

# BOOK REVIEWS

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## *Vermont Voices, 1609 through 1990s: A Documentary History of the Green Mountain State*

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*Edited by J. Kevin Graffagnino, Samuel B. Hand, and Gene Sessions (Montpelier, Vt.: Vermont Historical Society, 1999, pp. 409, cloth, \$60.00; paper, \$45.00).*

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Recent trends in Vermont historiography and education are neatly comprehended by two publications of the Vermont Historical Society: *In a State of Nature: Readings in Vermont History*, edited by H. Nicholas Muller and Samuel Hand, published in 1982, and the recently released *Vermont Voices*. Both, in the words of Gary Lord's 1982 review of *In a State of Nature*, address the "great need for suitable instructional materials to encourage and improve the teaching of Vermont history."

What distinguishes these two books from each other is the role they assign primary sources. *In a State of Nature* is a compilation of articles, stripped of their footnotes. Consequently, the primary sources steering the research are lost, leaving the reader adrift in the writer's interpretations. *Vermont Voices* reverses this approach, placing primary documents to the fore, shadowed only by brief contextual comments by the editors.

The editors, speaking from the experience of their own distinguished careers, note that "contemporary records are the essential ingredients used by historians in the writing of history." Unlike *In a State of Nature*, the *Voices*' reader is asked to participate in the historian's craft; to see history as an intellectual exercise in selection and interpretation. The editors recognize that "[u]nderstanding a primary source . . . can be complicated" and urge the reader to ask questions "about the authenticity of the item; about the attitudes and circumstances that underlay and influenced its creation; about the credibility of its details, the biases that may distort the reporting, and the existence of corroborating evidence. By engaging these questions, the reader enters into the historian's enterprise" (p. xxi).

This transition of the reader from passive recipient to active participant is what makes *Vermont Voices* so exciting. It also makes the volume essential to any school seriously pursuing the new state social studies standards. *Voices*, however, is less a textbook than a resource for all observers of the Vermont experience.

The selected documents are chronologically arranged and laid out in eleven sec-

tions, each prefaced with a contextual essay. Documents include public letters, newspaper editorials, journal entries, political cartoons, and song sheets. One can find Abenaki creation stories and an Abenaki petition for tribal recognition. There are familiar tales, such as Seth Hubbell's 1789 narrative of homesteading, and less accessible documents such as Mrs. Annette Parmalee's 1917 definition of a "woman's place." Ethan Allen's polemics supporting Vermont independence bolster our self-image; Kenneth Wibecan's 1968 "black man's viewpoint" jars our self-complacency. An epilogue suggests themes developed through the documents and a bibliography points to complementary compilations and studies (though curiously omits some of the documentary editions used for selections).

*Vermont Voices* is part of a long tradition of documentary editions, from William Slade's *Vermont State Papers* (1823) through John Duffy's *Ethan Allen and His Kin: Correspondence, 1772–1819* (1998). Weighed against that tradition, *Voices* holds its own.

Part of that tradition, of course, is debating the selections. We should all accept the editors' invitation to be participants. Certainly as an archivist I welcome that invitation as a way of encouraging discussion about the creation and use of records.

With the exception of a modern transcription of an ancient Abenaki creation story, the selected documents are "all . . . printed or written sources that have survived in their original form" (p. xxi). In practice, selections are frequently drawn not from original manuscripts but from previous documentary compilations such as Slade, E. P. Walton's *Records of the Council of Safety and the Governor and Council of the State of Vermont* (8 vols., 1873–1880), the State Papers of Vermont, etc. (a preference reinforced by the absence of a bibliographic section on Vermont repositories or their on-line or otherwise published catalogues).

The source for the 1777 constitution excerpt, for example, is cited as Walton's 1873 *Governor and Council*, not the manuscript 1777 constitution, nor the 1778 published version. How then can the reader effectively ask questions "about the authenticity of the item"? For example, did the 1777 manuscript or 1778 published versions of the constitution italicize sections of the Declaration of Rights, as the reproduced version does? Only by going to *Governor and Council* does one learn that Walton italicized lines that were Vermont's "additions to or changes" to the 1776 Pennsylvania constitution.

Contextual loss occurs in many other ways. Most of the selections were originally created for broad public consumption, an important fact not developed by the editors. Documents designed for publication carry different contexts than personal correspondence and diaries. The reader would be better served, for example, if informed that the *Vermont Watchman & State Journal*, from which the description of the 1848 Democratic State Convention is drawn, was a Whig newspaper.

Context is further obscured by representing complex public dialogue through single documents, thereby muffling once vigorous public debate. The entry on the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions, for example, is limited to the legislative response of the Federalist majority; the minority report of the fifty Jeffersonian legislators is omitted. How then can the reader effectively ask questions "about the attitudes and circumstances that underlay and influenced [the document's] creation?"

None of this, however, diminishes the importance of *Vermont Voices*. Rather, by raising such issues, *Vermont Voices* ultimately demonstrates why it is indeed an essential tool. To the degree that it can engender dialogue and provoke thought it will truly open the reader to the “historian’s enterprise.”

D. GREGORY SANFORD

*Gregory Sanford is the Vermont State Archivist.*

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## *Hands on the Land: A History of the Vermont Landscape*

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By Jan Albers (Rutland, Vt.: The Orton Family Foundation [by The MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass.], 2000, pp. 351, cloth, \$35.00).

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Jan Albers has given us much more than just “a history of the Vermont landscape,” although that might have been enough to justify calling *Hands on the Land* an important book. In a rich synthesis, Albers tells a full story of Vermont’s past as it has played out on the face of its landscape. Her accomplishment is valuable to all who care about Vermont, regardless of whether they consider themselves history minded. She has assembled a guidebook to Vermont’s useable past.

The lessons of Vermont’s past, as written on the land, are: (1) landscapes constantly develop and change in response to human cultural activity, and (2) our actions and values are revealed in the landscapes we leave to our descendants. Stated another way, the choices we make become indelible parts of the landscape, so we should be careful to make good choices. “We may not all have dirt under our fingernails, but every one of us has our hands on the land” (p. 332).

Albers’s writing echoes the insights of another Vermonter, George Perkins Marsh, who wrote the book *Man and Nature* 136 years ago. In this classic, Marsh postulated that human activity inexorably shaped nature, often with dire results, but also with the possibility of enlightened improvement. Marsh was expressing a new way of thinking, and we remember him as our earliest “ecological” writer. Albers anchors her fourth chapter with an insightful discussion of Marsh’s importance in which she relates his later insights to his formative years in Woodstock. Her analysis of Marsh is an interesting complement to David Lowenthal’s newly expanded biography of Marsh (*George Perkins Marsh: Prophet of Conservation*), which was published about the same time as *Hands on the Land*.

In an excellent work of historical synthesis, chapter one of *Hands on the Land* blends geological information on the Vermont landform and archeological analysis of prehistoric human occupation, seamlessly leading to the history of European contact and its impact on the land as well as on the native population of Vermont. Although the

myth of a Vermont devoid of native populations has long since been discredited, Albers replaces it with a very readable narrative that establishes Vermont at the time of English settlement as a real place populated by native people with strong cultural roots of their own. Albers understandably feels compelled to apologize for lumping native culture together with geology in a single chapter called “Native Vermont,” but the result is worthwhile, firmly establishing native people as shapers of the landscape.

Subsequent chapters tell the story of how Vermonters repeatedly shaped and reshaped the land and their communities: “Claiming the Land” and stripping it of forest in the period through statehood; organizing a “Classic Agrarian Landscape” in the hopeful first half of the nineteenth century; “Creating Vermont’s Yankee Kingdom” in response to the land’s natural limitations and significantly altering the landscape between the Civil War and World War II; and combining the myth of its past with the reality of its re-greened landscape, “Choosing Vermont” in a formula for recent prosperity and growth. Throughout Vermont’s past, spiritual outlooks, values and ideals, and economic imperatives and pressures have combined to influence the ways that Vermonters have shaped the land, and the record is writ large upon the landscape.

The industrial revolution dealt Vermont only a glancing blow. The state’s landscape and society remained primarily rural while most of the nation underwent industrial transformation in the first half of the twentieth century. Similarly, Vermont has been late to experience the postsuburban sprawl that has blighted rural landscapes throughout the East. Vermont’s unique rural character is ironically the product of the land’s limitations—ironically because the attractiveness of its rural character constitutes both threat and opportunity. In her concluding chapters, Albers chronicles the creation and cultivation of Vermont’s image as a quintessentially rural place. Today, the myth is so pervasive and seemingly timeless that it can mask the reality of the profound changes and transformations that the state has experienced as Vermonters struggled to make a living from the land. It can mask a real understanding of the historical forces and human decisions that shaped the Vermont landscape. And it may even mask insight into the forces that could undo—virtually before our eyes—what we value about Vermont.

In sponsoring, publishing, and underwriting *Hands on the Land*, the Orton Family Foundation has expressed its strong belief in the value of a useable past. The book is a history for everybody, published in the belief that “the more a community understands about how decisions have been made, the better will be its future decisions.” The book is engaging, written in a lively, provocative, and occasionally jocular style, liberally illustrated, and lavishly designed and printed. At \$35.00 it is truly a bargain—no doubt largely made possible by Orton’s generosity. But the Orton Family Foundation has done much more than simply underwrite an attractive book. The Foundation’s vision of the value of rural Vermont and the value of understanding how the past has shaped the present makes a lasting contribution to the historical literature of the Green Mountain State.

DAVID A. DONATH

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*The Great Warpath: British Military Sites  
from Albany to Crown Point*

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By David R. Starbuck (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1999, pp. 206, \$22.95, paper, \$19.95).

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This is not only an intimate look at the shadow of long-gone people and armies, but just as close a look at the day-to-day travails and thrills of the archaeological crews who laboriously unearth evidence and artifacts where the rest of us see only weedy mounds, depressions in the woods, and rotting timbers.

David Starbuck's uncovering and interpretation of soldier haunts, huts, forts, hospitals, and battlegrounds brings us all closer to the eighteenth-century people who lived, occasionally fought, and often died in the invasion corridor between Albany, N.Y., and the Canadian border. The very delicacy of the archaeologist's handwork and the painstaking effort to preserve ordinary things are a testimonial—an act of homage—to those very real, very tough, men, women, and children who were so typical of that bygone era of adventure, struggle, and conquest.

Whether they were conquering a vast wilderness or besieging forts, fighting whole armies or small war parties, the folk whose shadow can still be seen under the ground Starbuck turns over were human, not plastic icons—people, not idealized pictures in history books. Starbuck and company begin their quest for these shadows on that very premise: Real people, living every day in mundane campsites and cabins, threw what are now treasures into their trash pits. The archaeologist tells their story by revealing their humanity and showing us precisely where they won and lost, waited, ate, slept, recuperated, and were buried.

*The Great Warpath* is a journey into that shadowland of burn marks and post holes, lost graves and sunken bateaux. Those of us who see our ancestors as real people can appreciate such a book as this for showing vividly how the eighteenth-century generations were much like our own. The likeness is manifested by lost coins and buttons, pits full of beef bones, latrines, discolorations of soil that indicate the remains of walls and floors—and is evident on an unexploded mortar shell that bears a piece of human scalp, apparently from the head of the person upon whom the shell dropped.

Starbuck eloquently interprets what he and his fellow workers have found in the richest vein of eighteenth-century British military sites in the country. He overlays the historical narrative with an explanation of how he meticulously uncovered the physical evidence piece by piece, excavation by excavation. By showing us the ordinary things of life back then, the book evokes even more vividly the reality of the bloody battles of Saratoga and Hubbardton, the terrible massacre of unarmed British soldiers and civilians at Fort William Henry, and the waterborne clashes on lakes Champlain and George.

It is a delight and fascination to look at the 150 photographs and drawings that range from period illustrations of battles to square, lined-off excavations, and to collections of buttons and buckles discovered one by one.

Starbucks's own excitement shines through as he explores the earth that is not so far from his birthplace in nearby Ticonderoga, N.Y. The thirteen-year-long study detailed in the book was more than an academic endeavor for Starbuck, who teaches archeology at Plymouth State College in New Hampshire. It might be likened to a genealogical search of sorts—a search for his own people's ancestors, but with a spade, trowel, and brushes. That search bears an overarching sense of respect and reverence for those other folks who shared that past and that country with Starbuck's own forebears.

More questions than answers are often unearthed in this type of historical research: Why was a line of palisades found near a smallpox hospital on Rogers Island? Who were the five men whose skeletons were discovered years ago underneath a brick floor of a barracks at Fort William Henry (one with eight musket balls mingled with his bones)? What sorts of jars and bowls did those badly burned pottery shards unearthed at Mount Independence come from?

Mount Independence, across the narrows of Lake Champlain from Fort Ticonderoga, is perhaps the most intact site from the period, according to Starbuck. Its hospital, he believes, is the only eighteenth-century "general" hospital ever to have been professionally excavated. The encampment and fortifications there were in a constant state of construction throughout much of the Revolution, and thousands of troops came and went there, including British and loyalists.

Sites included in *The Great Warpath* are a blockhouse in the heart of Albany, the Saratoga battlefields, Fort Edward and Rogers Island, Fort William Henry, the Village of Lake George, Mount Independence, Ticonderoga, Hubbardton, and the depths beneath the waters of lakes George and Champlain.

Starbuck's combination of enthusiasm and personal gratification unites with his fine scholarship and profound respect for the people of the past. The result makes *The Great Warpath* a history book that goes beyond mere historical facts and delves deeper, into the truth about a people barely remembered—but whom we know a little better now, thanks to David Starbuck and company.

STUART MURRAY

*Stuart Murray has written eight historical novels set in the frontier regions after the French and Indian War and during the Revolutionary War; he has also written three non-fiction works on the era, including The Honor of Command, about the Saratoga campaign, and America's Song, The Story of "Yankee Doodle."*

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*Textiles in Early New England: Design, Production, and Consumption. The Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife Annual Proceedings 1997*

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Edited by Peter Benes (Boston: Boston University Press, 1999, pp. 240, paper, \$25.00).

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This publication features essays based on papers presented at the twenty-second annual Dublin Seminar held in Deerfield, Massachusetts, June 27–29, 1997. It was the first of two seminars addressing the history of domestic and imported textiles in New England, 1700–1950. The volume contains fourteen of the eighteen papers presented at the seminar, organized into six thematic sections and a postscript.

In section one, “Coverlets,” Deborah Kraak’s essay “Early American Silk Patchwork Quilts” examines four extant eighteenth-century American silk patchwork quilts and places them in the broader context of English silk patchwork quilts and dress fabrics. “The Warp and Weft of a Lifetime: The Discovery of a New Hampshire Weaver and Her Work,” relates the important research efforts of Donna-Belle Garvin into Hannah Leathers Wilson, the weaver of at least 177 weft-loop coverlets long admired by textile historians. The essay goes beyond the history of Hannah Wilson’s life, placing her work in the context of the local market, the consumers who “bespoke” the coverlets, local businesses, and textile spinning and weaving mills.

Section two, “Textiles and Decorative Arts,” features the essay by Paula Bradstreet Richter, “Lucy Cleveland’s Figures of Rags: Textile Arts and Social Commentary in Early-Nineteenth-Century New England.” The artist’s interest in storytelling is revealed by the domestic scenes she created, such as “The New Baby” or “The Sick Room.” Her figure “The Petition of the Poor Shirtwomen,” created for the 1852 Shirtwoman’s Union Fair in New York, illustrates her awareness of and participation in national reform movements.

In section three, “Hand Tools,” the essay “Heads Were Spinning: The Significance of the Patent Accelerating Spinning Wheel Head” documents how the development and distribution of the accelerating spinning head affected domestic woolen textile production. Author Frank G. White presents an excellent overview of nineteenth-century business development by relating how Amos Miner faced such issues as production rights, manufacturing concerns, and marketing strategies in his efforts.

Two of the essays in section four, “Domestic and Outwork Production,” trace unique home-based industries promoted by and organized for women. “The Laces of Ipswich, Massachusetts: An American Industry, 1750–1840” by Marta M. Cotterell, and “Mitten Production in Nineteenth-Century Downeast Maine” by Deborah Pulliam, discuss the structure and economy of two outwork industries and examine how the changes in nineteenth-century industry and commerce affected these home-based industries. In the third essay of this section, “Lace Schools and Lace Factories: Female Outwork in New England’s Machine-Lace Industry, 1818–1838,”

Richard M. Candee discusses how the outwork systems in the handmade lace industry were integrated into the factory-based production of lace.

Section five, "Toward Industrial Production," focuses on the history of domestic and factory textile production. Adrienne D. Hood discusses how regional differences, immigration patterns, and agricultural trends influenced patterns of industrialization in urban and rural Pennsylvania and Massachusetts in her essay, "Industrial Opportunism: From Handweaving to Mill Production, 1700–1830." In "Textile Legacy of a Narragansett Planter: Families of Robert and Christopher Browning," Gail B. Putnam examines an extensive collection of household textiles and clothing that demonstrates the continued production of hand-woven clothing and household goods long after factory goods were readily available. By relating these textiles to household guides and other documented extant textiles, Putnam illustrates how one family's collection can be used to provide a more complete picture of domestic life.

Section six, "Textiles and Clothing," explores the use of imported and domestic textiles and popular attitudes toward clothing and the people who produced it. In "Bandanna: On the Indian Origins of an All-American Textile," Susan S. Bean looks at the history of manufacture, importation, and use of these now familiar textiles. Lynne Z. Bassett examines fashionable clothing and popular attitudes in her essay, "'The Great Leap': Youth's Clothing in the Early Nineteenth Century." By relating extant clothing and illustrations found in portraits and prints to comments on appropriate clothing found in contemporary literature and guide books, Bassett shows that fashion-conscious youth were caught between the desire to dress according to style and parental concern for economy and popular attitudes that stressed restraint. In her essay "Designing Women: Massachusetts Milliners in the Nineteenth Century," Glendyne R. Wergland presents a fascinating commentary on the economic and social lifestyle of women employed in this fashionable trade. To insure a lucrative business, women needed more than creativity and sewing skills; they required good business skills, the ability to deal with salesmen and customers, and astuteness to market their creations. On the social side, a successful milliner needed to be cheerful and enjoy a good reputation. It was also important for her to attend a local church, not only to demonstrate her good character, but also to advertise her hats. "Luther Edgerton's 'Cloathing Books': A Record of Men's Ready-to-Wear, 1817–1821" by Adrienne St. Pierre describes Mr. Edgerton's career as a bookkeeper and tailor of ready-made clothing. Using Edgerton's records, St. Pierre provides information on the relative value of clothes, the textiles used to make them, the consumers purchasing the clothes, and the maker's life, family, and financial circumstances.

The closing essay, "A Canterbury Tale: Sarah Ann Major Harris and Prudence Crandall," reminds us of the continued value of textiles as artifacts of material culture. Using an embroidered family register as a reference, author Glee F. Krueger relates the story of Sally M. Prentice, the first African-American pupil to attend Prudence Crandall's academy in Canterbury, Connecticut.

The papers in this collection provide valuable information on the makers and users of quilts, coverlets, dolls, lace, millinery, and clothing; the fiber and fabric used in their manufacture; and the economic environment in which they were produced.

*Textiles in Early New England: Design, Production, and Consumption* will be an excellent resource for anyone interested in the study of textiles.

CELIA Y. OLIVER

*Celia Oliver is the Curator of Textiles at Shelburne Museum. Her recent publication, "Enduring Grace: Quilts from the Shelburne Museum," examines the use and relationship of quilts and other bedcovers in the historic home.*

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### *A Tourist's New England: Travel Fiction, 1820–1920*

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*Edited by Dona Brown (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1999, pp. 217, paper, \$19.95).*

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Pitched to an academic as well as a popular audience, *A Tourist's New England* is a welcome addition to the still sparse published literature treating tourist travel in New England from 1820 to 1920. In presenting concepts and literary images of travel, it realizes an admirable goal. It provides substantive intellectual stimulation as well as engaging entertainment. In recent years, by virtue of her publications, lectures, conference presentations, and editorial work, Dona Brown, associate professor of history at the University of Vermont, has established herself as the premier historian of tourism in nineteenth- and twentieth-century New England. This reputation is well merited. Brown's most notable accomplishment to date is her marvelously insightful and thought-provoking book, *Inventing New England: Regional Tourism in the Nineteenth Century*.

In *A Tourist's New England*, a volume in the University Press of New England's extensive and successful "Hardscrabble Books" series, Brown has assembled, edited, and written a fine introduction to a representative group of fictional writings—short stories as well as excerpts from novels—by some of the region's best-known writers, beginning with Nathaniel Hawthorne in the 1830s and concluding with William Dean Howells and Sinclair Lewis in the 1920s. In the author's words, "this collection explores tourists' responses to New England in an earlier era" and "the experiences of one particular set of tourists who wrote—and published—fictional accounts of their experiences" (p. 1). In Brown's introduction, one gains a sense of the importance of the practice of travel in nineteenth-century fiction, the demographics and economics of tourism, and the changes in travel patterns and "the ways people wrote about traveling" (p. 2). As New England underwent pronounced transformation in the nineteenth century, so did perceptions of the landscape, seascape, city, rural town, and the nature of travel.

Brown organizes the collected readings into three logical groupings. The first is concerned with "tourists in search of beautiful scenery" and illustrates effectively "the close relationship between scenic touring and literary work" (p. 4). The pri-

mary geographic focus of this section is on New Hampshire's White Mountains, long regarded by historians as the principal scenic tourist destination in the United States in the mid-nineteenth century. The reader is treated to excerpts from Hawthorne's "Sketches from Memory" (1835) and to the entire essay, "The Ambitious Guest" (1835), chronicling the Willey family and the tragic Crawford Notch landslide of 1826. Following Hawthorne's writings are Sarah Josepha Hale's "The Romance of Traveling" from her *Traits of American Life* (1835), two chapters from Susan Warner's *Nobody* (1882), and a chapter from Charles Dudley Warner's "Their Pilgrimage," serialized in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* (1886). Centered on both coastal and mountain scenery, these excerpts, like Hawthorne's, connect "literary fame and scenic touring" (p. 5), but also tie travel experiences to "the stories of love, rivalry, and social position that dominated late-nineteenth-century fiction" (p. 8).

The second section of the book, "Pleasure and Danger at New England Resorts," investigates the New England vacation experience and associated themes involving romance, sensualism, and sexuality. The reader is first treated to excerpts from Emma Dunham Kelley's *Megda* (1891), and Susan and Anna Warner's *The Gold of Chickaree* (1876), which deal with questionable human encounters, the significance of the waltz dance, and the "profound tension at the heart of nineteenth-century vacationing" (p. 8). Next, Harriet Beecher Stowe examines this tension in chapters from her novel *Pink and White Tyranny* (1871), about "corruptions of wealth and leisure" (p. 9). This is followed by excerpts from Edith Wharton's *Summer* (1917), in which she recounts an episode about "the lure of marriage to an inappropriate mate" (pp. 10–11). The unpredictable human side of tourism is thus fully investigated.

In the book's third section, "A Visit to Old New England," Brown explores "the tourist's search for an experience of . . . [an] imaginary nostalgic New England." Each of her five selections "harbors a fantasy—a memory of something lost that might be found in rural New England" (p. 13). In contrast to earlier times, visions of the regional countryside after the Civil War underwent "a radical transformation" (p. 12) due to industrialization, urbanization, and growing ethnic diversity. Chapter one of Edward Bellamy's *Six to One: A Nantucket Idyl* (1878) portrays a peaceful, orderly, remote island, removed from the stresses of city life. The next excerpt, from Sarah Orne Jewett's *Deephaven* (1877), describes her home town, South Berwick, Maine, in a similar fashion, "blending nostalgia for the past with meticulous powers of observation" (p. 14). This is followed by Thomas Nelson Page's short story, "Miss Godwin's Inheritance" (*Scribner's Magazine*, 1904), also set in coastal Maine and similarly concerned with recapturing "stability and harmony in a world without industrial conflict" (p. 15) through immersion in the past. In portions of his last novel, *The Vacation of the Kelwyns* (1920), William Dean Howells provocatively describes the time-honored tourist quest for good country food, a vacation delight combined with "the pleasures of a 'colonial' fantasy of order and stability, [and] the quiet and solitude of a place off the railroad grid" (p. 15). In the final selection, Brown directs attention to the turn-of-the-century interest in wilderness hiking and camping through the experiences of Sinclair Lewis's legendary character George Babbitt (from the 1922 novel *Babbitt*), his search for communion with nature and a

return to the uncomplicated, pure, and primitive past. This is a most fitting conclusion to Brown's collection of "tourist responses to New England . . . between 1820 and 1920" (p. 1), and to that still wonderfully enticing and compelling invention—the New England myth that continues to beckon and refuses to die.

BRYANT F. TOLLES, JR.

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### *Beautiful Lake Bomoseen*

By Castleton State College History Students, with an introduction by Holman D. Jordan, Jr. (Castleton, Vt.: Castleton State College, 1999, pp. 227, paper, \$19.95).

### *The Right to Recreate and the Attempt to Amuse: Recreation and Leisure in the Towns of Addison County, Vermont, 1790–1930*

By Margaret Kline-Kirkpatrick (Middlebury, Vt.: Friends of the Library, Middlebury College, 1998, pp. 119, paper, \$15.00).

One of the greatest difficulties of exploring the history of leisure and recreation in the United States is the fact that so little research has been done on a local level. Leisure and recreation have played increasingly important roles in American life and, in many states (Vermont is one), have become crucial to the economy. Still, local historians are only beginning to show an interest in gathering basic information about the history of recreation and leisure in their towns and counties. These two new local histories may promise a change.

These books are also interesting for another reason: they are written by undergraduates at Vermont colleges. The first, *Beautiful Lake Bomoseen*, is the collaborative project of several generations of history students at Castleton State College, under the direction of Holman D. Jordan, Jr. The second, *The Right to Recreate and the Attempt to Amuse*, is Margaret Kline-Kirkpatrick's senior honors thesis, submitted to the history department at Middlebury College. As the products of undergraduate historians, these histories are each impressive, testifying to long hours of archival research and interviewing and also to the hard work of writing and analysis. They demonstrate, among other things, what a powerful teaching tool local history can be.

*Beautiful Lake Bomoseen* is a compilation of student research projects, each describing a specific aspect of the resort experience at Lake Bomoseen. Most are based on oral histories done in the community. For the most part focused on the

1920s and 1930s, they detail the history of each inn, hotel, beach, cottage community, and dance hall on the lake. Much of this material will be especially appealing to the local enthusiast, who will enjoy matching reminiscences with the people who appear here. Many sections also offer intriguing information for scholars, often touching on important questions of larger regional interest. Historians know very little, for example, about the work force employed by resorts. The discovery that workers from Jamaica staffed some Lake Bomoseen hotels is both startling and intriguing.

If these essays have any weakness, it is a general one often associated with oral histories: many of the questions historians may have about the past may not arise in an interview setting. For example, most of the oral histories imply that Lake Bomoseen was a largely Roman Catholic and Irish-American resort, but no one addresses the question of how that fact may have shaped the resort experience there. On the whole, though, these are lively and interesting essays, reflecting a devotion to concrete detail that a teacher loves to see in a history student. Professor Jordan offers a thought-provoking general introduction to their work, fitting the local information into a larger historical framework.

Margaret Kline-Kirkpatrick's work, *The Right to Recreate*, was originally her senior thesis at Middlebury College. As Kline-Kirkpatrick puts it, her work describes a "movement from a world where recreation was a private, individual, and usually single-sex experience to one more public, community-organized, and occasionally mixed-sex . . . and finally to a mass-American, often commercialized experience" (p. 6). Again, *The Right to Recreate* will interest local readers, who will find food for thought in her approach to local history. For example, she makes the connection between the demand for better roads in Addison County and the new craze for bicycles. But Kline-Kirkpatrick's purpose is clearly to set local history into the context of larger historical questions—essentially to illustrate national trends with a local narrative. Addison County serves here as a test case for rural America, offering evidence for use in more general theorizing about the history of leisure.

Kline-Kirkpatrick points out in her introduction that the complexity and magnitude of her subject made her task difficult. That is certainly true. In spite of its limited geographical focus, her work raises too many important questions to be answered in a short work like this: apparently simple questions about leisure invariably lead the researcher to a series of complex questions about gender, religion, social class, and the rise of industrialism. But these difficulties do not obscure the intelligent and thoughtful work she has done.

Both these books do important work, and both would make interesting reading for other undergraduates, not only because they were written by undergraduates, but because of their direct and concrete approach to history.

DONA BROWN

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*Safe Thus Far: A History of the Guilford Congregational Church, a.k.a. The Guilford Community Church, United Church of Christ in Guilford, Vermont, 1767–1997.*

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By Larrimore C. Crockett (Dummerston, Vt.: Black Mountain Press, 1999, pp. xiv+275+ Appendices, \$56.00).

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Larrimore Crockett's *Safe Thus Far* has a splendid title because it recognizes that life, as well as recorded history, is work in progress. The book is a monumental study of a parish in a town that seems to have become an outer suburb of Brattleboro. The Guilford church is unique in having survived, although sinking into a coma several times, when other denominations have come and gone. Its author, an outsider in birth, education, and early work, became an insider as Vermont executive, professor, interim pastor, and husband of the minister to whom his work is dedicated, F. Shirley Harris Crockett (1932–1998).

Crockett is interested in details and knows how to get them right and let them illuminate large themes. Hence his book will be useful for a wide variety of readers: the members of the Guilford church, its neighbors in the area, anyone concerned with religion, past and present, and genealogists and other persons seeking information about the hundreds of individuals carefully indexed. Most valuable is the vast collection of elusive data on the settled, supply, and guest pastors, especially the first four in the eighteenth century. The 136 pages of appendices include biographies of pastors; lists of members, baptisms, marriages, deaths; covenants, articles and confessions of faith; lists of church records; and bibliography.

Crockett carries the reader along with him in wondering why things happened, and in risking clearly marked guesses, based on an amazing variety of soundly scrutinized sources gathered from across the country. He penetrates, farther than most writers in this field, the darkness concealing events for which the main sources are gone. His lively curiosity and imagination operate skillfully on the few details he can find.

He combines detachment and sympathy for the leadership and the members. Although an ordained minister and preacher's kid, he is restrained in pointing morals. He does not dodge the failings to which human nature is prone, but explains the situation and is not judgmental. His treatment of Abner Reeve and Elijah Wollage, first and third pastors, is characteristic. However, when reporting the failure of the wheel chair lift to operate because one piece of electrician's tape on the door frame was too thick, Crockett cannot refrain from pointing out what a "huge difference even a small effort can make" (p. 256).

Where most historians end well back of their present, to avoid hurt feelings and because of the size of the job and the lack of perspective, Crockett risks revision by coming up to yesterday. Future historians of subjects upon which this sotry touches are fortunate that they will have *Safe Thus Far* to build on.

T. D. SEYMOUR BASSETT

*T. D. Seymour Bassett, retired from the University of Vermont, has recently published The Gods of the Hills: Piety and Society in Nineteenth-Century Vermont.*

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## *Vergennes, Vermont and the War of 1812: The Battle of Lake Champlain*

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By Norman Ansley (Severna Park, Md.: Brooke Keefer Limited Editions, 1999, pp. 232, \$29.95, paper, \$19.95).

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The history of Vergennes is dominated by the War of 1812. The central role played by the little city in the events leading up to the Battle of Plattsburg Bay casts a large shadow over the remainder of its illustrious past, much as the monument dedicated to the hero of the battle, Commodore Thomas MacDonough, overshadows the city green. For it was here, in the Otter Creek basin, that the motley flotilla we called a navy limped into winter quarters in late 1813. It was here, anticipating the desire of the British to gain control of the lake during the next sailing season, that a new fleet was carved out of the surrounding forest with such amazing speed that it still remains hard to believe. The eventual commander-in-chief of the Vermont volunteers, Samuel Strong, was also one of Vergennes's leading citizens.

With the title of *Vergennes, Vermont and the War of 1812*, one might expect a work centering on the activities in Vergennes during the conflict. Perhaps it would consider the impact of the naval shipyard on what was then Vermont's only city, or how military contracts and the fitting out of the American fleet revived the hopes of the Boston merchants who owned the struggling Monkton Iron Works situated on the Otter Creek falls. Instead, the title seems an attempt to pay homage to Vergennes's part in the conflict, for the city finds itself only peripherally involved in the main story. The subtitle, *The Battle of Lake Champlain*, more accurately describes what the reader will find inside the cover. The bulk of the book's two hundred thirty-two pages are devoted to following the members of the American army and navy in the Champlain valley as they moved toward their rendezvous with destiny on September 11, 1814.

The decisive engagement at Plattsburg Bay can hardly be considered virgin soil to the historian, for it has been analyzed and reanalyzed by everyone from academics to military and naval officers to world leaders. Yet Ansley's aim here is not to plow old ground. Rather, he has created a unique treasure trove on this epic battle from a Vermont perspective. The author opens with a forty-page synopsis of the contest. He sets the stage by describing the sorry state of the navy as it existed when MacDonough arrived on the lake in the fall of 1812. We are then led through the disastrous summer of 1813, punctuated by a demoralizing British raid, the commodore's choice of Vergennes as his winter quarters, and the frantic shipbuilding campaign that followed. Ansley describes the rebuff of the Royal Navy at Fort Cassin in the spring of 1814 as it attempted to bottle up the infant American fleet, and, of course, closes with a vivid rendering of the land and sea battles in Plattsburg and on Lake Champlain.

The balance of the book consists of a compendium of data on the battle divided into two appendices. In the first, the author furnishes detailed descriptions of all the ships of both navies that were present at Plattsburg Bay, right down to the gun

ranges of the cannon and the consistency of the shot. He also identifies all units of the United States army, Vermont volunteers, and New York militia present, as well as those of the British army. The second appendix lists all Vermont companies by town and commander, and each company's assignment to regiment. It also includes a valuable list of the over 3,000 Vermonters who volunteered for service at Plattsburg, which the author compiled by searching through the roster of 1812 veterans, pension lists, and town histories. The book is brought to completion with an afterword by Art Cohn, director of the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, and Kevin Crisman, professor at Texas A&M University. Both trailblazers in the exploration and preservation of the lake's underwater relics, they provide a short history of what has become of the remains of the British and American fleets that took part in this pivotal clash.

Norman Ansley has put together a nice volume on the Battle of Plattsburg Bay. The book is handsomely illustrated, with photographs as well as line drawings, has ample notes, a bibliography, and index. For the less seaworthy among us, the author includes a glossary of nautical terms. With its unique format and status as the first attempt at compiling a true list of Vermont volunteers at Plattsburg, *Vergennes, Vermont and the War of 1812* has earned a place on the crowded shelf of books devoted to this subject.

KENNETH A. DEGREE

*Kenneth A. Degree is the author of Vergennes in the Age of Jackson and Vergennes in 1870: A Vermont City in the Victorian Age.*

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### *Justin Smith Morrill: The Father of the Land Grant Colleges*

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By Coy F. Cross II (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1999, pp. 147, \$24.95).

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Justin Smith Morrill was arguably Vermont's most distinguished nineteenth-century politician. Certainly he was the most durable; Morrill's combined forty-four years in the House and Senate remains the longest tenure in Congress by any Vermonter. In his time, Morrill was considered uniquely representative of the characteristics of his home state, and he remains a Vermont icon, particularly in his native Orange County. Nevertheless, the last book-length biography of Morrill was written in 1924. Coy Cross's new biography, *Justin Smith Morrill: Father of the Land Grant Colleges*, rectifies that long neglect.

*Justin Smith Morrill* is generally a straightforward political history. As the book's subtitle suggests, Cross is mainly interested in recounting, and measuring the long-term impact of, Morrill's legislative achievements. The first chapter synthesizes Morrill's life prior to his formal entry into politics, from his Methodist upbringing

in Strafford and training in business in Portland, Maine, to early retirement after achieving great success as a merchant in South Strafford. It is with Morrill's election to the House of Representatives in 1854, amidst the deepening sectional crisis, that Cross's story truly commences.

Cross argues that Morrill had an immediate and enormous impact in Congress. He first made a name for himself crusading against Mormon polygamy. Morrill subsequently achieved greater prominence for his enthusiastically protectionist stance on industry and trade. "Ever the fiscal conservative" (p. 64), as Cross writes, Morrill submitted proposals to increase tariff rates in 1859 and 1860, but saw these blocked by his Southern colleagues. Only after the secession of the first six Southern states was the Morrill Tariff enacted. Cross writes that this made the Vermonter one of the foremost Yankee villains to Southerners; one Virginia newspaper offered a reward for the capture of Morrill dead or alive in 1862. The Morrill Tariff did not long survive the war, but it established his reputation. For forty years thereafter, Morrill was known as "Congress' most knowledgeable member on tariffs and wool's staunchest guardian" (p. 51).

Before the Civil War concluded, Morrill realized his greatest legislative achievement with the passage in 1862 of the Land-Grant College Act. Though Morrill's own education had ended at the secondary level, his law's effect on American higher education was profound; Cross quotes Robert Frost as writing that there was "no greater name in American education than that of Justin Smith Morrill" (p. 77). Morrill's vision of a system of universities that taught agriculture, engineering, and commerce, which Cross dubs "Morrill's Monument," remains the legislation for which he is best known. Cross is careful to note, but ultimately dismisses, persistent doubts concerning Morrill's authorship of many of the bill's provisions. The three million students of all types who currently attend land-grant colleges each year are, for Cross, a powerful, living testament to Morrill's extraordinary vision of a more practical and equitable system of higher education.

Morrill moved on to the Senate in 1867 and remained there until his death in 1898. He wrote little memorable legislation there, focusing his efforts on tariff issues, beautifying Washington, D.C., and nurturing the land-grant college system. A fierce proponent of the gold standard, Morrill helped write the Specie Resumption Act of 1875. The resulting deflation of currency was a massive economic tragedy for most rural sections of the nation, the reaction to it culminating two decades later in Populism's brief moment. Vermont farmers were far less touched by sound money policies, however, and Morrill's popularity in his home state never waned.

*Justin Smith Morrill* is excellent political history, and is highly recommended for a wide audience. Questions concerning the larger forces that influenced Morrill's ideology are left largely unanswered, such as how he was shaped by being raised a Methodist during the height of the Second Great Awakening. Perhaps also deserving more exploration is why Morrill was considered so uniquely representative of his state in the late nineteenth century. Late-nineteenth-century Vermont was not an entirely simple, coherent society, but instead rent with deep divisions, foremost among them between the state's farming and industrial communities. Cross writes that Morrill's constituents were attracted to his emulation of such unifying, ancient Ver-

mont qualities as thrift and integrity. Explaining whether Morrill shared the sentiment of many successful, urbane Vermonters like himself that the state's hill towns were in decline, rather than stable, would have done much to illuminate Morrill's broad appeal. Those with an interest in the inner workings of the era's politics in Vermont will find most of the action based in the nation's capital. Approaching such topics is not Cross's intent, however; measuring the genius of Morrill's most inspired legislation and political acumen is, and that goal is achieved admirably.

PAUL SEARLS

*Paul Searls is a visiting assistant professor at the University of Vermont.*

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### *Secret Yankees: The Union Circle in Confederate Atlanta*

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By Thomas G. Dyer (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999, pp. 397, \$29.95).

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**I**n *Secret Yankees: The Union Circle in Confederate Atlanta*, Thomas G. Dyer examines the fate of Union loyalists in the “second capital of the Confederacy” during the Civil War and immediate postwar period. His account, which focuses on the actions, attitudes, and perceptions of Atlanta's small Unionist circle, reveals the wartime presence of a surprising diversity of views in the city, and by implication challenges whether the South had sufficient political unity to succeed as a Confederate nation.

The documentary record concerning Atlanta during the Civil War, and the city's Unionists in particular, is not abundant. Dyer's exhaustive detective work, however, manages to uncover a dramatic new chapter of this most-examined of American wars. His most important source is the surviving 1864 portion of a recently rediscovered diary fragment kept by Cyrena Stone. Cyrena and her husband Amherst Stone, both natives of Vermont, emigrated to Georgia in 1848, and to Atlanta in 1854, becoming prosperous and prominent members of the community. Cyrena composed the diary in a kind of shorthand that she learned from her Vermont minister-father, which hid the real identities of individuals mentioned in her entries (for example, she referred to herself only as “Miss Abby”).

Dyer describes *Secret Yankees* as “the story of the Stones,” but “also the story of as many of Atlanta's wartime Unionists as can be coaxed out of the shadows of the Lost Cause mythology that has enshrouded them for generations” (p. 6). He tells us that, of the approximately ten thousand residents of Atlanta at the time of the secession crisis in 1860–1861 (two thousand of whom were blacks—mostly slaves), about one hundred families could be identified as Union loyalists. These included a small group of thirty-five or forty merchants, manufacturers, and professionals; a few tradesmen, artisans, and mechanics; a group of foreign-born residents; a circle

of black Atlantans; and the wives, sisters, and daughters of the above groups. Several in this informal Unionist circle, including the Stones, were Northern-born and of “social standing” in the city, and some were slave owners and staunch defenders of slavery. During the 1860 presidential election campaign these individuals tended to support the “moderate” candidates John Bell or Stephen A. Douglas, and in the weeks following Abraham Lincoln’s victory, Amherst Stone and other Unionists made public speeches opposing secession. After Georgia formally embraced the Confederacy, however, the pro-Northern viewpoint vanished from print and public discourse in Atlanta, and once-powerful members of the city’s “establishment” found themselves socially shunned and excluded. Vigilance groups enforced the silence, sending out warnings that “treasonous” Unionists should leave the community or risk being run out of town.

Although they suppressed their views while the war raged, several Atlanta Unionists, secretly and at great personal risk, worked in various ways to undermine the Confederate cause. This included providing money, food, and clothing to captured Union prisoners of war and smuggling information about Confederate troop movements and other military intelligence to Union military forces, especially in the days prior to General William T. Sherman’s July 1864 siege of the city. These activities resulted in occasional arrests on suspicion of spying (Cyrena Stone was among those detained) and brief imprisonments for some.

The Unionist group shrank in number as the fighting stretched on and the danger of conscription for these men and their sons grew. Several of the men, including Amherst Stone (ostensibly on a business venture), escaped to the North. Union authorities received these exiles skeptically, however, and Amherst was jailed for a time, as a Southern spy. For the wives and daughters who stayed behind, Cyrena Stone provided intrepid leadership, presiding at morale-boosting secret meetings that included displaying the American flag and singing patriotic songs. As Sherman’s forces approached the city Cyrena protected several runaway slaves in the bottom of her house, and provided a hiding place for a free black barber, while also extending aid to wounded Confederate soldiers.

The end of the fighting did not cease the Atlanta Unionists’ struggles or resolve questions of patriotism and loyalty raised by their experience. The Unionist circle’s prominent men had expected to benefit politically in the postwar years by their loyalty, but federal sources of Georgia patronage turned out to be disappointing. With their political identity in doubt, positions of Southern leadership eluded most members in their group. As for the Stones, they managed to survive the war but lost their substantial home and most of their other property in the destructive wake of Sherman’s siege. Three years after Appomattox Cyrena was dead, at age 38, of a lingering illness; and by 1873, Amherst had abandoned Georgia and the South to accept an appointment as a U.S. judge in Colorado territory.

Dyer has done prodigious scholarly work in providing readers a view of the Civil War from a hitherto overlooked perspective. His well-organized and clearly written narrative is accompanied by maps, ten pages of illustrations, and extensive notes. In an appendix Dyer presents his most important source, the fragmentary diary of Cyrena Stone, in its entirety; and in a second appendix he provides an account of the detec-

tive sleuthing that enabled the diary's contents to be interpreted. They are two of the book's best parts.

GENE SESSIONS

*Gene Sessions is emeritus professor of history at Norwich University.*

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### *A War of the People: Vermont Civil War Letters*

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*Edited by Jeffrey D. Marshall (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1999, pp. 357, cloth, \$50.00; paper, \$25.00).*

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Jeffrey Marshall, the archivist and curator of manuscripts at the University of Vermont's Bailey-Howe Library, has scoured, not only that university's collection of Civil War era letters, but also other collections, both public and private, to present a collage of correspondence from both soldiers and civilians that gives the reader a portrait of the impact of the war on their lives. In doing so, he has created a masterpiece that offers a compelling contrast with the all too frequent Currier & Ives images of heroic warriors, glittering uniforms, and bloodless deaths in less honest attempts to tell of the Civil War.

The chapters of *A War of the People* are the seventeen seasons of the four war years. Marshall begins each chapter with a competent outline of the wartime events of that season, with special emphasis on the roles that Vermonters played. Then he steps back to let the writers of the letters tell their personal experiences as they participated in those events, appropriately intruding only to edit an indecipherable word or phrase and to provide margin notes to inform the reader from which collection the letter was chosen or to explain an obscure reference contained in the body of a letter. He is careful not to over edit the letters, allowing the reader to encounter the spelling, grammar, and punctuation that appear in the original script, thereby permitting an intimacy with the writer that would have been lost by elevating all the documents to editorial perfection.

The writers are soldiers in the ranks, line and field grade officers, surgeons, and chaplains. Letters from wives, parents, siblings, friends, and neighbors of the soldiers are here as well, telling of the love, anxiety, and ultimately, in some cases, the grieving for them.

That is not to say that all perceptions of glory are absent. Marshall includes several letters of college students written during the first spring of the war and filled with patriotic platitudes no doubt genuinely felt. He astutely contrasts these letters with the letter of a Quaker schoolteacher to her brother, very accurately predicting and worrying about the "thunderbolt" that was about to strike the country.

Marshall skillfully traces the emotions generated by the war by selecting letters telling of homesickness, naive bravado, and thinly disguised anxiety before the first

battles. There is little in-depth description of the battles themselves, except as to the role the individual writer played in that particular clash of arms. But the reader cannot help but feel the anguish when an acquaintance or relative of the addressee is reported to have been wounded or killed, or the relief when no one from home was a casualty in the recent battle.

Several of the soldiers make repeat appearances to allow the reader to follow their military careers and, in some cases, promotions through the ranks. Valentine Barney of St. Albans rises from a homesick sergeant in the 1st Vermont Infantry in 1861 to lieutenant colonel of the 9th Vermont, cheering Lincoln while the president reviews his regiment shortly before Lee's surrender. Waterbury native William Wells as a captain in the 1st Vermont Cavalry shocks the reader with the gruesome account of his regimental commander's suicide in the spring of 1862 then thrills with his narrative of the Battle of Cedar Creek in 1864, in which he fought while commanding a cavalry brigade under George Armstrong Custer. In a letter to his parents dated June 4, 1864, Wells beseeches them to generate political support for his promotion to general officer rank, which he ultimately receives. This is evidenced not only in Marshall's notes, but also by his general's stars, which today he proudly wears on his twin statues at Battery Park in Burlington and at the base of Round Top at Gettysburg.

Marshall's selection of letters provides voices of a genuine cross-section of Vermont society. Blacks are mindlessly scorned by a cavalry sergeant and praised by a captain for assisting him in escaping his captors after he had become a prisoner of war. An infantry sergeant, writing to a female friend, bravely dismisses the loss of a leg at Fredericksburg as "but little inconvenience," while a private in the same brigade later asks his son to ship him "licker" carefully packed "so it wont wrattle for they are gitin (v)ery strick" in order to gain ill-gotten profits. Another private writes home to his wife telling of the sexual exploits, presumably of others in his division, in words that reveal that today's most common slang for coitus was also in use during the Civil War.

To satisfy the reader's curiosity about the fate of the writers of the letters, Marshall provides an appendix listing each writer with an abbreviated service recorded if he is a soldier, and other personal information, including the dates of birth and death, when available. I found myself regularly flipping to the rear of the book to find whether a particularly fascinating writer survived the war. Many did not.

The accounts of the deaths of loved ones are particularly agonizing, especially after the reader forms an intimate relationship with the soldier through the letters written before his death. But, as painful as the deaths from combat and disease were, none affected the soldiers as much as their required observation of executions for desertion by hanging or firing squad.

Marshall illustrates his work with photographs of many of the letter writers, period lithographs and photographs of events and places written about, and maps that put the locations of camps, marches, and battles in proper perspective. The stars on a map of Vermont at the end of the book reveal the town where each writer lived.

In his well written and informative introduction providing an overview of Vermont's Civil War experience, Marshall relates the enjoyment, pleasure, and "com-

fert” expressed by the soldiers in receiving letters from home. The selection of letters in this volume allows the reader to share those emotions, along with the exhilaration of a mock battle in the form of a snowball fight between two regiments, the mischievous joy of a practical joke on another regiment, the satisfaction of accomplishment after a victory, the anger toward officers blamed for excessive bloodshed after defeat, the love of a husband, son, brother, or friend, the sadness of that bond broken by death, and the shock of the assassination of a president.

This sampling from the thousands of letters available demonstrates Marshall’s special skill in selecting and organizing those pieces of correspondence that breathe life into Vermont’s participation in this national catastrophe. *A War of the People* provides the standard against which past and future edited collections of Civil War letters will be measured.

CHARLES S. MARTIN

*Charles Martin is a practicing attorney in Barre and a longtime Civil War scholar.*

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*“By the Blood of our Alumni”: Norwich University  
Citizen Soldiers in the Army of the Potomac*

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By Robert G. Poirier (Mason City, Iowa: Savas Publishing Co., 1999, pp. 452, \$29.95).

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**I**t is hard to imagine sometimes just what might be left to research, write, and publish on the U.S. Civil War. But the ever-popular—and profitable—Civil War history industry just keeps rolling along, with no apparent slowing to the publishing stream in sight. By my very approximate count using Amazon.com, well over 300 new Civil War titles were published during the last year alone, including new biographies of soldiers, statesmen, and civilians, previously unpublished memoirs, collections of letters and diaries, new battle and regimental histories, and new community studies, plus two new books on Civil War submarines and no fewer than three books on Civil War ghosts (about which other books had already appeared).

Even so, major historiographical gaps do exist. One of these gaps began to be filled in 1999 with the long-awaited publication of Robert G. Poirier’s *“By the Blood of our Alumni”: Norwich University Citizen Soldiers in the Army of the Potomac*. Although quite a bit has been written and celebrated through the years about the roles of Norwich’s southern counterparts, especially the Virginia Military Institute (VMI), the participation of America’s first independent military college in the War Between the States had never been addressed until now in its own book. This is all the more surprising because Norwich was the only such private school in the North training soldiers at the war’s outbreak. With this book’s publication, Norwich’s manifold contributions to the war can no longer be slighted or ignored.

Poirier, himself a Norwich alumnus, demonstrates again and again how Norwich and the men it produced were highly significant to the war effort in a number of ways. From the first, with the officer cadre of the small prewar regular army heavily committed and with many southern defections, squads of cadets dispatched from Norwich were invaluable in training and drilling the raw new volunteer regiments around Vermont and New Hampshire. Moreover, wherever you might look, Norwich citizen-soldiers took part in the fighting—in all the major theaters of war and at all levels of rank and command right up to major general (with at least seven attaining that rank). Poirier carefully weighs the various evidentiary sources—this is a challenging task because of a major fire at Norwich in 1866—and totals up over 600 former cadets who fought to preserve the Union for the North. He is able to count at least fifty-six others who joined and fought in the losing cause for the South. A total of sixty-one Norwich men gave their lives to uphold the Union. Five Norwich men received the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Not all of the men who went off to fight after training at the military college located in the only New England state lacking a seacoast participated in the ebb and flow of war on *terra firma*. Some Norwich graduates and former students, including the young George S. Dewey (class of '55), for whom much greater fame would come later during the Spanish-American War, played noteworthy roles in the navies and the sea battles on both sides. Gideon Welles (class of '26) was President Lincoln's secretary of the navy and political confidant.

Poirier, drawing principally upon secondary sources, rehearses the familiar courageous, blood-soaked narrative of the Army of the Potomac from the earliest engagements at Bull Run and Ball's Bluff through the silence that finally fell upon both armies at Appomattox Court House. At each major site of the conflict, and at some of the minor ones, he identifies the Norwich participants by name and graduating class, and he describes what their units were up to within the larger battlefield contexts along with their successes and failures and the Norwich men's contributions. Casualties are identified, where possible. In those cases where he has been able to dig up relevant primary sources such as personal letters, Poirier utilizes them adeptly to provide short narratives about the actions and experiences of individuals.

Of particular interest is Poirier's description of the St. Albans Raid in October 1864, which was not only the sole Civil War "battle" to take place on Vermont soil but also led to the sole instance in which the Norwich cadet corps was called upon to help quell the Southern rebellion directly. This did not bring these teenage soldiers onto a "field of honor," however, as was the case for the VMI cadets at the famous if inconsequential Confederate victory at New Market, Virginia, the previous May. The St. Albans Raid instead led to a rather comical denouement, as rumors circulated of a possible Confederate invasion force descending Lake Memphremagog from Canada to Newport. The cadets were marched to help stop it, but the supposed raid fizzled out. Yet, as the Norwich motto says, "I Will Try"; and Norwich's students and alumni certainly did that, whenever and wherever they could—and often they accomplished much.

One chapter digresses from the military narrative to look at Norwich campus life during the war years, and a final chapter surveys the involvement of Norwich men

outside the campaigns of the Army of the Potomac. In one of the appendices, the author offers an extensive agenda for future research. This includes such interesting and potentially important questions as how Norwich's citizen-soldier military principles may have differed in battlefield practice from those implemented by the graduates of West Point; and the possible influences of Norwich's philosophy and methods on the antebellum Southern military colleges, established in part due to the activity of Norwich founder and former West Point acting superintendent, Alden Partridge. These are complex interconnections and interactions for some future scholar eventually to explore.

Poirier's focus is almost totally on the fighting itself, with relatively little said about the longer periods of camp life between battles or other nonmilitary aspects of wartime experiences. One can only wonder what insights might also be gleaned from the same primary sources that Poirier uses about the lives of the families and friends of the Norwich soldiers who kept the home fires burning back in Vermont and elsewhere.

Some of these same materials might also help throw light on the recent controversy among Civil War historians about what motivated this war's soldiers to fight and die, as they did in such astounding numbers. However, Poirier goes no deeper into analyzing his sources than to provide the evidence of the Norwich soldiers' undoubted professionalism and patriotism. He seems oddly unsympathetic to the notion that at least some of the soldiers fighting for the North could have been motivated by the desire to help put an end to slavery, a general point that James McPherson has recently emphasized using similar primary sources. One would think that in such a major antislavery state as Vermont, antislavery ideals must surely have affected the ideological orientation of its military college and of the men it sent off to war. One indication of this possibility is the fairly substantial number of Norwich men Poirier shows volunteering to be officers with the U.S. Colored Troops.

Whatever its omissions and limitations, "*By the Blood of our Alumni*" should be widely welcomed as a much-needed and indeed excellent beginning that documents Norwich's participation in the Civil War. With its solid text, photographs, maps, meticulous lists of Norwich soldiers and sailors organized alphabetically and by regiment, many useful endnotes, and a decent index, Poirier's book will be picked up not just once but used as a reference work and as a starting point for study and pleasure many times over. This work belongs on the shelf of any serious Civil War scholar or buff and, for the students of Vermont history, right next to other excellent recent titles such as Howard Coffin's *Full Duty: Vermonters in the Civil War* and Jeffrey D. Marshall's *A War of the People: Vermont Civil War Letters*.

JOSEPH P. MOORE

*Joseph P. Moore juggles the varying perspectives of someone who was raised on the New Market battlefield in Virginia and who taught Civil War history at Norwich. He currently teaches history at the University of Vermont.*

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*A Vermont Century: Photographs and Essays from the Green Mountain State, 1900–1999*

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(Rutland Herald and the Barre-Montpelier Times Argus, 1999, pp. 207, \$34.95).

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On the table that holds my laptop computer lies a copy of *Arizona Landmarks* and my Arizona landlord's University of Vermont Kakewalk trophy. Writing this review in desert country suggests to me a relevance both items have to *A Vermont Century*. *Arizona Landmarks* is a collection of photographs and essays culled from *Arizona Highways*, that state's equivalent of *Vermont Life*. It is apparent from *A Vermont Century*'s very first pages, however, that despite its excellent photographic reproductions, it is not just another sophisticated variation of *Arizona Highways* or *Vermont Life*. The pictures along with accompanying essays elevate it to the ranks of pictorial history that paint a more complicated reality than state promotional literature allows—still affectionate, but also darker. Readers are even likely to discover that on some matters the volume will constitute a valuable reference source.

As could be anticipated from a *Rutland Herald-Times Argus* publication, most essayists are current or former journalists, although contributors include participants and historians. The over 200 photographs, largely from newspaper archives, include items from the Vermont Historical Society, the University of Vermont, and other sources. Reflecting the technology of Vermont newspaper publishing, only photographs from the final decade are in color.

The first essay in this coffee-table sized volume begins with a December 31, 1901 diary entry from Molly Riordon. Abandoned by her alcoholic husband after their Charlotte farm went bankrupt, Molly's subsequent struggles for women's political and economic causes ended in March, 1912 in New York City when she jumped to her death with others in the Triangle Shirt Waist Company fire. Although there are no images of Molly, there are photographs of Addie Laird as a ten-year-old worker at a North Pownal cotton mill taken by Lewis Hine.

For this reviewer the most compelling images were those that by capturing an event at its most magical moment have come to substitute for the event itself in the minds of subsequent generations, often draining the event of all ambivalence. A commentary on the University of Vermont's Kakewalk, a winter carnival whose central focus was a stylized plantation dance by costumed contestants in blackface, is accompanied by a striking photograph of two such walkers. Described as a "shameful tradition from the University's past" (p. 103), for many undergraduates and alumni its banning from campus marked a discontinuity from the University's past that was seen as largely arbitrary, even by some who recognized its racist implications. My Arizona landlord's trophy is from 1969, the final Kakewalk, and at the request of the NAACP he and his partner performed without makeup. At about the same time I received a letter from an African-American alum serving with the military in Europe who questioned the wisdom of totally abandoning the practice. Personally opposed to continuing the performances, I showed the letter to no one.

Central to banning Kakewalk rather than continuing efforts to sanitize it, a com-

promise at one time acceptable to most critics, was shattered the illusion that Vermont was free of racism. Negative responses to the Vermont–New York project, a summer program that brought city blacks to the state, alerted residents to a strong antiblack sentiment, while a nightrider shooting into the home of a newly arrived black minister and the legal aftermath of the incident left many Vermonters traumatized. Depicted to the nation as a bastion of self-righteous New England hypocrites, the University, aspiring for national approval, abandoned efforts at “sanitation” and sought a thorough purge of Kakewalk from the campus.

Of course, single photographs can seldom tell such complicated stories, but the fact that *A Vermont Century* included so many photos that stimulated detailed reflections merits high praise.

There are occasional errors of fact. Some essayists leave the impression that before there was a Republican Party Vermonters voted Democratic, and purists will note that Bernard Sanders ran for governor, not Congress in 1972. Bernie Sanders merits consideration in another context as well. Possessed of a broad New York City accent, he has done more than any other single individual to change the popular concept of Vermont speech. My wife and I also claim New York City as our place of birth, and though we have lived in Vermont for forty years we have retained our original speech patterns. It was with considerable surprise, therefore, that beginning about ten years ago strangers we met in middle America and on the west coast often claimed they could identify us as being from Vermont from the way we spoke. This puzzled us for a time until we realized that the Vermonter most Americans saw and heard on television was the state’s newly elected Independent congressman.

*A Vermont Century* makes the larger point in a more felicitous manner, positing that “outsiders changed the look and even the sounds of Vermont” (p. 181). Whether an insider or an outsider, you are likely to be captivated by *A Vermont Century*. Even the price is right.

SAMUEL B. HAND

*Samuel B. Hand is Professor Emeritus of history at the University of Vermont and a former president of the Vermont Historical Society. Most recently he was a co-editor of Vermont Voices, 1609 through the 1990s: A Documentary History of the Green Mountain State.*

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## *Ticonderoga: Lake Champlain Steamboat*

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By Richard M. Strum (Shelburne: Shelburne Museum, Inc., 1998; pp. 110, cloth, \$29.95; paper, \$19.95).

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A welcome addition to the bookshelf of anyone interested in steamboats, maritime transportation, or regional history, this new book about the venerable steamboat *Ticonderoga* is skillfully crafted by Shelburne Museum educator Richard

Strum. The book starts by tracing the evolution of Lake Champlain steamers from 1808 to 1906. The remainder of the book focuses on the construction, operation, trials, tribulations, and triumphs of the steamer *Ticonderoga*. Strum captures the world as it changed from steam power to the gasoline engine, and he demonstrates the impact of the automobile and the Great Depression on the Champlain Transportation Company (CTC) and its sister company, the Lake George Steamboat Company. Of particular interest are the chapters that chronicle the “Twilight of Steamboating, 1937–1953,” and the acquisition and movement of the *Ticonderoga* to the grounds of the Shelburne Museum. The final chapter details the complex and significant challenges the Shelburne Museum and its staff faced with *Ticonderoga*’s restoration, the landmark achievement completed in 1998 that motivated this new publication. The book is luxuriously illustrated with paintings, postcards, menus, broadsides, and photographs. Most of these items come from the Shelburne Museum’s extensive collection, an accumulation of material that provides an excellent visual record of the people, the period, and the steamboats themselves.

*Ticonderoga* (1906) was the last steamboat built by CTC, incorporated in 1826. The Delaware & Hudson Railroad acquired the CTC in 1870 and ultimately sold the *Ticonderoga*, along with the CTC’s other assets, in 1937. Strum describes well the steamers’ physical limitations, since *Chateaugay* (1888), *Vermont III* (1903), and *Ticonderoga* (1906) were all designed for the pre-automobile age of passenger excursions. The dawn of the automobile era forced the awkward steamers to adapt or risk being sent to the scrap heap, but time and tide could not save the steamers from the advancement of technology. After a series of heroic efforts led by Daniel Loomis, the Fishers, Ralph Hill, and Electra Webb, the time had come to seek a creative solution. That solution, the dramatic movement of the *Ticonderoga* overland to the Shelburne Museum, is beautifully presented in this book.

Strum consulted the best archival and printed material available, and the book’s bibliography and endnotes will be very useful to those interested in further researching this topic. A particular contribution is information from interviews conducted by Jane Beck, director of the Vermont Folklife Center. Excerpts from interviews with Lois McClure, Lynn Bottum, David Eakin, Dick Adams, Jr., and Sterling Weed give the story a texture that brings *Ticonderoga* to life, adding a new dimension to the steamboat’s history that cannot be found in newspapers, books, or corporate records.

I questioned only one aspect of Strum’s historical presentation, when on page 65 he quoted from the diary of Daniel Loomis, who worked for the CTC for fifty years and was its last general manager before it was sold. Strum stated that the 1933 entry, “‘No fuel-no money-no brains’ reflects his [Loomis’s] exasperation at the effect the Depression was having on his ability to keep the steamboat business alive.” I have always interpreted this passage as a criticism that Loomis directed not at himself, but rather at his ever resourceful competitor, Elisha Goodsell, an unflappable entrepreneur who on occasion had to raise his ferries from the lake bottom at the start of the day. In 1923, Goodsell began placing the old steamers *Admiral*, *Legonia*, and *Oneida* in direct competition with the CTC. It was Goodsell’s operation that drew Loomis’s comment about “No fuel-no money-no brains,” although it was

Horace Corbin who launched the new ferry *City of Burlington* in 1936 and thus ushered in the end of the steam era on Lake Champlain. Corbin's diesel-powered "streamline" ferry was specifically designed to transport automobiles. One year later Horace Corbin bought the ailing CTC for a fraction of its book value. References to competition from Goodsell and Corbin would have helped readers to appreciate more fully the severity of the CTC's dilemma in the final years of its operation.

*Ticonderoga: Lake Champlain Steamboat* was released to coincide with the rededication of the steamboat *Ticonderoga* following an intensive six-year restoration. The restoration effort, underwritten by Mac and Lois McClure and the estate of Ralph Nading Hill, was a momentous event in historic preservation and will insure that *Ticonderoga*, the last of her line, will remain a national treasure for future generations to enjoy. Strum's publication is a worthy companion to this effort and will provide everyone who has an interest in history with a valuable new resource for a voyage into the world of steamboating.

ARTHUR B. COHN

*Arthur B. Cohn is Director of the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum at Basin Harbor, Vermont. He is an adjunct faculty member at the University of Vermont and at Texas A & M University and coordinator of the State of Vermont's Underwater Historic Preserve Program.*

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### *Breeding Better Vermonters: The Eugenics Project in the Green Mountain State*

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By Nancy L. Gallagher (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1999, pp. 237, paper, \$21.00).

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By the 1920s prominent Vermonters had been worrying for decades that their state seemed to be "falling behind" as the rest of the country "progressed." When Henry F. Perkins, a zoologist at the University of Vermont (UVM), launched the state on a notorious adventure in eugenics late in the decade, he believed it would provide both an explanation and a solution for Vermont's difficulties. According to *Breeding Better Vermonters*, Nancy L. Gallagher's careful and intelligent account of Perkins's activities, the UVM science professor "discovered in eugenics the means to renew Vermont's heroic history and reveal the sources of Vermont's social and economic problems" (pp. 9–10).

Perkins became drawn to the study of heredity and genetics around 1912 and soon joined ranks with a growing number of early-twentieth-century scientists enamored of the notion that laws governing heredity provided a means for directing human progress; that some races and classes stood genetically superior to others; and that, consequently, race mixing deteriorated "pure racial stocks" and impeded

“progress.” When Perkins learned that mental tests given to Vermont recruits during World War I showed that a high number of men had been rejected for military service because of low scores, he decided to bring eugenics research to Vermont.

He utilized studies in “rural eugenics,” which rested on the belief that recessive genes, including a “feeble-mindedness gene,” explained “the apparent ‘life incompetence’ and ‘peculiarities’ of isolated and inbred families” (p. 36). Perkins soon concluded that the rugged, isolated life of some rural Vermonters had produced not hardy self-reliance and continuation of the proud Yankee Protestant tradition, but bad heredity, inbreeding, and unsocial communities that helped explain both Vermont’s reputation for backwardness and the wartime tests’ embarrassing results (pp. 39–40).

In 1925 Perkins established the Eugenics Survey of Vermont to document his conclusions and offer scientific solutions to the problems exposed by the draft board results. Gallagher writes that, far from “scientific,” the Eugenics Survey’s assumptions and methods reflected the “deep historic prejudices” that existed among Vermont’s “elites,” directed at the state’s non-Yankee “unwanted peoples,” primarily French Canadians and Abenakis (p. 70).

By presenting his Eugenics Survey as a means for advancing child welfare and progressive social reform in the state, Perkins gained valuable cooperation and financial backing. Some of the state’s most reputable individuals endorsed his work and contributed money to his cause. He also won public endorsement from such trusted institutions as the Vermont Conference of Social Work and the Vermont Children’s Aid Society, through which he gained access to confidential case files of “problem” families with “inherited defects.”

Gallagher identifies Perkins’s goal as the “very specific” one of transforming “the social records of families registered in the Vermont Children’s Aid Society and the State Social Services Exchange into pedigrees of degeneracy that would help support a campaign for legalized sterilization” (p. 71). In this effort to prevent the reproduction of the unfit, his field staff drew up profiles of sixty-two “defective” and “degenerate” family lines, and more than six thousand individuals, spanning several generations (p. 77). These “unwholesome” Vermonters had been classified by welfare authorities as either criminally inclined, feeble-minded, or dependent on public charity. In 1931, with Perkins’s support, the Vermont legislature enacted “An Act for Human Betterment by Voluntary Sterilization,” which led to an unknown number of sterilizations, both voluntary and involuntary, many of them performed on people of Abenaki or French Canadian descent. Lawmakers did not repeal the act until 1981.

Two developments complicated Perkins’s efforts in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The scientific climate of opinion concerning the merits of eugenics research and related social policies began to change; and a report by the National Committee on Mental Hygiene found Vermont’s rate of mental deficiency to be not disproportionately high but in fact similar to the national average. Faced with declining support for his endeavors, Perkins broadened the Eugenics Survey’s focus, moving away from the “negative eugenics” of investigating “degenerate” families, with its emphasis on sterilization, to a broader survey of the conditions of life in rural Vermont that encompassed not only heredity factors but also social, cultural, and economic influences.

The vehicle for this more comprehensive approach became the Vermont Com-

mission on Country Life (VCCL), established in 1928. Composed of two hundred prominent Vermonters, the commission had Governor John Weeks as chairman and Perkins as secretary. Its funding, through grants from the Social Science Research Council and the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Fund, assured continued life for the Eugenics Survey itself.

Over a three-year period VCCL devised recommendations in a wide range of areas affecting Vermont's future, from agriculture to tourism to the state's "heritage." Beneath the surface of its 1931 final report, *Rural Vermont: A Program for the Future*, however, lay Perkins's eugenic concern for protecting and nourishing Vermont's "old stock." One of the commission's study groups, the "Committee on the Human Factor," specifically continued the work of the Eugenics Survey, promoting in its closing report a program of "positive eugenics" that would include assistance to the "handicapped" poor and feebleminded, and child-focused parent education programs, to be provided by the state Department of Public Welfare. It also recommended good breeding, "urging that it should be the patriotic duty of every 'normal' couple to have sufficient children to replenish 'the good old Vermont stock'" (p. 116).

In 1936, as the Germany of Adolph Hitler commenced translating eugenics into a program of racial purification through genocide, Perkins's Vermont eugenics efforts were coming to an end, his ideas in decreasing favor. By then, Perkins himself grudgingly had begun placing larger emphasis on the role of individual choice and motivation in human success and failure. In 1945 he formally retired from the UVM faculty, and died in 1956, reportedly a disappointed and bitter man.

Perkins's endeavors, and that of his Vermont backers, left a harsh legacy. They poisoned efforts of reformers at defining an enlarged and more enlightened role for state social services; they undermined the very community bonds Perkins and his allies presumably sought to strengthen; and, most significantly, their contributions to Vermont's experiment with sterilization had untold and tragic consequences for the lives of countless individuals. "Unfortunately," Gallagher writes, "the process of looking at people eugenically—in terms of their conformity to the idealized Vermont family—would alter the relationship between the middle class and the poor, between providers and recipients of 'human services,' and between civil authority and the people they served" (p. 70).

Gallagher tells this complex and fascinating Vermont story in a direct and clear prose style, never losing sight of its larger national and international context. Along the way, she provides informative side lessons in the history of science, the politics of scientific inquiry, and the cultural and social history of early-twentieth-century Vermont. *Breeding Better Vermonters* is an important book, made more timely by recent advances in mapping the human genome and renewed questions about the proper uses of scientific information in efforts at charting "a better future." The volume contains endnotes, an index, seventeen helpful illustrations, a bibliography, and appendices that include a "pedigree chart," examples from Perkins's case studies, and Vermont's 1931 sterilization law.

#### GENE SESSIONS

*Gene Sessions* is a former editor of *Vermont History* and a coeditor of *Vermont Voices, 1609 through the 1990s: A Documentary History of the Green Mountain State*.

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## *Vermont State Government since 1965*

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*Edited by Michael Sherman (Burlington, Vt.: University of Vermont, 1999, pp. 668, \$49.95).*

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Every American state has a diverse band of writers, academics, journalists, politicians, and administrators who take a detailed interest in the life and times of their state. The records of these individuals, appearing singly as authors or gathered in edited volumes, appear in the annual volume of *Books in Print*, which notes, for example, some 850 items under the subject heading of “Vermont” and 37 items under “Vermont, politics and government.” *Vermont State Government since 1965*, with its thirty-two authors and co-authors of twenty-six substantive chapters plus three introductory messages, a substantive appendix, and six selected tables of general interest plus two maps, is the latest contribution to a sizable and diverse literature on the Green Mountain State. The book follows steadfastly in two traditions of political analysis.

The writers, who were gathered under the auspices of the University of Vermont’s Center for Research on Vermont and the Snelling Center for Government, extend a tradition that was first set out by Andrew and Edith Nuquist, who co-authored the earlier and complementary 1966 volume, *Vermont State Government and Administration*. The current volume is dedicated to these two chroniclers of Vermont politics who wrote as it passed through the middle of this century. The present volume emulates the organization and layout of the Nuquist & Nuquist book, thereby continuing their traditional analysis, but also providing a valuable updating and more extensive analyses that befit a many times more complicated politics and government. It must have been a most sobering thought for editor Michael Sherman and his colleagues when they gathered to discuss and plan this present volume that it took the efforts of so many dedicated and energetic Vermonters in 1999 to replicate for the last third of this century what the two-Nuquist team had done for Vermont for the period up to 1966.

Both the Nuquists and Sherman *et al.* follow in a second tradition of what can be called “within-state analysis.” These analyses are characterized by a close scrutiny of a state, institution by institution. In this volume, the constitutional framework of Vermont government and politics is masterfully brought up to date by the late, former Justice of the Vermont Supreme Court, William Hill. It is followed by five chapters that discuss the formal and informal institutions that mark Vermont’s “political system.” Gregory Sanford and Bill Doyle nicely team up as “outsider and insider” to describe Vermont’s legislative politics, wonderfully complemented by the most engaging chapter in the book, on “the media,” written by former journalists William Porter and Stephen Terry. Frank Bryan’s chapter on “interest groups and lobbying” sets out some of the results of his on-going research on these informal political institutions, an ever-more-complex web of links and understandings between those authorities vested with power—officials and administrators—and those who need something from those in power—representatives of private individuals, firms, and associations.

Further, this volume draws on “within-state analysts” from different perspectives and unique perches. Former administrator of many hats, Ron Crisman, writes on the politics of taxing and spending, while economist Arthur Woolf presents a crisp chapter on Vermont taxes. Crisman has probably forgotten more politics than most of us academics will ever learn, while Woolf is an academic, a statehouse adviser, and a columnist. The five chapters on the judiciary, justice, law enforcement, corrections, and civil and human rights, are written by two justices of the Vermont Supreme Court, an academic, a state official, and a practicing lawyer, and together they serve as an important 130-page primer on this subject of increasing importance to all Vermonters.

An additional perspective on this volume is most crucial: No analysis of Vermont politics that was published in 1966 can adequately account for present-day Vermont politics. When the Nuquists closed their volume, Philip Hoff was in his second term as governor; the Vermont House and Senate had not yet put into place the post-*Baker vs. Carr* reapportionment reforms; the longer-term consequences of Vermont as “the beckoning country” were just then being detected; and the Vietnam War and the counterculture movement had yet to manifest themselves on the state’s campuses and in its hills. Most important of all, I suspect, the revolutionary effects of the rise of the “positive state” in Washington, D.C. were just beginning to manifest themselves in the many public policies that Vermont state government—with Washington’s help—either assumed (e.g., cultural agencies), extended (education, health care, public welfare, agriculture, natural resources), or transformed (business, labor, and industry; land use, planning, and the environment; and transportation). Chapters 15 through 23 discuss, one by one, these transformed public policies. The overwhelming impression on the reader is the extraordinary change in politics, government, and administration in post-Nuquist Vermont. In a very interesting chapter, Paul Gillies assesses the most vulnerable governments in the changing Vermont—its local governments. And in a companion chapter, Art Ristau analyzes how federal power and influence varied, policy by policy, in timing of arrival and impact on Vermont’s public policies; and how skillful and able Vermont leaders were in identifying and exploiting various federal programs. Frank Smallwood, in the concluding chapter, very ably brings this encyclopedic and diverse volume to a satisfactory close.

This book decidedly does *not* follow in one other tradition. It is not a political science tome for political scientists. It is a book about the political life and times of Vermont written by Vermonters for their fellow citizens. It will appeal to every politically interested Vermonter and it will be useful to the politically active citizen. It will also be enormously valuable to those, such as students, who have a substantive interest in Vermont politics and government, and to political scientists in need of informed opinion, historical detail, and broad understanding of the unique qualities that set the Green Mountain State apart from the others.

RICHARD F. WINTERS

*Richard F. Winters is professor and chair of the department of government at Dartmouth College.*

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*Addison County Justice: Tales from a Vermont Courthouse*

By Peter Langrock (Forest Dale, Vermont: Paul S. Erickson, 1997), pp. 194, paper, \$14.95.

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*Beyond the Courthouse: Tales of Lawyers and Lawyering*

By Peter Langrock (Forest Dale, Vermont: Paul S. Erickson, 1999), pp. 180, \$21.95.

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**P**eter Langrock is a lawyer, and everybody knows what that means. He can talk, and how he can talk. People used to say of such lawyers, that they were vaccinated with phonograph needles.

Now in the September of his legal career, attorney Langrock has given us a precious gift: his stories about cases and people from his forty years as a Vermont lawyer. His is an insider's view of the law, and he shares his memories freely and openly, with an engaging style. Apparently never tempted to get into politics or accept a judicial appointment, Langrock is a lawyer's lawyer, a veteran of thousands of trials, pleadings, and settlements, who has appeared in every court in Vermont at one time or another and before every judge. He defended Becky Duranleau, Leo Durocher, and John Zaccaro. He has stories about everyone, it seems.

The tone of these memoirs is relaxed and inviting. It's as if we're in a comfortable hunting lodge, around a fireplace, with cigars and whiskey, hearing wooly stories told by a great lawyer. Peter Langrock is one of the best we have. No one should be surprised to discover he's a great storyteller, too.

A great lawyer graces the law, as a great judge does, elevating the domestic and the mundane into something majestic and proper. He always stands erect. He is confident, goodhumored, and determined to win, always. Above all else, he understands human nature. That's the skill Peter Langrock brings to his stories.

These books are not about the law, but about people's experiences with the legal system, from the perspective of one of the crusaders. Langrock is not a neutral observer, of course, but he admits when he lost and respects his opponents. There is not an ounce of bitterness in these writings, although now and again you sense a remembered pain or regret.

Langrock's stories are surprisingly candid. I kept worrying he was telling too many secrets, but no doubt he has releases from everybody. The truth is, every lawyer has some stories that just beg to be retold, but the opportunity is limited, given the lawyer-client privilege. That may be why so many lawyers are writing novels these days. Behind every story, no doubt, there is another story, and these may not (ought not to) be the last we hear from Peter Langrock, because he has a gift for telling stories, and the stories deserve keeping.

Langrock has known the powerful and the not powerful, and it sounds as if he prefers the latter for companionship. He has pursuits other than the law. His love of horses and harness racing is obvious in these books, but above all else is his admiration for the rural character, the practical wisdom of the farmer and the mechanic, and Vermont tradition.

Tradition and change are the central themes of these books. The old ways were passing over the last forty years, as more people moved to Vermont, and their collisions with the natives brought new challenges to the legal system. Rural Vermont started to give way to suburban Vermont in these years, but the traditions are still largely in place, preserved in our institutions and memories.

Peter Langrock is among a very few Vermont lawyers and judges who have written about their life in the law. Deane Davis, of course, was the most recent example, with several collections of his stories. Before Governor Davis, there was Lucius Chittenden, back in 1893. Judge Frank Fish collected biographies of lawyers and judges, in the fifth volume of Walter Hill Crockett's *Vermont: The Green Mountain State* (1921, 1924), but beyond that you have to look hard to find details about trials and the legal system in Vermont.

Books like Langrock's are important because they help detoxify the experience of dealing with the law. Here you see average people in unusual situations, trying to protect themselves in a world that seems cold and unresponsive at times. Justice, in the pure sense, is not present in these stories. You are left with the impression that right wins sometimes, occasionally by accident, by the arrival of a surprise fact or an unintended response.

It's best to get used to that idea, that right doesn't always triumph. Good doesn't always find its reward, and bad is sometimes never punished. The legal system isn't perfect, but it yearns to be. That yearning is our best hope, and is the music that accompanies these memoirs of one of Vermont's first-ranked lawyers.

PAUL GILLIES

*Paul Gillies is a Montpelier lawyer who writes about Vermont legal and judicial history.*

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## *Forever Calais: A History of Calais, Vermont*

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By Weston A. Cate Jr. (Barre, Vt.: L. Brown and Sons Printing, Inc., and Calais Historical Society, 1999, pp. 241, \$35.00).

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Everything you ever wanted to know about this archetypal Vermont town—with its creatively anglicized pronunciation (only a non-Vermonter needs to be told that the name of this town rhymes with “Dallas”)—has been meticulously set down by an author who could be described as the most qualified living person to do so. Weston A. Cate Jr. is a former director of the Vermont Historical Society and author of a history of the VHS (*Up and Doing* [1988]). He also knows the workings of Vermont towns in depth, having been executive director of the Vermont Education Association.

Wes Cate's roots also reach deep into the region he writes about. His ancestors first settled in Montpelier in 1793 and a great-grandfather was a Calais selectman at the time of his death in 1887.

Calais is a real hill town—with no mountains—and by Vermont standards it was settled quite late, in 1789, near the end of the Independent Vermont Republic, having been a former inactivated New York patent. The town is characterized by neighborhoods that bear names more curious than its own. In addition to Kents Corner (one corner, several Kents, the reader is cautioned) there are places called Moscow, Pekin, Bunkerville (also known as Gospel Hollow), and Sodom, which took on the more sober label of Adamant. In 1797, Cate tells us, the town meeting rejected an effort to rename the town Mt. Vernon, in honor of the home of the father of our country, and no legislation to make the change was ever introduced.

Cate has woven a rich and readable fabric of local warp and wool to create a volume that no “Calaisite” will be able to live without and many Vermontophiles will want to acquire. The reader will learn, for example, that the French-flavored names of both Calais and nearby Montpelier trace to the assumption that Jacob Davis, an early proprietor and speculator, selected them out of gratitude for France’s crucial support during the American Revolution.

Some details simply fascinate. The 1850 agricultural census, for instance, discloses that Calais farmers were producing enormous crops of potatoes. “George Foster raised 700 bushels of potatoes that year. Fayette Teachout raised 600 bushels while Amasa Tucker and George Ide each raised 500 bushels. More than half the farmers in town each raised over 150 bushels.” The reason was neither domestic consumption nor conversion to spiritous beverages. Canny Calais farmers were responding to the Irish potato famine and the resulting shortage of starch in England, where huge cotton mills required great quantities of the stiffening compound.

Earlier, a manufactory was built at Gospel Hollow in 1844 by Abdiel and Ira Kent and L. Bancroft that produced as much as 80 tons of starch a year. About the same time Moses Sheldon launched another starch factory farther down Pekin Branch. But the local agricultural bonanza proved too good to last: “The British developed a new and less expensive method of cloth production that no longer required starch, and the bottom fell out of the potato barrel in Calais,” Cate explains. By 1860 the Kent factory had closed and Sheldon’s was converted to making lath and eaves troughs.

*Forever Calais* sweeps across the twentieth century, too, touching upon the dramatic arrival of electricity with the creation in 1939 of the Washington Electric Cooperative; a candid account of the troubles of the Adamant Credit Union; and a concise but knowledgeable overview of the evolution of public education.

There are also riches in the back-of-the-book matter. These include a lengthy bibliography; a record of how the town meeting voted over the years on “special issues” (in 1933, repeal of the 18th Amendment was favored 65-53; in 1936 the Green Mountain Parkway was defeated 110-42; and in 1974 Richard Nixon’s impeachment was favored 82-71); a list of unusual names given to children born between 1785 and 1900 (samples: Rocksey, Keziak, Zoeth, Reuphemia); rosters of town officials; citizens who served in the armed forces from the American Revolution to Desert Storm; an ample index; a list of patrons; a tribute from the Calais Historical Society to the author; and nineteenth-century maps of individual neighborhoods.

From a design point of view, the book has a plain-Jane appearance, and could

have benefited from some special touches such as more imaginative use—by cropping, enlargement, and placement—of its carefully chosen array of photographs. A copy editor might have smoothed out some spelling and consistency problems; for example, footnotes on pages 81 and 82 skip from 8 to 11, while the missing notes 9 and 10 appear in the “notes” section without textual references. After a stern warning that the place name “Kents Corner” should appear in that format, with no apostrophe, we see on page 70 a reversion to “Kent’s Corner” (actually, one could argue: four corners, Kents’ as plural possessive). But these are truly minor quibbles about a volume of exceedingly well-informed history that has been lovingly assembled and will be treasured in many homes and libraries.

TYLER RESCH

*Tyler Resch, librarian of the Bennington Museum, a Shaftsbury selectman, and former member of the VHS Publications Committee, is the author of a town history of Dorset and a dozen other books of regional history.*

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*Cabot, Vermont: A Collection of Memories from the Century Past, Liberally Illustrated with Photographs and Other Ephemera*

By Jane Brown, Barbara Carpenter, and Amanda Legare, Caleb Pitkin (ed.)  
(Cabot, VT: Cabot Oral History Committee, 1999, pp. 216, paper \$20.00).

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*Pittsford’s Second Century, 1872–1997*

By Jean S. Davies, Margaret Armitage, Lois Blittersdorf, and Jean Harvie (West Kennebunk, Me: Phoenix Publishing/The Pittsford Historical Society, 1998, pp. 779, \$50.00).

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Town histories are a special genre. They are primarily intended for the people who live in the town and those who have a special link to the town. The myriad of details, names of people, and places that are so appealing to those intimately acquainted with the town are less meaningful to the general reader. Yet, these details are what make town histories so valuable to historians.

Two Vermont towns recently completed local histories that cover the past one hundred years or so. *Pittsford’s Second Century* is focused on this time frame to complement Dr. A. M. Caverly’s 1872 *History of Pittsford*, which covered the first hundred years since the town’s founding in 1772. *Cabot, Vermont: A Collection of Memories from the Century Past* deals primarily with the twentieth century because it is an oral history, limited by the memories of its informants.

As one would expect, these two volumes have much in common because they cover many of the same subjects that are common to this genre: farming, business,

industry, education, social life, recreation, and recognition of veterans in the nation's wars. Yet these volumes are quite different in the way they handle these topics.

*Cabot, Vermont* is a collection of the sights and voices of the past century. It is the product of an extensive project by the Cabot Oral History Committee. The authors explicitly state that "This volume is not intended to be a history of Cabot, and the reader should always bear in mind that what is presented here is not fact, but opinion—memories." The bulk of the text consists of quotes from the eighty-seven informants who contributed to the project. Added to this are literally hundreds of photographs. Of special charm are the eight Stanley Lyndes' cartoons of daily life in Cabot that are scattered throughout the book. This blend of visual images and the first person narrative brings to life the experience of living in Cabot during the first half of the twentieth century.

One pitfall of many local histories is the custom of referring to a residence or business by the name of the current owner. Cabot does an excellent job of avoiding this problem by providing an excellent set of maps showing Cabot in 1873 and in 1999. By labeling on the 1999 map the residents mentioned in the text, future readers will be able to identify the location, even if the property has changed ownership. While excellent, the map set would have been even better if the 1999 map of Lower Cabot were on the same scale and orientation as the Beer's map of the same region.

*Pittsford's Second Century* is a very handsome volume. It has a hard cover of red with gold letters and a color print of Frederick Church's "View of Pittsford, 1848." This image is repeated on the insides of both covers. In addition, the book includes four color prints of works by local artists.

Over seven hundred and fifty pages long, *Pittsford's Second Century* is almost encyclopedic in its approach. In addition to the usual narrative of the town's economic and social past, the book has sixty pages of mini-biographies of selected individuals, forty pages tracing the title of property ownership back from current owners, and 181 pages of genealogical information on town residents. One concern is that because none of these is comprehensive, some townspeople may feel slighted for being left out.

At several points the reviewer was reminded that *Pittsford's Second Century* is the sequel to Caverly's *History of Pittsford* and, to get a full picture of the town's history, one would have to consult both volumes. For example, the chain of titles in the "Homes and Other Buildings" section only goes back to 1872, with a reference to Caverly for those who wish to go back further.

Pittsford's history also includes appendices of military rosters of the wars since the Spanish-American War, pastors of the town's three churches, town representatives since 1870, businesses, and place names. The book ends with twelve maps, including three from Beer's Atlas of Rutland County, but the reviewer found it hard to relate the modern maps to the Beer's maps. While most of the maps were keyed by number to the "Homes and Other Buildings" section of the book, only those buildings covered in the text were shown on the maps. A map of the entire town would have been helpful in aiding the general reader in relating the other maps to each other.

While these two town histories are quite different in their approach, both are testimony to what can be accomplished by a group of dedicated local historians. Both

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groups are to be commended for including an index. These books will be invaluable resources for those individuals interested in the history of Cabot or Pittsford.

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