

I come here today directly from listening to Dara Horn, author of "People Love Dead Jews," talking at Keene State University on "Jews in a Non-Jewish World." Horn's most pressing point about Holocaust education is that it leaves behind Jewish culture at 1945. Vermont has had Jewish connections since its founding -- Alexander Harvey and his crew, choosing land to settle on in Barnet VT, took a break to travel and worshipped with Jews, according to his journal, and one of Lyndon's most prosperous businesses in the late 1800s and early 1900s was owned by the Stern family, who sent away to New York City for a rabbi to arrive by train when their daughter was ready to marry. Such historic details are rarely raised in Vermont today. (I may be one of the few authors to do the research and bring them up.)

More critically, most of the Vermonters I meet outside Burlington have not knowingly met a Jew. This is in part because even Vermont Jews have learned to hush themselves. My late husband Dave Kanell, a 40-year synagogue leader, would not place a menorah in the windowsill (a tradition) because he understood that it was dangerous to become a target for antisemitism. For several of my neighbors now, I am the only Jew they've met; there are four Jews in Waterford, and the other three decline to publicly self-identify at most times. This enduring lack of community awareness feeds the contagious disorder of antisemitism. Please raise awareness in school curricula, among educators, and among our communities that Jews are an important part of Vermont, and their history -- and current culture -- are valuable to our children and adults.

Thank you.

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