



# Vermont Blizzards: Snow Removal then and now



It is clear that snow has always been a part of the landscape in Vermont, so how have things changed? My scrapbook captures the evolution of snow-removal technology.  
LS07086



Vermont 1959

# Blizzard of March 1888

Look how far we have come! This photograph depicts Main Street in Brattleboro, Vermont after a big snow.



Notice there seems to have been no attempt to remove snow from the roadway. If you look closely you can see a horse and cart traveling across the snow. LS01896\_000

# Snow Rollers

The reason the snow was not removed from Main street in the previous picture is because before the plow and the automobile, people used snow rollers.

LS02787\_000

Greensboro,  
Vermont  
1923



R-19 Four horses and very large wooden rollers were used to pack the roads for winter sledding travel well into the 1930's. Cars spent the winter on blocks!

# Snow Rollers continued



The purpose of these rollers was to pack down the snow (not remove it) in order to provide a smooth surface over which horses and carts could pass.  
LS03955\_000 Vermont, 1941.

# Snow Rollers

This picture gives a better idea of what snow rollers looked like and the materials they were composed of. Snow rollers were often constructed with two wooden barrels centered around a cast iron bearing to support a steel arbor. A platform was built over the rollers for a conductor, and a neck yolk was present to hold the horses. LS03993\_000 Newark, Vermont 1955.



# Winter Travel

This picture shows why it was not necessary to clear all the snow from the roads. Since most travel occurred by horse and cart, having packed snow made it easier for the carts to slide along.

LS01934\_000 Ryegate, Vermont 1907.



# The beginning of the Snow

With the invention of the automobile, packed snow on the roads was no longer safe. Snow rollers were replaced by plows with V-shaped wings.



Greensboro,  
Vermont 1950

R-3 Another view of the snowplow. Bulldozer plow was used from 1940's through most of the 1950's!

# The Snow Plow continued



Although the plows were originally driven by horses, bulldozers were all the hype in the 1940's and 50's. LS02789\_000 Greensboro, Vermont 1950.

# The evolving methods...



It is obvious from these two photographs why Vermont's snow removal program needed a face-lift. Below: LS07913\_000 Stowe, Vermont 1963.



So how did Vermont get from point a (the picture above) to point b (the picture to the right)? The answer: Vermont's Agency of Transportation. Above: LS11586\_000 Burlington, 1880.

# The Modern Plow



Today Vermont's Agency of Transportation is equipped with multiple plows and snow removal devices. They follow a three step process including salt application, sand application, and a chemical de-icing process. LS07087\_000

Williamstown, Vermont  
1965

# Everyday life

The best part of new snow removal technologies is the effect it has on people's everyday lives. During the earliest blizzards in Vermont roads were impassable for days, newspapers were shut down, and mail was not delivered for up to a week!



This picture depicts a mailman in Burlington making sure mail was delivered the day following the big Valentines Day Blizzard of 2007. This is a perfect example of how snow removal technology has bettered every day activity. LS12149\_000

# Compare..

These two pictures depict powerful blizzards: one from 1888 and one from 2007. Although the Valentines Day blizzard left cars covered in snow, the roads were cleared the day after, unlike the picture above.

Above: LS12147  
Burlington, 2007

Below: LS11584  
Burlington, 1888.



# References

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