



# Summit Preserve: The University of Vermont's Unprecedented 1859 Purchase of the Summit of Mount Mansfield

*... Therefore am I still  
A lover of the meadows and the woods  
And mountains; and of all that we behold  
From this green earth; of all the mighty world.  
William Wordsworth  
("Tintern Abbey," lines 107–110)*

By ROBERT A. MELLO

**I**n 1859, at a time when the University of Vermont was experiencing financial difficulty, it paid a substantial sum of money to purchase the summit of Mount Mansfield and accepted responsibility for preserving the unusual vegetation on the summit in its natural state for posterity. The decision was both remarkable and unprecedented, yet there are no documents explaining the reasons why the university agreed to take this action. This article will attempt to ascertain what motivated the university to purchase the Mansfield summit and agree to preserve its unique flora by exploring the historical circumstances surrounding the purchase and the views and goals of the university's leadership. The article concludes that the university had good educa-

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tional reasons to purchase the summit in 1859 on the terms agreed to because: the summit contained important geological evidence and a community of unusual plants of considerable interest to the university's natural history students and faculty; Mansfield's sublime beauty and panoramic views were seen by university leadership as having a power to inspire reverence in and teach students lessons of "high and holy meaning"; and if the university had failed to purchase the summit when it did, there was a risk that the summit would have fallen into the hands of a group of out-of-state investors seeking to capitalize on the mountain's lucrative summit tourist trade. The article concludes with a discussion of the importance of the university's decision 165 years ago to purchase and preserve the summit for posterity.

#### THE SUMMIT

The summit of Mount Mansfield in northern Vermont is a special place. At 4,393 feet in elevation at its highest point, Mansfield is Vermont's tallest mountain. Its summit consists of three peaks connected by a long ridge, extending from the "Forehead" (3,940 ft.) at its southern end to the "Chin" (4,393 ft.) at its northern end, with the "Nose" (4,060 ft.) in between. To traverse the summit, one must hike a distance of two miles.<sup>1</sup> Because the summit ridge is almost entirely above tree line, the views from the summit are dramatic and panoramic. From the Chin on a clear day one can see not only Lake Champlain nestled in the valley below, but also the High Peaks of the Adirondacks in New York to the west, Montreal's Mount Real in Canada to the north, the Presidential and Franconia Ranges of New Hampshire to the east, and a chain of Green Mountain peaks extending for miles to the south. Except for hiking trails and a few communications towers and associated buildings, the summit remains largely undisturbed by human development.

What makes the summit of Mount Mansfield most extraordinary, however, is that it is home to a 250-acre meadow of rare plants usually found only in the Arctic and on a few other high-elevation peaks in northern New York, northern New England, and eastern Canada, including Bigelow's sedge, Highland rush, Greenland sandwort, Alpine bilberry, and Black crowberry. This meadow is a tiny remnant of the Arctic vegetation that covered the northeastern United States some 10,000 years ago, following the retreat of the last Ice-Age glaciers.<sup>2</sup> These tundra plants in turn support a small number of rare insects, such as the boreal long-lipped tiger beetle and the yellow-banded bumble bee. Just one other peak in Vermont, Camel's Hump (4,083 ft.) with a ten-acre alpine meadow, supports such a community of rare plants.<sup>3</sup>

Few plants and insects can survive the harsh conditions found above tree line in our northern mountains, and for the few that do, life remains tenuous at best. Because these plants are so small and fragile, they are also quite vulnerable to damage by foot traffic and development. Therefore, they need to be protected from human activity if they are to be preserved. Part of the reason these plants have done as well as they have on Mount Mansfield is that the University of Vermont in 1859 decided to purchase the summit and assume responsibility for preserving it in its natural state.

#### THE PURCHASE

In 1859, two men claimed to own the summit of Mount Mansfield. John B. Wheeler of Burlington owned large tracts of timberland on the western side of the mountain, including those portions of the summit located in the town of Underhill. William H. H. Bingham of Stowe owned large tracts of timberland on the eastern side of the mountain, including the parts of the summit in the town of Stowe. Bingham also owned the Summit House, a small hotel for tourists located about 300 feet below the summit in the vicinity of the Nose.<sup>4</sup> In late September 1859, Wheeler and Bingham signed deeds conveying nearly the entire summit to the "Corporation of the University of Vermont."<sup>5</sup> According to the deeds, Wheeler and Bingham each received \$1,000 from the university for the land.

The closing on the sale took place in Burlington on September 30, 1859. Wheeler and Bingham were present; the university was represented by its president, Rev. Calvin Pease, and its treasurer, Nathan S. Hill. At the closing, Bingham signed a deed, which Wheeler witnessed and notarized, conveying to the university a 400-acre strip of land constituting the summit of the mountain. Bingham's deed contained the following remarkable provision:

The said Corporation by accepting this deed agree & it is a Condition of this grant that no timber growing trees or undergrowth on said tract shall be cut down set on fire or used on the above land conveyed except such as may be necessary for the clearing for the erection of buildings for scientific purposes. Also that said land above conveyed shall not be leased or sold for purposes other than for the erection of necessary buildings for scientific purposes and their legitimate use by said Corporation.

Bingham included another provision in the deed reserving the right to return to the summit for the purpose of "rendering said Mountain attractive to visitors."<sup>6</sup> Wheeler had signed a similar deed two days earlier, which stated that the conveyance of the summit was made on the condition that "the summit of said Mountain shall at all times be free

for the access of visitors . . . excepting such portions of said tract as the said Corporation may use for the purposes of an observatory or Observatories or for scientific purposes.”<sup>7</sup> In return for these deeds, Hill signed a perpetual lease agreement, which Pease witnessed, in which the university conveyed back to Bingham a twenty-acre strip of land in the vicinity of the Nose, which guaranteed that Bingham, his business partners, and hotel guests would have continued access to the summit in the future.<sup>8</sup>

The wording of the deeds was somewhat clumsy, but the parties’ intent was clear. The summit was to be preserved in its wilderness state except for the construction of buildings needed by the university for scientific or observatory purposes. No timber, trees, or undergrowth could be cut down, burned, or used for any other purpose. In addition, the summit was to remain available to visitors, including Bingham’s hotel guests and other members of the public.

Two thousand dollars was a substantial amount of money in 1859, especially for land on a mountain top that could not be developed or used except for very limited purposes. Indeed, half that amount of money could have purchased a house and lot in Burlington then.<sup>9</sup>

Moreover, the university was experiencing significant financial difficulties in 1859. The nation had suffered a financial panic in late 1857, as a result of which many banks and businesses failed. In his August 3, 1858, report to the university’s board of trustees, President Pease noted, “The remarkable financial embarrassments of the Autumn and Winter . . . [are] making it difficult to collect our dues and consequently to make our payments.”<sup>10</sup> The payments that the university was having difficulty making included the salaries of its officers and professors; as of August 1, 1860, the university owed its professors and staff \$6,339.03 in unpaid salaries, including \$186.77 in back pay owed to President Pease.<sup>11</sup> In light of these circumstances, the university’s decision to proceed with the 1859 acquisition is surprising.

The decision also appears to have been unprecedented. Never before had an American educational institution or governmental entity purchased or set aside wild land for the purpose of preserving it in its natural state forever.<sup>12</sup> The federal government did not take the first step to establish wilderness parks in the United States until 1864, when Congress granted Yosemite Valley and its neighboring grove of giant sequoias to the State of California “for public use, resort, and recreation . . . inalienable for all time.”<sup>13</sup> The first national park (Yellowstone) was not created until 1872; the Adirondacks of Upper New York State were not declared “forever wild” until the 1880s, and the White Mountains of New Hampshire did not become a national forest until 1918. The

individuals at the University of Vermont who spearheaded its 1859 acquisition of the Mansfield summit were ahead of their time.

While the deeds clearly establish what the parties intended to happen on September 30, 1859, they do not explain the parties' motives. They do not explain, for example, why the university would agree to pay \$2,000 to purchase a mountaintop in 1859, or why the university would promise to preserve the summit and its vegetation in their natural state for posterity. Yet the deeds appear to be the only writings that the parties created to document the transaction. No public announcement or press release mentioned the university's purchase of the summit. If President Pease ever requested or received written permission from the university's board of trustees to proceed with the purchase, there is no record of it. The records of the board of trustees make no mention of the acquisition or even that it was under consideration. Pease's correspondence and diary make no mention of the acquisition, either.

Hence, any attempt to explain what motivated the university to purchase the Mansfield summit must take into account not only the language of the deeds but also the circumstances under which they were signed, and what we can surmise about the university's institutional purposes and goals from what is known about its leadership.

#### THE LEADERSHIP

There are no documents identifying the individuals at the university who participated in approving the acquisition, other than Pease, who attended the closing with the university's treasurer and signed off as a witness on one of the documents needed to consummate the transaction. The university was governed then by a board of trustees that included the current governor of Vermont (Hiland Hall) and speaker of the Vermont House of Representatives (George F. Edmunds) as *ex officio* members, plus fourteen regular members, several of whom were quite notable, such as: Erastus Fairbanks (governor of Vermont from 1852 to 1853 and 1860 to 1861);



*George Perkins Marsh.  
Photograph by Matthew Brady, 1861.*

Henry J. Raymond (a brilliant former student of the university who would go on to co-found the *New York Times*); Portus Baxter (who in 1860 would be elected to the U.S. House of Representatives); John B. Wheeler (a former president of the university), and, perhaps most notable of all, George Perkins Marsh, considered by many today as the father of the modern environmental movement for his groundbreaking 1864 book, *Man and Nature*.

In *Man and Nature* Marsh showed that the ancient civilizations of the Mediterranean had brought about their own collapse by deforesting their hillsides, eroding their soils, pursuing their fish and game to the point of extinction, and abusing their natural resources. He warned that, "The earth is fast becoming an unfit home for its noblest inhabitant, and another era of equal human crime and human improvidence . . . would reduce it to such a condition of impoverished productiveness, of shattered surface, of climatic excess, as to threaten . . . perhaps even the extinction of the species."<sup>14</sup> As a remedy, Marsh suggested that "some large and easily accessible region of American soil should remain, as far as possible, in its primitive condition, at once a museum for the instruction of the student, a garden for the recreation of the lover of nature, and an asylum where indigenous tree, and humble plant that loves the shade, and fish and fowl and four-footed beast, may dwell and perpetuate their kind."<sup>15</sup> The university's decision to purchase and preserve the Mansfield summit was in complete accord with Marsh's prescription. Although Marsh would not publish his book until 1864, he had been developing and advocating its core concepts in Vermont since the 1840s and '50s.<sup>16</sup> We will probably never know whether Marsh played any direct role in the university's decision to acquire the Mansfield summit, but his views would have been well known to his colleagues there.

Pease had been president since 1855 and appears always to have enjoyed a good relationship with the trustees. It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that Pease probably discussed the proposed acquisition with members of his board to obtain at least their oral approval before proceeding with such a remarkable purchase. Other than Pease, however, the record is silent as to the identity of the specific individuals who spearheaded the university's decision to purchase the summit.

#### REASONS TO PURCHASE AND PRESERVE THE SUMMIT

In attempting to determine the university's motives for purchasing the Mansfield summit, one must first consider the possibility that it made the decision merely as a favor to John B. Wheeler. In September 1859 Wheeler had close ties with the university. He was a current

member of the board of trustees, a former president, and one of its generous benefactors. He knew most if not all of the university's officers and trustees personally, and he undoubtedly enjoyed their respect and good will. If there was no good educational reason for the university to purchase the summit, then it might be reasonable to conclude that it did so solely and merely as a favor to Mr. Wheeler. However, that is not the case. As I intend to show, the university had good reasons to acquire the summit when it did.

At the time the university was considering the purchase, a team of geologists was wrapping up an exhaustive analysis of the geology of Vermont, including Mount Mansfield and its summit. The project, which involved more than two years of geological, botanical, and zoological research and investigation, had begun in the spring of 1857 and was essentially finished by October 1, 1859, the date on which Edward Hitchcock, the chief geologist, wrote his introduction to the team's final report.<sup>17</sup> The portion of the report dealing with Mount Mansfield and its summit was written by Albert D. Hager, who had been born in Chester, Vermont, and had been appointed Vermont's assistant state naturalist in 1856.<sup>18</sup> In the final report, Hager declared that Mansfield's summit afforded "one of the grandest and most extensive views in New England."<sup>19</sup> After noting the "wild" and "romantic beauty" of the mountain, he described some of its interesting geological features, including the physical evidence that the team of geologists found between the Nose and the Chin proving that the summit had been scraped by glaciers during the last Ice Age and had once been at the bottom of an ancient sea.<sup>20</sup> Hager also discussed the unusual plants growing on the summit: "The vegetation on the summit is materially unlike that at the base—the trees are those only of the hardy kinds, and of a stunted growth—and the shrubs are essentially different from those of the valley below."<sup>21</sup> Hager concluded: "To the contemplative mind this is a spot of unusual interest, and well calculated to inspire one with reverence for Him who hath made all so majestic and beautiful. To the student who reads the book of nature, there is revealed a page of instruction on this mountain."<sup>22</sup> To a "contemplative mind" like that of President Pease, the summit of Mount Mansfield would clearly have been "a spot" of considerable scientific interest to the university and its students because of the mountain's geological importance and its unusual community of summit plants.

Pease would also have agreed with the geologists' conclusion that Mansfield's "wild" and "romantic beauty" were a source of emotional and spiritual inspiration for "the student who reads the book of nature." Pease was both an ordained minister of the Congregational Church and a





*Rev. Calvin Pease, president of the University of Vermont, 1855–1861. Silver Special Collections Library, University of Vermont.*

student of the classics. He began his career at the university in 1842 as professor of classical languages, but he loved the romantic poets, including Wordsworth.<sup>23</sup> Born in Canaan, Connecticut, in 1813, Pease moved with his family to Charlotte, Vermont, when he was thirteen years old. There he experienced “the scenery and bracing winds” of Vermont and “felt . . . the inspiration of nature in her forms of sublimity and beauty.”<sup>24</sup> Upon moving to Burlington, he fell in love with Mount Mansfield and its stunning views of Lake Champlain and the Adirondacks.<sup>25</sup> According to a friend, Pease had “a poet’s enthusiasm for Nature; his love for lake and mountain scenery—the haunts of his youth, and the familiar views of his riper years—never forsook him and was often the glowing theme of his conversation and letters.”<sup>26</sup> After his death, another friend said of Pease: “To his dying day the hills and valleys, the lakes and mountains of the State of his adoption were as much incorporated with the qualities of his mind and heart as was the scenery around Tintern Abbey with the soul and sense of Wordsworth.”<sup>27</sup>

Pease was not alone in his romantic appreciation of Mount Mansfield. In Vermont in the late 1850s, the romantic landscape painting style of the Hudson River School was ascendant, and in Burlington at that time the most popular disciple of that style was Charles Louis Heyde. “Heyde’s many images of Lake Champlain, like those of Mount Mansfield . . . , reflect a set of attitudes regarding the power of uncultivated Nature to teach ‘lessons of high and holy meaning.’”<sup>28</sup> One of Heyde’s finest works was “Mount Mansfield,” which he painted in Underhill circa 1857, and in which he captured the mountain’s “wild, uncontaminated state of primeval nature.”<sup>29</sup> Sanford Robinson Gifford’s “Mount Mansfield,” circa 1858, was painted on the mountain’s summit and shows “human beings dwarfed by the awesome beauty of nature.”<sup>30</sup> Another romantic masterpiece also painted on Mansfield’s summit during that same period was Jerome Thompson’s 1858 “The Belated Party on Mansfield Mountain.”<sup>31</sup>





*Charles Louis Heyde, Mount Mansfield, c. 1857, oil on fabric. Fleming Museum of Art, University of Vermont, 1944.3. Gift of Mabel G. Bailey.*

From the University of Vermont, Pease enjoyed an unimpeded view of Mount Mansfield, as it rose dramatically to its full height out of the Pleasant Valley plateau twenty-five miles away in Underhill. That view was the inspiration for another Heyde painting, “Mount Mansfield from the University of Vermont Campus.”<sup>32</sup> Pease would have recognized the power of Mount Mansfield to teach “lessons of high and holy meaning” not only to Victorian painters but also to his students at the university.

Hence, Pease and his colleagues had two good educational reasons to recommend that the university acquire the summit on the conditions set forth in the deeds. First, the summit contained important geological evidence as well as a 250-acre community of unusual plants that would probably be of considerable interest to the university’s natural history students and professors. Second, Mansfield’s wild beauty and surpassing panoramic views had the power to inspire reverence and teach students “lessons of high and holy meaning.” The purchase also satisfied George Perkins Marsh’s ecological concern that natural resources be conserved as “a museum for the instruction of the student, a garden for the recreation of the lover of nature, and an asylum where indigenous [plants and animals] may dwell and perpetuate their kind.”

## TIMING OF THE PURCHASE

These historical circumstances and educational goals help to explain the reasons for the university's decision to purchase the summit, but they do not explain the timing of the decision. Why did the university decide to acquire the summit on September 30, 1859, at a time when it was having considerable difficulty paying its bills? The public was not clamoring for the mountain's protection, nor was any political party advocating for its preservation at the time. For an answer to that question, we need to consider one final set of circumstances.

In September 1859, William H. H. Bingham was about to capitalize on his ten-year-long competition for the summit's lucrative tourist trade. His plan, which he had already begun to implement, was to build a large luxury hotel in Stowe, expand his Summit House, and then sell his valuable holdings to a corporation controlled by a group of out-of-state investors.

Vermont's mountains had always attracted adventurous tourists, but with the arrival of the railroads in the late 1840s, city dwellers from lower New England and the South began pouring into the state in search of fresh air, mineral spring cures, and the beauty and grandeur of untrammelled nature. Business interests in Underhill and Stowe quickly began to compete for this tourist trade. In 1850 a businessman in Underhill constructed a small hotel at the end of a road leading halfway up the west side of Mount Mansfield, which he called the "Halfway House." In 1856 David N. Shaw and George Downing of Underhill "provided the first overnight lodging on the summit in the form of a platform tent" near where Bingham would eventually place his Summit House. To bring up boards for the structure, they utilized a bridle path that had been constructed from Underhill all the way to the top of the Nose.<sup>33</sup> In the meantime, Andre Lavigne of Underhill enlarged the original Halfway House, which reportedly "was well patronized."<sup>34</sup> Thus by late 1859 businessmen from Underhill had made significant progress toward accommodating the lucrative summit tourist trade, but they had not yet managed to construct a hotel close to the summit.

In Stowe on the east side of the mountain, Stillman Churchill in 1850 converted his home in the village into a hotel and began an advertising campaign to attract tourists "for the purpose of enjoyment and rusticating in one of the pleasantest country villages in the state, and visiting OLD MANSFIELD MOUNTAIN."<sup>35</sup> By 1853 "a carriage road had been completed to a large spring about half-way up" the east side of the mountain, "and a bridle trail cleared to within a half-mile of the Nose."<sup>36</sup> Stillman's business failed and was taken over by Bingham, who had held the mortgage on his hotel. In 1856 Bingham constructed a small

guesthouse for his summit visitors at the large spring; the following year he built a second hotel farther up the mountain; and in 1858 he moved that hotel a half mile further up the mountain to a new site just under the Nose, which became known as the “Summit House.” The Summit House was so successful that by the time of his closing with the university in September 1859, Bingham had already begun expanding it to accommodate seventy-five overnight visitors.<sup>37</sup> Thus, as of late 1859 Bingham had cornered most of the lucrative summit tourist trade on Mount Mansfield, although Lavigne and other Underhill innkeepers continued to compete for that business.



*Summit House, no date (ca. 1930). Post card. Vermont Historical Society.*

By then Bingham also had plans to build a luxury hotel in Stowe that would attract an even larger percentage of the mountain’s yearly tourists. He had already applied to the legislature for a charter incorporating the Mount Mansfield Hotel Company, and he had persuaded “nine capitalists in Boston, New York and Montreal to join him in putting \$10,000 each—a total of \$100,000—into the organization” to fund construction of the grand new hotel.<sup>38</sup> The last step in Bingham’s master plan was to sell his holdings on the mountain to the new corporation for a substantial profit after the new hotel was built. Bingham’s sale of the Mansfield summit was clearly part of this scheme; it assured that no one else could build a hotel closer to the summit than his and that he could sell the Summit House to the corporation for a substantial profit.<sup>39</sup>

Bingham's plans worked. On November 21, 1859, less than two months after Bingham's closing with the university, the Vermont legislature passed an act incorporating the Mount Mansfield Hotel Company and authorizing Bingham and his several partners to build "a house or houses of public entertainment at Stowe and on Mount Mansfield."<sup>40</sup> One of Bingham's listed partners was John B. Wheeler.<sup>41</sup> Bingham expanded the Summit House, the grand luxury hotel was built, and Bingham sold the Summit House and his other holdings to a corporation (the Mount Mansfield Hotel Company) controlled by investors from Boston, New York, and Montreal.<sup>42</sup> The Summit House remained in business for 100 years before closing its doors in 1959. The fortunes of the grand hotel in Stowe village waxed and waned until 1889, when it was destroyed by fire.

Bingham's out-of-state investors would not have been willing to pay him and his partners large sums of money for the Summit House if he or anyone else could then build a competing hotel on the summit. Such a competing hotel obviously would undermine their investment in Bingham's Summit House. To avoid that risk, the investors would have insisted that the summit be conveyed either to themselves or to some third party willing to promise never to allow it to be developed. Businessmen from Boston, New York, and Montreal would have had little interest in the summit other than to maximize their profits from its use. Having decided to purchase the summit, therefore, the university needed to act promptly to avoid the risk that the summit would otherwise fall into the hands of the out-of-state investors. George Perkins Marsh, a trustee of the university at the time, would have been particularly concerned about the summit falling into the hands of a private corporation. Marsh openly distrusted private corporations and feared they would put profits ahead of the interests of the environment and the community at large.<sup>43</sup>

#### LEGACY

In the summer or fall of 1860, Calvin Pease visited the summit of Mount Mansfield to christen a small body of water near the Adam's Apple, the so-called "Lake of the Clouds," as "Crescent Lake."<sup>44</sup> It may have been his last time on the summit. Pease resigned as president of the university in 1861, moved to Rochester, NY and died in 1863. He left behind a lasting legacy. Motivated by a love of nature and a recognition of Mansfield's beauty and scientific interest, Pease and his colleagues had the university purchase and preserve the summit for future students and scientists to study and enjoy. Their decision proved prescient. Years later, scientists discovered the true nature of the community of rare and uncommon plants on the summit and began taking steps to protect and preserve them.

Vermont state government has followed up on the university's precedent-setting purchase of the Mansfield summit, although it was slow at first to do so. Fifty years passed before the state began to acquire and protect its forests from abusive lumbering practices. Vermont's first state forests were acquired by gifts, most notably Joseph Battell's January 1911 gift of approximately 1,200 ecologically critical acres on and surrounding the summit of Camel's Hump Mountain, located approximately fifteen miles south of Mount Mansfield. Battell's deed specified that "Trees growing on the land herein conveyed are not to be cut except those which it is necessary to remove in building paths or roads, and the whole forest is to be preserved in a primeval state by planting or natural growth."<sup>45</sup> Battell, a "wilderness visionary" from Ripton and Middlebury, acquired during his lifetime thousands of acres of mountain forest lands with the goal of protecting them from the lumber industry and preserving them "as a specimen of the original Vermont forest."<sup>46</sup> Following his death in 1915, the remainder of Battell's land was bequeathed to Middlebury College and eventually became incorporated into the Green Mountain National Forest. Like Pease, Battell had been inspired from his youth with a romantic appreciation of nature, and like Marsh, Battell had been appalled by the clearcutting practices of the lumber industry.<sup>47</sup>

In 1914, the Vermont Forest Service (now known as the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation) purchased 3,155 acres of woodland on the west flank of Mount Mansfield, creating the Mount Mansfield State Forest.<sup>48</sup> Subsequent purchases increased its size to 37,000 acres, making it the largest of Vermont's state forests, which now number thirty-eight. Vermont has also established fifty-one state parks and nearly one hundred municipal forests, together comprising close to 100,000 acres of protected forestland, not counting the hundreds of thousands of acres under the protection of the US Forest Service and the Nature Conservancy. Today, Mount Mansfield "is the most frequently visited mountain in Vermont with over 40,000 visitors . . . annually," and its summit ridge "has been declared a State Natural Area and National Natural Landmark."<sup>49</sup>

Thanks to a remarkable decision made 165 years ago by officials of the University of Vermont to purchase and preserve a natural resource of local importance, something no one in this country had ever done before, we are the beneficiaries of a priceless legacy. The fact that Mansfield's summit is still wild, and that its tiny remnant of Ice-Age Alpine tundra still thrives, alone fully justify our celebrating the university's decision. In addition, hundreds of thousands of acres of scenic and ecologically important forestlands in Vermont are now under

the protection of governmental agencies and nature conservancy trusts, although some argue that many more natural resources still also need protection.

We are also the recipients of an important lesson. Throughout this country there are countless natural resources too small for the federal government's notice but of great importance to the people, plants, and animals living there. Calvin Pease and his colleagues have shown us that thoughtful people with foresight and fortitude can take matters into their own hands and, with the aid of a stable local institution, preserve for posterity the precious natural resources in our own back yards.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Day Hiker's Guide to Vermont: Exploring the Green Mountain State*, 6th ed. (Waterbury Center, VT: Green Mountain Club, 2011), 327, 333–35. A fourth peak, the “Adam’s Apple” (4,060 ft.), is north of the Chin. Two additional, lesser “peaks,” the “Upper Lip” and “Lower Lip,” are located between the Nose and the Chin.

<sup>2</sup> Jan Albers, *Hands on the Land: A History of the Vermont Landscape* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), 39.

<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth H. Thompson, Eric R. Sorenson and Robert J. Zaino, *Wetland, Woodland, and Wildland: A Guide to the Natural Communities of Vermont* 2nd ed. (White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2019), 253–56; Charles W. Johnson, *The Nature of Vermont: Introduction and Guide to a New England Environment* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1998 reprint edition), 69–72.

<sup>4</sup> Walter J. Bigelow, *History of Stowe, Vermont (From 1763 to 1934)*, 2nd ed. (Stowe, VT: Stowe Historical Society, Second Edition 1988), 130–131.

<sup>5</sup> At the time, there was no reliable survey establishing the location of the boundary line between the two towns, so neither Wheeler nor Bingham could be sure which portions of the summit he owned. This is probably why Wheeler and Bingham both signed deeds conveying the entire 400-acre summit to the university. Reliable surveys would later show that Wheeler had owned the Chin and the northern-most third of the summit ridge, and that Bingham had owned the Nose, the Forehead, and the southern-most two-thirds of the ridge. Thus, the Chin, the highest point in the state of Vermont, is located in Underhill (Chittenden County), not Stowe (Lamoille County). See “University of Vermont Survey of Mount Mansfield,” February 11, 1994, drawn by J. Matosky, at UVM’s Campus Planning Office.

<sup>6</sup> Bingham’s deed is recorded in the Underhill Land Records, Vol. 17:165.

<sup>7</sup> Wheeler’s deed is recorded in the Underhill Land Records, Vol. 17:162.

<sup>8</sup> A copy of the perpetual lease agreement may be found at UVM’s Campus Planning Office.

<sup>9</sup> In 1864, the artist Charles Louis Heyde purchased a house at 21 Pearl Street in Burlington for \$1,000 according to Nancy Price Graff and E. Thomas Pierce, editors, *Charles Louis Heyde: Nineteenth-Century Vermont Landscape Painter* (Burlington, VT: Robert Hull Fleming Museum, 2001), 15. According to a Consumer Price Index calculator, \$2,000 in 1859 is equivalent to \$73,000 today.

<sup>10</sup> The report can be found at the University of Vermont Howe Library, Special Collections, RG1, “Board of Trustees,” Carton 1, Folder 104.

<sup>11</sup> “Treasurer’s Report to the Corporation of the University of Vermont at the Annual Meeting of August 1, 1860,” University of Vermont Howe Library, Special Collections, Financial Records, Annual Reports, 1832–89, RG42, Box 6, Folder July 1, 1859–July 1, 1860.

<sup>12</sup> Sally K. Fairfax, Lauren Gwin, Mary Ann King, Leigh Raymond, and Laura A. Watt, *Buying Nature: The Limits of Land Acquisition as a Conservation Strategy, 1780–2004* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 21–40.

<sup>13</sup> Rolf Diamant and Ethan Carr, *Olmsted, and Yosemite: Civil War, Abolition, and the National Park Idea* (Amherst, MA: Library of American Landscape History, 2022), 7; Douglas H. Strong, *Dreamers & Defenders: American Conservationists* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, First Bison Book printing, 1988), 23.



<sup>14</sup> George Perkins Marsh, *Man and Nature, or, Physical Geography as Modified by Human Action*, ed. David Lowenthal (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 43.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 203.

<sup>16</sup> Robert L. Dorman, *A Word for Nature: Four Pioneering Environmental Advocates, 1845–1913* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 22–25; David Lowenthal, *George Perkins Marsh: Prophet of Conservation* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 171–74.

<sup>17</sup> Edward Hitchcock, Albert D. Hager, Edward Hitchcock Jr. and Charles H. Hitchcock, *Report on the Geology of Vermont: Descriptive, Theoretical, Economical, and Scenographical*, 2 vols. (Claremont, NH: Claremont Manufacturing Company, 1861), 1: 9–15. Publication of the final report was delayed two years for lack of available funding.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 871–941.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 877.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 878–79.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 878.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Thomas H. Pease, comp., *In Memoriam, Calvin Pease* (New Haven, CT: Printed privately, 1865), 82–85.

<sup>24</sup> “Remarks of Professor Cutting on the Life and Character of the Rev. Dr. Pease,” printed in the *Democrat & American* (Rochester, NY), 30 September 1863.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> “The Late Calvin Pease,” *Democrat & American*, 25 September 1863.

<sup>27</sup> “Discourse Commemorative of the Life and Service of Calvin Pease, DD, Delivered at Burlington, Vt., August 2, 1864, by William G. T. Shedd, DD, Professor in Union Seminary, N.Y.,” 8–9, University of Vermont Howe Library, Special Collections, Box 9 (President: Calvin Pease), Folder 7 (Pease, Calvin, UVM/CLIPPINGS, Passing of Calvin Pease).

<sup>28</sup> William C. Lipke, “Places of Delight: Mount Mansfield and Lake Champlain. Major Motifs in the Paintings of Charles Louis Heyde,” in Graff and Pierce, eds., *Charles Louis Heyde*, 21.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 22. The painting is reproduced there. Color plate 12, at p. 33. The original is at the Robert Hull Fleming Museum in Burlington.

<sup>30</sup> Albers, *Hands on the Land*, 184–85.

<sup>31</sup> This painting appears as the dust cover to Robert L. Hagerman’s *Mansfield: The Story of Vermont’s Loftiest Mountain*, 2nd ed. (Canaan, NH: Phoenix Publishing, 1975); the painting is also reproduced in William C. Lipke and Philip N. Grime, eds., *Vermont Landscape Images 1776–1976* (Burlington: Robert Hull Fleming Museum, 1976), 58. The original is at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

<sup>32</sup> The painting is reproduced in Graff and Thomas, eds., *Charles Louis Heyde*, color plate 22, at p. 53. The original is privately owned.

<sup>33</sup> Hagerman, *Mansfield*, 76.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 57. Emphasis in text.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Bigelow, *History of Stowe*, 131.

<sup>39</sup> In his *History of Stowe* (130–31) Bigelow expressed the opinion that Bingham and Wheeler sold the summit to the university “[t]o perpetuate Mt. Mansfield as a playground.” Hagerman, in his *Mansfield* (58) said, “Bingham’s intention was to see the mountain top preserved in essentially its wilderness state.” Neither author hazarded an opinion about the university’s motives or intent.

<sup>40</sup> No. 91, “An Act to Incorporate the Mount Mansfield Hotel Company,” approved November 21, 1859. *Acts and Resolves Passed by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont at the October Session 1859*, (Montpelier: E. P. Walton, Printer, 1859), 121–22.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> Hagerman, *Mansfield*, 59.

<sup>43</sup> Dorman, *A Word for Nature*, 39–40.

<sup>44</sup> Hagerman, *Mansfield*, 25–26; *St. Albans Weekly Messenger*, 13 September 1860, 2. Pease and his companions did this because they had discovered that there already was a “Lake of the Clouds” in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. However, the new name was never popular, so the body of water on Mt. Mansfield is still called Lake of the Clouds to this day.



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<sup>45</sup> Battell's deed is recorded in the Huntington Land Records, Vol. 18: 420–21.

<sup>46</sup> Emily Bateson and Nancy Smith, "Making It Happen: Protecting Wilderness on the Ground," in Christopher McGrory Klyza, ed., *Wilderness Comes Home: Rewilding the Northeast* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2001), 205.

<sup>47</sup> Joseph Battell, *The Yankee Boy from Home*, 2nd ed. (New York: James Miller, Publisher, 1865), 103–04; David Haward Bain, "Joseph Battell," appearing as chapter 24 in Charles A. Billings, *A History of Ripton, Vermont: The Story of a Green Mountain Town, 1781–1981* (Ripton, VT: Niche Arts, 2019), 183.

<sup>48</sup> Hagerman, *Mansfield*, 64–65; Perry H. Merrill, *History of Forestry in Vermont, 1909–1959* (published privately by the author), 43.

<sup>49</sup> *Day Hiker's Guide to Vermont*, 301–4.