

BOOK REVIEWS



The Vermont Encyclopedia

Edited by John J. Duffy, Samuel B. Hand, and Ralph H. Orth
(Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 2003,
pp. xx, 332, \$39.95).

Anyone with an interest in the state of Vermont and its past will welcome the *Vermont Encyclopedia*. There has never been a compact reference book about Vermont at once as comprehensive and accessible as this volume. To be sure, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries a number of important compendia were published, including the *Encyclopedia of Vermont Biography* (1912) and the sprawling *Vermont of Today, With Its Historic Background, Attractions and People* (1929). Though valuable, these sources tended to be idiosyncratic and partial to the endeavors of the state's white male elite. Many first-rate guidebooks about Vermont have been published, but they are understandably more interested in highlighting the special flavor of the Green Mountain state than in serving as authorities on its politics, history, and culture.

The *Vermont Encyclopedia* is framed by brief, yet rewarding, overviews of seven dimensions of the state: its geography, weather, and natural history; its population; its history, its government; its economy; efforts to protect the environment; and historic preservation. Samuel B. Hand's essay on Vermont's history is the best concise survey of the subject that I have read.

The heart of the encyclopedia consists of the more than a thousand entries, organized alphabetically, on a wide range of topics. Many are brief summaries, fewer than 200 words long. Every community in the

state is covered, as are most of the state's influential figures, including those who were born elsewhere and came to Vermont to live (like the writer and humorist William Hazlett Upson) and those born in the state but who gained fame after they left (like John Deere and Stephen Douglas). The entries even include prominent individuals, organizations, and events presently active in the state, such as the poet Ellen Bryant Voigt, the *Bennington Banner*, and the Mozart Festival. The editors—John J. Duffy, Samuel B. Hand, and Ralph H. Orth—ultimately had to select which subjects to cover from a larger set of contenders, and individual favorites of some readers are bound to be missing. (I wish, for instance, that Seth Storrs, who was arguably more influential in establishing Middlebury College than Gamaliel Painter, had not been omitted. Painter is justly included.) On the whole, however, the selections are fitting and appropriate.

The encyclopedia also features many longer entries. The large towns and cities are accorded in-depth coverage. So too are leading politicians like Justin Smith Morrill and Redfield Proctor, Sr. Dairy farming, the Republican Party, skiing, and the Northeast Kingdom are just a few examples of topics that are treated more fully.

The editors wrote many of the entries, but they wisely recruited a stable of over 140 contributors to bring their expertise to the project. One of the great strengths of this volume is the opportunity to read a summary of the larger work by an expert on a topic: Frederick Wiseman on the Abenaki, J. Kevin Graffagnino on Ira Allen, Nancy L. Gallagher on the Eugenics Survey of Vermont, and Deborah Clifford on Abby Maria Hemenway, to name a few.

The encyclopedia covers topics that were largely ignored by its predecessors. The imprint that Vermont women have left on the state is clear here. The story of African Americans in Vermont is given close attention. The cumulative effect of the entries on slavery in Vermont, the Ku Klux Klan, and the Irasburg Affair is to raise questions about the common perception of Vermont as a land without prejudice.

The editors' decision to take a wide view of what could be included gives the encyclopedia added sparkle. Here, for instance, one can learn about Samuel de Champlain and Champ, films of Vermont and Phish, back-to-the-landers and endangered species.

Maps, charts, and photographs enliven the text. The practice of capitalizing within a given entry subjects that are featured elsewhere in the volume makes the encyclopedia easier for the browser or the scholar to use. It would have been advantageous, however, if the longer entries had been broken up into paragraphs rather than permitted to run as long, uninterrupted blocks of text.

I have heard rumors about this project for a number of years now. The publication of the encyclopedia—"an historical dictionary and a current report," as Duffy calls it—is an important event in its own right. This volume—appropriately dedicated to the late T. D. Seymour Bassett, who did so much to promote understanding of his state—should be a fixture on the bookshelves of libraries, scholars, and all those curious about Vermont.

JAMES RALPH

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Republic of Shade: New England and the American Elm

By Thomas J. Campanella (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003, pp. 240, \$35.00).

There is no tree like the American elm. It towered over the pastures and riverbanks of New England, and it lined our streets, lofty, wide spreading, and supremely graceful. Thomas Campanella, a professor in the Department of City and Regional Planning at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, has given us the first book about this great tree. As he says, we loved it to death. *Republic of Shade* tells the elm's story from colonial times until the present. The loss of those trees, which made a green summer forest of streets, houses, and elms, was so heartbreaking that it would have been hard to read about it twenty years ago. But we've had a long time to get used to our grief, and it seems high time someone recalled and recorded the history of the elm tree.

The American elm is a tree of river valleys and wet soils, with the spreading crown often seen in that open habitat. It is also fast growing and adaptable. With wood that is hard to split and work, many elms were spared the ax and left standing by early settlers. Its beauty and open shade were appreciated by early botanists and farmers, and it was transplanted from woods and pastures to dooryards, streets, and commons. Many a house was flanked by sentinel elms, providing shade and shelter. The elm became the quintessential street tree of the Northeast.

One of several admirable aspects of this book is the way the author traces the various roles and meanings of the elm in the New England

landscape. Campanella tells how elms in colonial towns often became symbolic rallying places for the Revolution, like the famous Liberty Tree of Boston. Large elms became monuments of remembrance for great events, persons, and town histories. Early in the nineteenth century, citizens of New England towns joined together to beautify and improve their surroundings by planting elms along their streets and in parks and squares. This effort eventually made the leafy streets a living link between forest and city, joining nature and culture. Some saw in their lofty green arches the Gothic cathedrals of the New World. The author says that “As an icon of the pastoral landscape, a harbinger of domesticity, a civic totem, a relic of pre-European settlement, or an arboreal monument marking great events and persons, elms bore extraordinary cultural freight” (p. 138). The dominance of the elm began in New England, but it spread across the country, and over 25 million elms were growing in American towns and cities in 1937.

Stress, from having to share the streets with trolley lines, utility poles and wires, sewer lines, water mains, and impervious pavement, had weakened street trees by the turn of the twentieth century. The next chapter in the elm story is a tragedy that only a few saw coming, and none could stop. Campanella tells it well. It is a terrible demonstration of the fragility of a monoculture. Dutch elm disease arrived in northern Europe in 1918 from Asia, and soon wiped out the European and English elms. It was first seen in North America in 1931, spreading out from the port of New York (though it had been first noticed in Ohio). It is a fungus that blocks the vascular system of the elm, spread by bark beetles carrying spores, and also directly through intergrafted roots of elms growing next to each other. After the hurricane of 1938 knocked down thousands of elms from New Haven to northern Vermont, disease spread quickly through them, infecting those still standing. Though cutting and burning of infected elms slowed the spread, World War II stopped those efforts. After the war, DDT was sprayed extensively, with little good effect—and by the 1960s and 1970s, most of the elms were dead or dying. Many streets in Vermont towns still look barren and bare without the elms that once grew there, and in many farmyards you can imagine the shapes of trees that are gone.

In a short time we have lost the American chestnut and seen the decline of the beech, butternut, and Eastern hemlock in many areas, all from imported diseases and pests. Is there any hope for elms? Campanella’s epilogue makes it seem so. It was a bad idea to line so many streets with only one species, but it would be wonderful if we could all look at some healthy elms again. Breeders have been working for decades to develop resistant elms, and have had significant success.

Campanella's epilogue is an informative survey of these projects, as well as of intensive efforts to save some remaining large elms.

I hope this is the first, but not the only good book about *Ulmus americana*. It is well illustrated in black and white, and contains many references, but I think there is room for more in the way of documentation of the age of elms in paintings, writings, and photographs. *Republic of Shade: New England and the American Elm* makes an important contribution to the history of local landscapes, and will be welcomed by many. It gives a context to some rich and sad memories, a valuable lesson, and something to look forward to.

SUSAN SAWYER

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New England Weather New England Climate

By Gregory A. Zielinski and Barry D. Keim (Hanover, N.H.:
University Press of New England, 2003, pp. xiv, 276, \$29.95).

“**Y**es, one of the brightest gems in the New England weather is the dazzling uncertainty of it” (p. 3). Mark Twain's quotation is as fitting today as when it was first written and provides the perfect opening to the text by Zielinski and Keim, which updates and expands David Ludlum's classic book on New England weather.

The book is arranged in six sections, each of which explores a particular aspect of weather and/or climate across the region at time scales ranging from daily and seasonal to decadal, centennial, and longer. Part I introduces the region's weather and climate and its perception by New Englanders and visitors alike. Part II offers a closer examination of the various causal factors of changes in New England's weather and climate, again at a variety of scales from the annual to the millennial and beyond. Part III takes readers across the region by noting the underlying reasons for spatial variations across different time periods. In Part IV, the authors introduce distinctly unique New England seasons and their characteristics, which resonate more closely than the more traditional winter, spring, summer, and autumn. This is appropriately followed in Part V by the examination of specific types of meteorological and/or climatological events that have an impact on daily activity in New England. The text ends with a look at the implications of both past and present climate changes.

The introduction of the redefined seasons of ski (winter), mud (spring), beach and lake (summer), and foliage (autumn), with the potential for overlapping lengths and differing characteristics from one year to the next, is one of the unique features of the book. New Englanders will certainly identify with the subseasons of these new annual periods, including, for example, sugaring and pothole seasons at the end of the ski season. Likewise, the ubiquitous mud season that heralds New England's true spring from mid/late April until early June, is a more accurate portrayal than relying on astronomical designations alone.

Some of the chapters (e.g. chapter 11, "Year in Summary") are quite technical in content, but the authors explain many difficult concepts such as teleconnections (chapter 6), climate singularities (chapter 7) and the use of statistical analyses (chapter 11) in very accessible language. The summary remarks at the end of each of the twenty chapters are another strength of the book, serving to highlight the key points outlined. These build upon the liberal use of photographs (often taken by the authors themselves), explanatory tables, and diagrams, which complement the narrative very effectively. Examples of weather events and landscapes are drawn from around New England, to paint the picture of the complex way in which storms can affect the region.

The final two chapters are devoted to deciphering the various ways in which New England "climate has and will continue to change with time" (p. 253). The authors present results from the New England Regional Assessment Group, which found that since 1895 most New England states (except Maine) have experienced both a warming and an increase in precipitation. Variations in climate over the last few centuries were then gleaned from historical records such as diaries, journals, and newspaper accounts. As for predicting future climate changes in New England, the authors highlight the inadequacies of current General Circulation Models (GCMs) for capturing regional variations and weather events. The book ends with a retrospective that not only summarizes the narrative but also discusses life in New England in response to the vagaries of our climate.

Several details somewhat detract from the book. The first is that a few topics are heavily weighted toward examples from New Hampshire and Maine, which may have led to the omission of some causal factors for a given weather event. For example, chapter 12 on the Alpine Zone could have been enhanced by including the role of the region's topography in creating ideal conditions for flooding during the beach and lake (summer) season. Similarly, the influence of terrain in setting up preferred locations for tornado development (chapter 17) could have explained why parts of Massachusetts are particularly prone to being affected. Finally,

the tropical storm remnants on November 3, 1927, which led to the Great Flood of 1927, should be included in chapter 18 on the hurricanes that have influenced New England. The rains from this storm produced greater than 100-year flooding on many rivers across Vermont, which is why it still remains the flood of record.

Zielinski and Keim have done a remarkable job in portraying the many intricacies of the weather and climate that New Englanders have learned to love and live with over the centuries. Written in a very accessible style, the book extends and complements the richness of the historical accounts of David Ludlum's works by placing the region's atmospheric characteristics in the context of global processes. While everyone will gain valuable insights from the text, perhaps the greatest beneficiaries will be those with some fundamental understanding of the ways in which the atmosphere works.

LESLEY-ANN DUPIGNY-GIROUX

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*This American River: Five Centuries of Writing
about the Connecticut*

*Edited by W. D. Wetherell (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of
New England, 2002, pp. 325, \$30.00)*

W. D. Wetherell's anthology about the Connecticut River was a bit of a pleasant surprise to me. Even those of us who read a great deal of local and regional fiction and nonfiction of many kinds may not have realized how often the Connecticut River appears in our reading, and how centrally it figures in our perception of the region of New England. As I read this collection, I gradually became even more surprised that the Connecticut River has not received more of the sort of attention Wetherell focuses on here. Indeed, Wetherell begins his collection with a hilariously understated illustration of just how inadequate our understanding of the Connecticut River is. Chapter 1, "From the Source to the Sea," opens with a handful of epigraphs selected from several popular works on the Connecticut River. Each simply states the length of the river: It is, according to these experts, precisely 335, or 350, or 410, or 407 miles long, which prompts Wetherell to ask, "just how long is the river, anyway?" (p. 1).

Running directly through the center of New England, the Connecticut River also runs just as truly through the figurative heart of New England. It has been the site of many of the defining events of New England history, from the founding of the Puritan commonwealths to the industrial age and into our own time. Wetherell has done a real service in compiling this entertaining and thought-provoking collection.

The collection is quite idiosyncratic, as Wetherell is quick to point out—a reflection of his own interests, consulting his own literary tastes. This “slapdash” method (to use Wetherell’s own word) may be a little confusing at time, but it also makes for interesting reading. The collection does, however, follow a coherent plan. It is organized primarily to reflect different human interactions with the landscape, in roughly chronological order. The framework is chapters on the uses of the river: as a battleground, a source of industrial power, a conduit for lumber from the far North, a fishery, and a recreational area. Interspersed among these more thematic chapters are more general collections of genre writing: early travel writing, tourist guidebooks, and poetry.

A wide variety of fine writers are featured here, including those whose works are no longer much read. Two of my own favorites are nineteenth-century classics: Francis Parkman’s fine account of the Deerfield Raid, and a selection of the keenly observant travel writing of Timothy Dwight. Many Vermont readers will recognize the elegant description of “Cutting Ice at McIndoe Falls,” by Scott E. Hastings, Jr. The selection of poetry includes some unknown and intriguing poets alongside Wallace Stevens and Sylvia Plath. The two poems by Stevens are especially fine examples of writing shaped by a strong sense of place.

Wetherell has also ranged far afield from the standard literary anthology, including a well-chosen selection of classic guidebook accounts, ranging from the Boston & Maine Railroad’s nineteenth-century guide, to the WPA’s 1930s auto tour of the historic lower Connecticut, and the Appalachian Mountain Club’s canoeing guide to the wilder upper Connecticut.

This eclecticism is a source of strength, but it sometimes leaves the reader with little sense of context. In the “River of War” chapter, for instance, we are confronted with a text written by Susanna Johnson, a colonist taken captive by opposing forces in the imperial wars of the eighteenth century; a text written by Colonel Robert Rogers, the leader of an infamous military expedition against the Abenaki village of St. Francis; and a text written by Francis Parkman, a distinguished nineteenth-century historian. Primary sources such as the accounts of Johnson and Rogers we may take for granted as speaking from their own time, from the midst of armed conflict, and we may judge their descriptions with that in mind. But what is the general reader to make of the assertion

with which Parkman ends his account of the Deerfield Raid: that English women taken captive by the Abenaki/Caughnawaga coalition were not “subjected to violence” only because of “superstition, aided perhaps by the influence of missionaries”? (p. 37). A little more intervention from the editor would provide the proper context for understanding and evaluating this very nineteenth-century view.

Finally, though, this is an effective anthology. It is a book for dipping into, for sampling—and a book that provides a great deal of enjoyable reading. Ultimately, perhaps the best compliment one can give a collection like this is that it makes us eager to get our hands on the complete version of some of the works excerpted here. That is precisely what I predict readers will want to do.

DONA BROWN

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Conquering the American Wilderness: The Triumph of European Warfare in the Colonial Northeast

By Guy Chet (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003, pp. xix, 207, \$60; paper \$18.95).

Historians have long debated whether English settlers created a distinctive “American way of war” in the colonial Northeast. Those who argue in the affirmative contend that European models of warmaking were outdated and ill suited to American conditions. Colonists, they suggest, readily adopted Indian-style hit-and-run tactics, what today we would recognize as guerrilla warfare. Those on the other side of the argument believe that European models of warfare carried over to the New World in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century America mirrored warfare in Europe, albeit on a smaller scale. Guy Chet situates his *Conquering the American Wilderness* on the latter side of the debate. He argues that colonial military leaders were not “Americanized” and their emulation of Indian tactics stands as proof of their inexperience and unprofessionalism. Indeed, Chet contends that one can see more continuity than innovation when comparing European and American warfare; that the colonists’ tactical innovations were not departures from contemporary European doctrine; that Americans did not adopt a new style

of warfare; and that European tactics actually were effective in North America.

Chet centers his analysis on tactics, or what he calls “actual combat.” He goes to great lengths to make clear that he is discussing the tactical rather than the strategic and operational levels of war. He argues that the colonists never abandoned their preference for or dependence on massed volleys of fire, and that they most often fought on the tactical defensive, just like European armies. In assessing the contribution of Indians to American warcraft, he believes that they proved of little value as teachers of tactics; their real contribution to colonists’ military successes came in the strategic and political realms.

The narrative of *Conquering the American Wilderness* revolves around seventeenth-century New England. The Pequot (1636–1637) and King Philip’s (1675–1676) Wars thus receive most of Chet’s attention. After an examination of those conflicts, he focuses on the role of the British Army in the Seven Years’ War (1754–1763). It is in that conflict, when the crown sent large armies of regulars to North America, that Chet finds justification for his claim that European tactics, when employed by competent commanders with well-trained and well-equipped troops, could succeed in North America.

Chet’s insistence that the experience of seventeenth-century New Englanders and British regulars, writ large in the Seven Years’ War, speaks for all colonial Americans leads to problems. Most strikingly, he fails to account adequately for the American rangers who, especially in the early and mid-eighteenth century, sought tutelage from Indians and adopted hit-and-run tactics. Indeed, rangers who fought like Indians were ubiquitous in all the colonial era’s wars. “Indian fighters” such as Benjamin Church, Charles Frost, the Gorham family, John Lovewell, John Goffe, and Robert Rogers were the most famous American military figures of their day and, more important for Chet’s analysis, developed tactics quite at odds with contemporary European tactics. And while it would be a mistake to claim that the rangers single-handedly won the colonial wars, few contemporaries, either American or British, would have judged the Gorham brothers (John and Joseph) of King George’s War and Rogers in the Seven Years’ War as inexperienced and unprofessional amateurs. The British crown granted each of them commissions as officers in the regular Army, based on their expertise as Indian fighters. The little-examined skirmishing between Anglo-American rangers and Indians on the frontier, and the British Army’s partial adoption of ranger tactics in the wars of the mid-eighteenth century, certainly resulted in an “Americanization” of European warfare.

Chet therefore misses an early but important phase in the develop-

ment of an American way of war. Nonetheless, *Conquering the American Wilderness* is not without merit. It is a work that contextualizes early American battlefield tactics within broader patterns of warfare in early America. When combined with the current literature on colonial warfare, Guy Chet's work will help scholars advance a better and more thorough synthesis of early American military history.

JOHN GRENIER

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American Wall Stenciling, 1790–1840

By Ann Eckert Brown (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 2003, pp. xv, 263, \$17.95).

This beautifully produced publication significantly expands the research of Janet Waring (1937) and Nina Fletcher Little (1952) into the field of early American wall stenciling. Begun as an inexpensive substitute for costly imported wallpapers, stenciling flourished in homes, inns, and taverns throughout the period under investigation. Among the considerable advances of the current study over previous publications is the discovery and documentation of numerous decorations found outside New England, especially in the South and the Western Reserve. Another advantage lies in the superb quality of photographic reproduction, as accurate color plates were not available to the earlier researchers.

In the matter of historical documentation, the author displays a wide ranging knowledge of the Federal period and follows the precedent established by Nina Fletcher Little of situating each recorded site in its specific cultural context. Brown further traces through credible attribution the peregrinations of known stencilers (J. Gleason and the admirable Moses Eaton, Sr. and Jr., in particular) from New England to the Midwest. These geo-cultural findings constitute, among other things, an important contribution to our understanding of patterns of artistic migration. In a more questionable critical move, Brown divides the practice of stenciling into a vernacular rural-based "folk group" and a more refined, urbane "classical group." At times these divisions can appear somewhat arbitrary and a more nuanced approach emphasizing hybridity and cross-fertilization might have yielded better insights into actual practices.

If this admirably researched study has any shortcomings, they lie in

the paucity of theoretical grounding. As stenciling is a relatively mechanical process, as compared, for example, with mural painting, it might have been instructive to develop a methodology for discriminating between original decorations, fragments thereof, and the numerous modern recreations encountered in the textual descriptions and photographic reproductions. These diverse levels of ornamentation emerge from this study as somewhat of a piece when in fact they are not, either physically, chronologically, or aesthetically. Moreover, some consideration of the role of the patron in choosing the decoration might have been set against the predetermined schemes of the artist-stenciler. In short, how were stencils marketed and what range of choices, if any, was available to the homeowner? Why were decorative stencils preferable to painted walls and what do these patterns tell us about aesthetic preferences? Were New England designs ever altered for midwestern applications? Are “classical group” stencils ever found in vernacular homes, producing some form of cultural disconnect? Questions such as these are either partially addressed, or not at all.

The underlying premise of this study—that stencils provide a tangible link to the past—is stated but less persuasively affirmed when many of the walls studied and reproduced are in fact re-creations. How can such mute, formulaic ornament be made to articulate the patterns of sensibility and imagination of the age? Here one thinks of the brilliant work of the art historian Alois Riegl (*Spatromische Kunstindustrie* [1901]) on Late Roman ornamentation. This is the challenge that a deeper archaeology and anthropology of wall stenciling may yet reveal. In the meantime this rich archive of ornamentation, carefully recorded, has set the bar for scholarly research and close documentation.

ROBERT L. MCGRATH

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Architecture in the United States, 1800–1850

By W. Barksdale Maynard (New Haven, Ct.: Yale University Press, 2002, pp. 322, \$50.00).

Starting with a size that invites holding, this book beckons the reader to settle in for an architectural armchair adventure. W. Barksdale Maynard presents an intellectual history of the first half of the nineteenth century as a context for understanding its architecture. He focuses

briefly on the waning Federal style, and then turns his attention to the ascending Greek Revival and Gothic Revival styles. The book visits the men who made architectural history, such as Andrew Jackson Downing, Benjamin Latrobe, and Asher Benjamin (although that visit is not nearly long enough), and those who commissioned it. An acquaintance with architectural chroniclers and critics would help the reader's understanding, but the book also offers a chance to become more familiar with the architects who defined style in the period and where they looked for inspiration.

Maynard sets out to counter the commonly held idea that by the third decade of the nineteenth century, America had developed a uniquely American architecture, the Greek Revival style, so ubiquitous in Vermont. He contends that twentieth-century architectural historians went astray in attributing the development and immense popularity of the Greek Revival to an affinity for ancient Greek democracy and political sympathy for the Greek war of independence from the Turks, fought from 1821 to 1830. Instead, he asserts that English precedent was the driving force behind American architecture, and that America remained a dependent cultural colony of England long after the Revolution. The credit for early nineteenth-century American architecture belongs to Britain, and Maynard shows example after example of direct design derivation from buildings in the mother country. Only the scale and materials were modified to suit American conditions. To bolster his case, he quotes many contemporary observers, in the same way that filmmaker Ken Burns enlivens still images with historic "voices." Maynard's research has uncovered many articulate voices, including a fair number of women, speaking about architecture.

The author guides the reader to early landmarks in Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and upstate New York, many of them seminal in their influence but long gone from the landscape. Those landmarks spring to life in the book's 222 illustrations, which are mostly historic, and almost one-quarter in color. The beautifully reproduced photographs, aquatints, lithographs, and paintings in the book are teeming with detail and call out for examination with a magnifying glass. They contain a wealth of landscape and human details that greatly enhance their subject buildings. Women in hoop skirts ascend the steps of The Arcade in Providence. A crowd of students gathers at the University of Virginia in 1895 to watch Jefferson's Rotunda burn. Thomas Cole depicts the history of great building in the dreams of architect (and covered bridge designer) Ithiel Town. Maynard uses age-worn photographs showing construction, and even some early destruction, of landmarks in the history of style that evoke a time when they were new, or at least young. Their making,

and unmaking, reveal construction details and pre-machine-age methods that palpably connect the finished buildings to the skill of the craftsmen who made them. Images of the burned Ammi Young State House and a stunning painting of an early West Rutland marble yard constitute the only Vermont images in the book. Be forewarned that one cannot skim the book's images to learn its story; the image captions are curatorial identifications and not narrative explanations. The latter are contained only in the main text.

Maynard is a good storyteller with an abundance of sidebar detail that makes the characters in the book, be they creators or consumers of architecture, very human and three-dimensional. His lengthy chapter on porches is a wonderful architectural etymology of the feature known variously as verandah, portico, or piazza. Vermonters will read with interest his early nineteenth-century testimonials to the virtue of white houses with green shutters.

The book certainly succeeds in pointing out the continued English influence on American architecture, but it fails to convince the reader that the question of the source of American architectural design only has or needs one answer. Human behavior is complex and cannot be explained by single ideas or motivations. Maynard expands our understanding of the development of American architecture. Most early-nineteenth-century builders probably spent little time contemplating the source of their design ideas and simply relied on assumptions deriving from the cultural assimilation of those ideas, assumptions about what was appropriate, tasteful, and beautiful.

Through its words and images, the book inspires readers to get up out of the armchair and venture into the built environment in search of the stories that buildings can tell. Vermonters are fortunate that the journey does not have to be far. Maynard's book will give readers new insights into Vermont's rich architectural legacy—from the pink Gothic Justin Smith Morrill Homestead in Strafford, to the state's Greek Revival temples such as the old Town Hall in Brandon, the Follett House overlooking Burlington's waterfront, and the State House portico, to the "country seats" in Addison county's agricultural landscape. Enjoy the trip.

NANCY E. BOONE

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A Tale of New England: The Diaries of Hiram Harwood, Vermont Farmer, 1810–1837

By Robert E. Shalhope (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003, pp. 328, \$45.00).

In 1806, at the age of eighteen, Hiram Harwood assumed the role of scribe in his father's daybook. As he recorded both farm activity and his father's innermost thoughts, the bond between father and son became more tightly woven but also more perverse; repeatedly Hiram found himself inscribing his father's judgments about his own shiftless behavior. "Hiram did but little"; Hiram was "careless"; and "Hiram had a poor disposition to work" (p. 28) were common paternal refrains. This form of parental discipline hardly diminished Hiram's desire to please his father, even as it helped shape his lifelong struggle to fulfill his familial and social responsibilities. Eventually he transformed his father's diary into a voluminous record of his own personal journey into dutiful manhood.

In *A Tale of New England*, Robert Shalhope, professor of history at the University of Oklahoma, uses the Harwood diaries to trace the tortuous pathway of this Bennington farmer over a thirty-year period of economic and social change. Having detailed the evolution of republicanism in his earlier volume, *Bennington and the Green Mountain Boys: The Emergence of Liberal Democracy in Vermont, 1760–1850*, Shalhope provides readers with a new, personal perspective on the same community. The richness of the diaries, preserved and transcribed at the Bennington Museum, allows Shalhope to tell the story in Hiram's voice as he reflects both inwardly on his personal struggle and outwardly on the changes occurring in Bennington.

This account is neither a chronology of daily existence nor a social history. Instead, Shalhope shapes the story into a persuasive drama, a psychological biography that reveals the consciousness of a Vermont farmer and the heights and depths of male anxieties. Using a gender analysis, Shalhope highlights Hiram's developing sense of masculinity and the way family obligations circumscribed male autonomy. Along the way we see Hiram evolve from a self-conscious, dilatory, and tortured adolescent to a satisfied husband, proud father, and successful cheese manufacturer, only to reach a precipitous decline at the end of his life. This narrative structure allows Shalhope to conceal Hiram's demise for dramatic purposes until the end of the story.

The volume provides rich fodder for social historians. Choosing not to include historiographical discussions in the text, Shalhope has nonetheless used themes from recent social history to frame the story. Topics include: child rearing, adolescence, courting, gender relations, literacy, education, neighborly exchange and socializing, military experience, music (Hiram was an impressive flutist), and treatments for the insane. Shalhope's analysis of the latter is particularly astute. References to sexuality, however, are absent, a surprising omission.

Shalhope is most effective in detailing shifts in the household economy and the relationship between Hiram's economic concerns and his evolving social and political attitudes. We learn about the extent of local indebtedness, the exchange of labor and goods among neighbors, apprenticeship arrangements, and marketing difficulties. Unfortunately, he provides only a glimpse of the important role of women in the production of cheese, the farm's most successful commodity. Yet the story provides a window on the frustrations Vermont farmers faced as they shifted away from self-sufficiency and engaged more extensively in commercial operations.

Interweaving these economic interests with Hiram's reading habits, his thoughts about religion, and his engagement in local electioneering, Shalhope uncovers the complex roots of Hiram's social values and political attitudes. Hiram was a reluctant soldier and dismissed religious fanaticism, but he engaged actively in partisan politics and read literature and local newspapers prodigiously. He wrote ballots before elections, recruited neighbors for campaigns, and condemned the partisan uses of drunkenness. Shalhope uses the diaries to reveal how these activities, Hiram's economic interests, his reading, and his connections with local men, including Congressman Hiland Hall, shaped his evolution from Democratic-Republican to Whig by the 1830s. All the while, Hiram continued to subscribe to the communal values of Vermont's founding generation, a thesis Shalhope sets forth in more general terms in his earlier volume on the nature of liberal democracy in the new nation.

For all its insights into male behavior and thinking, there are some gaps in *A Tale of New England*. By keeping a sharp focus on Hiram's psychological development, his inner turmoil, and his perception of himself as a man, Shalhope is forced to resign the broader social and political context of his life to the endnotes. This tradeoff preserves the integrity of the story, but leaves readers to seek out his brief references or his earlier volume on Bennington to grasp how the larger community, the state, and the nation experienced the economic and social changes Hiram faced. Moreover, Shalhope supplies only a few insights into how others evaluated Hiram's character and behavior. This omission may

reflect a lack of sources, but the result is a one-dimensional view of the protagonist. Despite these problems, Shalhope has contributed immensely to our understanding of rural manhood while developing a compelling drama of one man's life.

MARILYN S. BLACKWELL

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A New Order of Things: How the Textile Industry Transformed New England

By Paul E. Rivard (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 2002, pp. xviii, 156, paper, \$24.95).

In the history of New England, textile mills are as prominent a feature as the Puritans. As Paul Rivard's work clearly demonstrates, the manufacturing of textiles, whether in the homes, shops, or factories of New Englanders, measured the economic pulse of the region. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, textiles represented much of the personal wealth of colonial households, and their manufacture linked communities to the larger economic life of the region. The advent of machinery reinforced already developed patterns of outwork and piece work. Yet the incorporation of machine production also served to widen the gap between those who performed the work and those who profited from it. By the end of the nineteenth century, the desire for profits eclipsed the interest in innovation and long-term capitalization.

Rivard has not merely produced an economic assessment of cloth manufacture. *A New Order of Things* also traces the development of technology that enabled the textile industry to dominate the nineteenth-century landscape in an amazingly short time. Invention and innovation among textile entrepreneurs created a viable, even profitable industry that literally exploded onto the scene and reshaped or created whole communities in just a few years. Over the course of the first half of the nineteenth century, improvements in power delivery systems, efficiency of machinery, and coordination of multiple manufacturing processes made textiles the premier New England industry and some shrewd Yankees very wealthy. Technology also reduced the need for skilled workers and opened the door for unskilled factory operatives, especially the influx of immigrants around the middle of the nineteenth century.

Rivard's study is also a social history of the textile industry. The most original and interesting aspect of his work is his discussion of outwork and piecework. Often histories of the textile industry are telescoped in such a way as to imply that women put away their spinning wheels and went into the factories with no intermediate stage linking home production with the infant factory system. A more informed examination of that interim period reveals a more gradual evolution from home production to factory work. Women did not simply take up factory work when cloth was no longer produced in the home; they merged into the factory as they took up piecework and used machine-spun fibers in their work at home. In frontier areas, they continued to weave utilitarian fabrics when cost or distance made home production practical and cost-efficient. As transportation and distribution systems became more efficient and affordable, frontier production declined.

Improved transportation also changed the character of the New England workforce. Although the development of a pluralistic society in nineteenth-century New England is not a new story, Rivard links this important development with the technological changes that occurred in the factory system. The same advent of steam-driven transportation that improved market access and expanded the scope and scale of manufacturing brought many new workers to the factories. French-Canadian and Irish immigrants changed the ethnic and social character of New England forever. They also made it possible for factory owners to gouge greater profits as they exploited the more vulnerable immigrant workers. Throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth century, organized resistance to long hours and low pay was only marginally successful.

Finally, in his desire to construct a history of the textile industry for "a general readership," Rivard has produced a visually stunning book. *A New Order of Things* is a veritable compendium of some of the best and most important images on the subject. Certainly, the vast array and impressive use of images—drawings, maps, diagrams, and photographs—make Rivard's study accessible. In these images the reader can make direct contact with the past, whether through the eyes of a young factory operative posing in front of her power loom or through the technical drawings of the machinery. One troubling aspect of the book that may be related to Rivard's impulse to produce a popular book is his "Selected Bibliography." Most of the materials listed are dated while some of the most interesting and current books on New England's textile industry such as the work of Mary Blewett, Tamara Hareven, and Susan Porter do not appear at all.

Those hoping to see Vermont in this study of New England's textile history will be disappointed. Despite the fact that textile mills were an

early feature of Vermont's landscape, Rivard offers no information beyond the eastern half of the region. Yet the complex of woolen and cotton-producing mills along the Winooski River near Burlington that attracted its own populations of mill girls and immigrant families took Lowell as its model. Carding and spinning mills dotted the landscape and provided local producers with processed fibers to use in their spinning and weaving at the turn of the nineteenth century. By the 1840s industrial discontent among the factory operatives set the stage for walkouts, spontaneous strikes, and other job actions.

Despite these minor deficiencies, *A New Order of Things* is a worthwhile read and a visually appealing book that should not be overlooked.

SUSAN M. OUELLETTE

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Yankee in a Confederate Town: The Journal of Calvin L. Robinson

Edited by Anne Robinson Clancy (Sarasota, Fla.: Pineapple Press, 2002, pp. xi, 137, \$16.95).

During the antebellum period, sizable numbers of Vermonters left their homes and scattered across the United States as a part of the westward and southern migrations. Some of those who went to the South put down deep roots, taking active roles in the social, economic, and political life of their new homes. As the sectional conflict intensified, these transplanted Vermonters had to make choices about whether they would maintain their loyalty to the Union or cast their lots with the seceding states. Some remained loyal to the United States; others did not.

Calvin L. Robinson was among those who remained staunchly true to the United States, and this book chronicles his loyalty to the Union and his experiences during the Civil War era. Born in 1828 in Reading (Windsor County), Vermont, and educated at the University of Vermont, young Robinson taught for a few years before the "confinement of the school room" (p. 6) impaired his health, leading him instead to become a merchant. He lived briefly in Massachusetts and then emigrated to Florida in 1857. The next year he settled in Jack-

sonville, became prosperous, and stayed there for most of the rest of his life.

Robinson's experiences as a Unionist closely paralleled those of loyalists in urban areas elsewhere in the South. He found his loyalty to the Union frequently tested by intimidation, threats, and attacks on his property. He took an active role among the small group of Unionists in Jacksonville and appears to have been the most prominent of the Union band in the city. Like Unionists elsewhere in the South, he and his family suffered at the hands of Confederate partisans who destroyed his property, including his business and his home. And, like Unionists elsewhere, he witnessed the shifting loyalty of Confederates during the war, particularly as Union forces drew near. Ultimately, Robinson and his family had to flee their Southern homes and take refuge in the North. The Robinsons went first to New York City and then to their former home in Vermont. While in New York, Robinson took a prominent role in meetings of exiled Unionists in that city.

This book adds to the growing literature on Southern Unionism during the Civil War. The editor has performed a useful service in making it available for publication and in bringing the experiences of Calvin L. Robinson to the attention of those with an interest in Unionism, the Civil War, and Florida history. Unfortunately, it contains little material that develops in detail the connections to Vermont or the exile that Robinson and his family spent there.

There is confusion in the book as to whether the manuscript that formed the basis for the volume is a journal or a memoir. Notations on the book's jacket and title page indicate that we are reading a journal, but the editor refers to the manuscript as memoirs (p. 1). The substance of the printed version strongly suggests that it is a memoir written after the war. The editor indicates that chapter headings have been added for clarity and that some of the language has been "modernized" (p. 2). Historians who are interested in the document will want to resolve these and other problems concerning the nature of the manuscript.

The contextual research that the editor has undertaken is not extensive. Many additional sources might have been consulted that would have added depth and breadth to an understanding of Calvin Robinson and Unionism in Florida, including, in particular, the papers of the Southern Claims Commission. The commission received petitions for redress from loyal persons who lived in the South during the war and lost property to the Union forces. If Robinson or his Unionist colleagues in Jacksonville filed claims with the commission, those documents could greatly enlarge our understanding of this exceedingly interesting

Vermonters-turned-Floridian whose memoir reveals the courage and persistence of loyal Unionists in the Civil War South.

THOMAS G. DYER

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*“Dear Wife”: The Civil War Letters of
Chester K. Leach*

Compiled by Edward J. Feidner (Burlington, Vt.: The Center for Research on Vermont, 2002, pp. 229 and “Photographs from the Leach Family Album,” paper, \$16.00).

*Quite Ready to be Sent Somewhere: The Civil War
Letters of Aldace Freeman Walker*

Edited by Tom Ledoux (Victoria, British Columbia: Trafford Publishing, 2002, pp. 400, paper, \$25.00).

Two Vermont men who served three years in the Army of the Potomac each exchanged several hundred letters with their families in Fletcher and West Rutland. Charles K. Leach’s and Aldace Freeman Walker’s Civil War odysseys took them both to the hastily constructed outposts guarding Washington, D.C. and on the same campaign in the spring of 1864 as members of the revered Old Vermont Brigade. But each man observed a different war. They may never have met, and neither appears in the other’s letters, though they must have traveled many of the same roads.

Charles K. Leach, a sober, steady, and rather dour married farmer enlisted with other men from Franklin County towns near Fletcher and joined the 2nd Regiment of Volunteer Vermont Infantry. Mustered in as a first lieutenant in June 1861, he served in that rank until his enlistment expired in June 1864, during the first months of the Overland Campaign from Spotsylvania to Petersburg, Virginia. Close by at the time, Aldace Walker noted matter of factly in a letter to his father on June 20, 1864, that “The 2d Vt. is just relieved from service at the front, as its time expires today” (*Walker*, p. 268).

Aldace Freeman Walker enlisted in the 11th Vermont Volunteer Infantry in 1862 and had begun drilling recruits before his graduation from

Middlebury College as valedictorian on August 13, 1862. That same day he received a commission as first lieutenant of Company B. After a few weeks assembling and equipping the unit at Camp Bradley in Brattleboro, the 11th traveled south to join the defense of Washington. Having marched and camped near Washington for much of 1861, Leach's unit, by the time the 11th arrived, had fought on the edges of the battles of Crampton Gap and Antietam and had begun preparation for winter quarters near the Potomac River a few miles north and west of the capital. Walker would leave the army after three years of service a few months after the Confederate surrender as a lieutenant colonel who had frequently commanded his regiment in hot action and in camp.

The publication of these two collections contributes to the ever popular genre of Civil War soldier's letters, and provides solid detail on the steadfast Vermont commitment and contribution to restoring the Union. Proud families sensing the importance of the letters preserved them. Leach's eventually came to Special Collections at the University of Vermont (UVM) through his granddaughter, who jealously guarded the record of her family's contribution to the momentous war, while Walker's granddaughter assumed the responsibility to preserve his. Edward J. Feidner, well known for his contributions at UVM as professor of theatre and a long tenure as director of the Champlain Shakespeare Festival, discovered the portrait album of family, army colleagues, and Civil War notables that Leach assembled. When he joined the album to the letters, he set about their transcription and preparation for publication. Feidner allows Leach to speak for himself, with editorial austerity worthy of Leach's own restraint. He assembled brief identifications of the men and family members who frequently appear in the letters and very little of the historical and geographical context in which to set the events about which Leach writes.

The Walker letters came to Tom Ledoux through the "Vermont in the Civil War" Internet project's effort to document the state's participation in the war. He understood that the Walker collection merited more substantial publication than "the website as it existed at that time" (*Walker*, Preface). Ledoux has divided the letters into chronological chapters with endnotes and has provided a useful historical introduction. For the dramatic transition in the spring of 1864 when the 11th Vermont left guard duty and went into the field, fighting from the Wilderness to Appomattox, he inserted Walker's published speech, "The First Vermont Brigade," which, decades later and after having compiled a history of the brigade in the Shenandoah Valley, established a clear context for his own detailed letters. This neat editorial touch greatly enhances the value of the letters that follow. Like Feidner, Ledoux did not include any maps

to help orient Leach's and Walker's letters in the complex local geography of their movements, though Ledoux did append a helpful description of "The Forts Surrounding Washington."

The straightforward Charles K. Leach tramped around much of Maryland and Virginia in the vicinity of Washington, protecting against approaches to the capital. The 2nd Vermont saw an unusual amount of action. They participated in the first Battle of Bull Run and McClellan's failed Peninsula Campaign in 1861. They fought at the edges of the 2nd Battle of Bull Run and Antietam in 1862, and at Chancellorsville and near Gettysburg in 1863. Both Leach and Walker corresponded to stay close to the familiar in a very difficult time. Leach's letters did not discuss strategy and muted the details of combat; instead he attempted to uphold his parental responsibilities and help his wife, Ann, operate the farm and subsist in tight financial times. He provided steady advice on livestock, crops, vehicles, building maintenance, sugaring, planting, and expenditures. His letters recount endless marching, persistent sickness, disease, death, concern about pay and finances (the slow and unpredictable army paymasters frustrated both Leach and Walker), complaints about avaricious sutlers, food, weather, and clothing. Leach's letters support the importance of logistics and the dictum that armies travel on their stomachs.

Both men relied on the Vermont press, in Leach's case the *St. Albans Messenger*, for war information. Walker supplemented his reading of the *Rutland Herald* (to which he contributed letters) with New York, Baltimore, and Washington newspapers, and, in the closing months, publications from Richmond and Petersburg. They both found the press accounts inadequate in describing the actions in which they had fought. They also shared, especially in the first years, a healthy disdain for the quality of officers commissioned more through political muscle than military capability. In an uncharacteristic, pithy outburst, Leach commented on one disappointed officer who huffily resigned when passed over for promotion to general because "the Eagle that sits on his shoulder cannot be made to shit a Star, to take the place of the Eagle" (*Leach*, p. 125). Walker referred to "complete ninnyes" (*Walker*, p. 25) and excoriated one "exceedingly profane" and "withered little man, about 50, I should think, lame from a wound in the heel, received in no noble way, the story goes," who Walker dubbed "a silly martinet with no scope or width of purpose" (*Walker*, p. 49).

The educated son of a prominent clergyman, often traveling on horseback a few feet above the ubiquitous mud, Walker saw many of the same events as Leach from a much different vantage. The Fletcher farmer stayed close to camp, providing a fatherly steadiness to his men.

He fought without complaint, lamented the disease that carried away friends and his brother, enforced discipline, and worked to dampen the availability of alcohol. Walker frequently “boarded out,” taking meals with fellow officers on a contract basis in area homes. He took advantage of frequent passes to explore Washington, where he visited with friends and classmates, met Vermont political leaders and their families, and attended theater and opera. He had entré to the parlor of Francis Preston Blair (“Old F. P. Blair,” as Walker put it), the capital scion who had exerted great power in Jackson’s Kitchen Cabinet in the 1830s and later supported Lincoln in 1860. Blair’s son, also Francis Preston, served in Congress in 1860–62 and rose to the rank of major general.

Walker often had with him the *Atlantic*, a Greek Testament, some classics, and the works of Shakespeare, Dumas, and Bulwer. While Leach discussed the details of farm management, Walker confined his advice to his father to the purchase of a piano. Both men returned home on leave (Leach twice). Walker’s father visited him outside of Washington, and Leach saw his wife, Ann, when she came to camp during his illness, when he went to Brattleboro to recruit, and in the aftermath of the New York City draft riots of 1863. The army dispatched Leach’s unit to keep the peace in New York, an assignment Walker deemed “quite a compliment to the Vermonters, though I suppose they are as good a brigade as any in the army” (*Walker*, p. 161).

Though Walker fought in many of the hottest actions of the 1864 campaign in Virginia, where the Old Vermont Brigade absorbed huge losses, he never received a wound or suffered serious disease. His letters often demonstrate a capacity to look for the larger picture even as the confusion of combat swirled about him. Walker grew from serious boy to a man during the war, which became a formative experience in his life.

Leach, despite the huge casualties inflicted on the 2nd Vermont, also did not receive a wound. He shied away from discussing action, perhaps wishing to spare his wife and children anxiety and the brutality he witnessed. His letters demonstrate little propensity to reach beyond events in his immediate vicinity. He returned to Vermont much the same man who had left Vermont three years earlier, if wiser and more appreciative of his blessings. Leach never followed through on his intention to write the history of his unit. In the forty-five years allotted to him after he mustered out in 1864, Leach remained a solid citizen and family man, serving one term in the Vermont House of Representatives and remaining active in Fletcher town and school affairs.

Walker returned to Vermont to study law in the Burlington office of George F. Edmunds, later a leader of the United States Senate. He finished his study of law at Columbia College and returned to Rutland to

work as a railroad counsel, become a civic leader, and serve a term as president of the Vermont Bar Association. In 1887 President Cleveland appointed him to the newly formed Interstate Commerce Commission. In 1889 he moved to Chicago and became the head of the Interstate Railway Commerce Association and a succession of other Chicago-based organizations created to protect railroad interests. As a receiver of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe system, he helped guide it back to financial health and became chairman of its board in 1895, a position he held until his death in 1901.

These two extensive collections join a substantial bibliography on the Vermont experience in the Civil War. Very different in many respects, but with poignant similarities, they underline the importance of the Civil War in the lives of Vermonters during the conflict and in the years that followed. These letters have earned their way into libraries and onto bookshelves.

H. NICHOLAS MULLER III

A Trustee of the Vermont Historical Society and a former editor of Vermont History, Dr. Muller has written extensively about Vermont's past.

Sightseeking: Clues to the Landscape History of New England

By Christopher J. Lenney (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 2003, pp. 359, \$24.95).

Few observant travelers fail to notice how abruptly landscapes seem to change as one crosses boundaries, whether naturally or politically drawn. And for those who enjoy excursions across New England, few sightseers miss noting how older villages on the coast of Maine differ in so many subtle but remarkably discernable ways from the villages on the South Shore of Massachusetts or those along the Connecticut River or those in the Champlain Valley of Vermont.

To be sure, the lure of distinctive historic landscapes has been long recognized by the travel and tourism industry, politicians, and preservationists. But as a pervasive sameness of postindustrial America relentlessly seeps across the New England landscape and as so many places once cherished for their distinctive character and feeling are changed or repackaged as caricatures of their former selves, it is encouraging to

discover a book that offers a fresh academic approach to the study of vernacular landscapes.

For readers who enjoy unraveling clues of local and regional history while exploring historic landscapes, Christopher J. Lenney in his new book, *Sightseeking*, offers remarkable insights through his creative study of six common landscape artifacts. Through an examination of place names, town plans, boundaries, roads, houses, and gravestones, Lenney applies basic archaeological survey methods to test what he calls the Kurathian Hypothesis: “that the distribution of vernacular artifacts follows subregional lines that reflect original points of settlement (hearths) and subsequent internal migration streams (settlement patterns)” (p. 2). By plotting the geographical distributions of scores of examples of vernacular landscape artifacts, Lenney shows how the patterns that emerge can provide important clues to the history of the New England region.

While his approach may seem cumbersome at first, the value soon becomes clear. Indeed as he observes, “While the study of these building blocks may strike one initially as dull and inadequate to the overall task, once one’s curiosity is aroused, there is no landscape in New England that will ever be dull again. Ordinary things—select but ubiquitous—assume an unexpected importance, not only in the field, but in old photographs, sketches, and maps. Heretofore objects of nostalgic reverie, these become vital documents to be minutely scrutinized for key details. Historic landmarks, praised and preserved as rare or unique, are taken down from their pedestals and reconnected with the traditions and landscapes that created them” (p. 307).

Through his pattern-based approach to studying regional landscapes, Christopher Lenney encourages ambitious sightseekers to avoid the common trap of looking at places through a simple then-and-now filter, where artifacts are regarded either as old or as new. To be sure, it takes some effort and practice to view places in four dimensions and it may take some time to travel to where boundaries become distinct, but the rewards are addictive. As Lenney notes, “Conventional sightseeking blithely lumps the whole historic landscape under ‘Old New England,’ an undifferentiated Yankee dreamland that embraces two to three centuries and sixty thousand square miles. Sightseeking critically dissects this idyll along more calculated lines. The mind is quick to organize information according to the framework available, and a sightseeker is no more than a well-briefed sightseer with a focused agenda. The thrill of borders can be relied upon to spur the quest” (p. 294).

While this is not the first study to explore how physical features of vernacular buildings and landscapes may provide clues to the cultural history of a region like New England, *Sightseeking* will likely become

regarded as one of the most important works in this field of research. Lenney's awareness of how his work (which he wrote because he was convinced no "expert" would) fits within the body of scholarly research is reflected in his observation: "A rich genre of such scholarly syntheses, disguised as popularizations, yet written by distinguished experts, has served as an ever-present model for this volume. In effect, this book strives to be a pseudo-popularization of a subject that has not yet fully taken coherent form in the scholarly literature" (p. 308). As the author of one of the "scholarly syntheses, disguised as popularizations" mentioned in *Sightseeking*, I found that Christopher Lenney offers historians and preservationists a very powerful intellectual framework on which to base future research, while providing a stimulating affirmation of the urgency and value of the task.

Readers who enjoy investing a bit of effort into their literary excursions will find this energetically written book to be especially delightful and rewarding. Travels through New England will never be quite the same!

THOMAS D. VISSER

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Off the Leash: Subversive Journeys around Vermont

By Helen Husher (Woodstock, Vt.: The Countryman Press, 1999, pp. 206, \$21.00).

Curious New England: The Unconventional Traveler's Guide to Eccentric Destinations

By Joseph A. Citro and Diane E. Foulds (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 2003, pp. xi, 334, paper, \$19.95).

Vermont has long been a popular destination for "people from away." Statesmen and hunters, artists and house hunters hope to find and savor some shard of "the Vermont mystique." These two books are intriguing guides for visitors (as compared to tourists) who appreciate the unusual.

In *Off the Leash*, Helen Husher, who lives in Randolph, leads us to a dozen off-the-beaten-track destinations, some symbolic of bygone eras,

others of more contemporary interest, such as the three devastating fires that nearly razed downtown Randolph over seven months after Christmas 1991. Husher writes engagingly, and has some illuminating observations about the nature and pursuit of travel. As well as ferreting out the unusual, she likes to perceive what lies behind the arras of the more or less familiar.

In the introduction, Husher makes an acute distinction between travelers and tourists. “Travel is a search for newness, for something different, and for a kind of magic. We like confirmation that places are genuine and that new places have something to tell us; we like to glimpse the forces that have come down from the clouds, like big hands, and squeezed places into being. If this is not true, and if places are interchangeable, then there is no point in going anywhere at all. Yet much of the work of tourism is to separate us from those forces and to offer, instead, a prettified and often rather costly version of a given destination” (p. 14).

Accordingly, Husher spends an afternoon in Hope Cemetery in Barre; reflects on Justin Morgan and his famous horse; and contemplates the Joseph Smith Memorial in Sharon. We also visit the Donohue Sea Caves in the Winooski Valley Park, the Dowsers Labyrinth in Danville, the Round Schoolhouse in Brookline, and the Round Church in Richmond. She describes a performance at the Bread and Puppet Museum in Glover, and gives us a capsule history and significance of the Fenian Raids.

One example of her graphic, often mordant style can be found in the “Wheat Paste and Rags” chapter about the Bread and Puppet Museum in the Northeast Kingdom, “where the paved roads get bumpy and many of the villages take on an inward expression—half-painted, resistant, poised for flight or perhaps revolution. . . . The Kingdom, as it is called, is a place apart, provisional and defiant. This is Vermont’s woodwork, a place where people and ideas lie hidden and ripen and sometimes spill out unexpectedly into dooryards” (p.125).

For *Curious New England*, Joseph Citro (Vermont’s own Edgar Allan Poe) and Diane Foulds, a widely read newspaper feature writer, searched out and described dozens of “weird” or otherwise bizarre places in the six New England states, with emphasis on time warps and the macabre.

In Vermont, for example, we could admire Elvis Presley’s gallstones in the Main Street Museum, Hartford; Hetty Green’s “fainting couch” in the Bellows Falls Library; and Emily’s (haunted) covered bridge in Stowe. Other, less esoteric entries cite the Spider Web Farm in Williamstown; Brigham Young’s monument in Whitingham; the Bowman Memorial in Cuttingsville; and Fort Blunder in Alburg, plus the oddities in several town museums.

In New Hampshire, we visit “America’s Stonehenge” in North Salem; Tilton’s Arch in Northfield; and the quirky Wentworth-Coolidge Mansion in Portsmouth. Rhode Island entries are concentrated in fashionable Newport, where the ghoulish-minded can retrace heiress Doris Duke’s vehicular homicide outside the gates to her estate.

The authors whet our curiosities in appealing terms and provide good directions to these tantalizing phenomena.

Both books add cubits to our appreciation of the life and lore of the land we are lucky enough to inhabit.

PETER SAXE JENNISON

Peter Jennison, Taftsville, a former trustee of the Vermont Historical Society, is the author of a dozen books, including The Roadside History of Vermont.

Untamed Vermont: Extraordinary Wilderness Areas of the Green Mountain State

Photographs by A. Blake Gardner, Commentary by Tom Wessels (North Pomfret, Vt.: Thistle Hill Publications, 2003, pp. 112, \$39.95).

Several years ago, A. Blake Gardner stuffed fifty-five pounds of camera equipment into a backpack and headed out across country to photograph Vermont’s wild, remote, and untamed areas. The result is this collection of sixty-four stunning color photographs.

Six short essays by ecologist Tom Wessels accompany the photographs and provide the context for Gardner’s pictures. Folded bedrock and a mile-thick ice sheet are two of the slow geological dramas that created Vermont’s remarkable natural diversity: eighty-two distinct upland and wetland communities, including ancient black gum trees, “the Okefenokee swamp’s northern outpost,” according to Wessels (p. 69).

Wessels’s essays also complement individual photographs. For example, Gardner has a close-up of a spray of showy lady’s slippers in the Eshqua Bog. In the photograph, the white and crimson slippers extend enticingly from stems and leaves of vibrant green. Wessels describes the exotic reproduction ritual of the showy plant: “The pollinator crawls into the slit on the top of the slipper, which then restricts its exit. The insect has to struggle through a tight tunnel just below the flower stem, where it gets a pollen sack glued onto its back” (p. 61). When the insect and pollen sack enter another slipper for the tight crawl, cross-pollination occurs.

Gardner's photographs mirror the diversity of Vermont's natural environment. There are exquisite close-ups: a nest of warbler eggs, fiddleheads in spring; medium-range shots: black gum trees in Vernon, frosted grass along a beaver channel; and long views: Mount Hor reflected in Lake Willoughby, a storm over Kettle Pond.

All of Gardner's photographs contain enlivening contrasts in color, texture, and substance. In the fiddlehead close-up, for example, the fiddleheads are pushing through fallen oak leaves. The leaves are dry and brown; several curl upon themselves. By contrast, the fiddlehead stems are supple and green; the lighter green heads are covered with white fuzz. The leaves are dead; the fiddleheads radiate new life. The fact that fiddleheads are also good to eat completes the picture.

Another feature exemplified by the fiddlehead shot is the remarkable fineness of detail in Gardner's photographs. The veins of the oak leaves are as clear as if the object were literally in one's hand.

Gardner does amazing things with water. In a medium range shot of Austin Brook, the tumbling water looks like a sheet of silver. The water in the beaver channel is midnight blue and thick as mercury.

While Gardner tells us all about wild Vermont in his photographs, he holds the cards of his technique closer to his chest. We know he uses a large-format camera—thus the breathtaking detail—and we also learn in a caption that an exposure along Lake Champlain lasted eight seconds. Eight seconds! These are the exposure times used at the dawn of photography over a hundred years ago. Long exposure may explain the silvery effect in Gardner's rivers: The water is actually moving, not stopped in its flow by the shutter.

Gardner's pictures often tell a story from foreground to background. In his photo of Vernon's Black Gum Swamp, for example, the long foreground is dominated by an odd path that leads us into the dark forest background. But what is that path? Look closely and it seems to be a fallen black gum covered with fungi. Look more carefully and there is a tiny red lizard climbing through the fungi.

Wessels's longest essay discusses threats to untamed Vermont. He asserts, "Regional warming will extinguish species like sugar maple, paper birch, red spruce and balsam fir—all hallmarks of the Vermont landscape" (p. 81). Thus, Gardner's photographs may at some point become historic, picturing a landscape that no longer exists. This collection will therefore be of special interest to environmentalists and natural historians.

Tourists, travelers, and hikers will also find this book inviting. In fact, the photographs entice one into the wild: You want to go there and see it for yourself. Gardner's exquisite images sharpen one's own eye for natural detail and panorama.



Finally, photographers can spend hours with these pictures learning about composition, color, and visual narrative.

The question with a picture book is, can you return to it again and again or does it grow old quickly? Gardner's photographs are complex. I didn't see the tiny red lizard until my fourth look at the black gum picture. Repeat visits yield new pleasures. This book will not gather dust on the coffee table. It's a volume of art and nature for all seasons.

ROGER CRANSE

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