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PRESS RELEASE

Vermont County Court Records Highlighted in Online Exhibition

Montpelier, VT –Secretary of State Jim Condos announced today that the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (VSARA), a division of the Secretary of State’s Office, has launched a new web exhibit. “150 Years of Vermont Court Records” explores the history of the courts as an expression of social, economic, and legal developments in Vermont.

“Court records open a window into the lives of early Vermonters,” Condos said. “The documents presented in this exhibit show us that human concerns have not changed greatly over the years. Most lawsuits were over money, of course. But there are also cases related to social issues we still confront, like responsibility for care of the poor and elderly, regulating controlled substances, and environmental concerns. Court records are an invaluable resource for all kinds of researchers.”

The exhibit highlights 650 cubic feet of records from the Caledonia, Lamoille, Orleans, and Franklin county courts, covering the years 1794 to 1945. According to State Archivist Tanya Marshall, this represents just a fraction of the court records held by VSARA. Additional records from Essex, Rutland, Windsor, and Windham counties have been transferred to VSARA since the project was launched.

“150 Years of Vermont Court Records” is the culmination of a three-year project to process and make available to the public historic court records of four Vermont counties. The online exhibit, viewable through <http://tinyurl.com/VTCourtRecords>, presents images of documents found in the records, along with the stories of individual Vermonters as told through their court cases, and contextual information about Vermont’s court system.

Researchers and legal historians are encouraged to visit VSARA and take advantage of these resources. VSARA’s online index contains box level descriptions of the records and the VSARA Reference Room in Middlesex is open Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Archivists are also available to answer questions by phone at 802-828-2308 or by e-mail at archives@sec.state.vt.us.

This work has been made possible thanks to a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) to preserve and improve access to archival court records. The NHPRC, the granting arm of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), supports a wide range of activities to preserve, publish, and encourage the use of documentary sources, created in every medium ranging from quill pen to computer, relating to the history of the United States.

The mission of VSARA is to provide, protect, promote, and preserve Vermont public records, in collaboration with other public agencies, for the benefit of the public. To learn more, visit www.vermont-archives.org.

