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Wayward Youths: Raising Adolescents in Vermont, 1777-1815

Today Vermonters have largely forgotten the troubles that democracy caused their forebears.

By RANDOLPH ROTH

Vermonters take great pride in their eighteenth-century revolutions against Yorker tyranny and the British Empire, and well they should. The society they created was more democratic than any other society formed during the Age of Revolution. Vermonters dedicated themselves wholeheartedly to the principles of freedom, equality, and opportunity. They adopted suffrage for men of all races, no matter how rich or how poor. They embraced religious toleration. They abolished slavery, eschewed discriminatory racial laws, and granted both men and women unprecedented rights to dissolve abusive marriages. They fostered private enterprise and promoted literacy. Nowhere did more families own their own shops and farms. Nowhere did more men and women know how to read and write. And nowhere were citizens better informed about political and social issues.¹

Today, however, Vermonters have largely forgotten the troubles that democracy caused their forebears. Most people (including many historians) think of Vermont's postrevolutionary era as a period of relative calm, when Vermonters prospered amid the freedom and opportunity of New England's revolutionary frontier. Few people realize that Vermont's struggle for independence and statehood marked only the beginning of Vermont's revolution and that the state would remain in turmoil for another half-century. Democracy, it seems, created as many problems as it solved.

One of those problems was the difficulty pious, churchgoing parents (who comprised the majority of parents in early Vermont) had controlling and disciplining adolescents in postrevolutionary Vermont. Of course, devout New England parents had always had their share of difficulties with young adults. But as Vermont's revolution unfolded, young people became more contrary and assertive. They got into serious mischief, experimenting with alcohol, tobacco, gambling, and sex. Young people also had difficulties transforming youthful religious zeal into mature piety. Vermont parents tried to deal with these problems straightforwardly, doubling their efforts to supervise, discipline, and convert the young. Despite exhortations to righteousness, however, they could not always bring even penitent youths to give up their irreverent attitudes toward certain sins. Nor could they moderate the intense outbursts of moral fervor and religious conviction that occurred at intervals throughout the period among young people. This was especially true if these outbursts got out of hand, and the young converted before reaching moral maturity or — what was worse — turned their fervid enthusiasm against adult church members, condemning them for inconsistent doctrines and lack of piety.

Henry Stevens, a young Presbyterian farmer and innkeeper from Barnet, demonstrated how reputable, churchgoing young people frustrated churchgoing adults by at once repenting and delighting in their misbehavior. Stevens began a diary in 1811 at age twenty. He expressed regret about not going to meeting more often and lamented that he lived in a place “inhabited by many young people and Devilish proud.” As he began to confess his misdeeds, however, Stevens often forgot to be remorseful. His accounts of “boyish courtships” turned into “some fine stories about some Lyman [New Hampshire] ladies” with whom Henry and his friends used to dally. Later in the diary a regretful account of youthful “scrapes” was interrupted by the entry of July 4, 1812. On that day Stevens and several young friends drank grog all morning, offering seventeen patriotic toasts to their country “in less than an hour,” and marched to the town's Liberty Pole to offer seventeen more “in presence of a Large company. Done well.”²

How could a youth like Stevens, who in later years would preside over the Caledonia County Temperance Society, simultaneously lament and delight in his misdeeds? That question confounded churchgoing adults throughout Vermont. They knew that human nature allowed contrary impulses to reside together in weak souls, but they were reluctant to acknowledge that young people lived by two standards and felt the continual pull of two lives and two sets of values.

Like all but the most otherworldly of their friends and relatives, young

Vermonters dwelt in at least two overlapping but distinct spheres of social life, one within their churches and one outside in the community at large. Both spheres offered young people opportunities to meet with neighbors, to flirt with and court the opposite sex, and to honor their neighborhoods, communities, and country. Whereas one centered on the church, however, on displaying moral and spiritual maturity, on striving for unity, on observing Christian rituals and Christian holidays—in other words, on realizing New England's traditional communal ideals—the other sphere centered on the tavern, on displaying physical strength and physical attractions, on working with neighbors at raisings and bees, and on militia training and the Fourth of July.

For men in particular, social life outside the churches revolved around Vermont's many taverns. There people could congregate casually, gossip, exchange business information, play cards or quoits, while away inclement weather, celebrate personal triumphs, and mull over failures. Of course, churches offered some of these attractions, and churches were the only places where most women could congregate outside their own homes. But churches were not as numerous as taverns. Nor could churches keep the hours, offer the comforts, gather the range of neighbors, or provide the atmosphere of easy camaraderie that taverns could. Most devout church members, not to speak of those who were not regular churchgoers, probably spent more time in taverns than in churches.³

The sphere of social life outside the churches attracted more inhabitants, including women, to festive gatherings near the taverns. Sporting events were especially popular, even though they sanctioned ostensibly immoral behavior. A wild title match for the wrestling championship of St. Johnsbury, held by lantern light on a Saturday night, went on so late that the referee set back his watch as midnight approached, so that no one who stayed to see who won would "violate" the Sabbath. Horse racing on St. Johnsbury's main street was also popular; especially memorable to residents of that town was "the superior equestrienneship of Sally Tute . . . who leaping on a barebacked horse called for a glass of stimulant and challenged any man of the crowd to overtake her." These contests drew admiring throngs who wanted to cheer for their neighborhood champions and celebrate the physical strength, horsemanship, courage, and tenacity so admired on the farming frontier.⁴

Most frequent of all social events in Vermont were the various raisings and bees held to make light work of arduous physical tasks. At raisings, neighbors would come together to construct the frame for a building. The builder would purchase the building materials, send out the invitations, and supply reinforcing beverages. Under the influence of those beverages, workers often held contests to see who could perform the most

daring acrobatic feat. In 1804, Ziba Tute (Sally's brother) assured himself a place in history when he stood on his head on the ridge pole of the new St. Johnsbury meetinghouse.⁵

Bees gave Vermonters another chance to socialize. Quilting bees, spinning bees, chopping bees, and goose-plucking bees brought neighbors together, but apple-paring bees and corn-husking bees were the truly popular events of the season, particularly among young people. Both sexes were present at these gatherings, hard cider was plentiful, and "sparking" was encouraged. At husking bees the young men were allowed to kiss the young women whenever anyone came up with a red ear of corn.⁶

The major events of the year in Vermont, however, were the patriotic holidays, the militia training days, and the Fourth of July. The militia would turn out in full force on these occasions, and liquor flowed freely. It was the custom for militia captains to "treat" their men from early morning on to sustain their strength and enthusiasm. As a result, unfortunately, accidental shootings were all too common. But intoxication allowed the men to level all distinctions among themselves and to celebrate their freedom as Americans. Getting drunk was a way for men to assert that as Americans they were free to do as they pleased and did not have to answer to anyone. According to historian William Rorabaugh, the urge to level distinctions and celebrate being an American was one of the reasons alcohol consumption rose to twice today's per capita rate in Vermont and in the nation at large in the years after the Revolution. Like patriotic songs and martial fervor, alcohol drew neighbors together and reinforced their sense of themselves as a defiant, liberated people.

Patriotic holidays served other purposes as well, particularly for the younger participants. Young men took the opportunity to show they could outdrink, outdrill, and outsloganize any patriot in Vermont. They took pride in having "done well" before friends, neighbors, and, most especially, the young women in the crowd.⁷

This sphere of Vermont life, and that which centered on the church, were inhabited by much the same people. Most church members participated in the social life outside their churches, and most people were included to some degree in the circle of a church. The spheres were not necessarily inimical to each other. Christians young and old felt it possible to be pious and at the same time patriotic, good-natured, and neighborly to those outside their churches. Still, the spheres were distinct, and potential for antagonism was great, particularly as hard drinking and patriotic celebrations became more prevalent after the Revolution. In the church's circle, patriotism and good fellowship were not to be sought (and were indeed censured) as ends in themselves. Conversely, in the community sphere, where patriotism and good fellowship were valued as ends in

themselves, rectitude and piety were admirable, but there was a point beyond which quibbling over the morality of a national policy or a neighbor's actions became bad manners.

These spheres posed a perpetual problem for pious adults, whose mission "to be in but not of the world" required them to participate in the social life outside their churches without becoming creatures of that life. The burden of that problem rested most heavily, however, on young Vermonters who were of an age to be attracted by the worldly sphere and who were all too ready to place camaraderie ahead of their duty to God. The young also had to face temptation without having mastered the subtle code that told adult church members when they had partaken enough of revelry, when they had shown enough charity toward human frailty, when they should chastise, when they should let matters pass.

Thus it was not strange that young people like Henry Stevens were doomed to repeat what in more sober moods they knew to be sins. Reconciling the demands of two worlds was a problem most young people were not equipped to deal with. As both a tavern owner and a promising Presbyterian, Stevens was forced to confront this problem head on, for he lived in two worlds, amidst piety and promiscuity, and knew the attractions of both.

Drinking and carousing among young people were not the only problems that confronted Christians. Fervent evangelicals also faced problems that had their source solely in the religious sphere—in particular, premature conversions. It was natural for evangelical parents to tell their children at an early age how Christ had died for their sins and how only conversion—the evangelical experience of being "born again" in which God fills the sinner's soul with saving grace—could bring peace and salvation. They meant to make children think seriously about God and to encourage them to consider and pray over their own souls. Such conversations produced the desired effect with surprising frequency. Children would try to improve their behavior and would sit down with their friends and play preacher to them—a common enough pastime before the games of cowboys and Indians or cops and robbers came into being. But at times young children were terrified. They hid during thunder and lightning storms for fear of dying before receiving God's grace. Some even made mild attempts at mortification of the flesh. Joel Winch, a young Hartland boy, recalled in his memoirs (written at the age of twenty-one) that he thought "much about dying" after such a conversation with his father, and would "git alone and cry."⁸

Few parents knew what to make of children who were so desperately concerned about their souls. Joel Winch's parents, who were dedicated evangelical Congregationalists, had no wish to discourage their twelve-

year-old son from seeking God, but they had hoped he would be a little older before he found Him. Joel did not yet know, they thought, what real sin or real religion was about. His mother tried to reclaim her son and, as Joel wrote later, "being a quick woman twitted me of my pretending to be good." She was none too gentle in her teasing, however, and Joel was crushed. "O how it sunk me down," he wrote. For three years he lived with the knowledge of his own sinfulness. When at last the Lord "broke into" Joel's soul at age fifteen, "the Congregationalist professores would take no notis of that which the Lord had don for me." It was not at that time customary for the church to accept young people as full members.

Joel did gain admittance to the church while still a teenager, as did a number of other young people, even though "it made some talk" among church members. Their elders feared that no matter how fervent the religious commitment the young professed, it was at bottom unreliable. At the age of fourteen, fifteen, or sixteen, young people, particularly those from farm, artisan, and laboring families, were entering the most difficult years of their lives. It was then that they would begin working, often for long periods away from home—the girls as domestics, the boys as farmhands or apprentices. Their wages would go toward augmenting the family income, building dowries, or, in the case of males, toward saving for a farm or a shop. Once they reached the age of twenty-one, young people were responsible for themselves and could "journey" wherever they wished to find suitable employment. Until then, however, their parents controlled their destinies.⁹

It was the prevailing notion among Christian parents that responsible relatives, neighbors, and fellow church members handled young people better than did parents, because they did not face rebellion against specifically parental authority and because they were not reluctant to administer strict discipline out of the "false" love that sometimes prevented parents from correcting their children.¹⁰ Putting children out was not always a solution to disciplinary problems, however. There is little evidence that masters and mistresses actually had any less trouble than parents in governing young people. Then, too, even when parents were careful in their selection of an employer, the moral and spiritual lives of their children were sometimes neglected. Masters and mistresses might prove less warm toward the church than parents expected and allow their wards to stay home on the Sabbath or to strike up friendships with freethinkers. That was certainly true for Joel Winch, who flirted briefly with deism while working a season for an easy-going, free-thinking farm family. Under these circumstances young converts could quickly become backsliders.¹¹

The greatest problem for those who converted at a young age, however, was the temptation to cast off religion for a while and return to carefree, reckless ways. A few truly rebelled, indulging in drunkenness or fornication; others sought release in flirtation, pranks, or vandalism. Upon his return from journeying in the fall of 1800, Joel Winch fought with his parents and fell headlong into sin. He stayed out nights, leaving his parents to fear that he had compromised several young women in the neighborhood. In fact he and his friends were trying to start a witchcraft scare. They opened people's doors, made "all manner of noises," threw carts down wells, and put hogs in cow pens and cows in hog pens. Joel grew "more hardened in sin, more bald in Deviltry, more subtle in my plans, more engaged to pre sew what I undertook. I was afraid of nothing but Jestis." The seriousness of what he was doing did not strike him until he tried to seduce a young Baptist girl at a party and was repulsed. Her righteous rejection of him made him realize that he had become an ally of the Devil. In his own defense, he protested that he was not as bad as some of his friends. He did not dance, swear, or play cards, for he knew he "could not have the name of being religious" if he did so.¹²

Joel's behavior was typical of many young converts who backslid. They behaved frivolously or wickedly, but were careful not to do anything that would injure their churches. Their sins were committed in secret and were usually minor, having to do with wasting time, gossiping, daydreaming about parties and courting, or fishing when there was work to be done (one young man confessed to catching 1,117 fish in two years). They suffered remorse periodically and rededicated themselves to Christ for weeks or even months, only to lapse again. Unable to live in two worlds at once, they traversed the cycles of sin and salvation.¹³

Even when young people turned to Christ for good, they often confounded their friends, relatives, and congregations with rigorous searches for doctrinal truth and purity. They could do so privately, or they could do so openly and aggressively. Unwilling to confront the leaders of her church, or perhaps merely loath to make trouble, Lois Leverett of Windsor decided secretly that predestination and infant damnation were unscriptural foolishness. She also covertly rejected the evangelism of her Congregationalist forbears. In religion, as in love, she would not allow herself to be "smitten," and she opined that Windsorites caught up in the frenzy of a revival in 1810 were "almost crazy," adding that the revivalists "work too much upon the passions of the people." A voracious reader, she thought deeply about religious issues and had a clear sense of her own sinfulness, but shrank from discussing religion with the pious Mrs. Niles, whose submissive acceptance of the contradictions implicit in faith made her uneasy. She relied strongly on intellect to resolve

religious questions; after all, she wrote, “the design of religion was not to bewilder, but enlighten our understandings and the plea of ignorance will not avail us.” Not to exercise the intellect on any matter would result, she felt, in a “relapse into feminine style.”¹⁴

There were a great many young people in Vermont who not only rejected their parents’ faith but went so far as to leave their parents’ churches — particularly Congregationalist, Baptist, and Presbyterian churches, which adhered to New England’s traditional ideals — over some difference in scriptural interpretation or social style. Lois Leverett, finding Windsor’s Old South Congregational church insufficiently enlightened and genteel, joined the Episcopalians as an adult. Twenty-year-old Elias Smith of South Woodstock, distressed at not finding the Baptist doctrines he learned as a child supported by the Bible, demanded that open discussion of complex theological questions be allowed in his church. When his request was denied, he quit to found an egalitarian denomination, later known as the Christian Church, that would allow honest disagreements among sincere Christians.¹⁵

Joel Winch likewise left his parents’ church, when he decided it lacked the dignified, quiet, holy manner of Methodist prayer meetings. When its council ordered him to “come out from among” the Methodists “and be separate and tutch not the unclean thing,” Joel determined “to stand fast in the liberty whare in Christ had made me free.” He asked embarrassing doctrinal questions in church meetings and rallied support for a policy of granting letters to members wishing to join competing evangelical churches. The minister pressed for Joel’s excommunication. He was hurt by Joel’s charges that he was “prejudiced” and felt betrayed by the righteous, unyielding insurgency of a youth he had sheltered and supported even in his darkest times. But the majority voted to give Joel his letter. The outraged minister and his supporters withdrew to form a more orthodox Congregational church. Joel later heard that the minister had “told som of his friends about a Dream that he had one night (viz) that he had a Snake that he had brought up in his bosom and it bit him but his wife was friendly to it &c. This he called J. W.” The minister learned what an intense, zealous youth could do to a ministry and a church.¹⁶

Backsliding and overzealousness presented enduring problems for Christians and their communal ideals. In part, of course, the problem was that young people were just that — young and immature. They had few of the attachments of adulthood that provided a firm basis for social, moral, and spiritual maturity: a spouse, a household, a shop or farm, respectable friends, and a commitment to the community and its values. It took time to acquire such connections and commitments. Young Vermonters remained half in and half out of the adult world at least until their mid-twenties or early thirties.

After the Revolution, adult church members in Vermont deliberately chose to let the young mature in their own good time. In a radical departure from the ways of their fathers, they decided not to subject the young to anything more than gentle moral suasion. Moderate Calvinists abandoned efforts to use church councils to discipline the young by the 1790s, the Woodstock Congregationalists in 1783 being the last to exclude baptized nonmembers from the watch and care of the church. In addition, evangelical churches no longer required that applicants for admission confess past sins, except when the sins had been committed so recently as to place the sincerity of the person's change of heart in doubt. Only the Scottish Presbyterians in Barnet and Ryegate continued the practice of confessing sins beyond 1810, because they had brought it with them from Scotland in the 1790s, and all but one of their churches would soon stop.¹⁷

Most important, evangelicals decided after the Revolution not to encourage or press for youthful conversions. The data on ages at conversion for males show that even during revivals, the typical convert was well into maturity in this period and far older than typical converts during southern New England's Great Awakening of the eighteenth century. Eighty percent of new female members of Congregationalist and Baptist churches were married by the time they entered the church. (The Scottish Presbyterians in Barnet differed; among them the mean age at conversion remained below thirty prior to 1815.)¹⁸ Church members did not censure or disregard all youthful conversions, for they believed that God elected souls when He pleased; still, they were wary of them. Several churches had to vote down, as scripturally unsound, efforts to deny admission to converts solely on the basis of their youth.¹⁹

The retreat spread as pious adults began grudgingly to tolerate a greater range of excesses, particularly by young people, on public occasions. They issued no audible protests against the continuation of the St. Johnsbury wrestling match into the Sabbath. They refrained from condemning the rowdiness among young people that accompanied the raising of that town's meetinghouse. Members of one church actually sided against their minister in favor of several young converts who had "returned to their sports, carousing, and dancing," maintaining "that abstinence from mirthful recreation could not be expected of those who were in the heat and vigor of youth."²⁰ A new balance of power had been struck between adult church members and their young and potential members.

There were now religious and political movements in Vermont that were hostile to the traditional Calvinist faiths and communal ideals that most adults embraced, and pious parents recognized that they could drive the young into those movements if they pressed them too hard or if, on the other hand, they failed to take them seriously.²¹ That was precisely what

happened to Lois Leverett, Elias Smith, and Joel Winch. Alternately pressured and chaffed by their elders, they were driven further away from their parents' traditional faiths. Parents' problems were only compounded, according to historian William Gilmore, by the dramatic increase in literacy and reading in postrevolutionary Vermont. Young people now had ready access to unorthodox books and periodicals of every stripe.²²

In addition to there being new alternatives available, the attitudes of young people seemed to have undergone a change. Relative to southern New England, workers were in great demand in Vermont and opportunities for marriage and for independent proprietorship were plentiful. The young considered their futures secure. Therefore they may have been truly less careful of their reputations than before. It is also possible that the Revolution compounded the problems of adult Christians by leading young people to confuse their right to hold their own religious and political opinions with their ability to arrive at opinions that were as valid as those of their elders. Young people had on occasion challenged the beliefs of authorities in southern New England before the Revolution, but on a less widespread basis.

The revolution and migration to New England's northern frontier had thus destabilized relationships between parents and adolescents in Vermont in ways adult Christians had not foreseen. Pious adults, particularly those who were members of New England's traditional Calvinist churches, believed it would be easier to preserve traditional values on New England's revolutionary frontier. However, in Vermont they found themselves confronting the inescapable dilemma of democratic life: how to preserve order, morality, deference, and hierarchy in a society formally committed to freedom, equality, tolerance, and opportunity. It was not until after 1815 that adult church members began to address this dilemma successfully, at least where young people were concerned, and even then their success was due more to changing economic circumstances than to any imaginative new measure they tried. An economic decline reduced opportunities for marriage and self-employment, thereby altering the balance of power between generations. Since success in an increasingly competitive economy depended on a reputation for reliability and restraint, young people were forced to abide by stricter standards. Finding their children more tractable, parents intensified their efforts to control and discipline them.

The generational conflicts of the first postrevolutionary years still bear witness, however, to the dramatic effects of democracy on a democratic people. Vermont's revolution not only created an independent state; it transformed a society.

NOTES

I would like to thank Cambridge University Press for permission to adapt for publication in *Vermont History* the section on "Wayward Youths" from my book, *The Democratic Dilemma: Religion, Reform, and the Social Order in the Connecticut River Valley of Vermont, 1791-1850* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 46-54.

¹ On Vermont's democratic revolution, see Chilton Williamson, *Vermont in Quandary, 1763-1825* (Montpelier: Vermont Historical Society, 1949); Donald A. Smith, "Legacy of Dissent: Religion and Politics in Revolutionary Vermont" (Ph.D. diss., Clark University, 1981); David M. Ludlum, *Social Ferment in Vermont, 1791-1850* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939); William J. Gilmore, *Reading Becomes a Necessity of Life: Material and Cultural Life in Rural New England, 1780-1835* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989); and Betty Bandel, "What the Good Laws of Man Hath Put Asunder . . .," *Vermont History* 46 (Fall 1978): 221-233.

² Autobiography and diary of Henry Stevens, Wilbur Collection, University of Vermont Library (UVM).

³ On the importance of taverns in postrevolutionary America, see Jack Larkin, *The Reshaping of Everyday Life, 1790-1840* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 281-286; William J. Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979); and Roy Rozensweig, *Eight Hours for What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 35-64.

⁴ Edward T. Fairbanks, *The Town of St. Johnsbury, Vermont* (St. Johnsbury: Cowles Press, 1914), 161, 159.

⁵ Fairbanks, *St. Johnsbury*, 161.

⁶ Larkin, *Reshaping of Everyday Life*, 266-271.

⁷ Edward Miller and Frederick P. Wells, *The History of Ryegate, Vermont* (St. Johnsbury: Caledonian Press, 1913), 223; Anthony Marro, "Vermont's Local Militia Units, 1815-1860," *Vermont History* 40 (Winter 1972): 28-42; Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic*, 19-20, 149-152; Larkin, *Reshaping of Everyday Life*, 271-275; and Ian R. Tyrell, *Sobering Up: From Temperance to Prohibition in Antebellum America, 1800-1860* (Westport: Greenwood, 1979), 16-29.

⁸ The autobiography of Joel Winch, Vermont Historical Society (VHS). See also Frederick P. Wells, *History of Newbury, Vermont* (St. Johnsbury, 1902), 137; and the narrative and diary of Abel Adams, VHS.

⁹ On apprenticeship and journeying, see William J. Rorabaugh, *The Craft Apprentice: Franklin to the Machine Age in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 3-75, 97-112.

¹⁰ See, for example, Louis W. Flanders, *Simeon Ide: Yeoman, Freeman, Pioneer Printer* (Rutland: Tuttle, 1931), 24-25; the indenture of Harvey May to William Ashley of Hartland, 30 March 1822, Sabin Family Papers, VHS; and the indenture of Riley Chamberlain to E. C. Chamberlain, 13 May 1828, VHS.

¹¹ Edmund S. Morgan, *The Puritan Family: Religion and Domestic Relations in Seventeenth-Century New England* (New York: Harper and Row, rev. ed., 1966), 65-86, 109-132; and Joseph F. Kett, *Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America, 1790 to the Present* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 62-85.

¹² Autobiography of Joel Winch, VHS.

¹³ Solon Currier, *The Wonderful Wheel of Fortune* (Laconia: John H. Brewster, 1867), 20-21; Ariel Kendrick, *Sketches of the Life and Times of Elder Ariel Kendrick* (Windsor: P. Merrifield, 1850), 12, 19-22; and Elias Smith, *The Life, Conversion, Preaching, Travels, and Sufferings of Elias Smith* (Portsmouth: Beck and Foster, 1816), 23-25, 31.

¹⁴ Lois Leverett in Windsor, Vermont, to Louisa Morris in Springfield, Vermont, 19 July, 4 October, and 9 November, 1806, and 16 September 1810, Wardner Collection, VHS.

¹⁵ Smith, *Sufferings of Elias Smith*, 31ff.

¹⁶ Autobiography of Joel Winch, VHS.

¹⁷ Records of the North Congregational Church of Woodstock, March 1782 and August 1783; Associate Presbyterian Church of Barnet and Ryegate, 1789-1816; and Old South Congregational Church of Windsor, June 1793. The trend toward excluding baptized nonmembers from discipline and refraining from pressing for youthful conversions did not stem from an effort to preserve churches as havens for the truly elect. Such motives had indeed led Calvinists during the Great Awakening in southern New England to press for youthful conversions in the 1740s and to abandon the halfway covenant as scripturally unsound and a holdover from spiritually lax times, but no such motives were in evidence among Calvinists on the revolutionary frontier in Vermont. See C. C. Goen, *Revivalism and Separatism in New England, 1740-1800: Strict Congregationalists and Separate Baptists in the Great Awakening* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962).

¹⁸ For statistics and sources, see Randolph A. Roth, *The Democratic Dilemma: Religion, Reform, and the Social Order in the Connecticut River Valley of Vermont, 1791-1850* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 53, 311-15.

¹⁹ During this period (1790-1810) Vermont men who underwent conversions were on average older than their seventeenth- and eighteenth-century counterparts in southern New England had been when they had conversion experiences. Similarly, the proportion of women who were married at the time of conversion was higher in Vermont between 1790 and 1810 than it was in southern New England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Neither figure was unusually high for periods of spiritual calm or lassitude, however. See Robert Pope, *The Half-Way Covenant: Church Membership in Puritan New England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 279-286; J. M. Bumsted, "Religion, Finance, and Democracy in Massachusetts: The Town of Norton as a Case Study," *Journal of American History* 57 (1971): 824; Gerald F. Moran, "Conditions of Religious Conversion in the First Society of Norwich, Connecticut, 1718-1744," *Journal of Social History* 5 (1972): 331-343; James Walsh, "The Great Awakening in the First Congregational Church of Woodbury, Connecticut," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 28 (1971): 551; William F. Willingham, "Religious Conversion in the Second Society of Windham, Connecticut, 1723-1743," *Societas* 6 (1976): 109-119; and Philip Greven, "Youth, Maturity, and Religious Conversion: A Note on the Age of Converts in Andover, Massachusetts, 1711-1749," *Essex Institute Historical Collections* 108 (1972): 119-134.

²⁰ Kendrick, *Life and Times*, 12-13; Joseph Lathrop in West Springfield to Paul Brigham in Montpelier, 26 July 1809, UVM; and Eden Burroughs, "The Profession and Practice of Christians Held Up to View by Way of Contrast to Each Other" (Windsor: Hough and Spooner, 1784).

²¹ On religious and political movements that threatened Calvinist churches and social ideals, see Stephen A. Marini, *Radical Sects of Revolutionary New England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982); Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); and Roth, *Democratic Dilemma*, 55-79.

²² Gilmore, *Reading Becomes a Necessity of Life*, 354-361.