Vermont Genealogy Library

Home of the Vermont French-Canadian Genealogical Society

Established 1996

CONFERENCE SPEAKER & FULL LECTURE DESCRIPTIONS

Saturday, October 3, 2026

9:30 AM "Benedict Arnold: Hero or Traitor? 1776 and the Legacy of the Battle of Valcour Island"

When the fighting that ignited the American Revolution in 1775 began, Lake Champlain and the region's interconnected waterways became the "Keys to Liberty". As we mark the 250th anniversary of the Nation, Art Cohn will focus on Lake Champlain's role in the events that led to the creation of the United States of America. This will include the important saga of the American campaign to conquer Quebec in 1775, the pivotal Battle of Valcour Island in 1776, and the impact of that battle on the Battles of Saratoga during the 1777 campaign. The presentation will also seek to connect the lake's rich Revolutionary War maritime history with the cultural legacy left behind.

Art Cohn is the Director Emeritus of the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum. After a brief legal career, Art became a professional diver, spending winters in the Caribbean while running a dive business in Burlington for the remaining nine months of the year. While diving in Lake Champlain, he soon became aware of a potential treasure trove of underwater cultural heritage on the lake's bottom. Art's background in law, marine salvage, and cultural resource public policy led him to want to preserve this legacy through proper management. Art is the co-founder of the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum and is researching and writing a book titled "Benedict Arnold: Treason at West Point".

11:00 AM "Using AI to Help with Your Genealogy Research"

The world of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is quickly evolving, making it easier to use in your family history research. As with all technology there are pluses and minuses. A real benefit of AI is that it might find sources that you had not thought to use. On the other hand, one needs to remember that AI is not really thinking, it is predicting what it thinks you want for answers based on what it has seen previously. Marcie Crocker will go over how to word your prompts in order to increase the productive leads AI generates, and reduce the possibility of it generating fabrications.

Marcie Crocker is an experienced genealogist. She has been a long-time volunteer at the Vermont Genealogy Library and has served as President. Marcie advises our library's visitors on FindMyPast, FamilySearch and other online databases.

1:45 PM "Photo Restoration Using Artificial Intelligence"

Peter Crosby's presentation will focus on how the advancements in computer technology can be harnessed with artificial intelligence to preserve treasured photographs, videographys and memorabilia. Mr. Crosby's experience spans over 30 years in restoration and preservation of old still photographs, 1930's 8mm home movies, documents and newspaper clippings. He has used a variety of photo and film editing programs and is excited to now present the opportunities using artificial intelligence (AI). He has found that these tools are easily accessible for enhancing, repairing and even animating old photos and films to bring our ancestors to life to share.

Peter Crosby is a 72-year-old tenth-generation Vermonter living in Essex Junction, Vermont. A dedicated family historian and lifelong history buff, he has been deeply involved in genealogy for more than 50 years. Peter has spent years experimenting with techniques to preserve historical images. Peter combines technical skill, historical curiosity, and a deep appreciation for Vermont's heritage as he continues to share his knowledge and passion with fellow historians, genealogists, and enthusiasts.

Misc. Information

Our schedule will include a short business meeting for members. Come early to browse genealogy displays and our book sale.

The conference is in-person only and will not be recorded.

Registration

Cost: $42 Members - $52 Non-Members
The option of a sandwich lunch for $15 may be ordered ahead.

To facilitate planning, please register via our website. Mail in registrations should be received by September 25th.