

Stephen Bates | Vergennes Sheriff

Who Was Stephen Bates?

Vermont's earliest known Black Sheriff and Chief of Police, Stephen Bates was first elected Sheriff of Vergennes in 1879, fourteen years after the end of the Civil War. City records show that Bates was elected Sheriff in all but six of the 29 years that followed. Bates was also appointed Chief of Police several times during this period.

A well-respected citizen, Bates raised his family here. Sheriff Bates was very involved in the community life of Vergennes. He sang in the choir of St. Paul's Episcopal Church. He participated in Republican Party gatherings and was appointed to a campaign committee. He attended social occasions with local businessmen and won a coal stove at a lottery where other prizes included horses and wagons. He trained thoroughbred horses, and was appointed an agent for the Humane Society.

Bates was praised as "cool and self-restrained, rarely if ever acting hastily. . . . He had courage . . . and he was liked and given a friendly greeting wherever he went."

A roadside historic marker from the State of Vermont honoring Stephen Bates was dedicated in Vergennes on October 3, 2021.

Early Years in Virginia

Stephen Bates was born on Shirley Plantation, Charles City County, Virginia in 1842. Located on the north bank of the James River between Richmond and Williamsburg, Shirley is now a National Historic Landmark. When Stephen was born, the plantation had been in operation for over 200 years, using the forced labor of about 70 to 90 enslaved people for plowing the fields, cultivating tobacco, cleaning, childcare, and cooking.

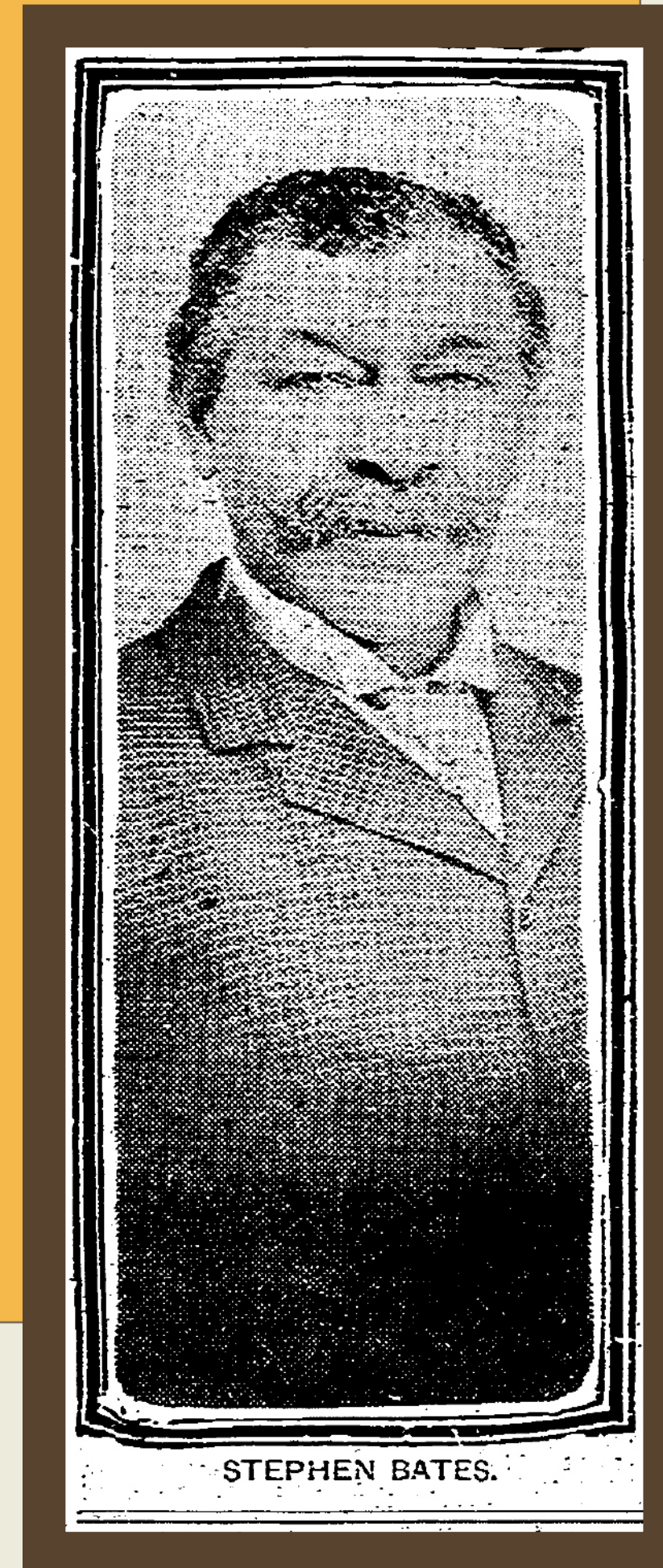


While Stephen Bates lived there, Shirley Plantation was owned by the grandparents of Robert E. Lee. Decades later, Bates would share with family members and Vermont neighbors his "vivid recollections" of General Robert E. Lee, members of the Hill Carter family, the Custis family, and other leading families of Virginia.

Although his obituary says that Bates was born of "free parents," records of enslaved people from the Shirley Plantation include Stephen, his mother Phillis, and siblings Mary, William, Nancy, and Lucy. Stephen Bates was trained "as a waiter." His brother William is listed as a "house servant."

Stephen's father was named Napoleon Bates. Records of labor hired from nearby plantations in 1848 and 1849 show a payment of \$130 for the services of a carpenter named Napoleon. In 1867, the first year that Black men could vote, Napoleon Bates appears on the list of Charles County "Colored Voters." Phillis and Napoleon remained together until her death in 1868. Their sons, however, had emancipated themselves and left Virginia during the turmoil of the Civil War.

Stephen Bates made his escape from the Shirley Plantation early in the Civil War. The Charles County Virginia "Record of Slaves that have escaped to the enemy during the war" lists Stephen at the age of 20 among those who "left when McClellan's Army retreated from Berkley . . ."



Civil War Experiences

Deployed to Virginia to capture the Confederate capital at Richmond, Union General George McClellan had defeated Robert E. Lee's Confederate troops in six of seven battles in June and July 1862, but had lost nearly 16,000 men. By August, McClellan and 140,000 Union troops, Vermonters among them, occupied Berkeley Plantation at Harrison Landing, Virginia, adjacent to Shirley Plantation. There "excessive heat, bad water, poor food, and lack of rest . . . rendered many of the men useless as soldiers." When Union plans to capture Richmond failed, the Army of the Potomac marched toward their transport vessels to battle elsewhere or return to Washington. The *New York Tribune* reported "negroes of the whole region join[ed] the army in its march." Stephen's brother William Bates, age 22, was listed among ten Hill Carter slaves who "left on the [Union] gun boats."

Traveling to Washington with McClellan's troops, Stephen Bates may have established connections with the Vermont regiments, and then with Congressman Woodbridge.

Thousands of the people who escaped from slavery during the Civil War made their way to Washington, D. C., and opportunities for employment were few.

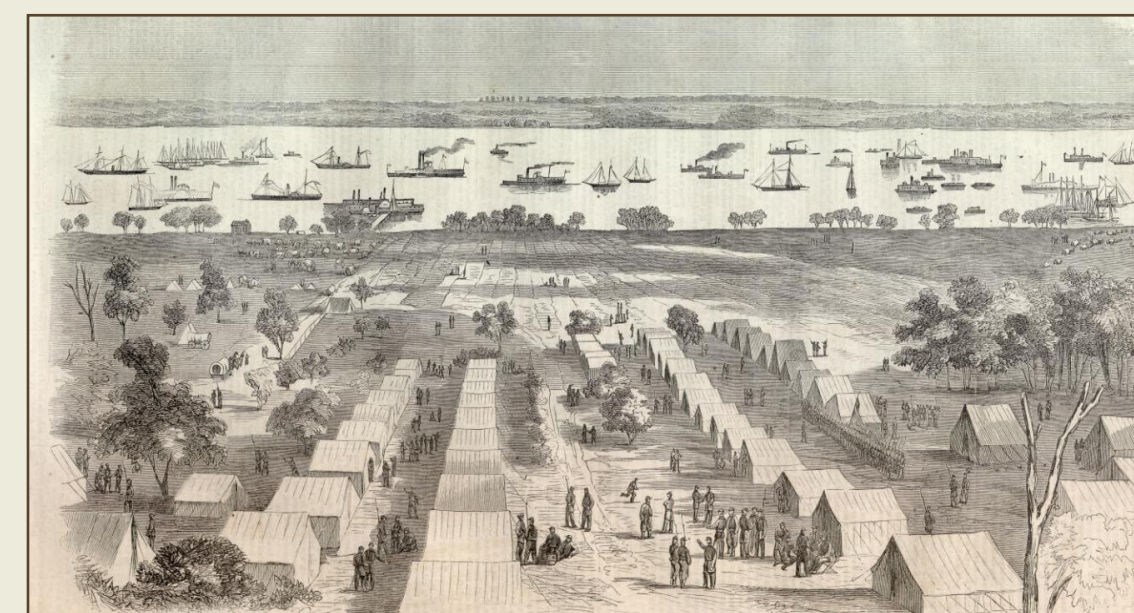
To avoid being reclaimed as "fugitive slaves," the refugees were referred to as "Contraband," a term for "Confederate property confiscated by the Union during wartime." They crowded into "Contraband Camps." The facilities were inadequate, and some 25 deaths per week from scarlet fever, typhoid, measles, and whooping cough were recorded. In 1863, General Robert E. Lee's estate at Arlington, which had been confiscated by the federal government, became the site of a Freedmen's Village. There the mortality rate was "only" two per day, or 14 deaths per week. President and Mrs. Lincoln, abolitionist Frederick Douglass, and other prominent leaders visited the camps and contributed to the Contraband Relief Association established by formerly enslaved people to improve conditions in the camps and aid the refugees.

Meeting Congressman Woodbridge

After his time in the service of Union officers at Harrison's Landing, Stephen Bates made his way to Washington D.C. There, sometime during or just after the Civil War, Bates found employment with Frederick E. Woodbridge of Vermont, who served in the United States House of Representatives from 1863 to 1869.

During Woodbridge's first term, the 38th Congress established the Freedmen's Bureau (March 3, 1865), and approved the 13th amendment to the Constitution, abolishing slavery in the United States (ratified by the states on Dec. 6, 1865). Woodbridge's term in the 39th Congress began in 1865 with Abraham Lincoln's second inauguration in March. In April, the Confederate surrender at Appomattox effectively ended the Civil War, but days later the nation was devastated by Lincoln's assassination. Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1866 and the Freedmen's Bureau Bill before adjourning for the summer.

(right) Frederick Enoch Woodbridge, United States Congress 1863 – 1869. Library of Congress.



(above) "General view of the encampment of the Army of the Potomac at Harrison's Landing." *Harper's Weekly*, 23 August 1862, courtesy Charles City County Richard M. Bowman Center for Local History.

(below) Harrison's Landing, Va. : Showing Union line of defence [sic], by Robert Knox Sneden, ca. 1862, showing Harrison House, Berkeley Landing, and the Union gunboats and supply vessels on the James River.



Contrabands at Camp Barker prepare for visit from Abraham Lincoln. National Archives and Records Administration.

Stephen Bates | Vergennes Sheriff

Coming to Vermont

Stephen Bates came to Vermont in 1866 as Woodbridge’s coachman. The Woodbridge family residence was in Vergennes. It is unclear whether Bates remained continuously in Vergennes from this time on, or accompanied Woodbridge between Vermont and Washington during the three years of his Congressional term.

Bates and the Woodbridge family had an ongoing and multifaceted relationship. In 1870 Steven Bates boarded next door to the Woodbridge residence at the home of Samuel Wilson, where Congressman Woodbridge’s mother-in-law also resided. For many years, Bates rented a house on North Street where he raised his family; in 1890 Bates purchased this house from Freder-

(below) Stephen Bates is named (lower left corner) as manager of the Spring Hill Stock Farm, owned by F. A. Woodbridge in this display ad from the Vergennes Enterprise & Vermonter, June 21, 1889

Horse Breeders, Attention !

Five years' experience in breeding to Percheron stock has shown the farmers of Addison County the superiority of size and weight to unsustained speed and undesirable weakness.

GOOD BLOOD
W LL
SUREL Y TELL.



SEND YOUR
MARES TO
GOOD Stallions.

It costs as much to raise a poor horse as it does to raise a good one. It is a very short sighted policy that obtains cheap service. Two and three-year-old half-bloods have been sold for from \$125 to \$175 and many are held at higher figures.

AT SPRING HILL STOCK FARM WILL STAND FAVORI, NO. 1974, PERCHERON STUD BOOK OF FRANCE. NO. 3191, PERCHERON STUD BOOK OF AMERICA. Double grey, foaled May 10th, 1880; imported March 1st, 1884. FAVORI stands 16½ hands high and weighs 1650 pounds, is a horse of extraordinary breadth of quarters and stifle, with breadth of chest to match; a splendid and symmetrically shaped body, with strong and nicely formed legs; a most beautiful head and neck; is a good square trotter and a fast walker. Has been tried and is known to be a most excellent breeder and a very sure foal getter. He obtained first prize at Vermont State fair for three years.

PIERRE, Sired by Romulus from a Morgan bred mare; is a fine sample of the half blood Percheron. Stands at 2 years of age at 14½ hands high and weighs 1050 pounds; a very promising colt and will be allowed a few mares the coming season at \$25 to warrant.

TERMS FOR FAVORI: \$15 TO WARRANT. Five dollars at time of service; balance when mare is safe in foal. Twenty per cent. discount on balance if paid within 90 days from time of service. \$12 for season service, payable Aug. 1st.

F. A. WOODBRIDGE.
STEPHEN BATES, Manager,
Vergennes, Vermont, May 29, 1889.

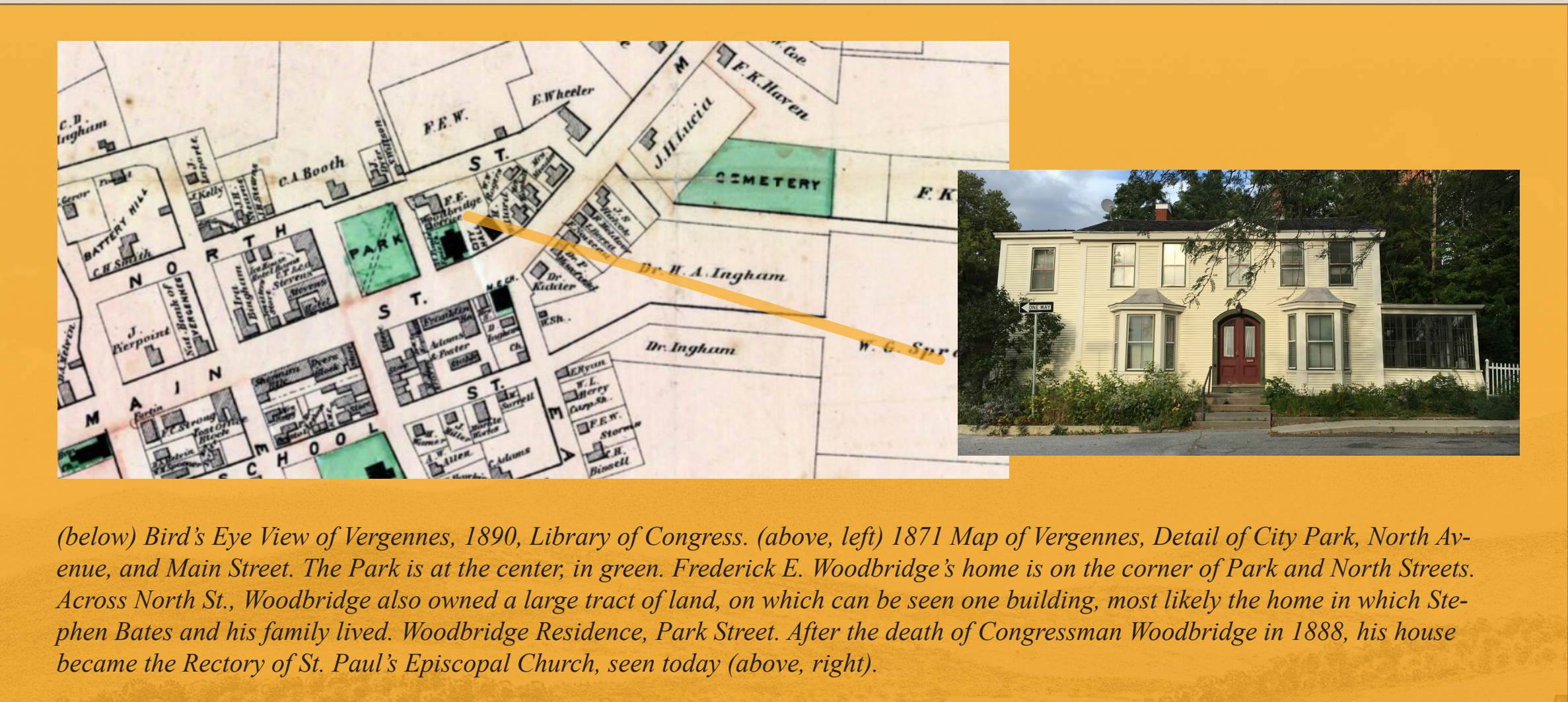
ick A. Woodbridge, son of the Congressman. When his son was born in 1875, Bates named him Frederick, for Woodbridge, and Napoleon for his own father.

Frederick E. Woodbridge had served as Mayor of Vergennes from 1844 to 1849. In 1879, when Woodbridge was again elected as Mayor, Stephen Bates was elected for his first term as Sheriff. Bates’ standing in the community was such that he was able to furnish the bond of \$10,000 then required from the Sheriff.

Sheriff Bates was described as “almost entirely a self-taught man, and in the discharge of the duties of his office was cool and self-restrained, rarely if ever acting hastily.” The pay rate for Chief of Police was recorded only occasionally, but as late as 1905, it was still only 20 cents an hour. Sheriff Bates was a versatile man, and since his duties for the city did not provide full-time earnings, he worked at many other jobs. In census

records he is listed as coachman, laborer and general worker. He worked as a night watchman at a local bank, and as a custodian. He also was manager of the Spring Hill Stock Farm, owned by F. A. Woodbridge.

Bates’ skill with horses was well known. In the 1880s and 1890s the local newspaper regularly reported on his training and handling of thoroughbreds. In Nov. 1881 the *Enterprise and Vermonter* noted, “Stephen Bates is handling a very fine colt for Hon. F. E. Woodbridge. It was sired by Ralph Sattley’s ‘Walkill Chief.’” The edition of January 5, 1883 reported, “Stephen Bates is handling a very promising ‘Burgo’ colt for Mr. F. A. Woodbridge. He bids fair to be a clipper.” Bates was entrusted with the delivery of fine horses both in Vermont and out of state. In May 1883, Bates delivered “a fine pair of driving horses” to Col. Scranton of New Jersey, and was employed by Scranton for several months in New Rochelle, NY before returning to Vermont.



Sheriff Bates on the Job

From the start of his career as a lawmaker, Sheriff Bates was news. On April 7, 1879, the *Orleans County Monitor*, published in Barton, VT, over 100 miles from Vergennes, included a notice, “Vergennes has elected ex-Congressman F. E. Woodbridge Mayor, while his colored coachman, Stephen Bates, is the new Sheriff.” This might have raised the question of whether Bates owed his position to the influence of the Mayor, but the following year, the *Burlington Free Press* election results listed “Stephen Bates, Sheriff (unanimously).” Bates was re-elected annually for decades.

Many newspaper stories record events that took place while Steven Bates was on the job as Sheriff and Chief of Police. Bates was the arresting officer in cases involving murder, grand larceny, check forgery, vagrancy, and other offenses in Vergennes and the surrounding areas, including Panton and Ferrisburg. In 1897, Sheriff Bates and the Deputy Sheriff were each awarded \$100 by the Assistant Attorney General of the Post Office Department for their services in arresting two people involved with robbing post offices in Morrisville, Glover, and Windsor in 1894.

The job could be dangerous at times. Attempted murder charges were brought against a man who tried to kill Sheriff Bates while he was responding to a call, and a trial ensued The man was not convicted of attempted murder, but instead pled guilty to obstructing, beating, and wounding an officer.

His obituary noted some of his more prominent cases:

While Chief of Police he had the satisfaction of arresting ‘Brooklyn Slim’ and ‘Ottawa Red,’ two members of a gang of post office burglars, who are now serving sentences in the state prison, and at one time [Bates] had in his custody as a tramp, Perry the New York train robber, but released him before he was informed that the Pinkertons wanted him.”

ANOTHER LODGER.—Genial city officer Bates had a transient of the genus-hobo who desired lodging at the “Bates house” during the storm of Sunday night. He was accommodated, and officer Bates was detailing the circumstances to a number of citizens during the evening. He stated that the poor fellow was about shoeless. One big-hearted citizen who was fortunate enough to have two pairs of shoes was present and his heart went into his shoes at the thought of a fellow-being “on his uppers” on such a night. He kindly volunteered to donate a pair of shoes. They were presented to the poor tramp who said **HE WOULD BLACK THEM HIMSELF.** Officer Bates will be fortunate if some of his guests do not carry off the “Bates house” some night,

(above) The nickname “Bates House” for the Old Jail appears in the whimsical paragraph “Another Lodger” in the *Enterprise and Vermonter*, Dec. 7, 1894.

(right) The Old Jail in Vergennes. Bixby Library Collection



When Bates was Sheriff, the “Old Jail” in Vergennes was still standing, but no longer in use. Bates sometimes accompanied prisoners to the House of Corrections in Rutland. However, transients knew that they could find shelter in the Old Jail, and sometimes even shoes, an overcoat, or a blanket if they appealed to Officer Bates.

The nickname “Bates House” may have fallen out of use, but as late as 1936, the newspaper recalled “For several years this old jail has been used almost entirely as an overnight stop for tramps, whose grape vine . . . carried the word that Vergennes was good for a night’s shelter with fire and blankets and perhaps a meal.” Deemed “unsafe and unsanitary,” the Old Jail was demolished in 1936.



Stephen Bates | Vergennes Sheriff

The Bates Family & Their Neighborhood

In 1871, Stephen Bates married Frances Mason of Elizabethtown, NY. They had two children. Rose Mary was born in 1872, and Fredrick Napoleon, born in 1875, known as “Fred.” Stephen Bates and his family were active members of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, where Bates sang in the choir. The Bates family lived on North Street in Vergennes a few doors east of the park at the center of the city. Nearby stood the Woodbridge home and the city offices. Sheriff Bates was very involved in the community life of Vergennes. He sang in the choir, and attended Republican Party gatherings and was appointed to a campaign committee. He enjoyed social occasions with local businessmen and on one occasion was winner of a coal stove at a lottery where other prizes included horses and wagons. He also was appointed an agent for the Humane Society.

In 1880, the Bates home was seriously damaged by fire. Some community members at the time suspected arson, as retaliation against Sheriff Bates for his police duties. The citizens of Vergennes rallied around the Bates family, and raised funds to assist them during this difficult time. Twice in the following decade, Sheriff Bates mortgaged the property, and both mortgages were discharged. He purchased the home from Woodbridge’s son in 1890.

Rose and Fred Bates attended and graduated from the Vergennes elementary and high schools. Their progress through school was made public each June in school reports that appeared in the *Enterprise and Vermonter*.



(above) St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Park and Main Streets. Bates and his family were members of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church on Park Street, one block from their home.

Rose had perfect attendance and was among the top students in her class when she graduated in 1889. Fifty years later a classmate recalled Rose as “very popular, and a fine singer.” Fred was also musical. In 1891 he was chosen from among 50 voices to perform two solo parts in the Cantata “Mother Goose and Her Temperance Family.” In 1892, he and Rose were chosen to sing the Star Spangled Banner when the city celebrated the 400th Anniversary of the voyage of Christopher Columbus. Years later, Fred would become a highly regarded tenor soloist at All Saints Church in Worcester.

After graduating from Vergennes High School in 1893, Fred worked as a clerk for N. J. McCuen’s store. He

made the news by rescuing Rev. E. B. Smith, rector of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, from drowning in Lake Champlain. Days later, Smith officiated when Rose Bates married Raymond A. Schuyler of Worcester, Massachusetts, where the young couple would reside.

Frances Bates died of heart failure in 1897, at age 45. Two years later, in 1899, as a widower with no children at home, Bates sold the land on which the house had stood. For the rest of his life, he boarded with Mrs. Mary Berry at 50 East Street, and continued to serve as Sheriff and to work at various jobs around the community.

Wednesday morning at 10:30 o'clock the Episcopal church was beautifully festooned and trimmed with rare and fragrant flowers, vines, etc., the occasion being the marriage of Miss Rose M. Bates, daughter of our chief of police, Stephen Bates, and wife to Raymond A. Schuyler of Worcester, Mass. The church was crowded with the relatives and friends of the contracting parties, the rector, Rev. E. B. Smith officiating. Mr. and Mrs. Schuyler departed on the noon express for Worcester, where they will reside.

(above) Rose Bates' wedding to Raymond A. Schuyler was described in detail in the Middlebury Register, August 18, 1893 p.4.

*For 26 Years Colored Man Has Been
The Chief of Police of Vergennes, Vt.*

**STEPHEN BATES ABLE
AND TRUSTED OFFICER**

Also a City Sheriff and Has No
Trouble in Procuring His
\$10,000 Bonds—Aided by
Late Col. Woodbridge.

[Special Dispatch to the Boston Herald.]
VERGENNES, Vt., Dec. 26, 1905. ▲
colored man has been the trusted and respected chief of police and city sheriff of Vergennes for 26 consecutive years. He is Stephen Bates, born of free parents, in Shirley, Charles City county, Va., in 1842. He lived with the Hill Carter family and has vivid recollection of Gen. Robert E. Lee, the Custises and other prominent families. His father was a carpenter and Stephen was trained to be a waiter, though he has followed that employment but little. During the war Bates was in the service of officers at Harrison's Landing, and afterward went to Washington. There he entered the service of Col. Frederick E. Woodbridge, member of Congress, returned with him to Vergennes in 1866 and remained with him until Mr. Woodbridge's death. After his retirement from Congress Col. Woodbridge was elected mayor of Vergennes, and the same year Bates was elected city sheriff and chief of police. His standing in the community was such that he was able to furnish the bond of \$10,000. No exciting adventures have come to him while police chief. He had the satisfaction of arresting Brooklyn Slim and Ottawa Red, two members of a gang of postoffice burglars, who are now serving sentences in the state prison, and at one time had in his custody as a tramp Perry, the New York train robber, but released him before he was informed that the Pinkertons wanted him. Bates was married some years ago, but his wife is dead. A son is living in New York and a daughter in Worcester, Mass. Mr. Bates is almost entirely self-taught, is a good citizen as he has been a faithful officer, and occupies a high place in the estimation of the people of Vergennes.

STEPHEN BATES.

(above) Boston Herald, December 27, 1905.

Over the years, Sheriff Bates’ reputation spread beyond the local community. In the *Boston Herald* of December 27, 1905, a special dispatch datelined Vergennes, Vt., informed readers, “*For 26 Years Colored Man has been Chief of Police in Vergennes, Vermont . . . Stephen Bates Able and Trusted Officer.*”

Perhaps the people of Vergennes were becoming concerned about Bates’ health. There had been reports of illness in 1896, and in 1903 he had been badly bruised after falling from a ladder while picking apples.

January of 1907 saw an alarming report that “Stephen Bates suddenly collapsed on Saturday about six o’clock while crossing Main Street in front of Norton’s feed store, falling to the ice on his face and slightly bruising it. He was taken into the feed store and a doctor was called who revived him.” The notice concluded, “Mr. Bates is subject to heart spells.” Only a few months later, on a Sunday evening in June, Sheriff Bates suffered cardiac arrest while milking a cow. He was 64 years old.

St. Paul’s Episcopal Church was filled with mourners. Fred Bates, Rose and Raymond Schuyler and their son came from Worcester. Newspapers published tributes. But the *Boston Herald* article had already summed up the community’s feelings about Sheriff Bates with a few well-chosen words: “He is as good a citizen as he is a faithful officer, and occupies a high place in the estimation of the people of Vergennes.”



(left) Old Vergennes City Hall as it appeared during Bates’ first years as Sheriff and Chief of Police. Bixby Library Collection.

(below) Newly restored, the grave marker of Stephen Bates and his wife Frances stands in Prospect Cemetery in Vergennes. Photo, Catherine Brooks.



CANTATA!
“Mother Goose and her Temperance Family,”
— WILL BE AT —
SCHOOL : HOUSE : HALL,
TUESDAY EVE., FEB. 10, 1891.
CAST OF CHARACTERS:
Mother Goose.....Miss Mary Johnson
Old Woman in Shoe.....Miss Edna Spear
Mother Hubbard.....Adela Ingham
Jack, the Giant Killer.....Dr. W. B. Rich
Blue Beard.....O. C. Peck
King Cole.....H. W. Day
Bo Peep.....Mary Foss
Red Riding Hood.....Genevieve Goss
Goody Two-Shoes.....Clara Shepard
Jack.....Charlie Moore
Jill.....Rena Cotey
Humpty Dumpty.....Bobbie McLean
Little Boy Blue.....Louie Staples
Fritz.....Walter Ross
Pak.....Geo. Ross
Jack Horner.....Johnnie Pullman
Wandering Charlie.....Fred Bates
Jolly Jack.....Jessie Pullman
Tommy.....Fremont Everest
Boy Sing Chin.....Willie Cotey
Yankee Doodle.....Geo. Rostwick
Columbia.....Miss Edith Shively
Peggy.....Bessie Foss
Emma.....Ruth Goss
Jane.....Laura Robards
Happy Little Darlings—Edith McGovern, Sarah Foss, Mabel Gravlino, Genevieve Goss, Mary Foss, Mammie Goss, Nancy Smith, Nellie Hinder, Amy Gravlino, Mary Bailey, John Henry Goss, Grace Gordon, Arthur Tuttle, Grace Lyon, Charlie Gravlino, Lulu Yattaw, Lena Solender, Clara Pullman.
Chorus of Fifty Voices.
—Doors open at 7:30 p. m. Entertainment will commence at 8 o'clock.
TICKETS, 20 CENTS AND 25 CENTS.
—Reserved seats on sale at Young’s, on Saturday, Feb. 7th.

(above) Fred Bates sang two roles in “Cantata.” *Vergennes Enterprise and Vermonter*, Feb. 6, 1891.

(right) Vergennes High School Classes and Teams, 1893. Fred Bates is most likely the student in the back row, third from left. Bixby Library Collection.



Stephen Bates | Vergennes Sheriff

Worcester: the Next Generations

Two of Frances Mason Bates' sisters married brothers from the Storms family, land-owning Black farmers in Addison County Vermont. Thirza Mason married Eugene Storms, who lived in Pantton, in 1869. In 1871, Orphia Mason married Jonathan Robert Storms, who worked as a horse jockey. Orphia and Jonathan's daughter Harriet (called "Hattie") was born in Vergennes, and they moved to Worcester Massachusetts before the birth of their daughter Margaret in 1874. The children in these families were close in age, and it is likely that they all continued to spend time together both in Addison County and in Worcester, Massachusetts.

After her divorce from Jonathan Storms, Orphia headed her own household in Worcester and Boston until 1892, when she married Joshua Aldrich of Vergennes. The couple settled in Worcester. In 1893, Rose Bates

moved to Worcester with her new husband, Raymond Schuyler. Her brother Frederick Bates moved there as well, and married dressmaker Louise Moore of Worcester in 1898. When Rose Bates Schuyler and Fred Bates visited from Worcester, Massachusetts with their children, and when Sheriff Bates or his wife Frances made a visit to Worcester, the news appeared in the social columns of the *Vergennes Enterprise and Vermonter*.

With a strong abolitionist presence, Massachusetts had become home to a significant population of formerly enslaved people before and during the Civil War. This pattern of migration continued for decades following the conflict. Encouraged by connections between family members and friends, the descendants of Stephen Bates became part of this "tiny but highly organized and politically active Northern black community."

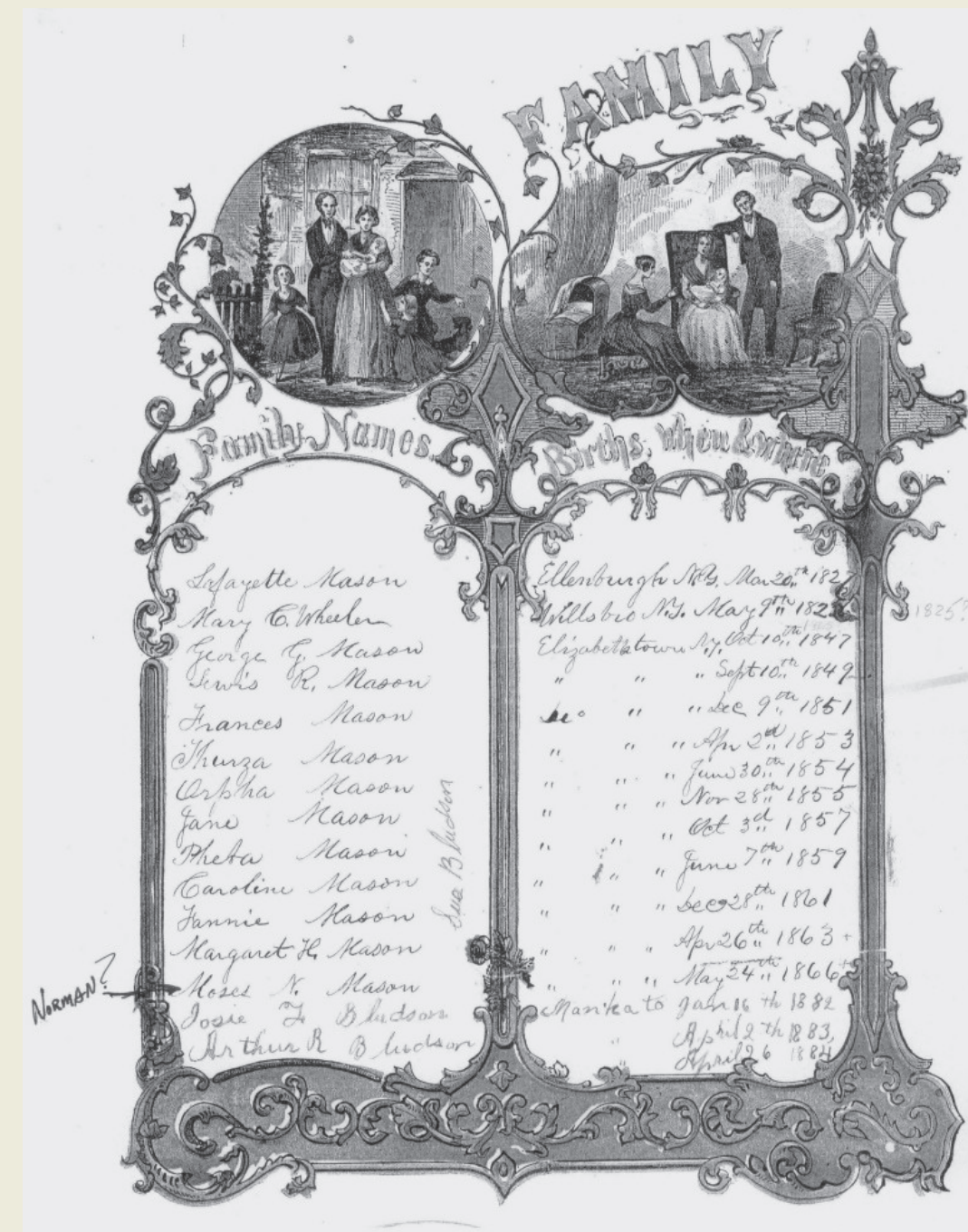


(left) Rose Bates Schuyler, image courtesy Larry Schuyler.

(right, below) Rose Bates Schuyler's son Richard, born in 1913, was the father of Larry and Nick Schuyler, image courtesy Larry Schuyler.

(right, bottom) Rose Bates, daughter of Fred Bates and Louise Moore, was named for her aunt. Courtesy of the Bullard Archives Photograph Collection.

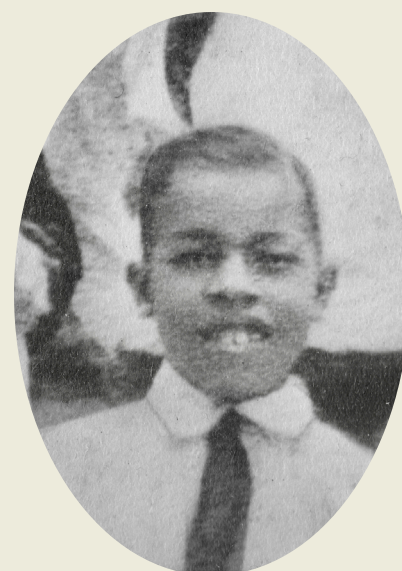
(below) Raymond Schuyler, husband of Rose Bates Schuyler, with their children Ethel, Stephen, Beatrice, and Dorothea, taken in Worcester, MA ca. 1904. Courtesy of the Bullard Archives Photograph Collection.



(above) Mason Family Record, Courtesy of Cheryl Toney Holley. (below) Marriage notice, *Vergennes Enterprise and Vermonter*, 13 August 1869.



Descendants of the Bates/Schuyler and Mason families still live in the Worcester, MA area. William Bullard, a white resident of the ethnically diverse Beaver Brook neighborhood, took over 5400 photographs of community residents between 1897 and 1918, including 236 portraits of African Americans and people of Native American descent—most of whom were his neighbors.



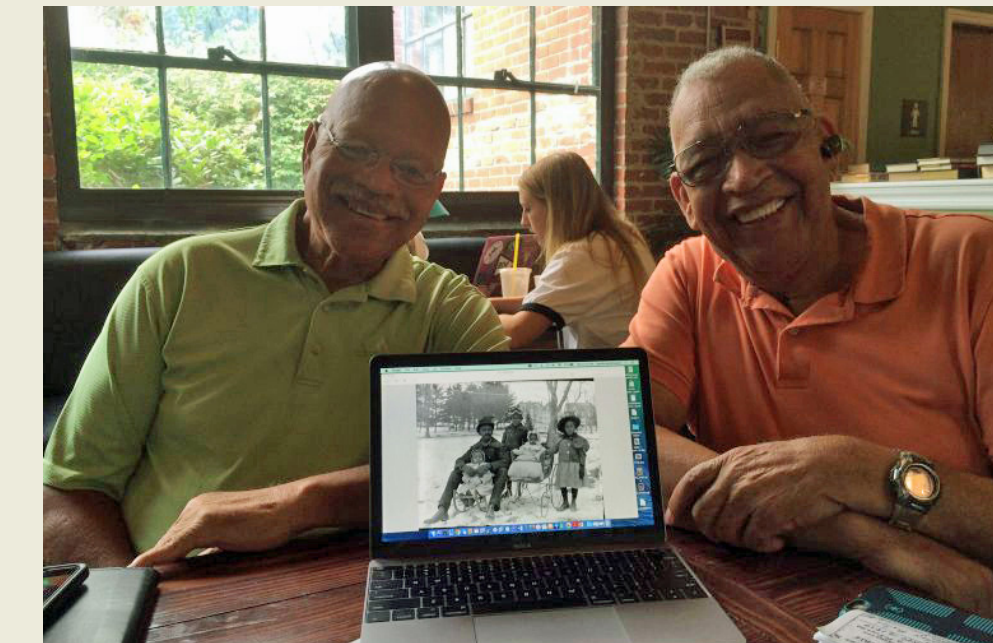
Remembering Stephen Bates

Memories of Stephen Bates remained vivid in the community for many years after his death. A 1914 newspaper article recalled that the "Famous Colored Sheriff . . . lugged the city's evil-doers to the lockup, repressed disorder, and kept the turbulent from breaking the peace."

In 1939, when the 150th anniversary of Vergennes commemorated notable citizens Sheriff Bates was included. Reporters then posed a question: Had there ever been another Black Sheriff in Vermont? Another Black officer, Brian Peete, was elected Police Chief of Montpelier, Vermont's capital, in 2020.

In 2019-20, Sheriff Bates' great-grandsons, Larry Schuyler and Nick Schuyler of Massachusetts, teamed up with a group of historians and community members to research Sheriff Bates' story and create a permanent roadside historic marker in Vergennes.

(below) A visit to Vergennes by Larry and Lynn Schuyler in 2019 to learn more about family history has rekindled the connection between the communities where the Bates family lived.



Larry (left) and Nick Schuyler, great-grandsons of Stephen Bates, with ca. 1904 photograph of Rose Bates Schuyler's family. Research on this William Bullard photo of Bates' descendants exhibited in Worcester, MA was the catalyst for Larry and Lynn Schuyler's 2019 visit to Vergennes, and sparked the Historic Marker project.

(below) Marker Team Co-Chairs Lizbeth Ryan, Bo Price, and Alicia Grangent hold the Congressional Record. In background, the former home of Congressman Frederick Woodbridge, now the Rectory of St. Paul's Episcopal Church.



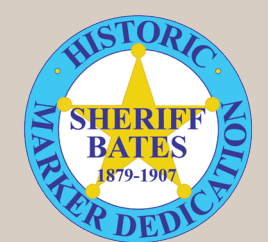
Further information
about Stephen Bates
is available online at

bixbylibrary.org



HONORING STEPHEN BATES Congressional Record Roadside Historic Marker State Proclamation

Rediscovering the history of Stephen Bates
Special thanks to all who helped
to make this project possible



Beth Awhaitey
Outreach Representative, Office of U. S. Senator Bernie Sanders

Eloise Beil
Historical Research & Editing, Marker Team

Catherine Brooks
Historical Research, Marker Team

Mike Daniels
Superintendent of Prospect Cemetery

Susan Ferland
President, Vergennes Historical Society

Alicia Grangent
Marker Team Co-Chair

Janette Thomas Greenwood
Professor of History, Clark University

Catharine Findiesen Hays
Director, Bixby Library

Jeff and Andrew Fritz
Contributors

Cheryll Toney Holley
Chief/Sachem Hassanamisco Band, Nipmuc Nation; Historian of Native American and African-American genealogy

Sarah Lyman
Designer

Lenore Morse
Librarian and Historian

Bo Price
Lead Researcher & Chair, Marker Team

Ron Redmond
Vergennes City Manager

Rebecca Rey
Designer

Lizbeth Ryan
Community Facilitator, Marker Team Co-Chair

Timothy Ryan
Contributor

Larry Schuyler
Great-grandson of Stephen Bates

Nick Schuyler
Great-grandson of Stephen Bates

Cookie Steponaitis
Educator

Ann Sullivan
Educator, Oral History (deceased)

Laura Trieschmann
Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

Jane Williamson
Historical Research

Grave Marker
Restoration
Prospect Cemetery
Special Thanks To
**Deborah Hardy &
Jim "Woody" Woodman**



Press Coverage

Polly Heminway, Andy Kirkaldy, *Addison Independent*
Elizabeth Murray, *Burlington Free Press*
Dan Bolles, *Seven Days*