

About this Issue

Readers of *Vermont History* have, perhaps, become accustomed to receiving some issues that are thematically coherent and many that are not. This issue falls into the second category. The articles presented here span a wider than usual range of time periods, topics, and methodologies.

André Senécal's article on the French fort at Pointe-à-la-Chevelure, now known as Chimney Point, is the archival equivalent of an archaeological exploration. Senécal brings to light and brings together documents in French and Canadian archives that have long been difficult to access, but that now reveal in minute detail the planning and resources required to build the wood fort on the eastern shore of Lake Champlain in 1731, then dismantle it, relocate it, and reuse some of the materials in 1735 to build Fort Saint-Frédéric, on the western shore of the lake at the site now known as Crown Point.

Gary Parker turns our attention from what lies beneath our feet to what swirls around us in the night skies, with an examination of a little-known dimension of Wilson ("Snowflake") Bentley's scientific observations: the aurora. Using and sometimes having to decipher Bentley's notebooks of his observations of the occurrences and periodicity of auroras, Parker demonstrates that the man most celebrated for his photographs of snowflakes was also a careful and pioneering observer of the aurora and its relationship to sunspots. Those with an interest in making their own observations will be pleased to learn that one of the two best opportunities for seeing the flashing night lights each year coincides with the publication of Parker's article.

Finally, Elise Guyette's article brings us back to earth and the here and now.

For the culmination of Vermont's observance of the Civil War Sesquicentennial, 2011-2015, the Vermont Humanities Council, in cooperation with the Vermont Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission, presented "A Fire Never Extinguished: How the Civil War Continues to

Shape Civic and Cultural Life in America,” as its annual fall conference, November 14-15, 2015. The two-day event included keynote addresses by David Blight (Yale University), Lois Brown (Wesleyan University), Eleanor James Harvey (Smithsonian American Art Museum), and John Stauffer (Harvard University); breakout sessions, with presentations by the featured speakers and other scholars of history, politics, literature, and art history; and an exhibit at the Fleming Museum of Art at the University of Vermont. Video excerpts of the conference and links to C-SPAN videos of three of the keynote presentations are available at the Vermont Humanities Council’s web site: <http://www.vermonthumanities.org/programs/public-programs/annual-fall-conference/fallconf14films/>.

The conference speakers examined the legacy of the Civil War in a broadly national context. I therefore invited Elise Guyette to write an essay for *Vermont History* on one topic that was prominently featured in the conference, what David Blight characterized as the “roiling conflict” over race and racism, focusing closely on Vermont history and the Vermont experience. Her article is both a brief and selective survey of the roles, perceptions, and representations of African Americans in Vermont’s history and a personal reflection on that history and the current state of race relations in Vermont. Although unusual for *Vermont History* in its form and, to some extent, in its content, Guyette’s article is an important and thought-provoking meditation on Vermont’s past, present, and future experience with interracial relationships. It is an appropriate way to conclude this journal’s participation in the commemoration of the Civil War Sesquicentennial and to focus attention on the enduring impact of the Civil War on our state’s history and future.

MICHAEL SHERMAN, *Editor*