



Setting as Character:

Vermont's Landscape, Stories, and Sense of Place

November 3-4, 2006 • FRIDAY EVENING AND ALL DAY SATURDAY • KILLINGTON GRAND HOTEL



VERMONT HUMANITIES COUNCIL — 2006 ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE

Presented in partnership with



LITERATURE • POETRY • PAINTING • HISTORY • PHOTOGRAPHY • ORAL HISTORY

**“If you don’t know where you are,
you don’t know who you are.” – Wendell Berry**

When did the desire to save what is special about Vermont begin, and why have concerns about balancing prosperity and progress with preservation echoed throughout the state’s history? How has the landscape shaped the character of Vermont and its people? How have Vermonters in turn shaped the landscape? And how can we understand our state better by examining the humanities of its landscape?

Speakers



Paul Bierman

Professor of Geology, University of Vermont

Bierman has done research in Vermont, Canada, Australia, Africa, Israel, and the American Southwest. His latest efforts use historic imagery to document the impact of people on the Vermont landscape and the impact of landscape events on people and societies in our state.



John Harris

Director, Monadnock Institute of Nature, Place, and Culture, Franklin Pierce College

Harris holds a Ph.D. in English from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. His work on the study of place has appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *Boston Globe*, and the *Keene Sentinel*. He was a distinguished collegium chair at the Orion Millennium Conference.



John Elder

Professor of English and Environmental Studies, Middlebury College

Elder is author of *Reading the Mountains of Home* and *The Frog Run*.

He recently completed a manuscript on George Perkins Marsh. Elder received a Guggenheim Fellowship to work on a book about the future of Vermont’s forests.

Bridget Besaw

Fall Conference Schedule

Friday, November 3

- 1:45 PM** **Outdoor excursion: “Vermont Forests: Past, Present, and Future,”** Gary Salmon, District Urban and Community Forester, Vermont Department of Forests and Parks. On a tour of sites in Mendon, examine trees, stone walls, cellar holes, cemeteries—land use past and present—to reveal a social and natural resource history of what is still a very forested, undeveloped town. Attendees must register in advance. *Meet in main lobby, Killington Grand Hotel. Depart at 2:00 PM. Limited to 30 people.*
- 4:00–6:00 PM** **Registration,** *Lower Lobby, Killington Grand Hotel*
- 7:30 PM** **“Imaging and Imagining the Place that Was and Is Vermont,”** presentation by Paul Bierman, Professor of Geology, University of Vermont, *Oscar Wilde Ballroom*
- 8:30 PM** **“Save Us a Place,”** Woodstock High School Speakchorus under the direction of Harriet Worrell, *Oscar Wilde Ballroom*
- 9:00 PM** **Reception, cash bar,** *Oscar Wilde Ballroom*

Saturday, November 4

- 7:00 AM** **Registration and continental breakfast,** *Lower lobby*
- 8:30 AM** **Welcome,** Peter Gilbert, Vermont Humanities Council Executive Director and Darby Bradley, Vermont Land Trust President; presentation of Victor R. Swenson Humanities Educator Award, *Oscar Wilde Ballroom*
- 9:15 AM** **“Cultivating Place and Community in Northern New England,”** keynote address by John R. Harris, director, Monadnock Institute for Nature, Place, and Culture, Franklin Pierce College, *Oscar Wilde Ballroom*
- 10:15 AM** **Break**
- 10:30 AM** **Breakout sessions**
- 19th- and 20th-Century Vermont Landscape Poetry
 - Back to the Land
 - Imaging Vermont’s Landscape: Re-defining Pastoralism in the 21st Century
 - Natural and Artificial Subdivisions of Vermont: How Who We Are is Shaped by Lines, History, and Allegiance
 - Observations of the Rural Humanscape: A Photographer’s Reflections Over Time
 - Stories Conjuring Place
 - Vermont as a Setting for Writers
- 12:00 PM** **Lunch,** *Oscar Wilde Ballroom*
- 1:15 PM** **“Vermont Land and Life: Historical and Geographic Perspectives,”** afternoon panel with Dona Brown, Paul Searls, and Blake Harrison, *Oscar Wilde Ballroom*
- 2:30 PM** **Break**
- 2:45 PM** **Breakout sessions,** *same as above*
- 4:15 PM** **“Landscape, Community, and the Destiny of Vermont,”** endnote address by John Elder, Professor of English and Environmental Studies, Middlebury College, *Oscar Wilde Ballroom*
- 5:15 PM** **Conference ends**

Lodging - Rooms at the Killington Grand Hotel are \$109 single or double on a first-come, first-served basis. For reservations, 888.644.GRAND (888.644.7263) or www.killington.com. Be sure to mention the conference to receive the special conference rate.

Contact - 802.262.2626 • info@vermonthumanities.org • www.vermonthumanities.org

VERMONT HUMANITIES COUNCIL — 2006 ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE

The Vermont Humanities Council's fall conference will examine more than two centuries of thinking about Vermont's landscape and sense of place.

Conference goers can get an early start to the conference Friday afternoon with “**Vermont Forests: Past, Present, and Future,**” an outing with Gary Salmon, a Vermont Department of Forests and Parks forester.

Friday evening, University of Vermont Professor of Geology Paul Bierman formally opens the conference with “**Imaging and Imagining the Place that Was and Is Vermont.**” Using images of Vermont then and now from UVM's Landscape Change Program, he will illustrate how people have changed the landscape and how the landscape has changed lives. Woodstock High School's Speakchorus will cap the evening with *Save Us a Place*, a spoken and musical recitation of nature writing and poetry evoking what is special about Vermont and how we must preserve that distinctiveness for future generations.

On Saturday, John Harris, director of the Monadnock Institute of Nature, Place, and Culture, will give the keynote address “**Cultivating Place and Community in Northern New England.**” His talk will examine place, community, and the importance of stories in connecting people to the landscape.

Morning and afternoon breakout sessions will examine Vermont poetry, painting, photography, oral history, history, fiction, and the back-to-the-land movement.

An afternoon panel, “**Vermont Land and Life: Historical and Geographic Perspectives,**” explores how Vermont's landscape has been shaped by the interaction of human activity and human ideas.

And John Elder, author and Middlebury College professor, will bring the conference to a close with “**Landscape, Community, and the Destiny of Vermont.**”

Breakout Sessions

Every session runs twice—once in the morning and again in the afternoon.

19th- and 20th-Century Vermont Landscape Poetry — Vermont-based poets have long evoked nostalgia about the landscape they loved and feared was fast disappearing. Delve into this grand tradition with works from the 19th century to modern times. **Facilitator:** *Arthur W. Biddle, Professor Emeritus of English, University of Vermont and co-editor of The Literature of Vermont: A Sampler.*

Back to the Land — Explore the back-to-the-land movements of the 20th century, with a focus on how Vermont migrants of the 1930s and the 1970s shaped the contemporary image of the state. **Facilitator:** *Dona Brown, Associate Professor of History and former Director of the Center for Research on Vermont, University of Vermont*

Imaging Vermont's Landscape: Re-defining Pastoralism in the 21st Century — This session offers a visual presentation and discussion of historical and recent images and concepts of the Vermont landscape in painting and photography. Traditional landscape images and their attendant literary viewpoints from the 19th and 20th centuries are juxtaposed with the broader regional constructs of imaging Vermont. **Facilitator:** *William Lipke, Professor Emeritus of Art, University of Vermont*

Natural and Artificial Subdivisions of Vermont: How Who We Are is Shaped by Lines, History, and Allegiance — The landscape is defined by boundaries, between what is Vermont and what is not Vermont, between what is one town and another. Nature is framed by borders. Geography alone has never been sufficient; lines define us. Investigate those definitions and those lines within the context of law, history, and politics. **Facilitator:** *Paul Gillies, attorney, Tarrant, Marks & Gillies; Deputy Secretary of State 1981–1993*

Observations of the Rural Humanscape: A Photographer's Reflections Over Time — Join John Miller, photographer-author of *Deer Camp: Last Light in the Northeast Kingdom* and *Granite and Cedar: The People and the Land of Vermont's Northeast Kingdom*, for a three-decade retrospective show-and-tell of projects incorporating the Vermont landscape and the impact of people upon it. Also featured is his work in the American West and Europe, which highlights how landscape is appropriated for human endeavor. **Facilitator:** *John M. Miller, Associate Professor of Photography and Digital Media and Chair, Department of Fine Art, Johnson State College*

Stories Conjuring Place — Drawing on the storytelling of lifelong Braintree, Vermont resident Perkins Flint, this session explores the ways in which memory and narrative over time build a sense of place. Flint's stories reflect relationships that bind people to specific locations and make place matter in people's lives. **Facilitator:** *Gregory Sharrow, Director of Education, Vermont Folklife Center*

Vermont as a Setting for Writers — Yvonne Daley, author of *Vermont Writers: A State of Mind*, and Ann McKinstry Micou, author of *A Guide to Fiction Set in Vermont*, discuss the elements of the Vermont landscape that have attracted writers throughout history. **Facilitator:** *Yvonne Daley and Ann McKinstry Micou*

Panel Biographies



Dona Brown

Associate Professor of History, University of Vermont and former Director of the Center for Research on Vermont

Brown is author of *Inventing New England: Regional Tourism in the 19th Century*. Her current research is on the back-to-the-land movements of the early 20th century.



Paul Searls

Assistant Professor of Social Sciences, Lyndon State College

Searls is author of *Two Vermonts: Geography and Identity, 1865–1910*, which explores the tensions between those who promoted progress and modernization in rural New England, and those who sought to maintain traditional institutions and habits.



Blake Harrison

Adjunct Professor, Department of Geography, Southern Connecticut State University

Harrison's research explores the historical and cultural geography of North America, with an emphasis on New England. His book, *The View from Vermont: Tourism and*

the Making of an American Rural Landscape, examines tourism's role in the production of rural landscapes and rural identity.

VHC Fall Conference Registration Form

Conference fee – The \$95 fee includes Friday’s outdoor excursion, presentations, and reception; Saturday’s programs, continental breakfast, lunch, and snacks; and reading materials. Space is limited; registration is first-come, first-served. Students and teachers are encouraged to attend; certification letters are available. An on-site bookstore will be open during the day.

Registration and payment deadline is October 20; after the deadline, registrations will be accepted as space is available.

Cancellations: refund less \$25 fee until October 20; no refund after October 20. A few scholarships are available; deadline is October 13. One person per registration form. The scholarship form and additional registration forms are available at www.vermonthumanities.org. Make checks payable to **Vermont Humanities Council** and send to 11 Loomis Street, Montpelier, Vermont 05602 or fax to 802.262.2620.

First name _____ Last name _____

Mailing address _____

Town _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (day) _____ E-mail _____

Vegetarian meals? (circle) Yes No First VHC conference? (circle) Yes No

Special needs? _____

Fee: \$95 Full registration \$ _____

Conference scholarship donation \$ _____

Total due \$ _____

Check enclosed for \$ _____

Charge to (circle) Visa MC Exp. date _____ Card no. _____

Signature _____

Check if applicable _____ I am a teacher and need a participation letter for teacher recertification.

_____ Yes, I will attend the Friday outdoor excursion: “Vermont Forests: Past, Present, and Future”

Morning session (rank preference, 1–7)

- _____ 19th and 20th Century Vermont Landscape Poetry
- _____ Back to the Land
- _____ Imaging Vermont’s Landscape: Re-defining Pastoralism in the 21st Century
- _____ Natural and Artificial Subdivisions of Vermont: How Who We Are is Shaped by Lines, History, and Allegiance
- _____ Observations of the Rural Humanscape: A Photographer’s Reflections Over Time
- _____ Stories Conjuring Place
- _____ Vermont as a Setting for Writers

Afternoon session (rank preference, 1–7)

- _____ 19th and 20th Century Vermont Landscape Poetry
- _____ Back to the Land
- _____ Imaging Vermont’s Landscape: Re-defining Pastoralism in the 21st Century
- _____ Natural and Artificial Subdivisions of Vermont: How Who We Are is Shaped by Lines, History, and Allegiance
- _____ Observations of the Rural Humanscape: A Photographer’s Reflections Over Time
- _____ Stories Conjuring Place
- _____ Vermont as a Setting for Writers