

VERMONT HISTORY



VOLUME 81, No. 2 SUMMER/FALL 2013



- Major Valentine's Swedes *Paul Searls*
- The "Cattle Disease" Outbreak in Vermont, 1902-1903 *Basil P. Tangredi*
- Vermont Archives and Manuscripts: *Gregory Sanford, Reidun D. Nuquist,*
Eben Judd *Eva Garcelon-Hart*

The Journal of the Vermont Historical Society

About the Cover Illustrations

Green Mountain Vermont Maple Syrup Broadside, ca. 1925

Before maple syrup was packaged in the plastic jugs, decorative glass bottles, and rectangular “tins” that fill store shelves today, it was packaged in standard columnar cans. At least it was if it came from the Green Mountain Packing Company of St. Albans. A 9.75" × 12.25" poster in the library of the Vermont Historical Society, donated by the Essex Community Historical Society in 2004, depicts an attractive can of this type.

A 1904 article in the *St. Albans Messenger* describes the extensive operations of the Green Mountain Packing Company. It was located in a large building known as the “canning factory,” just west of the railroad tracks, and employed seventy-five people. At that time the factory may not have been canning maple syrup, because the article does not mention this product. Instead the *Messenger* inventories the impressive number of cans of fruits and vegetables that the company dispensed from its factory from April through December: 24,000 cans of blueberries, 160,000 cans of string beans, 150,000 cans of baked beans, and 25,000 cans of beets. On top of it all, the company also usually harvested enough corn from local farmers to fill 800,000 cans.

The company’s line of canned vegetables received a promotional boost in 1925 when the explorer Captain Donald B. MacMillan took canned baked beans and string beans from the St. Albans company to the Arctic aboard the schooner *Bowdoin*. A photograph of the boxes of canned beans, stenciled with the company’s name, on the coast of North Greenland near the North Pole was circulated at a St. Albans area Rotary Club meeting in that year, much to the delight of the audience. A poster advertising the three kinds of the company’s baked beans, although without reference to the North Pole expedition, is also in the collections of the Vermont Historical Society.

In 1926 the company’s maple products received a promotional boost of their own aboard the state’s “Sugar Train.” The “Vermont Maple Sugar Special Train” included three baggage cars fitted with exhibits



Green Mountain Packing Company promoted three kinds of Vermont baked beans using images of a happy, three-generation family.

from the Associated Industries of Vermont and one carrying “family packages” of maple products. These packages, which were probably given away to visitors en route, contained two quarts of maple syrup, a five-pound pail of maple sugar, and a one-pound box of maple sugar candies. More than 100 Vermonters joined the eleven-day excursion, which made stops in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, Cleveland, Chicago, and Buffalo. According to the *Messenger*, the company “benefitted much from the advertising the firm received.”

Color scans of these Green Mountain Packing Company advertisements can be viewed at www.vermonthistory.org/GreenMountainPacking.

PAUL A. CARNAHAN, *Librarian*

Back cover: The Green Mountain Packing Company did not limit their product line to pure Vermont maple syrup. They also blended their maple syrup with cane sugar to make a different product they called “Brier Rose Syrup.” They were not alone in this practice.

VERMONT HISTORY



VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY
60 Washington Street
BARRE, VT 05641-4209

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BARRE, VT 05641
PERMIT NO. 222

