

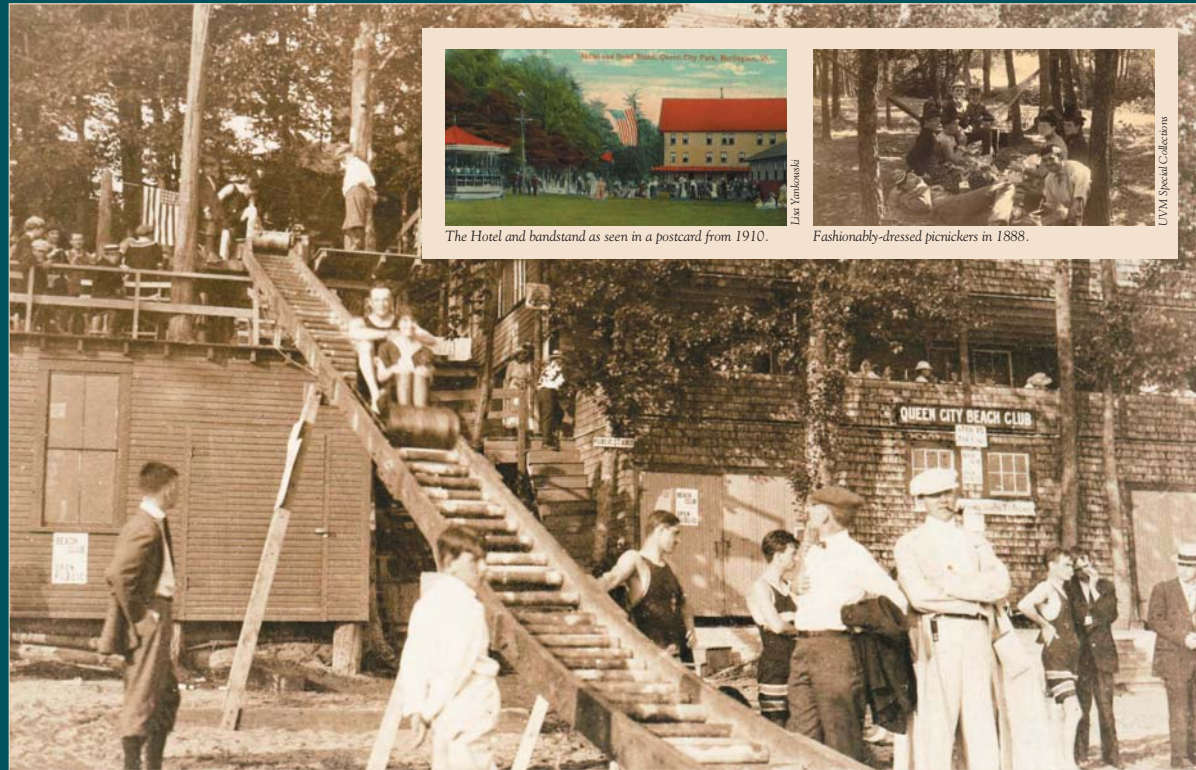
# Summers at Queen City Park



The neighborhood of Queen City Park and the beach below you were the scene of both religion and recreation for more than 100 years. After the Civil War, the Central Vermont Railroad, which owned several acres in this area, built a hotel on this picturesque overlook. They also built a small dock jutting out into Shelburne Bay below to allow steamboats to deliver and pick-up visitors (even from as far as Québec) to this popular beach. The area around the hotel grew as both a community of summer cottages and a popular spot for tourists and area residents to picnic and swim and walk the trails of the nearby Hatch estate, now known as Red Rocks Park.

In 1881, the Queen City Park Association, an offshoot of the Vermont State Spiritualist Association, purchased the hotel and the surrounding acreage to use for an annual month-long camp meeting held every August. Participants stayed at the hotel, rented rooms in local cottages or pitched tents. They had a broad religious conviction, believing that cultivated spiritual and intellectual qualities could save mankind (both now and in the hereafter) from sin and superstition.

Vacationers, swimmers and picnickers and Spiritualists coexisted for decades and the popularity of Queen City grew as the place to be in the summer. During the 1920s thousands of people a day would ride the trolley, with service every 20 minutes between Burlington and Queen City Park. In May 1939, a fire destroyed the hotel and several cottages and the Spiritualists held their last camp meeting that summer.



An early 20th century "waterslide"—a toboggan on rollers—dumped swimmers into Shelburne Bay (Photo, ca. 1908-1911).



The Hotel and bandstand as seen in a postcard from 1910.



Fashionably-dressed picnickers in 1888.



The trolley service promoted the region as "the Switzerland of America" due to its lake and mountain scenery.



Built in 1882 and powered by an 800-horsepower steam engine, this 168 ft (51.2m) vessel ran between Burlington and Alburgh, VT. It sank in 1902, was salvaged to Whitehall, NY, cut for scrap and its hull sunk in nearby South Bay. Its turret house is on display at the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum in Ferrisburgh, VT.



Spiritualists were most known for their faith in the ability of sensitive mediums to communicate with the dead through séances.