

Book Reviews

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- GLENN M. ANDRES AND CURTIS B. JOHNSON, *Buildings of Vermont (Buildings of the United States)* Bryant F. Tolles Jr. 149
- CORIN HIRSCH, *Forgotten Drinks of Colonial New England: From Flips & Rattle-Skulls to Switchel & Spruce Beer* Bill Mares 151
- MARK R. ANDERSON, *The Battle for the Fourteenth Colony: America's War of Liberation in Canada, 1774-1776* Susan M. Ouellette 153
- STEPHEN DARLEY, *The Battle of Valcour Island* H. Nicholas Muller III 155
- JENNIFER S. H. BROWN AND WILSON B. BROWN, *Col. William Marsh: Vermont Patriot and Loyalist* John J. Duffy 156
- HARVEY AMANI WHITFIELD, *The Problem of Slavery in Early Vermont, 1777-1810* Jill Mudgett 159
- CHARLES C. JOHNSON, *Why Coolidge Matters: Leadership Lessons from America's Most Underrated President* Daniel A. Métraux 162
- LOURDES B. AVILÉS, *Taken by Storm, 1938: A Social and Meteorological History of the Great New England Hurricane* Lesley-Ann Dupigny-Giroux 164
- ANNE MEIS KNUPFER, *Food Co-ops in America: Communities, Consumption, and Economic Democracy* Dona Brown 167
- HAVERHILL/NEWBURY 250TH COMMITTEE, *Two Towns: One Community. Haverhill, New Hampshire & Newbury, Vermont, 1763-2013: Souvenir Companion to a Year of Community Celebration, December 31, 2012-December 31, 2013* Frank Bryan 169
- ROBERT J. RESNIK, *Legendary Locals of Burlington* P. Jeffrey Potash 171
- NORA JACOBSON, *Freedom and Unity: The Vermont Movie. One State, Many Voices* Kevin Thornton 173

More About Vermont History

Compiled by PAUL A. CARNAHAN

BOOK REVIEWS



Buildings of Vermont (Buildings of the United States)

By Glenn M. Andres and Curtis B. Johnson (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press for the Society of Architectural Historians, 2014, pp. xvii, 480, \$85.00).

Researched and written by Glenn M. Andres, Professor of the History of Art and Architecture at Middlebury College, with assistance by Chester H. Liebs, and with illustrations by professional photographer Curtis B. Johnson, *Buildings of Vermont* is a highly significant and impressive contribution to the academic as well as popular understanding of the state's architecture, set in the broad context of international and American architectural history. It is a book that will be much in demand and attract a wide variety of researchers and enthusiastic readers well into the foreseeable future. While it will be used primarily as a reference work, it will also serve as a transportable guide for those who wish to sample personally Vermont's rich architectural heritage.

Buildings of Vermont enjoys the distinction of being a volume in the "Buildings of the United States" series, a collection of books compiled on a state-by-state basis and commissioned by the Society of Architectural Historians. Initially, beginning in the early 1990s, SAH worked with Oxford University Press on the series, but in recent years it has maintained a formal affiliation with the University of Virginia Press. To date, nearly twenty volumes have been published, with over sixty ultimately planned, including states possessing major urban districts necessitating in some instances more than a single volume. Thus far, for the New England region, books have been published on Rhode Island (2004) and metropolitan Boston (2009) architecture. To quote from the series description in *Build-*

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ings of Vermont, “the primary objective of the series is to identify and celebrate the rich cultural, economic, and geographical diversity of the United States as it is reflected in the architecture of each state” (p. 480).

Buildings of Vermont is organized in a logical, practical, and easily useable fashion. Following the front matter and heading the principal text is a nearly thirty-page, multidisciplinary introduction treating the state’s origins and settlement; general history; topography and land division; developing settlement and waterpower; steam power and industrialization; transition to the twentieth century; émigrés and single-season summer residents; the major impact of the Colonial Revival style; outdoor recreation, automobile tourism, and the ski industry; World War II and subsequent trends; and conservation and preservation. Individual buildings and building groupings are systematically arranged for study (some with documentary photographs) under county and town headings (supplemented by linear, keyed maps), with the county sections arranged clockwise from the southwestern corner of Vermont, to the northwestern corner along the Lake Champlain valley, to the northeastern corner parallel to the Canadian border, then to the southeastern corner along the Connecticut River valley. With well-articulated building descriptions (including construction materials and techniques) and the use of appropriate architectural terminology, Andres appropriately includes a wide variety of building types: residential, ecclesiastical, agricultural, industrial, factory housing, retail, public (governmental), educational, library, transportation, hotels and inns, and recreational (cottages, camps, etc.). A related popular feature of the book is the comprehensive information offered about the individuals associated with architectural development—architects, engineers, builders, landscapers, and owners/investors. But most significantly, the arrangement of the text and essay entries, including several special topic sidebars, encourages visitation and further study. The volume concludes with an essential glossary of architectural terms, a bibliography, and an index.

Finally, as vital supplements to the text entries, the book includes approximately 300 high-quality black-and-white photographic views of individual buildings, monuments, and building groups. It is a credit to both the photographer’s competency, and the authors’ outstanding composition of the entries that one wishes for more photographic documentation than the editorial guidelines and the operating budget for the book actually permit. Mostly front façade views, the majority of these photographs illustrate clearly and in detail the principal architectural elements of each structure.

Given Vermont’s well-documented, outstanding architectural legacy, the state well merits the recognition that it has been granted as a national

historical treasure by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. With its exemplary qualities, in future years *Buildings of Vermont* will continue to sustain this legacy and present the state's architecture and related history to a broad, inquisitive, and appreciative audience.

BRYANT F. TOLLES JR.

Bryant F. Tolles Jr. is Professor Emeritus of History and Art History at the University of Delaware, and the former director of the Essex Institute, Salem, Massachusetts. A retired resident of New Hampshire, he teaches at Harvard Summer School, and is the author of numerous books and articles on New England architecture and related history.

Forgotten Drinks of Colonial New England: From Flips & Rattle-Skulls to Switchel & Spruce Beer

By Corin Hirsch (Charleston, S.C.: American Palate, a division of The History Press, 2014, pp. 127, \$19.99).

Thirty-five years ago, as I was beginning to make home brew, I happened on a book about Colonial-era alcoholic drinks, called *Wines & Beers of Old New England: A How-To-Do-it History*, by Sanford Brown. It was full of intriguing recipes by thirsty (and resourceful) New Englanders in those times of hard labor and suspect water.

Now, in a kind of alcoholic apostolic succession, Corin Hirsch has “visited” the same stills, presses, and vats to produce a book that is even better in illustrations, history, and recipes. Hirsch, the food and drink writer for *Seven Days* newspaper, offers a lively sure-footed history of public and private drinking in New England in colonial times.

In useful journalistic fashion, the author breaks the book into four sections: *Why* they drank, *Where* they drank, *What* they drank, and *How* they drank. It begins with the tradition of drinking that the colonists brought from England: beverages like beer, ale, and cider. Water, which was long polluted in England and soon polluted in the New World, spurred the search for alternative liquids. The techniques were primitive, but the colonists' enterprise was insatiable.

By the end of the 1600s, cider was the farmer's drink of choice. It was difficult to produce good ale, but with the profusion of apples and simple pressing equipment, it was easy to make cider, hard cider, and applejack. The average family in the 1700s consumed a barrel of cider per week.

They also collected honey from wild bees and turned it into mead, then

meglithin, which was mead flavored with nutmeg and rum, and braggot, which was mead mixed with beer and spices.

I've always been fascinated that the colonists could work from dawn to dusk, without drinking water. Apparently, they did this with low-alcohol cider and drinks like switchel, a blend of water, ginger, sugar, molasses, and vinegar, to which rum was occasionally added. Hirsch describes the evolution of the tavern, or "ordinary," where the men (women were excluded) went to drink, argue, and occasionally make revolution. She suggests that liquor consumed in the taverns roused the fighting spirits of the colonials at Lexington and the Green Mountain Boys at Castleton, from whence the Vermonters marched forth to strike their tipsy blows for liberty.

The colonists were not content with simple and straight ale, or beer, or rum, or cider; they loved to mix drinks. When they couldn't get malt for beer, they substituted molasses, pumpkins, berries, maple sap, or spruce tips, and then flavored it further with a variety of spices or herbs.

That relentless experimentation is being reborn today in the craft beer movement, as some of the more than 2,500 breweries across the country and 40 across Vermont compete to push the envelope of flavors, from peanut butter to pumpkin, from chamomile to nutmeg, from chipotle to the great beyond.

Fully a third of the book is devoted to recipes, both traditional and modern, for the reader to try. Color photos of the drinks and black and white photos of some New England taverns make the read interesting even for the teetotaler. Some of the names sound like drinks concocted by the Sorcerer's Apprentice—Calibogus, Ebulum, Mimbo, Bombo, Syl-labub. Or they could have been the mere mumbblings of drunks. The names were often juxtapositions of the incongruous: Cherrybounce, Whistle-Belly Vengeance, Stone Fence, and Rattle-Skull. The latter was a fit name for a drink with four or five ounces of rum mixed with beer.

You can use this as a "cookbook" of drinks, or as a history, or as both. After I tried a couple of these recipes (without taking the wheel of the car), I shared Hirsch's belief that it is thrilling to "taste another era through re-creating its food and drink" (p. 7). She has made that both enticing and possible.

BILL MARES

Bill Mares, a former journalist, teacher, and state representative, has authored or co-authored fourteen books, including Making Beer, Bees Besieged, and Real Vermonters Don't Milk Goats. He does bi-weekly commentaries for Vermont Public Radio.

The Battle for the Fourteenth Colony: America's War of Liberation in Canada, 1774-1776

By Mark R. Anderson (Hanover, N.H. and London: University Press of New England, 2013, pp. 456, \$35.00, ebook, \$34.99).

Until now, what Mark R. Anderson calls the “Battle for the Fourteenth Colony” has largely been ignored in the fervor for Revolutionary history. Anderson has addressed this lack and, at the same time, provided another way to examine the American genesis of liberation ideology. In 1774, the American colonies launched a campaign to bring Québec into the coalescing American resistance to British rule. While Anderson’s main focus is on the failed American invasion of Québec, his narrative also attempts to explain why Americans miscalculated the sentiments of Canadians and why Lower Canada did not join the Revolution as the fourteenth colony in rebellion.

Anderson begins his study with an analysis of Lower Canada’s various constituents: the elite *seigneurs*, Québécois “peasant” *habitants* of the countryside, and the merchants/political leaders of the urban centers of Montréal, Trois-Rivières, and Québec. His somewhat one-dimensional description of the *habitants* relegates them to isolated agricultural lives devoid of education and disconnected from the urban centers except through occasional contacts with merchants. Urban centers are places of greater sophistication, but also greater tension between “Old” and “New Subjects” as well as the overlay of British authority in these centers. Within this milieu and in the context of the controversial Quebec Act of 1774, Anderson holds that the American attempt to bring the province into the Continental Congress for mutual support was a tantalizing possibility that ultimately failed.

In many ways, American efforts at bringing Canada into the Continental Congress were immediately stymied. Problems in communication and a general lack of political savvy among Canadians generally made even the initial overtures problematic. The United Colonies’ attempt to communicate their message of fraternal concern to Canadian brethren was prevented by two major obstacles: political censorship of the only newspaper available, and a general lack of education outside of elite circles. The conservative *Quebec Gazette* was not likely to print anything sympathetic to American patriots. Even if the newspaper had not been effectively silenced, Anderson posits that publication of liberation messages from the “Sons of New-England” would not have been read; 90 percent of all Québécois were illiterate. Ordinary Canadians, especially those liv-

ing in the agricultural *seigneuries*, presumably received their information from the outside world filtered through their priests, who were corrupted by Quebec Act prejudice. The only other source might be infrequent contact with merchants. Anderson's evidence for such widespread illiteracy is thin; scholarship on colonial literacy in Québec is uneven and at least one study puts literacy at 30 percent for men and slightly better for women in this period. Indeed, contemporaries seem not to have noticed the total lack of literacy among their citizens; the bilingual printing of the government newspaper supports the notion that at least some believed that the written word had the power to influence. Moreover, there is evidence to suggest that the propagandists of the United Colonies attempted to spread their liberation message via published speeches, letters, and other written communications in both English and French to further the cause. Finally, even the most isolated *habitant* populations were accessible through letters and broadsides.

In political terms, Anderson makes the case that American colonists dismissed the abilities and inclinations of Canadians, Old and New Subjects alike. United Colonists apparently believed that the total lack of legislative experience with colonial assemblies among Canadians made them vulnerable to British tyranny. Indeed, once in possession of the Richelieu districts and Montréal, American leaders failed to establish and mentor a new "patriot" government. This seems a fatal error on the part of Americans. There must have been evidence of some potential for liberty-loving Canadians; in his description of the military occupation of Montréal and Trois-Rivières, Anderson describes elections of militia captains that unseated incumbents and expressed "free decisions" of many parishes.

Anderson's description of the Québec invasion provides a complex understanding of the military and civilian difficulties faced by the Americans as they tried to stitch together a successful resistance campaign against British rule in Canada. Canadian loyalists and partisan rebels alternately hindered and energized the success of the American "liberators" as Americans tried to make sense of the complicated post-Seven Years' War demographic landscape of Canada. Fundamental distrust of the Francophone and Catholic *habitants* made them uncomfortable allies, even after the capture of Montréal with their help. From there, the assault on Québec was to be the final forging of the last link in the "Bright and Strong Chain of Union." Another demographic that does not get examined deeply is that of the Amerindians who fought on both sides of this conflict. Anderson mentions the efforts to draw them in, but does not give native people enough attention as American allies or enemies.

We know that the siege of Québec failed miserably, but Anderson has provided us with a much more closely analyzed explanation for that fail-

ure in spite of the support within Canada. His study looks closely at a number of factors, including the perennial lack of manpower, difficulties with supplies, and disease. All of these elements made the expedition and resultant siege difficult. One area that Anderson does not describe well is the widespread impact of the smallpox epidemic on the campaign. The proliferation, effect, and overall destruction of the smallpox outbreak fundamentally weakened the soldiers' ability to mount and sustain the siege. More evident in Anderson's account is the deleterious effect of lackluster support on the "war of liberation" in Canada. Throughout the period, the Continental Congress failed to support adequately the troops and commanders on the ground. Equally liable is the failure of a concerted Canadian effort to promote its own cause of liberty despite Continental beliefs that Canadians would accept the American soldiers as liberators and allies in a common fight against British tyranny.

SUSAN M. OUELLETTE

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The Battle of Valcour Island

By Stephen Darley (North Haven, Conn.: Darley Books.com, 2013, pp. xv, 229, \$14.09; Kindle file, \$7.99).

The second of a proposed series of four books on the battles of the Northern Army in the opening years of the Revolutionary War with particular attention to the activities of Benedict Arnold, *The Battle of Valcour Island* provides a very interesting and useful compendium of the vessels, the participants, and their firsthand accounts. Stephen Darley sees Arnold's leadership in assembling the fleet and deploying it in October 1776 as an heroic achievement and a strategic victory that led to British General John Burgoyne's capitulation at Saratoga a year later. Not a narrative history in the traditional sense, Darley's brief account of the battle provides context for the information he has assembled from impressive and far-reaching research, much of it fresh. Despite the many previous histories of the battle, "there remains" for example, "a surprising lack of important details . . . including the names and personal histories of the captains of the seventeen American vessels" (pp. xii-xiii).

Darley sets out to rectify that and other gaps in the record. He presents detailed information about each of the vessels in Arnold's and the British

fleets. He has tracked down all of Arnold's commanders and captains with the exception of two, one of whom remains "elusive." Based on Darley's calculations, 761 men participated in the Battle of Valcour Island in the American fleet. Gleaning information from sixty-seven different sources, including archival records, pension records, published records, genealogies, local histories, and some secondary works, Darley's prodigious research has identified 411 participants, leaving another 350 still unknown to posterity. His clear tables augment the narrative accounts of his research.

This clearly organized and well-written volume brings together the fundamental information that any new analysis and account of the important October 1776 action on Lake Champlain must consult. Stephen Darley has brought together his long interest, research, and writing about Benedict Arnold into a very useful book.

H. NICHOLAS MULLER III

H. Nicholas Muller III began his interest in the Battle of Valcour Island as a youth reading Kenneth Roberts and has continued it sailing on Lake Champlain and researching and writing about Vermont's past.

Col. William Marsh: Vermont Patriot and Loyalist

By Jennifer S. H. Brown and Wilson B. Brown (Denver, Col.: Tiger Rock Press, 2013, pp. xxi, 415, paper, \$24.95).

There's an interesting story to be found in *Col. William Marsh: Vermont Patriot and Loyalist*. To find and follow that story, however, readers need to be patient. The narrative path of the book winds through far too many "he must have[s]" whenever the authors' lack of evidence from historical records threatens to cut the narrative thread. At other points the story plods under a thinly relevant genealogical burden. Pursuing genealogy to address the initial question, "Who Was William Marsh?" for example, leads to a speculative mare's nest that Oliver Cromwell killed an obscure seventeenth-century English royalist, James Marsh, who probably was not an ancestor of Vermont's William Marsh after all. Slightly more amusing with its suggestions of Charles Dickens's *Bleak House*, but equally less relevant to the book's subject, a brief account of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Marshes chasing elusive and probably phantom land claims through English bureaucracies and the Court of Chancery strays far from William Marsh.

A complicated figure little attended to by historians of early Vermont,

William Marsh (1738-1816) grew to adulthood and started a family in Dutchess County, New York, during the Rent Wars of the 1760s. After British troops suppressed the agrarian insurrection in Dutchess County, many of the vanquished rebels moved north and east to settle on the New Hampshire Grants. Though probably not one of the insurgents, Marsh moved in 1768 with his family to Manchester on the New Hampshire Grants. In the next few years, he prospered by farming, buying and selling land, and keeping a tavern. Meanwhile, by the early 1770s, the colonial government of the province of New York and allied wealthy land speculators found themselves opposed by a new, burgeoning resistance to New York's land aggrandizing efforts on the Grants. Settlers launched another armed insurrection against New York's attempts to impose its authority over land grants and titles.

By 1772-73, Marsh had been several times elected town pound keeper and is believed by the authors of this book to have led a small force of Manchester men to ally with the insurgent Green Mountain Boys, led by the self-commissioned Colonel Ethan Allen. Marsh's colonelcy in the book's title seems to have been awarded posthumously by nineteenth-century historians. Marsh's personal role in resisting New York's efforts to establish jurisdiction on the Grants remains obscure. In 1775-76, he served on Manchester's Committee of Safety and as the town's delegate to the General Convention of the Committees of Safety on the Grants to plan for defenses against Britain and New York. In mid-1775, wary of Ethan Allen's abilities and motives, Marsh warned Philip Schuyler not to allow Allen to command the new Green Mountain regiment that the revolutionary New York Congress had agreed to support. The Committee of Safety representatives who convened in Dorset to select officers for the regiment voted 41-5 in favor of Seth Warner for the post. Obviously, many more delegates than Marsh thought the Hero of Ticonderoga unfit to lead a real regiment into war.

Committees of Safety and the Council of Safety in late 1776 sent Marsh and others to towns in the Connecticut River Valley to seek their alliance with towns west of the Green Mountains. He did not participate in the 1777 conventions that produced a declaration of independence and a covenant of towns to organize a government, though he did sign a proclamation of support for the Continental Congress.

Using the very thin Vermont record of Marsh's patriot role, the Browns' story presents a mildly interesting figure in the early history of Vermont about whose motives almost nothing is known during the critical point of his life when he left his family in Manchester to join the British army's invasion of the Champlain Valley in mid-1777. Burgoyne had sent loyalist

rangers ahead of his army to recruit wavering loyalists to join the British invasion. Abjuring the oath of allegiance he had taken to support the Continental Congress and defend the soon-to-be named Vermont, Marsh joined Burgoyne at Skenesboro on the march to Saratoga. Records lack any report of Marsh fighting with the loyalist ranger troops, but he was part of their retreat to Canada that was allowed separately from the surrender convention that sent Burgoyne's regulars as prisoners to Boston and elsewhere. Stopping for a surreptitious visit in Manchester, he went on to Canada to serve the Crown in various capacities, including as a spy and a courier during the Haldimand negotiations. The historical records' silence on his motives left unappealing choices for the authors. Did an otherwise undisclosed reverence for the British Crown or cupidity and cowardice drive turncoat William Marsh to join Burgoyne? The Browns conclude that he was a troubled man. At that time and place, chances of finding an untroubled man among patriots and loyalists were slim to none.

In his absence, the Vermont Confiscation Court soon took Marsh's Manchester farm and other lands, including 154 acres in Burlington that Ira Allen bought from the court, which brother Ethan would occupy for the last two years of his life. This book adds little to our understanding of the Allen brothers' shady Burlington land dealing, including Ira's ambiguous documentation of the Marsh farm's acquisition. As a courier and spy, Marsh carried at least one message to Ethan Allen during the first round of the Haldimand negotiations. At St. John from 1782-84, Marsh managed the exchanges of prisoners and loyalists established by an agreement with the British. During those postwar years Marsh also explored and promoted settlement of loyalists down the St. Lawrence River on the Bay of Chaleurs and upstream around the Bay of Quinte on Lake Ontario, where many members of his family eventually settled.

Soon after the General Assembly established the Courts of Confiscation in 1777-1778, Marsh lost his Manchester and Burlington lands. In 1782, the assembly repealed the law that banished loyalists, thus permitting Marsh to return openly to Vermont. His sons, meanwhile, had maintained the farm in Dorset that Marsh's father had bequeathed him during the war, a legal insurance that allowed him to return to Vermont, supervise his sons' work, and serve as a courier and spy for Canadian Governor General Haldimand. On one of those subsequent visits, Marsh and his sons drove about fifty head of cattle to feed loyalist refugees at St. John in 1783. Between 1784 and 1788 he made frequent journeys from Canada to Vermont on his own business or family affairs.

The authors were influenced by Matt Jones's *Vermont in the Making* (1939) for his highly positive assessment of Marsh's role in the organization of Vermont at various conventions of the Committees of Safety. Cer-

tainly Marsh and at least two other envoys from the convention carried a significant message to the east side towns that persuaded them to join the pre-constitution association in 1777, but nothing he said there or at the convention survives. Very few of Marsh's paper records have survived, in part probably because he produced few originals. He retrieved his financial records—mostly bonds and debts—from Vermont in the 1780s, but they too seem not to have survived. Shortly after Marsh turned loyalist, Ira Allen called him “the infamous William Marsh.” While other Vermont leaders could have used stronger language than Ira's, Governor Thomas Chittenden supported Marsh's unsuccessful claim for restoration of his confiscated Manchester land. His wife never lost her own land in Manchester to the Confiscation Court.

Marsh settled permanently back in Dorset about 1790 and appears in several federal census counts for that town until his death in 1816. His gravestone remains standing in Dorset, presenting numerous figures from Freemasonry and a quotation from Oliver Goldsmith's history of Rome on the assassination of Pompey, Julius Caesar's rival: “He whose merits deserve a temple, can now scarce find a tomb.” Though Marsh fell far short of Pompey's military accomplishments, Goldsmith's sentimental pathos struck the required chord as an epitaph for an eighteenth-century family's beloved patriarch.

The authors' understanding of the Haldimand negotiations from the British point of view is heavily indebted, correctly, to the Haldimand papers. They diligently and commendably searched for documentary evidence and genealogy to track down Marsh. Yet, large doses of concision and paraphrase applied to their book could have kept the story of William Marsh front and center for readers.

JOHN J. DUFFY

*John J. Duffy, Emeritus Professor of English and Humanities at Johnson State College, lives on Isle La Motte. He is co-author with H. Nicholas Muller III, of *Inventing Ethan Allen* (2014) and chief editor of *The Vermont Encyclopedia* (2003) and *Ethan Allen and His Kin: Selected Correspondence* (1998).*

The Problem of Slavery in Early Vermont, 1777-1810

By Harvey Amani Whitfield (Barre: Vermont Historical Society, 2014, pp. xiv, 140, \$19.95).

Harvey Amani Whitfield has made a big splash in the Vermont press and among Vermont historians with his new book on the history of slavery in early Vermont, and for good reason. *The Problem of Slavery in*

Early Vermont, 1777-1810, published by the Vermont Historical Society, is an edited collection of primary documents that attempts to reconcile the popular and centuries-old belief that Vermont was always a place without slavery with what in reality is a messier and more complicated historical record. The truth is that the full elimination of slavery in Vermont happened gradually, and that slavery and antislavery sentiments coexisted in early Vermont. As Whitfield says in his introductory essay, “The end of slavery must be viewed as a long process that occurred over thirty years (1777-1810), during which time emancipation, slavery, freedom, racism, hopes for natural rights, reenslavement, *de facto* slavery, and fleeting notions of black citizenship existed simultaneously” (p. 4).

For over 200 years Vermonters have proudly pointed to the state’s 1777 constitution as evidence that Vermont’s strong antislavery principles date to its founding. Whitfield reminds us that the Vermont Constitution barred adulthood slavery only. As Kari J. Winter did in her 2005 discussion of the forced indenture of Jeffrey Brace’s stepchildren, Whitfield points out that black children were vulnerable in early Vermont and that forced labor could take several forms. Room remains for historians to further parse out the difference between forced indenture and forced childhood enslavement as they existed in New England.

Whitfield goes a step further by arguing that adult slavery persisted despite the Vermont Constitution, and his contextual analysis of that document and the laws that followed it is perhaps the most important contribution of the book. As Whitfield sees it, the laws “An Act to Prevent the Sale and Transportation of Negroes & Molattoes Out of This State” from 1786 (Document 11) and the 1806 “Prevention of Kidnapping Act” (Document 30) were each attempts to strengthen earlier legislation. As such, they point to a problem of enforcement and suggest the discrepancy between laws on the books in Vermont and a cultural attitude of tolerance and perhaps even acceptance of Vermont enslavement and interstate slave sales. The 1790 bill of sale between a man in Springfield and a man in New Hampshire for the purchase of an eight-year-old boy named Anthony (Document 14) personalizes the trafficking of children and documents the continuation of practices that had been made illegal. As Whitfield says, “Slavery clearly had not ended for adult African Americans and certainly not for their still-enslaved children who had not reached the age of majority spelled out in the constitution” (pp. 31-32).

The Problem of Slavery in Early Vermont includes eight advertisements for runaway slaves that appeared in the *Vermont Gazette* between 1786 and 1795, all of them posted by New York residents who must have assumed, as Whitfield says, that Vermonters “might help them regain escaped slaves” (p. 77). Those advertisements document the border fluidity

of early Vermont and provide an intriguing glimpse into the clothing, occupational skills, and bilingual fluency of New York State slaves at the end of the eighteenth century. Taken together, they provide a northern and seemingly less violent counterpoint to the runaway ads common in southern newspapers and popularized in print by abolitionists.

In public talks and interviews, Whitfield has expressed his hunch that the documents featured in the book are only a small sampling of the evidence that awaits researchers willing to bypass the better-known state and university repositories for the often uncatalogued sources in vaults of town clerks' offices and county courthouses across the state. If Whitfield is correct, his work has set a model for future researchers to follow, and the ongoing digitization of some of those sources will facilitate the study of Vermont slavery.

As many scholars of Vermont history know, Whitfield's book is just the latest research to focus on the broad but related topics of black Vermonters and antislavery efforts in Vermont. The quality of that scholarship has been uneven but always attracts interest. Why is this history so compelling? Why do we seem so consistently and repeatedly surprised to learn that Vermont's relationship to slavery and racial inclusion is less honorable than what we like to believe? We may be surprised to learn about free black community members or indentured black children, but early Vermonters were not surprised by them. Margot Minardi's brilliant 2010 study of slavery and memory making in Massachusetts can help by reminding us that the best scholarship focuses not on the rhetoric of retrieving hidden histories—on “rescuing individual lives and collective mentalities from the sediments of history” (Margot Minardi, *Making Slavery History: Abolitionism and the Politics of Memory in Massachusetts* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010], p. 5)—but on the long history of what we as a state have chosen to remember and to forget. History is a story, and at some point relatively early on, Vermonters began to tell each other that as with so many other things, Vermont's relationship to slavery had been exceptional. Harvey Amani Whitfield's lovely new book problematizes that narrative though his keen analysis of primary documents that implicate Vermont in the practice of human enslavement; it remains for Whitfield and others to explain the processes by which those documents and the people they represent were forgotten, and were left out of our shared story.

JILL MUDGETT

Jill Mudgett is a cultural historian who writes about environmental and regional topics from her home in Lamoille County. Her research interests include the connection between the natural environment and antislavery sentiments in northern New England.

Why Coolidge Matters: Leadership Lessons from America's Most Underrated President.

By Charles C. Johnson (New York and London: Encounter Books, 2013, pp. 408, \$25.99).

After years of relative obscurity and degradation by scores of scholars, Calvin Coolidge has experienced a revival among American conservatives since President Reagan placed his portrait in the Oval Office of the White House. Various conservative writers in recent years have worked hard to enhance Coolidge's reputation by singling out what they consider to be the many virtues of his administration. They stress that when he became president upon the death of Warren G. Harding in 1923, the federal government was facing a mountain of war debt, but that instead of raising taxes, Coolidge cut taxes. The result was strong economic growth, considerable expansion of the American economy, increased government revenues, and elimination of the war-time debt. They strongly criticize what they term the age of big government that started with Franklin Roosevelt, which in their opinion has brought untold misery upon the nation with mountains of debt, deepening doubt about the viability of the American republic, and deep partisan discord.

Conservative investigative reporter Charles C. Johnson presents his interpretation of President Coolidge's views and actions on a wide range of topics in his book, *Why Coolidge Matters: Leadership Lessons from America's Most Underrated President*. While Amity Shlaes's lengthy biography is a linear chronicle of Coolidge's political career and the evolution of his economic ideas, Johnson's work is a subject-by-subject survey of Coolidge's ideas and actions in a wide variety of areas including taxes, education, defense, the Constitution, racial issues, foreign policy, and the role of government in society.

Johnson claims that Coolidge was the epitome of a progressive conservative. Coolidge, Johnson notes, was a strong admirer of the American Declaration of Independence and of the Constitution. The goal of government, he believed, must be to protect the freedom and liberty guaranteed by these documents. Therefore, while government should protect the welfare, freedom, and dignity of the people, it must not enact policies that would in any way erode these privileges. Taxes were a major concern to Coolidge. He noted that every dollar taken in by the government is one dollar less that an enterprising businessman could invest in the economy. Economic growth would best occur

when hard-working individuals could advance their welfare through their own initiatives.

Johnson recounts how Coolidge wanted Americans to work less for the government and more for themselves, and to enjoy a larger share of the rewards of their industry. He regarded fiscal matters as a deep moral question based on the founding era's assumption that a free people can and should govern themselves. The productive capacity of the nation was the sum total of the initiatives of each individual and Coolidge urged all Americans to work hard and save. He thought the way out of the depression was for the government to cut spending and reduce taxes, thus putting money into the hands of assiduous Americans whose hard work and wise saving and investments would restore the nation to prosperity.

Johnson devotes a full chapter to the Vermont upbringing and education of Calvin Coolidge. Coolidge grew up working hand-in-hand with other farmers and common laborers. He had deep respect and empathy for the many hard-working and dedicated men and women who strove to scratch out a living in the rocky soil of central Vermont. He learned about the hardship of unnecessary taxes as he followed his father on his tax-collecting routes and came to respect the piety, thrift, and dedication of his fellow Vermonters. Johnson writes:

Unlike current leaders, who tend to bemoan the fact that they worked as children or to boast about it for political gain with middle-class voters, Coolidge expressed genuine fondness for his early days, especially his work in a smithy. The blacksmith "always pitched the hay on the ox cart and I raked after," Coolidge recalled. "If I was getting behind he slowed up a little. He was a big-hearted man. I wish I could see that blacksmith again." Coolidge didn't seek to distance himself from his youth (p. 48).

Johnson goes to great lengths to discuss the strong educational background of Coolidge as a youth in Vermont and as a student at Amherst College. He stresses that though Coolidge may have had modest origins, his home had many books, most of them great books. Coolidge developed a strong love for reading and from a very young age spent most of his free time reading classical literature. He loved history and romantic literature and before her premature death, his mother helped him to cultivate a deep appreciation of such literary masters as Sir Walter Scott and Tennyson. Coolidge was a dedicated student of history who soon realized that "ancient thought shaped present realities and therefore politics" (p. 49).

When Coolidge entered Vermont's Black River Academy at age thirteen he grew deeply interested in government and the founding of

the American republic. He studied and came to deeply admire the American Constitution, “realizing that no other document devised by the hand of man ever brought so much progress and happiness to humanity. The good it has brought can never be measured” (pp. 50-51). Coolidge studied Greek and Roman history and realized how modern ideas of democracy first evolved in Greece, and that the once mighty Roman Republic fell because it abandoned its own ideals. He feared that the United States could experience a similar fall if it neglected its own ideals. To survive, the United States needed to build and enhance the education of all its citizens so they could better understand and work to develop the bold ideals of the American Revolution.

The organization of Johnson’s book is both a help and a hindrance. Each chapter is topically organized, which allows a lengthy exposition of Coolidge’s ideas on such topics as the role of government in society, national defense, and so on. The research is excellent, but the writing is quite dry. The chapters are very informative and well organized, but Johnson relies far too much on long quotes from Coolidge to support his points. Furthermore, each chapter is independent of all the others, so there is little to tie this book together. What we really have here is a collection of essays that bear little relation with each other. Reading the entire work can become a bit tiresome because there is no real underlying narrative. Nevertheless, the reader who makes the effort will come away with a strong understanding of Calvin Coolidge’s world view.

DANIEL A. MÉTRAUX

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Taken by Storm, 1938: A Social and Meteorological History of the Great New England Hurricane

By Lourdes B. Avilés (American Meteorological Society, 2013, pp. 265, \$40.00).

Taken by Storm, 1938 is a riveting historical and meteorological account that addresses questions about the lead time with which the hurricane was forecast, the adequacy of the warnings disseminated, post-event recovery, and lessons learned. Lourdes B. Avilés presents her

work in three parts: an overview, which sets the science context of the event; the life cycle of the hurricane; and its aftermath.

The book opens with a review of the meteorology of the hurricane, its historical context, and the dynamics of that fateful September day in 1938. Historically, the world was in the throes of World War II, and war news eclipsed Weather Bureau warnings of the impending storm. In outlining previous land-falling tropical systems in New England since 1635, Avilés distinguishes between cyclones of tropical origin (like hurricanes) *versus* those of mid-latitude origin (such as nor'easters). The importance of this distinction was highlighted in 2012, when like the 1938 hurricane, Hurricane Sandy transitioned into an extratropical system as its effects unfolded in New England. The main difference between these two events, however, was the lack of awareness of the impending danger in 1938 *versus* the unfortunate drop in public perception of Sandy's danger due to the change in designation. Also unchanged over the decades is the orientation of New England's coastline relative to an approaching tropical cyclone and the resulting implications for storm surge at varying tidal marks.

The hurricane served as a catalyst for economic, social, and political change, especially poignant in the post-Depression era of the 1930s. Particularly important were the changes in forecasting, methodology, and instrumentation that took place across the Weather Bureau, driven in part by the limitations and communications issues brought to light by this disaster. In 1938, forecasters used pressure maps hand-drawn from far fewer observations than we have today and without access to the upper atmospheric details that have become a staple of modern forecasting. Inaccurate forecasts on that fateful day largely stemmed from an over-reliance on the climatology of past tropical cyclones. In fact, Charles Pierce, a junior forecaster was the only one to produce an accurate forecast by relying on his undergraduate training in meteorology, aviation experience, and exposure to techniques used in Europe. When these forecasting shortfalls converged with the widespread belief inside and outside the Weather Bureau that major hurricanes do not affect New England, inadequate communications merged with a lack of preparedness in the worst possible way.

Avilés leads the reader through the development of a tropical cyclone from its birth as an easterly wave off the coast of Africa. Her meticulous reconstruction of the hurricane from the historical accounts is fascinating in its own right, but also allows her to effectively intersperse critical background knowledge of the tools of the trade, such as the Beaufort Scale, and how inferences can be made from diary entries. As the hurricane intensified and recurved away from Florida, Avilés high-

lights the timing of hurricane warnings, the progression from almost “too late” (i.e. the storm’s central pressure had already dropped rapidly), to the twenty-first century practice of giving 36-hour alerts, to allow for proper preparation including evacuation. Lessons learned from this event have informed the best practices still used by today’s National Weather Service when it conducts service assessments of field office performance following a major weather event.

Remarkable similarities existed in a deep trough in the jet stream observed during both Hurricane Sandy and the 1938 hurricane. The rapid northward acceleration of the storm led to its other name of “The Long Island Express,” with northern New England experiencing copious rainfall (of at least 17”), inland flooding, and excessive tree damage. Avilés highlights the importance of pooling precipitation data from all sources available in compiling storm totals. Also important is the role of precipitation prior to the main event (called a Predecessor Rainfall Event), and how this primes the ground for later flooding or tree blow-down (observations that were also made in southern Vermont following Tropical Storm Irene in August 2011).

The book concludes with an analysis of the storm’s impacts and relief efforts (Chapter 8), as well as past, present, and future New England hurricanes (Chapter 9). In 1938, loss of human life was highest in Rhode Island; but throughout the region, ecosystems and geologic structures were affected, and no sector of the region’s economy remained untouched. For the first time, federal government assistance shifted from a localized approach to large-scale response to the damage, primarily under the auspices of the Works Progress Administration (WPA). This same spirit of local organizations “chipping in” to assist in pragmatic, logistical ways also characterized the post-Irene and Sandy response. Using the 1635, 1815, and 1938 cyclones, Avilés extrapolates the worst-case scenario of intense New England hurricanes to present “what if” scenarios for damages, recovery costs, communications and emergency planning, and relief.

Avilés’s accessible writing style successfully intertwines scientific detail, historical narrative, and present-day hurricane monitoring/archiving methodology in a way that will appeal to atmospheric scientists and lay readers alike. Her book is a testament to climate literacy in action, affording all readers an understanding of the processes involved, basic definitions, and why changes in methodology have been made over time. Her treatment of scientific uncertainty and how this has changed over the decades as our knowledge and skills have increased is noteworthy. Finally, the recurring theme of the many lessons learned in the aftermath of this hurricane is one of the valuable contributions of

this monograph. The only two drawbacks to the book are the tendency to repeat material across chapters and an organization (historical narrative interspersed with present-day analysis) that is not always intuitive. Each chapter may have been designed to serve as a stand-alone entity in terms of its content, even though Avilés provides references across chapters.

This book stands as a great contribution to the fields of historical and synoptic climatology, in its use of such disparate records and data sources to create a coherent whole, and for highlighting where our present-day understanding of storm behavior originated.

LESLEY-ANN DUPIGNY-GIROUX

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*Food Co-ops in America: Communities,
Consumption, and Economic Democracy*

By Anne Meis Knupfer (Cornell University Press: Ithaca and London, 2013, pp. 273, \$29.95).

This is a book that will find its way into the hands of several different kinds of readers. Some will welcome it as a useful first effort at chronicling the history of food cooperatives in the United States, while others will read it as an advice manual for today's cooperative movement.

Until recently, food cooperatives have attracted little attention from historians, so Knupfer's work provides a significant starting point for future studies. The book begins with a brief account of the origins of food cooperatives in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. But this background is sketchy: The author's central concern is cooperative stores founded in the mid-twentieth century. To assemble her story, Knupfer traveled across the country, exhuming mimeographed and handwritten records buried in attics and back offices. Fleshing out those often scanty archives, she interviewed co-op members, workers, and board members from a dozen different cooperative stores. Based on these case studies, Knupfer makes a convincing argument that the food co-ops founded during the Great Depression and World War II developed political sensibilities and struggles quite different from those founded in the 1960s and 1970s. Co-ops founded in the Great Depres-

sion or World War II, for example, often confronted the temptation to become more and more like the grocery-stores-turned-supermarkets that were mushrooming around them in the postwar years. Co-ops founded in the 1960s and 1970s, in contrast, were less likely to make unwise choices about growth, but were more often threatened by internal ideological dissension.

Knupfer chose co-ops scattered across the country as case studies (although all are located in the Northeast, in Midwestern cities, or along the northern California coast). So it seems especially intriguing (to this reader, at least) that the co-ops she identifies as the three oldest surviving stores in the United States are all located in Vermont (Putney and Adamant) or just over the border, in Hanover and Lebanon, New Hampshire. Knupfer does not make anything of this fact, but she does point out that these three co-ops have strikingly diverse histories, in spite of their close geographical proximity. As Knupfer tells it, Hanover's Consumer Cooperative Society (founded in 1936) faced a challenge common to its generation of co-ops: In the post-World War II years, it expanded its size and customer base, but struggled to maintain an active and engaged membership. The Adamant Food Co-op, on the other hand, was also founded during the Depression (in 1935, making it the oldest surviving food co-op in the United States, according to Knupfer), but characteristically followed its own path, remaining extremely small and almost purposefully disorganized, its identity completely merged with its village and the music school that grew up alongside it. The Putney Food Co-op took still another route: Although it was founded in 1941 (making it the third oldest surviving co-op), it transformed itself into a 1960s-style "food revolution" co-op in the years when the town was attracting a large and vibrant mix of communards and radicals.

The combination of interviews, personal reflections, and archival research presented here makes for thought-provoking history. But Knupfer's concerns are not primarily historical. She is most at home writing as an advocate of the cooperative movement, and her book is designed chiefly for readers who are interested in fostering the success of food co-ops today. At the heart of the book is a frankly ideological argument: When co-ops make the right choices, Knupfer argues, they foster a kind of participatory democracy that is vital to a healthy political culture. At the same time, they offer an important and welcome alternative to industrial-scale capitalism. In Knupfer's judgment, her case studies indicate that active democratic participation—which she views as vital to the mission of co-ops—is strained and weakened when cooperatives grow too large. Her assessment is that co-ops often go down the wrong path when they expand, open branch stores, or place too much emphasis

on increasing markets and sales. Ultimately, Knupfer argues, co-ops do best and survive longest when they keep a clear emphasis on democratic participation, cherish the local and small-scale, and maintain a close connection to community: A Vermont reader might be tempted to name it the “Adamant model.”

DONA BROWN

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Two Towns: One Community. Haverhill, New Hampshire & Newbury, Vermont, 1763-2013: Souvenir Companion to a Year of Community Celebration, December 31, 2012-December 31, 2013

By Haverhill/Newbury 250th Committee (North Haverhill, N.H.: Haverhill/Newbury 250th Committee, 2013, pp. 160, paper, \$10.00).

The subtitle for this celebratory volume might have been, “The Search for Community: Paired Towns on the Connecticut.” Here we have a book about two towns in a valley separated by the Connecticut River. Historians sometimes called this spot “The Intervales” because of its wide, fertile natural meadows. It drew such important early settlers as Jacob Bayley (to Newbury, Vermont) and his friend Moses Hazen (to Haverhill, New Hampshire), directly across the river. These two would later attempt to build the ill-fated military road from Newbury to St. Johns, Québec—without (one needs to *seriously* appreciate) a single chainsaw or dozer.

History is a laboratory for social scientists, helping to answer questions about (for instance) the collective action of governmental units. One such question might be: Can social interaction survive political differences? How much community is left between the towns on either side of the Connecticut River after two centuries of *political* separation as different American states?

The towns of Haverhill and Newbury have written a book together to commemorate their common founding in 1763 and their linked history over the subsequent two and a half centuries. In it they claim that a vibrant interstate community does exist within their remarkably dif-

ferent systems of statewide politics. They even entitle their book, *Two Towns: One Community*. It is chock full of history; of churches, farms, roads, places, people, bridges, and more. Yet these two towns are creatures of the very dissimilar politics of Vermont and New Hampshire.

To answer this question calls up another: Do the valley towns of Newbury and Haverhill reflect the *political* divide between Vermont and New Hampshire that has perplexed so many political scientists over the years? It turns out that they do. For example, in the most recent presidential election, Vermont's statewide vote for President Obama was 66 percent, while Newbury's was only 61 percent. New Hampshire went 52 percent for President Obama and Haverhill 49 percent. The difference between Haverhill and Newbury (12 percentage points) was *greater* than the difference between either Haverhill and New Hampshire (3 percentage points) or Newbury and Vermont (5 percentage points). Politically, both towns acted more like their home state than like each other.

At the same time, Newbury and Haverhill are beset by *internal* fragmentation that threatens "community." The unincorporated "village" of Woodsville is the commercial center within the town of Haverhill, New Hampshire. Woodsville is also the *de facto* "county seat" of Grafton County, New Hampshire. The town of Newbury has two incorporated villages within it, Wells River village and Newbury village. Both have their own taxing system and decision-making process.

Finally, the most important local function of all—public education—is often at odds with other community functions and agendas. The town of Newbury is formally associated with Oxbow Union High School in Bradford to the south. The village of Wells River (in the town of Newbury) is formally linked to Blue Mountain School in the town of Ryegate (just outside Wells River) to the north. Haverhill, on the other hand, lacks the profound complexity of Newbury's outback regions but is complicated by New Hampshire's stronger county system.

Enough. This is an extraordinary book. Indeed, its very existence answers the questions I posed at the beginning: Is there enough community bridging the upper valley of the Connecticut River between Vermont and New Hampshire to sustain the title of the book, *Two Towns: One Community*? Is there enough community given the very real political divisions *within* these towns? After reading this 160-page volume—which contains 346 photographs; nine maps; 66 individually authored short essays; an introductory poem, "Yoked," by Newbury resident and Vermont Poet Laureate Sydney Lea; dozens of unauthored pieces; and 80 advertisements—dawn broke over my marble head! This book neither would nor could have happened without community. It validates

itself: page-turning, rich, honest and beautiful. Yes, it is always beautiful.

Even the advertisements that helped fund the book make a valuable contribution. Easy to look at and deeply interesting, these advertisements are good history, telling us and future generations much about the life of this historic spot. And the citizen committee that put this book together was wise enough to spread them throughout. No “year-book” ambiance here.

Finally, this book is more than a celebration. It is an historical document of tremendous value. It is local history at its best: written by farmers and poets, mechanics and teachers, young and old, and (especially) newcomers and old-timers; and beautifully illustrated. And, it was written by a *committee*—where else but in a strong community could this possibly happen?

FRANK BRYAN

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Legendary Locals of Burlington

By Robert J. Resnik (Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2013, pp. 128, paper, \$21.99).

Deep down, I suspect every historian harbors the hidden desire to create history where none presently exists. In effect, this is what longtime Burlington resident and reference librarian Robert Resnik has done through his invention of legendary locals. His purpose, explained in a brief introduction, is simple: “Burlington’s most valuable resource . . . is its residents. This book will introduce you to some special ones” (p. 8).

With few exceptions, each of his subjects merits similar treatment: a picture (sometimes two) and a thoughtful one-paragraph description of their noteworthy achievement(s). Resnik organizes his presentation around seven themes: People and Their Places and Things; Stars of Media and Multimedia; Teachers, Historians, Archivists, and Other Keepers of the Flame; Entrepreneurs, Land Barons, and Businesses Large and Small; Artists of Every Sort; Local Heroes; and One of a Kind.

As evidenced in the chapter titles, the author does not follow traditional chronological or contextual conventions. Chapter 1 opens with

“The Queen City,” a page sporting two photographs, one of Burlington’s first mayor, Albert L. Catlin (who proclaimed in an early speech, “We represent a young city, which may in time be known and distinguished as the Queen City of New England”), the second dating from the early 1950s, showing a highway sign announcing “Welcome to Burlington *The Queen City.*” Subsequent pages pay homage to John Converse, described as a native University of Vermont graduate who made his fortune in Chicago and endowed a dormitory thought later to be haunted; Bill Truex, who in the 1970s-80s spearheaded the construction of the pedestrian-friendly Church Street Marketplace; late nineteenth-century businessman William Van Pattern; Frederick Billings (UVM grad and president of the Northern Pacific Railroad, who funded H.H. Richardson’s Billings Library); Steve Conant (owner of Conant Metal & Light); and Bishop Louis de Goesbriand, the first bishop of the Diocese of Burlington. It is a disparate group, to say the least.

But that is only the beginning. Resnik’s delight in melding past and present, and the expected with the eccentric and esoteric, underscores the playful manner with which he (re)invents Burlington’s legendary past. In the chapter on “Stars of Media and Multimedia,” that past predictably incorporates a good deal of the present (a majority of his legendary figures are both alive and still very active!). “Teachers, Historians, Archivists, and Other Keepers of the Flame” includes many who would doubtless appear in any historian’s list: for example, Zadock Thompson, John Dewey, Bertha Terrill, Raul Hilberg, and Ralph Nading Hill. Less obvious additions, though, are Lorrie Colburn, the “Library Lady,” Kenneth Rothwell, Shakespearean scholar, Will Miller, UVM philosopher and peace activist, and Leesa Guay-Timpson, Burlington High School “Frau.”

Criticism could easily be focused on the number of renowned educators whom the author overlooks (a UVM list might include former President James Marsh, Russian historian William Daniels, and Samuel B. Hand, Vermont historian). But again, that misses the author’s point. What abounds in this work—and what this reader rejoices in—is the author’s unapologetic celebration of a colorful and diverse set of residents, past and present, whose presence informs the special character of this community.

Peter Freyne, Lauren Glenn Davidian, Crestian Lea, Lyn Severance, not to mention the “Clarinet Man,” the “Dumpling Lady,” and the “Hot Dog Lady.” These are but a few of the many colorful characters Robert Resnik honors in this very personal tribute. While *Legendary Locals of Burlington* is not, by traditional measures, a work of scholarship, it is to

be commended for preserving a multifaceted past and present that might otherwise be lost.

A lifelong Burlington resident and historian myself, I took great delight in continually discovering information I didn't know, people with whom I was unfamiliar, and priceless pictures aptly placing individuals in their historical context that more than overcame a relative scarcity of historical text.

This book is, for the moment, the definitive work on its chosen subject matter. But I suspect—and I hope—that it will inspire others to continue to render further contributions in nurturing a multifaceted past that pays homage to the accomplishments, antics, and oddities that have made and continue to make Burlington a city of distinction.

P. JEFFREY POTASH

P. Jeffrey Potash is a coauthor of Freedom and Unity: A History of Vermont (2004) and a lifelong Burlington resident.

Freedom and Unity: The Vermont Movie. One State, Many Voices

Directed and edited by Nora Jacobson (Norwich, Vt.: Upper Valley Arts, 2013, Boxed set of 3 DVDs + 28-page booklet, \$44.99).

Making a film about history is hard. Viewers' eyes demand movement. We like color, too. All that gives the medium a bias toward the present. It's easier to make a film about Herbert Hoover than George Washington, and easier still to make one about Lady Gaga. That's the way it is, and the merits of the subject have nothing to do with it.

Which leads me to *The Vermont Movie*. A big, sprawling love note to a particular vision of Vermont, it is a textbook example (if you'll excuse the metaphor of a book) of the methods filmmakers can use to bring history to life. The film—or series of films, really—was the collaborative effort of dozens of filmmakers, and their collective enterprise and inventiveness is on full display.

Home movies, old photographs, personal reminiscences, expert talking heads, rare footage, newspaper headlines, and visual artifacts are all in here, woven together to tell a series of Vermont stories. Even those of us most familiar with Vermont history will see things that are new to us and wonder, "Where did they find that?" I watched on DVD and

found myself often stopping to take a long look at something or other. Putting it all together must have been a gargantuan task for Project Director and Editor Nora Jacobson.

It couldn't have been easy, because even edited down the film is not short. *The Vermont Movie* is really six films of about 80 minutes each, organized thematically rather than chronologically. Part 4, for example, is titled "Doers and Shapers," and covers such diverse elements as French Canadians, town poor farms, and Vermont inventors.

The biggest compliment I can give *The Vermont Movie* is that, despite its prodigious length and breadth of scale, I was often left wanting more. In many places—such as that segment on French Canadians, for example—I felt as if the film was just warming up to the subject when it moved on. I suspect at least one filmmaker involved in the project would agree with me there, but analytic brevity is another inherent problem with the medium. It has to move along, and it's eight hours long (in total) already. You can't include everything.

But still, Howard Coffin must have been disappointed that the movie gives considerably more attention to Scott and Helen Nearing than it does to the Civil War.

Speaking of Howard, the movie uses a number of outstanding talking heads. The filmmakers consulted a variety of Vermont authors, historians, and enthusiasts, and they are the ones who bring life to the movie. Some other examples: Paul Searls, whose enthusiasm for his subject matter comes shining through in all his comments, is an absolute master of the telling detail. Frank Bryan has a wonderful common-sense knack for reminding us that the demands of climate and making a living around here have always had a stubborn way of intruding on the plans of even the most idealistic dreamer. The late John Dutton (to my mind, the star of Part 1) displays an incredibly deep knowledge of his specialty, local maps and roads. He was the kind of guy everybody (correctly) calls a real old-timer, and the sort of person to whom the professional historians should pay far more attention. Good for the filmmakers for finding him.

At other times, though, one wishes they had been a bit more discriminating in whom to term an expert. In the segment on eugenics, for example, we didn't hear enough from Nancy Gallagher, and heard too much from other people who seemed to be reciting what they remembered from reading her. I'd rather have gotten more from her.

And about that particular vision I mentioned at the top: This is definitely a baby boomer's, neo-hippie history of the state. At times one gets the impression that the filmmakers went to great lengths to interview every type of Vermonter but a Republican. Nor do we get much of

anything about religion. That's a real blind spot if you want to understand this state before, say, 1969.

Still, in the end, it's that neo-hippie perspective that holds this sprawling film together. The filmmakers set out to make a history of a quirky place that drew contrarian dreamers. Their affection for their subject comes through most, I think, when the aging baby boomers in *The Vermont Movie* speak of their lives here back when they were young and Vermont offered an alternative life. In that sense the movie is less a history of a state than a fascinating artifact of a perspective.

KEVIN THORNTON

Kevin Thornton, lives in Brandon and is a Community Research Fellow for 2014, awarded by the University of Vermont's Center for Research on Vermont.