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## Vermont's Nineteenth-Century Civil Religion

*Vermont's declaration of independence at Westminster, 15 January 1777, outlined its creed and promised mutual support "by all the ties that are held sacred among men." The rituals, scriptures, symbols, and saints of its patriotism developed gradually over the next century and a quarter.*

By T. D. SEYMOUR BASSETT

**B**etween the American Revolution and the Spanish American War, the separate states of the United States of America were drawn closer together by the powerful forces of nationalism, a worldwide movement. Coming together at first as a coalition to win independence from the British Empire, the many different colonies only gradually, after much strife and mutual experience as states, came to realize that they belonged to each other.

Vermont brought its own brand of patriotism to the Union: its fifteen years of independence and its share in the Revolution. The unifying force in the independent state of Vermont had been opposition to outward foes, first New York, then the British, Indians, and Tories. Opposition to the Confederation was mainly because of its refusal to let Vermont join. Until 1796, the British occupied their fort at Block House Point, on a prong of North Hero commanding the trade on the direct route between the Isle la Mott Passage and the Carrying Place, a portage to the east shore of the island. Britain was indeed an enemy to be wary of, as well as a trading partner to profit from. Exposed to this British threat, and divided by factions with opposing political, economic and religious interests, Vermont sat on a fence. Where did its interests lie? With the American Confederation? With British North

America? Or as some would-be filibusters dreamed, in a greater Vermont carved out of Lower Canada and upper New York? When Vermonters got off the fence and decided to join the feeble, infant, federal union, only their patriotism, proven in the Revolution, could overcome the conflicting loyalties threatening to tear them apart.

When the end of the war and the admission of Vermont to the Union resolved old tensions over land titles and New York jurisdiction, British North America, touching Vermont's Canadian border, was the only enemy against which Vermonters could unite. Congregationalism, beleaguered by competing churches, had been retreating for years and now could no longer impose unity. Vermont, which had held out for its acceptance as one of the United States, needed to merge loyalty to its past with loyalty to the nation. Vermonters needed to claim a share in the victorious Revolution, to bind all their people together.

I have come to realize that this patriotism, this budding nationalism, eventually had all the elements of what historians have recently come to call a "civil religion." Vermont's declaration of independence at Westminster, January 15, 1777, outlined its creed and promised mutual support "by all the ties that are held sacred among men."<sup>1</sup> The rituals, scriptures, symbols, and saints of its patriotism developed gradually over the next century and a quarter.

#### THE VERMONT CREED

Vermont's creed was clear from the start. Freedom and unity, Vermont's motto in Ira Allen's design for the first state seal, and all the words related to the doctrine it symbolizes, were often repeated abstractions. "Unanimity, the great Strength and Security of a free and independent People, is necessary for the Existence of a sovereign State," declared the preamble to the Act of June 21, 1782, against armed subversion.<sup>2</sup> Vermonters valued their freedoms: liberty to acquire property and use it with minimal outside interference; liberty to move without a by-your-leave; liberty to meet, speak, and publish without restriction; freedom to vote and hold office; freedom to worship without an established church.

Like most creeds, the declaration stated goals, some of which, like equality, tolerance, and balance, were implicit, and mere gleams on the horizon. Revivals and reforms in the first third of the nineteenth century were new outlooks differing from those of the freethinking founders, but the evangelical groups all identified their ideas of the kingdom of God with the fortunes of the American republic.<sup>3</sup>

The Westminster convention, in its haste to draft a declaration or creed, tried to state the ideal of human equality and the equality of churches without choosing its language carefully. By combining language concerning the legal bondage of apprentices and convicts with a prohibition of slavery, it left a

loophole for minors to be held as slaves. Cases continue to turn up of settlers bringing slaves to Vermont from states still sanctioning slavery. They freed them, sometimes as late as the 1830s and 1840s, when someone called their attention to Vermont's intended prohibition, or courts forced them to give their slaves up.<sup>4</sup>

Aside from those civil rights embedded in the first ten amendments to the federal constitution, and derived from long colonial common law tradition, the part underlying Vermont's attitude toward religion was Article 3 of its 1777 declaration. No one can be forced to attend or support worship or pay for preaching, it read, but all *denominations* "ought to observe the Sabbath . . . and keep up some sort of religious worship." Again, this was hasty and careless draftsmanship. The intention was to require *everyone* to go to some church on Sunday. But, literally, only a handful of the population belonged to a "sect or denomination;" the rest were therefore exempt. The General Assembly proceeded to enact blue laws and the multiple establishment as if everybody had to attend worship and toe the mark.

In most of the world that Vermonters came from—Great Britain, Quebec, and much of New England—the state gave advantages to what it considered to be the one true church. For Vermonters the principle of religious freedom rested on a broader assumption not yet fully articulated. Referring to Protestantism, and soon to Christianity instead of to one of its branches, they implied that there was not one true church but a communion of saints in many churches, each with special insights into the truth.

Vermont in its first fifty years had a remarkably homogeneous population, compared to its later diversity. Compared to their places of origin, however—eastern New York, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and towns in southern New England "burnt over" by revivalism—Vermont's new settlements were remarkably heterogenous. As Vermont lacked a single established church, only the revolutionary creed could unite those thousands of early arrivals and the two hundred thousand people with varying traditions added in the first half century. They feted the Revolution in spite of the fact that escape from military service in the war for independence had been one of the motives driving young men out of settled New England into the relatively safe Connecticut valley.

Toleration had to mean more than accepting the principle that other people's creeds made no difference or that heresy must be allowed but restricted. Samuel Williams wrote in 1794, "It is not barely *toleration*, but *equality* which the people aim at."<sup>5</sup> Those who favored this kind of toleration wanted a level playing field, where people who believed passionately could evangelize and those who did not care could be left to mind their own business.

On this playing field political parties developed in Vermont out of a colonial background that had not needed them. It is hard to see how the English-

speaking world shifted in the eighteenth century from factional to party politics. The early modern "faction" was a group that earned destruction because it plotted treason. The party, by contrast, came to be assumed loyal to the state whether in or out of power. Both factions and parties had interests and formed coalitions, but only the party loved its country more than its coalition or interests. The distinction is hard to make because party rhetoric then, as it does even today, labelled opponents as evil factions and subversives.

Colonial interests had been woven together in a combination of loyalties and frictions. A weak loyalty to the empire and stronger loyalties to one's colony and town created crown-colony and town-colony tensions. At home, habitual deference to the magistrates, the clergy, and the other wealthy, well-born, or well-educated men kept the community in balance. People running affairs through their business and family connections in the wider world had not needed parties as long as most people were quiet, isolated, and only superficially involved beyond their neighborhoods.

The Revolution allowed self-made men like Ira Allen and Matthew Lyon to develop followings, calling to their active support people who had hitherto taken no part against the traditional leaders. Allen's was a faction subordinating the republic's interest to his, while Lyon's was a party, accepting defeat at the polls until it won a seat for him in Congress and the presidency for Jefferson in 1800.

Patriotic loyalty overcame the evils of faction in this new situation in the dictum of Jefferson's first inaugural, "We are all Republicans, we are all Federalists." Knowing that pure liberty is chaotic anarchy, Vermonters, like other Americans, believed in order created by coming to agreement. For them, unity did not mean absence of conflict. They loved verbal fights in court, church meeting, town meeting, and around the tavern or home fireplace. Ideally, unity meant that all the people could speak up according to rules of order and try to persuade the whole; that everybody should be represented in the General Assembly. In its first constitution, everybody meant white, male, Protestant adults who paid their taxes.<sup>6</sup> The creed allowed for growth to include more and more of the population eligible to take part. These liberties had limits, of course. No individual or group could be allowed to harm the life, liberty, or property of others or disturb their worship.

From the revolution on, Vermonters recited their creed by developing rituals that embodied ideas and events from the new nation's revolutionary tradition and their own special part in it.

The first votive fires lighted on the altar of freedom were in the fireplaces of veterans' cabins, where their children and grandchildren heard about hardships at the siege of Quebec and the deadly trek back to the Champlain Valley, the battles on their borders, and doing one's bit as a ranger or private elsewhere. Baptist Elder Ezra Butler's Waterbury neighbors testified to his

stories, probably not about himself, as he was never in battle, but about what others did, about why the Revolution was worth the sacrifice.<sup>7</sup> For those who had not done their bit, the patriotic pose was more important than for veterans. Repetition of Vermont's folk history, the exploits at Ticonderoga, Hubbardton, and Bennington, with all their metaphors and omissions, resonated in the people's memory and gave value and meaning to their later experience.

Patriotic scripture appeared in the reading of the American Declaration of Independence at various rituals, as recitations of creedal statements in common school texts, or in print after being proclaimed from pulpits. The publication of two Vermont histories by Samuel Williams and Ira Allen in the 1790s satisfied the personal needs of their authors and the considerable Anglo-American curiosity about this "Switzerland of America." More important, it crystallized the Vermont story that people like Butler had been telling each other.<sup>8</sup>

#### THE FOURTH OF JULY AND OTHER CIVIC HOLIDAYS

Just as at first in the new settlements the devout gathered privately to pray, sing psalms, and read the Bible, so citizens gathered at family altars and tavern celebrations to remember the birth of freedom and departed veterans who won it. By the time newspapers were reporting public gatherings to celebrate the Fourth of July, people felt that they had always marked the day. While Vermont was independent, celebration signaled the state's willingness to join the Confederation. After admission, people assembled to proclaim unity and to offer each other "mutual congratulation, uninfluenced by party," according to the program at Vergennes in 1796.<sup>9</sup> Yet partisans promoted the celebrations, each claiming a monopoly of patriotism. Matthew Lyon and the Democratic Societies celebrated for Jefferson's party in western Vermont, and the Federalists countered on the other side of the state. In Vergennes people assembled at Captain Hollister's inn at noon, and ate "a plentiful Republican dinner" at three, followed by sixteen toasts. Then a deputation visited "the ladies assembled at a bowry on the bank of Otter creek to commemorate the day over a cup of hyson [tea]," and festivities ended with the mingling of ladies and gentlemen in song and dance until six. After so many toasts, one can imagine that many continued to celebrate far into the night.

The Rutland County Democratic Society that year heard an oration by Elias Buel of Fair Haven, where Lyon lived, while its Chittenden County counterpart heard veteran Udney Hay of Underhill. After Hay's speech the faithful gathered at Gideon King's tavern in Burlington for dinner at three, with fifteen toasts.<sup>10</sup>

Fifteen years later, twenty-year-old Jacob Collamer, one year out of college,

addressed a large Independence Day audience at Fairfax, his first step up the ladder that would lead him to the United States Senate. Pretense of nonpartisanship was gone. Like other orators since two parties contested federal elections, he called the Fourth our civil "sabbath," and claimed the altar of freedom for the Republicans, with "the cloud of war . . . on our political horizon."<sup>11</sup>

A typical oration, like those in other states, shouted the battle cry of freedom. Speakers in the meetinghouse or outdoors had to shout to be heard. They praised Vermont's contributions to the fight for freedom against the tyrannical British and declared that God had guided the patriots at every turn and had brought peace and prosperity to state and nation. Hard times were only a dip on the rising road of progress if people would be faithful to their God and work in the spirit of the Revolution. The program mixed patriotic music and the repetition of Vermont's tribal history with quotation of "scriptures" featuring the Declaration of Independence and the Protestant Bible. The exodus from British Egypt and the Conquest of Canaan (the New Hampshire Grants) from New York shared center stage with battles won.

The Fourth was dawn-to-dark excitement, no matter how good the haying weather was. Boys and young men saluted the sunrise with cannon-firing and bell-ringing. Parades, with militia first, and dignitaries, veterans, students at every level, and townspeople, kept in time by drummers and stirred by tunes on whatever musical instruments the town afforded, led to the meetinghouse, court house, or grove. Outdoor ceremonies featured militia inspections, banners and bunting, huzzas, volleys of musketry, and cannonades. Indoors a Protestant type of "service" enveloped the oration with invocation and dismissal, hymns led by the choir, and a public reading of the Declaration of Independence. The morning and afternoon sessions were separated by feasting in local taverns.<sup>12</sup>

In tandem with the national holiday (holy day), Vermont's Election Day, a state holiday since 1778, celebrated government's balance between freedom and unity. States are "honorable and happy," declared Samuel Shuttlesworth, the Windsor Congregational minister, in 1791, "in proportion to their conformity to the essential laws of religion."<sup>13</sup> The General Assembly launched its annual session with an "order of worship" duplicated in Fourth of July celebrations, to consecrate the people's loyalty to the state and from 1791, to the nation. When the legislature met at the Windsor court house on Thursday, October 13, 1791, "the day was ushered in by the beating of drums." About ten o'clock, Captain Hawley's cavalry met Governor Chittenden's party a few miles from town and paraded them to the green, where the local militia companies maneuvered in "beautiful uniforms." The canvassing committee thereupon declared Chittenden re-elected and fifteen cannon boomed. Shuttlesworth, appointed at the previous session, then delivered the Election

Day sermon “with his usual energy and pathos.” After a banquet, with a long series of nonpartisan toasts, festivities closed with an elegant ball including guests from neighboring states. In 1792, the state reimbursed Governor Thomas Chittenden for his nine-pound contribution toward the expenses, probably for gunpowder. Militia officers were expected to provide the liquor.<sup>14</sup>

That booms, bangs and marching were important to the ritual of election day is suggested by the fate of the resolution introduced by Daniel Farrand of Newbury in 1796: “military parade on days of election is inconsistent with the true dignity and principles of a republican form of government.” Therefore there should be no military parade on election day and the legislature should pay none of the expenses. The House politely heard his resolution and promptly tabled it. Festivities and fireworks continued to flourish.<sup>15</sup>

Appointment to deliver an election sermon, although originally an honor awarded to a distinguished Congregational minister, came to follow the principle of rotation in office. Only Shuttlesworth and Asa Burton of Thetford preached more than one election sermon. Baptist Caleb Blood was the first non-Congregationalist, at Rutland in 1792. The General Assembly elected the Reverend Samuel Williams, Congregational pastor in East Rutland, chaplain of the session, presumably because Blood came up from Shaftsbury for Election Day only and could not open each day’s session with prayer. To show the world what a *real* election sermon should have been, Williams dusted off his 1774 sermon on love of country for a rerun at his own Congregational church ten days after Blood’s performance. Williams’ eloquence showed that he had been to and taught at Harvard; Blood’s was revivalist chanting rather than logical rhetoric.<sup>16</sup>

Other civic holidays carried over from New England colonial times were the movable feasts of Fast Day and June militia training in the spring, academic commencement in the summer, and Thanksgiving in late fall. Although holidays focused on some aspect of public or private life, all had a patriotic ambience. Counting one’s sins and blessings were acts of worship by a population that still accepted God as dispensing rewards and punishments on earth. The special holidays for schools and militia publicly acknowledged the part of the creed that recognized learning and public security as sacred goals. As in Election Day ritual, forms inherited from the Puritans prevailed.

The governor first proclaimed Fast Day to recognize “the frowns of Divine Providence” in the 1777 British invasion. God-sent disasters like the frost-filled summer of 1816 also called for special penitential proclamations. As defined in Governor Isaac Tichenor’s 1805 proclamation, Vermonters, “from a sense of religious duty,” annually devoted “a day at the commencement of the labors of the season” to pray for “Divine protection and blessing.”<sup>17</sup> They chose a day in April, sometimes coinciding with Good Friday but essentially a civil celebration, after provisions and fodder had been used up over the

winter. Although some governors suggested public worship, meetinghouses were even less occupied than at Thanksgiving. Nor has any evidence surfaced that anyone actually fasted. Governors' proclamations acknowledged dependence on the Creator and that public safety and prosperity depended on conformity to divine law. Except for the call to mourn the death of presidents, Fast Day was practically dead after 1870.

In the 1850s, four spring rituals competed to be Vermont's salute to the start of the growing season: the official state Fast Day; the traditional English May Day; the Christian sequence of Lent, Holy Week, Easter, and Pentecost; and a new movement for Arbor Day.

A ritual recognizing the Vermont farmers' cold weather hardships now reflected a shift of attention to the village. One element was the exuberance of prehistoric spring renewal, expressed by children hanging May baskets of arbutus on neighbors' doors. Another, observed by Catholics, Episcopalians and Lutherans, was Christian joy that Christ was risen. The messiness of the farmstead was compounded as dwellings crowded together in villages, crying for beautification and yard cleaning at home or in the graveyard. On May 1, 1860, some two hundred people of Dorset met at the burial ground and planted maples, elms, and evergreens around the edge of the yard and righted stones, paying meet adoration to those who came to town before them. "At noon about 100 men sat down to a well set table in Mr. Baldwin's yard.... The second table was filled mostly with ladies."<sup>18</sup>

With plowing and planting done but hay not ready for mowing, militia musters provided pauses in the rural year. The importance of June training, however, declined after 1840, partly because Independence Day satisfied the same needs, partly because the temperance movement decried its alcoholic ambience, and perhaps because people did not see an enemy to prepare against. When their country gave them an enemy by declaring war on Mexico, Vermonters produced only one company of volunteers. Freedom and unity could not be served, they felt, in an imperialist war that extended slave territory. Drill revived, however, as hostility toward the slaveholding South increased in the mid-1850s.<sup>19</sup>

A cardinal principle of the Protestants' patriotic creed was that people must be educated, not only to read the Bible and understand their faith, but also to be good citizens. Every central place with an academy or college held an exhibition at the end of the scholars' final terms. They heard an eminent visitor exhort the young to uphold science (meaning the wide realm of learning), their church, and their nation. They heard the scholars declaim and honor the village for supporting "the higher branches," and the "land of the free" for its wide-open opportunities. Trustees gathered for business and, more frequently toward midcentury, alumni attended and contributed to a building fund. The seniors, besides declamations and student drama, had

their final literary and religious society meetings with separate speakers from the learned occupations (lawyers, clergy, and editors), banquets, and excursions.

Commemoration of the battles of Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill glorified annually the role of Massachusetts in the Revolution. For the same reason, Bennington began its annual celebration of Bennington Battle Day the year after the August 16, 1777 battle. With the filiopietistic logic of "for want of a nail the shoe was lost," orators pointed out that the setback to Burgoyne's German dragoons on their side trip to seize munitions broke the spirit of the invaders in 1777 and led to American victory and independence. At least Vermonters could and did say over and over again, "We did our duty for our country."

For the first ten years Battle Day "was the busiest day in the year" in Bennington. Youths would find an old barn to burn, and volunteer firemen paraded in full uniform. In 1784, local thespians put on a play.<sup>20</sup> The heroes featured in Bennington Battle orations were John Stark, Seth Warner, and Samuel Herrick, commander of a company of rangers at the battle. It was always a local celebration, although in 1795 they observed the day at Manchester and in 1801 at Shaftsbury. Taking its cue from the antebellum movement to build the Washington Monument, the Bennington Battle Monument Association was incorporated in 1853, with statewide incorporators for fundraising purposes. By contrast, the Hubbardton Battle Monument Association, incorporated in 1856, never struck fire, although it had a site in the state rather than across the line in New York, where Seth Warner fought the Germans.

Both Washington and Bennington got boosts of public funding during the centennial enthusiasm of 1876. As a result of the wide publicity for the dedication of the Bennington Battle monument in 1891, the legislature named August 16 a state holiday in 1894. The monument is on the hill in Old Bennington, not at the battle site.<sup>21</sup>

In December, Vermont almost universally celebrated Thanksgiving but ignored Christmas. Governors usually proclaimed the first Thursday in the month and called for public worship, but families observed mainly by gathering and feasting. The event celebrated home and family, for which the patriots had fought ever since the Pilgrims landed. Where the Fast Day outlook was dark, Thanksgiving's was bright, in spite of the Vermont weather. To complete the seasonal round of ritual holidays, Vermonters used New Year's Day as a time to exchange gifts, pay social calls, and make resolutions. Lorenzo Dow recorded in 1799, "I . . . renewed my covenant to be more faithful to God and man."<sup>22</sup>

## PARTISANSHIP AND PATRIOTISM, 1791-1831

Vermont in the early republic, especially from admission in 1791 through the War of 1812, preserved the paradox of bitter partisanship in church and state under a canopy of patriotism. Among the increasing output of published sermons and orations, songs and stories, the rhymes of Royall Tyler and Anthony Haswell combined loyalty and ardent disagreement about how to express it. They represented the two sides of the state and both Washingtonian and Jeffersonian orientations. The conflicts between the reigning Federalists and Democratic Societies that supported Matthew Lyon for Congress in the late 1790s continued between Washington Benevolent Societies and reigning Republicans, over the same principles, but with a new focus on the War of 1812.<sup>23</sup>

Above the local heroes towered General Washington, the Father of his Country. The eulogies that poured out after his death were mainly from Federalists and Congregational ministers but included such Jeffersonians as Anthony Haswell. They made plain that the retired president was the revolutionary word made flesh for all sorts and conditions of men. Endowed by God with almost superhuman virtues of solid judgment, acute discernment, perseverance in adversity, and prudence, he checked treason and held a neutral course in a war-stricken world. St. George slew the British dragon and kept the country united as plain President Washington.

His birthday, February 22, which Leonard Worcester claimed was annually observed before his death, came to be his saint's day. However, at the request of Bennington Masons, Anthony Haswell first mourned his death (December 14, 1799) on St. John the Baptist Day, December 27, and the Reverend Heman Ball spoke in Rutland on New Year's Day, 1800. In the two and a half years before the battles at Plattsburg silenced most Federalist guns, Vermont's Federalist Washington Benevolent Societies published twenty-one speeches on Washington-oriented holidays, invoking the patron military saint in opposition to the War of 1812. But after the war, Washington was a hero above party.<sup>24</sup>

Vermont's patriotism came near shipwreck in the cold and hot war conditions under Presidents Jefferson and Madison. The embargo and the War of 1812 inhibited Champlain Valley trade, travel, and social intercourse with Canada. Governor Martin Chittenden came near nullification when he refused to order Vermont troops to assist General Macomb, across Lake Champlain. He weaseled out of his Federalist hostility by encouraging volunteers, who streamed toward Lake Champlain and Plattsburg. Yet sounds of secessionism came not from the Champlain valley, where smuggling and trade with the enemy were subverting administration policy, but from the lower Connecticut valley. Windham County Federalists sent a delegate to the Hartford Convention in 1815 and Secretary of State Josiah Dunham of

Windsor attended as an observer, but the Republican Assembly of 1815 repudiated the Hartford resolutions. After such bitter, unity-breaking partisanship the Federalists could do no more than crawl into their holes or join the Republicans, who won large and steady majorities after the war.

During the war, flags decorated martial maneuvers around recruiting stations, the Vergennes shipyard, the Burlington barracks, and on Lake Champlain vessels. Although the state established its militia flag in 1803, such symbols had little civilian use until the Whig and Democratic politicians of the era of Henry Clay and Andrew Jackson, when flagpoles were erected on village greens. Then Independence Day ceremonies officially opened and closed with the raising and lowering of the flag of the United States. The 1836 legislature authorized a state flag of thirteen stripes, alternately red and white, and one large white star on a blue field bearing the state coat of arms, but it does not seem to have had much use. Instead, Vermont troops in the wars from 1837 on carried a flag with the state coat of arms on a blue field. Not until the Civil War did this flag become a necessary symbol of Union. It was made official in 1923, to distinguish it more clearly from the Stars and Stripes.<sup>25</sup>

Unity, fractured by party battles of 1800-1815, needed rebuilding. President James Monroe, crossing the state in late July 1817, did his best to mend fences. He courted such Federalists as Josiah Dunham and emphasized the value of national defense by stopping at sites of recent military activity.<sup>26</sup> Still more effective, the return of the Marquis de Lafayette in 1825 on a two-day trip via Windsor, Woodstock, Montpelier, and Burlington, drew large crowds.

Half a century after he first came, Lafayette's return reminded patriots inclined to say "we did it ourselves" of their country's broader Revolution.<sup>27</sup> In welcoming General Lafayette, Vermonters repeated the well-established Independence Day ritual of cheers, bell-ringing, gunfire, wordfire, toasts, and illuminations rehearsed during President Monroe's visit. Celebrations were held in each town, and one innkeeper charged the federal government, which picked up the tab, \$68.75 for 273 meals and \$36 for "27 Gales [*sic*] Brandy, gin & spirits for solgers."<sup>28</sup> As far as one could see through the haze of patriotic enthusiasm and spirituous drink, the general public rejoiced to show the general how widespread were "the blessings of republican liberty" Vermont had inherited from the Revolution he had helped win. The Montpelier Congregational ladies entertained him, and one of them pronounced the welcome. Only one other woman on his ten-month tour had that honor.

Governor Cornelius P. Van Ness, the choice of three-quarters of the voters in three elections, hosted Lafayette's Burlington visit. The general embraced veterans, laid the cornerstone for the University of Vermont's new building that students would call "the Old Mill," rising from the ashes of an 1824 fire,

and boarded the "sleeper," the steamboat *Phoenix*, for Whitehall.

While Lafayette's hosts had honored his republican leadership, they had toasted the Green Mountain Boys, because they were of two minds about equality. Guided through their first half century by the revolutionary declaration that "all men are created equal," they had the usual democratic dilemma of reconciling the uncommon individual with the common people. Americans canonized Washington, but Congress decided in 1789 to call him "President" and not "His Highness." Vermonters lauded President Monroe and General Lafayette, but were fond, in funeral eulogies, of praising an ordinary man as "nature's nobleman," a phrase widely used in Vermont by 1840. Titles of nobility could not be granted by the United States, according to the new constitution, nor accepted when offered by foreign powers without the consent of Congress.

The revolutionary creed of equality, and the Christian creed of human equality in the sight of God, minimized distinctions, yet Vermonters used deferential titles to honor state officials, militia and masonic officers. Vermont's House Rule 5, adopted in 1791, stated that "no other title than Mr. be required to address the members of the House." Rule 12, however, required that "whenever his Excellency the Governor, or any member of the Council" entered the House chamber, "all business shall cease" except their business.<sup>29</sup> But because representatives were chosen by the freemen, the legislators were always "honorable" and the titles of the Governor and Council exalted the people through their servants. Extolling the merits of their leaders because of their office, not their party, class, or social background, provided another bond between the people, the state, and the nation.

As in the case of legislative titles, the popularity of freemasonry illustrated the paradox of belief in the simple equality of brother Masons and the hunger of plain Yankees for ritual, costume, and mystery veiling inequalities of rank. Masonry, "a church outside the church," provided another support connecting local, state, and national affairs across the boundaries of party and church, at least in the eyes of its organizers. All members had to believe in the Supreme Ruler of the Universe, and, although each lodge served as a mutual benefit society of brothers (no women were admitted), their larger goals were enlightenment, education, morality, and upholding the members' religious obligations. They explicitly denied any conflict between their solemn Masonic duties and their domestic, civil, and religious responsibilities. From five lodges operating in Vermont in 1794, the movement grew to over seventy by 1826. Leaders of both parties joined; ministers of several denominations served as Masonic chaplains.<sup>30</sup>

Suspicion of secrecy and fear of conspiratorial power led to the organization of a fanatical party against the Masons, driven by revivalistic emotions and economic uncertainties. This rival religious party wiped out the Masons in

less than a decade. John H. Woodward, Westford pastor, concluded that “the anti-Masonic revolution . . . soured and alienated some minds, . . . dismissed some ministers, and . . . nearly wrecked some churches.”<sup>31</sup> Had the Masons been recognized as the religious society they were, the religious liberty section of the Vermont constitution ought to have protected them against the antimasonic attacks of the 1830s.

By the 1830s the civic religion of Vermont had developed a panoply of holy days, scriptures, rituals, and beliefs. It had suffered schism in which each party believed it alone was patriotic, while others invoked a plague on both their houses. Governors’ messages for half a century had outlined the dominant creed: minimal government; maximum freedom; frugality; thanks to God for benefits; and confession of sins that brought disasters. Governors were the most prominent ministers of this civic religion, but denominational clergy saw in their dual membership no conflict between the civic and the sectarian societies. All public servants down to common school teachers with their patriotic texts were also its ministers. Nature’s noblemen did not run for office; the people called them as ministers to serve the commonwealth, not just their party. This attitude faintly echoed that of the eighteenth-century Congregational churches’ Standing Order, with the minister both pastor called to shepherd a church within the town and appointed the whole town’s moral teacher. Each civic festival had community scale, although the centers attracted visitors from surrounding towns and speakers from farther away. The celebration took place on sacred ground, the town common or in the town meetinghouse. Each had a different emphasis, but used similar rituals.

Until the 1850s, Vermont’s patriotism lacked two elements of its religion: a state capitol and a state hero to symbolize republican democracy and to epitomize what Vermont stood for. Ammi B. Young designed such a capitol in 1833-37, but Vermonters did not choose Ethan Allen until later.

#### THE SECOND STATE HOUSE: TEMPLE OF REPUBLICAN DEMOCRACY

In the thirty years after 1777 the legislature was peripatetic, meeting in thirteen towns, without a single place to call capital. Meeting permanently in Montpelier from 1808, the General Assembly occupied space satisfactory as a gathering place but very inadequate as a symbol. It was a simple wooden frame meetinghouse like many others throughout New England, with a belfry surmounting a hipped roof and unusual porches on the second and third floors above the main entrance, affording covered walkways to the hall of the House and the Council chamber.<sup>32</sup>

Between 1808 and 1834, thirty-three newly organized towns sent representatives for the first time, to crowd the House chamber. From 1826 to 1836 pressure for a second chamber built up until a Senate of thirty members replaced the twelve-member Governor’s Council. The cry for more space

overcame parsimony. The presence of Ammi B. Young, an ambitious and talented architect with a plan, and the rising prosperity in the 1830s brought the second state house into being.<sup>33</sup>

Vermonters have tended to name all their buildings houses, whatever their use, and so the term “capitol,” reminiscent of the Roman temple of Jupiter, has never been popular in Vermont. Although the State used its “House” for its business only three to six weeks a year, it had the same practical requirements of use as most other “houses,” especially meetinghouses, likewise used a small part of the time.

The Vermont creed, or complex of ideals to be symbolized, had changed in half a century. The scales between freedom and unity had shifted away from wild freedom as the turbulent frontier had given way to settled farming and trading villages. Instead of militia on the *qui vive* against the British Lion in the revolutionary spirit, June training was a farce and soon abandoned. The Democrats could whip up little practical support for the Canadian rebellion. Governors’ proclamations were paeans of peace. The “ultraism” of antimasonry and the perceived excesses of other reformers and revivalists had lost majority support and the Whig Party came into a long decade of dominance. The Whigs used the style of reformer-revivalists but promoted a new judicial syndrome: justice, order, thrift, openness to change only in the light of new evidence, and solid conservatism. Only independence continued as a cardinal principle in the Vermonters’ creed. Architect Young expressed these conservative principles in his design.

Young and his building committee sited the capitol on the axis of travel up and down the Winooski valley. Necessarily in the valley trough, it could not be a beacon like the Old Mill’s tin-covered dome at the University of Vermont, built a decade earlier on the crest of a hill, reflecting light to travelers miles away. Perhaps ex-congressman and ex-governor Samuel C. Crafts of Young’s building committee was responsible for some of the refinements, such as extending the vista to maximize the approach by blasting into the hill. Congressman Crafts had experience on the Public Buildings Committee for the reconstruction of the U.S. Capitol after the British burned it in 1814.

From Berlin Hill to State Street the approach showed a subtly proportioned pile with the facade of a Greek temple merged with a Roman dome. A state gazetteer described it as simple, neat, pure, appropriate (i.e., functional), built for the ages.<sup>34</sup> Young had the base of the wooden dome painted gray to blend with the granite walls, while the copper sheathing of the dome and roofs oxidized in a few years to blend with the green pasture above.<sup>35</sup> The sergeant-at-arms contracted the hay-cutting inside the yard enclosed by an iron fence. The 325-foot approach, broken by a series of steps, allowed the visitor-worshiper to gaze on the shrine’s Doric entrance and feel that gods and heroes dwelt within.



*Second Vermont State House, 1837-1857. Daguerreotype, ca. 1850.*

Entering ceremonially through the imposing portico or for business from either end, people found an interior design symbolizing the importance of each element of state government. The basic form of a Greek cross suggested the marriage of classical and Christian culture. This was the people's center, apparently never locked, where all could walk at any time into the people's meetinghouse.

Symbols and icons inside were almost as scarce as images in a synagogue. Portraits, not flags, hung in the chambers. George Gassner's copy of Gilbert Stuart's portrait of George Washington, behind the speaker's desk, was the first thing people thought of saving in the 1857 fire that destroyed the second capitol. This, with copies of the Declaration of Independence and of Washington's farewell address hanging in the state library, called to mind the glorious American Revolution in the tradition of the liberties fought for by the ancient Greek democracy, as contemporaries viewed it. The Greek revolution of the 1820s gave fresh meaning to the Greek revival when Jonathan P. Miller of Montpelier joined a foreign legion to fight for Greek independence from the Turks, and returned with a young Greek protégé. No one provided a portrait of Lafayette, who had aroused patriotic fervor in 1825.

The only portraits of Vermonters were a bust of Elijah Paine, judge of the First U.S. District Court, 1801-42, and an elegant full-length oil of Charles K. Williams, Vermont Supreme Court, 1829-1846, both in the Senate Chamber by 1847.<sup>36</sup> By the 1840s, public poverty did not prevent ex-governor Charles Paine from giving to the state the bust of his father, nor the Rutland County Bar Association from presenting the portrait of retiring judge C. K. Williams.

The two jurists were appropriate symbols because in the popular mind both were free from partisan politics and epitomized probity and justice. They represented both sides of the state and both had links to early Vermont. Samuel Williams, the judge's father, an immigrant of the 1780s, was pastor, publisher, and first historian of Vermont. Paine's was the typical success story of a man with advantages who made good on the Vermont frontier. He speculated in Vermont lands in the 1780s, built a turnpike, invested in a broadcloth mill, and held major offices for fifteen years, climaxed by a term in the U.S. Senate, from which he was appointed to the U.S. District Court.

#### ETHAN ALLEN, STATE HERO

The last element needed to complete Vermont's civil religion was the canonization of its saint, Ethan Allen. It will surprise those acquainted with Ethan Allen's heroic image that he had no icon anywhere until October 10, 1861, when the General Assembly dedicated Larkin G. Mead's statue in the portico of the third state house.<sup>37</sup>

Why had they waited so long? No other early Vermont leader, either, had the honor of recognition with a public image. Was it Bible-based, Puritan hostility to icons or Yankee parsimony? Did people feel that nature's noblemen needed no glorification? The images of judges, senators, congressmen and governors were not exposed to public view, although many of their families had portraits on their own walls.

All those long years of the early republic, the deist George Washington could be a hero, bathed in the glory of final victory; Ethan Allen, author of that infidel book, *Reason: The Only Oracle of Man* (1784) could not. The Green Mountain Boys chose not to elect Ethan to be their leader because they doubted his ability. He chose himself, however, to lead a quixotic invasion of Canada with a handful of men. When he tried to take Montreal, not, like Ticonderoga, a tumbledown fortress inadequately guarded, His Majesty's troops surrounded his men and took him prisoner, ending his military career.

Although Ira Allen tried to make his brother a hero, the deistical Allen could not win wide approval until revivalistic fires burned out in the late 1830s. Then he could be remembered only as a romantic frontier character who struck a bold blow for freedom in capturing strategic Ticonderoga and then suffered under British captivity.

The 1779 charter of the Two Heroes (later divided into the towns of South

Hero, Grand Isle, and North Hero) listed Ethan Allen and Samuel Herrick as the first of 365 grantees. Who were the two heroes if not the first two named? Exchanged after two years as a prisoner of war, Ethan spent the month of May, 1779, visiting General Washington at Valley Forge and lobbying Congress in Philadelphia. He came home with a brevet colonelcy in the Continental Army and back pay for the entire period of his captivity.

Finally reaching Bennington on the night of May 31, "he caused three cannon to be fired," arousing the town, and "brought out rum" to celebrate with his old friends. The next day, Samuel Herrick ordered a fourteen-gun salute, one for each state in the Union and one for Vermont. Allen spent the summer in further self-glorification, telling the story of his life as a prisoner of war, in the genre of the Indian captivity narratives. Before the year was out, he and other Green Mountain Boys had bought the two largest islands in Lake Champlain for ten thousand pounds.<sup>38</sup>

No contemporary evidence has surfaced to identify Ethan Allen as one of the Heroes. Ira Allen as Surveyor General and State Treasurer in charge of land grants could have stated officially that the Two Heroes were the first two grantees named. The Allens had enemies who did not like the idea. No one would have objected to Herrick. He had a sterling reputation as leader of a regiment of rangers with a large role in winning the battle of Bennington. But the Two Heroes cannot be identified. People believed for over a century, with no justification, that the Two Heroes were Ethan and Ira Allen. If one speculates that Ira Allen painted his brother golden, the dye was not fast. After his death it washed off.<sup>39</sup>

When Ethan died (February 12, 1789), Ira tried once more to make his eldest brother a hero. He delayed the funeral several days, saying that Ethan wanted to be "buried under arms" and therefore his former comrades had to be called from about the country. Witnesses recalled a large crowd, "considering the newness of the country," parading from Ira Allen's house across the Winooski River on the ice and up the hill, with a cannon fired "every minute by the watch." Veterans laid their drawn swords across the coffin until it was opened for a final farewell and then closed and lowered with a six-platoon salute of musketry. Since by Ethan's request no clergyman was present,<sup>40</sup> Major William Goodrich, the marshal, then made a few remarks on how much General Allen had done for his country and suffered for it. Then all returned at quick step across the snow and ice to Ira's house, where they tapped a barrel of rum. Ira saw to it that the only two newspapers in the state, the *Windsor Vermont Journal* and the *Bennington Vermont Gazette*, had full accounts.<sup>41</sup>

Samuel Williams could have painted Ethan a hero, but devoted less than three pages to Allen in his *History of Vermont*, published only five years after Allen's death. He "placed himself at the head of the opposition" to New

York, wrote Williams, and in May 1775, with "enterprising spirit . . . put himself at the head of the troops" he raised in a few days and bravely took Ticonderoga. He "placed himself;" "put himself at the head;" he was not chosen. Williams closes him out as commander of the militia enforcing Vermont law against the Guilford Yorkers and in charge of the initial Haldimand negotiations.<sup>42</sup>

Williams wrote with restraint. The more common Federalist attitude, shared in a less lampooning tone by Ezra Stiles and Timothy Dwight, presidents of Yale, the Rev. Nathan Perkins, and many other orthodox divines,<sup>43</sup> found voice in the anonymous rhyme of about 1790 beginning "Allen's escaped from British jails. / His tushes broke by biting nails," and ending "One hand is clenched, to batter noses / While t'other scrawls 'gainst Paul and Moses."<sup>44</sup>

Favorable comments from outsiders accumulated over the half century after Ethan Allen's death. At the banquet for Lafayette in Gould's Hotel, Burlington, June 29, 1825, after twenty-two toasts to all the great from Washington to Simon Bolívar and the South American revolutions, Lafayette proposed "Ethan Allen and the Green Mountain Boys." The master of ceremonies rejoined with the "Patriotism of the Early Settlers," as if to say, "It was the rank and file, not that infidel blow-hard." School histories by Nathan Hoskins and Zadock Thompson expanded, repeated, and sometimes even plagiarized Williams. The six printings or editions between 1779 and 1814 of Ethan Allen's captivity narrative, none printed in Vermont, may have accounted for upwards of a thousand copies that served to keep his name alive. But the Vermont story, as Vermonters believed it, was about the fight with New York, maintaining independence, and admission to the Union on terms that recognized New Hampshire titles. The heroes were the Green Mountain Boys, settlers, and frontiersmen, and only incidentally their leaders, Ethan occasionally among them.<sup>45</sup>

Vermonters began to show more interest in Ethan as hero from 1834 when Hugh Moore published his *Memoir* in Plattsburgh. Daniel Pierce Thompson's *The Green Mountain Boys* (1839) testified to the new interest. But Thompson, although inscribing his story to Ethan's nephew Heman, ex-Minister to Chile, featured Seth Warner as his hero. By calling Warner Warrington he suggested that Warner, a hero of the battle of Bennington, was the Washington of Vermont. Thompson treated the taking of Ticonderoga as a minor theme of only thirty pages. Zadock Thompson's *History of Vermont* (1842), because it had wider distribution, fanned the flame at Ethan Allen's altar. Ethan's *Narrative* had its first Vermont imprint in Burlington in 1838, followed by three more Burlington printings by 1852. Henry W. Dupuy's *Ethan Allen and the Green Mountain Boys of '76* (1853) enjoyed three more printings before the Civil War.<sup>46</sup>

Not long before he died in 1841, Jabez Penniman provided a marble slab on a low granite foundation in Burlington's Green Mount Cemetery to mark Ethan Allen's grave. It seems unlikely that Penniman's wife, Ethan's widow, could have remembered after more than forty years where her former husband was buried. The inscription on the slab ended denying Allen was an infidel: "His spirit tried the mercies of his God, in whom alone he believed and strongly trusted." Penniman, after eight years as collector of customs in Swanton, farmed and processed limestone near the high bridge over the Winooski gorge in Colchester. The Pennimans must have started the story that when Ethan's dying daughter asked him whether to believe her mother's faith or his freethinking, he replied, "Believe like your mother."<sup>47</sup>

Benson J. Lossing, visiting in July 1850, sketched the tablet and noted, "A willow drooped over the tombs of the patriot dead, and rose-bushes clustered around the storm-worn monument."<sup>48</sup> Although Lossing thought he saw Ira Allen's grave, Ira died and was buried in Philadelphia. Jabez Penniman probably created "the Allen enclosure" of 1850 when he ordered the memorial tablet, and his wife had to guess, after half a century, where Ethan was buried. Although she had long wanted a respectable tombstone, Penniman's lime kilns had not provided a surplus until the prosperity of the 1830s, when travelers were beginning to ask where Ethan Allen's grave was.

What people thought of Ethan had become so favorable by 1850 that a local artist dreamed of carving Ethan's statue. At the 1850 session of the General Assembly, B. H. Kinney, a cameo-cutter from Rutland, exhibited his plaster casts of Ethan Allen, Governor C. K. Williams, and an Indian girl, hoping the legislature would commission the Ethan Allen in heroic marble. The legislature pleaded poor until 1855, when it authorized two thousand dollars for a statue over his grave. The movement supporting this commemoration evoked the effusions of college students like Constans Liberty Goodell of the University of Vermont Class of 1855, who wrote "Ethan Allen," a paean praising nature's nobleman, the "hero of Ti."<sup>49</sup> Ethan's was becoming a name to use: two years later the Ethan Allen Engine Company Number 4 organized in Burlington.<sup>50</sup>

The state appropriation also sparked a search for the original wooden or stone marker. Workmen digging for the foundations of the new monument authorized by the 1855 legislature found bones near the old tablet "within the Allen enclosure," The *Burlington Free Press* concluded (9 June 1858) they must be Ethan's. "No more of the dust of the Patriot was disturbed than was necessary," because this had become holy ground. If Ethan had hero-worshippers all the years after his death, they would have beaten a path to his well-marked grave.

Failure to raise matching funds prevented completion of Burlington's monument until 1873, with another sculptor's Ethan atop a Tuscan column.



*"Ethan Allen," by Aristide Piccini (1941), after the original by Larkin G. Mead (1861). Portico of the Third Vermont State House.*

Larkin Mead had submitted a design and model for the Burlington job, but these became the ultimate choice for the portico of the third capitol. John Spargo, president of the Bennington Battle Monument and Historical Association, noted in 1937 that "since the middle of the last century" Vermonters had been looking in vain for a likeness of Ethan. Not enough people cared before 1850.<sup>51</sup>

By mid-century, as people called for public images of founding fathers, they first chose neither those aristocrats nor the self-made men of the first partisan period, but judges. Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales* had romanticized the northeastern woodland frontier and his imitator, Daniel Pierce Thompson, had given it a Vermont flavor. But Ethan's full rehabilitation had to wait until the erosion of memory left little but the martyred captive and the hero of Ticonderoga. By then, the fires of religious revival had died down and multiple reforms had drained off into the antislavery crusade. Then Ethan's blow for freedom could be linked with freedom for slaves and his heterodox book, *Reason: The Only Oracle of Man*, so long called "infidel," could be forgotten.

Ethan Allen was "oftenest on the lips of" Vermonters as their choice to be honored with a statue in National Statuary Hall, which Congress established

in 1865. The joint resolution commissioned each state's senators to choose two of its deceased citizens, "illustrious for their historical renown or for distinguished civic or military services."<sup>52</sup> Ethan Allen represented Vermont's founding generation.

For their second choice, the commissioners claimed they looked for an antislavery crusader among the many Vermonters who had worked to end the evil. Passing over six-term Congressman William Slade (1786-1859), active supporter of the abolitionist petition campaign in the federal House, Charles K. Williams, first Liberty Party candidate for governor and ultimately elected as a Whig, and Erastus Fairbanks (1792-1864), first Civil War governor who had worked for gradual, compensated, emancipation, they chose Jacob Collamer (1791-1865), a conservative Republican opposed only to slavery in the territories.

Collamer had spent seventy years of his life in Vermont and thirty-two in public service on the bench, at the bar, in the state legislature, in the U.S. House, and briefly as Postmaster General in President Zachary Taylor's cabinet, and had just died after ten Republican years in the U.S. Senate. They urged his solid combination of learning, jurisprudence, statesmanship, and eloquence. The qualities of Judge Collamer were the qualities of Judge Elijah Paine and Judge Charles K. Williams, the only images of state leaders in the second state capitol. Collamer represented the Republican Party, heir of Paine's Federalist and Williams's Whig parties, and for the next century, the Republican Party represented Vermont. But Collamer's career did not have the stuff folk heroes are made of. The speeches at the presentation of his statue in 1881 were his last hurrahs. Today, few know that Collamer's statue stands in the Hall with Ethan Allen's, and if they knew his name, they would not know why he was chosen.<sup>53</sup>

#### ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND MEMORIAL DAY

Collamer's statue did not in any sense represent a Vermont Civil War hero for all generations. Indeed, Vermonters never focused on any one local war hero, but they were unanimous in raising Abraham Lincoln to sainthood beside, if not above, George Washington. Funereal gatherings in April, 1865, immediately focused on the martyred president. Speakers recalled Lincoln's great unifying speeches assuring Vermonters that their dead had not died in vain.<sup>54</sup>

For a generation, people looked back on the Civil War with bittersweet feelings.<sup>55</sup> Hope for national renewal drove away sorrow over war losses. To their tradition of freedom and unity formed in their country's first two wars against Britain, Vermonters easily added their part in ending slavery and preserving the Union. They told that story in celebration of a new national holiday, proclaimed in General John A. Logan's order to observe May 30,

1868 as "Commemoration Day." Occurring at the start of the summer political season, Decoration Day, its common name until World War I, enabled Republican politicians to wave the bloody shirt and imply that the Democrats had not given their last full measure of devotion. Neither Fast Day, long indifferently observed in Vermont, and last proclaimed by Governor George W. Hendee in 1870, nor Easter, nor Arbor Day, nor May Day could compete with the annual requiem of Memorial Day.

Even during the war, families had visited their cemetery plots or had transferred soldiers' remains from battle graves. In 1868, small groups of Vermont veterans and their friends quietly observed Decoration Day. Observance rituals developed from the traditional Fourth of July celebration, but in a minor mode. This simplicity struck the right note with veterans who had known and respected Johnny Reb and borne the sufferings of war.

At St. Johnsbury in 1868, a procession offered flowers and evergreens at the new soldiers' monument. Rain interfered at Woodstock in 1869, but on the following Sunday a silent company deposited a miniature flag, with wreath and staff, at each warrior's grave. Burlington emphasized the contributions of anonymous volunteers in speeches honoring the unknown soldier in 1870. At Bristol in 1872 they spent the day improving the burial ground. The crowds grew each year; business stopped; the floral arrangements became more elaborate, and bands, choirs, public officials, fraternal orders, fire companies, schoolchildren, veterans of earlier wars—especially the two new Civil War organizations, the Loyal Legion (commissioned officers) and the Grand Army of the Republic—and citizens afoot and in carriages joined the parade. But the bands played softly in the cemetery, barriers between Yankee, French, and Irish lowered for the moment, and the orators dwelt less on glory than on rededication. More and more celebrants found Lincoln's Gettysburg address worth quoting.

Governor John W. Stewart preached reconciliation at Burlington in 1872. Preferring quiet meditation to speeches and pomp, he called for remembrance of the devoted dead and for facing the trials and duties of peace. "Smother every remaining . . . spark of animosity between the sections," he concluded. "We cannot afford to perpetuate the hatreds of the war. We should feel today that we can shake hands across the graves with our Southern brethren."<sup>56</sup> Gen. W. W. Grout of Barton, not yet elected to Congress, echoed the same sentiments in 1878. Half a century later, schoolchildren recited Francis Miles Finch's poem, "The Blue and the Gray": "We banish our anger forever / As we laurel the graves of our dead."

In spite of the exhortations of governors, in the dozen years after the conflict, the hatreds of the war fired the Radical Republican program to make the Southern rebels pay and to give former slaves power over their former oppressors. When Jefferson Davis ventured across the Canadian border at

Derby in 1867, an indignant woman threw a stone at him, a crowd taunted and booed, and he was refused a visit to a famous herd of cattle. As Vermont carpetbaggers wrote home that the Ku Klux Klan and other Southerners were resisting the Radicals' program and rallying to deny them the fruits of victory, Vermonters hardened too.

The patriotism of those who took part in the victory of the Union in the Civil War was part of the religion of all church people and the centerpiece in the religion of those who were not adherents to any particular religious organization. Some were like the original settlers, not connected with any association, except perhaps the family, through which they could express their sense of the sacred.

The Grand Army of the Republic, open to Union veterans honorably discharged, established a Vermont department in 1868, which promoted Memorial Day. But for veterans, re-establishing themselves in civilian life took priority for a decade over nostalgia, and the G.A.R. did not grow. Toward 1880, however, veterans began to win political offices, thanks to Redfield Proctor's and Wheelock G. Veazey's Reunion of Vermont Officers, and the annual encampments attracted larger numbers. G.A.R. peak membership of 5,445 at the time of the Burlington encampment, February, 1891, represented almost one-sixth of all those who served in Vermont units. It was a very high percentage of veterans still alive and in the Vermont department. Another sign of the growth of the G.A.R. was the founding of the Women's Relief Corps, consisting of wives of veterans, and devoted to patriotic education and the distribution of flags to weekday schools and Sunday Schools.

In the wake of the G.A.R., other patriotic societies aimed to garner the unearned increment of the members' ancestors who fought in earlier wars. The Sons of the American Revolution organized in Vermont in 1890, the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1892. The Society of Colonial Wars followed in 1894, and the Society of Colonial Dames in 1897.<sup>57</sup>

For Vermonters, the Civil War had achieved "one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for" the ex-slave too. They trusted the Union, "under God." They were confident that the democracy they practiced, which had become the common name for patriotism, had proved its validity and could meet new challenges. Unfinished business between Protestants and Catholics required no revision of the mode of operation: majority rule, minority rights, and by peaceful acceptance of election results, gradual accommodation to gradually changing situations.

For another half century or more they would need no restatement of the American Way in different language. In Vermont the essentials of its patriotic faith had crystallized. "The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battle field and patriot grave, to every living heart and hearthstone," as Lincoln appealed to them in his first inaugural, bonded them beyond all difference.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Records of the Council of Safety and Governor and Council of the State of Vermont, to Which Are Prefixed the Records of the General Conventions from July 1775 to December 1777*, ed. E. P. Walton (Montpelier: J. & J. M. Poland, 1873-1880), 1:51, with supporting documents and commentary, 48-54.

<sup>2</sup> *Laws of Vermont, 1781-1784*, ed. John A. Williams (Montpelier: Secretary of State, 1965) in *State Papers of Vermont* (Montpelier: Secretary of State, 1918-1978; 17v.) 13:98. The annual printing of a session's enactments will be cited as *Vermont Laws*, with date.

<sup>3</sup> See C. C. Goen, "The Evangelical Bond," in *Broken Churches, Broken Nation: Denominational Schisms and the Coming of the Civil War* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer Univ. Press, 1985), 41.

<sup>4</sup> For example, see Marshall True, "Slavery in Burlington? An Historical Note," *Vermont History*, 50 (Fall 1982): 227.

<sup>5</sup> Samuel Williams, *The Natural and Civil History of Vermont* (Walpole, N. H.: Isaiah Thomas and David Carlisle, Jr., 1794), 336; 2d ed. (Burlington: Samuel Mills, 1809) 2:382. The second edition, "corrected and much enlarged," reprinted the 1794 chapter on religion with two inserts dated 1806.

<sup>6</sup> Voters in town meetings, according to *The Revised Statutes of the State of Vermont, Passed November 19, 1839, To Which Are Added Several Public Acts Now In Force* (Burlington: Chauncey Goodrich for the Legislature, 1840), 86, were limited to those "whose list shall have been taken in any town the year preceding his voting," or those "exempt from taxation" because aged sixty and over.

<sup>7</sup> See Butler's typical pension file, R. 1555 under the Act of June 7, 1832. In it, ex-Governor Butler, 68, recorded his service as a private in Lt. Col. Henry Dearborn's Third New Hampshire Regiment, in the Veterans' Records of the National Archives and Records Administration. He marched in the spring of 1780 from his Claremont, New Hampshire, farm via Springfield, Massachusetts and Danbury, Connecticut, to West Point. His unit went as far south as Hackensack, New Jersey, before returning in the fall, crossing the Hudson to the Highlands, and building log huts for winter quarters in November 1780. During his six month enlistment, they served as sentinels in a foot of snow at the top of the mountain, with forays to Long Island Sound for forage, and then returned home "over the frozen ground."

<sup>8</sup> Williams, *Natural and Civil History*; Ira Allen, *The Natural and Political History of the State of Vermont* (London: J. W. Myers, 1798). See also the succession of state histories after them.

<sup>9</sup> *Rutland Herald*, 8 August 1796, 2:3. All the quotations in this paragraph relating to the Vergennes celebration refer to this report.

<sup>10</sup> Fair Haven *Farmer's Library*, 8 August 1796, according to Marcus A. McCorison, *Vermont Imprints, 1778-1820* (Worcester: American Antiquarian Society, 1963), #382; *Burlington Mercury*, 17 June, 3:4, 1 July, 4:4, 8 July, 1796, 3:2-3.

<sup>11</sup> Jacob Collamer, *Oration Delivered at Fairfax, Vt., On the Anniversary of American Independence, July 4th, 1811* (Burlington: Samuel Mills, 1811), 5, 14.

<sup>12</sup> See John Spargo's "composite description" of the Bennington ritual in his *Anthony Haswell, Printer-Patriot-Ballader: A Biographical Study with a Selection of His Ballads and an Annotated Bibliographical List of His Imprints* (Rutland: Tuttle, 1925), 142-143. See also Merle E. Curti, *The Growth of American Thought*, 3rd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1946), especially "The Nurture of Loyalty," 123-143.

<sup>13</sup> Samuel Shuttlesworth, *A Discourse Delivered in Presence of His Excellency, Thomas Chittenden, Esq. Governor, His Honor Peter Olcott, Esq. Lieutenant Governor, the Honorable Council, and House of Representatives of the State of Vermont: at Windsor, October 13, 1791* (Windsor: Printed by James Reed Hutchins for . . . the General Assembly, 1791), 6.

<sup>14</sup> *Records of the Governor and Council*, 4:3; *State Papers of Vermont*, v.3 (Journals and Proceedings of the General Assembly) pt.4:266 (appointment of Shuttlesworth, January 24, 1791) and pt.5:ix, 215 (reimbursement of Chittenden "in hard money," November 8, 1792, for election day expenses). Fifteen seems like a remarkable collection of artillery, no doubt for this special celebration in honor of Vermont's admission to the Union.

<sup>15</sup> *State Papers of Vermont*, 3(7):227. Previous references to election day show that officers had advanced money for the purchase of gunpowder to perform "the common exercises and manoeuvres of the day," (October 8, 1795, 6) likewise in 1796, 210, and were reimbursed.

<sup>16</sup> Caleb Blood, *A Sermon Preached Before the Honorable Legislature of the State of Vermont, Convened at Rutland, October 11th, 1792. Being the Day of General Election* (Windsor: Alden Spooner, [1792]); Samuel Williams, *The Love of Country: . . . a Discourse Delivered October 21, 1792, at Rutland* (Rutland: A. Haswell, 1792). Williams first delivered *Love of Country* as a

Thanksgiving Day address in Salem when he was the pastor at Bradford, Massachusetts (Salem, New-England: printed by Samuel and Ebenezer Hall, 1775). He used Psalm 137:5-6 for his text in 1774 and Psalm 122:7-8 in 1792, but extensive passages are the same. Even when he professed loyalty to the British Empire—we live, he wrote, in “the great community, . . . believe in her religion,” favor “her laws and government, share her fortunes” — (1774, pp. 7-9), he smoothly transferred the sense to the federal government of 1792.

<sup>17</sup> Gov. Isaac Tichenor, *Proclamation, for a Day of Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer . . . Given Under My Hand at Bennington, This 18th Day of March, Anno Domini 1805* [n.p., n.d. Bennington? Haswell & Smead?, 1805]. This was a broadside recommending “to ministers and people of every religious denomination . . . to assemble on Wednesday,” April 24. A copy is in the Boston Public Library.

<sup>18</sup> Alfred Holley Gilbert, *Parsons Stuart Pratt, D.D. Life and Ministry, Dorset, Vermont, 1822-1906* (Dorset: Dorset Historical Society, 1975), 4-5. See also the *Burlington Free Press*, 4 May 1848, 2:1, on the poetry of May Day. Governor Levi Fuller’s 1893 proclamation named May 18 as Arbor Day, “following a now well established custom.” (*Burlington Free Press*, 2 May 1893, 4:1).

Easter, in contrast with Christmas or Thanksgiving, is not indexed in M. A. McCorison’s *Vermont Imprints*, or M. D. Gilman’s *Bibliography of Vermont*, or the eight volumes of *Bibliographies of New England History* (Boston and Hanover: Committee for a New England Bibliography, 1976-1990). That suggests that for those of Puritan background, Easter was not a climax celebration, and that those who observed it did not tie it to local tradition. While towns were tidying, their dyed-in-the-wool localism found another expression in the spate of nostalgic town histories in the half century after the Civil War.

<sup>19</sup> See T. D. Seymour Bassett, *The Growing Edge: Vermont Villages, 1840-1880* (Montpelier: Vermont Historical Society, 1992), 47, 129-130; Marilyn Blackwell and James M. Holway, “Reflections on Jacksonian Democracy and Militia Reform: The Waitsfield Militia Petition of 1836,” *Vermont History* 55 (Winter 1987): 5.

<sup>20</sup> Alexander B. Drysdale, *Bennington’s Book: Being the Complete Chronicle of a New England Village* [Troy, N.Y.: Troy Times Art Pr., 1927], 84-85; the *Bennington Vermont Gazette* (15, 23, 30 August 1784), advertised a proposal to print the “tragedy.”

<sup>21</sup> Stephen Jacob, *A Poetical Essay. Delivered at Bennington on the Anniversary of the 16th of August, 1777 . . . 1778* (Hartford: Watson & Goodwin, 1779). The introduction to the reprinted edition in Vermont Historical Society Collections (Montpelier: J. & J. M. Poland, 1870-1871), 1:253-254, outlines the elements of the ritual. See also Noah Smith’s speech to the same assembly, 1:255-261. McCorison, *Vermont Imprints*, nos. 359, 529, 603, 629, 853, 1010, 1089, 1174, 1757, 2173, and 2192, and 147A (1788) in “Additions and Corrections,” *American Antiquarian Society Proceedings*, v.94, pt. 2 (October 1984), show steady celebration from 1795 to 1820. Note also Anthony Haswell’s joining the patriotism of Independence Day and Bennington Battle Day in no. 2269-2270, *Songs for the 4th of July and the 16th of August*. For the incorporation of the Bennington Battle Monument Association, see *Vermont Laws* (1853), 135-136, the charter of the Hubbardton Battle Monument Association, *Vermont Laws* (1856), 191-192, and the establishment of the state holiday, *Vermont Laws* (1894), 112.

<sup>22</sup> Lorenzo Dow, *History of Cosmopolite: or, The Four Volumes of Lorenzo Dow’s Journal Concentrated in One, Containing his Experience and Travels, from Childhood to Near his Fiftieth Year. . . . Also his Polemical Writings . . . to Which is Added the ‘Journey of Life’ of Peggy Dow*, 5th ed. (Wheeling, Va.: Joshua Martin, 1848), 57.

<sup>23</sup> Royall Tyler, “Ode Composed for the Fourth of July, [1796]”, “The Fourth of July [1799] Poems,” *The Verse of Royall Tyler*, Collected and edited by Marius B. Peladeau (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1968), 46-48, 96-109; John Spargo, “Anthony the Ballader,” *Anthony Haswell*, 137-170, with all the poems Spargo could find, set to the popular tunes of the day and sung on the Fourth of July (189-208), and Bennington Battle Day, August 16 (209-229). There is a short section, 221-229, commemorating American victories in the War of 1812.

<sup>24</sup> Royall Tyler, “Oration on the Death of George Washington,” *The Prose of Royall Tyler*, ed. Marius B. Peladeau (Montpelier: Vermont Historical Society and Rutland: Charles E. Tuttle, 1972), 269-280; Leonard Worcester, *An Oration, Pronounced at Peacham, in Commemoration of the Death of the Late Gen. George Washington, February 22d, 1800* (Peacham: Farley & Goss, 1800). See McCorison, *Vermont Imprints*, index entries for Washington Benevolent Society and Washington’s farewell address.

<sup>25</sup> Mary G. Nye, *Vermont’s State House* (Montpelier: Vermont Publicity Service, 1936), 11.

<sup>26</sup> Walter H. Crockett, *Vermont: The Green Mountain State* (New York: Century History, 1921), 3:142-147.

<sup>27</sup> Crockett, *Vermont: The Green Mountain State*, 3:201-208. The account of Lafayette’s visit

in Burlington by Auguste Levasseur, one of the general's party, is in Bassett, *Outsiders Inside Vermont*, 59-61.

<sup>28</sup> Mary Grace Canfield, *Lafayette in Vermont* (Rochester, N.Y.: Canfield and Tack, 1934), 25-26.

<sup>29</sup> *State Papers of Vermont*, 3(5):12. An interesting note needs to be written on the evolution of the meaning of "Esquire," from its medieval meaning of shield-bearer preparing for knighthood, to the British landed gentry with local power, to identification in early Vermont with justices of the peace and therefore a notch above Mr., to an honorific.

<sup>30</sup> Walter J. Coates, *Masonry: A Church Outside the Church* (North Montpelier: Driftwind Press, 1934); Clark Brown, *The Moral and Benevolent Design of Christianity and Freemasonry* (Danville: Ebenezer Eaton, 1808), preached to the Masons in Danville, and *The Utility of Moral and Religious Societies and of the Masonick in Particular* (Keene, N.H.: John Prentiss, 1814), Brown's Putney sermon.

<sup>31</sup> In A. M. Hemenway, ed., *Vermont Historical Gazetteer*, 1:895. Deborah Clifford called my attention to Woodward's opinion. David Ludlum, after sketching the growth of Masonry in Vermont from 1781 to 1826, concluded, "the socio-religious sentiment aroused by the blessed spirit" of militant antimasonry then turned to a new enemy, the slaveholder." (*Social Ferment in Vermont*, 89-94, 133.)

<sup>32</sup> Daniel Robbins, "Montpelier Becomes the Capital," *The Vermont State House: A History & Guide* (Montpelier: Vermont State House Preservation Committee, 1980), 14-17. illus. on 17.

<sup>33</sup> I have examined the inventories of the sergeants-at-arms during the life of the State House, 1836-1856, to create a portrait of the building, in "Vermont's Second State House: A Temple of Republican Democracy," *Vermont History* 64 (Spring 1996): 99.

<sup>34</sup> Zadock Thompson, "Vermont State House," *History of Vermont, Natural, Civil, and Statistical* (Burlington: Chauncey Goodrich, 1842), 2:130-132, with woodcut, based on consultation with the architect. Young designed the engraving of the Vermont State House in John Hayward, *A Gazetteer of Vermont: Containing Descriptions of All the Counties, Towns, and Districts in the State, and of its Principal Mountains, Rivers, Waterfalls, Harbors, Islands, and Curious Places. To Which are Added, Statistical Accounts of Its Agriculture, Commerce and Manufactures; With a Great Variety of Other Useful Information* (Boston: Tappan, Whittemore, and Mason, 1849), opposite 187.

<sup>35</sup> I have found no evidence that, like the dome of the third state house, the dome was painted red. See Daniel Robbins, *Vermont State House*, 54.

<sup>36</sup> Henry Kirke Brown's bust of Judge Paine is now in the Supreme Court building; Benjamin Franklin Mason's Williams is in the governor's ceremonial office. See Nye, *Vermont's State House*, 60 (Williams), 80 (Paine), 82 (Washington).

<sup>37</sup> Nye, *Vermont's State House*, 14; "J. Q. D." in *Rutland Herald* (12 October 1861), 2:3.

<sup>38</sup> Unfriendly report of Ethan's arrival in Bennington, by the son of Seth Warner, who commanded the Vermont regiment at the battle of Bennington, quoted in Charles M. Thompson, *Independent Vermont* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1942), 349. The legislature granted the charter of the Two Heroes October 27, 1779, on a petition four days earlier (*Vermont State Papers*, 2:192-195).

<sup>39</sup> Esther Munroe Swift, *Vermont Place Names: Footprints of History* (Brattleboro: Stephen Green Press, 1977), 262; Allen L. Stratton, *History of the South Hero Island: Being the Towns of South Hero & Grand Isle, Vermont* (North Hero: A. L. Stratton, 1980), 6.

<sup>40</sup> Or did Ira ascribe the prohibition to Ethan because no minister would come, not even Governor Chittenden's brother Bethuel? There were then at least fifty ministers in Vermont.

<sup>41</sup> Reminiscences of Hawley Witters, Ethan's chore boy, Huldah Lawrence, who witnessed the funeral at age six, and Henry Collins, a Burlington lad of twenty-five at the time, in the *Burlington Daily Free Press*, 5 June (Witters) and 19 June 1858. See the account in the *Vermont Gazette*, 23 February 1789.

<sup>42</sup> Williams, *Natural and Civil History* (1794), 219, 223, 226, 244, 248, 249.

<sup>43</sup> Timothy Dwight, *Travels* (1969), 2:283, C. M. Thompson, *Independent Vermont*, 157-158.

<sup>44</sup> [Melvin Barnes], *A Circular, or Short Biography of Col. Ebenezer Allen, Known as Captain or Major, in the New Hampshire Grants, and Its Rangers, A. D., 1777, and After* [Grand Isle, Dec. 1851]; (reprint, Plattsburgh, N.Y.: J. W. Tuttle, 1852), appendix, 15. Quoted in *North Country Life* 13 (Spring 1959). Not indexed by first line in Peladeau, *Verses of Royall Tyler*. Francis Parkman, on a tour of French and Indian War sites in 1842, reported an old storyteller near Lake George who told "one about Ethan Allen...scarcely to be put in writing." (*The Journal of Francis Parkman* ed. Mason Wade (New York: Harper, 1947; 2v.), 1:50.

<sup>45</sup> Rufus W. Griswold, "Ethan Allen. Written on Visiting His Tomb, Near Burlington, Vt.," *New-Yorker* 9 (July 18, 1840), 275, originally printed in the *Southern Literary Messenger*. Seventy-

eight lines of rhymed iambic tetrameter, claim that Ethan's fame will outlast the Green Mountains. See also Nathan Hoskins, *A History of the State of Vermont* (Vergennes: J. Shedd, 1831); Zadock Thompson, *History of the State of Vermont* (Burlington: Edward Smith, 1833); Marcus D. Gilman, *Bibliography of Vermont: or, A List of Books and Pamphlets Relating In Any Way to the State. With Biographical and Other Notes.* ed. George Grenville Benedict (Burlington: Free Press, 1897), 5-7; J. Kevin Graffagnino, "The Vermont 'Story': Continuity and Change in Vermont Historiography," *Vermont History* 46 (Spring 1978): 77, and John McWilliams, "The Faces of Ethan Allen, 1760-1860," *New England Quarterly* 49 (June 1976): 257.

<sup>46</sup> Hugh Moore, *Memoir of Col. Ethan Allen* (Plattsburgh, N.Y.: O. R. Cook, 1834); *Daniel Pierce Thompson, The Green Mountain Boys: A Historical Tale of the Early Settlement of Vermont* (Montpelier: E. P. Walton, 1839; 2v.); *A Narrative of Col. Ethan Allen's Captivity* (Burlington: H. Johnson, 1838); Henry W. De Puy, *Ethan Allen and the Green Mountain Boys of '76* (Buffalo: Phinney, 1853). See also Jared Sparks, *The Life of Col. Ethan Allen* (Boston: Hilliard and Gray, 1834); J. Melville [pseud. for Josiah A. Fraetas], *Ethan Allen: or, The King's Men, an Historical Novel* (New York: W. H. Graham, 1836).

<sup>47</sup> A. M. Hemenway told the story in rhyme in her *Vermont Historical Gazetteer*, 1:568.

<sup>48</sup> This first tourist guide to an Ethan Allen monument, as David J. Blow of the University of Vermont Archives described it, appeared in Benson J. Lossing, *The Pictorial Field-Book of the Revolution* (New York: Harper, 1851), 1:161, with drawing.

<sup>49</sup> In Abby Maria Hemenway, ed., *Poets and Poetry of Vermont* (Rutland: Charles A. Tuttle, 1858), 132-137.

<sup>50</sup> *Exercises Attending the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of Ethan Allen Engine Company Number 4, Burlington, Vermont, April 14th, 1882. Including Historical Address by Hon. George H. Bigelow* (Burlington: Free Press Association, 1882), 17.

<sup>51</sup> Kinney in Montpelier: *Bradford Green Mountain Gem* 8 (Nov. 1858): 274; Zadock Thompson's March 1852 lecture on Ethan's life, occasioned by Kinney's exhibiting in Burlington, is in the *Vermont Historical Gazetteer*, 1:560:2. A. M. Hemenway's poem about Ethan's daughter is *ibid.*, 1:569. Spargo's comment is in the *Battle Monument Association Report* (1937), 4.

<sup>52</sup> *Report of Justin S. Morrill and George F. Edmunds, Commissioners for Vermont, on the National Statuary Hall, in the Capitol, at Washington* (Montpelier: Walton's Steam Printing, 1866), 5. See also Senator Morrill's canvas of leading Republicans, in the Morrill Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, for the year before this report.

<sup>53</sup> *Addresses on the Presentation of the Statue of Jacob Collamer, of Vermont, by Hon. James M. Tyler, of Vermont, Hon. Geo. B. Loring, of Massachusetts, Hon. Alexander H. Stephens, of Georgia, delivered in the House of Representatives, Tuesday, February 15, 1881* (Washington [Government Printing Office], 1881). The state paid Larkin G. Mead \$6,500 for Allen's statue and Hiram Powers \$8,000 for Collamer's. See *Windsor Vermont Chronicle* (November 17, 1866), 3:1.

<sup>54</sup> For a sample of the spontaneous outpouring of Vermonters' grief, see Henry A. P. Torrey, "In Memoriam—Abraham Lincoln," undated MS in University of Vermont Archives. The development of this hero worship over the next two generations was marked by a movement exalting Lincoln's Gettysburg address, started by the publication of Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews, *The Perfect Tribute* (1906). *Laws of Vermont* (1939), No. 1. (April 6, 1939), 2, added Lincoln's Birthday to Vermont's ten other legal holidays.

<sup>55</sup> Bassett, *The Growing Edge*, 155-219, provides economic and social background and detail for some of my conclusions about the postwar period to 1880.

<sup>56</sup> *Burlington Weekly Free Press*, 7 June 1872. The whole state press annually gave the holiday full coverage.

<sup>57</sup> Arthur F. Stone, "Military and Patriotic Societies," in *The Vermont of Today: With Its Historic Background, Attractions and People* (New York: Lewis Publishing, 1929), 2:599-619.