

PLAYING THE ODDS

Alburl, Vermont, offered little in the way of employment to Joseph Hawkins. So, at twenty, he set out on horseback for Boston. From there he caught a boat to Charleston, South Carolina, where he took a job on a slave trading ship. They set sail for West Africa on December 1, 1794.

Upon arrival, Hawkins was sent inland to exchange goods with the Ebo tribe for prisoners of war. He did as he was instructed, traveling through strange jungle and crossing paths with crocodiles, monkeys and large serpents. After he had made his trade, Hawkins returned to the ship with the natives his captain **intended** to sell as slaves in America.



They sailed for home on June 13, 1795. During the voyage, disease spread among the slaves and the crew, killing many and blinding Joseph Hawkins. It was in this condition that he returned to Vermont.

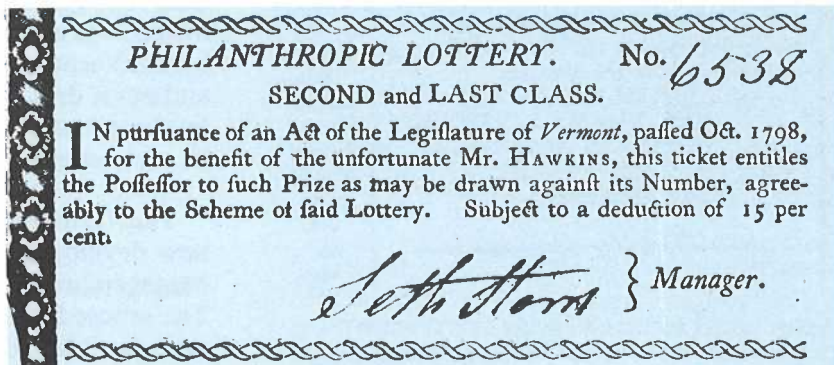
Hawkins tried in **vain** to regain his vision. He learned from doctors in this country that an **ophthalmologist** in Europe was his only hope. With no money to pay his **passage** over, he needed help. On October 30, 1798, the Vermont Legislature came to his rescue, as they had for others, by way of a state authorized lottery.

Between 1779 and 1804 Vermont's government approved forty-two state lotteries, more than either of its neighbors New York or New Hampshire. Raising money in this way was not unusual in early times. Most of the states in the Union operated lotteries **sanctioned** by their legislatures.

Initially, lotteries were used when taxes were **insufficient** to cover a proposed project like the building of a school. But as their popularity grew, so did the types of causes they supported.

Money was raised for a wide variety of purposes, chief among them the building and repairing of roads and bridges. But individuals like Joseph Hawkins were helped as well. When fire destroyed Anthony Haswell's Rutland print shop, the legislature authorized a lottery. The **proceeds** were to help him repair the structure and open again. The state also helped Joseph

LOTTERY TICKET #
6538 SOLD FOR THE
BENEFIT OF JOSEPH
HAWKINS. THE LOT-
TERY WAS AUTHOR-
IZED TO RAISE \$2,000.



SCHEME OF A LOTTERY

For raising two hundred and fifty pounds for the purpose of building two Bridges, the first over Otter-Creek near Brown's Camp the other over Leicester river at the most convenient places in order to accommodate the public.

The Lottery to consist of four thousand tickets, at one dollar each, 1276 of which are prizes of the following value, viz.

1	of	100	is	100
2		50		100
2		40		80
2		30		60
5		20		100
10		10		100
20		5		100
1234		2		2468

But little more than two blanks to a prize.

From the utility of the undertaking, the Managers flatter themselves the tickets will meet with a rapid sale, and that the drawing of the Lottery will shortly commence. A list of the fortunate numbers will be published in the Vermont Gazette immediately after the drawing.

SAMUEL WILLIAMS,
JONATHAN CARPENTER,
BENJAMIN GARFIELD,
REUBEN FULLER,
JAMES EVANS.

Sattin
Prince
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Shirts
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Striped
Brown
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Marcel
Mens
Silk,
and
ings,

Hubbard who wished to open a brewery in Weathersfield. Those who wished to participate in this lottery could buy tickets with either cash, wheat, rye or Indian corn.

At first there was general support for the lottery system. Some, however, disapproved, saying that playing the lottery was a form of gambling and as such should not be sanctioned by law. But defenders of the system argued that funds raised went to worthy and charitable causes and should be continued.

As time passed, public sentiment towards the lottery changed. Originally a fast and successful means of raising money, it became a way for private individuals, and not the intended cause, to make a profit. The Vermont lottery began to fall into disfavor.

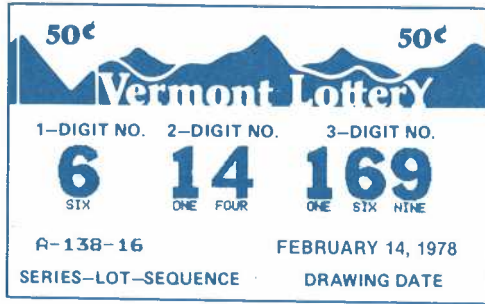
Usually 85% of the money raised from ticket sales was spent on prizes. The remaining 15%, called the deduction, went to the lottery's stated cause. Since frequently all the necessary tickets were not sold, and lottery managers were obligated to award the advertised prizes, the purpose for which the lottery was granted did not always receive the expected funds. The system was failing. In 1804 Vermont authorized its last lottery for more than twenty years.

Vermont's second wave of lotteries began in 1825 with the "Phoenix Lottery." It, like the five that followed, was an extension of earlier lotteries approved by the Vermont Legislature between 1779 and 1804 and never drawn. Since there was no time limit given by the government for their completion they could be revived at any time and were.

The Vermont Legislature was not pleased with this new development. In order to discourage lottery managers, the legislature charged hefty license fees. The proceeds went to the state's school fund. As suddenly as it had begun, Vermont's second lottery era was over.

Advertisement for the "Rutland Lottery" in the November 29, 1784, *Vermont Gazette*. Prizes for this lottery were paid in grain.

The Vermont Lottery Commission was established in the 1977 session of the General Assembly. For the first time in approximately 150 years lottery tickets went on sale in Vermont. The date was February 14, 1978. Sales were so good that the legislature approved the indefinite continuation of the program.



In 1985 more history was made. Vermont joined New Hampshire and Maine in *Tri-State Megabucks*. The first drawing was on September 14, 1985.

Lotteries have been part of Vermont's history, past and present. Maybe you know someone who plays today. Then again, maybe you had an ancestor who bought a ticket in the "Philanthropic Lottery" of 1798 to benefit Joseph Hawkins.

VOCABULARY

intend - plan

vain - without success

ophthamologist - doctor specializing in the treatment of eye disease

passage - in this context it means his boat trip

sanctioned - authorize or approve

insufficient - not enough

proceeds - profits

sentiment - feeling

obligate - to have to do something for moral or legal reasons

revive - to bring back into use

hefty - heavy or large