

BOOK REVIEWS



A Building History of Northern New England

By James L. Garvin (Hanover and London: The University Press of New England, 2001, pp. ix, 199, \$35.00).

This is not a typical volume of architectural history, surveying great monuments and masters, identifying styles, or reproducing glorious photos of precious meetinghouses and mansions. True to its name, it is a history of building in upper New England, examining and explaining how and of what materials the regional buildings from the seventeenth century through World War II were put together. The book is the product of James Garvin's extended process of self-education, synthesized from specialized scholarship of the last decades of the twentieth century (collected here into a valuable, topically organized bibliography) and looking closely at the material evidence over a period of some thirty years, the last thirteen as state architectural historian for the New Hampshire Division of Historic Resources. It looks at the characteristics of building technology and planning, beginning with craft principles distilled from intuitive engineering, through the increasing impact of manufactured details and systems, to complete pre-fabrication.

The book is organized into concise, well-explained sections dealing first with technology (why the building is built the way it is) and then with style (why the building looks the way it does). In the former Garvin explores the unfolding histories of framing, sheathing, masonry, roofing, hardware, finishes, nails, and glass. He takes us from hand-hewn timbers to contemporary two-by-fours, from braced frame and plank construction to platform framing, from split shingles to cement asbestos roofing, from graduated clapboards to novelty siding, from Dutch bond brick to concrete blocks, from riven lath to beaver board. We examine cut nails, door latches, and the pattern and sizes of panes that can be cut from a disk of crown glass.

In the section on style we progress through plan and massing types, to moldings, doors, windows, and fireplaces. The author combines comparative photos of details from documented (mostly New Hampshire) buildings and examples from builders' guides and catalogues with his own numerous explanatory drawings that are worth a thousand words. At a glimpse one can understand the basic vocabulary of moldings, the evolution of window muntins, the construction and organization of panel doors. Because he explores them over time, he is able to establish clear comparisons of such details and to demonstrate how they can be utilized as evidence for decoding the history of a building—the dating of the original frame and plan, the remodeling of certain windows, the updating of a parlor's woodwork.

This may sound like a handbook for New England antiquarians and restorers. It isn't intended that way, though, nor does it read so. Garvin has aimed this book at anyone who seeks to understand old buildings, and especially at homeowners, whom he addresses as the temporary custodians of a finite heritage. He gives them the means to explore and read their buildings, providing keys to a world of discovery and appreciation. He also provides insights into materials and methods—the pattern of a structural frame, the width and strength of a mortar joint, the layering of a plaster wall—that can be of use to those who seek to care for and repair those buildings. His earliest examples tend to be regionally specific (thus justifying the book's title), but when he gets to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries he is discussing building types and features that, by virtue of their manufactured character and broad diffusion, make the volume useful to anyone confronting an older building almost anywhere in the country.

This book is guaranteed to send its readers heading for cellars and attics, cataloguing doors and windows, and looking at their woodwork with new eyes. A fascinating initial read, it is also likely to become a valued and frequently consulted reference.

GLENN M. ANDRES

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*Rural New England Furniture:
People, Place, and Production*

Edited by Peter Benes (Boston: Boston University, 2000, pp. 256, paper, \$25.00).

This book is the published proceedings of the Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife for 1998, a three-day series of lectures and demonstrations held in Deerfield, Massachusetts. Since 1976 the Dublin Seminar has brought together scholars, students, collectors, and other interested parties to present papers on an annual theme. Topics have included archaeology, gravestone art, foodways, medicine, Native Americans, music, paintings and this latest edition, furniture. Publication of the proceedings is eagerly anticipated by those who could not attend the seminar and those who did and whose interests were piqued during one of the many rapid-fire presentations (see the program description, pp. 252–253).

The articles in *Rural New England Furniture: People, Place, and Production* demonstrate varied approaches to the study of furniture from analysis of construction techniques and form (connoisseurship), to revealing the cultural meaning of specific forms of furniture in nineteenth-century America (material culture studies), to examining the mass production of chairs (industrial/economic history). Robert Trent's introduction is a good overview of what follows and gives the reader a succinct scholarly context for each article while providing the story of how presenters were chosen. It is worthwhile going back to ponder some of the questions he asks in the introduction after reading an article. All of the articles are worth reading, since they are vetted from the many oral presentations; but for the purposes of this journal this review will focus on the articles that are primarily about Vermont.

Jason T. Busch's "The Briggs Family Business and Furniture: A Study of Patronage and Consumption in Antebellum Southwestern New Hampshire" is a case study of a successful furniture making business that evolved, expanded, and contracted while competing in the changing marketplaces of pre-Civil War New England. Primarily a Keene, New Hampshire, business, the Briggs family expanded their operations into Vermont's capital city of Montpelier in the mid-1820s and stayed until the mid-1840s. These would have been boom years in the city, indicated by the many new homes being constructed as well as the new state capitol in the popular Greek revival style. Surviving portraits of

prosperous and successful families indicate that artists and craftsmen had receptive patrons in Montpelier. A table attributed to Lyman Briggs in the Vermont Historical Society collections was owned by Montpelier banker Timothy Hubbard and would have fit perfectly in his new temple-fronted home. Busch's article shows one strategy for long-term survival in what must have been a very competitive environment: Send out family members from your core operation to set up a new shop, provide other skilled family members as needed, and supply them with latest fashionable pieces from style-setting urban centers by transshipping them from your central store. As business dwindles, close up distant operations and focus on the main store. It all seems very modern and pragmatic though of course in antebellum Vermont Lyman Briggs was in business for a generation. Busch demonstrates that kinship ties, accumulation of capital, and flexibility allowed the Briggses to expand and then survive economic downturns that most likely put others out of business. As is usually the case with a good article, Busch raises more questions in the reader's mind than he can answer, such as, "what happened to other examples of Lyman Briggs furniture made in Montpelier?"

Kimberley King Zea writes about another successful Vermont furniture maker in "Cheaper by the One–sixth Dozen: Vermont's Patterson Chair Company." Like the Briggses, the Patterson family managed to succeed in business for three generations in Norwich. They did this by eventually specializing in chair making, adapting and adding new technologies for power, retaining their skilled labor force, and expanding their market by utilizing railroads and new sales techniques. Zea's analysis reminds us that many smaller manufacturers were able to compete with huge industrial producers in Southern New England creating small thriving communities as they did so.

David Krashes's article, "The South Shaftsbury, Vermont Painted Wooden Chests," revisits the painted chests that are often referred to as "Matteson-types" because two are marked with that name. Color and design have been used in the past to assign unmarked pieces to the South Shaftsbury area. Krashes believes that construction is a better way to determine origin and that the Mattesons were probably the owners, not the makers, of the two marked chests. Though Krashes's theory is probably a better approach, his checklist indicates that of the seventeen chests, five were not available for examination because their location is unknown, and a sixth, one of the marked Matteson chests, burned in 1970. As the author admits, the origins of these beautiful pieces will continue to be a mystery.

The final article in the volume, a fifteen-page bibliography prepared by Gerald W. R. Ward, is worth the price of the book to anyone interested in rural New England furniture.

JACQUELINE CALDER

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*In Search of New England's Native Past:
Selected Essays of Gordon M. Day*

Edited by Michael K. Foster and William Cowan (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998, pp. xiv, 328, \$70.00; paper, \$19.95).

There is much to admire in the career of Gordon M. Day: forester, turned linguist, turned ethnologist, turned historian. Day (1911–1993) was born in Albany, Vermont, and spent part of his childhood in Barre. After a stint in the army during World War II at the European Theater Headquarters, he embarked on his professional career. Early study (of the effects of earthworms on forest soils) honed his skills at observation, recording, and analysis. He was first a forester at Rutgers University in the 1940s and 1950s. Next he became a research associate in the Department of Anthropology at Dartmouth College in the late 1950s. Finally he was invited to be an ethnohistorian at the National Museum of Canada in Ottawa (later called the National Museum of Man, now the Canadian Museum of Civilization) in the mid-1960s. Day's 1979 "retirement" allowed him to synthesize his research, 17 of his 75 published works were prepared in this period, including *The Identity of the Saint Francis Indians* (1981), as yet unsurpassed in its field, several articles, chapters, and reviews, and two dictionaries of the Western Abenaki language, published posthumously.

As significant as his professional appointments were, Day's true contribution was in the happy conjuncture of tireless fieldwork, prodigious research in written and archaeological records, and clear-eyed synthesis. Day's early interest in the native peoples of northern New England drove him to seek out traces of Abenaki and Penobscot culture in town histories, archaeological sites, old news clippings and other obscure written sources. He sought Abenaki culture in Vermont, New Hampshire, Quebec, New York, and Ontario. He conducted extensive taped interviews with native informants, asking first about trees, plants, and ani-

mals, and later about families and traditions. He gained the trust of families in Canadian reserves and in Vermont enclaves, returning again and again for more detail. With a historian's concern for preservation, he consolidated all the texts he could find in the Abenaki language, some dating from the Catholic missionaries of the seventeenth century. Tapes of his interviews are stored on both sides of the border, at Dartmouth and in Ottawa; his papers are archived at the Canadian Museum of Civilization. One suspects that treasures remain hidden in both collections, ripe for the energetic researcher.

This cross-border focus in Day's career, in his research, and in the eventual archiving of his tapes and papers reflects the exigencies of his subject matter. Abenaki history, language, and culture rightfully belong both north and south of the border, in at least two provinces and several states. The scholarly kinship that produced this volume of New England history breaches borders as well. Foster is curator emeritus at the Canadian Museum of Civilization and Cowan is professor emeritus of linguistics at Carleton University, in Ottawa.

In Search of New England's Native Past includes a preface describing the selection process of the included essays, an introduction to the importance of Day's work by Foster, twenty-four essays, a list of works cited in Day's essays, several clear explanatory maps, photographs of Day and the individuals he interviewed, a bibliography of Day's published works, and a detailed index. The essays include linguistic analyses, an article about a Penobscot war bow, evidence about the eastern boundary of Iroquoia, and a discussion of Dartmouth College's early links with the Abenakis.

Day's major contribution to Vermont history is his establishment of the Abenaki people as the earliest identifiable inhabitants of Vermont. Using methods that would satisfy linguists, archaeologists, ethnologists, and historians, he laid the groundwork for later archaeologists such as Marjory Power and Bill Haviland of the University of Vermont, whose book, *The Original Vermonters* (1981) reversed three centuries of generalized denial about native influence in the region. There is a direct line from anthropologists such as Frank Speck and Franz Boas through Day's work to Power and Haviland, to Colin Calloway (*The Western Abenakis of Vermont, 1600–1800* [1990]) and, not tangentially, to the revival and recovery of Abenaki traditions, language, and lineages in Vermont in the last quarter of the twentieth century. This lineage, albeit in a Western tradition of documenting on paper and tapes the words of others, has done much to preserve Abenaki language and traditions. There is no doubt that Day's work could not have been done even a generation later, when many of the Abenaki speakers had died. His tire-

less fieldwork amounted to a rescue: Few scholars or native researchers had addressed the problem before Day applied himself, and none had done so comprehensively. Day's notes, tapes, and syntheses are of seminal and lasting value for the native history of northern New England.

The editors of this volume of essays decided to excerpt some of Day's longer works and reprinted many of his articles in full. Ethnologists of all regions will be as interested in Day's methods as they may be envious of the institutional support he enjoyed for this work. The selection, however, is of particular interest to Vermont historians, archaeologists, and anthropologists. For instance, a section on place names untangles the meanings of names such as Missisquoi, which have often been misunderstood. The editors also reproduced portions of *The Identity of the Saint Francis Indians* (1981), a less readily available work of research on Odanak (Quebec), which has significant implications for Vermont and New Hampshire Abenaki families.

Foster and Cowan decided not to edit the essays. They allowed Day's earlier statements to stand, even those that he modified in his later work. The reader is thus afforded the opportunity to examine the progression of Day's thought. In a compromise intended to keep the volume readable, Foster and Cowan also consolidated all the works cited toward the end of the volume. This could lead to some confusion about the sources Day used, most particularly about primary documents cited in edited works. For instance, John White's 1590 voyage is described as follows: "and at Roanoke, White's (1906) expedition . . ." Readers unfamiliar with the early narratives and their later publication history would do well to keep one finger in the works cited section.

As the volume's title implies, the field of New England's native past is as yet unsettled, and Day's work raises as many questions as it answers. The sense of quest that Day exemplified, the variety of the essays included here, and the sophistication of Day's analysis will keep the reader engrossed. This well-executed and useful volume deserves a place on the shelf of every scholar searching for the roots of New England.

LINDA B. GRAY

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*The Voice of the Dawn: An Autohistory
of the Abenaki Nation*

By Frederick Matthew Wiseman (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 2001, pp. xvii, 305, \$45.00; paper, \$19.95).

This book is a history of the Western Abenakis, descendants of the people whose homeland is now called Vermont. It is not about the descendants of the Western Abenakis of New Hampshire, or about those who settled at the end of the seventeenth century at St. Francis on the Odanak reserve in southern Quebec. Nor is it a history of the people known as the Eastern Abenakis, who are culturally and linguistically related. Frederick Wiseman makes it very clear why he has chosen to limit his history of the Abenakis to the Vermont region. In addition to being a book about their history, it is also intended, as the substantial document it is, to make a public claim for their tribal recognition (today read nation) which has long been denied them by both the state and federal governments. Wiseman also expresses his displeasure with the absence of scholarly inquiry by academics, who have too readily dismissed the Abenakis as having abandoned their homeland. His disapproval results in an interesting and frank book on the Abenakis of Vermont. Wiseman has provided a different and intriguing look at their long history, along with a much-needed perspective on the political events of the past several decades.

This history proceeds chronologically. It begins with the great Abenaki hero, Kuluscap, convincing the Frost Monsters to give up the ice cover, thereby permitting pollen and animals to take root and enabling the ancient Abenaki ancestors, created from the ash tree, to people the land. Each stage of their antique existence roughly follows the larger temporal periods used by archaeologists to describe the precontact eras. However, at the time of contact with the French in the early 1600s, Wiseman's chapter headings take on more sinister tones, such as "darkness falls." In fact, the years after 1609 are clouded by darkness until the 1970s, when the Abenakis began contesting their historical and geographical oblivion. What is intriguing about this history is that the author, himself an Abenaki, provides an almost first-person narrative, so that the reader gains greater insights into processes such as tool making or hunting. Wiseman, head of the Abenaki Tribal Museum, a professor of anthropology at Johnson State College in Vermont, and an expert on material culture, breathes life into the objects and subsistence activities he is portraying. In his discussion of his methodology, he freely admits

that his history is a personal interpretation, hence his reference to auto-history in the title. For the more recent period he draws on stories and characters from his childhood, interspersing them with the events he has gleaned from the published record. The last section of the book, on the Abenaki struggles for recognition, provides a candid account of the internal problems of factionalism and conflict. Wiseman does not hesitate, at times, to express his regret at decisions taken by the leadership. The author is to be admired for stepping into this minefield in such a public way; few others have done so.

Much of the book revolves around material culture. This reviewer found that approach puzzling, until the last chapters, when it occurred to me that Wiseman believes one way to prove the continued existence of the Abenakis is to identify all the crafts and artifacts they have produced in Vermont, most of which are now in the hands of collectors or antique shops. Although the focus is on the tools of Abenaki life, the book has much greater breadth and appeal. In his extensive endnotes Wiseman discusses many of the more academic topics, in addition to explaining whose research has guided his interpretation of events, as in his explanation of how his ancestors conducted warfare, the fur trade, and sea mammal hunting. These discussions are usually, but not always, convincing. For example, evidence is sorely lacking for his claim that a thousand years ago Abenaki log ships sailed to Europe. Also “irritating” (his expression, p. 246) is his suggestion that the St. Lawrence valley in the sixteenth century was a homeland for the Abenakis, not the St. Lawrence Iroquois. I judge these as two excesses in the author’s attempt to move the history away from the usual Eurocentric approach. Nevertheless, most of the discursive endnotes I found useful and informative. These endnotes also display Wiseman’s passion for subjects such as the need for academics to study the more recent period: “Ignore our prehistory. . . . please work on the archaeology and ethnohistory of a people who had to go underground” (p. 249). The book also contains very instructive appendices on educational resources, herbal medicines, and Abenaki place names.

Sometimes Wiseman’s passion impairs our reading. At the beginning of the book and beyond the introduction where it belongs, he is very insistent about how the Abenakis have been ill-used by academics. His complaint is understandable, to a degree, but it is overstated, particularly when he relies so heavily on their findings to flesh out the details of his history. Much of early ethnohistory was left to anthropologists, who were prejudiced against working with acculturated peoples and unaccustomed to working in archives. Once historians began research in the more obscure sources, however, as he acknowledges with Colin Calloway’s work, the Abenakis became reinstated on the map of Vermont.

Despite the internal and external difficulties the Abenakis have encountered in recent years in achieving tribal recognition, the last chapters end on an optimistic note, as Wiseman explains their renaissance as a people and a culture. This interesting and refreshing account of their past and their struggles is a fitting tribute to the Abenakis and the author. I would recommend it for lay readers as well as academics.

TOBY MORANTZ

Toby Morantz is an ethnohistorian whose latest work, in press, is, "The White Man's Gonna Getcha": The Colonial Challenge to the Crees in Quebec (McGill-Queen's University Press). She is an associate professor of Anthropology at McGill University.

The Green Mountain Boys

By Daniel P. Thompson in a new readable version *edited* by Carol E. Washington and Ida H. Washington. (Weybridge, Vt.: Cherry Tree Books, 2000, pp. 242, \$15.00).

Daniel Pierce Thompson's book *The Green Mountain Boys* (1839) was probably the most popular novel written in nineteenth-century Vermont. Appearing in dozens of reissues well into the twentieth century, the book offered generations of Vermonters a condensed version of events leading up to Ethan Allen and the Green Mountain Boys taking the old forts at Ticonderoga and Crown Point from the British army in 1775 and Seth Warner leading his Continental Green Mountain regiment in the rear guard battle at Hubbardton in 1777.

Thompson pads the narrative of these events with several subplots. The antirevolutionary Loyalist Jake Sherwood pursues the novel's romantic heroine, Alma Hendee, and her father's wealth, and four additional romantic entanglements further expand the tale. The novel concludes with an epilogue in which a domineering Ethan Allen jocularly commands the quadruple coupling of eight lovers: Alma marries Charles Warrington, who is loosely based on Seth Warner (though, unlike Warner, Warrington is unmarried); Alma's long-lost brother, who as a child had been given to the Indians in one of Sherwood's schemes, marries Jessie Reed, the daughter of a New York land speculator whose Scots settlers had been evicted from Panton by Ethan Allen and his merry band; Green Mountain Boy Pete Jones, a conventional comic rus-

tic, marries Alma's maid, Ruth; and Neshobee, the Indian friend of the Hendees, marries the servant girl Zilpha. Each Jack gets his Jill in a heavy-handed Shakespearean comedy ending.

Today, a lasting connection between a popular novel and its reading audience seldom lingers more than a month, as measured by consumer surveys like the *New York Times* Best Seller List. The history of the reissues of Thompson's *Green Mountain Boys* suggests that its popularity lasted for decades—from the 1850s to about the First World War. Young Vermonters most often encountered the book in school. Tradition tells us that teachers rewarded their students for good behavior by reading a chapter from the novel to conclude the school day. Happily, like most Victorian-era fiction, each chapter builds to a climax that leads the reader to want more of the story tomorrow. Teachers of especially active students doubtless learned the disciplinary value of Thompson's book early in their careers. As literacy in America declined between the Civil War and the 1920s, books that lent themselves to oral storytelling enjoyed enduring popularity.

Today, Carol and Ida Washington tell us, old copies of the book "lie gathering dust in attics and museums." The editors wish to give it a "renewal of life," however, so that "these adventures from our history [might gain] their rightful place in the American literary scene." Yet in conceiving the task of revival as only a revision of the "language of the novel to make it more readily readable by the youth, even the adults of today," they proceed from a simplistic and limited understanding of the book's faults. Modern audiences are attuned to the possibilities of narratives from their enormous exposure to the full range of popular media now accessible to them. They would need far more than a simple change of "language and style" to be drawn into Thompson's version of events and people in a revolutionary past.

Language, moreover, is not all that needs modernizing in Thompson's fiction. His characterization is one-dimensional and banal: The first three characters we meet are named Smith, Jones, and Brown. Rhetoric is overblown and obvious; dialogue is stilted, excessively formal and pseudo-literary, doing most of its damage in the story's dramatic crises. Jones, the comic rustic, reads like a character in a satirical Monty Python skit: "The jolly woodsman turned and bounded down the slope like a young colt, singing out, 'Trol, lol, lol de darly!'" A creaky plot crudely skips over years of real time, as in, "From this time for a period of about two years, there was a pause in our story. We propose, therefore, to pass lightly over this interval." One wonders if Judge Thompson would have allowed similar liberties in his court to a lawyer pleading a client's innocence.

The classic plot structure for warrior/cowboy narratives is not all that difficult to follow, whether in Cooper's *Last of the Mohicans*, Ford's *My Darling Clementine*, or *Star Wars*: First, there's everything before the fight; then there's the fight; and then there's everything after the fight. Thompson seems to know this formula, but he uses the wrong fight—the rear guard action at Hubbardton, from which no real victors emerge—rather than the big one a few days later on the Walloomsac, celebrated as the Bennington battle. In this novel, however, Thompson alludes to the Bennington battle—the single most important event of the revolution to involve Vermont and Vermonters in its purpose and outcome—only in an aside after the fight. So much for keeping the early Vermont heritage alive.

It is the treatment of Neshobee, the “friendly Indian,” and the hostile Indian allies of the British, that compels the question: Exactly what in “the heritage of early Vermont history” do the editors of this revision want to keep alive? Thompson presents Neshobee as an inscrutable, mysterious figure whose only redeeming qualities come from having been taken from his home and family. Like Captain Hendee's dog, he has a preternatural sense of intruders approaching the Hendee house, dancing around the farmyard listening to tree stumps for messages. The Hendee's dog yelps as he also senses the intruders, then barks to confirm Neshobee's animal sense of danger. Later, when British General John Burgoyne treats his Mohawk allies to a war feast and presents, the scene is described as full of “Hell and thunder! What whooping and yelling there was. One would have thought that all the underworld had been emptied upon the earth, and that the earth was alive with devils!” Thompson portrays the Indians other than or less than human, whether they serve the British or the colonists.

Judge Thompson was a founder of the Vermont Historical Society. Presenting Vermont's early history as a fictional tale allows him a great deal of authorial freedom, of course. The novel, moreover, once provided entertainment for audiences spanning several generations. Yet as a vehicle for teaching early Vermont history, it is best understood as a vehicle for myth. The test is easy to apply: We know we are in the realm of myth when heroines are “fairest in the land” (all are so in this book, including the formidable Ann Story) and none of the heroes are unspectacular. *Green Mountain Boys* passes that test.

The editors' aim to renew the life of this book in order to restore “the adventures from our history to their rightful place in the American literary scene” was doomed from the start. Its proper place is indeed on the dusty shelves of museums (and libraries) where students of American

popular culture can examine it for what it tells us about its nineteenth-century Vermont audience.

JOHN DUFFY

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*Edge of the Sword: The Ordeal of Carpetbagger
Marshall H. Twitchell in the Civil War
and Reconstruction*

By Ted Tunnell (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001, pp. x, 326, \$34.95).

I nstead of returning home to Vermont when the Civil War ended, Captain Marshall H. Twitchell, a farmer's son from Townshend, decided to seek his fortune in the South. Twitchell became a Freedmen's Bureau agent in Louisiana, and eventually an influential planter and important Republican political figure in that state during the violent post-war era known as Reconstruction, when the federal government controlled the states of the Confederacy before readmitting them to the Union. Ted Tunnell, a historian at Virginia Commonwealth University, describes Twitchell's experience in Louisiana as "one of the great stories of Reconstruction, a story never fully told and indeed largely unknown outside the purview of specialists" (p. 4).

Although primarily interested in Twitchell's postwar career, Tunnell devotes almost one-third of his narrative to events of the war years, from which a picture emerges of Twitchell as an intelligent and courageous soldier. Twitchell joined the 4th Vermont Regiment in 1861 and participated in seventeen battles, involving some of the Virginia theater's hardest fighting. He sustained, but survived, a serious head wound at the Battle of the Wilderness in May 1864. Three months later, this independent-spirited soldier moved up in rank from sergeant to captain by transferring to the newly created United States Colored Troops.

Dispatched to Texas with his unit in the summer following Ap-

pomattox, Twitchell soon after signed on with the Louisiana Freedmen's Bureau. When that service ended, the Townshend farmer's son bought a cotton plantation in the northwest part of the state. Embracing his new circumstances, he courted and eventually married a local girl, served as a delegate to the Louisiana convention that adopted an egalitarian constitution for the state and disfranchised Louisiana's Civil War leaders, worked to establish local public schools, and became a parish judge and state senator. Using his plantation as a base, Twitchell launched efforts to revitalize northwestern Louisiana's economy according to a business-minded Yankee model of thrift and industry, and brought eight of his own family members from Vermont to join his "Yankee colony."

However, as a carpetbagger (a derisive name for whites from the north), Twitchell found himself involved in a new type of war. By the early 1870s, his bold actions and business success made him a chief symbol of Reconstruction control in the state and a major target of anti-carpetbagger groups, including the notorious Knights of the White Camellia. Night-rider violence caused the deaths of seven of his Vermont family members, the destruction of much of his property, and eventually the expropriation of his plantation. Twitchell himself lost both arms to amputation from wounds absorbed in assassination attempts, and Tunnell describes the Vermonter's "crippled, armless body [as] a metaphor for Reconstruction's dying promises" (p. 247). Newspapers across the nation carried stories of his and his family's ordeal, and of the faltering efforts of Louisiana's political reconstruction. Finally driven from Louisiana in 1876, Twitchell retreated to Vermont and two years later accepted a presidential appointment as U.S. consul in Kingston, Canada, where he served until his death from a stroke in 1905.

This book, which contains sixteen photographs, three maps, a bibliography, and an index, traverses historiographical territory familiar to recent students of the era. Tunnell depicts carpetbagger Twitchell as one who "was more or less typical of the breed" (p. 2): not the stereotypical villainous opportunistic northern adventurer motivated by a desire to plunder the defeated South, but an ex-soldier simply trying to make his way in the region. However, apparently because of the limitations of his sources, Tunnell provides little insight into Twitchell's character and motivation, leaving readers with only a surface understanding of this formidable, seemingly complex figure. Also, while the work comes alive in its narration of anti-carpetbagger violence, it gives scant attention to the larger context of repression of Louisiana's newly freed black population. Tunnell's book nevertheless succeeds in its primary goal of providing an absorbing account of the odyssey of a

courageous Vermonter during one of the darker periods of America's past.

GENE SESSIONS

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So Great a Vision: The Conservation Writings of George Perkins Marsh

Edited by Stephen C. Trombulak (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 2001, pp. xviii, 228, \$50.00; paper, \$19.95).

George Perkins Marsh (1801–1882) is a paradoxical hero of the environmental movement. Historian Lewis Mumford heralded him as “the fountain-head of the conservation movement” (p. ix), and many leading environmentalists consider him the Father of Conservation. Yet, as author-editor Stephen Trombulak of Middlebury College notes in his Introduction to *So Great a Vision*, “it is surprising that so few people today have ever heard of George Perkins Marsh, and that so few even among them who have a deep understanding of environmental issues are aware of any of the details of Marsh’s thinking” (p. xv). As the most recent book in the Middlebury Bicentennial Series in Environmental Studies, this volume goes a long way toward resolving that enigma.

Part of reason for Marsh’s relative obscurity lies in the fact that, with the exception of his monumental work, *Man and Nature*, Marsh did not widely publish his thoughts. Perhaps even more to the point, as Trombulak explains, “Marsh wrote in a style common to men and women of letters in the nineteenth century, which more modern readers often find dense, even impenetrable” (p. xv). This book resolves both problems by including all of Marsh’s publications dealing with his environmental thinking. Trombulak reprints, with minor editing, six lectures and reports, covering topics of agriculture, artificial propagation of fish, the study of nature, irrigation, and a lecture advocating the introduction of the camel for use by the U.S. military.

While the topics of these brief essays may seem a bit arcane in the twenty-first century, Trombulak does a brilliant job of providing insight into Marsh’s thinking with brief introductions to each piece. In addition, by not overly editing Marsh’s “dense, even impenetrable prose,” Trombulak allows the reader to experience Marsh directly. It is doubtful that

any but the most dedicated scholar will wade through the text in its entirety. That, however, remains the reader's choice, not the editor's.

Most of what we know about Marsh appears in David Lowenthal's book, *George Perkins Marsh: Prophet of Conservation* (see review in *Vermont History*, v. 69, Nos 1&2 [Winter/Spring 2001], p. 233–4). While a superb biographer, Lowenthal is admittedly an apologist for his subject, rationalizing some of Marsh's most contradictory ideas by emphasizing his ability to criticize and reverse himself when new ideas suggested he was wrong.

Unlike a biographer, Trombulak in this book lets us read Marsh first-hand. Some of his ideas are quite astounding. He lauds the American institution of private property, as opposed to the European feudal system, that “makes every man the absolute irresponsible owner of his own land . . .” (p. 3). In his report on irrigation, however, he recommends that government “assume the absolute and perpetual ownership of all natural waters” in “States where irrigation has . . . importance” (p. 115). And he clearly favors civilization, “the mother and the fruit of peace” over the “arts of the savage” whose “life is a warfare of extermination, a series of hostilities against nature or his fellow man” (p. 5). Contradictions aside, Trombulak skillfully guides the reader through Marsh's wilderness of words to gain new appreciation of his amazing foresight on a wide range of conservation issues.

Trombulak's abridged presentation of Marsh's 1864 *Man and Nature: or Physical Geography As Modified by Human Action*, in contrast to the earlier essays, is heavily edited. He has eliminated Marsh's extensive footnotes and many examples used to support his key points, reducing Marsh's text to about one hundred pages—one-fifth the original. The result is splendid. Whereas no one I know—including this reviewer—has ever read *Man and Nature* in its entirety, Trombulak's edited version is very accessible.

Marsh's sweeping survey of history touches on many themes that invigorate the environmental movement today. He examines species extinction, introduction of exotic species, forest conservation and restoration, changes in aquatic ecosystems, desertification, and the impacts of large-scale projects. As he does in his introductions to the earlier essays, Trombulak translates Marsh's ideas, themes, and words into modern ecological terms.

In Trombulak's comments on the final chapter in *Man and Nature*, he emphasizes the importance of Marsh's theme of “humility.” He cites the book's final paragraph as “one of the most eloquent statements ever written about the relationship between humanity and nature” (p. 218). In it Marsh poses the “great question” as “whether man is of nature or

above her” (p. 226). Trombulak concludes that Marsh “thus set the stage for more than a hundred years of discussion among philosophers, writers, religious scholars, scientists, and all people who develop a deep connection with their place on earth” (p. 218).

Surely, today, that discussion is especially cogent here in Vermont as we face so many serious environmental problems. Thanks to Stephen Trombulak we can draw on the wisdom of fellow-Vermonters George Perkins Marsh with new clarity.

CARL REIDEL

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The Mills at Winooski Falls, Winooski and Burlington, Vermont: Illustrated Essays and Oral Histories

Edited by Laura Krawitt (Winooski, Vt.: Onion River Press, 2000, pp. 206, \$18.95 paper).

In the middle of the nineteenth century Vermont considered itself part of the nation’s emerging industrial economy. Yet barely a century later the Green Mountain State’s industrial past was all but forgotten. Only in recent decades have historians and preservationists sought to alter the tenacious image of Vermont as a rural state inhabited exclusively by independent Yankee farmers.

The Mills at Winooski Falls, a history of a Vermont textile mill community, is a fine example of the kind of effort now underway to rectify that image. This book of essays brings together experts in a wide variety of fields from botany and history to technology and environmental studies. Their short articles provide an excellent background for the reminiscences and oral history interviews that make up the remainder of the volume and bring it alive for the general reader. The book also complements the exhibits in the H eritage Winooski Mill Museum located in the Champlain Mill.

Several of the articles in this collection, previously published elsewhere, provide an important introduction to the Winooski mill story. Jennie Versteeg’s “Counting Sheep and Other Worldly Goods” gives an excellent overview of the industrial revolution in Vermont, with empha-

sis on the developing textile industry. Betsy Beattie's "French Canadian Émigrés and Industrialization" focuses on the Québécois who fled their overpopulated homeland with its grim economic conditions for the plentiful job opportunities in the United States. As Beattie points out, if working conditions at the Winooski mills were hardly ideal, "the prospect of weekly wages for the several family members was preferable to the uncertainties, sometimes hopelessness, of farming in Quebec" (p. 60).

We tend to think of Winooski as a largely French Canadian town. But as these recollections show, Irish, Italians, Poles, Armenians, Syrians, and Lebanese all had their little enclaves here. We are told how residents of these communities continued to speak their native languages, maintain their native traditions, and enjoy their native food. Madeline Perrino recalls the Italian community in Winooski with its own store, and the "padrones" who found jobs and a place to live for new arrivals. We learn from Connie Stech Flynn about the advantages enjoyed by Italian immigrants in Winooski who often came with enough money to start a small business. By contrast, the destitute French Canadians and Poles were wholly dependent on mill work for survival. For Syrian girls the move to Winooski meant liberation. Here their parents encouraged them to get the best education they could. Back home in Syria women weren't even allowed to attend school.

The darker side of mill employment—the long hours, poor wages, and dangerous working conditions—is hardly mentioned in these personal essays. One is left with the clear impression that hard as conditions were in Winooski, they marked a decided improvement over the destitution many of these immigrants had known back home.

Two articles in particular rectify this somewhat roseate picture of life in a factory town. The first, by Jeffrey Marshall, shows how the renowned early-twentieth-century photographer, Lewis Hine, used images of youthful mill workers—including several photographs taken in the Winooski woolen mills—"to raise public awareness of the abusive employment of children" (p. 139). The second, by Paul Gillies, traces the long history of child labor regulation in Vermont. As Gillies points out, in this largely rural state where children were expected to help out on the family farm their employment was viewed as a private matter, subject at best to local control. Thus when child labor laws first became a national concern, Vermont was the last state in New England to regulate the employment of children in mills and factories.

In 1954 the American Woolen Company, which had operated the Winooski woolen mills since the turn of the century, closed them down

for good. The reasons given for the shutdown ranged from charges of inefficient management and outmoded technology to union pressure to keep wages and employment high. The true answer, according to an article by Douglas Slaybaugh, was increasing foreign competition, which by the mid-twentieth century threatened the textile industries of both America and Europe.

Recovery from the loss of so many jobs was necessarily painful and slow, but it came, we are told, thanks to the faith of the townspeople in their community's future. Today only the great brick mill buildings lining the banks of the Winooski River remind the visitor of the town's industrial past. This book of essays and reminiscences fleshes out that past and makes it come alive for the modern reader.

DEBORAH P. CLIFFORD

Deborah Clifford is the author of The Passion of Abby Hemenway: Memory, Spirit, and the Making of History (Vermont Historical Society, 2001).

Green Mountain Boys of Summer: Vermonters in the Major Leagues, 1882–1993

Edited by Tom Simon (Shelburne, Vt.: New England Press, 2000, pp. 191, paper, \$24.95).

Baseball fans love to dream. *Green Mountain Boys of Summer* is good fodder for daydreams during a rain delay and winter dreams of opening day. It begins with a sentimental opening pitch by the Chief Justice of the Vermont Supreme Court, Jeffrey Amestoy, and ends with a page of statistics and an index. In between the writing ranges from serviceable to flights of poetry, both fair and foul. The illustrations, mostly photos, are excellent and include an image of each player represented. Many are baseball cards. All are the image the players wanted fans to see.

The subtitle tells you which players are included. The born-here Vermonter conundrum is raised by two players who were born here and left right after. They are also the two best players in the book, Birdie Tebbetts and Carlton Fisk. The place where one is born invokes a kind of geographical astrology. One response is “if a cat has kittens in the oven, it don’t make them biscuits.” No matter the criterion for inclusion, this is a wonderful cast of characters, both on and off the field. You will find Hall-of-Famer Carlton Fisk, “Three-Fingered” Dave Keefe, the inventor of the forkball, and Frank Dupee, “the third worst pitcher in the history

of Major League Baseball” (p. 38). Off the field they range from gregarious and pugnacious drinkers, to captains of industry, a doctor, a Mayflower descendant, French-Canadians, Irishmen, and others.

Vermont likes to think of itself as unique. Baseball is also unique. It is the only major sport in which you do not score with the ball. It is also played without a clock. With these facts and this book, even the casual fan and anyone interested in Vermont can learn and dream for many an hour.

BARNEY BLOOM

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Voices of Vermont Nurses: Nursing in Vermont 1941–1996

(Winooski, Vt., Vermont State Nurses Association, 2000, pp. 426, paper, \$25.00)

Each year nursing programs across the United States graduate a new class of nurses. What opportunities and challenges lie ahead for the graduates? If current trends continue, these graduates will experience rapid changes in the health care system, new developments in science and technology, increasing client acuity, escalating health care costs, and an impending shortage of nurses. Predicting the future is risky business. One can, however, look at history and see how previous graduates and students faced the challenges and reveled in their accomplishments. The history of nursing in Vermont is well documented in two previous Vermont State Nurses' Association publications: *We Who Serve: A Story of Nursing in Vermont*, published in 1941, and *Fifty Years of Progress: Past/Prospective*, published in 1964.

Voices of Vermont Nurses: Nursing in Vermont 1941–1996 portrays an exciting and dramatic picture of nursing in Vermont. This new publication utilizes many voices including students, staff nurses, educators, retirees, nurse practitioners, nurses from a variety of specialty areas, and nurse anesthetists. Each voice tells a different story, a different journey of sacrifice, joy, and suffering. Through these voices, we hear the will and strength of Vermont nurses.

The book is divided into four sections: Nursing Education, Nursing Practice, Nursing Organizations, and Vermont State Board of Nursing.

Each section provides the reader with a historical perspective, frequently followed by personal accounts by individual nurses. This format allows the reader to select particular areas of interest to read or use for research purposes.

Section one highlights nursing education in Vermont, beginning in the early 1940s and continuing through 1996, and presents information on each program in the state. During this period nursing education changed dramatically. New programs opened and others closed. Excerpts from students' personal stories share their views. "Life as a Student Nurse, Circa 1948: A Personal Account," allows the reader to hear the voice of a nursing student. "As students we worked or went to classes 6½ days a week and had two weeks off during the summer. Our uniform was a blue-and-white-striped short-sleeved dress with a stiff white collar and cuffs. Over the dress we wore a white bib and apron, and we wore white stockings and shoes. Each morning we had to stand for inspection for length-of-dress (over the knees), shoes (shined), and hairnet at proper length (just below the ears)" (p. 23).

Listen to the determination of another student who was one of five males in the class: "After being out of school for three years, I was scared to death, and I asked myself, what am I getting myself into? I knew at the time that I was entering a field that was predominantly made up of women. But I was not going to let that stop me from entering a career that I knew would be both rewarding and fulfilling" ("My Life as a Student Nurse. A Personal Account," p. 40).

Section two describes nursing practice in Vermont from 1941 through 1996. During this time-span nurses witnessed wars, the advance of technology, the beginning of Medicare, AIDS, increased attention to environmental and ethical issues, and the expanding legions of clinical nurse specialists and nurse practitioners. Today, a career in nursing provides a multitude of opportunities. Nurses only need to assert their voices to enter the field of their choice.

"When the Patient is Vermont: Public Health Nursing," provides an interesting portrayal of public health nursing from its beginning, when the nurse provided "bedside care in the home and school nursing" (p. 238), to the present "focus on the community while providing nursing intervention with individuals, families, and groups" (p. 266). Life as a public health nurse is challenging and hazardous, as described in this recollection from the 1940s. "There was one incident in mud season. As I was driving down from West Hill School, the road just separated and there I sat with the front end of the Plymouth nosed into the separation. It was a nearby farmer who came with his team to the rescue" (p. 246).

"A Nurse's Journey to Improve the Environment: A Personal Ac-

count,” shows the determination of one nurse who overcame numerous obstacles to start recycling efforts in Vermont hospitals. The culmination of her work came in 1997, when the American Nurses’ Association Convention passed a resolution, introduced by the Vermont delegation, to fund education for nurses on reducing pollution in health care.

“Vermont Nurses in the Military: Harbingers of Peace, Care, and Humanity during Wartime,” provides vivid accounts of Vermont nurses serving during wartime, starting with the Cadet Nurse Corps in World War II and culminating with Operation Desert Storm. These nurses tell of sacrifice, hardship, courage, long hours, lasting friendships, and pride. A statement by General Colin L. Powell at the 1993 groundbreaking ceremony for the Vietnam Women’s Memorial speaks of all nurses who served during wartime. “This monument will ensure that all of America will never forget that all of you were there, that you served, and that even in the depths of horror and cruelty, there will always beat the heart of human love . . . and therefore our hope for humanity” (p. 286).

Sections three and four provide information about the history, activities, and purposes of nursing organizations and the Vermont State Board of Nursing.

The many authors who contributed to *Voices of Vermont Nurses* offer a readable, enlightening, and entertaining picture of nursing in Vermont over the past fifty-five years. The use of photographs adds to the historical perspective and reminds the reader of days gone by. Nurses in Vermont will find inspiration in the voice of a colleague: “I hope that nurses in Vermont will march with vigor, with creativity, with a passionate commitment to quality patient care, remembering the slogan, ‘Virtually Nothing is Impossible’” (p. 237). All readers will find that the voices of Vermont nurses are loud and strong.

LINDA ELLIS

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Wilderness Comes Home: Rewilding the Northeast

Edited by Christopher McGrory Klyza (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 2001, pp. 320, \$50.000; paper, \$22.95)

John Elder closes his essay “A Conversation at the Edge of Wilderness” with an image from composer Charles Ives, haunted by the childhood memory of his bandmaster father’s delight in marching two

bands playing different tunes past each other on the town green. Elder suggests that the well-tuned ear could discern within this perambulating cacophony a complex euphony, and he employs that image to call for harmonization of the frequently discordant sounds produced as wilderness advocates march toward landscapes “primeval” while consensus-oriented conservationists double-step in the direction of “working” landscapes. One of the rewards for the reader of *Wilderness Comes Home: Rewilding the Northeast* is that the two symphonic strains contained in the twelve articles making up the book sound through of their own accord. Whether they reach a concordance of any sort is another question.

A variegated mix of foresters, park administrators, conservation biologists, and activists describe the successes, failures, and impending challenges for wilderness recovery and restoration in the Northeast. Editor Christopher McGrory Klyza suggests that taken together, their voices can help to balance the traditionally Western chauvinism of much American conversation about wilderness. Old-growth “evangelist” Robert Leverett describes a suite of forest stands he finds representative of hundreds of long-overlooked sites that will become increasingly important to any “rewilding”—accidental or managed—that takes place in the northeast. Middlebury College conservation biologist Stephen Trombulak looks at the theory and technique of ecological reserve design in one article, and with wildlife biologist Kimberly Royar surveys the status of species reintroductions—from nineteenth-century efforts to bring deer, caribou, elk, and beaver back to the region to the contemporary attempts to reintroduce the wood rat, fisher, pine marten, lynx, wild turkey, peregrine falcon, osprey, bald eagle, shad, and salmon. Activists Jamie Sayen and John Davis call for “forever wilding” big tracts of the northeastern forest, and point to the opportunities afforded by the recent sale of timber and paper company properties. Addison County Forester David Brynn, Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller Park Superintendent Rolf Diamant, and Conservation Study Institute Director Nora Mitchell find promise at a much smaller scale of stewardship, in the private forest lands of the region.

An alternative title for this volume of articles might be, “Ecology Comes Home: Rehistoricizing the Northeast,” and historians will take delight in seeing the formerly relentlessly ahistorical science of ecology pay homage to the importance of history. It is a deep irony that American forest ecology (born in the 1850s as Henry David Thoreau noted the patterns of pitch pines colonizing formerly plowed fields and watched squirrels burying hickory nuts in stands of hemlock) took shape in northeastern universities as the first wave of forest regeneration swept over New England in the wake of farm abandonment. Yet it has taken

nearly a century and a half to awaken to the fact that history matters as much in the life of wildlands as it does in the communities whose citizens seek out these places for restoration and renewal. If humans are to participate in the process of rewilding consciously, we must develop an acute knowledge of a place's past in order to guide its future effectively.

Successful ecological restoration depends on fine-grained knowledge of the natural histories of a place and its constituent species. Time and again, restoration efforts based on experience gained in one place have failed when transported to new locales. This need for specificity is an invitation to historians to collaborate with conservationists as they seek to restore the ecological integrity of landscapes. Local history becomes extremely relevant to the conservation biologist looking for just the right place to reintroduce lynx or peregrines. One wonders too, what local historians might say about the persistence throughout the Northeast of very distinct local places as "wildernesses" through the very era when, according to broad-brush regional histories, no wilderness existed.

Though in his essay John Elder reminds us that the wilderness movement is nothing transcendental, but is itself a historical phenomenon, the articles in *Wilderness Comes Home* almost universally lack any historical self-consciousness. This vantage point may be just the place where local and regional historians can create the most fruitful collaborative harmonies with both biologists and activists, seeking out the particular stories of past efforts at restoration that have become lost to us.

KEVIN DANN

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