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BOOK REVIEWS



*Writings on New England History: Additions to the
Bibliographies of New England History Series
(to 2001)*

*Compiled and edited by Roger Parks (Boston: Massachusetts
Historical Society, 2003, pp. xvii, 372, \$85.00).*

In 1969 the Committee for a New England Bibliography was formed to compile and publish bibliographies of published historical material for the six New England states. The first six volumes published under the auspices of the Committee from 1976 to 1986 each covered a specific state. The Vermont volume was published in 1981, with Thomas D. S. Bassett serving as editor. The seventh volume covered the history of the region as a whole. Volumes 8 and 9 updated the coverage included in the first seven volumes, and the electronic version of volume 9 is available online at <http://nebib.uvm.edu>.

The latest supplement, volume 10, includes citations to books, pamphlets, magazine and journal articles, dissertations and selected theses, and a few government publications, published between 1995 and 2001. It also includes additions and corrections to the earlier bibliographies. It does not include primary sources such as newspaper articles or manuscript material that can be found through ARCCAT, a selective Vermont archives union catalog, available online at <http://dol.state.vt.us:8002/arccat>, or the *National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections*, which is available online at <http://lcweb.loc.gov/coll/nucmc/nucmc.html>.

Volume 10 retains the basic geographic arrangement of entries found in the last two supplements. The entries for New England as a region or for more than one state appear first, followed alphabetically by entries

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for the six states. The first entries within each state are for works that pertain to the state as a whole or more than one county, followed by entries for counties and towns, in alphabetical order. Periodical titles are not abbreviated, as was done in previous volumes, so it was not necessary to include a list of serial abbreviations. The drawback of this change is that it is more difficult to ascertain what periodicals have been indexed in this volume. Many entries have helpful brief annotations. The entries for many books also have an "OCLC" notation to indicate that the book is included in the massive bibliographic database developed by the Online Computer Library Center. This database enables readers to identify holding locations for books in addition to the single library holding location usually given. The five-page list of holding location symbols in the front of the volume includes libraries from as far away as California and London. The author and subject index is over a hundred pages long and the use of bold and italic type for states and towns makes it easier to quickly find geographic subdivisions within a subject heading that has many entries. The index also has "see" and "see also" references that enhance its usefulness.

The scope of this bibliography is quite broad and the guidelines for inclusion are succinct and consistent with earlier volumes in the series. Some omissions are inevitable, both among books and periodical titles. For example, periodicals published by the Rutland Railroad Historical Society and the Central Vermont Railway Historical Society do not appear to be indexed, but these are not major omissions.

Publication of the first ten volumes has been an ambitious project that has filled an important bibliographical need, thanks to very knowledgeable editors, a dedicated corps of volunteers throughout New England, and funding support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, as well as donations from members of the Committee for a New England Bibliography and other historical and cultural institutions across New England.

Since the publication of the first volume in this series in 1976 the development of computer networks and online bibliographic databases has made it easier to identify and access information resources relating to New England history. Many larger libraries now provide public access to comprehensive historical databases such as *America: History and Life*, which indexes many of the most important historical magazines and journals covering the New England states. Such databases are usually more current than most printed indexes and bibliographies, but they are also often much more expensive and not as easy to use as printed bibliographies such as the *Additions to the Bibliographies of New England History Series (to 2001)*. Another database, a full-text online version of

the *New York Times*, covering 1851 to 2001, is available to subscribers of ProQuest Historical Newspapers. A simple search in this database retrieves well over a hundred newspaper articles on the St. Albans Raid in just a few seconds, and subscribers can view all of these articles and print any articles they choose. However, the annual cost of this database probably makes it unaffordable to all but a handful of larger libraries in Vermont.

Vermont History, *Vermont History News*, and *Vermont Life* all have published cumulative indexes to provide systematic access to their retrospective contents, but searching these individual indexes is far less efficient than searching the appropriate volumes of the Bibliographies of New England History. Despite the welcome addition of commercial databases that also provide bibliographic access to information resources on New England history, this volume is recommended for purchase by libraries for its depth and breadth of coverage, its ease of use, and its portability. Scholars who regularly do research on topics relating to the history of any of the New England states will also find this latest installment in the series to be a very useful addition to their personal collections.

This volume will be updated by volume 11, which is projected for publication in 2008.

HANS L. RAUM

Hans Raum is curator of the Vermont Collection at Middlebury College.

Digital Imaging: A Practical Approach

By Jill Marie Koelling (Altamira Press, 2004, pp. viii, 85, cloth, \$69.00; paper, \$24.95)

Since the mid-1990s, the use of digital imaging technologies to provide access to cultural heritage materials in archives, museums, and research libraries has become increasingly common. In response to high interest in this exciting, but also complex and volatile technology, numerous guidebooks and manuals have become available both in print and on the web. The pioneering but brief *Introduction to Imaging* (Besser & Trant, 1996) provides only a glimpse into the subject. By contrast, more comprehensive guides, such as the *Handbook for Digital Projects: A Management Tool for Preservation and Access* (Northeast Document Conservation Center, 2000) and *Guides to Quality in Visual Resource Imaging* (see Research Libraries Group website, 2000) can be overwhelming for a novice to the digital imaging field.

Jill Marie Koelling's *Digital Imaging: a Practical Approach* should appeal to institutions and collection curators who have not yet joined the web universe but who recognize the great potential of digital technology as an instrument for sharing and preserving their unique and fragile materials in an electronic format. Modest in size, the book will especially benefit those who are looking for step-by-step guidance on organizing a digital project. The author generously shares her practical knowledge derived from experience as curator of photographic collections at the Nebraska State Historical Society, where she was in charge of digital projects. Although the majority of examples used in this book focus on historical photographs and documents, Koelling also discusses digitization of other types of materials, including maps and three-dimensional objects. For this reason, the book will be of interest to institutions holding many different types of collections, including historical societies and museums.

Koelling's book outlines the key phases of a digital project, beginning with preliminary planning and collection assessment, and ending with database design issues. A "digital glossary" of field-specific terminology precedes the main body of the book, prompting the reader to review it beforehand. Koelling effectively explains and illustrates often obscure terms such as "dynamic range," "lossless" versus "lossy" compression, "optical resolution," "metadata," and others.

Subsequent chapters are devoted to preparatory stages of a project, from collection surveys to selection of materials for digitization. The author offers plenty of advice on how to successfully manage a digital project by realistically assessing staffing needs and creating pragmatic project timelines and realistic budgets. A separate section is devoted to complex issues of copy and property rights, which are often overlooked or misunderstood by custodians of visual materials. Koelling rightly observes that imaging technology presents new and unique challenges, as computer images can be more easily disseminated and misused. She also offers valuable advice on what constitutes a successful grant application for financial support. Since most institutions cannot even contemplate a digital project without outside resources, this is a valuable contribution.

Perhaps the most intimidating part of a digital project is the technical knowledge required to successfully conduct such an undertaking. Koelling leads the reader through the maze of technical specifications of image files, their formats, potential storage media, and creation of high quality scans. She discusses how to evaluate and choose scanning equipment suitable for different types of materials and stresses the importance of documenting digital assets in order to ensure their long-term viability in conditions of ever-changing computer software and hardware.

Koelling emphasizes the necessity of following established technical and descriptive standards and practices, as this opens the way to inter-institutional collaboration and sharing of resources and expertise. The motto of her book is “scan once, scan right, scan for the future,” which is the principle on which all digitization projects should be based, so that the monetary resources and intense human effort involved are not wasted.

Koelling richly illustrates the concepts discussed throughout the book with black and white photographs, diagrams, tables, and computer screen shots, many of which may be used and modified during the conceptualizing and planning of any digital project. The footnotes and bibliography are basic, but to the point. She frequently refers to the Colorado Digitization Project, an exemplary statewide collaboration to digitize materials from a variety of institutions under centrally developed guidelines. The project’s website provides links to very useful documents on many aspects of digitization.

Koelling concludes with a chapter on the great potential of digital imaging technology to transform research on historical photographs. She illustrates these ideas by describing an important digitization project she directed. In this project high-resolution scans of glass-plate negatives from the Solomon Butcher collection revealed details previously unseen in contemporary copy prints that had previously been used to study the collection. Copy prints did not have the capacity to reproduce all the details included in original negatives. The process of scanning directly from glass plate negatives allowed replication of the original image in its full detail, as initially framed by the photographer. The other unexpected potential of digital technology lies in its capacity to recover information from badly tarnished negatives, which are often discarded as damaged beyond repair. Unlike modern photographic papers, good quality scanners have a much higher capacity to record subtle tonal range in original negatives, therefore enabling what has been lost from the image to be seen again. This last chapter captures the exciting potential of digital technology, making it not only a reproduction medium, but also a tool for uncovering unknown and unexpected areas in historical images.

Koelling’s work presents approachable, well-balanced insights into imaging technology, and is an excellent starting point for planning any digital project. If it gets the attention it deserves, this book could invigorate curators and custodians of smaller institutions, especially in Vermont, where so many precious historical materials reside in tiny, isolated places, inaccessible to a wider public. If used properly and in a timely way, digital technology may at last provide a viable gateway to the wealth of these hidden treasures.

EVA GARCELON

Eva Garcelon worked as pictorial archivist at the Bancroft Library of the University of California-Berkeley during the 1990s, where she was involved in a number of digital projects. She now lives in Middlebury, and consults on the digitization, description, and preservation of visual collections for archives and museums.

New England's Covered Bridges: A Complete Guide

By Benjamin D. and June R. Evans (Lebanon, N.H.: University Press of New England, 2004, pp. 334, \$29.95).

Subtitled “A Complete Guide,” this book by a husband-and-wife team of “longtime covered bridge aficionados” is probably the one book that tells readers the most about all the covered wooden spans of the six New England states. It also contains beautiful and instructive photos of each bridge. This book presents an immense amount of information yet it is small enough to carry in a large coat pocket. The print is small but the paper and typography are of such high quality that it is easy to read. Each bridge is given at least one page of coverage providing location, directions for getting there including GPS coordinates, year of construction and sometimes reconstruction, type of truss, waterway it crosses, present use, number of spans, owner, builder if known, length, width, condition assessment, a number referencing the *World Guide to Covered Bridges*, and its status or lack thereof on the National Register of Historic Places. This information is followed by a narrative of research into the history of the crossing and this particular bridge, its builder and costs, repairs over time and often who carried them out, and a visual assessment of the current apparent condition of the structure when the authors last visited it. While the authors refer to these narratives as “anecdotal and miscellaneous,” they appear to contain solid historical information and they avoid the folksy and romantic tendencies, sometimes disinformative, that are often found in such books.

In addition to the survey of the individual bridges, *New England's Covered Bridges* contains an introductory essay on the writers' research methodology and format, and a glossary of covered bridge terms. An illustrated discussion of truss types helps users get much more out of their visits to the bridges by explaining these fascinating structures as well as their picturesque aspects. Rare within covered bridge literature is a bibliography as comprehensive as found in this book. References include

not only books, periodicals, and pamphlets but also nearly 100 web sites and personal emails from knowledgeable informants. The book is organized by state, but an index at the end allows one to search for individual bridges. Well researched and concisely written, overall the Evans' book in my opinion is the best available guide to New England's current stock of covered bridges, giving the visitor to each bridge a context to put it in as well as a location.

If you are like me and a surprising number of other "bridgers," you attempt to acquire all the books and images you can find about covered bridges. I consider myself knowledgeable, but anyone will learn new things from the Evans' work. However, no one book can do everything. If you want more technical detail on structure, Joe Nelson's book, *Spanning Time: Vermont's Covered Bridges* (1997) will give you more. Richard Sanders Allen's several books from the middle of the last century will provide more historical context and a great wealth of images, both photos and patent drawing. Robert Fletcher and J. P. Snow's article "A History of the Development of Wooden Bridges" (*Transactions of the American Society of Civil Engineers*, 1934) is invaluable for being written by engineers who designed both wooden and steel bridges during their long careers. For incontrovertible information from the point of view of a nineteenth-century builder of huge wooden railroad bridges, try to get hold of a copy of Herman Haupt's *General Theory of Bridge Construction* (1851). The list goes on and on and allows the lover of wood truss bridges to indulge his or her fascination while sitting at home or in a library, as well as when driving down a lonely dirt road into a valley, waiting for the bridge to appear.

JAN LEO LEWANDOSKI

Jan Lewandoski restores covered bridges and other historic wooden architecture. He lives in Stannard, Vermont.

Early Maps of Brattleboro, Vermont, 1745–1912, With a Narrative History

By David Allen (West Chesterfield, N.H.: Old Maps, 2003, pp. 76, paper, \$17.95; paper with CD-ROM, \$29.95).

In December 2003 David Allen of West Chesterfield, N.H., published this attractive 8½ by 11-inch book to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the chartering of Brattleboro, Vermont. Reproduced are

approximately fifty old town and village maps, organized primarily in chronological order, from a depiction of the first settlement, Fort Dummer, on the edge of the Winchester Charter map of 1733, to the Main Street portion of a 1912 fire insurance map. For comparison purposes a modern topographic map of the region from Northfield, Massachusetts, to Putney, Vermont, is included on the inside front cover, and one of downtown Brattleboro on the inside rear cover. Modern outline maps of the town and of the downtown area are also included, along with a timeline of events and a graph showing population changes.

Allen's insightful commentary traces the changing geographic and social history of Brattleboro through its maps. His research has taken him to state and local archives in New England and New York, as well as the National Archives and the Library of Congress. He has uncovered rarities, such as the 1749 map of Fort Dummer discovered at the Vermont Historical Society.

The earliest maps are simple outline maps and include the Brattleboro Charter map of December 26, 1753. A copy of the charter is included in the rear of the book. Also included is a map based on the land survey of the New York surveyor general, after King George III ruled in 1764 that the New Hampshire Grants were to be part of New York Province. This map and others delimit early land divisions. Brattleboro's early land records are missing, and Allen's maps and descriptions provide a valuable understanding of boundaries at that time. Many of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth-century maps of the township are excerpted from larger maps of Vermont. Among these are the Whitelaw maps of 1796, 1810, and 1821. The 1796 map, commissioned by Surveyor General James Whitelaw, was the first to show the small network of roads and the location of the first town meetinghouse in what was to become West Brattleboro.

The central portion of the volume, comprising over half the content, is devoted to land ownership maps and three panoramic or bird's-eye views. Some of the former, like the 1852 Presdee and Edwards map, are wall maps of the town. Others are excerpted from county maps, such as *McClellan's Map of Windham County, Vermont* of 1856. These maps, the 1869 F. W. Beers *Atlas of Windham Co. Vermont* in book form, and subsequent wall maps, were published by commercial mapmakers, who took subscriptions and included the names of subscribers and their businesses, if any, in the margin. Much detail is provided, including the sites of houses and buildings, often with the owners' names. Many of these maps are spread over several pages in the book. The 1895 D. L. Miller map, the largest of the wall maps, measuring 42 × 60 inches, is reprinted on eight pages for the downtown area and an additional page each for

West Brattleboro and for the entire town. The three bird's eye views or panoramic maps of 1856, 1876, and 1886 present unique three-dimensional views of the downtown area. These lithographs, based on artists' perspectives undoubtedly from Mt. Wantastiquet, across the Connecticut River in New Hampshire, name the streets and some of the more noteworthy buildings. The latest maps are the fire insurance maps of the Main Street area. Allen reprints portions of the oldest map produced by the Sanborn Map Company in 1885 and portions of one printed in 1912. The actual shapes, materials, and uses of the buildings and the location of hydrants and water lines are shown in detail.

Allen has produced a valuable addition to the literature on the history of Brattleboro through this unique collection of historic maps. His commentary adds to our knowledge of the changes in the social landscape that the maps convey. In their reprinted form, many of the maps, especially the panoramas, are not as clear as one could wish. Except for those on the covers, the maps are in black and white. To compensate for the lack of clarity and of color, Allen has included a CD-ROM as an option with the book. It contains the complete text as an Acrobat PDF file and complete copies of the maps as JPEG files. The user can study the maps in the original colors, where appropriate, and zoom in if greater detail is desired. The CD-ROM also includes images of the 1749 Patten Diary, which includes the original Fort Dummer map with descriptions, and of the 1766 New York Survey.

Allen previously published volumes on the early maps of several southwestern New Hampshire and northern Massachusetts communities. Historians of Vermont and local history as well as students of old maps should be pleased that he has ventured across the Connecticut River to produce this study of the early maps of Brattleboro.

ALFRED TOBORG

Alfred Toborg is professor of history emeritus at Lyndon State College and president of the Lyndon Historical Society.

Chester Alan Arthur

By Zachary Karabell (New York: Times Books, 2004, pp. 170 \$20.00).

Novelist Thomas Wolfe once described how the late-nineteenth-century presidents from Hayes to Harrison ran together in the American imagination:

.....

[T]heir gravely vacant and bewhiskered faces mixed, melted . . . together in the sea-depths of a past, intangible, immeasurable, and unknowable. . . For who was Garfield, the martyred man, and who had seen him in the streets of life? . . . Who had heard the casual and familiar tones of Chester Arthur? And where was Harrison? Where was Hayes? Which had the whiskers, which the burnsidies: which was which?

When he was asked to write a biography of Chester Arthur for the Times Books' American Presidents series, author Zachary Karabell faced an unenviable task: writing an entire book on one of the forgotten presidents. In response, Karabell has given us a slim, somewhat casual volume that sketches a portrait of postbellum America, Republican Party factionalism, and the man known as the "Gentleman Boss."

Chester Alan Arthur was one of two presidents born in Vermont, the other, of course, being Calvin Coolidge. Those looking for insight into how Vermont shaped Chester Arthur will be disappointed, as his Vermont connections were few. He was born in the town of Fairfield in 1829, but left the state before he was ten. His father, a Baptist minister, settled the family in the midst of the booming Hudson Valley in New York; by the time he was 25, Chester had moved permanently to New York City. The biography gives only one further mention of the state: Arthur countered a rumor that he was in fact Canadian by pointing to his Vermont birth.

As a young man in New York City, Arthur was a dedicated opponent of slavery. He became a law clerk in the office of a prominent abolitionist whose views he shared. Arthur went so far as to join the Free Soil movement, moving to Kansas briefly in 1856; however, he quickly became alarmed at the rough frontier ways and moved back east within a matter of months. Returning to New York, he set up shop as a lawyer and joined the new Republican Party. He flourished in these new realms, making powerful contacts that enabled him to get impressive state jobs.

Arthur fit easily and comfortably into the extensive patronage system of the mid-nineteenth century, in which government jobs were given to party loyalists. In 1871, he was appointed to one of the most lucrative positions the system had to offer: collector of the New York Custom House. He came to work late, left early, and more than quadrupled his official salary through a law that allowed officials to profit from intercepting smuggled goods. When the New York Custom House came under scrutiny from reformers and Arthur was replaced, he found a comfortable home as chair of the New York Republican Party. He dined and smoked with wealthy industrialists and financiers under the silver chandeliers of New York's most fashionable establishments.

Arthur was a reluctant president, brought to office by a series of unlikely events. He found himself the vice presidential nominee under James Garfield, largely because fellow delegates considered Arthur unobjectionable and likely to deliver New York to the Republicans in the presidential election. The Garfield-Arthur ticket won the 1880 election, but in a matter of months an assassin shot Garfield, declaring “I did it and will go to jail for it. . . . Arthur will be president.” This was, understandably, a difficult situation for Arthur. He did not want to be president and, while Garfield lingered on the brink of death, considered the prospect a “calamity.” But in September 1881, the day after Garfield died, Arthur was sworn in to office.

As president, Arthur provided some interesting surprises. Ever the bon vivant, he redid the White House in stained glass and gold leaf and hired a French chef for state dinners. He vetoed two overwhelmingly popular bills: the Rivers and Harbors Bill, a prime piece of legislative pork, and the Chinese Exclusion Act, which prohibited Chinese immigration for twenty years and required immigrants to register with the government. (Neither veto proved permanent: Congress overrode the first and returned a modified Chinese Exclusion Act to Arthur with enough votes so that he reluctantly signed it.) Perhaps the most important piece of legislation to emerge from Arthur’s time in office was the Pendleton Civil Service Act, which he signed in 1883. This act dismantled the very patronage system that had brought him to power: It outlawed assessments, required civil servants to qualify for their jobs by examination, and introduced the modern federal bureaucracy.

Arthur did not serve a second term. He had lost his base within the Republican Party by supporting enough reform so that his former allies mistrusted him but not enough to be championed by reformers. He lost the Republican nomination to James Blaine, who in turn lost the general election to Grover Cleveland. Arthur spent his last two years as a private citizen and lawyer, working relatively little and suffering from a kidney disease that had plagued his time in the White House. He died in 1886 at the age of fifty-seven.

Chester Alan Arthur is not a scholarly work. Instead, the book has a casual, contemporary tone: Karabell makes frequent comparisons to late-twentieth-century issues, calls Arthur “the Teflon candidate of his day,” and generally tries to add dramatic tension to a subject who was not a dramatic man. One can appreciate the author’s dilemma, but the result is that Karabell is self-consciously present in the book to an extent that some may find distracting. There is also an occasional factual error: Karabell lists Arthur’s birthplace as North Fairfield rather than Fairfield. But despite these shortcomings, the book will give most readers an in-

teresting look at Gilded Age America and as much information as they ever wanted to know about Chester Alan Arthur.

WODEN TEACHOUT

Woden Teachout is a lecturer in the History and Literature Program at Harvard University.

Mother & Daughter—Two Diaries of Glover, Vermont, Girls: 1894 Diary of Edith Francena Aldrich, Age 14; 1922 Diary of Edith Alexander, Age 14

Annotations compiled by Joan Alexander (Glover, Vt.: Glover Historical Society, 2004, pp. xii, 176, paper, price unknown).

A Little Girl's Diary: Life on a Farm in Rural Vermont: Written by Alice Bushnell in 1911

Edited by Marcia Cowles Bushnell (Strafford, Vt., 2002, pp. vi, 165, paper, \$12.00).

With the advent of desktop publishing, readers of Vermont history are gaining access to an increasing number of primary sources from town historical societies and private family collections. Recent examples include the 1894 diary of a fourteen-year-old girl followed by the 1922 diary of her daughter, also at age fourteen, edited by Joan Alexander, and the 1911 diary of a seven-year old girl edited by Marcia Cowles Bushnell.

In Alexander's book Edith Francena Aldrich begins her diary in the spring of 1894 after a long bout with typhoid fever. Cena, as she was called by her family, wrote short entries—four or five lines—that have been transcribed as written with a new line for each activity. Cena lived with her parents and younger brother in West Glover, Vermont. Her father, Wesley Aldrich, operated the Meadow Brook Creamery on the “cream gathering plan,” meaning the creamery traveled around to farms to gather the milk every few days (vii). The creamery's main business was churning butter which was then sent by rail to Providence, R.I., where it was sold by Aldrich's partner. Cena's entries give little information on this enterprise, although the editor fleshes it out nicely in the introduction. The diary is rich in details of a young girl's life: clothing, games, reading, and school days. Cena also describes family activities

such as church, gardening, and meals, and she records the usual diary subjects of weather and health. The Aldrich house was a hub for relatives, neighbors, and schoolmates, but it was not unusual to have an entry like this: "Didn't go anywhere or there didn't any one came here" (p. 23). In November the family took a train trip to Providence where Cena's father attended to business and the family visited relatives. On the return, they stopped at Boston and Cena reports that her father and brothers went to the Bunker Hill Monument and Naval Yard, and she joined them in the afternoon for a tour of the Natural History Museum. The family ate dinner at a restaurant, a rare occurrence, and Cena learned that city life differed from rural life when she "washed 19 handkerchiefs today and hung them out and some one came and stole them all" (p. 65).

The editor acknowledges that this 1894 diary is the first of many diaries Cena kept, seven of which "have survived" (p. 72). The apparent reason for transcribing and publishing this particular one is that Cena's daughter, Edith, also kept a diary when she was fourteen. The editor chose to present them together in this volume.

Family life had changed considerably by 1922, when Edith Alexander began her diary, twenty-eight years after her mother kept hers. Edith, a freshman at Barton Academy where she boarded, returned to the family farm in Glover on weekends. Unlike her mother, Edith's entries are in paragraphs, often filling the full page of the 3¼" × 6" journal. The most notable difference in the lives of these girls is the considerable change in social life from the late nineteenth century to the first quarter of the twentieth century. Adolescence no longer consisted of a girl learning to keep house and be helpful to relatives and neighbors. By 1922 a girl's main interests were young men, silent films and dances, learning to drive an auto, and going out evenings with friends. While her mother in 1894 had simply reported her activities, Edith readily expresses emotions, even anger at her mother, brothers, teachers, and friends. She writes of smoking her first cigarette, using rouge, and having her hair bobbed. She loved "to shock folks" (p. 105) and prided herself in being a rebel. One evening she "got into a very hot argument tonight about suffrage" for women (p. 105), a cause she supported and apparently had to defend even after the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920. Following the common twentieth-century practice of women diarists, Edith indicated the days of her menstrual cycle; her signal was an asterisk placed on the date line. Her "lifelong ambition" was to go up in an "aeroplane" (pp. 121, 151). Readers do not know when this wish was fulfilled but, according to the epilogue, she worked for Eastern Aircraft during World War II where she was in charge of an airplane assembly line.

The editor presents these two diaries in an unusual way. On the odd-

numbered pages is the transcription of the diary entries; on the even-numbered pages are annotations including photographs of people and places, maps, business cards of local stores, descriptions of clothing and other articles from the Montgomery Ward catalogues, and newspaper clippings. The layout is jumbled, but the accumulation of vintage ephemera is useful. Even the cover of the book provides information with the reproduction of a handwritten page and the cover of each diary printed in the exact size of the original. A careful proofreading of the transcription would have prevented many minor errors.

In *A Little Girl's Diary*, Bushnell presents the 1911 diary and a thirty-five-page essay titled "Reflections on my Childhood Written in 1967" in a spiral-bound book. At age seven Alice Bushnell started her small journal with spaces for six days on each open page. Facsimilies of the diary pages, enlarged 117 percent (p. 165), are printed on the right hand side of the book; the transcription is on the left. This dual presentation allows readers to experience the childlike handwriting but also to read the entries with ease. The notes at the end of the volume are helpful, although many of the people named in the diary, including relatives, are not identified and some words unfamiliar to today's readers are not defined.

Alice lived with her parents, three older brothers, and her eighty-five-year-old grandmother on a twenty-acre potato farm in Strafford, Vermont. All family members were involved in the farm work and sugar making. The family attended church and prayer meetings regularly, although one member always had to stay home with the grandmother, who did not go out. Alice's entries detail her chores, school, games, reading, and holidays. In January she wrote: "We opened the goods tonight" (pp. 40-41), meaning the box of things ordered from the Sears and Roebuck catalogue. On August 29 she noted "an auto went up by" (pp. 118-119), apparently the first she had seen on her road. To this the editor added a note: "She was frightened by the unfamiliar noise and hid in the bushes" (p. 165).

The reminiscence by the diary author, written more than fifty years after she kept the diary, is especially appropriate for reading to children. Among its many compelling stories is Alice's description of the trip her parents took when they moved in 1897 from Ohio to Vermont before her birth. Her father rode in a freight car, sitting on a rocking chair, taking care of "his horses, pig and household goods" (p. 8), while her mother rode in the passenger car, taking care of her three sons, ages six to four months.

Among today's history pioneers are editors, like Alexander and Bushnell, who publish family diaries and letters written by ordinary people. Diaries of children, and of course adults, offer gems of information

about Vermont's past that have a freshness of experience found only in first-hand accounts. It is worth noting in this regard that Sarah Rooker has created a package of materials for schools related to the Alice Bushnell Diary. The kit includes a teacher's guide, video, and ten copies of Alice's diary, selling for \$40.00.

LYNN A. BONFIELD

Lynn A. Bonfield, an archivist, is the co-author of Roxana's Children: The Biography of a Nineteenth-Century Vermont Family (1995).

Men Against Granite

By Mari Tomasi and Roaldus Richmond

Edited by Alfred Rosa and Mark Wanner (Shelburne, Vt.: New England Press, 2004, pp. 323; paper, \$22.95).

In the late 1930s, several of the Roosevelt administration's New Deal agencies and programs began hiring artists to document the lives of Depression-era Americans. The best-known results are probably the photographs taken for the Farm Security Administration (FSA) by Dorothea Lange, Walker Evans, and others whose stark yet often stunningly beautiful images of sharecroppers and migrants have become the face, as it were, of working-class America in the 1930s. Similarly, but less well known, the Works Progress Administration employed writers to document their communities by collecting interviews. In Vermont, the Federal Writers' Project focused mainly on multi-ethnic, industrial Barre. This was an ideological choice, part of an effort to "foster respect and tolerance for diversity" (p. 4) in the face of rising European fascism. From 1938–40, Roaldus Richmond led the Vermont effort and collected interviews along with, primarily, Montpelier journalist Mari Tomasi.

But opposition to the WPA from congressional red-baiters prevented Richmond and Tomasi's work from reaching publication—for sixty years. Now, with the editorial assistance of Alfred Rosa and Mark Wanner, 52 of the original 120 interviews are available in *Men Against Granite*. With the Depression lingering and World War II looming, these verbal snapshots, presented mostly as monologues by both men and women, with scene-setting descriptions by Richmond and Tomasi, provide an often compelling and sometimes moving view of life in the Granite City.

Organized in four sections—Town, Home, Quarry, and Shed—*Men Against Granite* presents folks ranging from granite workers to a street peddler, a farmer, and a boarding house keeper. Working class voices dominate, although we also hear from a blue-blood, a real estate speculator, a sports reporter, and a teacher. Along with details about their own lives, we learn about the naming of Barre, the growth of the granite industry, the quarrying process, and the city’s ethnic diversity. We also encounter such smaller yet equally interesting facets of Barre life as Syrian funerals, street names, umbrella mending, and that Barre once had a drinking and gambling “joint” (p. 85) run and frequented by African Americans.

Along with revealing glimpses into times past and life’s little dramas, the speakers provide some real insights. The Scottish stone cutter identified simply as Donegal comments on the double-edged sword of mechanization:

That’s the curse of the world today—the machines and everywhere men out of work. That makes for unhappiness and misery and trouble. Take away a man’s job and you kill the man. Maybe the dust killed them but being without work kills them inside—a worse way. (p. 272)

Mary Kane, recalling her native Ireland, sees yet another side of one of the granite industry’s principal products:

It was wooden crosses for us. . . . Wooden crosses are good enough for anybody. Here a stonecutter spends hours working on a memorial for the dead, and every one of those hours is shortening his own life. (p. 301)

At once Barre’s blessing and its curse, granite is at the center of most of the stories. Granite created Barre’s prosperity, drawing Scots, Italian, Spanish, Swedish, and other quarrymen, stonecutters, and sculptors to work in the thriving quarries and sheds. But it also brought life-threatening occupational hazards, from quarry accidents to the widespread “stonecutters’ TB” caused by the silica-laden dust generated in the enclosed sheds. From Tomasi’s fictionalized story, “The Italian Granite Worker,” which sets the tone for the collection, through a series of interviews with “granite widows,” to the statement by the quarryman identified simply as “Old Timer” that “It’s no place for a young fellow, the quarries” (p. 247), none of the interviewees wishes a granite worker’s life—and often early death—on his or her children.

One of those early deaths befell Barre’s most famous sculptor, Elia Corti, whose statue of Scottish poet Robert Burns receives high praise from several of the speakers. But Corti’s death was only indirectly caused by granite: He was fatally shot in 1903 at a still-disputed melee at

Barre's Socialist Labor Party Hall. Several of the interviewees refer to Corti, but there is little else in the collection about the rivalries among the city's radical groups or about Barre politics in general. That's unfortunate, since its political history is another aspect of Barre's uniqueness and an important corollary to its labor history.

The impending war in Europe does, however, provide a political platform for several speakers. To the immigrant storyteller Parlanto, Mussolini remains a hero, even if he has made "one, two, or three even good size' mistake" (p. 221). Most, however, feel, like florist Joanna Leoti, that Mussolini has "gone too far this time" (p. 42) and especially dread the possibility that Italian Americans may soon be at war with their cousins in the old country. Three members of Barre's Spanish Club express the collection's strongest antifascist sentiments, pointing to the \$15,000 raised, in \$.25 to \$5.00 donations, to support the Loyalist, anti-Franco side in the raging Spanish Civil War.

Although Rosa and Wanner invoke the familiar "melting pot" image (p. 2) to describe Barre, what we see is a community where, despite interethnic marriages and the easing of some hostilities (largely caused by the recruiting of French Canadian workers during the 1921–22 granite strike), ethnic and national differences remain observable objects of pride. "Melting" (and its implied melding) is certainly taking place, but the real meal is more of a chunky stew than a homogenized soup.

The methodology of the original project also raises some questions. Perhaps to encourage the interviewees to speak as freely as possible—especially in their workplaces, beer halls, and other public settings—neither Tomasi nor Richmond took significant notes or used the early recording devices that were available by 1938 (despite the current editors' assertion to the contrary; Helen Hartness Flanders, for example, began using wax cylinder recorders to collect Vermont folk music in the 1930s). Instead, they later recreated the interviews from memory and, later still, crafted the final narratives. Rosa and Warner have revised them further. Each of these stages raises questions about both substantive and stylistic accuracy.

So does the fact that, apparently at the Writers' Project's insistence, Richmond and Tomasi fictionalized many of their informants' names. "Mayor Duncan," for example, provides a clear, concise, and sometimes wry overview of the history of Barre and the granite industry (chapter 12), yet the only Barre mayor with that surname held office from 1982–84, long after Richmond collected this interview. In fact, Richmond's mayor was John Gordon, and while Richmond could hardly have anticipated such a coincidence, the current editors' failure to explain fully the treatment of names is a serious omission. Instead, they say that it was "prob-

ably impossible to double-check the names of people or places” (p. 8). This is hardly an adequate defense in the case of a public official.

Originally, this material was classified as folklore, thereby acknowledging the inevitable transmutations caused by aural/oral transmission and the unreliability of memory. (Benjamin Botkin, who presided over the collecting for the Writers’ Project, was himself a folklorist and may have dictated the methodology.) Today, Rosa and Wanner tell us, “these interviews document history” (p. 8). Indeed. But while certainly of great value in helping us honor and understand the past, they must also be seen in their proper perspective.

This memory-reliant method also casts a shadow over the accuracy of the interviewees’ “voices,” the characteristics of speech that help to express individuality. And we are certainly meant to be interested in these people as individuals and not simply as sources of information. In fact, that is where the real power of this collection resides. Tomasi and Richmond, both of whom soon became novelists, produced convincing monologues with some quite distinctive voices. But whether these are the informants’ true voices we’ll never really know.

Nevertheless, *Men Against Granite* is a significant and welcome addition to both Barre and American labor literature. Like the FSA photographers, Richmond and Tomasi have captured everyday yet vital moments in the lives of people without whom “history” would be reduced to a parade of facts and faces that too often seems far removed from the life around us. Rosa and Wanner deserve our thanks for making these stories available.

MARK GREENBERG

Mark Greenberg taught Humanities and American Studies at Goddard College from 1991–2003. He is the proprietor of Upstreet Productions, specializing in radio, video, and audio projects involving traditional folk music and oral history.

Tales of The 10th: The Mountain Troops and American Skiing

By Jeffrey R. Leich (Franconia, N.H.: New England Ski Museum, 2003, pp. 128, \$20.00)

The Vermont origins of the 10th Mountain Division date back to February 1940 when four prominent American skiers were discussing

winter warfare at Johnny Seesaw's lodge near Manchester, New Hampshire. Much of their conversation centered on the amazing ability shown by the Finns defending their country against invading Soviet armies. The Finns had developed a wide array of tactics that made best use of wintry conditions to stem the Russian assault. Especially prominent in those maneuvers were the white-camouflaged ski patrols that made lightning raids on the enemy columns. They would strike quickly and withdraw, only to reappear at other strategic points to continue their devastating attacks. The four Americans strongly believed that the U.S. Army should take advantage of the lessons taught by the Finns about winter warfare and they took that message to the highest levels of government. The 10th Mountain Division of World War II was the result of their efforts.

Tales of The 10th accurately describes the unique evolution of this division, which was masterminded and recruited mostly by civilian efforts. This in itself was highly unusual; even more so was the role of the National Ski Patrol System, which was assigned the task of screening applications for service in the 10th. This procedure assured that the most highly qualified skiers and mountaineers were selected for the rigorous training on Mt. Rainier in Washington and at Camp Hale in the Colorado Rocky Mountains. (An example of one of the detailed application forms is given on pp. 38–40.) The book also points out how research into cold-weather clothing and equipment done for the mountain troops made a significant contribution to postwar civilian markets. But the most important effect on American skiing and mountaineering came from the soldiers themselves who, after being discharged from military service, returned to civilian life full of enthusiasm and ideas about outdoor education and recreation on ski slopes and mountain trails.

Although the title of the book (*Tales of The 10th*) suggests a text-oriented account of the 10th Mountain Division, most of the book is made up of carefully selected photographic images. Jeff Leich interprets the photos with carefully composed and succinct captions. Most of the photographs and artwork in the book came from the 10th Mountain Division Resource Center maintained at the Denver Public Library. It is a fine book, but would have been considerably better with a comprehensive index.

According to records compiled by the Vermont Ski Museum in Stowe, more than 240 Vermonters served with the 10th Mountain Division during training and combat service in Italy. These veterans were officially inducted into the museum's Hall of Fame at an impressive ceremony in November 2003 in Killington. The museum also maintains an exhibit about the 10th Mountain Division that displays articles of equipment and pictorial displays of its training and combat experiences. Moreover, Vermont

Route 108, which begins in Stowe and continues up to the Canadian border, was officially dedicated as the 10th Mountain Division Memorial Highway in January 1983. A bronze plaque memorializing that event is mounted on a boulder of native stone at the Southern Gateway of Smugglers' Notch.

WILLIAM E. OSGOOD

William E. Osgood of Shelburne, Vermont is a veteran of service with the 10th Mountain Division.

An Officer and a Lady: The World War II Letters of Lt. Col. Betty Bandel, Women's Army Corps

Edited by Sylvia J. Bugbee (Lebanon, N.H.: University Press of New England, 2004, pp. xxiv, 222, paper, \$24.95).

Betty Bandel was one of the first women recruited into the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC, later the WAC) in 1942, following America's entrance into World War II, and she became one of its first officers. A year later, at the age of 31, she was a major and had advanced from being aide to Lt. Col. Oliveta Culp Hobby, director of the WAAC, to being acting deputy director. In the fall of 1943, when the WAAC was fully integrated into the Army as the WAC (Women's Army Corps), she became Air WAC, in charge of the Air Force contingent of WACs, and a lieutenant colonel. (There was a law against women becoming generals and none did until 1970.) It is easy to lose sight, in all the details and in the charm of Bandel's easy style, of how much Hobby, Bandel, and the other WAC officers accomplished in three years. Starting from scratch in the spring of 1942, the WAC boasted 400,000 enlistees and officers in all theaters of the war just three years later. This despite efforts within in the Army and elements of the press and public to denigrate their effectiveness and question their morality. Bandel worked long hours and traveled ceaselessly to increase the effectiveness and range of WAC activities, promote awareness, encourage recruitment, and maintain morale, often in the face of military and bureaucratic resistance. "I'm nuts about all this stuff," she declared (p. 102).

The letters Bandel wrote during her years in the army are now in Special Collections at Bailey/Howe Library, at the University of Vermont.

What emerges from this selection of excerpts from Betty Bandel's letters, edited by Sylvia J. Bugbee, an assistant archivist at UVM, and in-

troduced by Air Force Colonel Lorry M. Fenner, is her talent, intelligence, humor, and depth. She was a woman who, despite the stresses of her jobs, remained always herself.

Betty Bandel, a reporter for the *Arizona Sun*, joined the WAAC because “What else would there have been for an unmarried woman except to be in the service one way or another?” (p. 1). Her letters describe her increasing responsibilities, but they also, dotted with 1940s slang, reveal a world where grooming and makeup merit frequent mention and girdles and slips were standard parts of officers’ uniforms.

Bandel’s letters reflect the outpouring of patriotism in the United States that motivated service and sacrifice from men and women of all classes and professions. They also unselfconsciously reflect the social attitudes of the day. That a person was, or might be, Jewish seemed always worthy of mention. References to the “chocolate-brown” cook of the Hobbys (p. 50) and to her own maid, “Dusky Georgia” (p. 150) and her “ivory grin” (p. 151), are reminders of how racial attitudes have changed. More significant, however, is the fact that there is no mention in the book of the 40,000 black women WAAC/WAC enlistees and officers, segregated in their own units, who contributed to the war effort. But whether this is Bandel’s omission or Bugbee’s choice one cannot tell. At the same time, Bandel’s generosity of spirit is evident in her praise for the accomplishments of her associates, subordinates, and bosses of both genders and all classes, races, and backgrounds.

Bandel also seemed to accept different roles for the genders, while poking fun at both. One of her male correspondents praises the WACs’ efforts as beyond those of a “mere man” (p. 50), but Bandel’s letters take for granted that women are cooks and men can make gynecologist jokes. And Bandel and some of her correspondents, proud of what women were accomplishing in the war effort—military and civilian—seem surprised by their capabilities.

Unfortunately, not all of the social attitudes seem dated. The wartime efforts to discredit the WAC and WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service) and dismiss the role of women in the service are not much different from more recent attempts to limit women’s opportunities in the armed services and to marginalize homosexuals.

By mid-1944 Bandel was tired, of the pace, of the lack of authority given to women, of life in the army. She wrote more often about music and literature and began to consider a teaching career. The last letter describes the end of the war in Asia. Bugbee ends the book with a note about Bandel’s degrees from Columbia University and her recruitment by UVM, where she taught English from 1947 to 1975 and wrote books on music, literature, and history.

There are some quibbles and caveats. Why are the essays introducing each section of the book written in the present tense? Since the excerpted letters contain little about the progress of the war itself, focusing instead on Bandel's own work, more historical context would have been welcome in the essays that introduce each chapter or in the notes, as would either follow-up or amplification of some of the issues mentioned in the letters. The index is limited, with no subject headings outside of proper names and U.S. Army organization; and the notes would be more helpful if they deepened the context of the references. For instance, since she is mentioned in an academic context on page 124, it might have been useful to note that Millicent McAfee, commander of the WAVES, was before and after the war the president of Wellesley College. Margaret Sullivan, not Maureen Sullivan, starred in the 1943 hit Broadway play, *The Voice of the Turtle* (p. 154). Such matters may distract the reader, but nothing can detract from the service Sylvia Bugbee has performed by giving us such a window into the world of women in the Army in World War II and an introduction to this vital, interesting, intelligent woman. Betty Bandel was and remains a person for all seasons.

ANN E. COOPER

Ann E. Cooper is an independent scholar and the former editor of Historic Roots.

Real Democracy: The New England Town Meeting and How It Works

By Frank M. Bryan (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004, pp. xx, 312, \$49.00; paper, \$19.00).

Town meeting is the essential Vermont experience. It is what distinguishes us from every other government on earth, in that we hold annual meetings of voters to adopt budgets and settle questions of local interest in open meeting, face-to-face, reasoning together, the decision binding as a matter of law. This is direct democracy—the governance of the people by the people, as opposed to government by elected or appointed representatives. It is something that happens every year in nearly every Vermont town, as it has since the town began, according to law and tradition.

Of course, there are town meetings in other New England states and in some towns in Minnesota, but as Frank Bryan asserts, “Vermont is the

best place in New England with enough small town meeting governments to make possible a long-term comparative study of town meeting” (p. xii).

With something so unique and so vital, you might think that generations of scholars would have flocked to Vermont to study town meeting over the years, but you would be wrong. Meet Frank Bryan, the one and only political scientist to collect and interpret empirical data on town meeting. Bryan, who was raised in Newbury, Vermont, and has long held the position of professor of political science at the University of Vermont, has been studying town meeting for his entire professional career, more than thirty years. It is his life’s work.

His book is, at last, published, and it’s everything he promised and more. It is mandatory reading for every Vermonter who wants to understand town meeting.

At St. Michael’s College, where Bryan began his career, and then at UVM, Bryan recruited hundreds of students to attend over 1,700 town meetings, and then spent years compiling and making sense of the data they collected. The students carried clipboards and stop watches, and recorded all the numbers they could collect, such as how many people were in attendance at different times of the day, how many spoke, how many women participated. Bryan made charts and graphs, and read the numbers.

The students graduated and got on with their lives, but ask around and you’ll be surprised how many people you know took Frank Bryan’s course at UVM and will admit, if you pry, how it changed their lives. They are the leaders of our communities now. They didn’t just collect data for the professor; they were inspired by the experience.

Frank Bryan is a scientist. That means he is compelled to study data in order to understand his subject. Bryan explains his motive for writing the book in the preface, where he complains that, before he started his study, “Nearly everyone who said or wrote anything about small-town life or town meeting got it wrong. They inflated the hell out of either the positives or the negatives” (p. x). That happens without hard data. People fall back on what they think, rather than on what they know, and of all subjects fit for nostalgic treatment, town meeting can cause people to mist over quickly, their minds clouded by sentiment.

Most readers of *Real Democracy* won’t be political scientists, and for that reason the charts and graphs, and the conclusions drawn from the data, may seem foreign at first. Give it a chance. The author will wait for you, and his conclusions from those numbers are worth understanding. Frank Bryan is a strong writer, because he is a strong thinker. *Real Democracy* shows his real genius, in between the numbers.

It would do no good to declare town meeting an endangered species. In small Vermont towns, it continues to serve its original purpose, both

as an act of governance and as a way of bringing the community together. It is changing, as everything does, but it retains its basic structure and function. Bryan deserves some kind of First Citizen award for adopting it as his field of study and restraining himself from earlier publication, allowing the book to ripen at its own pace.

With nothing but gratitude for the work Frank Bryan has done, I cannot help but think there is another book on town meeting to be written, one that would complement *Real Democracy* by examining the subject of debate and how close issues are decided. It could not be scientific. It might not even be logical, in the classical sense. Debate does not always reflect the outcome of votes. But a community acting together to resolve public dilemmas at town meeting has a personality and a mind different from any of the individuals participating. How we decide important questions is a subject no one has investigated as yet, and something sorely lacking in the literature.

That is not to take anything away from *Real Democracy*, a book that warrants a close reading and will trigger a new appreciation for town meeting. Everything Frank Bryan publishes is engaging; this one more than others has a vitality that springs from the author's complete passion for the subject. It is an important book.

PAUL GILLIES

Paul Gillies is the Berlin Town Moderator.

The Fate of Family Farming: Variations on an American Idea

By Ronald Jager (Lebanon, N.H.: University Press of New England, 2004, pp. xix, 244, \$26.00)

Most of us have ideas about farming, but they seldom have anything to do with the food we eat. We see food as “just there . . . abundant like air and water,” says Ronald Jager in his book *The Fate of Family Farming* (p. xi).

More likely, we see food as brand names, carbohydrate sources, social lubricant, or an activity between soccer and “CSI,” rarely acknowledging the link between the bags of groceries we carry home from the store and the farms we drive by. Jager's book is yet another attempt to get us to understand that link.

In *The Fate of Family Farming*, Jager, a former professor of philosophy, considers our civilization's ideas about agriculture. Although his title is "family farming" and he says it relates to all farms in the nation, New England's agriculture is quite distinct from most other areas of the country in its scarcity of arable land, ubiquitous development pressure, proximity of a large mass of urban customers, and harsh weather. Jager narrows his perspective even more, to New Hampshire, where many of those factors particular to New England are most pronounced.

Jager divides the book into several sections, first tracing back the origins of our idyllic view of rural life. He outlines the agricultural history of the New World and New England, down to the story of the Jagers' Washington, N.H., farm, which they bought in the 1960s. That personal history, as much as anything else, illustrates the impermanence of any single type of farming in New England. "There are few long runs in this region," Jager writes (p. 37).

The book's next section discusses the long literary tradition of agriculture as Jager considers three modern writers of the agrarian tradition—Louis Bromfield, Victor Davis Hanson, and Wendell Berry. He explores how they help shape our ideas about farming and, sometimes, help shape agriculture itself.

Next is what Jager considers the core of his book—the stories of four current New Hampshire family farms. Bascom's Maple Farm, Eccardt Farm, Gould Hill Orchards, and Coll Farm illustrate four of the state's most important farm commodities: milk, maple, apples, and vegetables. After visiting the families often over a span of a few years to learn how they make their livelihoods and how they feel about farming, Jager tells their stories. These are the true voices of agriculture, albeit on a good day—practical, innovative, flexible, optimistic.

Along the way, Jager, in his pleasant, informal, narrative voice, wanders off into descriptive byways, offering tidbits on such topics as the maple tree, butter, the Boston produce market, and farm apple orchards.

One thing missing here is how these farmers fit into their communities. These days, how their neighbors view them and their farming practices can have a tremendous influence on how—maybe if—they will continue farming. It would be illuminating to know how these communities feel about the farmers and, if they consider the farms worth keeping, what they plan to do about it.

In the book's final section, called "Prospects," Jager meticulously summarizes the evolution of economic factors that have forced New Hampshire into its modern shape: a very few large farms, and many small ones searching for nooks and crannies in the marketplace where they can make a living. He illuminates how farming is constantly being changed

by the increasing globalization of markets, by ideas such as “efficiency,” and by manifestations of those ideas, such as technology—or, as Jager calls it, “the ruthless devouring beast”—which has hastened the rapid demise of small New England farms since the end of World War II. And he clearly describes how farmers acting in their own best interests can hardly fail to act against the best interest of agriculture as a whole.

And although Jager declares that “mine is an observer’s perspective, which strives for objectivity” (p. xix), he sets up the dichotomy of good vs. evil or, as he variously defines it, a clash between “craft” and “factory” farmers, a war between “resistance” vs. “system.” He lays out that battlefield in his discussion of biotechnology. He also describes the movements and organizations leading the struggle against “system” agriculture. Although the book could not be called a diatribe against modern farming methods, there was little doubt, from the very title, what stand Jager would take.

He leaves a big gap, however, between public policy and individual action: Call me a proselytizer, but I would have liked to see him address how we as consumers have given up our power as we buy into the myth that more and cheaper is best, especially when it comes to food, failing to see that payment is exacted elsewhere.

So, what are the “prospects”? Although agriculture has never been easy in New England, there will always be people who want to farm. Yet at the rate we’re devouring land, there won’t always be land to farm.

“Will they say the same about Vermont and New Hampshire a century hence? That fate and destiny could not allow them to remain rural?” Jager asks (p. 13). He leaves us with that question unanswered, but with plenty to chew on while we think about it.

SUSAN J. HARLOW

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Civic Agriculture: Reconnecting Farm, Food, and Community

By Thomas A. Lyson (Lebanon, N.H.: University Press of New England, 2004, pp. xv, 136, paper, \$16.95).

On a very rainy mid-September day this past fall I got up early to pick basil for a produce stand at the “First-Ever Celebration of Westminster Farming,” at the Harlow Farm in Westminster, Vt. I shared my table with a display from the school garden project I coordinate, and we were across from another school garden project. Also participating were farmers selling herbs, squash, and apples; an alpaca farmer who brought several alpaca with her; and the historical society with a display about the history of Westminster farming. Despite the chilling nonstop rain, the event was well-attended, and all the food sold out. The meal featured local produce, including a roast pig raised on the farm where the event was held. The pig-roast was supervised by a local cookbook author, and all the proceeds from the event went to Westminster Cares, a nonprofit agency that serves elders in the community. This agency together with local farmers, the local food coop, and local businesses sponsored the event to recognize the diversity and vitality of the agriculture that has characterized Westminster since its founding in 1751.

I couldn't help but reflect on this event as I read Thomas Lyson's *Civic Agriculture: Reconnecting Farm, Food, and Community*, because it seemed to epitomize Lyson's conception of civic agriculture: “the embedding of local agricultural and food production in the community” (p. 62). Lyson is Liberty Hyde Bailey Professor of Development Sociology at Cornell, currently co-editor of the *Journal of Sustainable Agriculture* and director of Cornell's Community, Food and Agriculture Program. For many years Lyson has been researching and documenting the emergence of new forms of food production, processing, and distribution that are deeply tied to particular places and communities. He contends that beginning in the early 1990s and continuing today, “a relocalization of production and processing may be occurring throughout the United States” (p. 7). That is, community-supported agriculture, farmers' markets, school gardens, small-scale organic producers, community kitchens, and local food processors are all manifestations of a new “civic agriculture movement,” which Lyson suggests may have the potential to “generate sufficient economic and political power to mute the more socially and environmentally destructive manifestations of the global marketplace” (p. 105).

By coining the term “civic agriculture” Lyson emphasizes the role agriculture played in this country a century ago, when households, communities, and economies were tightly interwoven. Farms were generally small and diversified, and the exchange of labor and bartering of goods and services was “an embedded feature of the economic life in rural communities” (p. 10). In three succinct chapters, Lyson traces the changes that have taken place in the U.S. and global food systems since that time, such that civic agriculture has been replaced by an industrialized model of agriculture, in which most food is produced on huge corporate-controlled farms, by wage-earning workers or contract farmers, and shipped thousands of miles to consumers who have no connection to the land or people where the food was grown.

Lyson marshals impressive statistics to illustrate the story of this transformation. For example, he notes that in 1997, megafarms with sales of over one million dollars a year represented just 1.4 percent of all U.S. farms yet produced almost 42 percent of all the farm products sold. In 1910, 80 percent of U.S. farmers grew vegetables, compared to only 2.8 percent in 1997, and concentration of production was similar for potatoes and fruit. Geographic concentration is also notable: In 1997 California accounted for 12 percent of all agricultural sales in the U.S. as a result of its year-round growing system and the availability of federally subsidized water. And there has been a trend away from farmers owning and operating their own farms. Lyson points out that half of all the agricultural land in California (as well as in Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, and North Dakota) is absentee-owned.

This disconnection of farms and food from community life is one aspect of the disconnection of individuals from society that characterizes a globalized world, yet Lyson believes that in some corners of that world a “relocalization” is taking place, most notably in those areas hard-hit by global competition, or perhaps overlooked by global capital. The second half of his book explores the theoretical underpinnings and practical applications of this alternative approach to food production. He suggests that New England has been at the vanguard of this movement because large-scale industrialized farming has bypassed the region. Informal observation would support this claim, in that new farmers’ markets, school gardens, farmer-owned marketing cooperatives, and small-scale food production facilities are starting up across the region. And in Vermont, according to data from Vermont Organic Farmers, LLC, the number of organic farms has jumped in the last decade from 78 to 332.

Lyson argues that only recently has this “civic agriculture paradigm emerged to challenge the wisdom of conventional commodity agriculture” (p. 101). As someone who was involved in what we then called the

“alternative agriculture” movement of the 1970s, I would have to quibble with this claim. Lyson does note the publication, in 1976, of Richard Merrill’s anthology *Radical Agriculture*, which brought together the thinking of many writers, scientists, farmers, and alternative technology practitioners (such as those at the New Alchemy Institute) of that time. Many of the most vibrant of today’s farmers’ markets were founded during this period, following the passage of the Farmer-to-Consumer Direct Marketing Act of 1976. In an article entitled “Counting Farmers Markets” in *The Geographical Review* 91 (October 2001), Alison Brown argues that the mid-1970s saw the most rapid growth in farmers’ markets, although absolute numbers have increased tenfold since that time. It was largely farmers, many of them organic practitioners, who spearheaded the development of these projects, and many of these same grassroots activists are at the forefront of today’s civic agricultural enterprises. Perhaps it is not so much that a new paradigm has developed as that state and academic institutions are at last getting on board to support the notion that small-scale agriculture and food-based enterprises are a vital and valid path toward invigorating local economies.

Lyson mentions, almost in passing, that for civic agricultural enterprises to take hold, state and federal policies must ensure that “all firms have access to the same pool of resources such as information, labor, and infrastructure and that policies do not favor one group of producers over another group” (pp. 75–76). As exciting a prospect as civic agriculture may be, it will not become a significant counterweight to the predominant globalized, industrialized agricultural system unless communities, states, and federal policymakers help to develop the needed infrastructure. In addition, states must act to ensure that farmland is preserved, and, equally important, that new farmers have access to that farmland. In Vermont we are fortunate to have legions of committed activists who have worked to preserve our agricultural landscape and who are working to develop models for reducing the costs to enter agriculture. Still, being a farmer in New England has not yet enabled most to join the “independent middle class” that Lyson touts as making up the backbone of civil society. According to the most recent census by the New England Agricultural Statistics Service, the average income from agriculture for Vermont farmers in 2002 was \$15,462 (in Windham Country, where I live, the average farm income was \$8,226). Despite the obstacles, however, events such as the recent Celebration of Westminster Farming demonstrate that communities are pulling together to recognize the value of local agriculture, and that, as Lyson argues, civic agriculture can bring together farmers and “food citizens” in ways that strengthen bonds of community and reinforce local identity. Lyson’s

book provides a concise and accessible account of how agriculture became divorced from communities, and offers a hopeful vision of how it can once again be nurtured.

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20th-Century Sprawl: Highways and the Reshaping of the American Landscape

By Owen D. Gutfreund (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 231, \$35.00)

In Vermont we may think that the current political debates about whether to construct the Circumferential Highway, Bennington Bypass, and Missisquoi Bridge or instead focus on the competing demands for maintenance of existing roads and bridges are new. But as Owen Gutfreund reveals in his fascinating history of road construction, these arguments have been going on ever since highway development had its big boost at the federal level in the early part of the twentieth century. Gutfreund sets forth the rural and long distance travel bias, fiscal burdens and land use impacts of highway construction and illustrates his findings through three case studies in Denver, Colorado, Middlebury, Vermont, and Smyrna, Tennessee.

In *20th-Century Sprawl* Gutfreund traces how America was transformed from a nation that relied on rail transportation for intercity and interstate travel into a nation dependent on automobiles and trucks to move most people and goods within and between communities. In the late nineteenth century long-distance travel was accomplished through rail supported by state and federal governments, while local travel was on roads under the purview of local government. Ironically, the first proponents for an expanded government role in road improvements were bicyclists who initiated the Good Roads movement in the 1880s. The movement expanded as America entered the auto age at the beginning of the twentieth century. At a meeting in Vermont in 1904 the president of the American Good Roads Association stated that “If it took night

and day for a hundred years and the wealth of a Croesus to bring about the reformation of any State in the Union from the thralldom of mud, it was time and money well spent" (p. 15).

As the road-building programs in this country progressed, so did the evidence of the rural, long-distance travel bias of the state and federal legislation. The Middlebury case study offers a good illustration. According to the author, state and federal subsidies in Middlebury typically didn't cover the roads within the incorporated village (the town and village of Middlebury merged in 1966). So, for example, Merchants Row within the village was more expensive for residents to maintain and improve than Main Street outside of the village. As in Middlebury, town and urban centers around the country were specifically excluded from many federal and state funding grants.

Gutfreund makes the case convincingly that the road-building movement in this country has never been fully paid for by its users and that burdens have disproportionately fallen on people without cars, on urban centers and villages without adequate federal and state subsidies, and on taxpayers everywhere. In addition, federal mandates increased the requirements on state and local governments to upgrade roads often to excessive standards that were successfully lobbied for by the automotive industry. In Middlebury, despite voters cutting the road tax at numerous town meetings, the town's debt burden increased to alarming levels in order to meet the town's share of state-aid programs. According to the author, "Despite the unwillingness of Middlebury voters to foot the bill, the small town was forced to accommodate automobility by the overwhelming power of state and federal policies and incentives" (pp. 148-149). Toll roads, gas tax hikes, and other user fees were successfully lobbied against by industry representatives. Between 1937 and 1957 state aid for highway maintenance remained at \$25 a mile for towns like Middlebury while inflation expanded by 95 percent during the same period (p. 157). Thus, in the early part of the twentieth century, the burden of road building fell on all taxpayers, most of whom did not even own automobiles.

The increasingly congested and deteriorating roadway conditions in urban and village centers, along with the emphasis on road building in outlying areas, contributed to migration of people, shops, services, and employment to suburban locations. Gutfreund offers numerous examples of the ways in which the expanded highway system opened up new opportunities for land development in previously isolated areas. At the same time, he points out that our road-building programs had a distinctly anti-urban bias that led to poor connections from outlying areas to urban centers, bypasses around these centers, and neglect of road maintenance and alternative transportation projects in these locations

that were necessary to avoid congestion and deterioration. Nevertheless, while Gutfreund's research is extensive on the evolution of United States highway construction and grant-in-aid programs, his documentation of the reactions to such programs by those involved in community planning is less thorough. For example, he provides little information on the efforts of the town of Middlebury to rezone the Route 7 corridor to preserve farmland and to prevent strip development in the 1960s after the residents realized that the commercial corridor they had zoned along its entire length was a mistake. He also fails to mention the movement to preserve large expanses of farmland in Middlebury that began in the 1980s and continues today. Nevertheless, his case studies in all three communities make a compelling case for the connection between highway development and sprawl.

It is not hard to share the outrage that Gutfreund clearly feels about the failures and inequities of the United States highway construction programs and their tremendous impact on the American landscape. While one can't deny the many positive benefits of road construction, we are all shouldering the fiscal costs, the urban congestion problems, and the sprawl consequences of these programs whose history Gutfreund describes in such interesting detail.

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