

## A. H. WESSNER COLLECTION Donated to MHS

The Manchester Historical Society recently received a significant gift of important historical objects, photos, and documents from the estate of Albert H. Wessner of Manchester. The gift came through his niece and executor Lisa Wessner, who is the current secretary of the MHS Board of Directors.

According to curator Shawn Harrington, this is the largest gift of Manchester memorabilia since its founding in 1897. “Not since the Harris C. Whipple Collection was donated by his brother John Whipple in 1960 has such a significant assemblage of artifacts, ephemera, photographs and documents been gifted to MHS.”

His (Herb’s) lifelong dream was to share that history with people through exhibitions and community gatherings.



*Photo from the A. H. Wessner Collection.*

Albert “Herb” Wessner was raised in Manchester and graduated from Burr and Burton Seminary and the Reich American Auctioneer’s School in Mason City,



*Herb Wessner*



*From the  
A. H. Wessner  
Collection...*

Iowa. He was a licensed auctioneer and antique dealer and ran the Manchester Flea Market for many years until his death in 2014. Herb was an avid collector and history buff and was well known by several generations of Manchester families.

“Herb’s career and passion for history gave him the foresight and means to collect a vast amount of local

## Exceptional Service Awards Longtime Contributors Honored

The MHS Board of Directors inaugurated the Exceptional Service Award in 2017 to permanently acknowledge supporters who deserve public recognition for their contributions to the preservation of Manchester's history. On December 11, two longtime contributors were honored as this year's recipients, architect Bill Badger and former curator Wesley Hill.

Bill has been the quiet force behind the Manchester Historical Society for several decades. A graduate of Dartmouth and the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Fine Arts, he returned to Vermont to raise a family and set up practice as an architect with a special interest in historic preservation. His love of history led him to begin a long relationship with the Manchester Historical Society.

Over the years his quiet determination and persistent dedication to MHS have kept it humming. Though he emphasizes that his role was one of bringing people together, he also served in several different capacities including president. In addition to MHS, Bill has given generously of his time to other local nonprofits boards over the years including the Manchester Community Land Trust, Riley Rink at Hunter Park, the Northshire Courthouse Preservation Committee, and the Bromley Outing Club. His passion for railroads led him to become one of the founders of the Rutland Railroad Historical Society.

Wes was born in Manchester, his family having arrived in 1913. Wes graduated from Burr and Burton Seminary (now Academy) in 1982 and went to work for the Orvis Company in 1994. His great friend, the late Herbie Wessner, got him hooked on Manchester history in 1995 and he has been studying it ever since. Wes is an amazing repository of all kinds of local historical knowledge. With his marvelous memory, he has been a solid



*Bill Badger and Wesley Hill at awards ceremony.*

source of names, places, and relationships in Manchester's history. He is generous with his knowledge and ready to respond to all who need his help finding some fact, no matter how arcane, and has devoted many hours in recent years to helping MHS catalogue the collection and sort out the larger items that are currently stored in a local barn. He was also an enormous help moving the collection from the Mark Skinner Library to the Manchester Community Library in 2014. Wes is still working for the Orvis Company where, in addition to his regular duties, he volunteers his time to assure the history of the company is preserved.

MHS is deeply indebted to both of our honorees for their remarkable support for the Manchester Historical Society.

Our special thanks to Ted Hopkins and Board members Eric Severance and Kim Rizio for creating a beautifully handcrafted wood plaque, a unique permanent record for our honorees which will hang outside our room at the Manchester Community Library.

Our thanks to the Equinox Resort for their generous corporate sponsorship and for hosting the evening.

---

## Building for the Future at MHS

The Manchester Historical Society has been the sole place for saving the history of our community for 120 years. **Would you like to join us to make certain MHS can continue its work long into the future?** Legacy gifts are simple ways to make certain your values continue to enrich the life of the Manchester community through the Manchester Historical Society.

A legacy gift allows us to support MHS after our lifetime in a way that may not have been possible through lifetime gifts.

A legacy gift is part of how we decide what should happen to our assets when we no longer need them. Because MHS is a charitable organization, gifts transferred at the end of our life

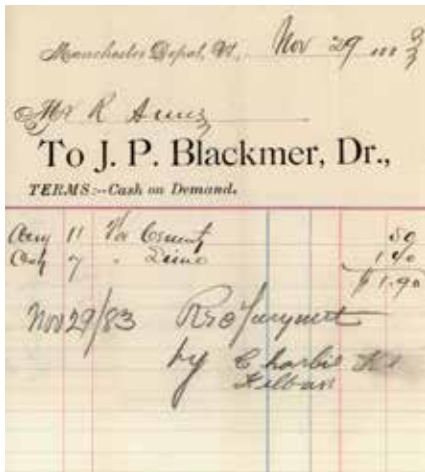
— including cash, securities, real estate, or tangible personal property — are not counted as part of our estate and are, therefore, tax exempt for our heirs.

The simplest way to plan a legacy gift is by including a bequest in your will or living trust. Gifts of retirement plan assets (IRAs) or of life insurance proceeds are also good opportunities for this "planned" gift.

If you would like to know more about how to support MHS through a legacy gift, speak to your lawyer, financial planner, or call MHS President Freddie Templeton at 802.549.4582.

## A. H. Wessner Collection

(continued from p. 1)



The A.H. Wessner Collection contains many billheads from days gone by which puts inflation into perspective.

historical items throughout his years,” Lisa explained. “His lifelong dream was to share that history with people through exhibitions and community gatherings. Unfortunately, he was never able to accomplish that during his lifetime. My dream is to ensure that what he collected will be preserved and live on for future generations to come. MHS has proven to be a viable and well-respected organization that has the resources to ensure that Herb’s legacy lives on in our community and my dream is fulfilled.”

“It is with profound appreciation that the Manchester Historical Society accepts this generous gift,” said Harrington. “The Harris C. Whipple Collection has been considered the cornerstone of the MHS archives, and with the addition of the A.H. Wessner Collection, the breadth and scope of the collection has deepened beyond what the founders could have imagined 120 plus years ago. Present and future generations owe a debt of gratitude to Lisa for her long and careful consideration of her uncle’s legacy.”

MHS looks forward to sharing more about the new additions to the collection with the community in the near future.

## UPCOMING EVENTS THIS WINTER Please Join Us!

### VT History Trivia Night

Tuesday, February 19 at 7 p.m.

*in partnership with the  
Manchester Community Library*

A fun, lighthearted program put together by the Vermont Historical Society in which teams compete for prizes by correctly answering questions about Vermont and Manchester history.



### Carving Up Vermont

Wednesday, February 20 at 10:30 a.m.

*at the Manchester Community Library*

MHS Board member Dave Quesnel will present “Carving Up Vermont,” the second in his series *Becoming Vermont*, a fond look at the history of how Vermont developed.



### Bromley Ski History Day

Saturday, March 2 at 12:30 p.m.  
in the Bromley Mountain Base Lodge

Bromley Mountain is celebrating its 60th anniversary with races

MHS curator Shawn Harrington and board member Bill Badger will present a program and answer questions on the history of Manchester’s beloved ski area.



### Cribbage Night

Friday, March 22 at 6 p.m.

*at the Manchester Community Library*

Learn how to play cribbage and enjoy a presentation of the history of board games.

Cribbage affords players both the anticipation of the luck of the deal as well as ample opportunity to exercise their skills in discarding and play.





BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
2018-2019

Frederica Templeton  
PRESIDENT

Kim Rizio  
VICE PRESIDENT

Lisa Wessner  
SECRETARY

Deborah McPherson  
TREASURER

Shawn Harrington  
CURATOR

Bill Badger  
Courtney Callo  
Irene Cole  
Mike DiMonda  
Brian Marthage  
Katy McNabb  
Michael Powers  
Dave Quesnel  
Eric Severance

The mission of the Manchester Historical Society is to collect, preserve, interpret and present the story of Manchester through the research collection, exhibitions, programs, and publications.

1897 SOCIETY



PROPRIETORS CIRCLE



UNION CLUB



Bob Fowler (at right) in conversation with former curator Wesley Hill in 2015.

## IN MEMORIAM BOB FOWLER (1923-2018)

MHS lost a great friend last September. Bob Fowler was a beloved Manchester community member who gave his time and energy to numerous nonprofit organizations.

Robert P. Fowler was born August 30, 1923, in Manchester, the fourth son of Earle Fowler and Helen Read. He lived for many years in the family home on Highland Avenue and graduated from Burr and Burton Seminary (now Academy) in 1943. Bob married Ruth Stone, a fellow graduate of Burr and Burton, in 1944, and they raised two children in Manchester. He worked as a farmer before becoming Manchester's postman. In 1952 Bob became president of the newly revitalized Manchester Historical Society and was president for a decade. He remained an active member until he moved to Bradford, VT, in 1996. Bob loved collecting historical artifacts and made generous gifts over the years to MHS as well as Burr and Burton. He is survived by his wife Ruth and their two children Roger Fowler and Trudy Fowler-Fadden, four grandchildren and two-great-grandchildren.

**The MHS Vault is open to visitors by appointment  
or on Friday afternoons from 1-3 p.m.  
We'd love to share our collection with you.**

IF YOU HAVE artifacts, documents, or memorabilia related to the history of Manchester, our curator, Shawn Harrington, would be very interested to speak to you. You can contact him at [info@manchesterhistoricalsocietyvt.org](mailto:info@manchesterhistoricalsocietyvt.org) or through private message on Facebook.