

Book Reviews

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BOOK REVIEWS



“Hero Strong” and Other Stories, Tales of Girlhood Ambition, Female Masculinity, and Women’s Worldly Achievement in Antebellum America

By Mary F. W. Gibson; edited with an introduction by Daniel A. Cohen (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2014, pp. xviii, 172, \$69.00).

In 1966 historian Barbara Welter wrote a seminal article in the *American Quarterly* outlining the “cult of true womanhood,” a feminine ideal that not only circumscribed a generation of white women in antebellum America but also predominated in women’s domestic fiction. Womanly virtue consisted of piety, purity, domesticity, and submissiveness; to stray outside these boundaries of selflessness was to risk the loss of love and threaten the social order. Mary F. W. Gibson (1835-1906), an aspiring author from Woodstock, Vermont, sought to challenge the prevailing ideal by subverting the binary relationship between the sexes. She imagined female characters with male traits, feminized their suitors, and fantasized different outcomes. Her tales are filled with ambitious young heroes with strong muscles and “hearts of steel”; they act out their desire for fame, fortune, and romantic love by wielding their pens to great effect. Yet Gibson was as bound by the constraints of true womanhood as any of her contemporaries.

In *“Hero Strong” and Other Stories*, Daniel A. Cohen, an associate professor of history at Case Western Reserve University, reprints ten of Gibson’s earliest tales written between 1853 and 1859 to restore her place in literary history. Barely entering adulthood, Gibson was part of that “damned mob of scribbling women” whom Nathaniel Hawthorne fa-

mously denigrated in 1855 for their formulaic domestic plots. By 1860, Gibson and many other nascent women writers had been eclipsed by rampant competition and the rise of a male-dominated highbrow literary canon, but she wrote poetry, satirical sketches, and adventure stories sporadically until the end of the century.

Cohen asserts that Gibson represents a new breed of budding women writers who reveal the rising expectations of American girls in the 1850s. They gave expression to their literary ambitions through the advent of weekly “story papers,” in which Cohen finds early models of the woman author-as-artist. Urban publishers stimulated an outpouring of eclectic literary production to fill these new periodicals geared to the popular taste of a burgeoning class of readers. Literary scholars have largely overlooked the merits of story papers, such as the *True Flag*, *Waverley’s Magazine*, *American Union*, *Olive Branch*, and the most popular, the *New York Ledger*. Yet Cohen insists that they helped launch the careers of such famous literary icons as Fanny Fern, Louisa May Alcott, and E. D. E. N. Southworth, who wrote in a similar vein about the quest for artistic expression during an era that prized romantic love and domestic happiness.

Little is known about Mary Gibson, though her tales reflect aspects of a troubled childhood. A doctor’s daughter who was orphaned as a toddler, Gibson grew up feeling like an outlier and acting the “tomboy” in the busy household of a stern guardian. Whatever deprivations she may have experienced, she did attend Thetford Academy for one year before migrating at age 17 to Boston, where she began writing under the pen name “Winnie Woodfern.” Following in the footsteps of Fanny Fern, Gibson achieved considerable renown as an author before moving to New York in 1855 in search of greater fame. Meanwhile, her encounters with men left her disillusioned with heterosexual love; she married twice without getting a divorce and quickly left her second husband. Unable to repeat her early success, Gibson moved to London in the late 1850s and eventually returned to Vermont about 1867. For the remainder of the century, her stories appeared irregularly under the name Mary W. Stanley Gibson or the pseudonym Margaret Blount in the *New York Ledger* and other papers.

“*Hero Strong*” and *Other Stories* provides evidence that some young women who came of age at mid-century were as restless and eager to attain autonomy as young men despite the demands of a society that insisted upon their selflessness. Cohen delivers an astute analysis of the new literary marketplace as an avenue to success at a time when the explosion of reading, secondary co-education, and mobility prompted young people to imagine lives of unfettered happiness. Gibson’s tales

from the 1850s are of interest, not so much for their literary quality, but because they enable readers to glimpse into the imaginative world of a young woman captivated by this new ethos, one that coincided with the heyday of the early woman's rights movement. Gibson's protagonists disguise themselves with manly traits to gain the respect they deserve; they often end up alone and unloved but consoled through their efforts at self-making. The wild, mountain girl Hilda—who possessed a “poet soul”—fled to freedom, leaving husband, child, and lover behind. “Hers [was] not the tame existence of some women, who have no idea that is not bounded by four walls,” Gibson explains (p. 86). Others such as “Hero Strong” overcome all odds and achieve that elusive feminist goal of “having it all,” wealth, fame, and a loving husband.

Such a happy ending could only be achieved in fiction for Mary Gibson, whose youthful aspirations had expired long before her death in 1906. But thanks to Daniel A. Cohen, her attempt to stake out a place for herself will no longer be forgotten.

MARILYN S. BLACKWELL

Marilyn S. Blackwell, Ph.D. co-authored Frontier Feminist: Clarina Howard Nichols and the Politics of Motherhood (2010). Her most recent article on women in Vermont's abolitionist movement appeared in Vermont History 82 (Winter/Spring 2014).

The Lamoille Stories II: Willy's Beer Garden and 20 New Tales from Vermont

By Bill Schubart (Hinesburg, Vt.: Magic Hill Press, 2014, pp.132, \$15.00, paper).

In *Lamoille Stories Two*, Bill Schubart offers another volume of well-crafted stories of life in rural northern Vermont. The topics range from practical jokes and sexual shenanigans to disability and death and from deeply poignant to laugh-out-loud funny. Schubart's sensitivity to the stresses of cultural change and appreciation of rural character give the stories depth and meaning.

His tales of conflict between locals and newcomers are both amusing and serious. Back-to-the-land hippies are oblivious to generosity that does not fit their naïve worldview. There are “flatlanders” who want the same rules and restrictions they had in suburbia, oblivious to how absurd they can be here or how they might end up creating the world they left behind.

Some stories explore more subtle issues, particularly how the intersections of caring, community, and government have changed over the last half-century. Until the mid-twentieth century, contact with government for rural residents was usually limited to local institutions—town meeting, schools, and road crews. The face of law enforcement was most likely the game warden or county sheriff, who might be your drinking buddy and more interested in keeping you out of trouble than getting you into it. “Jeeter Gets His Buck” reveals various ways—legitimate and not—that road kill fed the poor. In “Heavy Equipment,” Pete appropriates “abandoned” property and imposes his own justice when a wealthy urbanite builds a grand house next door that disrupts his view and privacy as the sheriff looks the other way.

The three stories about Lila reveal how the development of social services, no matter how well intentioned, can interfere with love and caring in sickness or death. Regulations do not accommodate traditional self-sufficiency or adjust for a lifetime of caring. For some, it was incomprehensible that caring for your own could be seen as wrong or that burying your own dead could be illegal. But at least for a time, local officials could bend the rules a little.

Schubart’s ear for language and dialect make the stories a pleasure to read and some, especially the most humorous ones, great for reading aloud. Several characters are masters of malaprops. Pete gets an old abandoned dozer that was not mentioned in the “last will and testicle” of the owner at “prostate court.” Jeeter’s father was “a good man, self-defecatin.” Jeeter is hilariously befuddled by how to bury his parents, but guided and helped by local officials who know him. Bev and June consider “gays and thespians” coming “outta the cellar.”

The book contains twenty-one stories, each a pleasure to read. The settings and some of the characters will be familiar to those who know Lamoille County, but anyone who enjoys rural life and traditional culture in Vermont or beyond will find stories that warm the heart or inspire a good laugh.

DAWN ANDREWS

Dawn Andrews works with non-profit organizations and farms in Cabot.

The St. Albans Raid: Confederate Attack on Vermont

By Michelle Arnosky Sherburne (Charleston, S.C.: The History Press, 2014, pp. 190, paper, \$19.99).

They called themselves Retributors. They had escaped a prison maintained by United States military authorities after being captured as enemy combatants and made their way to Canada. They planned retribution for the “barbarous atrocities,” “suffering . . . of [our] kindred,” and “depredations that were being carried out [on our] civilian population [and] their private property” by the United States armed forces. Some twenty of them, individually and in small groups, infiltrated the United States, crossing its border with Canada without incident. Their goal was to destroy civilian property and confiscate money for their cause. They arrived separately at the community they planned to attack and easily blended into the local population. At exactly 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 19, they drew their weapons, took hostages, gathered up all the money they could lay their hands on, and started fires intended to burn down the town. They made off with hundreds of thousands of dollars, escaped to Canada, and left behind a “reign of terror” throughout the northern United States along its international border.

The year was 1864, the community was St. Albans, Vermont, and the Retributors were officers and enlisted men of the Provisional Army of the Confederate States of America.

Michelle Arnosky Sherburne separates fact from fiction in her well-organized examination of the St. Albans Raid, the northernmost land action of the Civil War. Her work, bearing that title, examines not only the Raid but also the circumstances preceding it, the international diplomatic and legal maneuvering resulting from it, and its effects on Vermont and the nation. It is a welcome contrast to Hollywood’s rendition *The Raid*, released in 1954, in which the commander of the Retributors is promoted from first lieutenant to major and played by Van Heflin. Actually First Lieutenant Bennett Young is a far more dashing and interesting figure than his character in the movie. He was handsome, adventurous, a born leader, and had an almost disarming sense of humor. After his arrest by Canadian authorities he wrote to a local St. Albans newspaper from a Montreal jail apologizing for his inability to be in St. Albans because he was “otherwise engaged.” A letter to the proprietor of the St. Albans hotel where he stayed up to October 19 included a five-dollar bank note taken during the raid to pay his bill.

Although there is little new in Sherburne's recounting of the actual raid, she provides background information on the activities planned by the Confederate Secret Service originating in Canada. They included staging a peace conference at Niagara Falls designed to embarrass Lincoln before the presidential election in November, an attack on a prisoner of war compound to free thousands of captured Confederates, and the capture and manning of gunboats on the Great Lakes by freed Confederates to subjugate towns located on the lakeshores. Compared to those plans, Confederate Commissioner to Canada Jacob Thompson thought that the raid would be "mere banditry against a U.S. border town," in the words of Amanda Foreman's *A World on Fire: Britain's Crucial Role in the American Civil War* (2010); but Confederate Secretary of War James Seddon gave Lieutenant Young his blessing to conduct the raid in retaliation for the "total war" Grant's subordinates were waging in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia and Georgia. The presence of John Wilkes Booth and John Surratt (the son of Mary Surratt, hanged as a convicted conspirator in the Lincoln assassination plot) in a Montreal hotel within walking distance of the famous Notre Dame Cathedral at Place d'Armes, as noted in a caption to a photograph of the hotel (p. 158), raises some very interesting questions about other potential plans that may never be answered.

The success of the Confederate Secret Service in smuggling documents overland from Richmond to Montreal to prevent extradition of the raiders to Vermont to stand trial for their actions blends in nicely with Sherburne's very competent explanation of the legal proceedings of the three trials challenging the unsuccessful attempts of the United States government to have them tried as common criminals. Her discussion of the application of the Webster-Ashburton Treaty of 1842 between the United States and Great Britain to those trials adroitly takes the reader through the maze of international law with the skill of a diplomat. The final verdict was, "The attack upon St. Albans must . . . be regarded as a hostile expedition by the Confederate States against the United States and therefore an act of war and not an offense for which extradition could be claimed" (p. 164).

The author does an admirable job of viewing the raid through the lens of people who experienced it, by using their letters advising that they survived the trauma, the media coverage, and the call to arms by Vermont Governor John Gregory Smith, a St. Albans resident, who was in Montpelier at the time of the raid. Lt. Young had planned to burn Smith's home in retaliation for the burning of the home of Virginia's governor. However, it was spared in the raiders' rush to escape to Canada, and they in turn were spared the threat of harm at the hands of the governor's

wife, Ann Eliza Brainerd Smith, who was armed and prepared to defend their property.

Sherburne has well stocked her work with pictures and maps that make it possible to take an afternoon drive over the escape route of the raiders into Canada, where they were arrested by Canadian authorities to prevent both the ire of the United States government and a possible lynching by the posse of St. Albans citizens hot on their trail across the border. However, some discrepancies persist that detract from the otherwise entertaining and informative read. The map identifies the Québec town near the place where one of the raiders was captured as St. Johns without reference to its current name, St-Jean-sur-Richelieu. The use of contractions common in conversation is inappropriate for the scholarly nature of her work. The dynamite that could have been used to blow open the safe in the Missisquoi Bank that was on the raiders' escape route was not available because it would not be invented by Alfred Nobel for another two years. Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox on April 9, not April 12 in 1865, and Canada achieved Dominion status in 1867, not 1868.

But *The St. Albans Raid* shows the stuff that Vermonters were made of, then as now. Within minutes of the raiders' departure, Captain George Conger, formerly commander of Company B of the First Vermont Cavalry (portrayed quite inaccurately by Richard Boone in *The Raid*), organized a posse to capture the raiders and bring them to justice. When Lt. Young, who killed a civilian during the raid, was captured by a Vermont posse, he was almost killed trying to escape. The intervention by a Canadian official who arrived on the scene convinced the angry Vermonters to turn him over to the Canadian authorities to let the law take its course. Although Young was not invited to the 50th-anniversary celebration of the raid in St. Albans in 1904, more than a few of those traumatized during the raid overcame their feelings of anger and not only corresponded with but also met with the current commanding major general of the Kentucky Division of the United Confederate Veterans.

The St. Albans Raid reproduces an illustration in the November 12, 1864, edition of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* showing Cyrus Bishop, a cashier at the St. Albans Bank, being forced to take an oath of allegiance to the Confederate States of America during the raid (p. 106). That event was also depicted in the Hollywood version of *The Raid*. A story that made it into a footnote in *The St. Albans Raiders* by Daniel Rush and E. Gale Pewitt (2008) recounts a meeting between Bishop and Young in Boston in 1908. Bishop told Young, "I took an oath to support the Confederacy and have been unable to make a report about my doings or loyalty to anybody, but today seems a good occasion to report to

you.” Young responded with a hearty laugh. Although absent an authoritative source sufficient for Sherburne to include the story in her book, it is a plausible tale of the Vermont character.

CHARLES S. MARTIN

Charles S. Martin is a Barre attorney and Civil War reenactor member of the Champlain Valley Historical Reenactors, Inc.

The Calais Calamity and Other Tales of Wonder and Woe: Writings on Vermont History

By Paul Heller (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014, pp. 260, paper, \$15.00).

Paul Heller of Barre ranges far beyond Barre in this third published collection of his newspaper essays and journal articles, mostly written for the *Barre-Montpelier Times Argus*. His *Granite City Tales* (2012) and *More Granite City Tales* (2014) were predecessor volumes. He thus continues a venerable Vermont custom of transforming newspaper columns into book chapters. For example, in 1926 the Charles E. Tuttle Company of Rutland reprinted articles about “Unique Vermonters,” previously published in the *Rutland Herald*, in John Parker Lee’s volume, *Uncommon Vermont*. Margaret Steele Hard of Manchester published *Footloose in Vermont*, issued by Vermont Books of Middlebury in 1969, containing twenty-two of her *Rutland Herald* columns published in 1939-1940.

Giving history-centered newspaper columns a second life by anthologizing them in books like this one allows readers beyond the circulation area of a Vermont newspaper to access them conveniently. Likewise, two of Heller’s twenty-two selections appeared in obscure journals. One about the counterfeiter Christian Meadows, the excellent engraver incarcerated at Windsor Prison, appeared in *Ephemera*; another about the banjo maker Fred Bacon of Brandon and Newfane appeared in *The Old Time Herald*. Two staff members at the Vermont Historical Society (VHS) get recognized by Heller for alerting him to enticing topics: “sometimes the VHS Librarians, Paul Carnahan and Marjorie Strong, pointed me in the direction of scoundrels, disasters, and oddities that were part of the fabric of Vermont’s rich history” (p. 4).

A woeful disaster is the source of this book’s title: “The Calais Calamity” was the tragic drowning of five Sunday picnickers in 1873. Choosing a localized title for this collection, and embellishing both the front and rear covers with an enlarged map showing the Calais-Woodbury area where

the disaster occurred, may mislead prospective readers into assuming this is not a book that ranges far from where the *Times Argus* delivers newspapers. For Vermont readers living on the west side of the Green Mountains, Simeon Cheney of the Singing Cheney Family of Dorset is here, together with the artist Rockwell Kent, supporting the striking marble workers in Proctor in 1936, the magician Winston Freer of St. Albans, and Welcome Wilson, a commercial poppy grower and opium supply marketer in Monkton Ridge, whom Heller labels a “confidence man” (p. 190) who “met censure and opprobrium wherever he went” (p. 198).

But some annoyances constrain the value of this book. Some of the selections echo essays previously published in *Mischief in the Mountains*, issued by *Vermont Life* magazine in 1970, and Lee Dana Goodman’s *Vermont Saints and Sinners: An Impressive Assortment of Geniuses, Nincompoops, Curmudgeons, Scurvy Knaves, and Characters*, issued in 1985. Chester residents dread ongoing retellings of the familiar tale from more than a century ago about Clarence A. Adams, the Chester selectman, legislator, and esteemed citizen who for sixteen years was secretly a thief—a “sticky-fingered phantom,” in Goodman’s words.

Most frustrating for bibliophiles is Heller’s choice not to refer to his sources in footnotes or endnotes. For example, the selection about Melvin Dwinell of East Calais, a Confederate soldier, draws heavily from Harold A. Dwinell’s uncited article, “Vermont in Gray: The Story of Melvin Dwinell,” in the July 1962, issue of *Vermont History* (Volume 30, Number 3, pp. 220-237). Additionally, Harold Dwinell is misnamed Howard Dwinell.

Other glitches mar these pieces. The essay about Vermont Congressman Charles A. Plumley of Northfield, recounting his futile red baiting of subversive textbook authors, allegedly corrupting the innocent minds of Vermont schoolchildren, has Admiral George Dewey graduating from Norwich University. Actually, Dewey transferred to the U.S. Naval Academy after two years at Norwich. Zerah Colburn, the math wizard born in Cabot in 1804, could not have gone to Hanover for advice from Dartmouth President Eleazar Wheelock, as asserted, because Wheelock died in 1779.

Avoidable repetitions also sunder the narrative smoothness of these selections. One example in the profile of Thomas Davenport, the “father of the electric car,” tells us on page 112 that young Davenport was apprenticed to Enoch Howe, “whose home is now the Williamstown’s Ainsworth Public Library.” On page 120 we’re told a monument to Davenport “stands before the Enoch Howe house, the place where Thomas Davenport served as an apprentice. It is also fitting that the same place is now Williamstown’s Ainsworth Public Library.”

Heller's *Granite City Tales* contained an index of personal names, as did *More Granite Tales*. *The Calais Calamity* is not indexed, but this absence is equally true of some prominent volumes in Vermont's historiography, such as Dorothy Canfield Fisher's *Vermont Tradition: The Biography of an Outlook on Life* (1953), Madeleine M. Kunin's *Living a Political Life* (1994), and *The Vermont Encyclopedia* (2003).

CHARLES MORRISSEY

A former director of the Vermont Historical Society, Charles Morrissey has written history-centered columns monthly for The Hardwick Gazette since 1997.

Caledonia County

By Delores E. Chamberlain (Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2015, pp. 128, paper, \$21.99).

It is an old cliché that one picture is worth a thousand words. A tome on any historical topic is greatly enhanced with photographs or illustrations as long as they are accompanied by detailed captions describing the contents. Dolores E. Chamberlain's book, *Caledonia County*, is a rich compendium of photographs, many of them old postcards, which depict a way of life now long gone with enough text to provide the reader with a clear idea of Vermont life at the turn of the last century.

Caledonia County covers an attractive swath of land on the southern edge of Vermont's Northeast Kingdom. It ranges from the old manufacturing town of St. Johnsbury to the east to the former granite-processing center of Hardwick to the west, with fifteen other towns in between. Early settlers cleared the once heavily forested land and built a large number of mills and factories along its many surging rivers. Caledonia County is home to Stannard, one of the smallest and most rural towns in the state, as well as to St. Johnsbury, where in 1830 Thaddeus Fairbanks, a storekeeper, invented and patented the world's first platform scale and built a factory to produce them. The factory employed many people for decades before it was sold to Colt Industries, which moved its operation to Beloit, Wisconsin.

Chamberlain is an active local historian and former president of the Sheffield Historical Society. She begins her text with a brief but comprehensive sketch of the history and economic development of Caledonia County. There follow nine chapters, each of which includes photographs from select towns that are geographically proximate. The first

chapter, for example, includes material from Danville, Walden, and Hardwick. There are individual chapters for St. Johnsbury, Lyndonville, and Peacham. Each picture is accompanied by a detailed caption with full explanations as well as the modern history of a building or site, if it is still standing and in use.

The result of this fine work is a detailed portrait of life in Caledonia County from the 1870s through the 1920s. There are scenes of the region's natural beauty, but the focus is on the day-to-day life of Vermonters a century or more ago. We see the massive and rather squalid Ryegate Paper Company in East Ryegate that in 1906 must have polluted the land. We see burnt-out old buildings as well as beautiful structures such as the Fairbanks Museum of Natural History as it looked when presented to St. Johnsbury in 1889. We see men constructing an immense covered bridge in Waterford, a colorful ad for the Ye Olde Brick Tea Shoppe in Lyndon Corner, and children at school. We see the host of the long-gone Thurber Hotel in Danville, the interiors of many general stores, the inside of the South Walden church, men manufacturing butter in East Hardwick, and others cutting and polishing granite in the Woodbury and Hardwick Company sheds.

A careful reading of Chamberlain's *Caledonia County* gives one a very clear and honest portrait of both the beauty of the region as well as the hardships of life at the turn of the last century there. The selection of pictures is excellent. The captions provide ample descriptions of what is shown. The introductory text, while a bit brief, provides sufficient information for any reader not familiar with the region to fully appreciate what the book has to offer. All in all, Chamberlain's work is a noteworthy contribution to the field of Vermont history.

DANIEL A. MÉTRAUX

Daniel A. Métraux is professor emeritus of Asian Studies at Mary Baldwin College, Staunton, Virginia. He is a summer resident of Greensboro, Vermont.

From Copperas to Cleanup: The History of the Elizabeth Copper Mine

By Matt Kierstad, (Beacon, N.Y.: Milestone Heritage Consulting, 2014, pp. 64, paper, \$18.00).

If you are interested in Vermont's industrial/mining history, this is a book for you. At first glance it seems a coffee-table book: thin, large format, filled with photographs and drawings; yet once into it, the

reader discovers a concise, well-written, and well-organized history of an important chapter of Vermont's history.

The Elizabeth Mine, located in South Strafford just north of White River Junction, operated, off and on, from 1809 to 1958. It was the southernmost of three mines in eastern Vermont that tapped into metal sulfide deposits formed on the ocean floor over 350 million years ago. The ores were created from precipitates spewed from hydrothermal vents at the ocean bottom. These sediments, later metamorphosed by plate tectonics, produced metal sulfide ores of sulfur and many minerals: iron, copper, zinc, lead, gold, and others.

The first surprise: This book is a product of an agreement among the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, and the Vermont Department of Environment Conservation, "to address adverse impacts to historic resources resulting from the cleanup of the Elizabeth Mine Superfund site" (p. 1), as it was designated by the EPA in 2001. Concurrently, the mine was recognized as eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. A compromise preserved both the ecology and the history.

The second surprise: "Copperas" in the title has nothing to do with copper, but is, in fact, iron sulfate. Copperas is a greenish crystal produced by burning to oxidize the ore, leaching the iron sulfate with water, and evaporating the leachate into crystals. From copperas other chemicals, including sulfuric, nitric, and hydrochloric acids, were produced. It was used for making dyes and inks, red and brown pigments, and blacking wood and leather.

The extraction of copper from the ores paralleled copperas production. While copperas production ceased in 1881, extraction of copper ore increased. Since the concentration of copper in the ore was between 1 and 10 percent, processing facilities were required to concentrate the ore to about 40 percent copper and then it was shipped to smelters in Long Island, New York. In its almost 150 years of existence, the Elizabeth Mine produced over 50,000 tons of copper. By the end of production, the mine consisted of about five miles of tunnels, some as deep as 975 feet below the surface. In 1954-55, production reached 8.5 million tons per year. The mine employed 220 workers and had sales of over \$3 million. During these postwar years, the mine was among the top twenty-five copper producers in the U.S. The author does a good job tracing the many companies, leaders, and innovations involved in the mine.

Throughout its history, the waste by-products were disposed of on site. By the time of the final closing, 2.8 million cubic yards of tailing covered a 45-acre area, a quarter of a mile wide along its 150-foot-high

face. Air and rain acting on the sulfides produced sulfuric acid, which, in turn, dissolved metals such as cadmium, cobalt, copper, zinc, and up to 800 pounds of dissolved iron a day, which ran into Copperas Brook. These toxins severely impacted aquatic life in the Ompompanoosuc River, a tributary of the Connecticut River.

In 1980, Congress established the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act to address toxic waste sites throughout America. In 2001, the Elizabeth Mine was listed as a Superfund site. The chapter “Reclaiming the Land” describes the strategies to mitigate the environmental damage. Well-captioned color photographs help the reader understand the measures taken between 2003 and 2010 to clean up the site. The success was evident. By 2013, 99 percent of the iron was removed from the tailings’ leachate and the copper in Copperas Brook reduced by 95 percent.

“Recording the History” documents the work of a team of historic resource experts to preserve the history of the Elizabeth Mine at the same time that much of the physical evidence was being destroyed by the clean up. Four pages of line drawings show details of the Vermont Copper Company operations between 1942 and 1958.

One missing element is that there is little detail on the lives of miners and workers in the smelters. Phyl Harmon’s documentary video, *Riches & Remains: The Legacy of Vermont Copper Mining* (2013), fills this gap.

Vermont’s economic history is more than a story of Merino sheep and dairy cows. Vermont’s extractive mining was more than granite and marble. *From Copperas to Cleanup* provides a concise look at another industry, copper mining, important not just to three towns in the Upper Valley, but to industrial America.

ALLEN R. YALE JR.

Allen R. Yale Jr. is a retired Associate Professor of History at Lyndon State College.

CORRECTION

In Tyler Resch’s review of *The Vermont Difference* (vol. 83:1), at page 104, line 5, the mention of Lyndon Institute should read Lyndon Teachers College. Our thanks to Beth Kanell for calling this to our attention.

