



Log School House, Teacher and Scholars, Underhill, Vt., near Mansfield Mt.

A caption at the bottom of the historic image reads, "Log School House, Teacher and Scholars, Underhill, Vt., near Mansfield Mt." The image shows eight children and a woman standing in front of a one-room schoolhouse. The photograph comes from a stereoview.

Courtesy of UVM Landscape Change Program

Archive preserves visual past

UVM collection seeks curators, ages 6 to 96

By Joel Banner Baird
Free Press Staff Writer

Experts and amateurs who manage the University of Vermont's online archive of historical photographs are still looking for a new crop of curators, ages 6 to 96.

They also want your photo albums.

Geology professor Paul Bierman, one of the founders of the Landscape Change Project, said the collection was designed from the ground up in 1999 to sow interest among authorities and novices, teachers and students, historians and curiosity-seekers.

On Tuesday, Bierman and his UVM faculty colleague, Christine Massey, will lead a workshop for home-schooling parents in a hands-on scavenger hunt through their Web site.

"A big part of our mission is to disseminate successful educational models," Bierman said. "Kids see old pictures of their town, of places they know — and they start asking questions. Educators then look for a hook: What can get them interested in the science of what they're seeing?"

Images dominate the Web site. They include family snapshots, aerial photographs and scanned drawings from institutional col-

lections, some dating back 200 years.

Many of the images have been matched with more modern photographs of the same location; most have not. Some have linked GPS coordinates to Google-powered maps. Some of the pictures ("Mystery Images") lack dates and/or locations.

With an almost infinite storage and retrieval capacity, Landscape Change has room to grow with its participants. The needs of K-12 students steered the project's mission, Bierman said. And a National Science Foundation grant of \$75,000 jump-started the reciprocity between students and teachers as they built and learned from the virtual library.

"We've been blending academic research with service to the community, and Vermonters have returned the favor," Bierman said.

In the project's infancy, high school students and undergrads collected, scanned and uploaded the lion's share of photographs. Now even younger students, already

Web-savvy, are poised to shoulder more of the work.

The 'Aha' factor

Massey, whose professional life combines elements of geology and education, said old images of Vermont stimulated an appreciation for the physical and social sciences — and a host of other disciplines.

"There's so much you can pull out of a historical photograph, so many parts of the archive that appeal to so many different people," she said. "It really depends on what lens you use."

To attract diverse curiosities, the site features an online tutorial that helps in the dating of everything from fence posts to bonnets to bicycles.

"People find the 'Aha' factor, the 'Wow!' factor here," Massey said.

Historians of all ages, she added, are floored by photographs that document the widespread landscape disturbance during the construction of the interstate highway system in the early 1960s.

If you go

- **WHO:** Home-schooling parents and educators
- **WHAT:** A free, hands-on workshop featuring UVM's Landscape Change Project — a digital archive with 200 years of historical images online
- **WHEN:** 6-8:30 p.m. Tuesday
- **WHERE:** 316 Delahanty Hall, 180 Colchester Ave.
- **PARKING:** Free; available at adjacent parking lot.
- **MORE INFO:** Register with Christine Massey at christine.massey@uvm.edu or 863-3609.

"Until you've seen that part of the history, it's one of those features of the landscape that nobody looks at twice," she said.

Second glances

Shelly Snyder of South Burlington says she's a firm believer in time travel: Her students at Mount Abraham Union High School in Bristol helped launch the Landscape Change collection.

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ARCHIVE: Collection captures state's past

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The project's multi-disciplinary appeal continues to shape Snyder's curriculum in biology, forensics and field-based sciences. It also supports the Vermont Framework of Standards and the Grade Expectations.

"I'm a geologist by training, and we tend to look at the world in a more integrated way," she said. "To begin with, human years are different than geological years. This project provides

the framework for students to make connections with the past and project into the future.

A sense of urgency guides her commitment.

"We're trying to rescue the images from their great-grandmas' photo albums," Snyder said, "but as the older generations die, those images and that information are very often lost forever. We want the younger generations to get a handle on that."

Mystery prints

The University of Vermont's Landscape Change archives will always be a work-in-progress, says professor Paul Bierman, one of the project's founders.

Beyond adding new photographs to the collection, experts and amateurs are welcome to

enrich the archives with fresh details that pinpoint dates, places and identities.

The collection also contains "Mystery Images" that have defied Vermont's many online detectives.

Find out more about how you can contribute at www.uvm.edu/landscape.

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