attendance were, Randy Otis, Paul Hannan, Keith VanIlderstine, Lisa Ginett, Mark Day and our Administrator: Birgit McCall. Absent: Becky Gilson and Nate Yager.

Secretary's Minutes

Minutes for the Feb. 16 Executive Committee meeting were reviewed. The secretary made one revision, being the stated date of the meeting. The motion to approve the minutes with this revision was duly made and seconded and the vote was unanimously: to approve the minutes of the February 16, 2023 Executive Committee meeting.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer's report for January 2023 to March 9: total income for period was \$18,008.88, total expenses were \$15,465.26, leaving a net income of \$2,543.62 and a bank total of \$59,434.74. Keith reports that the date to sign with North Country Credit Union to invest the VSLs funds as decided last year was set for March 14, but due to the snowstorm it was rescheduled to March 22.

Administrator's Report

Birgit mailed out "The Cornerpost" last week. She states that she needs more content for the next publication. She asked that we send photos or an article. Registration is open for the Spring Seminar at Lake Morey on April 14, and an email was sent to the membership. So far, 15 people have registered. There has been a brief survey sent out asking for topics for the panel discussion that will be held that afternoon. Birgit will meet with the Program Committee at Lake Morey after the Seminar to continue planning the Fall Seminar. Brad Holden has suggested that he could give a presentation about Lotting Plans. Certainly this topic should be a point of interest for Vermont surveyors. Perhaps that could go into making up a portion of the Fall Seminar.

Birgit had a brief discussion with Craig Bailey, the president of NHLA, regarding our idea to combine the 2024 Fall Seminar, which is the 60th Anniversary of the VSLs, with their meeting. It was not met with much enthusiasm. NHLA has a big event planned for that same time period. Randy will talk to Craig and try to work something out.

Other Business

As discussed at our last meeting and as sent out by Birgit for our review, we agreed to add the suggested "titlemax.com" link to our website.

We had a request from a Vocational Guidance councilor for someone to allow a person interested in becoming a surveyor to do a job shadow of a surveyor in Central Vermont. The group thought a bit more information should be provided. Would this be just a one day job shadow of something longer term? Mark has done a few of these in the past and usually provides a day where he will take the person to do several tasks, maybe some research in the morning and to do some field work in the afternoon. Mark currently has an employee that he recruited through a job shadow that he hosted.

Pursuant to a call for someone to share some Beers Atlas information, I had mentioned that I had copy of the Washington County Beers that I would be open to having digitized, though I'm not able to do so myself. Mark has all of the Beers Atlases for the areas that he works in. The group felt it would be beneficial to post Beers maps on our website in a members-only section.

As Randy had limited time for this meeting, we deferred discussion of a possible paywall on our website for some of these endeavors. There was a brief discussion about the fee schedule for the Spring Seminar, which has made it less expensive for someone to attend the meeting as "technical staff" than if they were an associate member. We need to discuss this issue at our next meeting. Perhaps make the fee for an associate member to attend our seminars a bit less than the technical staff category. We would like to insure that there is some real benefit to becoming an associate member, perhaps send these members "The Cornerpost" as well.

Keith discussed briefly that Becky notified him that she would not be able to attend the Duxbury middle school career day as she had thought. Keith can go but needs some help as well as guidance as to what to present and if we have any materials to offer. Birgit will ask Gayle if she might be able to help. Gayle attended with Becky the last time the career day was held.

There being no other business the meeting adjourned at 6:37 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Ginett, VSLs Secretary

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June 1, 2023 • 6 p.m. • Zoom Video Call

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 P.M. In attendance were Randy Otis, Paul Hannan, Keith Van Iderstine, Lisa Ginett, Becky Gilson, Nate Yager and our Administrator, Birgit McCall. Absent: Mark Day. It should be noted that our meeting was scheduled for May 18, but due to conflicts we postponed it until June 1.

Secretary's Minutes

Minutes for the Executive Committee meeting for March 16, 2023 were reviewed. Paul made one revision, the word "possibly" to "possible" in the second paragraph of the second page. The motion to approve the minutes with this revision was duly made and seconded and the vote was unanimously: to approve the minutes of the March 16, 2023 Executive Committee meeting.

Treasurer's Report

The report was from Jan. 1, 2023 to May 12. Total income for period was \$ 29,897.12, total expenses were \$ 29,325.07, leaving a net income of \$ 572.05 and a bank total of \$55,870.23. Keith reports that 16% of members have not yet paid dues. It was reported that we did alright at the Spring Seminar, with 64 people attending, but not as well as hoped. Keith and Birgit noted that the Investment with North Country Credit Union has been finalized.

There was a discussion about the costs associated with our NSPS Representative Gayle Burchard attending the NSPS conferences. There are usually two conferences a year but this year there will be three. It was also noted that not every State Society pays the cost of their representatives attending the conferences. Gayle has attended one conference so far but has spent nearly half the travel budget allotted for the year. As things are pretty slim financially, the group decided to ask Gayle to choose only one of the other two conferences to stay within budget. Birgit will email Randy with the amount Gayle has spent so far, and Randy will talk to Gayle about the need to stick with the allotted travel budget for this year. If necessary we can add to the travel budget for next year.

Administrator's Report

Birgit notified the pertinent school officials regarding the VSLS Scholarship availability, but she has had no response to date. It appears that there will once again be no one applying for the VSLS Education Foundation scholarship.

Birgit asked the group what to do about "The Cornerpost" in terms of those members that have not remitted their dues, since it is meant to be sent to members only. After some discussion it was decided that she should send the magazine out to unpaid members for one year. If they do not renew after one year (three issues) then they should be dropped from the mailing list. Birgit commented that it might be worth letting the 200 piece bulk rate go as the cost of mailing first class might be offset by the lesser printing fee. She also noted that she needs more content for the next issue.

Birgit reports that the fall conference will be held at Killington, most likely on October 6, depending on availability of speakers, not all of whom have yet responded. This will be a one day conference with no vendors. In keeping with requested changes to our schedule by both the Executive and Program Committees, the December meeting will become an online meeting and

the Roundtables will become the Spring Seminar. Birgit will be unavailable to do much work for VSLS during the summer months due to her other responsibilities but in the fall she will start working on upgrading the VSLS web page functionality. She mentioned that she now has the upgraded survey scans.

Other Business

Stu Morrow gave Nate Yager a boxed Invar tape set that originally came from Pete Chase. The box includes the tape, a reel, spring weight pull handles and other old school taping elements used for accurate measuring. Pete had intended to auction it off at a VSLS event but would not let it go for the amount bid.

We recently discussed having the Fall Conference as a joint meeting with NHLA. Randy touched base with NHLA President Craig Bailey about this idea. We would need to pick a spot near the State border to facilitate NHLA members' attendance. Birgit remarked that we have quite a bit of swag in the storage unit. It was suggested that we pull it out and give it away at the joint meeting along with auctioning off the tape set at that time.

Based on Birgit's schedule we have decided to take our summer break in June. Our next meeting is planned to be held on July 20 at Three Penny Taproom.

There being no other business the meeting adjourned at 6:37 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Ginett, VSLS Secretary

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John M. Bruno | VERMONT L.S. #485 | MAY 5, 1942 - MARCH 26, 2023



John M. Bruno, 80, died on Sunday, March 26, 2023 at his home in Hartland, Vt., surrounded by his family.

John was born May 5, 1942 in Torrington, Conn., a son of John and Helen (Pormbjak) Bruno. He graduated from Torrington High School in 1960 and then studied at the University of Connecticut, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering in 1964 and a Master of Science in 1968.

John married Barbara Kissh on Sept. 5, 1964 in Harwinton, Conn. In 1972 they moved to Brownsville, Vt., where John started Bruno Associates, an engineering, surveying and consulting business in Woodstock, Vt. John retired in 2006, and he and Barbara moved to an 1870s farm house in South Charlestown, N.H., on the Connecticut River. They later moved to Hartland to be closer to their son, Mark.

John was a member of the Vermont Society

of Land Surveyors for more than 40 years. He also served on the West Windsor Zoning Board for 22 years, and on the Charlestown, New Hampshire Planning Board and the Hartland Planning Commission.

John enjoyed working with wood, carving birds and wood turning. Most of all he enjoyed time with family and friends, summer on Goose Pond and a good laugh.

John is predeceased by a son, Robert Bruno, and a sister, Barbara Ohotnicky.

He is survived by his beloved wife Barbara of 58 years, a son Mark Bruno, his wife Billie Jean of Hartland, and granddaughter Molly Bruno and her partner Oliver Levin of Malden, Mass.

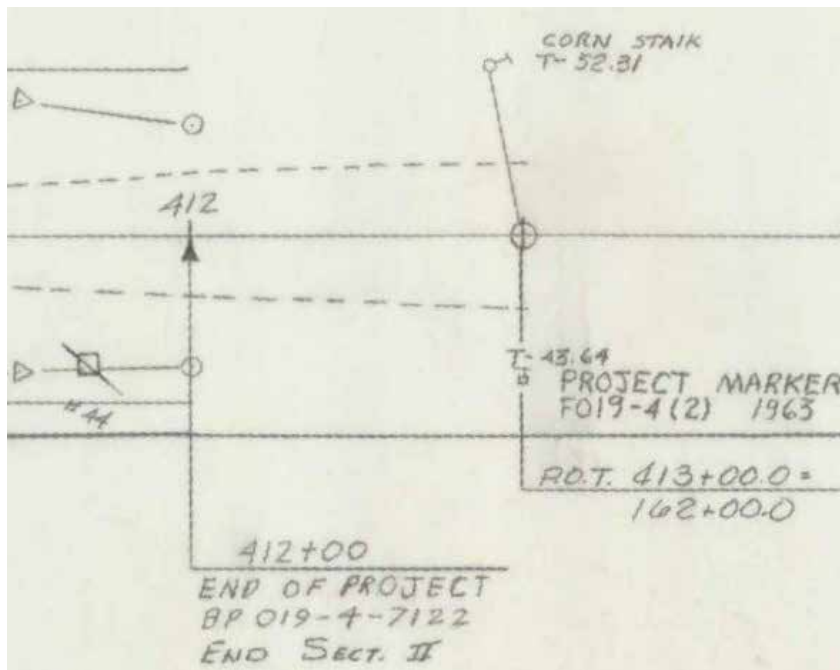
Condolences to John's family may expressed in an online guestbook at www.knightfuneralhomes.com.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the American Cancer Society or a charity of your choice.



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PERMANENT MARKER?

Readers may be amused or amazed by this image from a 1971 survey of Route 7 in Charlotte, where someone included a swing tie to Station 413+00 from a corn stalk. (Spotted by Tim Cowan, L.S.)



IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME ...

Doug Henson, L.S., sent in this photo of a wintry Mount Mansfield in the distance, a sharp reminder that those days will be back soon enough.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

This 2015 photo shows a town corner marker at Bolton–Jericho–Underhill; the marker is located in the Ethan Allen Firing Range. Harris Abbott, L.S., took the picture as part of a research expedition with other VSLs members into the 1930 Jericho–Underhill Town Line. Scan the code to read *The Cornerpost* article about their findings.

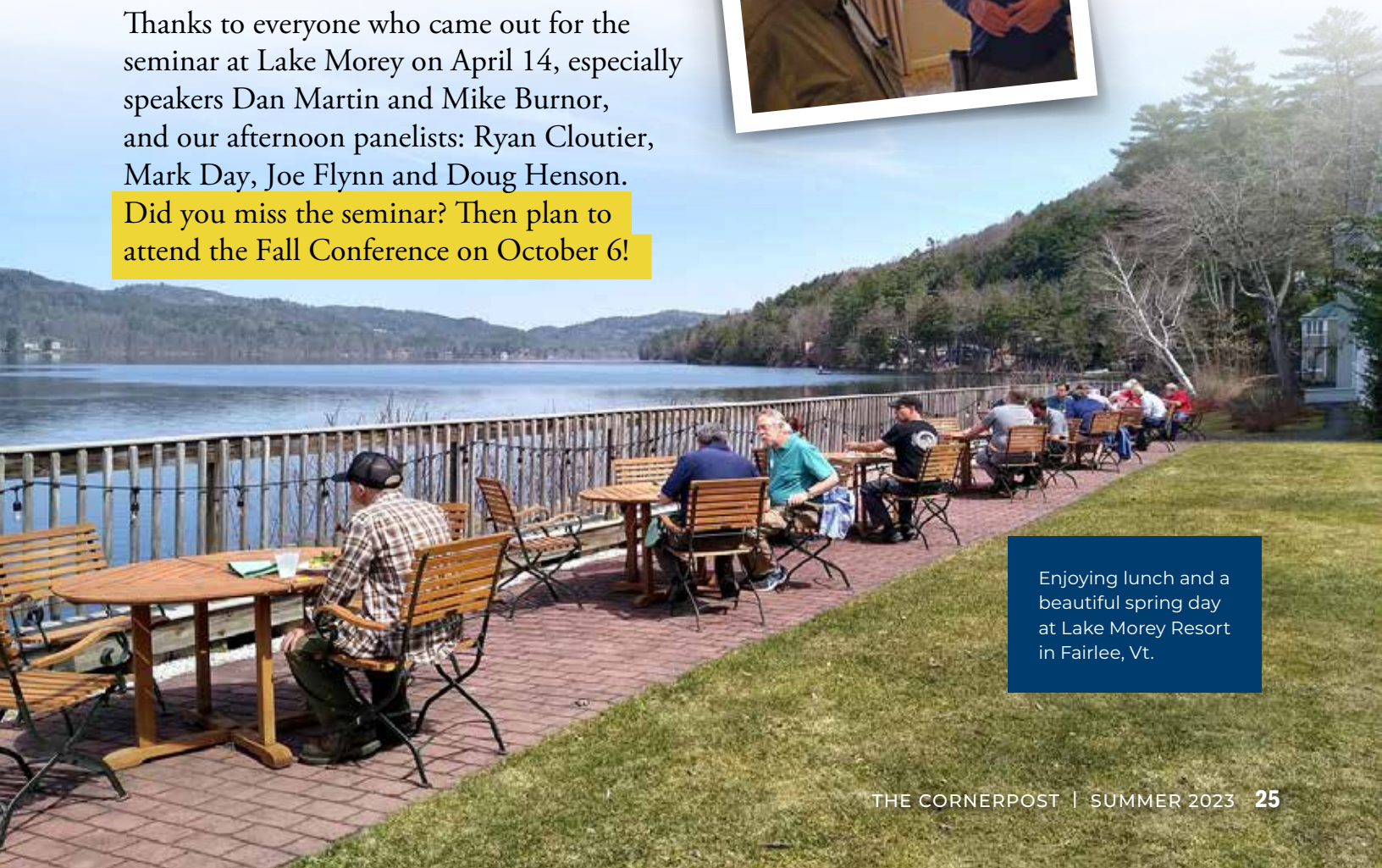




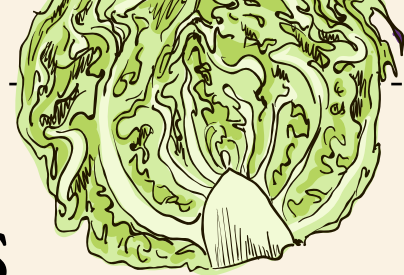
A FEW SCENES FROM THE 2023 SPRING SEMINAR

Thanks to everyone who came out for the seminar at Lake Morey on April 14, especially speakers Dan Martin and Mike Burnor, and our afternoon panelists: Ryan Cloutier, Mark Day, Joe Flynn and Doug Henson.

Did you miss the seminar? Then plan to attend the Fall Conference on October 6!



Enjoying lunch and a beautiful spring day at Lake Morey Resort in Fairlee, Vt.



Fruitful Companions

“BIG BILL” WAS A SUCCESSFUL FARMER IN

Harrington Park, New Jersey. This was in the '30s and '40s, when I was growing up. He and his wife, Jo, were good friends with my parents, Elmer and Hazel Bohlen. Hazel and Jo were also good friends as they were growing up in lower Manhattan, New York City. This association was carried on with their husbands after they all moved to New Jersey. Bill and Jo were frequent visitors to our home in Tenafly, N.J., and often shared a card game or two of bridge!

Bill was well known in New York City as a farmer that came to the market every Saturday to sell his farm produce. He raised some really great corn, and was known by many as that “corn king” from the wilds of New Jersey! He raised lots of other vegetables like rhubarb, beets, carrots, beans, squash, and cabbage.

He had an old open body truck with sides that he drove to the market on Saturday. Remember that this was in the 1930's and the old trucks in those days had no starters. When you wanted to start the engine, you had to see to the carburetor, the spark, and then go to the front of the vehicle and turn the engine “over” with a hand crank from under the radiator! This particular Saturday it was a big load of cabbage that was on the truck as he headed to market. The truck was a cantankerous old girl that had a habit of stopping now and then. And that was what happened on that Saturday, but this time in the middle of a railroad crossing. Right plum in the middle! So Bill got out, took the crank to the front, and went to work on getting it started Hello! A trail whistle sounded on the next crossing and Bill looked to the South to see a locomotive heading his way! Whoa, he kept working with that crank until the train was almost upon him, gave it up, and headed for the ditch. I guess that it was quite a sight when that train hit the truck and the cabbages flew all over the northern part of New Jersey!

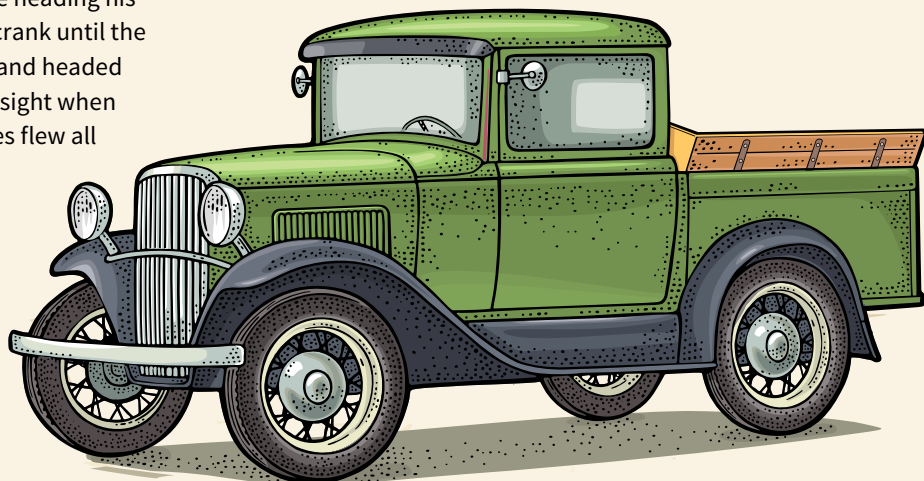
As he grew older, Bill sold the back part of his 100-acre farm to a developer that split it up into house lots that sold quickly. I recall Bill could not believe that those well-to-do homeowners went out into his field with a pan and a spoon to scrape up his fertilizer to put on their little gardens!

I got to know Bill as “Hot-Tip Ehret” in 1946 when I was in the U.S. Navy. Bill and Jo went to Florida during the winters in those days, and Bill got interested in betting on race horses. I guess that he got pretty good at it, and got to know some jockeys and other people at the track. I was stationed near Miami at the time and was also a frequent visitor to the race track. Bill was back in Harrington Park, getting ready for spring planting but was keeping me up with events at the Hialeah Race Track.

I got a telegram from Bill one time urging me to put all my money on “Star Batter” in the sixth at Hialeah. Bill said that he was a “sleeper” that was due, and would, upon winning, pay out BIG money! Gotta believe “Big Bill,” right?

So off to the track I went, and put all I could spare (about \$10) on “Star Batter” The race was exciting! “Star Batter” hit the first turn in the front of the pack. Then he increased his lead on the near turn and again on the back stretch and was well in the lead when he hit the home stretch. That, however, was “all he wrote.” He was all done and slowed way down, the rest of the horses ran past him and he came in dead last!! So much for “Hot-Tip Ehret”!! 🍀

— DICK BOHLEN, L.S.#7 (1926-2020)



VSLs FALL CONFERENCE

Friday, October 6, 2023
Killington Grand Hotel
228 East Mountain Rd., Killington, VT

6 PDH



Schedule

7:00 - 8:00 AM	Registration and Breakfast
8:00 - 10:00 AM	International Boundary Commission
10:00 - Noon	Researching Town Land Records
12:00 - 1:30 PM	Luncheon and Business Meeting
1:30 - 3:30 PM	Deep Research for Land Surveyors
3:30 PM	Final Announcements

FEES	THROUGH SEPT. 26*
Full Member of VSLs or kindred society	\$225.00
Associate Member	\$180.00
Life Member	\$168.75
Non-member technical staff attending with member	\$191.25
Group rate (three or more from same firm; must include a member)	\$191.25
Non-Member	\$325.00

*\$25 late fee after Sept. 26 / Members must be in good standing

Seminars

International Boundary Commission (2 hrs)

Presenter: J.T. Moore, Deputy Commissioner, US Section

Learn about the International Boundary Commission, what it does, and how to access data regarding monuments.

Researching Town Land Records (2 hrs)

Presenter: Julie A Graeter, Town Clerk and Treasurer for the Town of Colchester

This 2-hour presentation will discuss everything you might want to know about land records held in Town Offices.

Deep Research for Land Surveyors (2 hrs)

Presenter: Robert Krebs, Founder of Krebs and Lansing Consulting Engineers, Retired P.E. and L.S., VT State Rep.

What does “research” mean — standards, methodology, organization, sources, and risk and liability? There is arguably no more important aspect in locating boundaries than the “research” phase. What is your methodology and standard and “how much” do you do? Do your clients understand (or care) about the research necessary to locate their boundaries? How much do you rely on those (surveyors, scriveners, others) that have come before to locate the same lines? Are you aware of the many sources of research documents that might affect your work? Like many professional activities there are often many questions, and how do you compare with what a “reasonable” surveyor should do?

Registration (please complete this form and mail it with your payment, or register online at vsls.org)

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Send in Your News

A great magazine relies on its field reporters. Please send your submissions for the next issue of *The Cornerpost* by Oct. 1st to birgit@vsls.org. All photos, articles, and news bytes are welcome.

PHOTO BY MARK DAY, L.S.