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For Immediate Release
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PRESS RELEASE

**Sec'y of State Jim Condos Announces
150 Years of Caledonia County Court History Open for Research**

Montpelier, VT – Secretary of State Jim Condos announced today that the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (VSARA), a division of the Office of the Secretary of State, is making steady progress on an initiative to preserve and improve access to Vermont's archival court records. VSARA recently completed processing of all Caledonia County court records from 1794 to 1945. Orleans County court records were opened for research in July 2012 and Lamoille County court records will be completed this summer.

"Court records are especially valuable because they reflect – sometimes dramatically – the effects of legislation on the lives of Vermonters," Condos said. "For example, the court records in Caledonia County show us how Vermont's 1853 prohibition law was enforced, and how probation was instituted in the state beginning in 1898. At the heart of those issues were ideas about justice that are not very different from what's being debated today with regards to the decriminalization of marijuana for instance."

According to State Archivist Tanya Marshall, the Caledonia County records also document key local historical developments such as early-19th century smuggling, the rise of the granite industry, the influence of the temperance movement, changing ethnic patterns in Caledonia towns, and the capture of a notorious counterfeiting ring in Groton. One hundred and sixty cubic feet of case files and over three hundred dockets and record books comprise a nearly unbroken history of the county court, supreme court, and court of chancery in Caledonia County.

Researchers and legal historians are encouraged to visit VSARA and take advantage of these resources. VSARA's Reference Room in Middlesex is open Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Archivists are also available to answer questions by phone at 802-828-2308 or by e-mail at archives@sec.state.vt.us

In 2011, VSARA was awarded a grant of \$118,078 from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) to preserve and improve access to archival court records. The NHPRC, the granting arm of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), supports a wide range of activities to preserve, publish, and encourage the use of documentary sources, created in every medium ranging from quill pen to computer, relating to the history of the United States.

The mission of VSARA is to provide, protect, promote, and preserve Vermont public records, in collaboration with other public agencies, for the benefit of the public. To learn more, visit www.vermont-archives.org.

Jim Condos is Vermont's Secretary of State.

