

BOOK REVIEWS



The Passion of Abby Hemenway: Memory, Spirit, and the Making of History

By Deborah Pickman Clifford (Montpelier: Vermont Historical Society [Distributed by the University Press of New England], 2001, pp. x, 350, \$40.00; paper, \$24.95)

Deborah Pickman Clifford has aptly titled her account of the life and work of the editor of the *Vermont Historical Gazetteer*, *The Passion of Abby Hemenway*. After stints teaching school in Vermont and Michigan, Hemenway dedicated herself to capturing the essence of Vermont and its people in poetry and prose with the idea that she could support herself through these literary endeavors. The editorial and financial success of *Poets and Poetry of Vermont* (1858; rev. ed. 1860), an anthology selected from hundreds of submissions by published and amateur poets, doubtless encouraged Hemenway to pursue her next idea. She proposed a magazine of the history and literature of Vermont—the *Vermont Quarterly Gazetteer*. Her plan to recruit authors and a sales force to enlist subscribers beginning with the towns of Addison County was disarmingly simple, but Hemenway felt that she had the resources to do it successfully. Challenged by Middlebury College faculty that success was impossible, Hemenway set out with verve and determination to prove them wrong. And here, another passion story unfolds as Hemenway’s life and literary perspective become bound up in Catholicism, to which she converted in 1864. The increasingly heavier editorial and financial burdens she endured in her efforts to complete the publication of a history of each of the counties of Vermont became Hemenway’s road to Golgotha.

Clifford has parsed out the circumstances of the writing, editing, and production of the *Gazetteer*. Vermont already had a body of local history writing when Hemenway began, but it was a derivative of the “Allen brothers’ carefully orchestrated propaganda campaign” that depicted Vermonters as “freedom-loving” and “had solidified the myth of Ethan as

a selfless war hero” (p. 111). Hemenway would instead compile the stories of everyday life that would sell subscriptions, although she found herself relying on these published sources when filling a gap. Clifford offers many examples of Hemenway’s editorial eye for details and the treasures that are buried in the town histories. She recruited women and men to write fresh material and sometimes less than “flattering” accounts (p. 211).

The Civil War plays a dual role in Hemenway’s story. The town histories show how the patriotic excitement as Vermonters enlisted evaporated as the shattering cost of the war in human life became apparent. (Hemenway included a moving personal letter from John Ufford explaining why he missed his deadline, along with his account of Fairfax.) During the war it became apparent that the plan for producing the *Gazetteer* in quarterly installments was too ambitious and too costly. After six issues appeared between 1859 and 1863, Hemenway suspended publication for the remainder of the war, even though five additional issues were already set in type. Published in 1867, they were soon followed by the imposing first volume containing the histories of five counties. By then, Hemenway’s fortunes had apparently improved. For the first four years that she lived with an elderly Catholic friend, Lydia Meech of Burlington, she was comfortable and productive. After 1872, she nursed her ailing friend for two years, but when she inherited life interest in their house, Meech’s estranged son challenged it and a four-and-a-half year legal battle ensued. The effort cost more in legal fees than was gained by the victory. All the while, her publishers’ bills were mounting and obstructing her ability to distribute the work that she had prepared. Some relief came from the Vermont legislature, but on terms that were not generous.

To prepare her final volumes, Hemenway left Vermont for Chicago, where she edited and set the type for volume 5 and town histories she hoped to issue first in pamphlet form, but she continued to be dogged by misfortune. An 1886 fire destroyed the printing plant and 857 pages of typeset text and pages that had already been printed. Hemenway refused to give up and worked ceaselessly until she died in February 1890. Volume 5 was completed and published by her sister, Carrie H. Page. Material for the sixth historical volume was returned to William Portus Baxter in Vermont. After his death the material was shipped to his niece in North Carolina, prompting the Vermont Historical Society to act, but the papers had already burned in a house fire. In those lost trunks were the bulk of Hemenway’s unpublished text, papers, books, and historical materials, complicating even further the task of her biographer. Clifford observes the irony in the complaint of the VHS librarian in 1914, after spending \$12,000 granted by the legislature for a staff to index the *Gazetteer*, that it “has all along seemed too prodigious for any man to undertake” (p. 308).

Clifford does a fine job of crafting the linked stories of Hemenway's life and *oeuvre*. If only she had been served as well by her designer's idea of Victorian graphics and clutter (the intrusive sidebars from the *Gazetteers*). The choice of a Gothic type could have been inspired, but is, at best, confusing as a guide to the reader, who should know that there is a list of the contents of the *Gazetteer* volumes included with the bibliography.

CAROLINE F. SLOAT

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Vermont Hero: Major General George Stannard

By George S. Maharay (Shippensburg, Pa.: White Mane Books, 2001, xiv, 308, \$19.95 paper).

In Vermont history George Stannard and the Battle of Gettysburg have become inseparable. The role of Stannard and the Second Vermont Brigade is well documented and often praised for assisting in shattering the Confederate assault against the Union line on Cemetery Ridge on July 3, 1863. However, there is substantially more to the man's career than one day's heroics.

Stannard served Vermont and the Union for nearly the duration of the Civil War. He suffered five wounds, the last costing him his right arm. Some accounts state that he was the first Vermonter to volunteer for military duty, but even if that claim is unsubstantiated, his career was indeed worthy. He first served as lieutenant-colonel in the Second Vermont Regiment, then as colonel of the Ninth Vermont. A promotion to brigadier-general led him to the command of the Second Vermont Brigade climaxing with the events at Gettysburg. After the brigade's discharge Stannard had an assignment in New York City. In early 1864 he again assumed command of a brigade in the Eighteenth Army Corps and then was promoted to leading a division. While commanding this last unit he led a successful attack against Fort Harrison near Richmond, Virginia and in defending the fortification the next day he received his debilitating wound. This injury prevented him from any further active duty. In just over three years Stannard had risen from the rank of lieutenant-colonel to that of major general.

Stannard's story, like that of several other noteworthy Vermont Civil War figures, has gone unnoticed by writers. Perhaps one reason is the lack of a collection of Stannard correspondence.

George Maharay, in his book *Vermont Hero*, has elected to fill the void with a biography of the general. One might have hoped the book would detail most of Stannard's sixty-five-year life, but it primarily emphasizes the military career. Though this period of Stannard's life was exemplary it is difficult to comprehend the man's character solely on the basis of five years of military service. With the exception of several brief mentions of his involvement in the prewar state militia, the reader learns nothing of the first forty years of Stannard's life. How did he earn a promotion to the rank of a militia colonel? How did his early years influence his military service? After the Civil War and his retirement from the military Stannard worked as collector of customs for six years until a discrepancy in accounts forced his resignation. The author covers this subsequent black mark on Stannard's record and the remainder of his years in only one short chapter.

Maharay does provide an excellent synopsis of Stannard's military career, despite the lack of personal correspondence. He might have become too enamored with his subject, for he glosses over any negative comments and gives Stannard the persona of the perfect officer. The writer opens each chapter with an abstract of the chapter contents that could be eliminated. The chapters are brief and could be combined.

The greatest weakness in the book is attributable to the publisher and its editorial staff. A competent editor would have recommended changes to the author and picked up on errors in spelling and dates. For example, in "Gettysburg—Pickett's Charge" (chapter 18), Stannard's official report is printed separately, whereas including it in the text would have enhanced the story. However, in "Fort Harrison—Stannard's Attack" (chapter 26), this strategy is reversed, as the official report is inserted into the text with little or no paraphrasing. Accounts by other participants are likewise overused with no editing. Stannard's service in New York City is covered in chapter 20, but on two separate pages (pp. 184–185) the author presents multiple dates for the New York City draft riots. Also, the actions of General Canby are confusing (pp. 185–186, 188). Finally, the text is plagued by too much passive voice.

Maharay does Civil War historians a service by providing the first full study of Stannard's military career. The effort would have been better if he had covered a greater span of the man's life. A reader will gain some understanding of the general but must be willing to ignore the editorial weaknesses sprinkled throughout the pages.

DONALD H. WICKMAN

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*Charles Louis Heyde: Nineteenth-Century Vermont
Landscape Painter*

Edited by Nancy Price Graff and E. Thomas Pierce (Burlington, Vt.: Robert Hull Fleming Museum, The University of Vermont, 2001, pp. 100, \$45.00; paper \$28.95).

Vermont, like France, is—metaphorically and all too often literally—every American’s second home. As such, the rediscovery of any aspect of the region’s historic identity is a welcome addition to the understanding of the state’s charismatic aura. In addition to raising stimulating questions about regional culture, this monograph and catalogue raisonné of the oeuvre of nineteenth-century landscape painter Charles Louis Heyde also provides a service to anyone interested in the purported “look” of Vermont 150 years ago.

This handsome publication, the project of a scholarly team, was produced for an exhibition of the artist’s work held at the University of Vermont’s Fleming Museum in 2001. It faithfully documents the career and extensive output of an artist whose heretofore-principal claim to fame was his marriage to Walt Whitman’s sister. Unfortunately, despite the museum’s well-intended efforts, little has been achieved, either by the exhibition or the resulting publication, to dispel that reputation.

Heyde’s myriad views of Mount Mansfield and Lake Champlain, though not without appeal, scarcely deserve the praise shed upon them by the authors; at best they are provincial variants of the more sophisticated Hudson River School canvases; at worst they are formulaic productions of a not overly gifted hack. This is not to suggest, however, that Heyde’s painting lacks interest, only that the interest lies elsewhere than suggested by the text of the catalogue.

One of a handful of practicing artists who made Vermont their full-time residence during the nineteenth century, Heyde produced his conventional tableaux, not for the metropolitan center (i.e. Boston and New York) but, *faute de mieux*, for local consumption. Exhibiting his works in the lobby of a Burlington hotel, Heyde no doubt hoped to snare the occasional tourist or visiting businessman, but, as the narrow provenance of his many canvases suggests, this seldom occurred. Little insight, therefore, is gained by comparing his paintings with views of Mount Mansfield by such New York luminaries as Jerome Thompson and Sanford Gifford. The latter painted for overstressed urbanites in need of the perennially consoling fiction that Vermont was a rural Eden; Heyde painted for Vermonters who, then as now, clung to no such illu-

sions. The romantic or theocratic visions of nature imparted to Heyde by comparison with the poetry of William Cullen Bryant and the paintings of Thomas Cole, *inter alia*, do not stand up to closer scrutiny of his canvases. To be sure, Mount Mansfield looms majestically over verdant vales and cadmium-induced twilights are reflected in the limpid waters of Lake Champlain, but the foregrounds of these landscapes are emphatically marked by signs of human presence. Houses, fences, cultivated fields, bridges, manmade stumps, and, on at least one occasion, a steam engine pulling freight cars through the Winooski Valley, produce a cognitive dissonance not easily reconciled with the Knickerbocker cult of wildness. The substitution of a Wal-Mart—as any current resident of Burlington can attest—for a covered bridge or a millhouse in the foreground of several of his compositions would not significantly disturb the equilibrium between nature and culture.

In the instructive instance of the railroad painting (color plate 27), the machine may have penetrated the garden (*pace*: Leo Marx) but it is far less readily assimilated to the rubric of the “middle landscape” than to the triumphalist notion of “progress.” In short, the catalogue’s incessant claim (citing pantheist-painter Asher Durand) that Heyde subscribed to the notion of “the power of uncultivated Nature to teach ‘lessons of high and holy meaning’” (p. 23) seems literally at loggerheads with several of the dominant paradigms of his canvases.

Rather than striving to position Heyde’s oeuvre within the ideology of the nineteenth-century cult of wilderness and reverence for nature, the authors would have been better advised to look in their own past and present backyards. The eccentric painter James Hope, for example, a near contemporary and, like Heyde, another strident booster of Vermont’s rural industry, provides a far more compelling analogue than the poets and painters of New York’s Century Association. Hope, a native of Castleton, took provincial pride in celebrating Vermont’s emergent industries of quarrying, tourism, and transportation. In a word, he was a utilitarian with no discernible devotion to the preservation of scenic wilderness. On balance, neither artist displayed much interest in staging Vermont as a rural retreat for nostalgic reflection upon the nation’s pre-industrial innocence. Quite the opposite, both seemed anxious to record the technics and processes of industrial and social transformation. How else to explain Heyde’s one genuinely original pictorial invention, “Canyon of the Devil’s Chute” (color plate 28), a busy scene of a logging operation (replete with stumps, lumberjacks, and a steaming Satanic mill)? Commissioned by a Canadian lumber merchant, this dynamic canvas suggests that Heyde was neither an environmentalist, a transcendentalist, nor an anti-industrialist. As a consequence, Heyde is best viewed,

not as a pale reflection of metropolitan concerns, but as a determined chronicler of Vermont's passage from innocence to experience.

ROBERT L. MCGRATH

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Stowe, Vermont History and Genealogy: The Susan W. Downer Collection

Arranged by Patricia L. Haslam (Stowe, Vt.: Stowe Historical Society, 2001, pp. 578, \$50.00; paper \$40.00).

Papers compiled and collected by amateur family historians can be, at the same time, both the bane and delight of the inquiring genealogist. The struggle to decipher faded penmanship, the needle-in-a-haystack search for an elusive family connection, can be amply rewarded by the freshness of the material and the window that it offers into both the life of the compiler and his or her times.

Susan Whittemore Downer (1870–1935) was born and educated in Stowe. After graduating from Stowe High School, she worked in Boston for many years, returning to Stowe later in life to help her mother care for her grandmother. Never married, and employed at H. A. Slayton & Co. in Morrisville as a bookkeeper and stenographer during the 1920s and 1930s, she was an avid amateur historian, knowledgeable about many of the early Stowe families whose descendants she interviewed. She carefully compiled her interviews and her research into public records and cemetery inscriptions in notebooks, five of which were given to the Stowe Historical Society. The Society, under the able hand of genealogist Pat Haslam, has reproduced and published these documents, making them both available, and more importantly, accessible through meticulous indexing, to researchers.

In her informative introduction, Haslam notes that much of the material in the Downer collection was included, “at times word-for-word” (p. x), in Walter Bigelow’s *History of Stowe, Vermont 1763–1934*. While Bigelow seems to have given Susan Downer passing credit, it is likely that she was the person responsible for most of the research for his book. Susan’s brother, Harry Downer, wrote in his own copy of the Bigelow history the name of his sister beneath Bigelow’s name as author. Indeed, on the last page of her fifth notebook is a note by Susan Downer designating W. J. Bigelow as “keeper” of her work.

The sheer quantity of the material compiled by Downer—clippings, typed and handwritten genealogies, letters, stories, essays, and photos—provide rich prospecting for genealogists searching for Stowe family connections. But there is also great charm in this collection. Miss Downer’s abilities as a stenographer with a fine ear for dialogue have given us lively accounts by some of the residents she interviewed. In her interview with Dan Luce, we are offered a vivid description of Thomas Luce’s wife. “Tom’s wife, Lucinda, was short and plump and wore her gray hair in two braids brought around under her chin and the two ends tied together with a piece of woolen yarn. She was a great lover of canaries and flowers and the house and yard were overrun with them. . . . When they went abroad they used a two-seater carryall that even then was ancient, and a horse as old as the vehicle. Mrs. Luce sat in front and drove while Tom rested in the back and their appearance would be hailed, ‘Here come Mis’ Tom and the birdcage!’” (p. 47).

Some of the material on local families will attract interest from people whose primary focus may not be on Vermont history alone. The pages on the Dutton family contain unique material on the life of Brother Joseph Dutton. Born Ira Dutton, Brother Joseph was a Catholic lay missionary internationally known for his work with the famous and revered Father Damien in the leper colony on the Island of Molokai. This material, which includes photographs, clippings, and reproductions of notes and letters, should be of interest to those studying the lives and work of these extraordinary men. The pages include a letter in Dutton’s own hand written to Susan Downer in response to her request for reminiscences of his childhood in Stowe. Penned just a few years before his death, he writes of his failing eyesight and of the difficulties he has had in keeping up with correspondence. Still, his memories, as he painstakingly wrote them, are lively. “As to any house in Stowe cannot recall anything except that in a considerable space . . . I used to run about with a dog—something of the Newfoundland type—and a building there by itself with an outside staircase. This I can recall quite plainly and of running up and down—at least part way . . . playing with the dog as it capered about around the stairway” (p. 185).

In his prologue, the president of the Stowe Historical Society, Dr. Edwin Lang, emphasizes “the importance and permanence of records in matters of history.” The Society should be commended for its work in producing this handsome volume of Susan Downer’s research, thus making a valuable collection of documents widely available to those with an interest in Stowe history and genealogy.

HILARI FARRINGTON

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*Textiles in New England II:
Four Centuries of Material Life
The Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife
Annual Proceedings 1999*

Edited by Peter Benes (Boston: Boston University Scholarly Publications, 2001, pp. 240, paper, \$30.00).

For twenty-four years the Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife has met “to explore everyday life, work, and culture in New England’s past.” In conjunction with the Program in American and New England Studies at Boston University, a collection of papers on textile studies presented at the 1999 conference has been published in the book, *Textiles in New England II: Four Centuries of Material Life*.

The broad field of textile studies examined in this publication serves as an umbrella for studies of material culture (tangible objects), primary research (letters, diaries, account books, etc.), and social history. Many New England historical societies, museums, and families still have collections of textiles and other artifacts in trunks, attics, or, as Laurel Thatcher Ulrich said in her keynote address, “in the garrets and ratholes of old houses.” If we are lucky, scraps of paper attached to these items give us some idea who made, wore, or used them. When this information is missing, how does one begin to find out more about the artifact? This book contains research that will be useful to historians, museum curators, and individuals digging into the study of New England textiles, women, or early textile production processes.

The papers are organized into seven sections: 1) Coverlets; 2) Beds, Bed Hangings; 3) Millinery, Woven Rugs; 4) Textile Technology; 5) Textiles and Women’s History; 6) Commemoratives and Memorialization; and 7) Reproductions. Ninety-three photographs, illustrations, and graphs embellish and expand the information in each article. The bulk of the papers explore textiles in the nineteenth century, with a few focused on the eighteenth century.

Melinda Talbot’s article, “Mary Anne Warriner, A Rhode Island Milliner,” tells the story of a woman in the bonnet business, based on her daybook of daily business transactions and accounts from 1835 to 1841. (The term “millinery” originally meant “one from Milan” and came to be associated with the sellers of fashionable items that Milan was famous for—bonnets and other dress accessories.) Bonnets were ubiquitous during the nineteenth century. They were so prevalent and popular

that it is not uncommon to read diaries and letter references about buying a new bonnet or refurbishing one with new ribbons and flowers. Talbot describes the milliner's profession, bonnet fashions, and materials used to make bonnets, and includes a number of photographs of bonnets, a print of a milliner's shop, and a fashion plate from *Godey's Lady's Book* to support her paper.

Sandra Rux's article, "Rag Rug Carpet Weaving in Connecticut, 1850–1880," documents the use of rag rugs in Connecticut in both urban and rural settings. Rux's extensive use of primary documents to support her theory reveals the manufacture and popularity of a rug type previously believed to be out of style well before 1850. Although extant fragments of rag rugs from this period are yet to be found and documented, her research firmly establishes the rag rugmaking industry in the last half of the nineteenth century.

Kathryn Clipinger Kosto's "'Some work . . . to be kept': Textiles and Memories of Victorian Domesticity" will be interesting to readers who may have examples of textile diaries, "a form of homemade documentation which uses textiles to chronicle personal events" (p. 183), or who have surviving examples of family textiles and needlework. Kosto says, "Textiles were a common fabric in women's experience, linking worlds of philanthropy and domestic service, mourning and celebration, commemoration and the latest fashion" (p. 173). Three generations of Longfellow women (Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's mother, wife, and daughters) used textiles to document their lives and remembrance of each other. For example, Frances Appleton Longfellow (1817–1861), Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's wife, mounted swatches of dress silks and cottons used to make clothing for her children by arranging and dating them chronologically onto Merrimack Mills swatch cards (Frances's father owned Merrimack Mills in Massachusetts). Her textile diaries together with a written diary create snapshot memories of her children's lives.

On a broader note, Lynne Zacek Bassett's paper, "'A Dull Business Alone': Cooperative Quilting in New England, 1750–1850," dispels myths about the romantic social history of quilting and quilting parties based on her comprehensive investigation of diaries from across New England.

Other articles in the book talk about patents on the Connecticut Chair Wheel and the Hibbert-Townsend Latch Needle; the importance of beds and bedding, bed rugs, and bed curtains; Shaker textile production; the poet Mercy Otis Warren's needlepoint card table, where she established herself as an aristocrat through her needlework skills, yet challenged prevailing political ideas with her pen; Tryphenia Newton Cooke, a seamstress for Elizabeth Porter Phelps of Hadley, Massachusetts, who continued to sew for other people while raising a large family; textile

commemoratives and broadsides; Mary Saltonstall Parker, a sampler maker in the Colonial Revival era; and Plimoth Plantation's research methods for its reproduction clothing program.

A useful twenty-page textile studies bibliography is also organized by topic: periodicals, general works, local collections, decorative textile arts, coverlets, quilts, bed rugs, lace, clothing, hand production and technology, textile imports, outwork and factory production, knitting and hosiery machinery, and mills. This bibliography also includes sources used in papers from the Dublin Seminar's 1997 conference, *Textiles in Early New England: Design, Production, and Consumption*, previously reviewed in *Vermont History*, 68 (203–205).

Textiles in New England II includes plenty of resource ideas for anyone interested in textile studies. The book offers an intimate look at the subject, specifically in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire, the textile industry, its textile artifacts, the men and women involved in textile making, and needlework, based on primary documentation.

ELIZABETH SHATTUCK BLESS

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American Towns: An Interpretive History

By David J. Russo (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001, pp. xiii, 350, \$28.95).

Every so often some intrepid academic writes a book on the broad subject of American towns. The two best-known examples are Page Smith, *As a City Upon a Hill: The Town in American History* (1968) and Richard Lingeman, *Small Town America: A Narrative History, 1620–Present* (1980). David Russo's *American Towns: An Interpretive History* updates the work of Smith and Lingeman. Russo is well qualified for the task: His previous scholarship includes monographs on family and community, on local historical writing in the United States, and on the origins of local news in country presses. The new book should receive the same level of attention as its predecessors. *American Towns* is carefully organized, clearly written, thoughtful, and thorough. Readers interested in the history of Vermont towns, however, may end up disappointed in Russo's latest work.

First, a summary. *American Towns* contains a preface, six roughly equal-length chapters entitled "Founding," "Sites," "Political Life,"

“Economic Life,” “Cultural Life,” and a brief conclusion labeled “The Town in Myth and Reality.” The preface spells out intent and methodology. By “Interpretive History” Russo means that he is focused on what he calls “patterns of life among those who lived in American towns—what connects them rather than what separates them . . . what town dwellers have shared” (p. ix). Russo emphasizes that articles and books written by others have provided his main source of raw material and that he considers *American Towns* “a synthesis of existing scholarship” (p. x), not a work based on his own primary research in town history. The preface also addresses the fundamental question of what the word “town” means—Russo refuses to be bound by any simple definition—and briefly discusses regional differences and town types. The preface ends with a paragraph noting that towns, whatever the definition, differ from cities.

All six chapters have the same internal organization. In each, Russo devotes a page or two to aboriginal communities, then systematically goes through the European/American subject matter century by century. Readers will soon recognize that in general the author considers any significant clustering of human population a town as long as it isn’t too big or “urban.” He is less interested in towns as incorporated units of governance and geographical spaces with precise boundaries than he is in what occurred in concentrations of population. Thus, many people living within an incorporated town get separated out as “rural neighbors” (p. 171). Occasionally, however, Russo does the opposite by expanding the definition. The chapter on politics includes a good deal about county governance and ends with a commentary on local government in which the towns and counties of rural America are joined as one. The chapters on social and cultural life do consistently emphasize population center activities. These two units are subdivided into traditional academic and institutional categories, such as “social structure,” “churches,” “schools,” and the like. The conclusion both summarizes and laments what Russo sees as having taken place over time. “By the late twentieth century,” he writes, “towns had become pale copies of cities, though slower to accept change and much smaller” (p. 295).

Most readers of *Vermont History* will not learn a great deal about regional communities from Russo. The central problem is that looseness of definition and the ambitious attempt to cover all of the United States allows him to all but ignore the special nature of things New England. He never, for example, deals with the difference between incorporated villages and towns, both central to the functioning of Vermont. From his perspective Bellows Falls (an incorporated village in the Town of Rockingham) is a town, not a village, and folks out in the Upper Meadows or

Brockways Mills don't count. Yet these folks vote at town meeting, count as town inhabitants in census figures, go to town schools, and think of themselves as living in the Town of Rockingham. Russo, at a minimum, should discuss regional variations in what the term "town" means legally. He doesn't.

Two final observations. One is that Russo's methodology helps explain his low level of interest in local variation and consequently in Vermont (and New England) specialness. By deciding to emphasize what town dwellers throughout the country had in common he had to limit coverage of the region. After all, New England has less than five percent of the nation's population; Vermont has about one-fifth of one percent. Moreover, the academic world on which Russo relies has all but ignored the postcolonial history of New England towns, and Vermont, of course, didn't exist in colonial times. The other observation can be stated simply. I have physically been in the vast majority of Vermont towns, have lectured in about seventy-five of them, and have discussed both town and state history with thousands of Vermonters. Vermont towns are not "pale copies of cities," and never will be.

JERE R. DANIELL

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River Days: Exploring the Connecticut River from Source to Sea

By Michael Tougias (Boston: Appalachian Mountain Club Books, 2001, pp. 175, paper, \$14.95).

As a lifetime part-time to full-time resident of the Connecticut River Valley, the expertise I bring to this review is based on experience rather than scholarship. On the other hand, this fact puts me well within the apparent target audience for Michael Tougias's chatty tome about the Connecticut River. From the magnetic mysteries at the river's source to the majestic melding of river and sea at Old Saybrook, Tougias takes us on a picaresque ride through wilderness and urban decay. This is a short book full of delightful light touches and tips about a little bit of everything, ranging from where to canoe and camp to where to buy fly fishing equipment. There is a smattering of historical anecdote along the way.

So this is a nice book. The problem with it, however, is that the author never entirely decides what kind of book he is writing. The diverse seems to devolve to the scattered. Is this book about history? Is it a travel book? Is it a camping book? Is it a memoir? Only Michael Tougas knows for sure. One senses in the pages a certain reluctance about the project. Spread over two years, with some long gaps in focus on the project, it all feels a bit unwieldy. The text is a bit reminiscent of a coffee table book—but without pictures. Nevertheless, the river rises to the occasion and the author's affection for the Connecticut does shine through. Whatever else one may say, you will know more about this storied stream when you are done with the book than when you began, and it's a pretty painless trip. You will emerge without blisters or sunburn, and undamaged by damp.

PETER T. MALLARY

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Granite and Cedar: The People and the Land of Vermont's Northeast Kingdom

By John Miller and Howard Frank Mosher (Vermont Folklife Center and Thistle Hill Publications, 2001, 96 pp., 70 photographs, \$35.00).

In this beautifully written and photographed book, Howard Frank Mosher and John Miller have presented a frank and unsentimental portrait of a way of life in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom that is now all but forgotten. In the late 1970s and early 1980s John Miller worked systematically to record the remnants of an agrarian culture in this part of Vermont that is unique even in a state known for its uniqueness. Drawing on the photographic influences of Edward Weston, Paul Strand, and Walker Evans, as well as his own original vision, Miller has created a moving document of both historic and artistic value. His finely crafted images reflect his obvious commitment to technical excellence and aesthetic integrity. As in all good photography, the quality of light in a scene is of paramount importance to the creation of these images. I particularly appreciate his approach to his subject matter, which reflects his desire to honor both person and place.

In his acknowledgments for the book, Miller mentions the advice he

received from two prominent, regional photographers: Lotte Jacobi and Ralph Steiner. Jacobi suggested that he concentrate on portraits, while Steiner thought he should emphasize architectural and landscape aspects of the region. Happily, he has retained both suggestions and in a real sense has combined them into the same imagery.

The people Miller portrays are as flinty, gritty, and hardscrabble as the landscape and buildings they shaped and inhabit. In a sense these are reflections of each other, as in turn they each have shaped the other. The book is replete with examples of this duality of image.

Consider for example the photograph on page 95. It takes several minutes of looking to realize that the gargoyle-like apparition standing in the shadow is actually a man: a living ghost inhabiting a world more grounded in the past than in the present. Or in the photograph on page 31, which is more weathered, the man's face or the boards in front of which he stands? The image of the woman in the photograph on page 21 is broken into a patina of weathered resignation by the rusting screen in front of her. Finally, in one of my favorite photographs in the book (page 51), I see a line of old men making their way up a hill through a bleak and exhausted landscape. The fence posts there are as worn and old as the men who set them in place.

All these images seem to me to be a combination of portraiture and landscape that quite literally ties a people to the land that they inhabit.

The text by Howard Mosher perfectly complements Miller's photography. The sparseness and succinctness of his words create an appropriate captioning to the visual work. The brevity of the chapters works nicely to leave the flow of images unimpeded.

I think this document leaves unanswered the question of whether the end of a way of life is a tragedy to be mourned or the natural end to a culture that has served its purpose and is now being replaced. The book does, however, serve a greater purpose. If nothing else, it is a beautiful testament to a simpler way of life. We can't change the past. We can only remember it and try to learn from it. After all, as Jane Hubbell says at the end of Howard Mosher's text, "The photographs aren't a present. They're a legacy" (p. 101). On the other hand, as presented in this book, the photographs are both a gift and a legacy.

ANDREW KLINE

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My Declaration of Independence

By Senator James Jeffords (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001, pp. 136, \$14.95).

A few years ago my wife and I were visiting Ireland, and when we told someone we were from Vermont, they would ask us what state that was in. More recently my daughter was in Ireland, and when she said she was from Vermont people asked if she knew Jim Jeffords. The obvious explanation is that in the interim Senator James Jeffords had bolted the Republican Party to become an Independent, thus converting a closely divided Republican-led United States Senate to Democratic leadership. Within a few hours of taking that step he was elevated from his accustomed role as an obscure senator from a small state to international celebrity status. *My Declaration of Independence* is Jeffords' account of the immediate causes for his leaving the party of his birth. And whether one applauds or deplors that decision, this thin volume makes interesting reading.

Central to Jeffords' decision was conflict over funding for special education, specifically the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Jeffords advocated increased spending of \$200 billion over ten years, while the Bush administration placed a higher priority on \$1.6 trillion in tax cuts over the same period. The Vermont senator's arguments that the national interest would be better served by a greater investment in education and a smaller tax cut failed to persuade either the Senate leadership or the White House. They also served to encapsulate his growing estrangement from his party's programs and leadership.

Many readers, Vermonters in particular, are already familiar with much of this story from radio, television, and print accounts. *My Declaration of Independence* also presents revealing material about Senate operations and personal relationships that adds further color to events. In December 2000 Jeffords had voted for Pete Domenici against fellow Singing Senator Trent Lott for majority leader thereby poisoning an already difficult relationship. Jeffords considered Lott's leadership combative and ultra-partisan, and pages of *My Declaration of Independence* read like an indictment. Yet in spite of Lott and more calculated political irritants, Jeffords maintains that he left the Republican Party to promote causes he believes in, and he concluded from high constituent approval ratings that most Vermonters supported his decision. The May 24, 2001 Burlington address formally announcing his defection is reprinted in its entirety. The speech ranks among Jeffords' more successful oratorical

offerings. For those unfamiliar with the senator's speechmaking prowess, he cites Bill Mares and Frank Bryan, who suggested that submitting someone to a Jeffords speech was tantamount to committing a felony.

For historians, a longer view of Jeffords' defection is as fascinating as its contemporary impact. The senator was not unmindful of his impeccable Republican credentials. His father, a Republican of course, had been Vermont chief justice and Jim Jeffords occupied the longest continuously held Republican seat in Congress. These were among the factors he weighed in making his final decision. But other factors, including a personal history of thirty years in periodic conflict with his state and national party, although not dealt with at any length in *My Declaration*, are likely to have diluted such influences. Readers may also reflect on the absence of any explicit reference to potential threats to the Republican majority posed by the advanced age of Senate cohorts. Did the possibility of a closing window of opportunity ever enter Jeffords' calculations? Senate President Pro Tempore Strom Thurmond was approaching his ninety-ninth year, and his state's Democratic governor was poised to appoint a successor. Had he been able to do so, news of Jeffords' defection might well have been buried on a back page rather than becoming a page one headline. And it must be noted that under Democratic leadership the Senate failed to increase funding for IDEA to Jeffords' satisfaction.

From the founding of the Republican Party until Jeffords' defection, Vermont always had a Republican in its congressional delegation. One of the first, Justin Morrill, in 1854 refused to endorse the Republican platform, ran as a Whig, and won over Republican and Democratic opposition. When he took his seat in the House of Representatives, however, he chose to sit as a Republican. What goes around comes around.

SAMUEL B. HAND

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