

Book Reviews

.....

- MIRIAM HERWIG, *A Mim's-Eye View from the Heart of Vermont*.
Kate Robinson 118
- CYNTHIA D. BITTINGER, *Vermont Women, Native Americans & African
Americans: Out of the Shadows of History*. Elise A. Guyette 120
- THEODORE CORBETT, *No Turning Point: The Saratoga Campaign in
Perspective*. Michael P. Gabriel 122
- DANIEL R. WEINFELD, *The Jackson County War: Reconstruction and
Resistance in Post-Civil-War Florida*. Paul Searls 124
- BONNIE TOCHER CLAUSE, *Edward Hopper in Vermont*. Amy B. Werbel
126
- ROBERT W. TURNER, *From Barre-Montpelier to E. F. Knapp: The Story
of a Small Airport in Berlin, Vermont*. Russell J. Belding 128
- EVELYN GRACE GEER, *The Lepine Girls of Mud City: Embracing Vermont*.
Dawn K. Andrews 130
- KIRK KARDASHIAN, *Milk Money: Cash, Cows and the Death of the
American Dairy Farm*. Daniel Smith 132

More About Vermont History

Compiled by PAUL A. CARNAHAN

BOOK REVIEWS



A Mim's-Eye View from the Heart of Vermont

By Miriam Herwig (Randolph, Vt.: The Public Press/The Herald of Randolph, 2012, pp. 187, paper, \$15.00).

Miriam Boyce Herwig, now eighty-nine years old, has been writing for upwards of seventy years and her columns for *The Herald of Randolph* span half a century; so giving readers her “view” in fewer than a hundred selections from those years was no small task. As the title implies, her selection is idiosyncratic, part popular history drawn from local and state archives and Abby Hemenway’s *Vermont Historical Gazetteer*, part “winter’s tales” passed down in local lore, part commentary on Randolph in her time there, and part personal recollections.

A Mim's-Eye View is not, and does not claim to be, a history of Randolph, but it is rich in those facts of social history that make a reader sit up and take notice. The scalp of Tom Pember, who was “speared and scalped” in the Royalton Raid of 1780, is reported to “have brought a double bounty because of his two cowlicks” (p. 32). Randolph boy Lee Tinkham, enlisting at age twenty under the command of General George Custer and surviving the Battle of the Little Bighorn, then deserted “like 30% of the soldiers at the time” and was summarily shot, as this was the penalty in that era (p. 48). Early settlers, once a simple house had been built “by the head of the house,” came north in winter because “snow provided a means for ox-drawn sleds laden with household goods to travel on since there were no roads.” A further recommendation was that “[o]xen could brouse (sic) like deer, which horses could not” (p. 31). In “A Handsome and Historic House,” we learn that log cabins gave

Vermont History Vol. 81, No. 1 (Winter/Spring 2013): 118–134.

© 2013 by the Vermont Historical Society. ISSN: 0042-4161; on-line ISSN: 1544-3043

way to frame houses around 1801, just at the time the Randolph Center house Mim has lived in for over sixty years was built. And in World War II, milkweed ‘silk’ was used to insulate airmen’s jackets.

Columns written for *The Herald* but also stories and essays contributed to other Vermont publications—*The Country Sampler* (published in Danby) and *Green Mountain Whittlins*, the Green Mountain Folklore Society publication—make up eleven chapters of an “old-time sideshow,” in her words. But the terms on which life was lived over the centuries are treated respectfully as often as they are grist for amusement. Experience Davis, “the first man to live in town,” came into the New Hampshire Grants, as they were called in 1776, and acquired his property under squatters’ law, which gave a prospective landowner three days to fence in as much land as he could. “We can imagine [Experience] rising early on the longest days of the year to fell trees in a straight line until he had enclosed nearly four square miles, or 1,533 acres” (p. 30), Herwig writes in “More Glimpses Into the Lives of Early Randolph Settlers.”

The conditions of life and the occupations of women are one of the threads tying this collection together. Women survived the rigors that men did in the early eighteenth century, including starvation rations in winter and capture by Indians and the long trek to Canada to be sold as servants. But they also faced childbirth and its risks, often alone. With asperity, Mim also records that widows whose husbands had bought land could not take possession of it until a young son came of age to claim it. And in “Glimpses Into the Lives of Early Randolph Settlers,” she writes that early accounts “seldom mentioned [women] by name, and referred to them as “so and so’s wife.” As an example, there is the nameless “Mrs. John Goss,” whose husband, the contemporary accounts state, “raised nine boys and three girls” (p. 27). “Making Money at Home” tells a rather different story, that of a distant ancestress of Mim’s who was the most prolific and accomplished counterfeiter of the early 1700s. “The Thirteen Single Ladies of Randolph Center” gives the facts of life for women in the 1950s who didn’t marry or were early widowed.

A Mim’s-Eye View draws a picture of the world Mim Herwig—a sort of *genius loci* for Randolph—has inhabited, with a past stretching back to early settlers in Massachusetts and then in Williamstown, Vermont. It is a portrait in small, deft, sharply etched strokes, and it is as an observer that she makes her mark. What she admires in a 1918 article, “Observation: Twin Brother to Invention,” by Alexander Graham Bell, defines the best of this book: “The close observation of little things is the secret to success in . . . every pursuit of life” (p. 59).

Bottom-up history makes good reading, though history buffs will have to go elsewhere for a fuller picture of the Royalton Raid of 1780 or the

curriculum in the schools that proliferated once a village or hamlet took shape. (We do learn that one-third of high school graduates went on to college in late-nineteenth-century Randolph.) The book, without an index and without dates attached to each essay, is of most pleasure and value as a reminder that history is always immediately around us and worth exploring.

KATE ROBINSON

Kate Robinson is a writer, journalist, and editor. She was the original creator, producer, and writer for Vermont Public Radio's Camel's Hump Radio program. Her most recent book is a biography of J. Richardson Dilworth.

Vermont Women, Native Americans & African Americans: Out of the Shadows of History

By Cynthia D. Bittinger (Charleston, S.C.: The History Press, 2012, pp. 159, paper, \$19.95).

This is a generously illustrated volume of black and white images accompanied by short essays on diverse people in Vermont from the days when Paleoindians tracked caribou on the flatlands to the twenty-first century. The difference between this book and other Vermont histories is that Cynthia Bittinger concentrates on people of color and women often left out of traditional histories. In using such a long timeline, she necessarily needed to pick and choose from among countless Abenaki and African American men and women, as well as white women who met her criteria: people who “wanted to leave a fairer, more caring world” or those who broke a glass ceiling (p. 14). As such, she chose people whose goal was leaving behind a more just society. This reminded me of Justin Morrill’s idea in 1858 that we should not study the art of war but instead concentrate on ways to care for each other and enlighten humanity. Many people on Bittinger’s list aspired to these ends.

For instance, Molly Ockett, a Pigwacket from Maine whose band moved to the upper Missisquoi River in Troy during the Revolution, was a skilled medicine woman. She lived through many adversities but helped her neighbors survive, including even those who had “gravely wronged her people” (p. 38). Bittinger also highlights Charles Bowles, a man of color with a home in Huntington for twenty years and a Free Will Baptist minister, who led revivals throughout the state in the early nineteenth century. Bittinger discusses people as different as Emma Willard of Middlebury, who fought for education for women, and Chief

Homer St. Francis of Swanton, who helped found the Abenaki Self Help Association in 1976 and organized fish-ins that ultimately led to official state recognition for his band in northwestern Vermont.

To find these people, Bittinger scoured mainly secondary sources but also some primary sources. She starts the three sections of the book, Native Americans, then African Americans, and finally women, with historical introductions. I would have liked much more of an overview to help the reader place these people within their historical contexts. However, it's obvious that Bittinger examined many print and visual sources. One strength of the book is the numerous images that dot the pages. It was a pleasure to find so many pictures of diverse Vermonters in one place. Another strength is the long list of sources about minorities and women that she encourages people to read in order to discover the complexities of our history.

The drawback of relying on secondary sources is that Bittinger sometimes repeats inaccuracies in those sources. For instance, Vermont did not truly ban slavery in 1777 (pp. 13, 95, and 97). Only adult slavery was constitutionally banned at that time. Bittinger asserts that free blacks were not obliged to fight during the Civil War (p. 72); but they were drafted along with white men in Vermont. When discussing Vermonters' fears of the Buffalo Soldiers stationed at Fort Ethan Allen in Colchester in 1910, she writes that people had heard about a black regiment terrorizing Brownsville, Texas, in 1906 and left it as a fact (p. 84). Some people believed it at the time; however, historians and our government today agree that the soldiers never intimidated anyone in the town. Madeleine Kunin and Esther Sorrel were not the founders of the Vermont Democratic Party, as stated on page 136. These sorts of missteps could have been avoided with a close edit by historians familiar with the relevant topics.

The three categories of the book bothered me when I read the title. However, I understand that having separate categories for women and minorities is needed until historians automatically integrate historical stories and put women and minorities back into their rightful places on the stage of history. If historians use a framework of highlighting people who fought for social justice, as Bittinger suggests, this will help to re-incorporate women and people of color into our stories. At the same time, I found the "Vermont Women" section problematic. It starts with a segment on Abenaki women but then evolves into a completely white women's piece. Most Abenaki and all African American women in the book are classified by race instead of gender. I wondered why Bittinger made that choice. It would have been useful for the author to include an explanation for her reasoning.

Despite its drawbacks, this is a useful book for those looking for people usually left out of our traditional histories. It offers a different framework for choosing whom to pay attention to: Instead of focusing on military and political history, find those who worked to better the human condition. The book offers many short descriptions of these people and movements, as well as a good bibliography. In this, Bittinger has done a service for people looking for a more diverse history of Vermont. I believe teachers and students, especially, will find this little volume of importance as they begin a search for women and people of color to study. The book then points the way to other sources that will illuminate the complex entanglements among these groups and the deep intricacies of our society.

ELISE A. GUYETTE

Elise A. Guyette is the author of Discovering Black Vermont: African American Farmers in Hinesburgh, 1790–1890 (2010) and the co-director of Turning Points in American History, a professional development program for grades 3–12 Vermont history teachers.

No Turning Point: The Saratoga Campaign in Perspective

By Theodore Corbett (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012, pp. xxi, 436, \$39.95).

The Battle of Saratoga has attracted historians of the American War for Independence ever since British general John Burgoyne's army surrendered there in October 1777. This remains true in the early twenty-first century, with at least three major studies of the campaign appearing since 2008. Theodore Corbett adds to this growing body of recent scholarship on Saratoga by offering a very different interpretation. Rather than focusing on its impact on the broader war, he examines Saratoga in the local context. In the years following the battle, conflicts that had previously raged in the Hudson-Champlain Valley and Western New England continued. Furthermore, Britain remained dominant on Lake Champlain and launched raids that left the northern frontier in ruins. When seen from this perspective, Saratoga, the supposed American watershed victory, did not mark a turning point.

Corbett's opening chapters give a thorough overview of the complex settlement pattern that existed from the western Mohawk Valley through the Hampshire Grants following the French and Indian War.

Overlapping land claims and tense landlord-tenant relations fueled controversies that led to the creation of the Green Mountain Boys and shaped how the region's inhabitants responded to the Revolution. Having established this background, the author plunges into the war, from the capture of Fort Ticonderoga in May 1775 through the 1783 Treaty of Paris.

Those looking for a highly detailed tactical study of the various battles should search elsewhere, because this is not Corbett's intent. Rather, he provides summaries of the major actions and focuses on themes that support his main argument. The author examines Burgoyne's program to pacify civilians, but argues that the British general really never understood the local situation. While many Loyalists joined Burgoyne's army, they often did so to protect their families and retaliate against enemies, not to promote the king's cause. When Corbett does assess Burgoyne's military performance, he makes several assertions that will surprise readers. For example, he argues that American efforts to slow the British advance from Skenesborough to Fort Edward were largely ineffective. He similarly maintains that Burgoyne's army successfully obtained provisions from the countryside through mid-September, which runs counter to most interpretations of the origins of the Battle of Bennington and its results. Corbett also offers an interesting comparison of Native Americans and colonial militia. Both groups would serve for only short periods of time, were difficult to control, and then returned home, partly to harvest crops and provide for their families.

What makes *No Turning Point* stand out from similar works is its last seven chapters. Here Corbett argues that British actions in the years following Saratoga largely undid much of what the Americans had gained, at least on the local level. He credits Frederick Haldimand for deploying Loyalist units and Native Americans in unprecedented numbers. Many of these Loyalists, including Edward Jessup, Justus Sherwood, and some African Americans, had formerly resided on the northern frontier. Now led by Christopher Carleton, "an especially talented partisan, certainly as good as Seven Years' War predecessor Robert Rogers," they penetrated farther south than Burgoyne had and devastated their former neighbors (p. 291). New York abandoned its settlements north of Saratoga while independent Vermont opened negotiations with Haldimand about creating a special relationship with British Canada. Vermont also promoted a secession movement in eastern New York and western New Hampshire, offering these areas protection from British incursions. While these plans never came to fruition, partly because many Vermonters and Continental authorities opposed them, Corbett reveals an aspect of the war that remains largely unknown.

The author closes his work by comparing the lands north and south of Lake Champlain. Haldimand, one of the book's heroes, ameliorated a virtual "Loyalist Diaspora" by successfully settling families from the Hudson-Champlain Valley along the shore of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River. "Today one can visit the historic homes constructed by Loyalists from New York and Vermont—evidence of the loss of population and talent sustained by both states at a time when they were needed" (p. 358). Meanwhile, the fledgling United States, exhausted by Haldimand's raids, experienced agrarian uprisings along its northern frontier that culminated in Shays's Rebellion and the sack of Stockbridge, Massachusetts. In these cases many Saratoga veterans fought against their former commanders, such as Benjamin Lincoln and Philip Schuyler, who now sided with local authorities and property.

The latter portion of *No Turning Point* is reminiscent of Gavin Watt's and Alan Taylor's recent works, both of whom Corbett cites. The book draws heavily on British, American, and Canadian manuscript collections, and local histories, but some of the current scholarship on the northern campaigns is absent from its bibliography. Additionally, the author often places the footnote number at the start of an idea, rather than at the end. This practice impedes the reader's ability to locate particular sources. Despite these shortcomings, *No Turning Point* is a thought-provoking look at the Saratoga Campaign and its aftermath. It enhances our knowledge of this important battle, and brings additional light to the internal conflict that was part of the Revolutionary War.

MICHAEL P. GABRIEL

Michael P. Gabriel, a professor of History at Kutztown University, is the author of The Battle of Bennington: Soldiers and Civilians (2012).

The Jackson County War: Reconstruction and Resistance in Post-Civil War Florida

By Daniel R. Weinfeld (Tuscaloosa, Al.: University of Alabama Press, 2012, pp. xv, 204, \$29.95).

This book tells the grim story of the violence that plagued one county in Florida during Reconstruction. Jackson County is situated on Florida's Panhandle. At the time, it was the state's second most populous county. About half of its residents were white, the other half newly freed slaves. Jackson County was known during antebellum times for its

prosperity and stability, and most white residents only embraced secession reluctantly. In the months immediately after the end of the Civil War, most whites attempted to act as much as possible as if emancipation had not happened: they enforced restrictive “black codes” militantly, and refused to pay African Americans for their work.

The situation for African Americans improved dramatically in 1866. Brevet Capt. Charles Hamilton was appointed Jackson County’s first officer of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, more commonly known as the “Freedmen’s Bureau.” Hamilton voided all current labor contracts, successfully forcing planters and employers to sign new contracts with much more favorable terms for blacks. Other problems were more intractable, such as local law enforcement’s harassment of African Americans, including arrests for trivial or nonexistent crimes.

The year 1867 began with the murder of a respected African American, and things went downhill from there. Whites pointed to a number of incidents involving Bureau agents and blacks as provocations, though in his book, Daniel Weinfeld makes clear that these were largely manufactured outrages. Violence against blacks, meanwhile, escalated, especially as a result of enthusiastic African American support for the Republican Party in the elections of 1868. By 1869, as Weinfeld describes it in one chapter title, Jackson County was “a small hell on earth.” The wave of violence did not abate until 1872 (p. 83). Later estimates of how many government agents and African Americans were murdered for political reasons between 1869 and 1872 varied from 120 to 185. Whatever the actual number, Weinfeld skillfully and colorfully tells the dramatic story of a place that plunged into a nightmare of terrorism and bloodshed.

The main interest of this story for readers of *Vermont History* is the role played in Jackson County by John Quincy Dickinson. A native of Benson, Vermont, Dickinson was a Middlebury College graduate who had worked as a reporter for the *Rutland Herald*. During the Civil War Dickinson served in the Seventh Vermont Regiment. After trying his hand at business in Florida following the war, Dickinson turned to government service. He was appointed the new head of Jackson County’s Freedmen’s Bureau in 1868. Finding the Bureau to have been mostly dormant in the previous year, Dickinson launched an ambitious program to improve the lives of blacks. He quickly found his life in danger. Various local white groups, including members of the Ku Klux Klan and groups commonly referred to as Regulators, became increasingly brazen, murdering blacks with virtual impunity. Dickinson escaped assassination in 1869 only because he did not accompany the other two most important government agents in the county to a minstrel show. On their

way home one was murdered, the other seriously wounded, in an attack that shocked the state.

Dickinson is the foremost hero of this story. Weinfeld paints him very sympathetically, as a kind and honest man who was in control of his emotions, and genuinely wanted to improve the lives of those he saw oppressed. By mid-1869, however, Dickinson “recognized that the situation had already passed far beyond his capability to influence or direct it,” leaving him an “impotent witness” to the spiraling level of violence (p. 86). Dickinson grew severely depressed in 1870, but bravely continued his work in the face of death threats. He became fatalistic about his future, predicting his imminent assassination even as he made arrangements for admission to the Jackson County Bar. Both Dickinson’s friends and enemies began to see his murder as inevitable. One friend in Vermont wrote him a letter in 1871 that exulted, “Hurrah! You still live.” On the night of April 3, 1871, Dickinson was shot to death as he returned to his home alone.

The Jackson County War includes a picture of Dickinson’s monument in a Benson, Vermont, graveyard. The inscription reads, “Capt. Dickinson Was Assassinated By the Ku Klux Klan Near His Home On the Night of April 3. He Fell at the Post of Duty in the Integrity of a True Patriot.” Dickinson was widely mourned in both Florida and Vermont, even as an inquest failed to identify his murderer.

Like many books about the Reconstruction South, this can be a very painful read. But Vermont historians will find it worthwhile to explore the experiences of John Quincy Dickinson, a man who emerges from this book as an exceedingly courageous, and even heroic, figure.

PAUL SEARLS

Paul Searls is an associate professor of history and music at Lyndon State College.

Edward Hopper in Vermont

By Bonnie Tocher Clause (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 2012, pp. xix, 214, \$35.00; Ebook, \$29.99).

The depth and diversity of literature on twentieth-century American artist Edward Hopper reflects his unrivaled standing as our foremost painter of places. Among the many exhibition catalogues, biographies, monographs, literary essays and poetry, and archival works of scholarship and general interest written on Hopper, several are devoted

to his views of particular regions. Over the last decade, these publications have included works focused on his views of New England, New York, Charleston, S.C., and Maine. Independent scholar and part-time Vermont resident Bonnie Tocher Clause has added a useful and impressive study to this list with her new book, *Edward Hopper in Vermont*.

Although the elevated status and value of Hopper's works are unquestionable at this point, his drawings and watercolors of Vermont in the past have received almost no attention. Why? Perhaps because these works simply are not especially memorable. The few dozen drawings and watercolors Hopper made in the Green Mountain State are not works that will stick in anyone's mind for long, unlike his striking night views of urban windows, gas pumps, creepy Victorian mansions, iconic lighthouses, or solitary nudes. In writing about Hopper in Vermont, the risk would be to overstate the importance of his time here in the development of his work, or, concurrently, to overstate the importance of the images themselves. Clause avoids both pitfalls here, producing instead a book that is an enjoyable and worthwhile read for anyone interested in Hopper's artistic process, and/or Vermont in the 1920s and 1930s.

Hopper visited Vermont with his wife Jo on brief trips in 1927, 1935, and 1936, and then for month-long stays in the summers of 1937 and 1938. In each case, the purpose was finding new scenes to inspire paintings. It's clear from Clause's research that the artist enjoyed and admired Vermont, both for its beauty and its Republican, "anti-Roosevelt" politics. Hopper was famously terse, in the mold of Calvin Coolidge, and an avid reader of Robert Frost's spare poetry. Nevertheless, he came purely for the views, and never returned after 1938. As Clause notes, such artistic ventures to Vermont blossomed in this era, and had a "double payoff"—artists brought beautiful scenes back to big cities, which in turn inspired sales, more tourism, and therefore more visits from artists.

Clause paints a wonderfully meticulous and intimate portrait of Hopper's working process—driving on the hunt for the perfect vista, sketching, then choosing among sketches and finally, committing to paint. Clause refers to this as a "selection and sorting out process," and through her careful charting of roads traveled, bridges crossed, and even hill-sides traversed, we experience the steps as if we were there. She has looked at all these works extremely closely, noticing when Hopper distorted a view for effect, or made a farm building seem more dilapidated than it probably was. Her love for the landscape of South Royalton—Hopper's favorite as well—emerges as a driving force. Most beautiful and striking are Hopper's several views of the White River, and especially his evocative and unfinished Black Conté drawing of the *Shallows of the White River* from 1938. The inset color illustrations, high-quality

paper, and many black-and-white photographs spread throughout all contribute to a handsome book.

For readers principally interested in Vermont history, the most enjoyable chapter of Clause's book will be the fourth—"On the Slaters' Farm, South Royalton." Here, the author admirably assembles quotes from the correspondence of Jo Hopper and Irene Slater, which lasted for several decades. Additionally, Clause includes information gleaned from interviews with the Slaters' son, Alan, who was a small boy when the Hoppers stayed as guests on his parents' working farm, called Wagon Wheels. We learn that Robert Slater was a celebrated pilot in World War I, who lost his job as South Royalton postmaster when Franklin Delano Roosevelt's victory threw federal jobs to loyal Democrats in the state. Irene adapted to farm life with impressive skill and hard work. The Slaters took in boarders like the Hoppers to add to the income from diverse farm operations. Clause adds research regarding the state's efforts to promote tourism as a new industry at this time, and the history of the bucolic settings Hopper chose for his works.

Clause's detailed history of sales and provenance is of more use to collectors, dealers, scholars, and curators than it is to those interested in Vermont history, but even here the author manages to infuse her text with interesting and well-told stories. By the end of this book we feel that we know the cast well—the taciturn Hopper, his scrappy and unsatisfied wife Jo, the Slater family, and those who sold, bought, exhibited, and/or donated the artist's Vermont pictures. In sum, *Edward Hopper in Vermont* is a fine addition to literature on both a much-loved artist, and a much-loved state.

AMY B. WERBEL

Amy Werbel is professor of art history and American studies at Saint Michael's College. She is the author of Thomas Eakins: Art, Medicine, and Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007).

*From Barre-Montpelier to E. F. Knapp:
The Story of a Small Airport in Berlin, Vermont*

By Robert W. Turner (Berlin, Vt.: Berlin Historical Society, pp. viii, 142, paper, \$19.95).

On Saturday afternoon, August 6, 1960, movie notable Lauren Bacall landed at the Barre-Montpelier airport in order to visit a

friend in Wells River. According to the *Times-Argus*, “she continually asked where Wells River was located and how to get there. ‘Drive through Barre,’ someone suggested, ‘and take Route 302.’ ‘How do I know where Barre is?’ she replied. ‘I don’t know anything about this state.’ At this point the *Times-Argus* reporter told her to follow his car” (“Actress Visitor,” *Barre-Montpelier Times-Argus*, 8 August 1960, 1, 7).

For those local readers who, like Miss Bacall, are eager to know more about the area in which they find themselves, Richard W. Turner’s engaging new history of the Edward F. Knapp State Airport is a good place to start.

The Barre-Montpelier Airport was born of necessity. After the flood of November 3–4, 1927, destroyed much of the infrastructure that made transportation possible from central Vermont to the larger world, a plane carrying mail from Concord, N.H., landed on November 21 at what was then known as the St. John/Slocum field in the town of Berlin. The flood occurred in the same year as Charles Lindbergh’s epic flight across the Atlantic, an event boosting excitement across the nation about the possibilities of aviation. The need and desire for a permanent landing space for planes was so substantial in the area that the cities of Barre and Montpelier actually cooperated on a major project. On August 5, 1929, with the approval of voters in both cities, prominent individuals from both communities formed Barre-Montpelier Airport, Inc. The first air show was held just two months later, and the Barre-Montpelier Airport was dedicated the following June.

The airport remained locally owned and operated for nearly forty years. On September 16, 1968, as part of a statewide trend, the State of Vermont took over. Turner writes that most airports in the state, with the exception of Burlington International, were not reaping great profits, and so were glad to have the option of letting the state step in, relieving local tax burdens. In a ceremony held on March 25, 1970, the field was renamed the Edward F. Knapp State Airport, after the longtime state aeronautics director. The mayors of both cities were present for the ceremony, Montpelier mayor Willard Strong voicing his approval of the new name by joking, “I never did like the way Barre-Montpelier Airport sounded” (p. 92).

This book provides a sensibly organized overview of the airport’s history, including detailed photographic documentation of changes to its physical status. Separate chapters also cover the many air shows and other events held there; people important to the airport’s story; and a comprehensive listing of accidents, serious and not-so-serious. A chapter on the airlines that used this airport may provide some surprises for younger readers who have never seen regular flights arriving and

departing there. (Turner notes that United Parcel Service's next-day air freight has been the only regular service at Edward F. Knapp since 1989.) Turner also devotes a chapter to the interesting and well-told reminiscences of Ed Underhill, concerning events at the airport in the 1930s.

Readers more interested in local history than in aviation per se, will find that Turner takes care to explain terms that might puzzle the layperson. Nonetheless, the many pictures of various aircraft, as well as sufficient identifying details, will probably leave the aviation enthusiasts well satisfied.

No doubt the most famous figure in American aviation history to land at the Barre-Montpelier Airport was Amelia Earhart, in 1933. She arrived, not as the most celebrated woman aviator alive, but as a representative from Boston and Maine Airways. As Turner explains, "her job was to publicly promote the airline and to make potential passengers comfortable with the idea of flying in place of driving. A very small percentage of the general population had ever flown at this time and frankly a very large percentage were afraid to fly. Hiring Amelia was an attempt by the airline to overcome this reluctance by the public to take that first flight. After all, if a young woman could fly all over the country and even across the Atlantic Ocean, how could the locals say they did not dare to take a short hop on an airline" (p. 31).

Nearly eighty years later, although never more than, as this book's title has it, "A Small Airport in Berlin, Vermont," Edward F. Knapp's namesake field is still open for business.

RUSSELL J. BELDING

Russell Belding is the author of three books on the history of Barre, Vermont.

The Lepine Girls of Mud City: Embracing Vermont

By Evelyn Grace Geer (Charleston, S.C.: The History Press, 2012, pp. 126, paper, \$19.99).

The story of the Lepine sisters' lives parallels those of many Vermonters who moved here from Québec in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; yet these women stand out as being well known throughout northern Vermont and many places beyond. In addition to achieving celebrity status at home, they have appeared in numerous publications including the *New York Times* and the *Los Angeles*

Times. I have had the good fortune to be acquainted with them for thirty years and to have spent time at their kitchen table. The Lepine sisters' personal qualities and life stories are worthy of a book. I looked forward to reading Evelyn Grace Geer's book and enjoyed it, but found it disappointing as well.

Geer's book tells stories of the Lepine sisters' joyful approach to life, determination, curiosity, broad interests in the world, humor, and bold willingness to do what makes sense to them. Gert became a farmer at a time when women were expected to become farm wives, not farmers, and developed one of the top Jersey herds in the country. Jeanette wanted to see the world so she became a Pan Am stewardess but continued to come home to the family farm in Morrisville. She ran a seasonal antiques market for many years and the sisters became savvy collectors and influential dealers. During World War II, Marie went to Washington, D.C., to work, and Therese joined the Navy. After the war, Marie married and moved to Colorado, and Therese moved to Washington to become secretary to Senator George Aiken. Geer also tells us of other ways "The Girls" have stood out—as serious collectors and promoters of work by Vermont artists, and leaders in farming, community gardens, and land conservation—but she barely touches on some, such as their philanthropy or their leadership in the local community and importance to several statewide organizations.

Geer's book captures the Lepines' joie de vivre, their close-knit family, their hard work, strong ties to the land, and good humor. She relates interesting stories and information, but in a somewhat idiosyncratic way. The narrative digresses into history that may be intended to give context to the Lepines' story but tends to be overly detailed as well as frequently inaccurate. Some stories are in separate, very short chapters at the end of the book that seem added on. The collection of Mama Lepine's recipes at the end of the book is fitting and interesting, but the collection of vignettes about Vermont and famous people with ties to Vermont is tangential. The voice shifts from narrator, to a very personal view, to novelistic description, and I was not always sure whether I was reading the author's thoughts or a retelling of a conversation with the sisters. More about the lively, fun, wide-ranging kitchen table conversations at the Lepine farm would have been a nice addition. As a friend of mine says, "If you need your spirits lifted, there's nothing better than a visit to the Lepine sisters' kitchen table."

DAWN K. ANDREWS

Dawn Andrews is a trustee of the Vermont Historical Society and an active community volunteer with a passion for the history of everyday life. In 2010, she moved from Morrisville to Cabot to become a farmer.

Milk Money: Cash, Cows and the Death of the American Dairy Farm

By Kirk Kardashian (Durham, N.H.: University of New Hampshire Press, 2012, pp. 253, \$27.95; Ebook \$24.95).

Vermont's dairy industry is inextricably linked with the state's cultural and social identity, and with its economy. Vermont's agricultural industry is the most dairy dependent of any state, with over 70 percent of farm receipts drawn from dairy farming. As recently as 1950, there were 11,000 Vermont dairy farms, one farm for almost every thirty people. Today, there are fewer than 1,000 operating Vermont dairy farms.

Of greatest concern, Vermont has lost 40 percent of its farms since 2000, and milk production appears to have peaked. Inconceivably, Vermont's position as the anchor of the New England milk marketplace appears to be in jeopardy.

This hemorrhaging loss of family dairy farms has occurred across the nation, despite dynamic growth in demand for dairy products. In 1950, there were 4.5 million dairying farm operations producing just over 100 billion pounds of milk annually; today, fewer than 60,000 dairy farms produce almost 200 billion pounds of milk each year.

As indicated by the title of his book, *Milk Money: Cash, Cows and the Death of the American Dairy Farm*, Vermont writer Kirk Kardashian, formerly a lawyer, intended to provoke a discussion about this disturbing loss of dairy farms in Vermont and across the nation. In his preface, the author declares his intent to provide "a piece of consciousness-raising journalism" to fill the need for "a grand narrative that explore[s] the larger questions few others seem to be asking."

The book vividly illustrates the tremendous upheaval associated with the loss of this unique rural way of life, with poignant stories of the demise of three multigeneration Vermont farms. The farmers are articulate spokespeople for the author's chronicling of economic, social, and cultural upheaval, and their stories are well told.

Unfortunately, Kardashian's grander purpose of explaining the demise of family dairy farming falls far short of his mark.

The book does raise many key questions. These include whether the benefits derived from improvements in animal science and husbandry, and the transforming technological changes in milk production techniques, have been worth their accompanying costs. Kardashian rightly takes issue with several trends: concentration in the dairy industry,

including the establishment of a monopoly in the New England fluid marketplace; the performance of the federal regulatory program that largely determines the prices farmers are paid; and the outsized rise of the California dairy industry and its dependency on “feedlot” farming. He also appropriately draws attention to on-farm labor issues and our irrational immigrant labor laws.

Although he asks many of the right questions, Kardashian’s discussion and proposed resolution are both seriously flawed. To start, the book lacks a coherent thesis. Each issue is addressed alone, in seemingly random order, and with little reference to the others, more like an assembly of disconnected magazine stories than a methodical analysis.

Further, and of greatest concern, the book’s often scathing assertions and conclusions rest on little if any supporting documentation. Weakest of all in this regard is the analysis of the federal Milk Market Order Program, so pivotal to all parts of the author’s story. The federal program’s eighty-year history provides a most detailed consideration of precisely the author’s “larger questions.” Congress, state legislatures, and federal and state courts have all confronted these issues from every conceivable angle and side. Yet out of this truly rich history of law and policymaking, exactly one single document may be found in the book’s entire bibliography (which does include a citation to *Moby Dick*), and only two passing citations appear in the discussion itself.

The equally critical antitrust analysis is arguably more flawed. A detailed catalog of antitrust violations is presented as seemingly established fact. Yet the four citations provided for this discussion include only the plaintiffs’ pleadings in two civil antitrust actions and a newspaper story. Moreover, it is only in the small print of the notes that the author even acknowledges that his presentation is merely “as alleged” by party plaintiffs. For the author, a lawyer, to provide unsubstantiated case pleadings as seeming fact amounts to literary legal malpractice.

Perhaps not surprising given the lack of primary source citations, the book is rife with factual errors. These errors range from basically incorrect descriptions of the fundamental federal Milk Market Order Program and the competitive dynamic between the Northeast and Midwest dairy industries, to a constant misstatement of more minor, yet still critical, supporting facts in issue.

In this latter category, for example, Kardashian describes Vermont as being part of the United States in 1769 (pp. 39–40), or before the Revolution was even fought; he incorrectly describes Dean Foods as having purchased Organic Valley Cooperative (p. 218), which misrepresents completely the structure of the organic market; and he ascribes the downfall of the Northeast Interstate Dairy Compact to Midwestern

“Republicans” in Congress (p. 59), when the legislators involved were in fact almost all key Democrats.

Even if based on fundamentally flawed analysis, a fresh review prompted by such passionate concern might still have yielded a useful suggestion for change. Even here, unfortunately, the book provides little contribution. Like many before him, Kardashian has discovered an exemplary small-scale beverage milk operation, and holds this business out as the best promise for family dairy farms. Not to disparage what appears to be a great business, but a company founded by a New York City doctor that processes and sells four million pounds of milk to a most rarified customer base does not provide a structural alternative for an industry that processes almost 60 billion pounds of milk for beverage consumption, and almost 130 billion pounds for manufactured dairy products.

Finally, despite Kardashian’s clear affinity for family dairy farmers, his book provides far too little recognition of their continuing vitality and perseverance in Vermont and around the country. Indeed, and most confounding to this reviewer, the author manages instead to denigrate the entire dairy community by his random inclusion of stories of animal cruelty, lacking any context at all.

Milk Money might well have provided a useful contribution to Vermont’s historical literature had the author limited his storytelling to a more developed discussion of the impact of the loss of family dairy farms on Vermont’s rural communities. Unfortunately, his mostly undocumented and factually flawed explanation for the demise of family dairy farming in Vermont and nationally contributes very little to our understanding, and this larger story remains untold.

DANIEL SMITH

Daniel Smith, an attorney, was founding Executive Director of the Northeast Dairy Compact Commission.