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SYMPOSIUM PROCEEDINGS

The Future of Vermont History
in the 21st Century:
Needs and Opportunities

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In This Issue

SYMPOSIUM ISSUE

The Future of Vermont History in the 21st Century: Needs and Opportunities

BOOK REVIEWS

Introduction

It was once said that every cultivated man's second country was France; it can certainly be said that every American's second State is Vermont... The greater part of our national heritage is to be found in the record of our States. From the study of that record we can gain a renewal of our most precious possession, faith in the national ideal.

—Allan Nevins, foreword to Earle Newton, *The Vermont Story: A History of the People of the Green Mountain State, 1749–1849* (1983)

The Vermont Historical Society's second biennial symposium, "The Future of Vermont History in the 21st Century: Needs and Opportunities," was held on April 20, 2002, and was dedicated to the memory of Vermont historian and bibliographer, T. D. Seymour Bassett. The symposium and the following proceedings are part of the Society's ongoing effort to encourage research in new as well as underrepresented areas of the state's history and to promote an exchange of ideas among members of the academy, the public history community, and the general public.

In this volume of *Vermont History,* you will have the opportunity to review the harvest of this one-day endeavor, which was designed to review past labors, focus on current work, and explore new avenues for future examination.

In order to refine the focus of the symposium, the Society solicited the opinions of more than two dozen friends and colleagues in various historical disciplines. Using their comments, the Society planned session topics relating to *Ethnicity and Gender, Business and Labor, Vermont in the National Context,* and *Arts, Crafts and Culture* as well as a panel on *Tools and Resources for Future Research.* With the help of an enthusiastic audience, fifteen historians and museum professionals focused the discussion over the course of the day and ended with a wrap-up discussion, "What's Next in Vermont History Research?" We expect

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the results of this meeting to inform the contents of future symposia. And we also hope that, as one speaker suggested, the larger topic of the "Future of Vermont History," will be readdressed every five years or so.

I would especially like to thank two of the Society's staff—Alan Berolzheimer, book editor, and Amy Cunningham, director of education—for their hard work in bringing this project to fruition. Special thanks must be given to Michael Sherman for his keynote address on the current state of Vermont history. Using Tom Bassett's 1981 bibliographical essay as his starting point, Sherman provided a coherent overview of the development of Vermont historical research over the past twenty years that set the stage for the day's discussions.

In addition to thanking all the presenters and facilitators for their insight into the complexities of interpreting Vermont's history, the Society would also like to recognize and express its gratitude to its own Publication and Research Committee and to the Institute of Museum and Library Services for their financial support.

GAINOR B. DAVIS

Editor's note: This issue of *Vermont History* contains most, but not all, of the presentations at the symposium. Videotapes of all the sessions are available for viewing in the Vermont Historical Society library at the Vermont History Center, 60 Washington Street, Barre.

Symposium Dedication

We begin this conference by invoking the name Thomas Day Seymour Bassett. During the second half of the twentieth century Tom Bassett was an extremely productive author, collector, and bibliographer of Vermontiana. He was also accessible to just about anyone who professed an interest in Vermont, whether casual researchers or serious scholars. He mentored a generation of mentors.

I wrote a remembrance of Tom Bassett for *Vermont History* shortly after Tom's death. It elicited a larger number of responses than I am accustomed to receiving. Some writers shared one or more of Tom's particularly idiosyncratic moments, but most provided accounts of how Tom had come to their aid. All provided testimony to the esteem in which he was held. Yet when personal memories of Bassett have faded, I suspect his 1981 *Bibliography of Vermont,* compiled for the Committee for a New England Bibliography series, will endure. It is likely to be his most enduring contribution.

The volume lists just under 6,500 entries, every printed title Tom could locate on Vermont that was published prior to December 1979. I emphasize published. The early guidelines set by the Committee precluded the inclusion of unpublished items such as masters theses. I hasten to add, however, that occasionally Tom would sneak in a proscribed item he thought particularly important.

This symposium, "The Future of Vermont History in the 21st Century," will implicitly deal with how the literature of Vermont has developed since Bassett's 1981 bibliography. I am going to use a few minutes to touch on some of the historical and practical pressures and influences that have directed the development of that literature. There can be no doubt that Vermont history has thrived during the past twenty years.

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One preeminent development has been a widespread movement to include life stories of others in addition to great white men. Researchers have increasingly documented the experiences of ordinary lives and commonplace circumstances. Much of Tom's work well before 1981 was in this direction, as his Ph.D. dissertation on Vermont's urban villages and his articles on labor unrest attest. The impetus toward this so-called "underside" of history has since been nourished by students guided by training and temperament further in that direction. In 1999 I was co-editor of a book of documents, *Vermont Voices,* and a sizable number of post-1981 titles celebrating the commonplace are included in our bibliography. Most (not all, but most) have relied, as Tom did, on traditional manuscript sources. There are numerous examples to draw upon.

One recent example is Deborah Cliffords's biography of Abby Hemenway, the woman who more than any other person captured what was ordinary as well as special in Vermont's past. *Roxanna's Children* by Lynn Bonifield and Mary Morrison also illustrates the point. Roxanna's claim to fame derives from her extensive correspondence with her family. Much of that correspondence has been preserved. The letters reveal details about the life of a Vermont family spreading west that have proven fascinating reading to our generation. But a female accounting of quotidian events likely would not have found a publisher fifty years ago. Women's studies and Vermont's high nineteenth-century literacy rates, along with spacious attics of course, made it possible to pursue this form of history. I want to underscore that it was possible to produce this history using the historian's traditional tools, written manuscripts. Jeff Marshall has done something similar with Civil War correspondence.

Dealing with preliterate societies, the Abenaki in particular, poses other problems. Earlier researchers tended to rely exclusively upon accounts by European authors describing contact with the Abenaki. Who among us hasn't read Samuel de Champlain's account of his sail up the lake he named for himself? (Available in Bassett's *Outsiders Inside Vermont* and also anthologized in *Vermont Voices.*) What red blooded Vermonter hasn't read Robert Rogers's account of his raid on the Abenakis at St. Francis or in Kenneth Roberts's novel and its film treatments? More recent studies have incorporated Indian perspectives on these events through the work of ethnologists, geographers, folklorists, archaeologists, anthropologists, and genealogists. The tools of those disciplines have become increasingly relevant to historians. And what is true for preliterate societies applies with at least equal vigor to studies of areas prior to their earliest human habitation.

By becoming more multidisciplinary, history has also become subjected

to a greater variety of perspectives. One set of influences is the celebration of history as national and state outpourings. Commemorations are cases in point. The Center for Research on Vermont administers a Vermont Studies program that involves over thirty faculty members from a variety of disciplines. It serves as a University of Vermont academic minor. Its long overdue adoption as an academic minor received impetus from the 1987 United States Constitution bicentennial and the 1991 celebration of Vermont's admission as the fourteenth state. Both events had major impact on historical writing about Vermont and by Vermonters. Scholars from out-of-state have also contributed significantly to our understanding of Vermont's past. For example, Peter Onuf tells us that during the debates over the design of the Constitution, Vermont played a prominent role without being present. Its stubborn insistence on independence from New York and New York's opposition gave rise to the provision in Article Four that no new state could be formed from within the jurisdiction of any other state without the consent of the legislature of that state. In another vein, many of the historical videos produced for public television in the past two decades were stimulated by national and state bicentennials. Bicentennials have even provided incentive grants. If I am not mistaken the 1776 bicentennial celebration provided the initial incentive for the Vermont Historical Society's state history to be published in the near future. The 1991 statehood bicentennial generated renewed interest in our own founding fathers. Two publications that immediately come to mind are the two-volume *Letters of Ethan Allen and His Kin* with John Duffy as chief editor, and Frank Smallwood's biography of Thomas Chittenden.

Dealing with Vermont in a national context can reorient one's sense of magnitude. For the past two decades the great flood of 1927 has been a centerpiece of my thinking and writing about the modernization of Vermont. I have also promoted it as the state's most celebrated natural disaster, causing 84 deaths and over $30 million in damage (in 1927 dollars). Vermont piggy-backed on federal legislation enacted to assist southern states even more devastated by a Mississippi River flood; receiving a $2,600,000 appropriation to assist in reconstruction. A 1997 study, *Rising Tide: The Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 and How It Changed America,* by John M. Barry reported southern states suffered over 1000 deaths and 900,000 people homeless.

Population figures underscore the immense significance numbers can have on writing and publishing. The fact that Vermont is the second least populated state in the union is a matter of tremendous marketing significance. It is one of only eight states with a population of less than a million. There are at least fifteen cities in the United States with a

larger population than Vermont. A California history textbook adopted by the City of Los Angeles school board has a potential market six times larger than the total population of Vermont. And I should quickly add that California hosts three other cities with populations larger than Vermont. Mainstream commercial publishers are particularly wary of works directed principally to Vermont audiences. Since the appearance of Bassett's 1981 bibliography financial pressures have led the University of Vermont to withdraw from the University Press of New England consortium and *Vermont History* to drop from four to two annual issues. Vermont publications have nonetheless continued to thrive in ways I will suggest.

The tape recorder and the computer have become essential tools for the historian and both have influenced the directions historical writing has taken. Oral history is so pervasive in our state that it needs no elaboration. And since the audiotape has been wedded to the videotape it has become both a research tool and a form of popular entertainment. Our bibliography for *Vermont Voices* lists six videotapes shown on public television, all from the 1990s. If we were to update that bibliography we could add an additional half dozen. One wag suggested we conduct a search to locate any Vermonter not yet interviewed.

The computer is another matter, especially when it comes to statistics. Vermont writers are more likely to use the computer as a word processor than for regression analysis or to compute Pearsons "r" or chi squares. One reason is Vermont's small population. Given the slim numbers, especially at the town level, it is often more efficient to present raw data than to extrapolate the data as representative or random samplings of Vermont. Having said that I believe that broader use of selective statistical tools can enhance our understanding of Vermont's past. I must also note that updates from the Committee for a New England Bibliography are now on line, but I will leave it to our state archivist, Gregory Sanford, to comment on the use and abuse of the World Wide Web.

After Tom Bassett completed *The Gods of the Hills,* a history of religion in nineteenth-century Vermont, he volunteered to write some entries for a Vermont encyclopedia. John Duffy, Harry Orth, and I are editing the encyclopedia. Tom took on a sizable number of entries and a very ambitious schedule. He died before he could complete all he had hoped to do. But when the encyclopedia appears in late 2003 it will include many of his entries. I suspect he would refer to those entries as posthumous efforts. And I will conclude by noting that the encyclopedia, like this symposium, will be dedicated to Tom Bassett.

SAMUEL B. HAND

Brickyards and Frameworks: A Retrospectus and Prospectus on Vermont History Writing

Under the stimulus of the breakup of some old models of national, state, and local history, and armed with a panoply of new methods and models for dissecting our past, we have assembled a brickyard of small studies. Many of these reveal small gems of new insight about the lives of individuals, the look of communities, and the operation of institutions in our immediate neighborhood or region. Some new ideas about Vermont's history lie among the bricks, but we may lack any common agreement on what the final product is supposed to look like.

By MICHAEL SHERMAN

BASSETT'S BIBLIOGRAPHY (1981)

Just over two decades ago, Tom Bassett did what I have been asked to do for this symposium: to take a reading on what has been accomplished in Vermont history and assess future needs and directions. He had just completed the work of compiling a bibliography of Vermont history, volume four of the *Bibliographies of New England History,* a series that continues to this day. It is a surprisingly

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thick volume: 293 pages, double column, folio size, that includes 6,413 entries. One of the thickest volumes in the series, it took its publishers by surprise—they anticipated 3,000 entries—and created new challenges for those responsible for raising the funds to publish it. As Samuel B. Hand noted in his memorial essay for Bassett published in *Vermont History,* that did not concern Tom himself in the least. His job, as he saw it, was simply to be comprehensive.[1]

Having completed the task of assembling such a large list of writing about Vermont history, Bassett wrote an eloquent foreword that says a lot about what he discovered and what he concluded about the state of Vermont historiography. Much of what he had to say twenty-one years ago remains relevant to what I can say on this topic today.

Bassett himself was somewhat surprised by the results of his work. His bibliography succeeded but did not duplicate that of Marcus Gilman, whose *Bibliography of Vermont,* published almost a century earlier, itself included 7,000 entries. Musing on this prolific historiographical tradition, Bassett commented, "Here is a state with virtually no colonial period, a state . . . where nothing of national importance ever happened, and one which has always had the fewest people of any in New England. Can such a state have much 'history'?"[2] Bassett offered three reasons for the astonishing productivity: "Vermont's kaleidoscopic diversity as a border area[;] . . . the publicity that for fifty years has successfully identified Vermont as the epitome of old-fashioned rural democracy[; and] . . . the growing number of able writers on Vermont themes whose chief purpose is to entertain a broadening public grown more history-conscious."[3] Each of these deserves some comment.

Although Bassett did not elaborate on it, the idea that Vermont historiography up to 1981 had been driven by a "kaleidoscopic diversity as a border area" may surprise many of us who read and work in Vermont history. Bassett himself noted later in his foreword that "one clear need in any revision [of Vermont history] is to shape a new, comprehensive image of Vermont with a strong ingredient of ethnic history. Indians have been treated as if they never lived here . . . Immigrants who were refugees from the rural poverty of Quebec or Ireland, from American slavery, or the pogroms of czars and Hitler, found nothing written in Vermont history to say that they counted." He pointed to Elin Anderson's study of Burlington, *We Americans,* published in 1937, as the pioneering work in an emerging historiography of ethnic groups.[4] But the tradition was slow to develop, Bassett argued, because those groups were slow to gain recognition or power. Perceived as victims or pariahs, ethnic groups remained outside the mainstream of public life and, Bassett argued, outside the purview of those who wrote about Vermont's

past until the end of World War II. In 1981 he observed, "we are on the threshold of major historical attention to them."[5] Researchers in this field faced some formidable challenges. Mastering languages, learning the techniques of taking and analyzing oral history and archaeology, and identifying, locating, and using other nontraditional sources, not always found in libraries presented the first layer of obstacles to progress in developing this line of inquiry. At the conceptual level, "the idea [of ethnic history] calls for comprehension of the interaction between earlier and later arrivals and the complexities of the interlocking community institutions that the newcomers changed." Bassett concluded somewhat sadly that "the field is strewn with unfinished work."[6]

What else could Bassett have meant by his reference to Vermont as a place of "kaleidoscopic diversity as a border area"? His recommendations later in the foreword for more study of religion and religious institutions, schools, literary and cultural institutions, politics, and the Vermont economy for all periods following the Civil War suggest some of the topics he saw as elements in the kaleidoscope and some of the landmarks for identifying change over time in a society so often seen both within and without as a place unchanging and unchanged.

More interesting, however, is Bassett's reference to Vermont as a "border area." When he wrote his foreword, the historical profession was busily re-examining the meaning and usefulness of Frederick Jackson Turner's "frontier thesis," proposed in 1893. Turner saw American history as a succession of reinventions, adapting a model of evolution to the movement and development of society. American history, he argued, was a continual reinvention of institutions, "a recurrence of the process of evolution in each western area reached in the process of expansion. Thus," he claimed, "American development has exhibited not merely advance along a single line, but a return to primitive conditions on a continually advancing frontier line, and a new development for that area. American social development has been continually beginning over again on the frontier. This perennial rebirth, this fluidity of American life, this expansion westward with its new opportunities, its continuous touch with the simplicity of primitive society, furnish the forces dominating American character."[7]

I do not know if Bassett meant to join in this debate with his comment, but his substitution of the idea of Vermont as a "border area" for "frontier" is provocative. It suggests neither a clash of cultures nor the obliteration of the successive waves that Turner evoked in his imagery, but rather a porous political, intellectual, and cultural environment, perhaps even concentric circles, where ideas and institutions are continually adopted from neighbors and adapted to local needs and conditions.

For Vermonters used to thinking, hearing, and writing about themselves as an isolated, exceptional society, as much of the historiographical tradition that Bassett included in his bibliography insisted upon, his suggestion that a porous border was a factor stimulating historical writing is an important counterpoint. Perhaps we might profit from Bassett's suggestion that we think of ourselves not on the edge or fringes of regional or national history but in the middle of several contexts that are less traditionally and rigidly defined by state or national borders.[8] Such a revisioning of our history would do much to help us think again and perhaps more constructively about Vermont "exceptionalism."

That theme counted as Bassett's second "reason" for the large amount of historical writing about Vermont: its reputation or identification as "the epitome of old fashioned rural democracy." Vermont's historiography has long been dominated by the telling and retelling of its dominant myth—as Bassett called it—of its founding as the determined effort of a few leaders dedicated to forging an independent state in the vacuum created by the collapse of New France and the rise of a New England, and between the questionable authority of colonial New Hampshire and the oligarchy of New York. That historical tradition, embedded in Ethan Allen's narrative of his triumph at Ticonderoga followed by his humiliating capture in Montreal and treatment as a prisoner of war, was transmitted through the historical writings of Samuel Williams, Ira Allen, and Zadock Thompson, and fixed in the imagination of every Vermont school child for another century through Daniel Pierce Thompson's novel, *The Green Mountain Boys.* "Few challenged this myth," Bassett wrote in 1981, "until half a century ago. The guardians of the temple defended it vigorously against the occasional outsider." Only in the late 1970s, Bassett observed, did the myth begin to give way to revisionism by more recent historians, such as J. Kevin Graffagnino, H. Nicholas Muller, and Charles Morrissey. "Gradually," Bassett observed, "new arrivals found the Allen myth one to which they could not relate. Yet the force of tradition scours a channel that is hard to divert. The revision of Vermont history has only recently begun," he commented, "Now I add my voice, but with the warning that today's history becomes tomorrow's folklore."[9]

The scores of town histories written for the 1976 national bicentennial tended to reinforce the older story rather than take up the newer one. In a period of lingering distrust of national government in the wake of the Vietnam War, Watergate, an energy crisis born of petroleum shortages created by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, and out-of-control inflation, Vermont exceptionalism, Vermont

as "the epitome of old fashioned rural democracy," held on in popular imagination and consequently held its grip on much of Vermont historiography. It continues to hold its grip on Vermonters' imaginations and their view of the relationship of the past to the present. The image of Ethan Allen is invoked frequently and freely to market everything from furniture to bowling. It is omnipresent in Vermont politics as a metaphor for rugged individualism and antistatism.[10]

The third factor accounting for the abundance of Vermont historical writing is what Bassett identified as the profusion of "able writers on Vermont themes whose chief purpose is to entertain a broadening public grown more history-conscious." Professional history, that is, history written by professionally trained scholars, came late to Vermont, and tended to concentrate on the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. During the interwar period of the 1920s to early 1940s emerging scholars at major institutions began to be attracted to Vermont topics. Bassett mentions Edward D. Andrews and John C. Huden at Yale, Harold F. Wilson and Lewis D. Stilwell at Harvard, Florence Woodard and Chilton Williamson at Columbia, David M. Ludlum at Princeton, and Walter T. Bogart at Stanford, whose works, now considered classics, were the result of their Ph.D. dissertations. But "clergy, teachers, and lawyers, less frequently editors and physicians, wrote the earlier histories," Bassett notes, and "members of the same professions are writing Vermont history now, with additions from the fields of publishing, reporting, publicity, and book dealing. . . . This growth in the Vermont historian pool," he explains, "came partly with the recent immigration of many with leisure, skills, and interests in the local past. It has also grown out of a conscious policy adopted by the State Bicentennial Commission to involve as many as possible in historical work, and therefore to emphasize town projects."[11]

Bassett wrote this foreword at the end of a period in the 1960s and 1970s when social and political turmoil divided the nation, when our national institutions and our national history seemed sullied and discredited by Vietnam, Watergate, the energy crisis, the revolution in Iran, and repudiation of American influence around the globe. It was a time, too, when the history profession became bitterly divided within itself. "The new historians," a generation of scholars that entered the profession during the era of the civil rights and antiwar movements, were disillusioned by narrative history and by what they perceived to be a patriarchal, jingoistic perspective in the writing of history. Many were devoted to the methods and techniques of quantitative social sciences, and most were eager to rewrite history to include ethnic minorities, women, the socially and the economically invisible and historically

silenced. They had an enormous effect on changing the direction of American historiography, but before that happened, they alienated many older colleagues (Bassett, significantly, not among them) and many readers outside academia. By contrast, a feel-good history like the nationally televised "Bicentennial minutes" helped feed a taste for a more pleasant and heroic past and nostalgia for vaguely defined "good old American values." The popularity of Alex Haley's *Roots* likewise opened an avenue for the personal exploration of the past through genealogy and family history. The proliferation of town historical societies and town histories during the national bicentennial picked up these themes of quieter, more settled, less volatile times and places on the American cultural landscape. Much of this emphasis is reflected in Bassett's compilation, in his observation that three-fifths of the entries he put into the *Vermont Bibliography* came from serial publications, and his comment that "most of these addressed . . . a popular audience. This is journalistic history," he commented, "sometimes superficial, but at its best, as in *Vermont Life,* linking background with contemporary significance."[12]

Far from being scornful of the efforts of local amateurs, collectors, antiquarians, and journalists, Bassett recognized the power of their work to shape attitudes and opinions, as well as the contribution they made to the formation and perpetuation of a Vermont identity based on some perception of Vermont's past. "Vermont history can entertain and touch the imagination," he admitted. "Yet both common readers and professional historians always have an underlying need for a story that will tell who Vermonters are, that will identify Vermont character. What habits, attitudes, and events have they shared with other kinds of people, and what makes them different? As Vermont character slowly changes, Vermont history (the story that explains how Vermonters have come to be what they are) needs revision."[13]

Bassett had some recommendations for how that revision ought to proceed. In general, he called for more research and writing on Vermont after the Civil War. He wanted to see more work on religion, with attention to the effects of shortages of pastors and rural isolation on hierarchical denominations, and examination of the centralization in recent times of denominations with congregational polity. He wanted to see more study of education, how schools reflect society, the hybrid institution of the academies, female seminaries, and the Vermont public high school. He also wanted to see more on higher education in Vermont. He was especially interested in the history of what he called "faltering and deceased" institutions: New Hampton Institute of Fairfax, Windham College of Putney, Mark Hopkins of Brattleboro, Goddard

College of Plainfield—an institution that continues to keep observers guessing—and the Putney Graduate School of Teacher Education. He wanted to see more attention to town literary and cultural institutions—libraries, newspapers, town literary, musical, and dramatic clubs—to understand how they educate and reflect adult society.

In the area of agriculture, he thought we needed closer examination of farm women and children, finances and debt during the earlier period of Vermont history, the role of the Farm Bureau as a social and cultural influence, and how farmers entertained themselves.

Except for railroads, he judged the economic history of Vermont "abysmally vague, especially for the late nineteenth century," and he recommended specific topics in the stone industries, paper, scales, and other manufacturing areas.

Bassett urged more study of Vermont's constitutional, legal, and political history. He hailed the work of Samuel B. Hand, Gregory Sanford, and Frank Bryan in analyzing the rise of Republican hegemony and its erosion after 1927; and he saw promise in the statistical methods of "the new history" to gain a deeper understanding of the endurance of the Republican Party in rural areas up to 1960.

Despite the fact that almost half the entries in Bassett's bibliography were produced in the thirty years before it was published, "practically no historians," he observed, had applied the theoretical or quantitative methods of the social sciences to studies in Vermont of "internal migration, social mobility, social classes, comparative site valuation, and the community organization of small towns and neighborhoods [or] to correlate voting behavior with other social factors."

He called for more studies of the recreation industry, acknowledging "many suggestive essays" but asking questions about the role of transportation, photography, and public funding at the state and federal levels. He urged a close study of the papers of James P. Taylor at the Vermont Historical Society as one of the key figures in what had already emerged by 1981 as a key feature of the economy and economic history of the state.

Bassett ended his litany of unanswered, indeed of unasked questions, by calling for a closer examination of private lives and of the private and public lives of women. "When did women work in the fields as well as in the farmhouse? When did working women find liberation? Did disfranchised women have a vote in the household? Until we have more women's history, human history cannot replace men's history."[14]

On many of these points, Bassett was remarkably in step and in tune with the trends in American historiography, and perhaps even prescient. On one point, however, he was surprisingly pessimistic and misread the signs that pointed to the future. Closing his essay, Bassett

noted that "although six sevenths of the titles in this volume were published since 1897, when Gilman's *Bibliography of Vermont* appeared, the publication explosion that they represent may be over. Popular interest in history may recede, and high costs may check the output of books and articles in history."[15]

Since Bassett: 1981 to the Present

Happily for us, popular interest in history has not receded and for whatever economic reasons—computerized typesetting and printing to offset the rising costs of paper, the rise of print-on-demand publication, perhaps even the arrival of on-line books and journals—the output of books and articles does not appear to have abated substantially. Volume seven of the *New England Bibliography,* which surveyed multistate studies, listed 179 additional titles that included Vermont up to 1989; volume eight, the first update of the six states and multistate listings up to 1989, added 852 items to the Vermont list; volume nine, updating the entries to 1995, listed an additional 507. Volume ten, in process, will add about 350. So the two decades since Bassett published his bibliography have seen a total of at least 1,700 new items in Vermont history. A substantial number of these entries are M.A. theses and Ph.D. dissertations, and although several of those have turned into published articles or monographs, that is not uniformly the case. So we have lost some research findings as students formerly interested in Vermont history have gone on to other places and occupations. As in the earlier *New England Bibliography* compilation, a large proportion of the items listed in the update volumes come from serial publications. In addition to *Vermont History,* which continues to be a major outlet for publication of scholarship in this field, a few of the most active and useful serials in Vermont are the *Chittenden County Historical Society Bulletin* (started in 1966), *Rutland Historical Society Quarterly* (started in 1971), *Hazen Road Dispatch* (started in 1975), and the Center for Research on Vermont's *Occasional Papers. Vermont Life* continues to publish pieces with historical interest, as it has done since its inception in 1946. A few publications have disappeared or been replaced. *Vermont History News,* which published short articles, no longer exists, but *Vermont History* will soon pick up that niche by including some of the items that appeared there. An interesting and useful journal, *Kfari: The Jewish Magazine of Rural New England and Quebec,* was published briefly between 1988 and 1991. The Central Vermont Chamber of Commerce published a magazine for ten years between 1984 and 1994 that included articles on regional history. A similar publication for Southern Vermont had a much briefer run of only four years from 1984 to 1988.

Some serials outside the state are good sources for material on Vermont history. *The New England Historic and Genealogical Register* and the annual proceedings of the Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife almost always contain one or two items with Vermont content, and occasionally an article with a Vermont focus turns up in the *New England Quarterly.* In general, therefore, numbers alone suggest that Vermont history is alive. Whether it is alive and well, intellectually vigorous, and relevant, is something that we need to examine a little more closely.

Bassett himself contributed substantially to the agenda he proposed in his 1981 foreword with publication in 1992 of *The Growing Edge: Vermont Villages, 1840–1880,* a remarkable distillation of his 1952 Ph.D. dissertation. In 2000, the last year of his life, he published *The Gods of the Hills: Piety and Society in Nineteenth-Century Vermont.* He also contributed several chapters to the 1991 bicentennial history of the University of Vermont and wrote an interesting article on documenting tourism for the Society of American Archivists that suggested a methodology for another one of the topics he urged upon the next generation of Vermont historians.[16]

A cursory examination of the historiography since 1981 shows that many of the other topics Bassett suggested attracted the attention of scholars and writers in the next generation. The last two decades have seen the publication of some new classics in Vermont historiography. First is the suggestion that several myths about Vermont needed reexamination. The founding myth—the story of Vermont's origins as a state—is one of the stories that has received significant revision. Some of this appears in books such as Randolph Roth's *The Democratic Dilemma: Religion, Reform, and the Social Order in the Connecticut River Valley of Vermont, 1791–1850* (1987), Michael Bellesiles's, *Revolutionary Outlaws: Ethan Allen and the Struggle for Independence on the Early American Frontier* (1993), and in Donald Smith's 1996 article in *Vermont History,* "Green Mountain Insurgency: Transformation of New York's Forty-year Land War," which distills his extensive dissertation research on the social, economic, and religious identities of over 600 Green Mountain Boys, and suggests a deeply pietistic element that has been largely ignored. Smith's work was precisely the kind of social science research that Bassett called for, and while it does not make for easy reading, it expands our understanding of who fought for an independent state of Vermont. Similarly, Robert E. Shalhope's study of Bennington from 1760 to 1850, which used individual life histories to trace the pattern and dynamics of social structure and association, both expands and deepens the story of early Vermont.[17]

The Allens, of course, continue to occupy the center of our founding mythology and history. Publication in 1992 of three volumes of writings by Ethan and Ira edited by Kevin Graffagnino, two volumes of letters of the Allen family edited by a team of scholars led by John Duffy in 1998, and articles on Levi Allen by Betty Bandel, Vi Luginbuhl, and Michael Bellesiles, and on Ira Allen by Kevin Graffagnino, continue to keep them there.[18]

Essays in the 1991 publications for the statehood bicentennial, *Celebrating Vermont: Myths and Reality* and *A More Perfect Union: Vermont Becomes a State, 1777–1816,* have helped refocus the myth of Vermont's political origins as a state and its "specialness." Several essays in those volumes called attention to the meaning of myth, as well as its function in creating and preserving communities and communal identity.[19]

Another prevailing myth was the "Vermont winter" described by Harold Fisher Wilson in his 1936 study of Northern New England's social and economic history up to 1930. Wilson characterized the late nineteenth century as a period of "abandonment and retrenchment," "rural decline," and the emptying of small towns as people left for the "lure of the city." Hal Barron's book about Chelsea, *Those Who Stayed Behind* (1984) and H. Nicholas Muller's study of Jericho, "From Ferment to Fatigue?" revised that interpretation by examining patterns of stability and movement, land exchanges, and the movement of certain kinds of economic activity, and consequently a sector of the work force, from rural to urban areas. A few articles on urban growth and development in the late nineteenth century have helped fill in some of the missing information that Bassett started to provide in his dissertation and book.[20]

Some new work has appeared on Vermont businesses and industries, including Victor Rolando's study of iron, charcoal, and lime production, Allen Yale's work on the Fairbanks Company, Dennis Waring's new book on the Estey Organ Company, a recent compilation of essays and interviews on the woolen mills at Winooski Falls, two small but important collections of essays on the Barre granite industry to accompany exhibits at the Aldrich Public Library and T. W. Wood Art Gallery, and occasional articles on other Vermont businesses and manufacturers. We still do not have the survey of businesses that Bassett called for in 1981, but we are seeing the details of a livelier commercial and industrial history and its changes over time, especially as we begin to get histories of the last half century, such as Joe Sherman's *Fast Lane on a Dirt Road.*[21]

The study of Vermont's transportation industries received help with the work of Robert C. Jones and Robert W. Jones on Vermont railroads, Giro Patalono's memoir of working on the railroad, and interest

in Vermont's maritime history as a result of the work of Art Cohn, Kevin Crisman, Russell Bellico, and the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum.[22]

As the tourism industry in Vermont has grown, so has interest in its history. Bassett noted a few early efforts and contributed to it with his article for the Society of American Archivists. The field has flourished with Dona Brown's work on nineteenth-century New England tourism, Holman Jordan's patient and detailed work with students at Castleton State College to document tourism and recreation at Lake Bomoseen, several other studies of regional and local tourism, and some tentative examinations of the ski industry. More will surely come of this in the next few years. The next step will be to tie tourism to environmental issues.[23]

Useful recent studies of agriculture include Yale's *While the Sun Shines: Making Hay in Vermont 1789–1990,* Charles Fish's memoir and meditation on the family farm, *In Good Hands* (1995), and the Vermont Folklife Center's collection of interviews and photographs, *Families on the Land: Profiles of Vermont Farm Families* (1995), prepared as part of an exhibit on the family farm in Vermont.[24] The long lament over the long decline of agriculture in Vermont calls for a study to continue where Howard Russell, Harold Wilson, and Edwin Rozwenc left off in the first half of the twentieth century. And the complicated story of the construction and demise of the Northeast Dairy Compact, as well as whatever its successor may be, will surely find its historian in the next few years.

Some collaborative efforts to expand and bring into focus a view of the whole of Vermont's history deserve notice because they have opened avenues for some new ways to think about our past. In 1982 Samuel B. Hand and H. Nicholas Muller III brought out *In a State of Nature,* a collection of essays on Vermont history, many of which were drawn from *Vermont History.* By making accessible articles and some documents covering the entire range of Vermont history, *In a State of Nature* quickly became one of the most-quoted volumes in our historiography. The two multiyear lecture series sponsored jointly by the Fletcher Free Library and the University of Vermont's Center for Research on Vermont produced two volumes of essays. *Lake Champlain: Reflections on Our Past* (1987) and *We Vermonters: Perspectives on the Past* (1992) included some rehashing of familiar themes and interpretations, but also some revisionist essays that have helped move us beyond tired clichés and brought to a wide audience some recent research on every era from prehistory to the early 1990s. *Vermont State Government since 1965,* a volume of twenty-six essays written by twenty-eight authors and coauthors, published in 1999 under sponsorship of the Snelling

Center for Government and the Center for Research on Vermont, updated the classic study on Vermont government, published in 1965 by Andrew and Edith Nuquist. This new collection of studies led readers into some of the controversies around state government that were emerging as the volume came out and are still with us: land use and planning, education funding, welfare reform, judicial reform, election financing and reform. A whole issue of *Vermont History* in 1988 was devoted to the history and functioning of the Vermont State Constitution, following a state Supreme Court decision that admonished Vermont lawyers to be more mindful of the state's own constitutional history. A 1992 monograph by the late William C. Hill, a former justice of the state Supreme Court, provides historical and legal perspectives on Vermont's fundamental document, which remains one of the shortest and most difficult to amend of the state constitutions.[25]

Document and primary source editing and publishing have slackened considerably in the past few decades, but the occasional document-with-commentary feature in history journals and a few efforts to provide collections of primary sources of Vermont's history are worth noting, if only to encourage more of that in the future. Reidun Nuquist, then librarian at the Vermont Historical Society, prepared several small sets of documents drawn from the VHS manuscript collections. Published as "In Their Words" in the late 1980s, the feature has appeared occasionally, with contributions by others working in the collections, in the years since she retired. Archivist Kelly Nolin discovered a valuable cache of Civil War letters by Samuel E. and Stephen M. Pingree at Lyndon State College. She transcribed, edited, and published several of them in *Vermont History.* A 1991 volume of the Records of the Council of Censors, edited by Paul Gillies and Gregory Sanford, provides a detailed and fascinating look into a century of constitutional thought, discussion, and reform from 1777 to 1870. In 1993 the Stowe Historical Society published a slim volume of autobiographical sketches of some of its early settlers. In 1994 the *Rutland Herald* published a generous collection of editorials written over a period of fifty years by its owner and publisher, Robert Mitchell. Jeffrey Marshall brought out a volume of Civil War letters written by Vermont soldiers and officers, as well as family and friends back home, and Donald Wickman edited two volumes of Civil War correspondent reports to Vermont newspapers. Samuel B. Hand, Kevin Graffagnino, and Gene Sessions collaborated on *Vermont Voices, 1609 through the 1990s,* a collection of primary sources that covers a wide range of historical topics and informs several issues of current interest and controversy.[26]

I am emphasizing the written word, of course, but documents in

other media also give us enormous insight and information about our past. Our museums have by and large abandoned the old ways of exhibiting objects as static relics from the past and most installations now present objects in relationship to each other, in an interpretive context, and in a way that encourages and assists the visitor in constructing a story or approach to understanding an event, period, or society. As the twentieth century came to a close the *Rutland Herald* and *Barre-Montpelier Times Argus* published a visual history of the 1900s drawn from the collections of the Vermont Historical Society and the newspapers' own photo archives.[27] Several local historical societies have also produced photo histories of their communities and photographs play an important role in establishing context or providing historical information in many museum exhibits. The historic preservation movement has saved, documented, and by promoting adaptive reuse of buildings, allowed us to experience as well as see many important examples of the built environment of our past. Oral histories, radio, television, and film documentaries give us the opportunity to see and hear Vermont as earlier generations heard and saw it and to hear the authentic voices of individuals from the past reflecting on their experiences. Although more expensive than print, and presenting some formidable methodological and conceptual problems for historians that I will discuss further on in this essay, these formats have great appeal because they give to their audiences a keen sense of the reality and immediacy of the past. Similarly, the World Wide Web is breaking new intellectual ground in making documents, images, and voices from the past widely available in ways that were only dimly perceptible twenty years ago when Bassett proposed his agenda for Vermont history.

Another area that was just emerging two decades ago is environmental history. In 1985 historian David Ludlum, the author forty years earlier of a classic work in Vermont history—*Social Ferment in Vermont, 1791–1850*—published an altogether different study. His *Vermont Weather Book* became one of the best selling volumes ever published by the Vermont Historical Society and, exploiting a topic dear to every Vermonter's heart, opened a window onto environmental history. In 1986 geographer Harold Meeks published *Time and Change in Vermont* and *Vermont's Land and Resources,* two volumes that looked at Vermont history from the perspective of the land, its resources, and the human use and impact on those natural features. In the past few years we have seen the publication of *The Story of Vermont: A Natural and Cultural History* by Christopher McGrory Klyza and Stephen C. Trombulak (1999), and *Hands on the Land: A History of the Vermont Landscape* by Jan Albers (2000), two large-scale histories of the state written

from the perspective of natural history, land use, and ecology. The emergence of a field of environmental history also inspired David Lowenthal's new version of his biography of George Perkins Marsh, a collection of Marsh's writings, edited by Klyza and Trombulak, and Kevin Dann's wide-ranging book, *Lewis Creek Lost and Found* (2001). The convergence of science and history also informs Nancy Gallagher's important book, *Breeding Better Vermonters: The Eugenics Project in the Green Mountain State* (1999). All of these suggest ways that Vermont history can expand and become deeper by moving in tandem—in this case, even reconnecting—with studies in other academic disciplines.[28]

Bassett in 1981 called for a revisioning of Vermont's politics and political tradition. The work, already underway with articles such as Lyman Jay Gould and Samuel B. Hand's classic article on the Mountain Rule (1970) and Frank Bryan's monograph *Yankee Politics in Rural Vermont* (1975), has moved forward in several directions. For several years Bryan and Clark Bensen published statistical analyses of Vermont elections. In 1985 Hand, Jeffrey Marshall, and Gregory Sanford published an article on the tension between local control—"The Little Republics"—and the growth of centralized state authority that has since become another anchor point for discussion of Vermont's political tradition. We also now have a few political memoirs and reports—George Aiken's *Senate Diary,* a volume of essays and recollections on Aiken's political heritage and legacy, Stephen Terry's articles on "the Hoff years," Deane Davis's autobiography, Madeleine Kunin's political autobiography, Ralph Wright's memoirs of his years in the Vermont House, Jim Jeffords's brief memoir of his recent political odyssey, and books about Bernie Sanders's years as mayor of Burlington—to guide us through an examination of a period of major change in the political environment of Vermont. Almost twenty years ago, William Doyle published *The Vermont Political Tradition,* an introduction to Vermont political history which he has updated periodically. Samuel B. Hand's recent book, *The Star that Set: The Vermont Republican Party, 1854–1974,* looks at the rise and decline of one of the defining political traditions in Vermont and examines the waning importance of party in the state and in American political life in recent years. The more systematic collecting of governors' papers and some legislators' papers by the State Archives, and the private and public papers of other political figures by the University of Vermont, Vermont Historical Society, and other repositories suggests that we could be on the edge of a new boom in writing about politics and political figures.[29]

Bassett also called for renewed interest in the history of religion in Vermont. His own final work, *The Gods of the Hills: Piety and Society*

in Nineteenth-Century Vermont (2000), is an encyclopedic survey of the topic but, as the title indicates, carries the story only as far as about 1900. Bassett was an indefatigable collector of information about church history and religion in the twentieth century and he reviewed church histories regularly for *Vermont History* and other publications. The historian of religion in Vermont who wishes to continue the story will have a large number of these recent monographs to draw upon for writing the supplement to Bassett's book. For the period that Bassett himself covered, other studies, such as Jeffrey Potash's history of the Second Great Awakening in Addison County, Erik Barnouw's story of the early Mormon congregation in Benson, Randolph Roth's work on religious institutions as a factor in creating the democratic society of early Vermont, and Robert Shalhope's study of Bennington, which includes church polity, and the many articles on religion and piety that have appeared in *Vermont History* since 1981, including several articles from the first VHS symposium on Vermont from 1820 to 1850, give us examples and models for future studies of congregations, church polity, and the intersection of religious, political, and social history.[30]

I do not share Bassett's enthusiasm for sectarian history or for the history of religion, although it is clear that religion had a very important role to play in the founding of the state and in shaping the politics of the eighteenth through mid-nineteenth centuries. It is also clear that the combination of the increasing tendency toward secularizing society in the twentieth century and the diversification of Vermont society in the years after 1970, presents a host of new challenges for historians interested in tracing the role of religion and spirituality and their relationships to democratic institutions in late-twentieth-century state and local history. We may also find through the examination of this topic in contemporary Vermont some ways to understand the tensions and dynamics of religion in democratic society generally. Moreover, the recent interjection and clash of specifically religious commitments into the debates over public policy issues such as abortion, civil unions, and public funding of sectarian education, demonstrate the need for a new look at religion in Vermont's history for the last hundred years.

The topic of religion in society leads almost inevitably to a discussion of race and ethnicity in Vermont. We are a society that continues to be seen from the outside, and in many ways continues to present itself to the world, as homogeneous: white, predominantly Protestant, mostly Anglo-Saxon. Internally, perhaps, we may see some change taking place to revise this image, but it is happening at glacial speed and is miniscule in scope. The 2000 census reported only 3 percent of Vermont's

population in the five categories officially counted as racial or ethnic minorities: Black or African American, American Indian, Asian, Hispanic or Latino, or "some other race." That is an increase of only 1 percent since the 1990 census, whereas Vermont's population as a whole grew by slightly over 8 percent in the ten-year period. We are still "the whitest state" in the nation and very likely among the least ethnically diverse.

Some research in the two decades since Bassett's foreword has provided more information about the other ethnic and racial groups that have lived here for many generations, and in the case of the Abenakis, for many centuries. This is one area that needs much more work, and historians at the local level as well as in academic settings have begun to lay a good foundation for further study. The *Rutland Historical Society Quarterly* published between 1983 and 1985 a series of sketches of the many ethnic and national groups living in the Rutland and Proctor area and working in the marble industry. Barre historians have written about the Italian, Scottish, Spanish, and French-Canadian immigrants who came to work at the granite quarries and in the sheds. Gwilym Roberts's recent book on the Welsh in the slate producing area of Fair Haven and Poultney fills in details from earlier studies of that area. Gene Sessions provided important insights into the social mobility of the Irish in Northfield, and R. D. Eno provided information about Jewish residents in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom which he published in *Kfari.* An article by William Wolkovich-Valkavicius in *Vermont History* in 1986 gave us some information about a short-lived Lithuanian community in Arlington. We have yet to see a study of the Swedish farmers recruited in the late nineteenth century, some of whom moved down to Brattleboro, nor on some of the other smaller ethnic groups from eastern and Baltic Europe who worked in the Rutland area. The recent arrival of new immigrants from the former Soviet Union, the former Yugoslavia, and Africa give some indication that many communities in Vermont will soon have a much more ethnically diverse population than they had in the past.[31]

Vermont's largest ethnic group, FrancoAmericans, has received some, but still inadequate attention, with studies by Betsy Beattie and Anne Pease McConnell, Peter Woolfson and André Senécal's brief but important occasional paper for the Center for Research on Vermont, *The French in Vermont: Some Current Views* (1983), Woolfson's study on FrancoAmericans done for the Vermont Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (1983), and Gerard Brault's book, *The French Canadian Heritage in New England* (1986). Bassett discussed the early history of French Catholics and St. Joseph Parish, and Robert

Keenan and Rev. Francis Privé produced a study on the history of that parish from 1830 to 1987.[32]

There is a very small body of material on African Americans in Vermont and this needs to grow. Ray Zirblis wrote an important study in 1996 for the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation on the Underground Railroad in Vermont that substantially revises the myth of Vermont's participation in antislavery and abolitionist activity in the period 1830 to 1850. Elise Guyette has been studying census data to understand the working lives of African Americans in the mid-nineteenth century. Don Wickman traced the lives and careers of African Americans from the Rutland area who fought in the Massachusetts 54th Regiment, and James Fuller has done remarkably detailed research on African American soldiers from Vermont in the Civil War that adds substantially to the lists that appear in the official roster. His research points to a larger and more widespread population of African Americans in the state than we have identified up to now. The oral history interviews with Daisy Turner of Grafton, conducted by Jane Beck, give us one view into the lives of African Americans in rural Vermont from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. [33]

For more recent history, Vermonters' participation in the Civil Rights Movement, the end of Kake Walk at the University of Vermont, and the Irasburg Affair in 1968, have already drawn the attention of historians and journalists. Stephen Wrinn's book, *Civil Rights in the Whitest State,* brings all this together in the only comprehensive look at the topic so far.[34]

Without question, the most dramatic revision of ethnic history in Vermont has concerned itself with rewriting the history of the Abenakis. Until the 1970s, the historiographical tradition portrayed Vermont as a "no-man's land" for the native people, who were thought to have used this area only as hunting and fishing grounds and as a pass-through, with no established or permanently settled communities, and virtually no presence after the end of the American Revolution. Gordon Day's work from 1945 until his death in 1993 on the language and identity of the native people in this area helped preserve and rekindle interest in Western Abenaki spoken and material culture. The Abenaki-English dictionary that he left unfinished came to fruition in 1995, along with a small phrase book and tape for pronunciation. His scholarly studies (some of which have been republished in a 1998 compilation) encouraged scholars in related fields to reexamine the assumptions and evidence of Abenaki presence after the late eighteenth century.[35]

Fueled by the American Indian movement and the work of other

scholars such as Francis Jennings and James Axtell, studies of native history began to reframe the context, documents, and interpretation of information about Abenaki history in Vermont. In 1981, just in time to be included in Bassett's Vermont bibliography, William Haviland and Marjory Power published *The Original Vermonters: Native Inhabitants, Past and Present,* summarizing and synthesizing archaeological, anthropological, and historical evidence to suggest a continuous presence of Abenaki people in Vermont. John Moody's essay, "The Native American Legacy," in *Always In Season,* a catalog of essays and images edited by Jane Beck to accompany an exhibit with that title that traveled the state in 1982, helped strengthen the case for a continuous presence of Abenakis in Vermont with documentary and material evidence. Historian Colin Calloway published a series of articles in *Vermont History* in 1984, 1985, and 1986 that presented more evidence of Abenaki presence in this area from 1600 to 1800, and his book, *The Western Abenakis of Vermont, 1600–1800* (1990), brought together his research on the early period, with an epilogue that discussed the continuity and survival of Abenaki society into the twentieth century. Renewed efforts to examine and analyze archaeological sites reinforced the conclusions of continuous and permanent Abenaki settlements in the Champlain and Connecticut valleys, and by the time Haviland and Power brought out the revised edition of their groundbreaking book in 1994, the myth of a Vermont "empty" of permanently settled native people was in serious doubt, if not completely discredited. In his recent book of history and memoir, *The Voice of the Dawn: An Autohistory of the Abenaki Nation* (2001), Frederick Wiseman has challenged scholars to move beyond the prehistoric (i.e., pre-1609) and early historic periods to recognize the continued and continuous presence of Abenakis in Vermont. This represents one of the next major issues and challenges in Vermont historiography. The recent report of the attorney general of Vermont, challenging the Abenaki petition for recognition as a tribe by the federal government, emphasizes the ambiguity and indeed the lack of documentary evidence to substantiate Abenaki claims of community and continuity. This reliance on and use of written documentation as the only credible source for historical research will either compete with or have to be examined with care and subtlety against the Abenakis' use of and reliance upon tradition, folklore, material culture, and oral history to demonstrate that they have been here all along.[36]

Bassett concluded his list of research and writing needs with an admonition, to borrow the famous quotation from Abigail Adams, to "remember the ladies." He listed a total of sixty-three items related to women's studies in the bibliography, and remarking on Faith Pepe's

important article, "Toward a History of Women in Vermont: An Essay and Bibliography" published in 1977, he urged continued research. The two update volumes of the New England Bibliography show a steady, if still inadequate, increase in women's studies: forty-two new items in the 1988 update and an additional forty-four in the 1994 volume. A few of the landmark works published since Bassett's bibliography include several oral histories compiled and published as, *Those Intriguing, Indomitable Vermont Women* (1980); *My Mama Rolled out of the Sleigh* (1988), and *A Diversity of Gifts: Vermont Women at Work* (1989); Deborah Clifford's two articles in *Vermont History,* "The Drive for Women's Municipal Suffrage in Vermont, 1883–1917" and "The Women's War against Rum"; and an entire issue of *Vermont History* in 1988 devoted to women's studies, including Constance McGovern's summary, "Women's History: The State of the Art," and Marilyn Blackwell's update of Pepe's bibliography, which added almost 100 new manuscript sources, almost 50 new series of association records, and almost 250 new books and articles.[37] Other highlights of Vermont women's history include Mark J. Madigan's *Keeping Fires Night and Day: Selected Letters of Dorothy Canfield Fisher* (1993); *Roxana's Children* (1995), an astounding and rich collection of letters exchanged between Roxana Brown Walbridge Watts and her eleven children, compiled by Lynn A. Bonfield and Mary C. Morrison; and Deborah Clifford's recent biography of Abby Maria Hemenway, which, in addition to showing us many details of women in education, women and religion, and women and the arts, reflects on the tradition of Vermont historiography itself.[38]

I have, I know, neglected many important contributions to Vermont historiography in this summary. Just one of those, for example, the writings about Vermont and Vermonters in the Civil War, would by itself double the size of this essay. As I turned each page of the New England Bibliography update volumes, and reviewed each issue of *Vermont History* since 1994—both articles and book reviews—I came across items that deserve mention and topics that one could easily argue should be inserted into this summary. But those items I have mentioned and the many I have had to leave behind adequately demonstrate, I hope, the depth and breadth of Vermont historical writing over the past two decades. They demonstrate as well the many ways writers of history in Vermont have fulfilled the promise outlined in Bassett's retrospective and projective essay.

The Future of Vermont's Past: Rummaging in the Brickyards of History

The third part of my assignment was to discuss the future directions of Vermont historiography. The problem with my summary up to now is

that it has been filling in the blanks of Bassett's agenda for Vermont history. In twenty years, however, the historical profession and our audiences have moved into other areas of interest, adopted and added to the agenda new intellectual models, methods, and questions, and left behind some that appeared as new stars on the horizon when Bassett wrote his foreword.

I have already mentioned a few areas where historians are taking us and where there are obvious needs and opportunities. My own hobby horse is the need and possibilities for more work in the history of ideas and in cultural history. We have much to learn about ourselves and our past by looking more closely at our literature and creative nonfiction, the flourishing of the fine arts and performing arts in Vermont, especially in the last half century, and the popular culture of our own and earlier times. In many cases these cultural landmarks provide paths toward a larger understanding of local places, landmarks, and events in the lives of communities. The stories of their origins, production, and use give us glimpses of both the cultural and economic life of small towns and villages as well as the larger urban communities that dot the Vermont landscape. They can help us see the processes and effects of rural communities becoming increasingly connected to a wider world through the movement—via railroad and then of automobiles—of people and ideas, popular entertainment, fads and fashions, and changes in commerce and technology. We can extend the inventorying and analysis of art, architecture, music, and literature, to learn more deeply about the workings of communities and the ideas, activities, tastes, and texts that have shaped them, are shaped by them, unite, and divide them.

Much remains to do to tell the stories of the non-White, non-Protestant, non-Yankee groups who have called or who now call Vermont their home. And much remains to do to tell the stories of the women, whose voices and history have only recently emerged from the silence of earlier generations of historical writing.

We are only beginning to get a history of nonagricultural work and workers in Vermont. We have very little information about or analysis of small business owners and operators, the many small manufacturers of the pre-Civil War period into the 1890s. We should be looking at the revival and flourishing phenomenon of small businesses and craft businesses in the past few decades as one aspect of the impact on Vermont's economy of the "global marketplace" and cyberspace marketing. We have not yet adequately explored the lives and patterns of organized labor, and we know much less about hired and itinerant farm workers from the earliest times to the present.

We know a lot about Civil War soldiers, less about those who went to

war at other times, far less about those who stayed behind to mind the home front, and almost nothing about those who chose not to fight.

Those are just a few of the commonplace deficiencies of our historiography. While we are conducting this discussion of the future of Vermont historiography, we need to note and think about the resources for future historical research. The electronic media, museums, and the whole realm of "public history" are obvious landmarks on the current horizon. They provide new and wider access to information, to be sure, and they offer us new audiences for our work. But they also point to new hazards for collecting, interpreting, and disseminating information about our past. With the adoption and adaptation of new technologies for communicating, we are, for example, rapidly losing some of the most relied upon resources for historical research and writing: private correspondence and private reflections in letters and diaries. The dominance of electronic communication in our society, by telephone and email, means that most communication between individuals has become ephemeral and the record, indeed any trace of those exchanges either ceases to exist or never comes into existence. Curiously, in an age when we complain that the private has become public, the only documents we will have in the future for reflecting on the past will be public ones. The unguarded statements and reflections that used to pass from person to person in letters or find their way into the coded language and format of diaries are rapidly disappearing. Oral history, homemade films (already a passe medium), videos (a passing medium), and digital imagery have already made the written word passe except for a few who stubbornly cling to the tradition. Where in the future will we find anything like Dorman Kent's fifty years of diary keeping, or the diaries kept by three or four children that I had a student read for her study of childhood in nineteenth-century Vermont, or the hundreds of shorter, smaller diaries I once counted in the VHS collections, the boxes of letters kept by nineteenth-century medium Achsha Sprague, the two volumes of letters that passed among the Allen family, boxes of letters written and kept by James P. Taylor, or the uncountable volume of letters from Civil War soldiers that have informed us of every detail of camp and campaign life? I don't write such letters to anyone in my immediate or extended family, and I do not know of many people who do. More commonly, I think, we will have to look into the published (sometimes self-published) works of memoir, personal essay, and journalism—including letters to the editor, op-ed pieces, and gossip column filler items in our daily papers.

One sign of the changing times arrived on my desk recently when I received for review in *Vermont History* a volume of commentaries

prepared for Vermont Public Radio.[39] However varied such commentaries are, and however much they may give us some insight into events and the culture of contemporary Vermont, they are the views and voices of a select, gregarious, articulate, opinionated, and self-confident few among us. Moreover, however personal and revealing they may be on the surface, all such items (except, perhaps, those produced as vanity publications) come to us mediated by their authors' own editing and revision and the additional editing and polishing that is the work of editors and publishers. In that process we lose much of the uniqueness of a voice—even as it is expressed in the eccentric spelling, punctuation, grammar, and vocabulary that so captivates us and puzzles us as we read the unmediated words of letter and diary writers from the past.

Over the past thirty or forty years historians have grown used to thinking of their work as uncovering and telling or retelling the stories of the ordinary lives of ordinary people to give context to the extraordinary events that pop up over the horizon. We are going to have to learn where to find the sources for those stories and how to use and interpret new kinds of sources if we intend to keep that task in our repertory.

This brings me to my final task: trying to see how some of the pieces of our current writing about the past might fit together to make a coherent whole.

To prepare for this challenge, I spent some time reading the addresses of the presidents of the Organization of American Historians and the American Historical Society for the past twenty years. Here, I thought, I might find a map of how leaders in the historical profession have been assessing current work, projecting needs for future work, and articulating a purpose for historical study. There are some interesting possibilities here, even for the small field of Vermont history.

Our generation of historians faces an unusual and interesting problem. Under the stimulus of the breakup of some old models of national and consequently of state and local history, and armed with a panoply of new methods and models for dissecting our past, we have assembled a brickyard of small studies, many of which reveal small gems of new insight about the lives of individuals, the look of communities, the operation of institutions in our immediate neighborhood or region. It is, as I hope I have demonstrated in the previous section of my talk, a fertile but also a bewildering brickyard. It's clear that some new ideas about Vermont's history lie among the bricks or are waiting to be assembled with them, but we may lack any common agreement on what the final product is supposed to look like. Finding our way to that agreement seems, in this era of diversity, globalization, deconstructionist thinking, and postmodern antisythesism, an almost impossible task. I wish, six

years ago, instead of agreeing to try to write a one-volume history of Vermont, I had thought of the project that John Duffy invented and has since completed: an encyclopedia of Vermont history, to be published in 2003.[40] I do not mean to diminish the accomplishment or intellectual rigor that has gone into planning, executing, and assembling that formidable work, which started after I embarked on my task and will see light of day before the work I have done with my two colleagues will go into galley proofs. And I must acknowledge that Duffy had already written a one-volume history of Vermont in 1985, which he and Vincent Feeney revised for republication in 2000.[41] But as I began my work, and especially as I have struggled to complete the final two chapters—from 1945 to the present (whenever that will be by the time I am truly finished)—I, too, looked around the brickyard of historical studies and wondered how to construct a coherent, convincing, and useful narrative out of the large and small elements so readily and abundantly available. Is it symbolic of our time, I wonder (or just my own failing as a historian, I may have to admit), that it seems easier and has certainly taken less time to assemble an encyclopedia of Vermont history than to write a history of Vermont? Would it have been easier to write such a history before the 1970s—before Vietnam, OPEC, and AIDS; before the Civil Rights Movement, Women's liberation, the American Indian Movement, and civil unions?

In the novel, *Herzog,* Saul Bellow puts into the mind of his main character the sardonic aphorism—delivered as much to himself as to the students he is supposed to be lecturing—"what this nation needs is a good five-cent synthesis." When I began working six years ago on a one-volume history of Vermont, I got a note from one commentator who urged me to "take the measure of Vermont." Nothing in these six long years of reading and writing has frightened me as much as that one brief sentence. Why is it, I have pondered, that it seems so hard to "take the measure of Vermont"? Reading the comments of the stellar performers in my profession has at least helped me understand.

What are we trying to do when we write history? In her 1982 address to the Organization of American Historians Gerda Lerner, a pioneer in writing and teaching the history of women, asserted that "Making history means form-giving and meaning-giving." We are called upon in this effort, not only to recall and record data and events; that is the important work of what the ancient and medieval world called "chroniclers" and what we now call journalists. Historians are expected to take one more step in the intellectual process because history, as Lerner notes, satisfies a variety of human needs:

1. History as memory and as a source of personal identity. As memory it keeps alive the experiences, deeds, and ideas of people of the past. By locating each individual life as a link between generations and by allowing us to transform the dead into heroes and role models for emulation, history connects past and future and becomes a source of personal identity.
2. History as collective immortality. By rooting human beings on a continuum of human enterprise, history provides each man and woman with a sense of immortality through the creation of a structure in the mind, which extends human life beyond its span.
3. History as cultural tradition. A shared body of ideas, values, and experiences, which has a coherent shape, becomes a cultural tradition, be it national, ethnic, religious, or racial. Such a "symbolic universe" unites diverse groups. It also legitimates those holding power, by rooting its source in a distant past.
4. History as explanation. Through an order of the past into some larger connectedness and pattern, historical events become "illustrations" of philosophies and of broader interpretative frameworks. Depending on the system of thought represented, the past becomes evidence, model, contrast to the present, symbol, or challenge.[42]

I would make only two additions to this summary. In the discussion of "history as memory," we should be sure to include the studies of antiheroes and destroyers as examples to avoid emulating. And in the discussion of "history as cultural tradition" it is important—especially in the present context—to include among the traditions that we wish to study those that are local, that reside in our communities, for there is where we begin the process of building up a sense of our history as a state.

For my current purposes, I am going to set aside the issue of history as collective immortality, for, like Thomas Jefferson, I sometimes worry about society being caught in the grip of the dead hand of the past. As a historian and as a citizen living in contemporary Vermont, I often see the value of understanding the lives and conditions of those who preceded me in this place, but sometimes I see the necessity to let go of or move beyond some attitudes, values, and ways of doing things that were useful and valuable to Vermonters one hundred or two hundred years ago, but that may serve us less well precisely because our world, indeed our Vermont, is in some ways unlike theirs.

History as memory and as a source of personal identity. These days, historians are particularly interested in the problem of memory and how it sometimes confirms, sometimes supplements, sometimes deviates from, what we can document in a systematic way. Memory of course is selective and we can choose to forget as well as remember, so one task the historian faces is to reconstruct the past by using memories but

also by correcting them. More important, perhaps, is the observation of Charles S. Maier that "unlike history, memories do not assign causes or explain the past, but merely bear witness." In this way memories can become the seedbed for myth (which can, but does not always, have explanatory power) and public rituals, which attempt to recreate a version or group conception of the past, often out of context of that past and, curiously, out of context of the present time in which the ritual itself is performed. Memory, in short is malleable, and as historian David Thelen argues, is "not reproduced, but constructed, and . . . this construction is made not in isolation, but as part of an individual's interaction, both politically and socially, within the context of community." While memory thus becomes a powerful medium for building and sustaining communities and identity within communities, we have to continue to be aware of the gaps between memory and history, even as we honor and use individual and communal memories as gateways to the past. Moreover, we have to be careful not to be trapped into making memory the only basis for using history. "The excessive involvement with memory" Maier argues, "reflects not a healthy concern for history but a cultural insecurity about the future and a loss of faith in transformative political action."[43]

History as cultural tradition. This item on Gerda Lerner's list represents a particularly powerful strain in Vermont's historical consciousness. In the past few years, as Vermonters have struggled with and sometimes over difficult public policy directions and specific laws—I'm thinking, of course, of Act 60 and the civil unions bill, but we could add Act 250, Act 200, or the current West Mountain reserve lands controversy—advocates on both sides have invoked a version of the past and individuals from the past to support their positions. When Senator Jim Jeffords abandoned the Republican Party in 2002, he invoked a pantheon of his predecessors who represented Vermont in the Senate and claimed a tradition of independence from party that encouraged his supporters, dismayed those who disagreed with his action, and probably would have astonished the very individuals whose ghosts he summoned up at his press conference.

We must be careful about how we use history to create and perpetuate cultural traditions. And I would argue that we have to be careful sometimes to pit history against tradition, which, as Lerner says, sometimes serves only to "legitimate those holding power, by rooting its source in a distant past," and which I would argue has the potential of flattening the complexity and destroying the context of actions, ideas, and the perceptions of reality. For me, history demonstrates also, perhaps most of all, the possibilities of choice—a very modernist and

Western position, to be sure—the possibility of moving beyond what has been by acknowledging the past and assessing the benefits and harm we have inherited from it. Lerner, too, argued this point in her presidential address when she said, "We learn from our construction of the past what possibilities and choices once existed. Assuming . . . that the actions of the living and those of the dead are comparable, we then draw conclusions about the consequences of our present-day choices."[44]

History as explanation. It is that very construction of the past that turns the recitation of mere events, mere data, into a body of knowledge that is usable because it is coherent. And that, finally, brings me to a discussion of what we ought to be talking about. What are the topics or themes that will serve as an adequate medium for explaining our history, that might be the intellectual glue that will allow us reassemble the shattered Humpty-Dumpty of historical tidbits, or to return to my other metaphor, the frameworks that will allow us to use the bricks in our intellectual brickyard? The presidential addresses I read suggest some possibilities. Recognizing that each age, each generation, has its own questions and issues, I found in three addresses topics that seem to me important here and now.

In his presidential address to the Organization of American Historians in 1986, William E. Leuchtenburg astonished his audience by stating "that the historian's next frontier is political history." Writing barely a generation after Watergate and the Vietnam war era, which discredited politicians and led the historical profession into the examination of those groups who had been for so long excluded from and were thought to be the victims of local, national, and state political processes, Leuchtenburg astutely suggested that having abandoned political history, we had abandoned the one narrative thread that allowed us to see the interaction of the private and public lives of people in the past. Political history, he argued, provides the way to see and understand how group identity becomes ideology and how ideology becomes the agent of change that gives new groups power to effect change—directly or indirectly. While Leuchtenburg acknowledged an expanding definition of political history among his colleagues, he was clear in stating that for him, political history is "the history of the American state. . . . In truth, I do not see how we can conceivably write a credible history of this country and ignore the state."[45]

This analysis translates well to state history and to the history of Vermont. I am myself a reluctant convert to this position, but in my work on the history of Vermont I have come to understand and appreciate the complicated relationship, one might even say the dialogue, between political and social history. Bassett claimed to be surprised by the deep

historical tradition in a place where, here he quoted Charles T. Morrissey, "practically nothing of national importance ever happened." I think one could argue convincingly, however, that precisely because Vermont was not in the forefront, examining its political history gives us insight into the dynamics and relationships between social and political identity, the role of ideology in shaping political institutions, and the processes by which those excluded from political power gain a voice and sometimes even get the opportunity to exercise power.

Moreover, as Leuchtenburg notes, "The force of the state has been especially manifest in our own century,"[46] and if there is one place where the clash of tradition with history in at least the last half of the twentieth century is obvious, it is the steady growth of government in Vermont, sometimes accepted reluctantly on the part of those who govern, often resisted, always debated and disputed.

Closely related to Leuchtenburg's admonition to reexamine political history is Linda K. Kerber's discussion of "The Meanings of Citizenship" in her 1997 presidential address to the OAH.[47] Who have been considered citizens, and who has been excluded from exercising the role, receiving the benefits, accepting the obligations of citizenship? What did citizenship mean in an earlier period and what does it mean today? "All over the globe," Kerber writes, "individuals' rights as citizens are being recast. The status of citizen, which in stable times we tend to assume is permanent and fixed, has become contested, variable, fluid."[48] Is that not as true for our state, indeed for any state, as it is for our nation? Indeed, understanding the definitions, limitations, and roles of citizenship in our towns and state opens up precisely those significant questions about the relationships between social and cultural identity and institutions, political institutions, and political power.

The first Vermont constitution (1777) included a Declaration of the Rights of the Inhabitants of the State of Vermont, which included this limiting clause in section III: "nor can any *man* who professes the *protestant religion* be justly deprived or abridged of any civil right as a citizen on account of his religious sentiment, or peculiar mode of worship [emphasis added]." Section I of that Declaration of Rights stated "That all men are born equally free and independent, and have certain natural, inherent and unalienable rights, amongst which are the enjoying and defending life and liberty; acquiring, possessing and protecting property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety." Nonetheless, in the years after 1777, the Vermont General Assembly confiscated the lands of those of its citizens who remained loyal to George III and fled to Canada. And what of those who had little or no property to speak of? In 1779 the General Assembly adopted "An Act for the

Ordering and Disposing of Transient Persons," thereby establishing in state law the practice of "warning out" that continued until 1818, and not until 1978 did the state legislature eliminate a poll tax.[49] Vermont reluctantly gave women who paid taxes the right to vote in school elections in 1880, but declined to ratify the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution in 1920. In 1998 the Vermont Supreme Court articulated the rights of children to equal education opportunities, thereby expanding one area in the definition of citizenship; and in 1999 the Supreme Court ruled that same-sex couples have the right to enjoy the benefits of marriage granted to heterosexual couples under the common benefits clause that applies to all citizens of the state.[50] The expanding and contracting definitions of citizenship constitute an important but underrecognized theme in our history.

Moreover, if we fear that state history can become too parochial in its outlook, examining Vermont history through the lens of the meanings of citizenship can give us a framework for thinking about the relationship of Vermont to the nation. In the War of 1812, the Vermont militia, ordered to return home from Plattsburgh by Federalist Governor Martin Chittenden, refused, stating that "when we are ordered into the service of the United States, it becomes our duty, when required, to march to the defense of any section of the Union. We are not of that class who believe that our duties as citizens and soldiers are circumscribed within the narrow limits of the Town or State in which we reside, but that we are under a paramount obligation to our common country, to the great confederation of the States."[51] By contrast, in 1850 the Vermont General Assembly went on record in opposition to the Fugitive Slave Act, which it characterized as both an offense to civil liberties and a violation of state sovereignty, then went a step further by passing the Habeas Corpus bill to impede the execution of the new federal law.[52] How Vermonters defined citizenship and the obligations of citizenship in the context of the state and nation reveals some aspects of the complex, fluid, sometimes troubled relationship of states to nation.

Was Vermont unusual in these intrastate and interstate disputes? Can we use a history of the shifting meanings and applications of citizenship to gain better insight into our present controversies, where opponents of legislation like Act 60 and civil unions call upon their fellow citizens to "Take Back Vermont"? Those citizens claim to be the bearers of the true Vermont tradition. But which tradition do they claim? And how different is this tradition and the attitudes it represents or claims to represent from those of other states, indeed from our national history seen as a whole?

This brings me to the final theme I have gleaned from my reading in OAH presidential addresses: the theme of exceptionalism.

Vermonters like to think of their state as a last bastion of independent thinking, rural living, and old-time American republican virtue—as a holdout, in short, against the downward drift of national culture and politics. The theme of Vermont exceptionalism is part of the Vermont tradition that is revered and embedded in popular ideas of our history. In a curious way, however, Vermont has inherited and adapted this way of thinking from our national history and historiography. In her presidential address to the OAH in 1992, Joyce Appleby examined this theme in American history and discoursed on the meanings, implications, and dangers of a historiography of exceptionalism. "Exceptional does not mean different. All nations are different; and almost all national sentiments exploit those differences. Exceptionalism does more; it projects onto a nation . . . qualities that are envied because they represent deliverance from a common lot. There are no exceptions without well-understood generalizations or norms in contrast to which the exception commands attention."[53] Maintaining a myth of exceptionalism as the core myth of American history, Appleby asserted, means forgetting some of the details and less attractive episodes from our past. For American history, it means forgetting slavery, the oppression and near destruction of the native people, the exclusion of groups from immigration, the long period of marginalizing women. It means focusing on some aspects of our ideology and history at the expense of others, selective memory (we've come round to that again) and selective forgetting. "Our sense of worth, of well-being, even our unity depends upon our remembering. But, alas, our sense of worth, our well-being, our sanity also depend upon our forgetting. Remembering and forgetting determine the history we tell."[54]

Vermont can make some good and valid claims to exceptionalism in the context of American history. We were, indeed, the first state to write into its constitution a ban on adult slavery, followed soon thereafter, however—as soon as they were sure they had won the war of independence and were free to rewrite their old colonial charters—by many northern states. The fact that Vermont never had a colonial charter, that it made itself, doubtless helped it win the accolade for pioneering antislavery.

The fact that Vermont made itself also set it apart from the colonies and all the states that followed because, according to Peter Onuf, Vermont forced the hand of the Constitutional Convention of 1787 in drafting section 3 of Article IV, then forced the hand of Congress in brokering an arrangement with New York State.[55] Vermont remains exceptional—or at least unusual—among the United States in its small population, its high proportion of rural population, its direct democ-

racy in town meetings, its close supervision of elected officials and representatives through the two-year term for all statewide officers and all legislators. Other states have some of these characteristics in different combinations; we may claim exceptionalism—for what it's worth in this instance, and that is the important question—for having them all.

But is Vermont exceptional in some of the other qualities it claims for itself? In 1990, on the eve of the bicentennial anniversary of statehood, Vermonters enjoyed the spectacle of a series of debates over whether Vermont should exercise a supposed "escape clause": an agreement, according to the folklore, that Vermont could exercise once every 100 years an option to secede from the Union. This is part of the Vermont myth, part of its tradition. In all but one of the debates, Frank Bryan, professor of political science at the University of Vermont, argued for secession, and John Dooley, associate justice of the Vermont Supreme Court, argued for staying in the Union. For one debate they exchanged sides. And on that occasion Bryan argued that "Vermont has done more to create the United States than any other state." The idea of secession, he insisted, violates Vermont's culture, which includes the principle of having the courage to fix what's wrong. "Vermont nationalism is a nationalism of orneriness and that's the best kind of nationalism. . . . America needs us," he concluded, "because we are its conscience and its heart; we are its homeland."[56] I know of no better expression of Vermont exceptionalism and no more succinct distillation of the Vermont myth.

As is the case with examination of American exceptionalism, claiming that distinction for Vermont means remembering and emphasizing some details from our past and of our present, and forgetting or ignoring others. It means claiming isolation from and immunization against the deleterious influences of a wider national history, making Vermont a frontier territory in the Turnerian tradition rather than a porous border area as described by Bassett. It means using the small townscape of Peacham as the poster image for tourism rather than the city skyline of Burlington. It means celebrating stubborn, self-conscious resistance to change, as Dorothy Canfield Fisher commented in the 1937 Vermont volume of the American Guide Series, "it is perhaps safe to tell you visitors to our State that if you will think of us as representing the American past, you may have a better understanding of what you see in Vermont,"[57] and ignoring the 1993 designation by the National Trust for Historic Preservation of Vermont as one of the eleven most endangered historic places in the nation.

The exceptionalism theme is powerful and important for understanding and writing our history, for it challenges us to place our research and

writing in the larger context of American history and now, in global history. It is powerful, too, as a historiographical tradition, for we should try to discover when Vermont writers began to make those claims and what they saw in the state and in the nation that led them to that conclusion. And it is powerful, as Joyce Appleby reminds us, because it points to "the historian's inescapable role as moralist. What we attend to in the past will form that restructured memory that we call history, the reservoir of knowledge about human experience that informs our ideas about suffering and crimes, virtues and vices, recordable accomplishments and unworthy happenings. No scientifically based, objective model exists to guide our curiosity. We and the cultural milieus in which we think determine historical significance."[58]

This comment suggests that as we read, write, and talk about the past we need to be mindful of an audience for our labors. Academic historians in our day have been justly chided for writing only for each other; public historians have been chided by some of their academic colleagues for allowing their work to be shaped by and for popular conceptions; state and local historians are frequently chided for being mere antiquarians and for not casting their glance beyond the boundaries of their community or state. All of these criticisms are true and not true, useful and merely mean spirited. If we want our work as historians to fulfill the functions that Gerder Lerner outlined—of entertainment, perpetuating tradition, creating or reinforcing identity, expanding knowledge, and providing explanations—we have to think hard about how and how widely we communicate what we ourselves discover, know, learn, and think about. We have to think about the forums we create and, more important, the ones that exist where we can have a voice; and we have to think about the way we present the fruits of our labors so that the language of the past can become part of the political, social, and cultural discourse in the present.

Notes

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[2] Bassett, *Vermont: A Bibliography of Its History,* "Foreword," xix.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] Elin Anderson, *We Americans: A Study of Cleavage in an American City* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1937; reprint, New York: Russell & Russell, 1967).

[5] Bassett, *Vermont: A Bibliography of Its History,* xx.

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," *American Historical Association Annual Report* (Washington, D.C., 1893), quoted in The Staff, Social Sciences

I, [University of Chicago] ed., *The People Shall Judge: Readings in the Formation of American Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), 2: 130.

[8] See, for example, Alan Taylor, "Center and Periphery: Locating Maine's History," *Maine History* 39:1 (Spring 2000): 2–15.

[9] Bassett, *Vermont: A Bibliography of Its History*, xx.

[10] See Michael Sherman, "Ethan Allen and the History that Lives in Our Hearts," *Oracle* [newsletter of the Ethan Allen Homestead] (Fall 1999): 1, 3–5.

[11] Bassett, *Vermont: A Bibliography of Its History*, xxi.

[12] *Ibid.*, xix.

[13] *Ibid.*

[14] For all these questions and recommendations, see ibid., xxii–xxiv.

[15] *Ibid.*, xxiv.

[16] T. D. Seymour Bassett, *The Growing Edge: Vermont Villages, 1840–1880* (Montpelier: Vermont Historical Society, 1994); Bassett, *The Gods of the Hills: Piety and Society in Nineteenth-Century Vermont* (Montpelier: Vermont Historical Society, 2000); Robert V. Daniels, ed., *The University of Vermont: The First Two Hundred Years* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1991); Bassett, "Documenting Recreation and Tourism in New England," *American Archivist* 50 (Fall, 1987): 550–569.

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Gender and Vermont History: Moving Women from the Sidebars into the Text

How did Vermont institutions and culture create opportunities or barriers for women's self-development? How did women, in turn, forge identities in this place? Did women help create and benefit from Vermonters' spirit of independence and self-reliance?

By MARILYN S. BLACKWELL

On March 30, 1939, Dorothy Canfield Fisher wrote an impassioned letter to the *Burlington Free Press* urging Vermont legislators to pass a bill granting women the right to serve on juries in Vermont. She compared women's status in this regard to that of African Americans and insisted that the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution assuring women's right to vote gave them "all the rights and duties of citizenship," including "the right of women to have members of their own sex on juries which try them." Despite her efforts and those of other activists, the bill failed, and Vermont women were not assured that right until passage of a statewide referendum in November 1942.[1]

Fisher's advocacy and her articulate defense of women's rights in American society raise questions about how she portrayed women in *Vermont Tradition,* her idiosyncratic history of the state written over

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a decade later. Did she include women and address women's status in her description of the state's early history?

Often characterized as "Vermont's First Lady," Fisher was a prolific Vermont booster, whose popular novels spread ideas about Vermonters and the merits of country life as much as any other writer in the mid-twentieth century.[2] Raised in the Midwest, Fisher spent much of her adult life after her marriage in 1907 at her ancestral home in Arlington.[3] She did not pretend to be a historian, but she did have a theory of history. "History is worth reading," she wrote, "when it tells us truly what the attitude towards life was in the past."[4] Based on her reading of Vermont history, her knowledge of Vermont folklore, and her own family's heritage, *Vermont Tradition: The Biography of an Outlook on Life* was an effort to define the attitude that had molded Vermonters.

Fisher's portrait reaffirms one of the most persistent images of Vermont as the embodiment of the American ideal of freedom. Writing in the 1950s, she built on national themes developed during the war years coupled with nostalgia for preindustrial virtues that the Vermont tourist industry had promoted since the late nineteenth century.[5] The New Hampshire Grants controversy, in Fisher's view, symbolized the American struggle for democracy and freedom against aristocratic old-world systems of hierarchy and power that New York landlords exhibited. The freely held, small farms emerging out of this struggle laid the foundation for Vermonters' sense of self-reliance and independence and for a largely classless, tolerant society that assimilated social differences.

In this freedom-loving place, where were the women? Ironically, women appear throughout *Vermont Tradition* in Fisher's stories gleaned from folklore, but historical women are largely missing. Noting that, "Something is told about the spirit of a people by the stories they chance to hand down, by the kind of women they admire," Fisher describes several active, strong-minded, and hardworking women in the white settlement era.[6] Young women race horses to see who can reach Bennington first; a wise matron chooses a house site based on the quality of the water for washing fine linens; grandmothers plow fields. In one revealing story a Connecticut man, who had come to clear land, greets his wife and children when they arrive the following spring. "I think I know . . . what he felt," Fisher tells us:

> "'Oh my wife, my love, when you come the meaning of life springs up like a fountain. With you and the children here, I am a whole man again, deep-rooted in hope, faith and joy.'" But, she continues, "I am sure that he put none of that feeling into words. Probably what he said was something like this: 'I've got a line of pump-logs rigged up right to the door. You won't need to go to the brook for water. Little

> Delia's fat as a pig, ain't she.' It was a language his wife understood as well as he."[7]

This scene, like much of *Vermont Tradition,* reveals as much about Fisher's sense of romance and her practical values in the 1950s as about early Vermont. In her view, a frontier woman knew how to wash clothes and feed her children; her inventive and loving, but inexpressive, husband would prepare the way to make life as easy as possible. Fisher accompanied this image of the complementary roles of men and women settlers with the conviction that "the traditional, submissive, husband-obeying wife, who loved to be commanded by a male . . . certainly was not a Vermont product."[8] Yet she had little evidence for this assertion. Her stories of the mid-nineteenth century portray Vermont grandmothers lovingly corresponding with the children who have left home, caring for wounded soldiers, or maintaining family farms and the idea of home.

Fisher's portrayal of women testified to the classless, preindustrial nature of Vermont society and the image of the state as a seat of rural virtues. The Victorian woman, elevated to genteel ways and idleness by her middle-class status, did not exist in Fisher's Vermont.[9] Instead, she depicted women's farm and household work as a means of domesticating, democratizing, and channeling Vermont's history into a narrow stream of frontier traits and home values that persisted in the rural Vermont of her own lifetime. Fisher blended women's identity into that of the men of Vermont because she saw them as marriage partners maintaining a Jeffersonian ideal of democracy. She failed to ask historical questions about women's status, rights, and freedoms in Vermont's past, even though during her long career she supported equal opportunities for women and many of her novels address gender role tensions.[10]

To a considerable extent Fisher's perspective also resulted from women's invisibility in history. For example, she explained that when President Lincoln said "government by the people," he certainly did not "dream of including half of 'the people'—women. Almost nobody in his time would have done so." Yet a number of women and men had dreamed of including women in "the people" long before Lincoln's presidency.[11] For example, Vermont's Clarina Howard Nichols appeared before the state legislature in 1852 to support a petition allowing women to vote in school meetings. Apparently, Fisher was unaware of Nichols's activism. Yet she easily could have integrated her story into *Vermont Tradition* because Nichols relied as much on American ideals of equality and freedom as Fisher to develop her theory of women's rights. Moreover, Nichols championed the same values of home and motherhood that Fisher wrote about extensively throughout her life.[12]

The absence of real women as actors in Fisher's work provides a good example of why we need to ask questions that will offer Vermont women a more usable past. How did Vermont institutions and culture create opportunities or barriers for women's self-development? How did women, in turn, forge identities in this place? Did women help create and benefit from Vermonters' spirit of independence and self-reliance?

In 1977 Faith Pepe first attempted to address some of these questions. She urged researchers to look beyond biography and examine women's institutions and social trends affecting women.[13] At that time, collecting women's stories and identifying women's archival sources had just begun. The emphasis on social history in the 1970s and American diversity in the 1980s spurred local and state historians all over the country to recover details of the daily lives of ordinary Americans from every ethnic group. We learned about Daisy Turner, the oldest black woman in the state, and about the young Vermont women who migrated to Lowell to work in the textile mills.[14] At the same time, Deborah Clifford wrote about Vermont women's long struggle for suffrage and their temperance activism in the late nineteenth century.[15] In 1988 Constance McGovern echoed Pepe's appeal and challenged Vermont historians and writers to examine patterns of marriage and divorce, treatment of women in prisons and asylums, the experience of ethnic women, and the status of poor and working-class women. McGovern called for more interpretive accounts that show "how events and trends in Vermont history affected women and defined womanhood."[16]

Today, despite considerable new research, that challenge remains largely unfulfilled. Scholars of social and women's history have used Vermont evidence and data to explore questions at the regional or national level, while historians using the state as a unit of analysis have rarely asked questions about women's status. Local historians have brought women's experience in family and community life into our collective memory, but this material remains largely unconnected to economic and political trends in the state. Consequently, in histories of Vermont, women are visible, but they remain largely in the sidebars. Consider *Vermont Voices,* the new documentary history of Vermont, which encompasses 166 documents; the editors included some exemplary entries by women, but only 13, representing 8 percent.[17] In Jan Albers's *Hands on the Land,* which has been hailed as a new synthesis, women appear in photos and boxes alongside the narrative. They work on farms; they bake crackers and cookies; they exchange some goods; they partake of leisure activities; and by the early twentieth century they are getting a little uppity both with their menfolk and the tourists. Dorothy Canfield Fisher is the only woman who is given serious atten-

tion in the text as a promoter of Vermont tradition.[18] For the most part, women are not actors in the story; their labor to build communities and a Vermont identity is not connected to the main narrative. Clearly, the authors of both of these books tried to bring women out of the shadows of the past. But they have found neither enough material nor a compelling analytical model that would incorporate women in the story of the state.

In the 1990s historians of women sought to resolve this problem in history writing by focusing on gender rather than women as a separate group. They examined the ways that men's and women's attitudes about gender, intertwined with race and class perspectives, shape our social, economic, and political institutions.[19] In state history writing, attention to gender can help produce a more synthetic history as long as women's experience from their own perspective remains paramount. Historians need to continue to highlight those individual female actors from the past—many from different class and ethnic backgrounds—who help Vermonters define a sense of place while also examining the way ideas about gender influenced the development of Vermont society and culture.

With this approach in mind, I have chosen a few examples from the research of the 1990s to raise some new questions and to suggest ways to move women out of the sidebars of Vermont history and into the text. These examples highlight themes connecting women to a chronology of the state's history: their role in the economy, their status in Vermont law, and their influence in religious and political life.

Recent Research on Women in Vermont

In 1749, Peter Kalm, a Swedish traveler near St. Jean, Quebec, described three Abenaki women in a canoe holding guns poised for duck hunting. They donned "funnel shaped caps, trimmed . . . with white glass beads" and "French women's waists and jackets."[20] This intriguing image raises a number of questions about Abenaki women in the eighteenth century: Did the acquisition of guns modify traditional gender roles in food gathering and hunting? To what extent did women participate in and benefit from extensive trade networks with Europeans? How did Abenaki women cope with endless war, disease, and family loss?

Colin Calloway, Frederick Wiseman, and others have enlightened us about the Abenaki world, but the voices of Western Abenaki women from this period are hard to find.[21] How did their experience of migration, trade relations, interracial marriage, diplomacy, war, and Jesuit missionizing differ from that of Abenaki men? Some clues can be found in regional histories. Bunny McBride has detailed the lives of

Eastern Abenaki women, including Molly Ockett, who lived near Bethel, Maine, much of her life, participated in Catholic rituals, and periodically appeared in northern Vermont to doctor the sick and wounded.[22] John Demos's *Unredeemed Captive*—about the capture of Eunice Williams from Deerfield in 1704 and her father's attempt to retrieve her—provides a good description of the war-torn landscape between Quebec and the Connecticut River Valley. Here Abenaki, Iroquois, and white women struggled to adapt to an interracial borderland.[23] These women moved between, around, and sometimes outside of French Catholic missions, intertribal settlements, and English Protestant communities. Their struggle for survival reminds us that Vermont did not emerge out of a wilderness but out of a clash of empires and cultures, and that women's fortunes rose and fell somewhat differently from men's during that lengthy conflict.

One female voice from the eighteenth century that has become clearer is that of Lucy Terry Prince. Dubbing her a "Singer of History," David Proper identified Prince as the earliest black poet in America for her bloody ballad, "The Bars Fight." In detailing the last Abenaki raid on Deerfield, Massachusetts, in 1746, Prince depicts a scene of slaughter; she names five men as victims of Indian violence and then describes the experience from a woman's perspective:

> Eunice Allen see the Indians comeing
> And hoped to save herself by running;
> And had not her petticoats stopt her,
> The awful creatures had not cotched her,
> Nor tommyhawked her on the head,
> And left her on the ground for dead.

Petticoats made women vulnerable, but Eunice Allen "hoped to save herself."[24] Prince's oration provides a glimpse of women's experience of wartime violence, reveals a little about her own attitude toward life, and raises additional questions about how the insecurities of the frontier influenced women's actions and their status.

Lucy Terry Prince's subsequent migration to Vermont with her husband Abijah and her way with words before Governor Chittenden and his Council in 1785 have long been part of the mythology of early Vermont.[25] Proper has verified some and demystified much of the Prince story. But why did "Abijah's Lucy," as she was sometimes called, speak before the governor and council about a property dispute in Guilford in the late eighteenth century? Under the common law of coverture, a married woman held limited legal standing; she could not sell property, make contracts, sue, or make a will, and was barred from legal proceedings unless accompanied by her husband. Married women were

allowed to petition authorities and to present grievances, but usually they only did so when their husbands were dead or absent. Where was Abijah when Lucy presented their case? Was she simply more outspoken and articulate than her husband? Or were Vermont's political culture and infant legal system so fluid that women had more space to negotiate than they had later? What difference did Prince's race make? In the period of the Republic, which was crucial to establishing Vermont as both a region of disorderly outcasts and rogues and of quintessential democracy, how did women fare? Was it simply a place where they were at the mercy of male protectors, or did they benefit from the land-grab era in other ways? Did they prosper or were they harmed by frontier instability, common-law marriages, frequent marital and family separation, and a dearth of religious and educational institutions?

For Mary Goss of Montpelier, the disorder was clearly a problem. In a letter of 1821, she bemoaned that, "Vice and immorality greatly prevail" in the capital. Yet, she noted hopefully, "Praying circles have recently been instituted and a system of visiting from house to house established." Praying circles were only one mode of female evangelizing. Congregational women like Mary Goss, who represented a relatively educated, elite class in Vermont's commercial villages, not only formed Bible societies, Sunday schools, and missionary societies, but also comprised a significant majority of new Congregational members in the first round of religious revivals in the 1810s and 1820s.[26] While men built the meetinghouses that grace Vermont's landscape, women filled them. During this early period of church organizing, when the competition among churches was fierce, women's religious work played a significant role in Vermont's history. We know that a few, such as Baptist Clarissa Danforth of Weathersfield and Methodist Margaret Peckett of Bradford, took leadership roles, but how did women's evangelical efforts influence the development of Vermont communities and the structure of the state's churches? Incorporating their efforts into histories of the revival period will provide a fuller picture of Vermont's evangelical culture and what Tom Bassett called the "open race" between denominations.[27]

Unlike their religious activism, women's labor in Vermont between 1790 and 1840 has been more clearly documented. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich and Thomas Dublin have shown the importance of women's cloth production and putting-out work in northern New England even as mechanization of the textile industry developed.[28] How did women's shifting economic roles in this era contribute to the increasing specialization and regional dependence of the Vermont economy? Would the sheep craze have emerged without the labor of women who spun and

wove wool at home in between the carding and fulling process? Even Brattleboro's Mary Palmer Tyler, who participated in a flourishing literary culture by writing *The Maternal Physician* in 1811, remained productive. In the 1830s she planted 450 white mulberry trees, hatched silk worms, and spun, twisted, and dyed her own silk floss for market.[29]

Much of the new research delineating rural women's lives shows how their productive work influenced their attitudes about class and appropriate gender roles. Catherine Kelly has shown how women of the provincial middle class such as Tyler, whose childcare manual promoted the elevation of women's maternal roles, still clung to the values associated with the household economy through garment sewing and knitting.[30] For historian Karen Hansen, women's habitual work formed the basis of a cohesive social world in New England; men's and women's tasks and social activities were integrated and sometimes interchangeable rather than set apart in separate spheres as delineated in the urban middle-class home.[31]

Equally important was the effect of women's work on marriage relations. In an advertisement of 1804, an estranged husband complained about his wife Sukey and her refusal to uphold her female obligations:

> For she will neither spin nor weave,
> But there she'll sit and take her ease;
> There she'll sit, and pout, and grin,
> As if the Devil had entered in;
> For she would neither knit nor sew,
> But all in rags I had to go:
> So, farewell Sukey! and farewell, wife!
> Till you can live a better life.[32]

Indeed, this husband felt cheated of his wife's production. Historians Mary Beth Sievens, who examined marital conflicts, and Randolph Roth, who researched domestic violence, have shown that early Republic households were not necessarily harmonious. Vermont couples did have greater access to divorce than some other Americans; by 1803 Vermont statutes included adultery, fraudulent contract, desertion, intolerable severity, and impotence as legitimate causes for divorce. Women's household production became an important resource in their efforts to negotiate around their inferior legal status under coverture. Roth concludes that the economic interdependence of husbands and wives, coupled with high literacy rates and relatively easy access to divorce in Vermont and New Hampshire, helped prevent domestic murders.[33] Women's continuing household production during the antebellum era clearly helped shape their experience and a distinct rural ideology, while aspects of Vermont's legal code may have softened the effects of patriarchy.

American women were excluded from formal politics during this period, but they were deeply involved in social reform, especially antislavery and temperance. New research on Rachel Robinson of Ferrisburgh and her efforts at Rokeby to boycott slave products and harbor fugitives highlights the absence of studies about other women in Vermont's antislavery movement.[34] We know that women were members of the Vermont Anti-Slavery Society, but what happened to them when the Liberty Party formed?[35] How actively did they participate in national petition campaigns against Indian removal and slavery? In the mid-1830s women's antislavery and temperance petitions began appearing at the Vermont legislature. In 1852, 20,500 Vermont women and youths signed petitions in support of statewide prohibition, compared with only 17,500 male voters.[36] Women's political activism and their relationship to political parties is clearly one area that needs additional study.

In the mid to late nineteenth century, when hill towns declined and industrial and tourist havens bustled, women's role in the economy became less visible. Instead, new research documents young women leaving the state while others sustained families and communities. In *Roxana's Children,* Lynn Bonfield and Mary Morrison show how women underpinned the social fabric of hill towns such as Peacham while facing family separation as their children emigrated. Linda Peavy and Ursula Smith treat the same topic in a larger context in *Women in Waiting in the Westward Movement.*[37] If Vermont communities experienced a so-called "winter," it was warmed by women who populated churches, schoolhouses, and voluntary societies.[38] With the help of Abby Hemenway, residents of Vermont hill towns could claim a proud identity. As she single-handedly documented the early history of these communities, Hemenway appealed to Vermonters' sense of place and pride as effectively as did Dorothy Canfield Fisher. Deborah Clifford's new biography of Hemenway shows the struggle a single, educated woman faced as she sought not only to gather local historical writings but also to make a living in Vermont.[39]

Many single women migrated back and forth between Vermont farms and the state's commercial and industrial centers in the late nineteenth century, but we know little about their work lives. They faced a sex-segregated labor market in which women gained access only to low-level, unskilled employment. Did Vermont's economy during this era offer young women fewer opportunities than elsewhere, thereby limiting their choices and propelling them to emigrate at higher rates than young men; or did their obligations to farming and laboring families outweigh these considerations? Some women labored in small shops and textile factories; others operated boarding houses and served tourists who flocked to hotels, spas, and mineral springs. With the

"Girls, W. A. Cole Paper Company [Putney], Oct. 30 [18]99." Courtesy of the Putney Historical Society.

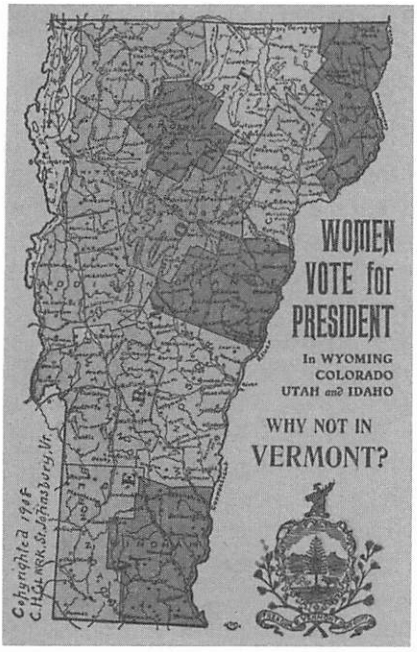
exception of Irish women in Northfield and Brattleboro, there has been little research on immigrant women in Vermont communities.[40] We need to know much more about French Canadian, Italian, Swedish, Eastern European, and other foreign-born women and whether their experience in Vermont—in both urban and rural areas—differed significantly from that of other places.

During the period 1890 to 1930, Vermont policymakers were intent upon selling the state to outsiders and developing regulations to bolster declining hill farms, families, and towns; this effort contributed to the myth about the state as a preindustrial oasis of self-supporting communities.[41] Two important studies, Dona Brown's *Inventing New England* and Nancy Gallagher's *Breeding Better Vermonters,* provide clues about women's participation in this process. Brown shows not only how feminine values infused the state's policy of promoting farm vacations but also how the work of farm women and their encounters with tourists helped recreate a mythic rural life.[42] Abenaki women also partook in

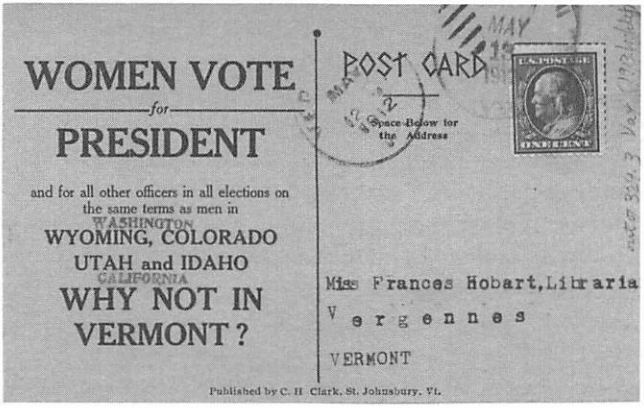
the selling of Vermont. According to Fred Wiseman, they took over basketmaking to service the budding tourist market; the "Indian basket" became a symbol of the exotic Indian and a way to sustain Abenaki families and reformulate their identity.[43] Nancy Gallagher's sobering investigation of the state's attempt at regulating reproduction should dispel any idealistic notions of sisterhood in Vermont. White women social workers helped implement a state policy that institutionalized and sterilized poor and disabled women, many of Abenaki ancestry, in an effort to protect a particular version of the ideal Vermont family.[44] The quest for ideal family relations drove the state's incipient regulation of male sexuality, according to Hal Goldman, and a similar impulse appeared in my research on public health nurses. In her zeal to protect children and ensure the healthiness of Vermont homes, nurse Anna Davis of the Brattleboro Mutual Aid Society scoured the state in the 1910s for diphtheria, impetigo, tooth aches, and mental "defects" as she called them, not hesitating to impose her own concepts of cleanliness and behavior on her patients.[45] These studies provide material for an analysis of state policy that takes gender and race into account and shows how both women and men created Vermont's version of the progressive state.

The most significant scholarship on Vermont women in the post-World War II era focuses on their representation in political life. In her study of rural women in local government, Ann Hallowell found higher rates of participation in Vermont than for women in more urbanized states. Yet, according to Karen Madden's research on women in the Republican Party, involvement in party politics did not contribute to women's political advancement. Gregory Sanford's research on the lengthy debate over women's jury service in the state supports Madden's conclusion that barriers to women's political participation continued to result in unequal citizenship through much of the twentieth century. These studies and Madeleine Kunin's intriguing memoir, *Living a Political Life,* raise important questions about women's participation in partisan and local politics in a rural state.[46] Kunin has given us new insights into women's experience in Vermont politics in the late twentieth century. Her opening line, "Don't cry, I told myself fiercely, stay in control," speaks volumes about the struggle public women faced as they entered a world in which men had set the rules of engagement.[47] How did Kunin's experience reflect the political context in Vermont? Why was Vermont's first female governor a Democrat?

Beyond women's place in political life, there are other areas of recent history ripe for investigation. How did increasing numbers of women in the wage force influence the growth and characteristics of the Vermont economy?[48] How did women feature in the back-to-



This postcard was probably commissioned by the Vermont Equal Suffrage Association, organized in 1907. It is copyrighted 1908, when only the four states noted on the front side allowed women to vote for president. By the time it was mailed, in 1912, Washington and California had passed woman suffrage laws, and those states were added to the message on the reverse side.



the-land movement, the environmental movement, and the debates over abortion, the state Equal Rights Amendment, and civil unions?

Conclusion

Despite these and other major gaps in knowledge about women in Vermont, some tentative hypotheses emerge from this review of recent

research. Evidence exists to support Dorothy Canfield Fisher's impression that Vermont women played an important role in the economy. This may not always have fostered their own freedom and independence, but it did influence gender ideologies and the way women experienced rural life. Visible and essential in the early nineteenth century, women's labor became invisible but no less essential on family farms and in ethnic communities by the end of the century. Like Fisher, many women were integral to the selling of Vermont, not only supplying the labor to serve tourists and vacationers but also creating that idea of home and community life that Vermonters sold to out-of-staters. To what extent did both the reality of women's work on farms and the myth about the virtues of rural life inhibit the development of women's identities as individual workers capable of claiming full citizenship rights? Vermont's early legal system allowed women relatively easier access to divorce than most other states, but the state lagged behind others in granting women full citizenship—property rights, suffrage, and jury service.[49] Between 1920 and the 1960s, the effect of Vermont's one-town, one-vote, one-party system may have opened political pathways for some women, but not political power.

In the 1990s many historians concluded that women's history not only varied by race and class but also followed a jagged pattern; it fell back nearly as often as it leaped forward, and it involved conflicts among women as well as between women and men.[50] Given the diversity of women's material and familial circumstances, Vermont scholars need to continue to ask how conditions in the state shaped opportunities for different groups of women and their access to social or political power. To that end, gathering the record of women's varied experience in the state and developing an analysis of the state's history that takes gender into account will help bring women out of the sidebars of Vermont histories and fully into view as actors in the state's past.

Notes

[1] D. Gregory Sanford, "From Ballot Box to Jury Box: Women and the Rights and Obligations of Citizenship," paper read at the Vermont Judicial History Society meeting, 2 June 2000, 10–17; quote on 13.

[2] For Fisher's significance in Vermont culture, see William C. Lipke, "From Pastoralism to Progressivism: Myth and Reality in Twentieth-Century Vermont," in *Celebrating Vermont: Myths and Realities,* ed. Nancy Price Graff (Middlebury, Vt.: Christian A. Johnson Memorial Gallery, Middlebury College, 1991), 76.

[3] Mark J. Madigan, ed., *Keeping Fires Night and Day: Selected Letters of Dorothy Canfield Fisher* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1993), 1–6.

[4] Dorothy Canfield Fisher, *Vermont Tradition: The Biography of an Outlook on Life* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1953), 49.

[5] Lipke, "Pastoralism to Progressivism," 74. For Vermont's tourist industry, see Dona Brown, *Inventing New England: Regional Tourism in the Nineteenth Century* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 142–167.

[6] Fisher, *Vermont Tradition*, 43.
[7] *Ibid.*, 45.
[8] *Ibid.*, 46.
[9] *Ibid.*, 42–43.
[10] Madigan, *Keeping Fires*, 19–22.
[11] Fisher, *Vermont Tradition*, 433.
[12] For a brief overview of Nichols's career, see T.D. Seymour Bassett, "Nichols, Clarina Irene Howard," *Notable American Women, 1607–1950: A Biographical Dictionary*, eds. Edward T. James, Janet Wilson James, and Paul S. Boyer (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 2: 625–627.
[13] Faith L. Pepe, "Toward a History of Women in Vermont: An Essay," *Vermont History* 45 (Spring 1977): 69–81.
[14] Jane C. Beck and Wes Graff, *On My Own: the Traditions of Daisy Turner*, directed by Jane C. Beck and Wes Graff, 28 min., Filmakers' Library, 1987, videocassette; Thomas Dublin, *Women at Work: The Transformation of Work and Community in Lowell, Massachusetts, 1826–1860* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979); *Farm to Factory: Women's Letters, 1830–1860* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981).
[15] Deborah P. Clifford, "The Drive for Women's Municipal Suffrage in Vermont, 1883–1917," *Vermont History* 47 (Summer 1979): 173–190; "The Women's War Against Rum," *Vermont History* 52 (Summer 1984): 141–160.
[16] Constance M. McGovern, "Women's History: The State of the Art," *Vermont History* 56 (Spring 1988): 78.
[17] J. Kevin Graffagnino, Samuel B. Hand, and Gene Sessions, eds., *Vermont Voices, 1609 through the 1990s: A Documentary History of the Green Mountain State* (Montpelier: Vermont Historical Society, 1999).
[18] Jan Albers, *Hands on the Land: A History of the Vermont Landscape* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press for the Orton Family Foundation, 2000), 100, 141, 172, 223, 249, 256, 259, 261, 271–272, 292.
[19] For the classic statement of this approach, see Joan W. Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988). For the inclusion of race, see Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, "African-American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race," *Signs* 17 (1992): 251–274.
[20] Adolph B. Benson, ed., *Peter Kalm's Travels in North America*, 2 vols. (1770; repr. New York: Wilson-Ericson, 1937), 2: 563, quoted in Colin G. Calloway, ed., *Dawnland Encounters: Indians and Europeans in Northern New England* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1991), 56.
[21] See for example, Colin G. Calloway, *The Western Abenakis of Vermont, 1600–1800: War, Migration, and the Survival of an Indian People* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990); Frederick Matthew Wiseman, *The Voice of the Dawn: An Autohistory of the Abenaki Nation* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 2001); William A. Haviland and Marjory W. Power, *The Original Vermonters: Native Inhabitants, Past and Present* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1994).
[22] Bunny McBride and Harold E. L. Prins, "Walking the Medicine Line: Molly Ockett, Pigwacket Doctor," in *Northeastern Indian Lives, 1632–1816*, ed. Robert Grument (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), 321–347; Bunny McBride, *Women of the Dawn* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 45–67.
[23] John Demos, *The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from Early America* (New York: Random House, 1994).
[24] David R. Proper, *Lucy Terry Prince: Singer of History* (Deerfield, Mass.: Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association & Historic Deerfield, 1997), 18–19.
[25] For a fictional version of Prince's story, see Bernard and Jonathan Katz, *Black Woman: A Fictionalized Biography of Lucy Terry Prince* (New York: Pantheon, 1973).
[26] Marilyn S. Blackwell, "Surrogate Ministers: Women, Revivalism, and Maternal Associations in Vermont," *Vermont History* 69 (Winter 2001): 68–72.
[27] T.D. Seymour Bassett, *The Gods of the Hills: Piety and Society in Nineteenth-Century Vermont* (Montpelier: Vermont Historical Society, 2000), 69–96.
[28] Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, "Wheels, Looms, and the Gender Division of Labor in Eighteenth-Century New England," *William and Mary Quarterly* 55 (January 1998): 3–38; Thomas Dublin, "Rural Putting-Out Work in Early Nineteenth-Century New England: Women and the Transition to Capitalism in the Countryside," *New England Quarterly* 64 (December 1991): 531–573.
[29] Marilyn S. Blackwell, "Love and Duty: Mary Palmer Tyler and Republican Childrearing," (M.A. thesis, University of Vermont, 1990), 166–167.
[30] Catherine E. Kelly, "Between Town and Country: New England Women and the Creation of a Provincial Middle Class, 1820–1860," (Ph.D. diss., University of Rochester, 1992): 20–29; *In the*

New England Fashion: Reshaping Women's Lives in the Nineteenth Century (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 47–58. For Tyler's childcare manual, see Marilyn S. Blackwell, "The Republican Vision of Mary Palmer Tyler," *Journal of the Early Republic* 12 (Spring 1992): 11–35.

[31] Karen V. Hansen, *A Very Social Time: Crafting Community in Antebellum New England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

[32] *Weekly Wanderer*, 23 July 1804, quoted in Mary Beth Sievens, "Stray Wives: Marital Conflict and Gender Relations in Vermont, 1790–1830," (Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 1996), 94; and Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *The Age of Homespun: Objects and Stories in the Creation of an American Myth* (New York: Knopf, 2001), 367.

[33] Mary Beth Sievens, "'The Wicked Agency of Others': Community, Law, and Marital Conflict in Vermont, 1790–1830," *Journal of the Early Republic* 21 (Spring 2001): 19–39; Ulrich, *Age of Homespun*, 367–368; Randolph A. Roth, "Spousal Murder in Northern New England, 1776–1865," in *Over the Threshold: Intimate Violence in Early America*, eds. Christine Daniels and Michael V. Kennedy (New York: Routledge, 1999), 65–93.

[34] Ronald Salomon, "Being Good: An Abolitionist Family Attempts to Live Up to Its Own Standards," *Vermont History* 69 (Winter 2001): 32–47; Jane Williamson, "Rowland T. Robinson, Rokeby, and the Underground Railroad in Vermont," *ibid.*, 19–31.

[35] Reinhard O. Johnson, "The Liberty Party in Vermont, 1840–1848: The Forgotten Abolitionists," *Vermont History* 47 (Fall 1979): 259.

[36] *Journal of the House of the State of Vermont, October Session, 1852* (Montpelier, 1852), 356–358. For Vermont petitions in the anti-Indian removal and antislavery campaigns, see Mary Hershberger, "Mobilizing Women, Anticipating Abolition: The Struggle against Indian Removal in the 1830s," *Journal of American History* 86 (June 1999): 24.

[37] Lynn A. Bonfield and Mary C. Morrison, *Roxana's Children: The Biography of a Nineteenth-Century Vermont Family* (Amherst: University Press of Massachusetts, 1995); Linda Peavy and Ursula Smith, *Women in Waiting in the Westward Movement: Life on the Home Frontier* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994).

[38] For the classic statement of Vermont's "winter" period in the late nineteenth century, see Harold Fisher Wilson, *The Hill Country of Northern New England: Its Social and Economic History, 1790–1930* (New York: AMS Press, 1967).

[39] Deborah Pickman Clifford, *The Passion of Abby Hemenway: Memory, Spirit, and the Making of History* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 2001), 211–229.

[40] For Irish women, see Marilyn Schultz Blackwell, "Entitled to Relief: Poor Women, Charity, and Medicine, 1900–1920," (Ph.D. diss., University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1996), 48–65; Gene Sessions, "'Years of Struggle': The Irish in the Village of Northfield, 1845–1900," *Vermont History* 55 (Spring 1987): 73–74.

[41] Andrea Rebek, "The Selling of Vermont: From Agriculture to Tourism, 1860–1910," *Vermont History* 44 (Winter 1976): 14–27.

[42] Brown, *Inventing New England*, 135–167.

[43] Wiseman, *Voice of the Dawn*, 132–138.

[44] Nancy L. Gallagher, *Breeding Better Vermonters: The Eugenics Project in the Green Mountain State* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1999), 71–126.

[45] Harold A. Goldman, "'He Had No Right,': Sex, Law, and the Courts in Vermont, 1777–1920," (Ph.D. diss., University of Massachusetts Amherst, 2000); Marilyn S. Blackwell, "The Politics of Public Health: Medical Inspection and School Nursing in Vermont, 1910–1923," *Vermont History* 68 (Winter/Spring 2000): 58–84.

[46] Ann Hallowell, "Women on the Threshold: An Analysis of Rural Women in Local Politics, 1921–1941," *Rural Sociology* 52 (1987): 510–512; Sanford, "From Ballot Box to Jury Box," 17; Karen Madden, "Ready to Work: Women in Vermont and Michigan from Suffrage to Republican Party Politics," (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2002); Madeleine Kunin, *Living a Political Life* (New York: Knopf, 1994). For another look at women in political life, see Frank Bryan, "How Does 'Real Democracy' Treat Women? New Data and Perspectives from Vermont's Town Meeting," Research-in-Progress Seminar #135, Center for Research on Vermont, 11 March 1999.

[47] Kunin, *Living a Political Life*, 3.

[48] Several oral history collections provide a record of women's work experience. See for example, D'Ann Calhoun Fago, *A Diversity of Gifts: Vermont Women at Work* (Woodstock, Vt.: Countryman Press, 1989); Karen Lane, Mary Kasamatsu, and Eleanor Ott, eds., *My Mama Rolled Out of the Sleigh: A Sampler of Individual and Family Memories Recorded at the Vermont Women's State Fair* (Montpelier, Vt.: Governor's Commission on Women, 1988); *Voices of Vermont Nurses: Nursing in Vermont, 1941–1996* (S. Burlington, Vt.: Vermont State Nurses Association, 2000).

[49] Under Vermont law, married women gradually achieved the right to control their real and personal property and their own earnings between 1847 and 1919, when they finally gained full control over their real estate. See Vermont, *Acts and Resolves Passed by the Legislature of the State of*

Vermont at their October Session 1847 (Burlington, 1847), 26; 1867, 29; 1884, 120; 1888, 98; 1919, 98. Vermont passed municipal suffrage for women in 1917, the same year New York and Rhode Island granted women full voting rights following numerous western states. Vermont women did not gain full suffrage until passage of the federal amendment in 1919. See Clifford, "Drive for Women's Municipal Suffrage," 188–189. For jury service, see Sanford, "From Ballot Box to Jury Box," 7.

[50] For an overview, see Nancy A. Hewitt, "Beyond the Search for Sisterhood: American Women's History in the 1990s," in *Unequal Sisters: A Multicultural Reader in U.S. Women's History*, 3 ed., eds. Vicki L. Ruiz and Ellen Carol DuBois (New York: Routledge, 2000), 1–19.

"Nos ancêtres les Gaulois": Ethnicity and History in Vermont

"Our ancestors the Canadians" raises the array of issues, the universals and the particulars, that are germane to the definition and the importance of ethnicity in Vermont history. Who is ethnic in the Green Mountain State?

By JOSEPH-ANDRÉ SENÉCAL

The modern world lends us complex identities. The many groups to which we belong have their own gravitational pull and they can become significant forces affecting our orbit. Some of us are pulled more by our sexual orientation than our gender or more by our social status than our instinct to behave in a certain way. To varying extents, we all have to come to terms with these many forces that set the course of our lives. All these Weberian categories reflect our complexity as human beings, as women and men existing at some point in time and space. If, as historians, we want to chart our collective course, we can focus on an unlimited number of positions to define our collective selves. One of these coordinates is called "Vermont and Ethnicity." To what extent is ethnicity critical to an understanding of Vermont's past and, it follows, Vermont's present and future?

The proposition "Our ancestors the Canadians" is as good a place as any to start a discussion of Vermont's ethnic history or the lack of it.

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Canadians, French and English speaking, make up the largest ethnic group in our state.[1] "Our ancestors the Canadians" raises the array of issues, the universals and the particulars, that are germane to the definition and the importance of ethnicity in Vermont history. Who is ethnic in the Green Mountain State? Is Vermont history fundamentally different from the main American narrative whose title could be "A Nation of Immigrants"? Is Vermont a state of immigrants? If the Green Mountains are replete with Canadian Catholics, Italian Socialists, and Russian Jews, why are we fascinated with "Real Vermonters": the Protestant "Last Yankees" who milk their historical constructs for *Vermont Life?*

I once had a student who defined "member of an ethnic group" as "a person who moved from somewhere else." This is an excellent, if incomplete definition of who we are. We are all Vermonters and none of us are real, first, or native, not in a way that should matter. Our understanding of Vermont's past should not overstate claims to the status of being first, or dwell upon the persistence or preponderance of any single group among us. What does "First" or "Real" Vermonters mean? There is something fundamentally evil in proclaiming to be the first when territorial occupation is the subject of history. Such pretensions, especially those accompanied by claims to divine election, are at the root of nationalism. There are no First Vermonters; only Abenakis who have left their mark upon the land for thousands of years. There are no First Vermonters; only European immigrants who planted themselves in Western Connecticut, Western Massachusetts, and elsewhere just long enough to become Americans before transplanting their roots into Vermont soil. The majority of these early Vermonters stayed in the Green Mountains no more than two or three generations before scattering to a West that unfolded to the Pacific.[2] Others—Canadians, Irish, Italians, Swedes, Poles, Lebanese, etc.—came, early and late, in large and small numbers.[3] For the most part, they did not identify their role in daily life with power and ascendancy; they failed to become bankers, railroad magnates, lumber barons, admirals of White Fleets, governors of the state; or if they did, they had no compulsion to define their roots or proclaim the special status of their ancestries. In short, insofar as ethnic identity is concerned, unless they could claim a Yankee lineage and in that way pass for white, Vermonters who made history remained as shrouded, ethnically speaking that is, as women. Most Vermonters, Yankee white or not, made the history of which I speak: the history of textile workers, mostly women and children, and lumberjacks, mostly men, of farm hands and quarry workers. It is the history of Canadians—of French Canadians who worked in the tanneries of Pownal, of

Scottish Canadians who made their way to Barre, of Irish Canadians who toiled in the railroad repair shops of St. Albans, of English Canadians (my litany follows the order of numerical importance),[4] and of course, of direct immigrants from Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Italy, Poland, etc. Is this history, the history of ethnic Vermont, important enough to merit a major part of our attention?

The answer is yes, emphatically. If we are all ethnic, then ethnicity lies at the heart of a definition of Vermont. But today, much if not most of our history focuses, often with insistence, on one of the state's ethnic groups: the Yankee. Vermont's construct of ethnicity is synonymous with whiteness, a most peculiar brand of whiteness at that. Vermont's definition of ethnicity, the source of much racial, gender, and ethnic prejudice, inequality, and intolerance, is closely associated with the narrative that we have built around the Yankee, the Native Vermonter that Frank Bryan has tried to transform into a witty, taciturn, likeable "Real Vermonter" who does not milk goats.[5] The nature of this prejudice is, in a way, our claim to fame: Vermont's original contribution to the American experience. We have made much of the environment, the small demographic scale and the racial and ethnic "natural selection" that has saved us from the violence of the Watts's of this country, the urban blight of the Lowells or Manchesters of New England, the sterile sprawl of the Levittowns of postwar America. George S. Weaver, in his piece, "Vermont's Minority," a paper read before the 1888 meeting of the Providence (Rhode Island) Association of the Sons of Vermont, captured the essentials of this long-lived ideology that has turned Vermont into the cultural product we market so successfully today. Evoking the settler days, the time of Vermont's "minority," Weaver transforms the Green Mountains into the setting for a eugenic Arcadia:

> There were no sleepy hollow neighbourhoods in our brainy young State. The whole of it was alive with the spirit of the times. Under these circumstances it could scarcely be otherwise than that a community of intelligent and conscientious people should be produced, as well as one of energy and independence of character. But there is another thing to go into the estimate of character which resulted from the early life of our State, that is, *the stock of which the people were composed.* [The italics are found in the original text]. It was settled chiefly by people from New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut. These States had been settled by people from different parts of England; mostly from the middle ranks of society. They had been improved and vitalized by a generation of American life. Those who went to Vermont were mostly children of those who had come from England, and were protestants of protestants—as good a stock as that time produced. They were not cousins who had intermarried for generations and grown weak by their nearness of

> relationship, but had come from sound European stocks settled in Vermont to mingle strains of health, vigor and spirit. Then there were the freshness of a new soil, the vitality of a mountain climate, air and water, and the vigor that comes from new enterprises. All these things entered into the ancestry that founded our State.[6]

The following passage from Cora Cheney's storybook tales admirably sums up how Vermont authors have amplified Weaver's themes:

> "Grandpa, what's a Vermonter?" asked a Yankee boy a hundred years or more ago.
>
> Grandpa thought a minute. "Why, son, it's a person who chooses to live here and take part in the community," he said. "There's been a lot of talk about 'Vermonters' running the 'foreigners' out, but as I see it, all people were foreigners here once, even the Indians."
>
> "I just wondered," said the boy. "Some fellows at school talk about it. I'll tell them what you said."
>
> "Something about the Green Mountains makes the people who live here get to be a certain way," said the old man thoughtfully. "The people who move here don't change Vermont, but instead they change to Vermonters."
>
> The boy took this thought back to school and became friends with the new Irish and French-Canadian children at recess. When he grew up, the boy married one of his French-Canadian neighbors and together they raised a family of Green Mountain boys and girls.[7]

What degree of historical truth and reality can we lend these images of our past? Let us ask major voices. The first testimony comes from the pen of Rowland E. Robinson. The text, taken from *Vermont: A Study of Independence* (1892), reflects the sentiment of some of Weaver's contemporaries as they had to grapple with new realities, changes that included the arrival of new "stocks." Robinson, the son of a family who shepherded blacks to Canadian freedom, cast a different eye on what the aboveground railroad was ferrying from the North. The Sage of Rokeby refers to newcomers who fill the place left by the Yankee emigration to the West as "foreign elements," "swarms," "gangs."[8] The verbs "maraud" and "pilfer" seem to find their way naturally into his dramatic prose. Words such as "infestation" and "inundation" prepare the reader for the following outburst of self-righteous contempt: "They [French-Canadian migrant workers] were an abominable crew of vagabonds, robust, lazy men and boys, slatternly women with litters of filthy brats, and all as detestable as they were uninteresting."[9]

Robinson takes stock of what Vermont is becoming in its "majority": "The character of these people is not such as to inspire the highest hope for the future of Vermont, if they should become the most numerous of its population. The affiliation with Anglo-Americans of a race so different in traits, in traditions, and in religion must necessarily be slow,

and may never be complete. Vermont, as may be seen, has given of her best for the building of new commonwealths, to her own loss of such material as had made her all that her sons, wherever found, are so proud of,—material whose place no alien drift from northward or overseas can ever fill."[10]

Robinson's lament elucidates the subtext of Weaver's praise of "vigor" and "sound European stock" and it calibrates the dark intimations contained in such phrases as "They were not cousins who had intermarried for generations."

To begin to understand the origin of such prejudice, we can turn to deeply buried evidence, the writings of a non-Vermonter perhaps, but an immigrant from England who gained renown in New England as the author of widely-used geography textbooks. Robinson and Weaver, the entire *nomenklatura* of intrabellum New England (from the Civil War to the Spanish-American War and beyond) learned by rote the following passage from William Swinton's *Elementary Course in Geography Designed for Primary and Intermediate Grades:*

> They [The French Canadians] are a gay, polite, simple-hearted folk, generally quite ignorant, and caring little for all the great new things that are setting the world astir. Of course you must understand this as a description of the peasants. The educated people are quite different. And you must not think that all Canadians belong to the French race; for though these form the largest part, yet there are many thousands of English, Scotch, and Irish Canadians. These are highly intelligent, progressive people, and have built railroads and telegraphs, and established excellent schools, and are making Canada a very prosperous country.[11]

With hindsight, we can appreciate that Rowland Robinson was unduly alarmed. Vermont has domesticated the French Canadians and the Irish Catholics. Climate, geography, small-scale industries, and poverty have conspired to deny us our allotment of Blacks, Chinese, Eastern, or Southern Europeans. We are as white as a virgin page, as buffered as snow. We live in Senator Dillingham's dream: Vermont has stayed that mythic kingdom that Currier and Ives can come home to. Much of this pious, infectious construct is dangerous and insidious. It blinds us to the nature of Vermont's ethnic past and our role, our peculiar role in the history of American inequality and prejudice.

Vermont's uneasiness with its ethnic past, its failure to valorize the accomplishments of French Canadians or Irish Catholics as such, its insistence on rescuing atypical blacks and other members of minorities, all these symptoms invite us to assess our fascination with what Weaver calls Vermont's "minority," and to explore the full meaning of our whiteness. There is much in the concept of whiteness as defined by contribu-

tors to *The Making and Unmaking of Whiteness*[12] that applies to Vermont, its ideology and its historiography; much in this second wave of whiteness studies to illuminate how Vermont "morphs" its ethnic past. Allan Bérubé's essay "How Gay Stays White and What Kind of White It Stays"[13] could easily be transposed to define what historians of Vermont's women or blacks are rescuing from the past and why. If there were French-Canadian Vermonters studying the ethnic history of the Franco-Americans in Vermont, we could easily transform Bérubé's title into "How the History of Franco-American Vermont Stays White and What Kind of White It Stays." It should suffice to say *hic et nunc* that the images we have of Franco-American Vermonters are for the most part generated by *Vermont Life,* images that are consistent with Cheney's *Vermont: The State with the Storybook Past,* a work that is in print and still in use in our schools.

How much of Vermont ethnic history has been written? None of it.[14] None if a history needs its epistemology. None if a history needs to devote whole chapters to its largest ethnic actors. We have begun to rescue women, the Abenaki, the mercifully rare but romantic black from the twilight of Vermont history. But what will it take to give life to those who gave Vermont a second life after the Civil War, after the momentous diaspora that emptied the Green Mountain valleys and piedmonts: the Canadians who took over marginal dairy farms? the Irish who made the railroad work? the Springfield and Bennington Jews who processed mountains of shoddy? the Italians, the Poles, the Swedes, the Irish, the French Canadians who emptied the stables of Shelburne Farm, manicured Arlington lawns, waited on tables at Clarendon Springs, and met the indignities and assaults of being a maid in the white compounds of Saint Albans or the Hill District of Burlington? Who has produced this history of Vermont?

Judging by the written word, historians and other intellectuals have not explored these aspects of our past. There is little in the epistemology of Vermont that could be construed as a reflection on the nature and complexity of our ethnic identity. Indeed, there is little but fortuitous, fragmented documentation to inform such a debate. Until such history is written, Vermont's knowledge of its past will remain as disingenuous as the history lesson dispensed by Republican France to its metropolitan population as well as the teeming masses of the French Empire. "Nos ancêtres les Gaulois," the opening words of the state-mandated history textbook, has made the French Republic the easy target of revisionists worldwide.[15] Can a more meaningful icon of colonialism be found than millions of black children preparing to be *Président du Sénégal* or *Cardinal du Mali* or *Dictateur de la Côte d'Ivoire* by

reciting "Our ancestors the Gauls" as their first history lesson? The phrase "Nos ancêtres les Gaulois" is not only a superb illustration of colonialism, it is a rich, telling demonstration of history as a construct. In full denial of their Germanic, Frankish roots, French historians of the Bismarck era closed their eyes to a mountain of evidence, evidence as ready as the name "France" or "Frankfurt" for example, and created a preposterous caricature: Those irreducible Gaulois who defied Jules César. Let us not laugh too loudly or snicker at these "Real Frenchmen." Here in Vermont, the new history has hardly made a dent into "Nos ancêtres les Yankees." How about "Nos ancêtres les Canadiens, les Québécois" to shake things up a bit?

Notes

[1] According to the 1990 Census, over 29 percent of all Vermonters report "French" or "French-Canadian" as one of their ancestries. Statistics on ancestry from the 1990 Census will be found in *Census of Population and Housing, 1990: Summary Tape File 3A*. Major tables will be found in *1990 Census of Population: Social and Economic Characteristics: Vermont* (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of the Census, 1993). This French/French-Canadian ancestry is the largest reported for the state and we can safely assume that much of the reported "French" ancestry refers to a French-Canadian immigration to Vermont. See Joseph-André Senécal, "Franco-Vermonters on the Eve of the Millennium: Tales From the 1990 Census," *Links* (Spring 1997): 8–11, 32.

The next group in importance is made up of Vermonters with an English ancestry (26 percent), followed by people with foremothers and fathers from Ireland (17 percent). Are these Vermonters who claim an ancestry from Great Britain (England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland) direct emigrants from the British archipelago, or could Canada claim many of them on the basis of a long stay (one generation or more), layovers lengthy enough to transform them into English Canadians? We are aware of the vast French-Canadian immigration to the U.S. northeast, but how many of us know that the English-Canadian immigration to the United States was slightly larger than the Québécois and Acadian? The most accurate and intelligent treatment of this phenomenon will be found in Walter Nugent, *Crossings: The Great Transatlantic Migrations, 1870–1914* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 117–148. Unless the multigenerational mobility patterns of the Anglo, Irish, Scotch, Scotch-Irish and Welsh Canadians who came to Vermont are vastly different than the dispersal of French Canadians who immigrated to the Green Mountains, the percentage of contemporary Vermonters who claim a British or an Irish ancestry, but who are also English Canadians, is very high, high enough to make Canadians (French and English Canadians combined) the largest ethnic group in Vermont.

[2] For the classic treatments of this essential chapter of Vermont's history see Stewart Hall Holbrook, *The Yankee Exodus: An Account of Migration from New England* (New York: Macmillan, 1950), and Lewis D. Stilwell, *Migration from Vermont* (Montpelier: Vermont Historical Society, 1948; reprinted Rutland, Vt.: Academy Books, 1983).

[3] Some material is available to sketch a preliminary narrative of ethnicity in Vermont. One can consult Elin L. Anderson, *We Americans: A Study of Cleavage in an American City* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1937; reprinted New York: Russell & Russell, 1967); Betsy Beattie, "Community-Building in Uncertain Times: The French Canadians of Burlington and Colchester, 1850–1860," *Vermont History* 57 (Spring 1989): 84–102, and "Opportunity Across the Border: The Burlington Area Economy and the French Canadian Worker in 1850," *Vermont History* 55 (Summer 1987): 133–152; John Duffy, *Vermont: An Illustrated History* (Northridge, Calif.: Windsor Publications, 1985; second edition, with Vincent Feeney, Sun Valley, Calif.: American Historical Press, 2000); Gene Sessions, "'Years of Struggle': The Irish in the Village of Northfield, 1845–1900," *Vermont History* 55 (Spring 1987): 69–95; Dorothy Mayo Harvey, "The Swedes in Vermont," *Vermont History* 28 (January 1960): 39–58; Paul R. Magocsi, "Immigrants from Eastern Europe: The Carpatho-Rusyn Community of Proctor, Vermont," *Vermont History* 42 (Winter 1974): 48–52; Otto T. Johnson, "History of the Swedish Settlement at Proctor, Vt.," *The Vermonter* 38 (March 1933): 63–65; William Wolkovich-Valkavičius, "The Lithuanians of Arlington," *Vermont History* 54 (Summer 1986): 164–174; James O'Beirne, "Some Early Irish in Vermont," *Vermont History* 28 (January

1960): 63–72; Jules Older, "Jews Among Gentiles," *Rutland Herald, Vermont Sunday Magazine,* 8 October 1989; Myron Samuelson, *The Story of the Jewish Community of Burlington* (Burlington, Vt.: Samuelson, 1976); Bruce P. Shields, "Scots Among the Yankees: The Settlement of Craftsbury East Hill," *Vermont History* 64 (Summer 1996): 174–183; Marjorie Strong and Gregory Sharrow, *They Came to Work: Oral Histories of the Vermont Granite Industry during the 1920s and 1930s* (Middlesex, Vt.: Franglais Cultural Enterprise, 1997); Mari Tomasi, "The Italian Story in Vermont," *Vermont History* 28 (January 1960): 72–87; Ralph Vicero, "French-Canadian Settlement in Vermont prior to the Civil War," *The Professional Geographer* 33 (October 1971): 290–294; Peter Woolfson and J-André Senécal, *The French in Vermont: Some Current Views* (Burlington: Center for Research on Vermont, University of Vermont, 1983).

[4] For statistics on the English-Canadian presence in Vermont see Leon Truesdell, *Canadian Born in the United States: An Analysis of Statistics of the Canadian Element in the Population of the United States, 1850–1930* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1943).

[5] Frank Bryan and Bill Mares, *Real Vermonters Don't Milk Goats* (Shelburne, Vt.: New England Press, 1983).

[6] G.S. [George Sumner] Weaver, *Vermont's Minority: A Paper, Read Before the Providence Association of the Sons of Vermont, December, 1888, and January, 1889* ([Providence, Rhode Island: The Association, 1889]), 12.

[7] Cora Cheney, *Vermont: The State with the Storybook Past* (Brattleboro, Vt.: Stephen Greene Press, 1976), 148. For a later edition: Shelburne, Vt.: New England Press, 1996.

[8] "When the acreage of meadow land and grainfield had broadened beyond ready harvesting by the resident yeomen, swarms of Canadian laborers came flocking over the border in gangs of two or three, baggy-breeched and mocassined habitants, embarked in rude carts drawn by shaggy Canadian ponies." Rowland E. Robinson, *Vermont: A Study of Independence* (Rutland, Vt: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1975), 329.

[9] *Ibid.*, 330.

[10] *Ibid.*, 331–332.

[11] William Swinton, *Elementary Course in Geography Designed for Primary and Intermediate Grades and as a Complete Short Course* (New York: Ivison, Blakeman, Taylor, and Company, 1875), 40.

[12] Birgit Brander Rasmussen, Eric Klinenberg, Irene Nexica, and Matt Wray, eds., *The Making and Unmaking of Whiteness* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2001).

[13] Allan Bérubé, "How Gay Stays White and What Kind of White It Stays," in Rasmussen et al., *The Making and Unmaking of Whiteness,* 234–265.

[14] An exaggeration to be sure. Two titles, Élise Guyette, *Vermont: A Cultural Patchwork* (Peterborough, N.H.: Cobblestone Publishing, 1986), and Gregory Sharrow's *Many Cultures, One People: A Multicultural Handbook about Vermont for Teachers,* Meg Ostrum, photo editor, Susan K. O'Brien, bibliographer (Middlebury: Vermont Folklife Center, 1992), merit the title of pioneer works. In their search for ethnicity, Sharrow and his team have focused primarily on visible characteristics: cultural language, religion, material culture with an emphasis on folklore. The textbook highlights the history of more than fifteen ethnic groups in Vermont. The work is essential reading not only for the documentary base it provides for the study of these groups but because it aims to combat the historical legacies of whiteness in Vermont. The authors consciously treat the Vermont Yankees as one ethnic group and reserve one chapter, commensurate with the length of the other chapters, to deal with the topic. They are also conscious of their Eurocentric bias and go to great lengths to nullify it. For example, the words "settler" and "pioneer" are avoided in the discussion of English Vermonters. Sharrow is well-aware that such words "tend to elevate the Early English above the other ethnic groups." Guyette's *Vermont: A Cultural Patchwork* affords a summary but balanced and enlightened treatment of ethnicity in Vermont. The most important lesson of this textbook may be the ties that Guyette documents between the story of ethnic Vermont and the preponderance of manufacturing in the state. In cultivating our bucolic image we have evacuated from our collective memory the large, essential historical role of manufacturing, mining, and lumbering in Vermont. In the importance of manufacturing between 1830 and 1930, Vermont mirrors the rest of New England. Only the scales vary. At no time could we have found a Manchester (New Hampshire) or Lowell (Massachusetts) in Vermont, but the resources of the Green Mountain State provided ample power and workers to support the important industrial complexes of St. Johnsbury, Bellows Falls, Bennington, and Brattleboro, to name but a few. The traces of the manufacturing vocation of those towns and large villages still linger in the decrepit Lombard factory architecture that one can observe in St. Albans, Winooski, or Rutland. But who remembers the vocation of Barton as the world capital of piano soundboards, the attraction of Jamaica as the site of a chair factory? Who remembers the importance of suspenders for the economic mainstay of Swanton, or wooden bobbins for the workers of Enosburg? Vermont's ethnic history is tied to its industrial past and one narrative will not emerge without the other.

[15] For a general treatment of the "Nos ancêtres les Gaulois" theme, see Charles-Olivier Carbonell, *Histoire et historiens: une mutation idéologique des historiens français, 1865–1895* (Toulouse: Privat, 1976). Also, one could consult Dominique Maingueneau, *Les livres d'école de la République, 1870–1914 : discours et idéologie* (Paris: Le Sycomore, 1979); Paul Marie Duval, *Pourquoi "nos ancêtres les Gaulois?"* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1982); Claude Billard and Pierre Guibbert, *Histoire mythologique des Français* (Paris: Éditions Galinée, 1976); Philippe Joutard, "Une passion française : l'histoire," André Burguière, ed., *Les formes de la culture* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1993), 505–567.

"Bloom Where You Are Planted": Doing Local History in a Big World

To place Vermont history in a national context is to raise the fundamental question: Why do we teach Vermont history? What work do we want it to do for ourselves, our students, and our communities?

By DONA BROWN

Placing Vermont's history in a national context is something teachers do nearly every day. In one sense it is a self-evident and even automatic response: We demonstrate to our students that Vermont's history illustrates national trends, for example, or that Vermonters experienced the same waves of social change endured by those in the rest of the United States. In another sense, though, to place Vermont history in a national context is to raise the fundamental question: Why do we teach Vermont history? What work do we want it to do for ourselves, our students, and our communities?

The practice of local, state, and regional history itself has a long history, and over the years it has carried many burdens for historians and for their communities. Perhaps most important, the practice of local history has always raised two difficult historical questions: the relationship of local history to a sense of place—to regional or local identity; and the question of its social purposes.

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Local history was born with a sense of social purpose. The early historical societies and organizations came to life in the late nineteenth century, at a time of rapid and disruptive change in both rural and urban environments. Local history in those days took the form of town and state histories. It told tales of settlement: of Puritan and Yankee ancestors who bore the culture of Europe into the wilderness; of hardy pioneers eking out an independent living. These early local historians searched diligently for a usable past. At one extreme, they produced xenophobic and defensive works, reacting against the strange names and faces of late-nineteenth-century immigrants, and they often intended to shore up the authority of old settlers against new ones. But more generally, these early history writers hoped to use local history as a kind of community cement. For example, they hoped that a knowledge and appreciation of their heritage would help to keep young men and women from leaving the farm.

Local history was also born with a sense of regional identity. From its earliest days, local history emphasized the unique traits of the community or state. The perception of just what those unique traits were may have changed over time—indeed it did—but the idea that the local place was unique did not change. Vermont's Green Mountain Boys have sometimes appeared as manly individualists, sometimes as Dorothy Canfield's young heads of nuclear households (fundamentally suburban dads), sometimes as New Deal collectivists; but in each case they were seen as unique expressions of a distinctive past.

At some point in the mid-twentieth century, this emphasis on the unique character of a state or town tended to become rather defensive. Local historians came to feel that it was necessary to prove that their state or town or region had contributed something great to the world: "Vermonters fought at Ticonderoga," or "Robert Frost lived here." At the same time, most *writers* of local history in the first half of the twentieth century had to contend with the burden that they, too, along with their subjects, were somehow less serious or worthy than historians with a larger focus.

In the second half of the century, the practice of history underwent a great revisionist transformation. What was then called the "new social history" swept considerations of the local and small scale into the forefront of academic history. Historians gave new emphasis to the lives of ordinary people, and they typically concentrated on small-scale, long-term changes rather than on epoch-making events. For local history, that meant that the obscure and humble regions of the country might gain a new centrality. This generation of historians found itself liberated to work in small towns and rural hinterlands—now perceived as "case studies" of national change—without justifying their work in the

old defensive terms. In Vermont this new attitude wrought a revolution in history writing. Samuel Hand's close studies of local politics, along with his unapologetic emphasis on the local and small scale, heralded the change for a generation of historians. William Gilmore used five upper Connecticut River Valley towns to explore the history of literacy. Hal Barron used the town of Chelsea to write about the transformation of rural life. Randolph Roth used the lower Connecticut River valley towns, and Jeff Potash used Addison County, to explore the massive social and religious upheaval of the early nineteenth century.[1]

For these historians, small-scale settings offered good opportunities for close study of otherwise unwieldy massive transformations: the rise and fall of literacy, of evangelicalism, or of the Republican Party. Breaking with the older tradition of local history, they did not usually grant state boundaries or regional identities any powerful mythic significance. As a group these historians generally worked to de-mystify regional myths and to weaken the association between local history and ancestor worship. Often, indeed, they were outsiders themselves, coming from other places or from ethnic groups who would have been excluded by earlier local historians.

Building on their foundation of close historical inquiry combined with healthy skepticism, our most recent model of local and regional historical inquiry has shifted back once again to a more active consideration of the *idea* of region. Local historians now investigate the "invented traditions" of region and place. They search for the boundaries of the "imagined community" that operates in states and regions. They ask, for example, where our images of Vermont originate, and who manufactured those images. In the work of Paul Searls, for example, the idea of the "Vermonter" is subjected to historical pressure; it changes in response to historical movements that shake the foundations of what we might once have imagined as a timeless community. Ironically, these scholars return full circle to some of the earliest historical works—to a sense of the uniqueness of region and place, to a sense that "Vermontness" is central to the story. But they place their work in a theoretical framework that integrates it into an international theoretical context.

Nancy Gallagher's groundbreaking study of the eugenics movement in Vermont fits that framework well, too.[2] From one standpoint, it analyzes an international debate about the nature of scientific knowledge and politics. But it also adds to the understanding of that debate by exploring the local circumstances, myths, and conflicts that generated a politically powerful and dangerous idea about "Yankee" community. Gallagher's work also returns to the concerns of the first generation of

local historians in another way: It addresses the Vermont community itself with a social and, in fact, a moral message. Her work is grounded in an immediate and powerful experience of class, power, and privilege in contemporary Vermont. Ultimately it is aimed not just at historians of science, but at the consciences of Vermonters today.

The pursuit of local history in Vermont today is at least partly rooted in new local concerns. Today many regional historians hope to use local history to create a "sense of place," perhaps even a bioregional identity, that will encourage a deep sense of responsibility to and for the land and people of Vermont. One local and public historian, Tom Slayton, explores those connections in his commentaries on Vermont Public Radio. There Slayton explores the relationship between community historians and a larger sense of community identity in the pursuit of an essentially moral goal. One of Slayton's commentaries remarked on Deborah Clifford's biography of Abby Maria Hemenway. In one five-minute segment, he offered three layers of interpretation of Vermont's past: Hemenway, the archetypal first-generation local historian, dedicated her life to preserving the memory and record of Vermont's inhabitants; Clifford, a contemporary historian, created a complex portrait of the nineteenth century by close attention to gender; and Slayton himself borrowed Clifford's account of Hemenway's difficult life to point out to a large general audience the perils of over-romanticizing Vermont's past.

Many regional historians today share this commitment to making local history immediately usable once again. In doing so they will confirm Wendell Berry's warning: "If you don't know where you are, you don't know who you are."

Notes

[1] Hal Barron, *Those Who Stayed Behind: Rural Society in Nineteenth-Century New England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Randolph Roth, *Democratic Dilemma: Religion, Reform, and the Social Order in the Connecticut River Valley of Vermont, 1791–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Jeffrey Potash, *Vermont's Burned-Over District: Patterns of Community Development and Religious Activity, 1761–1850* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Carlson Publishing, 1991); William J. Gilmore, *Reading Becomes a Necessity of Life: Material and Cultural Life in Rural New England, 1780–1835* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1993); Samuel B. Hand, *The Star that Set: The Vermont Republican Party, 1854–1974* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2002).

[2] Nancy L. Gallagher, *Breeding Better Vermonters: The Eugenics Project in the Green Mountain State* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1999).

America and the State that "Stayed Behind": An Argument for the National Relevance of Vermont History

The multiple ways in which Vermont has diverged from the national pattern should not be discounted, certainly; Vermont's peculiarities are, in fact, glaring. For those aspiring to study the state, however, taking an exceptionalist assumption as the point of departure risks losing most of the lessons Vermont can teach the nation about itself.

By PAUL SEARLS

The functioning premise for historians of Vermont should be that understanding Vermont's story is essential to understanding the larger process that has been United States history. It should be the axiomatic message of Vermont historians that, to come to grips with the mind and soul of America, Vermont must be appreciated both as a place and as an idea. Vermont's history needs to reach the point where the relevance of its story to America's general evolution is so obvious and self-evident that it need not be noted. There could be no greater tribute to Tom Bassett, who always saw Vermont in regional and national context.

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What is self-evident now for those with a keen interest in Vermont's past, however, is that both scholarly and popular renderings of American development have placed the state on the fringes of the national experience. A tentative hypothesis to begin to explain this disconnection between Vermont's story and the nation's is that historians perceive Vermont as having defied, or even reversed, the process that has been American history. So true is this that the relationship between America and Vermont can be characterized in dialectical terms. As historian Richard Hofstadter famously wrote, America was "born in the country and moved to the city"; Vermont, meanwhile, "stayed behind." America has been about the future; Vermont has been about the past. America has been about what could be; Vermont has been about what was.

For as long as Vermont has had this pre-modern, "unspoiled" image, Vermont historians have been complicit in its construction. They have certainly not been alone. Indeed, the conception of the state as having avoided or reversed national trends has long framed all Vermonters' understanding of themselves as unique. Whether begrudgingly or enthusiastically, Vermonters have drawn much of their sense of horizontal camaraderie—of membership in an imagined community of "Vermonters"—from the state's essential ruralness. The result has been that Vermonters who might disagree about a lot of things have agreed over time, and quite rightly in many ways, that as Ralph Nading Hill put it, Vermont is a state with "a distinctly private flavor."[1] Because Vermont historians and others shaping the state's history and identity have largely emphasized its peculiarities, Vermont's relevance to American history has flowed from its perceived exceptionalism. The multiple ways in which Vermont has diverged from the national pattern should not be discounted, certainly; Vermont's peculiarities are, in fact, glaring. For those aspiring to study the state, however, taking an exceptionalist assumption as the point of departure risks losing most of the lessons Vermont can teach the nation about itself.

Vermont's past argues for relevance on its own behalf. As recent scholarship has continued to erode the exceptionalist paradigm, it has become increasingly clear that Vermont should not be considered marginal to the American story, but instead wholly central to it on the most fundamental levels. The heart of America's move from the country to the city is the story of individuals coping with and responding to capitalist transformation and modernity. Rather than avoiding this experience, Vermont has been comprehensively shaped by it. At the same time, Vermont has been as much an idea as a place. At the state's outset, that idea was that Vermont would be the place where the competing tensions of everyday life, the desire for "Freedom and Unity" simulta-

neously, coexisted comfortably. Because this idea persisted, the meaning various people have attached to Vermont over time has occupied a space at the faultline of the American experience with change.

This argument for greater appreciation of Vermont's intimate relationship with the national experience of becoming modern operates on three levels. First, this appreciation exists in the realm of those outside the state: what outsiders have thought of Vermont, and the meaning they have attached to it. Vermont's national significance also emanates from the actions and ideology of those inside the state, who struggled to construct meaning for the state as a way of understanding their world. Finally, it exists in the dynamic relationship between what various people wanted Vermont to be, and what it actually was.

Outsiders Imaging Vermont: The Equation

The argument for the relevance of how Vermont has been seen by outsiders, as an indicator of national evolution, begins with a basic equation. When Americans have been optimistic, their view of Vermont has been pessimistic. Conversely, when America has been a pessimistic nation, popular perceptions of Vermont have grown considerably brighter. This equation is not perfect. It works better for some eras than others, and posits the typical "American" as someone suspiciously likely to be Eastern and middle class. Nevertheless, the equation is an effective organizing principle at widely varied times, including the state's earliest history. The growing feeling in the 1780s among many Eastern gentry that Vermont needed to be politically and religiously "tamed" suggests their retreat from the optimism of the Revolutionary period to the disillusionment and fear of chaos that characterized the Articles of Confederation era. Then, the equation probably becomes confused, as everything else was, during the era of rapid "market revolution."[2]

Particularly telling for using Vermont to understand America was the transition in how the nation saw Vermont in the Gilded Age and then the Progressive Era. In the Gilded Age, the nation was optimistic—or at least, that can be said about the most "progressive" and modern sections of it, the urban and industrial North. The Civil War seemed to confirm the correctness of the capitalist model for society. The North rushed forward, innovating and changing at a fantastic pace. Though some developments, such as the financial collapse of 1873, severe labor strife, and the onset of segregation, would give Eastern elites reason for pessimism, on the whole the wonders of industrial and scientific development gave Vermont's apparent stagnation comparatively ominous overtones. If not in those exact words, Eastern elites thought, and many

subsequent historians agreed, that Vermont was in a "winter period."[3] The vision of industrious emigrant Vermonters developing the continent, at the head of American progress, made Vermont's "decline" confounding and troubling. In other parts of the country, being a "Vermonter" was widely equated with characteristics most fitted to responding to capitalist imperatives, possessing sobriety, industriousness, reconciliation to time/work discipline, and, not least, the right ethnicity. Colonel W.H. Holabird told the membership of the Pacific Coast Sons of Vermont Club in 1894 that,

> In going up and down the State of California, I am proud to say that, wherever I have found a Vermonter, I have found a thrifty man. . . . We were just talking about Vermont before the banquet . . . when we go back there and tell the truth about California, they call us liars. . . . When we talk about a forty thousand acre wheat path . . . some old friends just shake their heads and say, 'we could hope for better things.'

Holabird concluded by requesting his audience "at the end of this love feast" to write letters inducing resident Vermonters to move to California; anyone doing so "would be doing a good thing for us, and a good thing for his friend."[4] Of course, luring away Vermont's remaining talent was the last thing the resident Vermonters in the audience would have wanted. To the contrary, their chief concern was how to keep the boys at home. That goal was not, however, easily achieved.

The disdain outsiders applied to Vermont's apparent stagnation made conquering native dissatisfaction no easier. A Chicago newspaper editor and member of the Chicago Sons of Vermont sent Newfane's 1874 town reunion a letter consoling residents that, while the town had been "too small" and "not wholly the place suited to my aspirations," they could be "proud of Vermont transplanted to the prairies."[5] Emigrants were more ambivalent about those who had stayed behind. The Rev. James Davie Butler, who had emigrated from Rutland to Madison, Wisconsin, said at Rutland's centennial celebration in 1870 that he foresaw "more and more Rutlanders becoming not only continentals but cosmopolitans, leaving those who will, to sluggardize at home."[6] There were many shades of complexity to this outsiders' belief in where Vermont's worth lay, and increasingly so as the Gilded Age wore on. The 1893 poem "Sons of Vermont" by Harry C. Shaw was typical of its era in that it reflected the ambivalence felt by those outside the state, about the state. Shaw wrote, "And when a native's time shall come to die/He longs to go back, and there to lie/Close up where the mountains meet the sky/In little, old Vermont."[7] The obvious inference to be drawn from this poem was that Vermont was no place for

healthy, ambitious people to spend the prime productive years of their lives. At the same time, it indicates Americans were developing a more subtle and ambivalent relationship with their own adjustment to mature capitalism. This ambiguity was reflected in the contradictory views harbored by outsiders of Vermont and Vermont residents.

Using Vermont to trace the growth of Gilded Age urban disillusionment with progress requires a word on the designation "Vermonter." Certainly the historical debate about who was and who was not a Vermonter has often been argued in terms of nativity. Nativity, however, has been only one among a number of ways that Vermonters have defined and argued about the designation. The heart of the matter has always been values. A way to categorize Vermonters in terms other than nativity has been offered by Robert Shalhope in his book *Bennington and the Green Mountain Boys.* Shalhope sees the citizens of Bennington divided into "uphill" and "downhill" factions. These terms can be applied usefully to the whole state, and to eras besides those Shalhope analyzed. The distinction works geographically, but more importantly the differences are ideological and philosophical. Uphill Vermonters are not just rural, but possess a community-oriented way of looking at the world that fosters pre-modern values: informality, parochialism, and an antinomian worldview. Downhill Vermonters, in contrast, possess a modern, systematic, formal, cosmopolitan, atomized way of looking at the world.[8]

Applying this dialectic to how outsiders saw the state yields the observation that, in the Gilded Age, they wanted Vermonters to be downhill, but they wanted Vermont to remain uphill. Ruing the loss of the noble virtues of the agrarian Republic, middle-class Americans wanted to believe that the values and folkways of the old world had somewhere been preserved. Furthermore, many of the most modern-thinking Americans clung to the belief that the virtues and characteristics of the farm were naturally compatible with, and applicable to, the challenges of competing in the modern world. As they grew more pessimistic about their own world, Gilded Age Americans grew more optimistic about Vermont, even if their view of Vermonters was a rather contemptuous vision of decline and enfeeblement.

Significantly, however, the trend of scholarship on rural Vermont paints a quite different portrait from the model of "winter" attached to Gilded Age emigration and rural population diminution. First, those who emigrated from Vermont were not primarily the state's most "ambitious and climbing stock," as Lewis Stilwell put it in *Migration from Vermont.*[9] Instead, they were primarily those most superfluous to the evolving local economy. Second, a range of factors, very much including

the transition to dairying and the nature of the dairying economy, fostered a way of life centered on social harmony and consensus. Some historians, notably Hal Barron, describe it as an authentically "premodern" form of social organization in many respects.[10] Third, the cohesiveness and homogeneity of the smallest villages in late-nineteenth-century Vermont were not happenstance. Contrary to contemporary conceptions of rural folk as fraught with "idleness," rural Vermonters very carefully constructed their communities, imposing a comprehensive set of formal and informal restraints on personal behavior.

The consensus among modernists that there was something gravely wrong with rural Vermont did not go away as the Gilded Age became the Progressive Era. Indeed, in many respects the dour conclusions drawn by middle-class observers grew more insistent as they, in the Progressive spirit, took it upon themselves to remedy rural defects. But in an age of pessimism, urban perceptions of Vermont grew considerably rosier. In the classic interpretation, Progressivism was driven by the anxieties of an increasingly uneasy urban middle class.[11] Americans had grown increasingly ambivalent about the efficacy of "progress." In this context, rural Vermont was appreciated for what it was not. Frank Dillingham, the president of the Pacific Coast Association Native Sons of Vermont, described his birthplace in 1895 as "essentially an American State" because its ethnic homogeneity allowed it to avoid "to a very large degree the disorders too frequent where an inassimilative element is in excess." Dillingham concluded that Vermont's value lay in its lesson "that equal rights can best be secured where the little 'Red School House' prevails, where their children are taught that this is America and that they are to be good Americans."[12]

The lesson to be drawn from using Vermont as a barometer of national mood is that the process by which America became modern was fraught with contradictions and confusion experienced by those immersed in the process of modernity. The historical experience has not been *Gemeinschaft* (suggesting an informal, static, rural community) replaced by *Gesellschaft* (suggesting formal, dynamic, urban society) in a linear fashion, as if the modern condition were necessarily a zero-sum game. The two modes of culture can coexist, or even reinforce each other. But even while exalting rural life, modernists have tended to misunderstand it, and even have posed a dire threat to its survival.

Vermonters in Myth and Reality

Vermont's founders pledged the state to reconciling freedom and unity, the individual and the collective. Over time, Vermonters have applied this search for balance to other contrary aspects of life, such as

preservation and development, or tradition and change. Scholars seeking a historical Vermont in which perfect balance was achieved, however, will be disappointed. They should not be. Vermont's national relevance is found not only in how outsiders imagined it to be pre-modern, but also in how Vermonters struggled with modernity. It is no revelation that Vermont was, in fact, comprehensively shaped by industrialization and capitalist transformation. As T.D.S. Bassett made clear in the 1950s, modernity worked in particular ways in Vermont, but no less profoundly.[13] The question was never how to avoid modernity, but instead how to negotiate it in a way that best preserved those traditions worth saving. If Gilded Age Vermont was characterized by a vast disconnect between two types of people, the distinction arose not just from two separate bundles of values, but also from two conceptions of the pace at which modernization should take place. No matter how effective they were at constructing their lives as they chose, Gilded Age farmers need to be understood in the context of modernity, as being in close proximity physically, and in ever-closer proximity culturally, politically, and economically, with people who were very unlike them, and with alien institutions.

The mood in the Gilded Age among "forward-thinking" Vermonters was that the logical extension of the typical Vermonters' characteristics, and of Vermont as an idea, was leading the pace of modern progress. This interpretation of Vermont's meaning was drawn logically in their eyes from their reading of Vermont history, and their perception of the achievements of emigrant Vermonters. Because new drilling technology set off "marble mania" in Rutland's marble quarries while so many other Vermont towns languished, optimism boiled over among representatives of Rutland's business interests at the town's 1870 centennial celebration. The celebration concluded with a local minister urging his listeners "to cooperate . . . in promoting the future prosperity of the town, and in making Rutland what her location and great natural resources have designed her to be—one of the most prosperous, thrifty and enterprising inland towns in New England."[14]

Gilded Age "downhill" Vermonters considered progress the logical culmination of Vermont as an idea. As a consequence, they generally took an even dimmer view of rural districts than outsiders did. This negative interpretation of rural Vermont was the one adopted by many subsequent historians. What is necessary, however, is almost to start over, and to read rural Vermonters' lives as texts, as stories that they tell about themselves. Doing so casts a considerably different light on rural life nationally, in the context of modernizing forces very close at hand. One representative subject, for instance, is farm implements.

Rural folk did not reject new tools altogether. Instead, they chose the tools they adopted very carefully, adopting only those that did not bring major economic or social disruptions to their communities. The question for rural Vermonters was never to avoid modernity or change, but instead to negotiate it in a way that helped to preserve the characteristics and dynamics of life they valued most.[15]

The rural story thus can be interpreted as one of people who were very capable of constructing their own lives as they wished. Other Vermonters, of course, were less sanguine about the choices rural folk made. At the Vermont Dairymen's Association annual banquet in 1891, ex-governor and railroad magnate John Gregory Smith complained to attendees, "There are men in the State, as elsewhere, who continually make efforts to arouse antagonism between the railroads and the farmers, on the ground that one is a grinding monopoly and the other an abused people." Smith offered instead that "relations between the railroads and the farmers should be harmonious," and called agitators "no better than men who seek to break up the domestic relation between man and wife." Smith was articulating a vision of industrial progress reconciled with old virtues preserved in the state, a mutually beneficial, cooperative relationship between tradition and progress. This is also what uphill folk wanted. Yet Smith exhorted them to change their ways in pursuit of that goal, concluding his talk by commanding farmers,

> Act like True Vermonters! Arouse within yourselves the energy and force that characterized the Green Mountain boys. Do not waste your time sitting still making complaint of the bad times. Improve your processes. Improve the quality of your animals . . . When you are producing the largest possible amount of butter, from the least possible amount of milk, and are getting a good, rich quality, you may then look for the dawning of a prosperous time.[16]

Smith's dream of a modernized countryside was bound to be frustrated, however, if the achievement of that goal entailed changes incompatible with the dynamics of communal life among those with what Hal Barron called "a different, contrary set of values."[17]

Tools are a physical example of how Vermont stood at the fault line between the contrary impulses of everyday life. There are other, less tangible ones. Meanwhile, Smith's manipulation of the designation "Vermonter"—his attachment to it of a bundle of values encouraging modernization—is both an old and a contemporary Vermont story. A variety of people have associated the designation "Vermonter" with a way of life more purely American than has been possible to maintain in most other places. When Vermonters debate what they think Vermont should be, they overtly are debating what America could be, in the

same way that outsiders' visions of Vermont are about what their own locale is not.

Americans' general conclusion about what the nation should be, based on the lessons Vermont tells, is that, ultimately, they do not know. As a people, Americans are torn; a deep and abiding ambivalence has been the hallmark of their relationship with progress. As much as studying Vermont in the Gilded Age can yield rich insights into this ambivalence, Vermont's relationship with modernity took on new shades of complexity in the Progressive Era. Even if people like Governor Smith did not reconcile themselves to the choices made by rural folk, there must have been something special about the way of life produced by those choices. After all, Vermonters ideologically similar to Governor Smith were increasingly selling rural life to tourists. As the Progressive Era's middle class grew increasingly uneasy about the benefits of progress, Vermont's apparent backwardness became an asset that more and more could be commodified. Vermont's modernists, determined as they were to make Vermont keep pace with the material progress of the rest of the nation, came to appreciate tourism's possibilities slowly. As it dawned downhill that tourism could help end the state's economic lethargy, cosmopolitan Vermonters, unlike their compatriots outside of the state, became more optimistic. They saw in outsiders' idealization of rural Vermont the path to salvation from the stagnation of "winter." For them, after all, modernization was the logical extension of Vermont as an imagined community. When studied as a story that Vermonters told about themselves, the turn-of-the-century tourism boom entails extraordinary incompatibilities and contradictions. On a basic level, one set of Vermonters was commodifying the "pre-modern" way of life of another set for the consumption of outsiders, in the long-term interest of modernizing the places lauded as "pre-modern." In the same 1895 issue of *The Vermonter* in which Frank Dillingham of the Pacific Coast Sons of Vermont argued that "equal rights can best be secured where the little red School House prevails," Mason S. Stone, state superintendent of education, happily directed his readers to the recent verdict of Rev. Dr. A.E. Winship, editor of the *Journal of Education,* that "No State in the Union has made greater educational progress in the past few years than Vermont."[18]

In the first decade of the twentieth century, the notion that Vermont was the location of a successful reconciliation of the competing tensions of life, unsuccessfully achieved elsewhere, grew into sharper focus. Montpelier's Old Home Week brochure for 1901 held an advertisement from a real estate agent which allowed that even "few of our citizens realize . . . the steady and unchecked growth of Montpelier, a

growth that has been and will be steady, constant, sure, a growth that comes not only from Montpelier's importance as a business trading center, offering every inducement to the enterprising merchant and to the manufacturer." Montpelier's promise was the product of it having "every advantage and none of the disadvantages of other places." Among these advantages was that it was "a city of happy homes and a prosperous people, picturesquely located among the green hills of a peaceful, fertile valley, with scenery unequalled in its quiet charm. . . ."[19] A promotional brochure published nine years later by the Woodstock Village Improvement Society described a town that "wears still its old-time country dress of living green" and "still clings to the old-time village life," yet had "quietly taken to itself the conveniences and comforts of modern life."[20] As some contemporary observers might conclude, in the long run, commodifying tradition to the end of achieving modernity serves to destroy the very thing, the "Vermont way of life," being sold. In the dawning recognition of diminishing returns, Vermont's contemporary identity truly originated. Vermont's relevance to the national story lies in the convergence in Vermont of modernity's consequences and a compelling pre-modern identity.

Revealing Truth, Appreciating Myth: Vermont and Current Historiographical Progress

Vermonters' appreciation of diminishing returns, both environmentally and socially, came slowly, with difficulty, and in instructive ways. The urge to balance effectively progress and tradition has unfolded as a process of evolution in Vermont. That process reveals experiences that are central to almost every important way historians seek to understand America. Three areas, in particular, need great exploration.

First, at the heart of Vermont's story, if it is primarily a pursuit of balance, is an understanding of how capitalism has shaped people, and how people have shaped capitalism. Vermont's story illuminates how the historical experience has not been a matter of tradition being replaced by progress, or community replaced by society, in a linear manner. Joseph S. Wood's recent book *The New England Village* explores how Vermonters attempted to reconcile progress with tradition in the ante-bellum years. Dona Brown, in *Inventing New England* is among those who have probed this same reconciliation in a later time. Both would agree, I assume, that those eras, and every other one, can be more deeply investigated to understand how Vermont reflects America's adjustment to modernity. In particular, the New Deal era demands a new book-length analysis to replace Richard Munson Judd's wonderful *New Deal in Vermont,* which is more than twenty years old. To study

Vermont in the New Deal is to probe new ways that normal, everyday people in America "made a new deal" for themselves.[21]

Second, Vermont has many more instructive lessons to share about humanity's historical relationship with nature. Vermont's environmental history recently has been probed brilliantly in both regional and national context in Richard W. Judd's *Common Lands, Common People.* Judd argues that the modern ethic of conservation originated among people in rural communities who sought to balance their use of natural resources. We need to understand better the process that led us to the situation today where large-scale conservation efforts, like the Champion Land Deal, are largely the doing of people outside the affected communities, often disgruntling those inside them. A similarly complex process has been at work in agriculture: in contrast to the 1880s, today's "uphill" people farm in "downhill" ways (by necessity, scientifically), while "downhill" people farm in "uphill" ways (organically and with an ethos of replenishment and sustainability). By understanding how different Vermonters have historically decided what was wise use of land, the general evolution of America's relationship with nature can be better understood.[22]

Third, Vermont needs to be studied through the lens of recent theories about the nature of frontiers, which depict them not as the edge of civilization, but instead the gray areas between different cultures and competing uses of natural resources. Particularly attractive as a focus for scholars on Vermont as a frontier is the northern, and particularly northwestern, region of Vermont. This Yankee-Quebecois frontier has historically been the site of ambiguous and contested conceptions of identity.[23] Over time, Vermonters as a whole have hotly contested the boundaries of their imagined community, arguing over who has deserved general recognition as "Vermonters." In trying to better understand the ways the designation "Vermonter" has been interpreted, reinterpreted, manipulated, and contested, we can better learn how identity is constructed not just here, but elsewhere. Ultimately, the distinction between Yankee and non-Yankee was always socially constructed. Deborah Clifford has already probed the "borderland" that was northern Vermont in the 1840s and 1850s through the life of Abby Hemenway. Much more scholarship is needed on Vermont as a cultural and economic frontier.[24]

Conclusion

In a multitude of ways, Vermont's history has compelling things to say about a fundamental problem all Americans have faced: How can a balance be found between the competing attractions of the past and fu-

ture? As it was fifty or a hundred or two hundred years ago, the aspiration to effectively, or at least for appearance's sake, reconcile progress and tradition is Vermonters' story. Recent promotional literature from the Smuggler's Notch Chamber of Commerce describes the resort as a place where "outstanding natural beauty, great recreational opportunities, and unspoiled Vermont village combine with modern shopping and services, lodging and restaurants . . . to provide visitors a unique experience." To be sure, the authenticity of that description of balance deserves critical analysis. But the higher truth is that, in the end, what the nation wants Vermont to be, and what different kinds of Vermonters want the state to be, are not necessarily contradictory, or even that different. The paths to achieving balance in Vermont can be not only different, but also conflicting. In the end, outsiders have read into Vermont the same experiment that Vermonters have pursued since they committed themselves to "Freedom and Unity." Dorothy Canfield Fisher wrote from a particular perspective, but her statement in *Vermont Tradition* that "Vermont tradition is based on the idea that group life should leave each person as free as possible to arrange his own life" transcends cultural, temporal, and geographic boundaries.[25]

Vermont, as a place and as an idea, is thus about balancing the contrary impulses of everyday life: one theoretically can have individuality and fulfilling community life simultaneously. One can have the benefits of modernity alongside the benefits of venerable rural splendor, not just visually but in modes of life. One can have progress and tradition, not only simultaneously, but combined in a way that they reinforce each other. Life need not be a zero-sum game. Attempting to reconcile the benefits of change with the community axiom is Vermont's oldest story. In the present as in the past, all Vermonters want the same things: tradition and progress, development and preservation, freedom and unity. Vermont's history is not the story of different goals, but the story of different paths to the same goal. For all the state's failings over time in actualizing that goal, there are in Vermont's history great lessons for the nation on how to begin.

Notes

[1] Ralph Nading Hill, *Contrary Country: A Chronicle of Vermont* (New York: Rinehart, 1950), 4.

[2] Historians have argued for the relevance of Vermont's experience to national evolution in the Jacksonian Era better than for any other era. The point still needs to be emphasized, however, that upstate New York and Vermont, particularly its western half were part of a single, coherent experience.

[3] The classic text on the "winter thesis" is Harold Fisher Wilson, *The Hill Country of Northern New England: Its Social and Economic History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936).

[4] *Souvenir of "Vermont Day": California Midwinter International Exposition, San Francisco, March 3, 1894* (San Francisco: G.W. Hopkins, 1894), 20.

[5] *Centennial Proceedings and Other Historical Facts and Incidents Relating to Newfane, the County Seat of Windham County, Vermont* (Brattleboro: D. Leonard, 1877), 115.

[6] Chauncy Kilborn Williams, *Centennial Celebration of the Settlement of Rutland, Vermont* (Rutland: Tuttle and Company Printers, 1870), 48.

[7] Jacob G. Ullery, *Men of Vermont: An Illustrated Biographical History of Vermonters and Sons of Vermont* (Brattleboro: Transcript Publishing Company, 1894), 365.

[8] Robert Shalhope, *Bennington and the Green Mountain Boys: The Emergence of Liberal Democracy in Vermont, 1760–1850* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

[9] Lewis Stilwell, *Migration from Vermont* (Montpelier: Vermont Historical Society, 1948), 52.

[10] Hal Barron, *Those Who Stayed Behind: Rural Society in Nineteenth-Century New England* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

[11] For a recent summary of this analysis of Progressivism, see Lewis Gould, *America in the Progressive Era, 1890–1914* (New York: Longman, 2001).

[12] *The Vermonter*, 1:1 (August 1895), 5.

[13] Thomas Day Seymour Bassett, "The Urban Penetration of Rural Vermont" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1952).

[14] Williams, *Centennial Celebration of the Settlement of Rutland*, 94.

[15] For an excellent recent work on rural choices about tools, see Allen R. Yale, *While the Sun Shines: Making Hay in Vermont, 1789–1990* (Montpelier: Vermont Historical Society, 1991).

[16] Vermont Dairymen's Association, *Report of the Twenty-First Annual Meeting of the Vermont Dairymen's Association* (1891), 124–25.

[17] Barron, *Those Who Stayed Behind*, 131.

[18] *The Vermonter*, 1:1, 8.

[19] Old Home Week Committee, *Souvenir Program: Old Home Week, Montpelier, Vermont, August 12th to 17th* (1901), 7.

[20] *Woodstock, Vermont: A Few Notes, Historical and Other, Concerning the Town and Village* (Woodstock: Elm Tree Press, 1910), 5. Another section of the pamphlet, titled "Modernity Added to Repose," claimed that, "Modern Woodstock, as it may be called, has kept pace with changing conditions and with advances in comforts and conveniences for country life."

[21] Dona Brown, *Inventing New England: Regional Tourism in the Nineteenth Century* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995); Joseph Sutherland Wood, *The New England Village* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997); Richard Munson Judd, *The New Deal in Vermont: Its Impact and Aftermath* (New York: Garland Press, 1979).

[22] Richard W. Judd, *Common Lands, Common People: The Origins of Conservation in Northern New England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).

[23] Looking back on the Civil War era from 1910, a number of the Yankee veterans contributing to Ralph Orson Sturtevant's *History of the 13th Regiment of Vermont Volunteers*, a preponderantly northern-Vermont unit, remembered the line between Yankee and non-Yankee as having been blurry. Quebec native Peter Bovat, who had moved to the state when young, was described as "what was sometimes called a Yankee Frenchman." Ralph Orson Sturtevant, *History of the 13th Regiment of Vermont Volunteers* (Montpelier: self-published, 1910), 223.

[24] Deborah Pickman Clifford, *The Passion of Abby Hemenway: Memory, Spirit, and the Making of History* (Montpelier: Vermont Historical Society, 2001). On the need to apply Benedict Anderson's construct of "imagined communities" to American regions, see Edward L. Ayers, et al., *All Over the Map: Rethinking American Regions* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1996).

[25] Dorothy Canfield Fisher, *The Vermont Tradition: The Biography of an Outlook on Life* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1953), 8.

Frontiers, to Farms, to Factories: The Economic and Social Development of Vermont from 1791 to 1991

The author emphasizes three areas in this article: explorations of trends in demographics, histories of social deviance, and the changing face of Vermont due to globalization. They portray sides of Vermont that are not represented by personality or power. Topics of social or economic history fill in behind the headlines and the more visible historical elements and events.

By SAMUEL A. MCREYNOLDS

From frontier to farms to factories to financial investments, the economic and social development of Vermont has had as many peaks and valleys as the state's terrain. The history of these changes is no less uneven.[1] It is not my intent to assess the history of these contours in a few pages. This would not do justice to the Vermont experience. Instead, my more modest goal is to note a few peaks and valleys in the economic and social history of Vermont. More sim-

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ply, this article will briefly explore recent trends in Vermont historiography with a focus on selected under-examined or under-analyzed issues.

Specifically, I emphasize three areas in this paper: explorations of trends in demographics, histories of social deviance, and the changing face of Vermont due to globalization. There are no particular events, patterns, or ideas that tie these three subjects together. They arise from my interest and training in history and rural sociology and my work in Vermont communities. These concepts are not without commonality, however. They portray sides of Vermont that are not represented by personality or power. Vermont historiography, like most historiography, focuses more on the individual via biography and genealogy, or issues of policy or political struggle. Topics of social or economic history fill in behind the headlines and the more visible historical elements and events.

Demographic Trends

It has been said that only demographers can take age and sex and make them boring. This may explain why historians generally avoid them. Indeed, it has been nearly a decade since *Vermont History* published an article that explicitly dealt with population, and one has to go back two decades further to find an article that explores the methodological role of demographics in historical research.[2] Obviously, there is need for greater attention to the demographic histories of Vermont. In particular, I stress the need for a greater understanding of the social context of historical actions. Knowing key demographic data such as age distribution, educational attainment, and migration enables us to lay a stronger social foundation that helps us understand the political development of the state. Demographics are also important because historically they have been the basis for concerns about social deviance. That is, we pay attention to demographics when they seem to paint a negative picture.

We are fortunate that Vermont's demographics have gotten attention from the very beginning of the state's history. With the appearance of the first demographic data, Vermont was barely Vermont. It was a scattering of outposts east of New York and west of New Hampshire. The first census of the region was taken in 1771 when it was enumerated as part of New York. At that time the territory contained only 4,669 individuals, and that included two additional counties that were later placed with New York.[3] Of these early residents, over 51 percent were under sixteen years of age. Only nineteen individuals were identified as "negros." By 1780, the population had risen over tenfold to 47,620 in less than a decade.

Changes in populations have also been at the core of social concerns since the beginning. Initially, the major concern was rapid growth. However, as early as the 1820s some areas were experiencing population decline; others would reach their peak by the Civil War. For the past 150 years, the primary concern has been how to retain or attract population, not restrict its growth. A major problem with population loss, of course, was economics. Typically, a decline in population means a decline in economic fortune. Vermont was no exception. While some scholars have looked at the shifting nature of populations as a loss,[4] others have seen it as a readjustment.[5] Most certainly, both characterizations are accurate. Regardless of how one interprets it, the reality is that population losses were severe. Vermont, more than any other New England state, lost population. Some headed to Boston, many others moved out west. Vermont not only lost population, but its young people were the most eager to move. In a list of 335 emigrants going west from Vermont in the late 1820s, for example, 258 were under thirty years of age and 170 of them were under twenty-five.[6] At the latter part of this era, the census of 1870 showed as many Vermonters outside the state as within. While many men died for Vermont and the Union, an even greater number left Vermont, never to return. Significantly, many of them continued to be from younger cohorts. Examining the 20-24-year-old cohort shows a radical drop from the previous and subsequent censuses. And even with the shortage of men, the divorce rate was 1 in 18 in 1870 and on the rise.

In the postbellum era, however, a counterbalance to the population outflows was building: immigrants from Europe were coming to Vermont. By the end of the century, the foreign born population provided almost all of the state's growth. In particular, Irish, Italian, and French-Canadian émigrés played a significant role in the growth and development of many Vermont cities and towns. Most of these new Vermonters, however, did not settle on the farms. Fewer than ten percent of farmers were foreign born and a very small share of these were French-Canadians. Instead, the French-Canadians and Italians settled in the larger towns. The Italians, in particular were drawn to those with quarry or manufacturing work.

As the century progressed many people perceived the decline of "the good old Vermont stock" and its replacement with foreigners as a foreboding trend for the state. A wide range of factors contributed to the decline of Vermont's population during the nineteenth century. The decline of agriculture and small industry, both under pressure from market competition, was significant. Culture was another cause frequently cited, and one that would be repeated into the next century.[7]

As the century turned, concern over Vermont's demographic decline continued. The reality, however, seemed to be different than the assumptions, primarily due to the rising fortunes of milk. The flow of milk from Vermont meant the inflow of dollars in return. Milk quickly rose to the head of the economic contributor list and more farmers concentrated on dairy production.

Increasing revenues allowed farmers to challenge the isolation of earlier eras. With milk money they could, for example, purchase cars. As of 1930, nearly two thirds of all Vermont farms had a car, the highest percentage in New England. This new technology gave farmers a new sense of freedom. The telephone gave them a sense of connection. As of 1930, 61 percent of Vermont farms had phones compared to only 34 percent of farmers nationally. Similarly, the arrival of the mail through rural free delivery strengthened the connection of farmer to the outside universe. Equally important, 30 percent of Vermont farms had electricity by 1930.[8]

Histories of Social Deviance

Despite its quaint villages and pristine countryside Vermont has housed a darker reality, or at least the perception of one. We have seen hints of this undercurrent throughout the demographic exploration of the state's history. Not all folks have been convinced that life in Vermont was rosy. In fact, until the 1930s, a dominant view was that the state was still in decline.[9] The loss of the "good old Vermont stock" was lamented frequently.[10]

While some literature in recent years has addressed the less normative aspects of Vermont's social and cultural history, it has focused more on the political than social dimensions of deviance.[11] In general, historical work in the area has been minimal. In Vermont, "the non-normative" have been defined as the poor and ethnic minorities, in particular the French Canadians. Despite some work on these populations, much needs to be done.[12] There also has been next to no historical research on crime rates and the criminal population. Each of these gaps is important to cover if we are to gain a fuller understanding of society in Vermont.

The one exception to the neglect of social deviance has been eugenics. The story of formal efforts to reform the stock of Vermont has been richly studied from a number of perspectives. The focus of these works has been the Vermont Commission on Country Life (VCCL), which attempted to study all areas of Vermont's social, economic, and political life and to recommend a program for the future.

One of the first to draw attention to the impact of the VCCL was

Richard Judd in 1979.[13] In 1985, Hal Barron examined the country life movement nationally and its impacts on rural change.[14] Kevin Dann has explored the connections of the Eugenics Survey to the VCCL.[15] I then made the connection of the VCCL to national policies and programs of rural development.[16] In 1999, Nancy Gallagher, came out with her comprehensive book, *Breeding Better Vermonters,* in which she explores the relationship of biology to the history of progressive politics and social reform in New England. Finally, on a separate but related topic, Hal Goldman has looked social exclusivity and leadership.[17] The sum of this work is one of the most impressive arrays of social research in Vermont history. It stands out as an exemplary body of work that has made a valuable contribution to our understanding of the state.

Vermont in a Global Grip

Finally, there is a great need to address the role and status of Vermont in the expanding grip of globalization. A limiting factor in examining the impact of globalization is the obsession with the question of the unique versus the universal character of Vermont's history. Is Vermont's history unique, as Frank Bryan and John McClaughry argue in their *Vermont Papers,*[18] or does Vermont share more historical similarities to other states, particularly those of the region? In these days of globalization and expanding American empire, the answer would seem obvious. My perspective is that we need to draw greater attention to the connections to external forces. Work in this area is growing, but more needs to be done.

While the impacts of globalization extend back to the very origins of the colonies, the coming of the railroads was among the first and most consequential developments bringing most Vermonters into direct contact with the world beyond their town and state borders. Railroads were a dominant motif in the state's history for over a hundred years. As Tom Bassett argues, the railroad had a profound influence on assisting the development of Vermont.[19] This influence has been noted in the works of numerous histories including those by Robert W. Jones and Robert C. Jones who, between them, have written five books on Vermont railroads in general as well as on specific lines.[20] Recently, Giro R. Patalano published a memoir of his years working on the railroad in Bellows Falls.[21] Also noted is Harold Meeks's useful summary of the history of the railroads in *Time and Change in Vermont.*[22]

The history of the railroads has a bleaker side as well: the stories of villages that, once prosperous, went into decline when the railroad bypassed them or located its tracks several towns away. Long after they had paid off their war debt many small towns owed heavily for monies

they had committed for railroad development, and many individuals lost land and money to unscrupulous railroad owners.[23] These problems had profound impacts on the social and economic development of the affected communities. This side of the story is less well told. As with today's tales of globalization, more attention must be paid to the impacts on the common citizen, the small town.

For example, despite the positive economic impact of the railroad on communities, its presence or absence often had a negative impact on populations.[24] Between 1850 and 1880 over half of Vermont's towns lost population. Over two dozen lost population in every census from 1830 to 1870. Several have never returned to the population they had during this era.[25] The majority of towns that lost population in every enumeration during these four decades were the localities that had not been touched by the railroad. On the other hand, of the 56 percent of Vermont towns that reached their peak population in this era, all had access or close access to the railroad.

The extractive industries were another major connection to the global market. The beginning of the rise of the marble industry roughly coincided with the rise of the railroad. By 1853, marble fever was epidemic in Rutland County. Within a decade over 1,200 men were employed in the industry.[26]

The forest products industry was also important. While no single activity (Christmas trees, wood for milling, wood for burning) constituted a gold mine, it provided the farmer a means of clearing his land and getting paid for it. The small scale and eclectic nature of how rural Vermonters profited from their forests resembles the practices of Central American *campesinos* more than American farmers.

Other, nonextractive industries flourished in this era, too. Fairbanks Scales was one of many newer industries, although it was the largest. By 1860, 46 woolen mills in the state hired over 2,000 workers; nearly 60 percent were female. Indeed, the growth rate of industry in Vermont was among the fastest of all states in the country.[27]

Manufacturing in general was on the rise in the twentieth century. A study in 1929 noted that one third of all workers were engaged in manufacturing, slightly more than in agriculture.[28] Indeed, the 1929 summary paints a very rosy picture for manufacturing in the state. Here are two interesting statistics that demonstrate the ability of globalization to reach even the smaller Vermont communities. Of these manufacturers, 80 percent were located in communities with fewer than 2,500 people and over 75 percent shipped their products outside of New England.

With the expansion of extractive industries and manufacturing came unions. In 1930, there were over 1,500 workers in the Barre area

alone.[29] Many of these workers were Italians who came to work in the granite, marble, and slate industries.[30]

By today's standards, the most important crop of the era was tourists. This became the critical cash crop for many people. Not only did hotel and restaurant owners and workers benefit, but farmers, stores, and a whole host of other economic units took advantage of this new resource. Tourists also became Vermonters, at least seasonal ones. Some bought property and paid taxes on second homes. In 1929, second home owners from out of state owned over $20 million in taxable property. As with the rise of extractive industries and manufacturing, the expansion of tourism was dependent on factors well beyond the boundaries of the state.

Post World War II to the End of the Century

The postwar world has seen many economic incarnations and pretenders to the economic throne in Vermont. Dairy has been a steady but declining industry. Agriculture is no longer number one in the state. Through the 1970s and 1980s high technology was thought to be the heir apparent. The arrival of IBM, then Digital, and other companies pointed to a Silicon Valley of the east. Somewhere along the way, however, the dream crumbled in market battles and economic setbacks that originated well beyond the borders of the state.

Increasingly, globalization is the theme. Financial markets are more centralized on a global scale and manufacturing within the state is under constant pressure from external forces. Ownership of the state's businesses is increasingly internationalized. A good example of the influence of external forces is investment income. New and important contributors to the Vermont economy today are dividend and interest payments. Vermont households in 1997 received more than 21 cents out of every dollar of income from these sources.[31] This figure was the third largest among all states. Florida was first, which is no surprise, given the number of retirees and elderly in the state. Wyoming was second, which again was no surprise, because it is the home of Dick Cheney and other wealthy investors. Vermont economist Jeffrey Carr has noted that this reliance on unearned income is a problem for the state. "When things are going well in financial markets, we do very well. When the stock market takes a powder, that can adversely affect our personal-income-tax receipts."[32]

Other factors contribute to the state's economy and will shape its future outlook, but no single area is dominant and none presently look like they are going to be expanding. These include high technology, higher education, communication, Vermont products, and forest products.

Finally, I note that Vermont continues to show a similar but changing demographic makeup. For example, while still among the whitest states, it has been surpassed by Maine in this category. While median household income is lower than the national median, the percent of persons living below the poverty level and of children living in poverty are noticeably less than the national figures. And the home ownership rate is among the highest in the nation.[33]

What is the Future for Vermont's Economic and Social Development and How Do We Document It?

Today, Vermont's economy is increasingly dependent on markets and other economies. Tourism and recreation remain key contributors to the Vermont economy. Depending on estimates they account for 15 to 40 percent of all economic activity. As the national or global economies falter, tourism is one of the first sectors to decline. But by trying to expand the tourist and recreation season into a year round affair, the state has tried to even out swings in the economic cycles.

Closely connected to the theme of globalization is centralization. This includes the centralization of political power. A centralized system may facilitate the external influences that are affecting Vermont. One can argue that local control, as envisioned by Frank Bryan and John McClaughry, has long since disappeared, and as Joe Sherman notes, the state has been highly centralized for a long time.[34] As Gregory Sanford contends, "Vermont is the vanguard of centralized government."[35]

While the traditional economic powerhouses of tourism and recreation will probably continue to expand, the dairy industry is in a very precarious position that will get worse before it gets better if it improves at all. Regardless of the area noted, most new employment will continue to be in the service sector. That means lower pay and the absence of unions. While unionization has not been particularly strong in Vermont, it is likely to be even weaker in the future.

What does the future hold for business? As a result of the expansion and power of markets, Vermont's business future is like the distant eddies of a rock hitting the water. There may not be an immediate splash in the state, but a wave is coming. The prognostication of business development in Vermont is clouded by the current market problems and the fallout from the various corporate failures and scandals of 2002.The problem is further exacerbated by the precipitous decline in dairy prices and price support. A most cautious assumption is that small business will be the primary mode of operation in Vermont in the twenty-first century.

So, where is Vermont going? The answer is that as historians, we are not expected to know. Given the growing global forces that affect the

state it is difficult to specify exactly what will happen. I can say that I believe whatever happens will continue to push Vermont toward greater integration into and conformity with world markets and behaviors. The uniqueness of Vermont will not derive from what it does economically or socially but from how it responds to these universal forces. The challenge to historians will be to recognize these forces and interpret them.

Notes

[1] Harold Fisher Wilson, *The Hill Country of Northern New England: Its Social and Economic History, 1790–1930* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936). See also: Percy Wells Bidwell, *Rural Economy in New England at the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven, Conn., 1916) and David Ludlum, *Social Ferment in Vermont, 1791–1850* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939). For more contemporary perspectives see William J. Gilmore-Lehne, "Reflections on Three Classics of Vermont History," *Vermont History,* 59 (1991): 227–247 and Joe Sherman, *Fast Lane on a Dirt Road: Vermont Transformed, 1945–1990* (Woodstock, Vt.: Countryman Press, 1992), 33.

[2] Luisa Spencer Finberg, "The Press and the Pulpit: Nativist Voices in Burlington and Middlebury, 1853–1860. *Vermont History,* 61 (1993): 156–175. We have to go to 1968 to find an article that explicitly deals with how to utilize demographics in history: Holman Drew Jordan, Jr. "The Value of Census Data in the Writing of Vermont Town History," *Vermont History,* 36 (1968): 19–25.

[3] U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1972), 1171.

[4] Thomas D.S. Bassett, *The Growing Edge: Vermont Villages, 1820–1860* (Montpelier: Vermont Historical Society, 1992), 52.

[5] Wilson, *Hill Country,* 46; Thurston M. Adams, *Prices Paid by Farmers for Goods and Services and Received by Them for Farm Products,* Vermont Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin 507 (Burlington: University of Vermont, 1944), 23.

[6] Lewis Stillwell, "Migration from Vermont," *Vermont Historical Society Proceedings* (Montpelier: Vermont Historical Society, 1937), 17.

[7] Vermont Commission on Country Life, *Rural Vermont: A Program for the Future* (Burlington, Vt.: Burlington Free Press, 1931).

[8] Wilson, *Hill Country,* 48.

[9] Samuel A. McReynolds, "Eugenics and Rural Development: The Vermont Commission on Country Life's Program for the Future," *Agricultural History* 71 (1997): 300–329.

[10] VCCL, *Rural Vermont.*

[11] Thomas L. Altherr, "A Convention of 'Moral Lunatics'": The Rutland, Vermont, Free Convention of 1858," *Vermont History* 69 (Supplement, 2001): 90–104.

[12] Steven R. Hoffbeck, "'Remember the Poor' (Galatians 2:10): Poor Farms in Vermont," *Vermont History,* 57 (1989): 226–240. On the French-Canadians see: Betsy Beattie, "Community-Building in Uncertain Times: The French Canadians of Burlington and Colchester, 1850–1860," *Vermont History,* 57 (1989): 84–102.

[13] Richard M. Judd, *The New Deal in Vermont: Its Impact and Aftermath* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1979).

[14] Hal S. Barron, *Those Who Stayed Behind: Rural Society in Nineteenth-Century New England* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

[15] Kevin Dann, "From Degeneration to Regeneration, The Eugenics Survey of Vermont, 1925–1936," *Vermont History,* 59 (1991): 7.

[16] McReynolds, "Eugenics."

[17] Nancy L. Gallagher, *Breeding Better Vermonters: The Eugenics Movement in the Green Mountain State* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1999). Hal Goldman, "A Desirable Class of People": The Leadership of the Green Mountain Club and Social Exclusivity, 1920–1936," *Vermont History,* 65 (1997): 131–152.

[18] Frank Bryan and John McClaughry, *The Vermont Papers: Recreating the Past* (Chelsea, Vt.: Chelsea Green Publishing, 1989).

[19] Bassett, *The Growing Edge,* 52.

[20] Robert W. Jones, *Green Mountain Rails: Vermont's Colorful Trains* (Los Angeles: Pine Tree, 1994). Robert C. Jones, *The Railroads of Vermont.* 2 vols. (Shelburne, Vt.: New England Press, 1993).

[21] Giro R. Patalano, *Behind the Iron Horse: The People Who Made the Trains Run in the Bellows Falls, Vermont, Area (1941–1980)* (Montpelier: Vermont Historical Society, 1997).

[22] Harold Meeks, *Time and Change in Vermont: A Human Geography* (Chester, Conn.: The Globe Pequot Press, 1986).

[23] Gregory Sanford, Vermont state archivist, Personal conversation with the author, April 16, 2002.

[24] U.S. Department of Commerce, *Historical Statistics,* 1145.

[25] Thomas Arnold, *Two Hundred Years of Population in Vermont Towns* (Burlington, Vt.: University of Vermont, Center for Rural Studies, 1986).

[26] Bassett, *The Growing Edge,* 61.

[27] U.S. Department of Commerce, *Census of Manufacturing 1931,* Vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce, 1933–1934) 634.

[28] U.S. Department of Commerce, *Summary Report of Industrial Survey* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Commerce, 1929).

[29] Richard Hathaway, "The Granite Workers of Barre, 1840–1940," in Michael Sherman and Jennie Versteeg, eds. *We Vermonters: Perspectives on the Past* (Montpelier: Vermont Historical Society, 1992), 225–238.

[30] Wilson, *Hill Country,* 163.

[31] Caleb Solomon and Shirley Leung, "Vermont's Life Style Lures People with Lots of Green," *Wall Street Journal,* 29 July 1998, 7.

[32] *Ibid.*

[33] Http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/500000.html

[34] Sherman, *Fast Lane,* 34.

[35] Sanford, personal conversation, April 16, 2002.

An Empty Toolbox? Archives and the Future of Research

From the Symposium Panel "Tools and Resources for Future Research"

By GREGORY SANFORD

I think I can keep this short. I have no idea what tools and resources will be available for future research.

Okay, any questions?

I would rather talk about something I have some knowledge about: present and past tools and resources. Let me begin with a few quick vignettes.

In 1864 Vermont mandated that the "official correspondence" of governors was "the property of the state," to be preserved by the secretary of state. Governors accordingly began to leave copies of their outgoing correspondence. In the 1890s new office technology, specifically carbon paper and the filing cabinet, allowed incoming and outgoing correspondence to be filed together for the first time. Consequently, without any statutory change, "official correspondence" came to mean incoming as well as outgoing letters, enhancing its value as a resource.[1]

In 2001 Governor Dean publicly referred to an e-mail he had sent relating to Okemo Mountain Resort. When an opponent of the resort's planned expansion asked for a copy, his public records request was rejected. The governor's legal counsel noted that the governor had neither a computer at work nor a state e-mail account. Instead, he used a

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private e-mail account at home; thus, the argument ran, his e-mails were not subject to disclosure. The legal counsel added, "The governor does not save either e-mail sent to or from his computer at home."[2] The challenge was not litigated and the records of one of our most significant gubernatorial administrations are already diminished.

In autumn 2001 the Statehouse network server's storage capacity was overwhelmed with accumulated e-mail to and from legislators. The civil union bill alone generated a reported 200,000 e-mails. To keep the system from crashing it was programmed to automatically delete e-mail messages once they had been on the system ninety days. Another resource vanished, not because of an appraisal of its legal or historical value, but because of limited network storage capacity. Storage space, whether virtual or physical, constantly limits our capacity to preserve resources.

Our research interests do not shape what future resources will be available. It is the rare individual or institution that primarily creates records for future research. Rather, records are created to document current transactions. Administrative, social, economic, and technological environments, and decisions, shape the form of that documentation and how long it is retained.

Should our focus be speculating on research trends, or on articulating documentation plans for the systematic identification and preservation of resources? Should we seek to gain a better understanding of why we document what, and how?

Citizens increasingly use digital cameras, video or its digital equivalents, or even Websites to document their lives, their communities, schools, and businesses. Without active management plans, and sustained resources, how long will these documents exist?

As writers turn to word processing, drafting and redrafting electronic manuscripts, what will remain of our traditional literary resources? Who is preserving the growing number of online newsletters, journals, and broadsides produced in Vermont?[3]

As e-mail replaces what we now dismiss as snail mail, what correspondence will remain for future reference? Indeed, does e-mail differ from paper correspondence in terms of content and purpose and, if so, how? Will the answers to these questions affect how we appraise e-mail as opposed to traditional correspondence?

Maps are being used for ever-expanding purposes, from environmental understandings to tax mapping to redistricting. Maps are also increasingly created through geographic information systems and other technologies. How will they be preserved and catalogued? Similar concerns surround the digitization of existing maps; at the moment the

Agency of Transportation is digitizing its map collections and disposing of the originals.[4]

As businesses employ online transactions, and national and international interests absorb corporations with strong Vermont identities, including Ben & Jerry's, how will we document our business community? What exactly is a *Vermont* business nowadays?

The list of questions is almost limitless. And yet, looking just at technology, I know of no Vermont repository that has established a sustainable plan for capturing computer-based records. That includes the State Archives. We have tried, and have a new project underway, but there are real obstacles to be overcome. Again, my point is that the present does not automatically document itself. To continue to rely on serendipity and chance is dangerous.

Moving from resources to tools, there is more to celebrate. Technology is offering new opportunities for access. Already many Vermont repositories have a Web presence. Typically those Websites offer general information on holdings, as well as location, policies, and hours.

Some of the larger repositories have posted finding aids, sample photographs, and information on upcoming programs. Representatives from several repositories are building a union catalog to Vermont holdings known as ARCCAT. ARCCAT allows you to search across repositories for records germane to your research. The University of Vermont's Special Collections is using encoded archival description to provide deeper views of their collections, including links to source documents. At the State Archives we are providing contextual overviews of continuing issues of government and governance. Those overviews are frequently linked to source documents.

All of these developments are exciting, but again they raise issues that demand our sustained attention. A research project I strongly encourage is an examination of the content of Vermont's historical and archival Websites. How do we present ourselves? What do we choose to highlight, and why? How do we know what our users expect? Indeed, who are, or could be, our users? Should we continue to focus Web presentations on the known interests of certain research communities, genealogy and the Civil War come to mind, or are we missing opportunities to broaden our research communities?

Most of the access tools I just cited follow the tradition of publicizing finding aids and then waiting for researchers to show up. Increasingly, researchers expect not simply an online finding aid, but also the source documents online. How will we achieve the resources to move in that direction? And should we?

I have become interested in how we are losing some of our basic

identities to technology. From my world, the term "archives," or more precisely, "archiving," has been appropriated and redefined by technology. Archives are institutional records of continuing value. Archival management is the professional understanding of how to identify records of continuing value, and how to keep them authentic and accessible over time. "Archiving" to information technology staff and the administrators they serve simply means backing up active data for short-term security.

Even what we mean by "history" is at risk. The Web and other broadcast technologies and media are image driven. If you take a Web design course you will be taught that you have seconds to capture a viewer's interest; that text should be limited; and that images attract attention.

An example: Connecticut History On-line is a wonderful project involving the University of Connecticut, the Connecticut Historical Society, and the Mystic Seaport. They have developed a Website with some 14,000 historical photographs. But are photographs history? What will happen to popular understandings of history as more and more repositories feed the Web's demand for images over text? Will collecting policies and resource allocation come to reflect image over text?[5]

In Vermont a well-respected local historical society spent a reported $40,000 to digitize its photograph collection. It did so largely as a preservation step. The vendor reasonably argued that digitizing the photographs reduced handling of the originals and therefore helped preserve them.[6] And yet, would the $40,000 have been better spent creating an adequate vault environment to preserve all the society's collections? Was the decision made as part of an overall business plan for managing the collections? And what about the special preservation needs of digital images, particularly if the vendor goes out of business? What will "preservation" come to mean as we pursue our love of technology?

I could go on; the issues I see confronting us are numerous and difficult. Will we have to develop a new media literacy to help us understand what is presented on the Web, why, and how? Will students, tapping into Internet resources from their dorm rooms, be exposed to the full range of historical inquiry? What will happen to serendipity as better and faster search engines increasingly narrow responses to Internet searches for resources?[7]

What are the future tools and resources for historical inquiry? Again, I do not know. I strongly believe, however, that we must act, and act collaboratively and cooperatively in the present in order to have a say in what those tools and resources will be.

Notes

[1] For a good examination of the impact of office technology on business practices and records, see JoAnne Yates, *Control through Communication: The Rise of System in American Management* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989).

[2] See the *Burlington Free Press,* 13 November 2001, p. 3B.

[3] For example, sets of *The Watchman,* a key nineteenth-century newspaper that provides Whig and later Republican perspectives, have been preserved. There is currently (April 2002) an on-line political newsletter, published by Progressive Michael Badamo, also called *The Watchman;* who is preserving that? Is it adequate to preserve printouts of the online *Watchman?*

[4] The Agency of Transportation made this decision despite a policy adopted by Public Records, the state's records management program, requiring that a hard copy, paper or film, be preserved of any records being digitized that have a retention period of more than ten years. A compromise will have the original maps, once digitized, appraised by surveyors and those deemed to have a continuing value deposited with some undesignated repository.

Maps are not the only record format being digitized. In a January 2001 report to the General Assembly on the Administrative Procedures Act, the Legislative Council noted the deterioration of forty years worth of audio (analog) tapes of legislative committee hearings. Deterioration included the obsolescence of some formats, such as reel-to-reel tapes. The proposed solution was to digitize the tapes for $100,000. No mention was made of how to index or manage the digital copies to avoid recreating the problems that led to the analog tapes' deterioration.

[5] Numerous observers have commented on image-driven technologies and broadcast media. See for example, Neil Postman, *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992).

Another wonderful consortium-based project is the Maine Memory Network. It does provide texts, as well as photographs, sound, and video recordings. It allows a user to cut and paste selected items into exhibits or articles, which raises a separate issue. Is the recombination of preselected material, already pulled from the contexts of parent collections, substantively different from traditional historical research and writings? If so, how, and what obligations do such Websites have to explain selection criteria and other contexts?

[6] The vendor perhaps provides an example of how we, as records professionals, have failed not only to make our concerns understood, but also to develop effective partnerships. The vendor, PhotoArk Digital Imaging, routinely promotes digitizing as a preservation tool while dismissing professional concerns.

In an editorial in the February 2000 issue of the company newsletter, *Digital Archiving,* the owner wrote: "Only a year or so ago, the collections management community in New England had yet to accept the value of the new technology. Most curators were wrestling not only with new information, but a bit of misinformation as well. As we enter the new millennium, it's clear that digitization of historical photographic collections has become the method of choice for collection managers throughout the New England area. There simply is no better way to achieve the preservation of photo artifacts than to digitize them."

The issue, again, is not that digitization isn't a powerful access tool, with some short-term preservation value (it is), but rather that decisions to digitize collections must be balanced within business plans that address all collections and the overall mission of each institution.

[7] Cass Sunstein in *republic.com* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001) opens with a useful discussion of "the neighborhood of me," and individualized search engines, collaborative filtering, and other emerging Web tools that narrow the range of information one is exposed to on the Web. Sunstein's focus is on the Web's move toward "The Daily Me" and its impact on public forums, free speech, and other expression and communication issues.

Giving Form to Vermont's History: The Challenge for the Future

The Vermont Historical Society symposium made clear that Vermont emerged and has continued to develop in a complex social, economic, and political environment. Scholars must continue to approach and understand the Vermont experience in larger regional, national, international, and, increasingly, global terms. Historians must further encourage and embrace the participation of other disciplines.

By H. NICHOLAS MULLER III

Vermont's history speaks directly to its future. A society that does not understand its past suffers collective amnesia, limiting self-understanding and obscuring prospects for the future. A society that reflexively escapes to mythology for self-perception exacerbates the effects of amnesia and relegates its sense of place to vague, often contradictory, notions. In assessing the current state of understanding of Vermont's past, the presenters in the symposium on the "Future of Vermont History in the 21st Century" directly addressed the future of the state.

The symposium, confined to one full day, placed some artificial limits on the exploration of the status of Vermont history and the direction

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for more study, but the presenters' evaluation of the "Needs and Opportunities" in the study of Vermont's past nevertheless found much common ground. Participants concluded that the condition of Vermont history demonstrates marked progress, particularly in the past half-century, but they stressed the need for more effort in questioning and developing underlying assumptions. They identified avenues for future investigation and called for strengthening the infrastructure on which serious analysis and the promulgation of the results depend.

The story of Vermont lends form and meaning to its present, and a distorted prism warps the perception of that form. For about a century and a half the interpretation of the Reverend Samuel Williams's pioneering 1794 history of Vermont, which he allowed Ira Allen to preview, and Allen's own self-serving 1798 account, dominated Vermont historiography.[1] They invented the "Myth of Creation," the heroic tale of innately liberty-loving, agrarian settlers who boldly freed themselves of British and Yorker tyranny, quelled wrong-headed dissent from within, founded an independent state, and won congressional recognition as the fourteenth state. Subsequent observers reiterated this account and extended the version to events that transpired after the founding years. The rock-hard Vermont love of liberty and self-sufficient individualism spiced with a strong tincture of cantankerousness expounded in the "Myth of Creation" long provided the interpretive framework for such major activities as Vermont's role in the Anti-Mason movement, abolitionism, the Civil War, the rise and dominance of the Republican Party, and other events. Whenever this explanation faltered, as Paul M. Searls effectively argued, observers quickly reverted to Vermont "exceptionalism," those characteristics thought to render Vermont distinct from all other states. Though largely discredited by contemporary scholarship, the Allen version persists in the popular imagination and helps explain the perceived marketing advantage in applying the name of Ethan Allen to shopping malls, furniture, a motel, a bowling alley, an Amtrak train, and dozens of other products and services. Exceptionalism continues to occupy discourse in Vermont, and defining a "Vermonter" remains a popular state sport.

As Michael Sherman's excellent analysis and synthesis of the current state of Vermont history demonstrates, the Allen version of Vermont came under frontal attack and substantial revision beginning in the second quarter of the twentieth century. Though they have not adequately penetrated the popular psyche, professional historians and other scholars, who have increasingly found the study of Vermont a legitimate endeavor, have largely revised and rewritten the Allen version and the sturdy shibboleths it spawned and reinforced. The Vermont Historical Society symposium made clear that Vermont emerged and has contin-

ued to develop in a complex social, economic, and political environment. Despite the state motto of "Freedom and Unity" and the strong self-identification with liberty, Joseph-André Senécal, Marilyn Blackwell, and Samuel A. McReynolds, in particular, pointed out that Vermonters too often have demonstrated an ugly intolerance to ethnic groups, non-Protestant religions, Native Americans, and other racial and cultural minorities. Women have had to persist to gain a full measure of liberty and participation. Despite the predominance of bucolic imagery, industry developed almost immediately and has long maintained a leading role in Vermont's economy. The symposium pointed to the diverse nature and traditions of those who have come to live and work in Vermont. Presenters noted that "winter" is not an adequate metaphor for Vermont in the last half of the nineteenth century, that Native Americans lived in Vermont and have not disappeared, and that the state's history reveals other experiences that belie the deeply held image of a homogeneous and agrarian Green Mountain State peopled by ruggedly independent, though tolerant, Yankees.

Scholars must continue to approach and understand the Vermont experience in larger regional, national, international, and, increasingly, global terms. Historians, as the symposium suggested, must further encourage and embrace the participation of other disciplines. Other presenters demonstrated that the time for invitation has already long passed. Ethnologists, geologists, geographers, genealogists, anthropologists, demographers, sociologists, archaeologists, political scientists, epidemiologists, students of material culture, literary scholars, and others have already joined the party. Their growing body of work has made important contributions to the understanding of Vermont's past.

Conversely, neither the Vermont experience, its history, nor the important archival collections have adequately attracted the attention of "national" scholars. To a significant degree Vermont has addressed major issues of national scope, especially concerning the environment, civil rights, education, and intentional communities. The Vermont experience, in concert with that of the nation and other states, deserves more intensive investigation.

The presenters made it clear that the "Myth of Creation" not only obscured the vital role of imperial politics, economics, war, and fending for itself amidst the intercolonial rivalry of the founding years, but also that, until recently, it has muted the investigation and understanding of the larger context in which Vermont developed and will continue to act. Ideas, trends, technology, financial operations, the spread of information, and all aspects of life in Vermont, even when generated in a local context, extend to the national scene and beyond. And Vermont and

Vermonters more often reacted to these developments than generated them. In its earliest days Vermont farmers relied on external markets in Canada, Boston, and New York. In return, Vermonters demanded a steady stream of imported goods, helping to explain some of the early "diplomacy" and the Champlain Valley's behavior in the embargo and War of 1812 eras. The stone industries could not flourish without external markets. The Proctors' influence, especially in Washington, provided a large gove-rnmental demand for Vermont marble, as well as the site of a major cavalry base in Colchester. The Vermont family-owned-and-operated dairy farm, perhaps the most enduring image in the state's self-definition, could not succeed without external markets. Over the years it, too, responded to livestock improvement, refrigerated transportation, new vehicles and equipment, electricity, state support, and a nationally imposed but eagerly embraced "dairy compact." In recent years students have made similar cases for the history of railroads, immigration and emigration, labor, industrial development, politics, and the transmission of information.

Rare among states at the close of the twentieth century by having only two native-born individuals serve as governor in the four decades since 1962 covering twenty-one elections, the state that ranks third in the proportion of personal income derived from dividends and interest, and with many important towns having clear majorities of in-migrant residents in the 2000 census, Vermont exemplifies a state that customarily operates in a larger context. Historians, scholars, and other observers must accelerate the study of Vermont in its regional, national, international, and global setting. They have no legitimate option but to turn away from analysis by exception and look beyond the state's borders.

For a state with a total population smaller than seventy of the largest metropolitan areas in the United States, Vermont has developed a surprisingly robust base of institutions dedicated to the preservation and understanding of the state's past. Articulating the programs and needs of three principal features of the preservation of Vermont heritage, Jane Beck from the Vermont Folklife Center, John P. Dumville of the state Division for Historic Preservation, and State Archivist Gregory Sanford detailed this richly textured fabric. At the same time they revealed some of its rents and frayed ends.

Developed over time in response to the well-intended initiatives of individuals, institutions, and state, county, and local governments, these heritage organizations often remain relatively isolated, thwarting coordination and cross-pollination and generally ladling a thin financial broth into too many cups. The active Vermont archival community, for example, does not meet in regularly scheduled, structured sessions that might dampen competition and integrate the scopes of the collections.

Archivists might also work to pursue integrated collection management standards and cooperative collection conservation. Gregory Sanford pointed out that much of the work of the State Archives has become electronic and that the World Wide Web provides greater access to researchers. Vermont archival resources should agree to standards of electronic storage and access to avoid establishing another barrier to coordination. In an archival version of Boyle's Law, which posits that gases tend to expand to the volume of their containers, the Vermont Historical Society, the Wilbur Collection at the University of Vermont, the Vermont State Archives, the Sheldon Museum, and other important repositories lament their inadequate physical, personnel, and financial resources, while at the same time they duplicate some programs and services. Each organization, often steeped in tradition and practice, maintains a legitimate and valuable function which it might better accomplish in a coordinated, cooperative fashion. The same issues generally apply to other organizations such as museums, historic sites, libraries, colleges and universities, and the myriad of small dedicated heritage foundations often pursuing overlapping missions. In 1982, the landmark, and only, "Governor's Conference on the Future of Vermont's Heritage" addressed many of these issues in over fifty resolutions, many stressing the need for preservation and maintenance of the historical record. Two decades later most of those remain simply recommendations.[2] The symposium placed a number of them back on the table.

Despite the richness, Vermont must break down the barriers that inhibit strengthening the institutional resources dedicated to heritage to begin to achieve their full collective potential. The Center for Research on Vermont at the University of Vermont has made a notable contribution to the interdisciplinary study of Vermont history and has given it more cachet among scholars in the past quarter century. But the university keeps the Center on starvation rations. The Vermont Historical Society, with the breakthrough new History Center comprising, for the present, adequate collection and archival storage, and with imaginative programs such as the Vermont History Expo that reach the important popular audience, has at the same time reduced the number of articles in *Vermont History,* the major outlet for publication about the history of the state. This decision, as Samuel B. Hand lamented in opening the symposium, has decreased the volume of published material and may have dampened the study of Vermont's past, as has the decision of The University of Vermont to drop out of the University Press of New England consortium. The healthy growth of the small state and regional publishers cannot take up the slack for monographs that lack the promise of a popular audience. Several decades of scholarship have dated a volume, now out of print, published by the Vermont Historical Society

and used to teach Vermont history.[3] The future of Vermont history awaits a collaborative one-volume effort prepared by Michael Sherman, Gene Sessions, and Jeff Potash, now nearly completed, that will both illuminate Vermont's past and provide a context for further study.

The future of Vermont history and the preservation of its heritage will depend on the coordination, strengthening, and support of the infrastructure that underpins it. With vital missions and dedicated and able voluntary and professional staff, most of the heritage organizations, with a very few and notable exceptions, have remained too passive in seeking the financial resources to nourish themselves. This devolves in part from the paucity of coordination that results in too many fishing poles in small or played-out ponds. Vermont does not have the later-developing Midwestern and Western tradition of relatively generous public support for heritage organizations; in Vermont they must actively identify, cultivate, and enlist "homo philanthropus." A healthy future for Vermont history will depend upon much stronger resource development.

The symposium, even limited to a few high-quality presentations, demonstrated that the understanding of the history of Vermont has made enormous strides, especially in the last twenty-five years. Yet the state of Vermont history has not yet lived up to the importance of its task. The degree to which scholars and others will close the gap by dampening "exceptionalism," expanding the context, embracing other disciplines, attracting national attention, and reaching the popular psyche will depend on success in strengthening the infrastructure. The very important symposium on "The Future of Vermont History in the 21st Century" picked up a dialogue organized twenty years ago with the "Governor's Conference on the Future of Vermont's Heritage." Those responsible for preserving and understanding Vermont's past must not allow another two decades to elapse before the dialogue resumes. Vermont can ill afford collective amnesia. The Vermont Historical Society should consider enlisting partners to help mount programs designed to intensify the pursuit of the understanding of the state's past, and its present, on a regular basis.

Notes

[1] Samuel Williams, *The Natural and Civil History of Vermont* (Walpole, N.H.: Isaiah Thomas and David Carlisle, Jr., 1794) and Ira Allen, *The Natural and Political History of the State of Vermont, One of the United States of America,* (London: J.W. Meyers, 1798).

[2] Vermont Governor's Conference on the Future of Vermont's Heritage, *Position Papers* (Hyde Park, Vt.: The Conference, 1982).

[3] H. Nicholas Muller III and Samuel B. Hand, eds., *In a State of Nature: Readings in Vermont History* (Montpelier, Vt.: Vermont Historical Society, 1985).

BOOK REVIEWS

Picture Rocks: American Indian Rock Art in the Northeast Woodlands

By Edward J. Lenik (Lebanon, N.H.: University Press of New England, 2003, pp. 267, $60.00; paper $29.95).

This book attempts to describe and document the petroglyphs and pictographs from forty-eight known sites in northeastern North America, as well as some decorated stone objects from several archaeological sites. Lenik begins with a short chapter on how petroglyphs and pictographs were made, followed by another on interpretation and dating. The latter is a bare bones, "minimalist" presentation. Chapter 3 completes the introductory material by presenting a short outline of northeastern culture history. This suffers from its brevity and some errors; for example, Lenik suggests (p. 16) that long distance social, political, and trade networks developed in Middle Woodland times (ca. 0–1000 CE), when in fact these declined after an Early Woodland peak and before a resurgence in the Late Woodland.

The "meat" of the book is in chapters 4–13 in which Lenik systematically reviews material from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey. The book ends with a three-page chapter: "Reflections on Picture Rocks."

Readers of this journal will be most interested in the chapter on Vermont petroglyphs. The bulk of it—a bit over sixteen pages—is devoted to the Bellows Falls site. Lenik carefully reviews past references to the glyphs, including pictures and drawings going back to 1789, so as to understand how the images have been altered over the years. This, of course, is necessary to understand the original nature of the "art." He also

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reviews the various interpretations that have been made, concluding that the glyphs mark a "power site" where Indian shamans came to make contact between the "everyday" and "supernatural" worlds. With this interpretation, few anthropologists, myself included, would disagree. Still, there is room for debate. Lenik rejects the dots surrounding the heads as entoptics, seeing them instead as traces of eyes, mouths, and noses of now-disappeared faces. My own examination of the site fails to support this. Yet, Lenik does recognize (p. 101) the importance of the trance experience to shamans, and an inevitable part of the trance experience is the generation (by the central nervous system) of entoptics—luminous, pulsating dots, grids, etc. So while Lenik would see the heads inscribed on the rock as shamans, executed in an attempt to make contact with spirits, I would see them as after-the-fact portrayals of spirts seen by shamans while in trance.

The Brattleboro petroglyphs receive a much shorter, though reasonably adequate, discussion. Lenik rejects the suggestion made by Marjorie Power and myself that the figures represent shamans' animal helpers. Instead, he sees them as attempts on the part of shamans to contact thunderbirds (and some sort of quadruped). Perhaps so, but whoever of us is right, the production of these images would be associated with shamans entering altered states of consciousness. One omission here is Lenik's failure to note that entering trance frequently brings with it a somatic sensation of flight. Could this have anything to do with the prominence of birds at the Brattleboro site?

Other Vermont sites discussed are one in Guilford, another in Woodbury, and a third in Jericho. The Guilford site is notable for an inscribed head not unlike the ones at Bellows Falls, as well as two crescents and several pits or "dots." These Lenik accepts as entoptics, contrary to his earlier rejection of that interpretation of the dots at Bellows Falls. The Woodbury images are the two sides of a right hand and a pair of feet. The hand Lenik sees (probably rightly) as a recent Euramerican production; the feet (much more weathered) he accepts as Indian. According to local tradition, they have been known since ca. 1800, and Lenik notes the Indian belief that shamans had the ability to sink their feet into rocks. But when all is said and done, we can't be sure of the Indian origin of these particular feet. The Jericho glyphs are even more problematic, accompanied as they are by the letters RAY carved into the rock. The other "glyphs" are hard to identify, but some might resemble some from Peterborough, Ontario. Who knows?

One last item discussed is a "thunderbird" with accompanying geometric designs on a tubular pipe from the "Hempyard Site," an Early Woodland cemetery in Swanton. Lenik is correct that the site dates between 2,000 and 3,000 years ago, but does not mention a radiocarbon

date of 425 BCE for one feature. The pipe could be a bit older or younger than that date. One of the design elements, a triangle, suggests to Lenik the triangular decoration on pottery vessels from two other Early Woodland sites. He does not note that triangular elements are common entoptics (fragmented zigzags), but does resurrect an old idea that these tubular pipes were used by shamans to effect sucking cures. What he overlooks is that residue from a similar pipe at the Boucher site, dated at ca. 300 BCE, shows that they were used to smoke tobacco. In the Americas, one (not the only) use of tobacco (which was considerably stronger than today's commercial product) was to induce altered states and their attendant visions.

Overall, this book is a useful inventory, but the descriptions tend to be general and many of the pictures are poorly reproduced. Those with a serious interest in this "rock art" will need to go back to original sources. They will also need to familiarize themselves with recent work on shamanism, altered states, and their connection with rock art elsewhere; subjects on which Lenik is not entirely up to date.

WILLIAM A. HAVILAND

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The Age of Homespun: Objects and Stories in the Creation of the American Myth

By Laurel Thatcher Ulrich (New York: Knopf, 2001, pp. 501, $35.00).

In her current book, *The Age of Homespun: Objects and Stories in the Creation of the American Myth,* Laurel Thatcher Ulrich imagines how a history of New England might have been conceptualized if its authors had started with a group of domestic objects as their sources. How would New England's history be told, if, instead of royal proclamations and colonial charters and the implicit rights and privileges, other stories of people and their daily encounters take center stage? The subtext, of course, is whether the Indian population would have fared so badly if the colonists had held a different understanding of the implications of living together on the margin of the Atlantic world.

Ulrich has chosen fourteen objects for her in-depth study and, in recovering their "lost stories" (p. 66), she is able to tease from them a new

version of New England's history from 1676 to the present. They include Indian-made baskets now in museum collections, banished spinning wheels, a celebrated carved cupboard, embroidered pictures and bed coverings, a tablecloth, and a stocking with balls of yarn abandoned on its knitting pins. Ulrich notes the resonance these bygones held for antiquarians, whose view of the past was often influenced by the patriarchal and patronizing view of New England's pioneers offered by Horace Bushnell and his peers. While appearing to acknowledge the physical labor of both women and men that undergirded the region's prosperity, this view privileged the settled homestead, the cleared farm, and the account-book economy.

Ulrich offers a different perspective on New England. One chapter is cued by an object from Vermont that can be dated to around 1821, when the state was experiencing a spike in population. Vermont was served by a number of newspapers, the settled farms provided a market for Indian basket makers to peddle their wares, and the growing sheep economy offered a measure of prosperity to those taking part in it. But as Ulrich shows, Vermont was much like the rest of New England, a locale where racial conflict and the impulse toward gentility were inextricably bound. A woodsplint basket lined with an issue of the *Rutland Herald* dating from 1821 that bears the name of the subscriber, an M. Goodrich, opens a discussion of this region that was also inhabited by western Abenaki. Joined by Mahicans and Pocumtucks from southern New England after King Philip's War, their stable links with French Canada were cut off by the peace treaty in 1763, just as settlers were establishing farms and villages in the Abenaki homelands. Their protests showed their lack of power and the Indian population either moved to Canada or "learned to live on the edges of white communities" (pp. 140–141). Those who stayed were part of the labor force and known to the white settlers, whose contacts might include hiring them or purchasing their colorful baskets. In instance after instance, Ulrich describes how the colonists considered the Indians' mobile lifestyle a lack of steady habits (implying that whites had steady habits), but what was the basis for that judgment? One imagines how the decorated basket might have looked among the household possessions of transients like the Goodriches. Did they have other new and colorful objects? Ulrich invites her readers to consider the similarities between Indians and Yankees on the margins: Moses Goodrich and his wife appear to have been passing through Rutland because of their inability to put down roots. In unpacking the stories, often of conflicts, buried in the objects, Ulrich is as likely to find evidence of disorderliness as the aspiration to gentility among the Yankee households.

One might be thinking at this point that Ulrich offers a tough accounting

of Vermont's history, but this is not entirely so. In the opening of the chapter, she is careful to note William Gilmore's conclusion in *Reading Becomes a Necessity of Life,* a contemporary classic that suggests a more genteel Vermont in the early Republic. And it should be observed that this is only one chapter of a broad and deep study of New England life. The chapter that describes higher education and the world for which genteel women were being educated in the eighteenth century deconstructs an embroidered picture in the decorative arts collection of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Through a close reading and by moving out into the wider circles it suggests, Ulrich discusses allegories of liberty in embroidered pictures and a charity event organized by women for the relief of the poor in juxtaposition to the empty-handed return of Governor William Shirley from London in 1753 and Massachusetts' own administration of policy toward the Wampanoags. Another chapter is a brilliant reading of diary fragments and other letters and papers from 1775 to 1780 against a group of well-known museum textiles and events in Connecticut.

Ulrich has studied each object to learn about its production and engaged a formidable range of sources to inform this recovery of the roles of race, class, and gender in the evolution of New England. For this reviewer, the challenge of writing about this book has been to avoid forms of such words as weave, color, embroider, thread, and piece to describe Ulrich's achievement.

CAROLINE F. SLOAT

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A Favorite Place of Resort for Strangers: The King's Garden at Fort Ticonderoga

By Lucinda A. Brockway with the staff of Fort Ticonderoga (Ticonderoga, N.Y.: Fort Ticonderoga, 2001, pp. 128, paper, $29.95).

Lucinda Brockway and the staff of Fort Ticonderoga have collaborated in the production of a highly engaging and thoroughly researched account of the evolution of the military garrison garden at one

of America's most historic sites. This work is, however, far more than an offering of horticultural history: *A Favorite Place of Resort for Strangers* also involves landscape history, the history of tourism, and preservation history. Connecting and unifying these various perspectives is the story of the multigenerational effort of the Pell family to preserve the Ticonderoga garrison site.

The French started to construct Fort Carillon in 1755 and before long established a vegetable garden nearly six acres in extent on a site located between the defensive works and Lake Champlain—the first of a long succession of gardens and orchards on the site. After the French abandoned Fort Carillon in 1759, a British engineer who drafted a map of the fortifications styled the French garden as the "King's Garden." The fortress, now called Ticonderoga, was subsequently captured by Patriot forces in 1775 and remained under American control until 1777 when the British destroyed it and left a melancholy ruin.

By the early nineteenth century an increasing number of travelers and artists were attracted to Ticonderoga for the impressive views of the crumbling walls of the devastated fort and the wild Adirondack Mountain scenery. One such person was William Ferris Pell, a New York City merchant, who saw the prospect of creating a country estate. After purchasing the 546-acre garrison site in 1820, Pell built his first house replete with gardens and an orchard. It burned in the mid-1820s and was replaced with an imposing Greek Revival house called the "Pavilion." Pell also took steps to stabilize what was left of the walls of Fort Ticonderoga, thus establishing the family tradition of stewardship of what would become one of the nation's most treasured historic sites.

After Pell's death in 1840 the Pavilion was leased to a series of hotel managers. The fortress and the extensively landscaped Pavilion were popular attractions on a fashionable itinerary that was part of what travel promoters called the "Northern Tour." After the Civil War, however, Fort Ticonderoga began to lose its luster as a tourist attraction. By the late nineteenth century the Pavilion and gardens had fallen into decline and in 1889 the Ticonderoga property attracted the interest of a developer who wanted to establish a residential subdivision and a golf course.

Happily, a sale did not take place and interest began to mount for preserving Fort Ticonderoga. The future of the site was assured when Stephan H. P. Pell and his wife, Sarah, acquired control of the property and launched a restoration effort. The reconstructed fort opened in 1909 and the Pells sought the advice of architect Alfred C. Blossom and landscape designer Marian C. Coffin to develop a comprehensive preservation plan for the entire property.

After supervising the reconstruction of the fort, Blossom guided the restoration of the Pavilion as a summer house for the Pell family, including a plan for a formal garden loosely based on the eighteenth-century plan for the French garrison garden. The design of the "King's Garden" reflected the then popular Colonial Revival aesthetic promoted in books by Alice Morse Earle and the ideas of landscape designer Charles A. Platt. A nine-foot high brick wall sheltered the formal garden and defined its limits beyond which lay a vegetable garden and orchard.

The walled garden was substantially redesigned in 1920 by Marion C. Coffin. One of the first women to gain prominence as a professional landscape architect, Coffin emphasized classical symmetry in the Pavilion garden. The centerpiece of her design was a *tapis vert* (green carpet) with a reflecting pool at its center. Narrow garden beds flanked the lawn, geometrically arranged in quadrants, with floral color tones arranged in such a way that the softer pastels located near the house effectively contrasted with the deeper and more vibrant colors of the plantings in the distance. The King's Garden, often called the "oldest garden in America," became widely known in the 1920s.

After Stephen Pell's death in 1950, his son John Pell became president and director of the Fort Ticonderoga Association. In his first two decades of stewardship John Pell devoted much of his attention to improving facilities to accommodate the steadily increasing stream of visitors. The King's Garden evolved as Pell's wife, Pyrma, shifted the color scheme to white and pastels, introduced a more "chaotic" (English) organization of plant varieties, and replaced trees and shrubs with new varieties.

Since John Pell's death in 1987, the Pavilion and the King's Garden have become more accessible to the public. The Pell legacy, including all of the historic structures and 2,500 acres around the Fort, has benefited from the application of modern museum standards and conservation practices. A Historic Landscape Study in 1995 recommended that the King's Garden be restored to Marion Coffin's 1920 plan. The restoration of the "masterwork garden" involved a number of public and private agencies and was implemented over a four-year period with the assistance of a large cadre of volunteers.

A Favorite Place of Resort for Strangers is a celebratory piece prompted by the completion of the restoration of the King's Garden and the adjacent grounds. The generously illustrated and fully annotated work is calculated to delight and inform readers. It succeeds in both respects, a credit to the book designer, Christopher Kuntze, and to Virginia M. Westbrook, who skillfully edited the 1995 technical report by Lucinda Brockway upon which the work is based. No doubt many readers will be

inspired by *A Favorite Place of Resort for Strangers* to follow in the footsteps of visitors of preceding generations by visiting this "great American garden."

GARY T. LORD

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The Battered Stars: One State's Civil War Ordeal during Grant's Overland Campaign

By Howard Coffin (Woodstock, Vt.: The Countryman Press, 2002, pp. xxii, 415, $30.00).

Steven Spielberg in *Saving Private Ryan* redefined the basic theme of the Hollywood war movie from glory to sacrifice. Howard Coffin has done the same with *The Battered Stars: One State's Civil War Ordeal during Grant's Overland Campaign. From the Home Front in Vermont to the Battlefields of Virginia.* General Ulysses S. Grant's 1864 overland campaign marked the beginning of the concept of total war, neither bestowing nor beseeching quarter, with the resultant sacrifice in blood. Coffin ably tells of Vermont's toll in that sacrifice, both in terms of front-line casualties and the grieving over the dead and the concern for the wounded back home, using official military records, period newspaper accounts, and diaries and letters of the participants in this tragic drama.

By 1864, the Confederacy was still a formidable foe, and its goal of independence remained viable. The North's treasury was waning, and the number of its dead and wounded was waxing. Abraham Lincoln legitimately feared that the failure to subdue the South would cost him the presidency in the November election. The victory the Confederacy could not win on the battlefield appeared to be within grasp at the polls if it could maintain a military stalemate as it had done successfully in the war's eastern theater for the past three years.

Lincoln's selection of Grant as supreme military commander was premised on Grant's personal strategy to advance all of the North's armies even if they won no battles. Based on the numerical superiority of the North's population, the meat grinder of war would exhaust the Confederacy's military manpower while the North had soldiers to spare. Coffin

transforms casualty statistics into real Vermonters who were husbands, fathers, sons, brothers, friends, and lovers. In doing so, he shows the true spirit of Vermont, not only in the words and deeds of those who did and did not survive the spring of 1864, but also in his own exploration of the lives of those who were condemned to live (and also die) in those interesting times.

Coffin first takes the reader into the winter encampments of the Vermont units of the Army of the Potomac that participated in this campaign: the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 10th, 11th, and 17th Vermont Infantry Regiments, Company F of the 1st U.S. Sharpshooter Regiment, Companies E and H of the 2nd U.S. Sharpshooter Regiments, and the 1st Vermont Cavalry Regiment, bivouacked nearby. The 2nd through the 6th, joined eventually by the 11th Regiment, were all a part of the "Old Vermont Brigade," one of the very few Northern brigades comprised of all regiments from the same state. It already had a reputation as one of the best in the Army, hence, generals used the Vermonters in the hottest spots on the battlefields, with the resultant cost in dead and wounded. By tracing the footsteps of the Vermont Brigade in and out of combat during the spring of 1864, and periodically checking on the cavalry, other regiments, and sharpshooter companies from Vermont, Coffin is able to provide the reader a credible overview of the entire campaign.

On the first day of combat during the campaign, May 5, 1864, the Vermont Brigade found itself positioned in a gap that had developed in the Army of the Potomac spread out along the Brock Road leading south snaking its way through a jungle of second-growth forest called the Wilderness. They and two other brigades were all that stood in the way of an attack by a third of Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia to cut the Northern army in two. To slow the Confederate threat to his forces until reinforcement could close the gap in his lines, Grant ordered an immediate attack.

Coffin's description of the slaughter of a third of the Vermonters of the Old Brigade in the resultant engagement with over twice their number of the enemy is both the best and most bloodcurdling of his writing: "The bullets struck everywhere, smashing faces, disemboweling, shattering arms and legs, ripping through lungs, destroying hands, feet, private parts. Men who had only recently discovered the joys of learning lost their powers of reason to a bullet in the head. Lads who worked dawn to dusk on the farm suddenly became cripples for life. Boys who loved to watch a pink sunrise of a golden sunset over the hills of home suddenly were without sight. Husbands and fathers, young lovers, in an instant, were made eunuchs" (p. 113). Had the Vermonters failed, and each divided part of the Army of the Potomac been defeated, the chances of

continuing the war to reunify the Union could have been slim to none. The blood of over a thousand Vermonters saved the Union that spring afternoon.

At the Bloody Angle at Spotsylvania and between the trenches at Cold Harbor yet more Vermonters were killed and wounded in the thickest of the fighting. The total number of Vermont casualties during the entire campaign eventually swelled to almost 3,000, close to one percent of the state's entire population. Coffin does not limit his discussion of the impact of the devastation to the front lines. He tells the reader about Vermont's governor organizing more than a dozen doctors to travel to Fredricksburg, which became one huge hospital for Grant's wounded and dying soldiers, along with wagons of supplies provided by the Vermonters back home. The refusal of Vermont's citizens to leave the responsibility to care for its wounded sons to the national government undoubtedly saved countless lives that would have been lost without that medical attention.

Coffin provides other insights to the Vermont character. One of the Vermonters he introduces who lived in Vermont during the spring of 1864 was a veteran of the 3rd Regiment who returned to civilian life upon the expiration of his enlistment and now worked at the Fairbanks scale manufacturing enterprise. Through his diary Coffin provides the reader with a view of not only civilian life in Vermont during that spring, but also the emotional impact on learning of the deaths of close friends with whom the diarist served in the Old Vermont Brigade. This story has a surprising twist, which I leave to the readers to discover for themselves. It also underscores Coffin's skills as a writer. He uses his prior experience in bringing Vermont's involvement in the Civil War to life to give some of his best descriptions of combat in this third, and one hopes not his last, book on the subject.

The book does have a few distractions, including the placement of pictures of events and participants pages away from their references in the text, and the necessity of an errata sheet to correct errors missed in proofreading or editing. However, none of these minor faults detract from the overall excellent work in this book. Coffin does not disappoint a contemporary generation of both Vermonters and non-Vermonters who have come to expect from him an introduction to the almost incomprehensible sacrifices that past generations of Vermonters made in assuring that the United States would be one nation, free and indivisible.

CHARLES S. MARTIN

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Manufacturing the Muse: Estey Organs & Consumer Culture in Victorian America

By Dennis G. Waring (Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 2002, pp. 371, $70.00, paper $24.95).

Dennis Waring has written a rich and provocatively ethnomusicological history of the Estey Organ Company of Brattleboro, Vermont. The introduction and part I of the book examine the historical and social-cultural contexts of the crafting of musical instruments, particularly the reed organ. Part II covers the life of Jacob Estey (1814–1890), the precursors, founding, and phenomenal growth of the Estey Organ Company, Jacob's successors, and the demise of the company in 1960. One hundred fifty-two pages of end material include a substantial set of musical and technical appendices, expansive footnotes, and an extensive bibliography and index. Finally, the book comes with a delightful CD recording of several accomplished reed organ artists playing typical music on vintage instruments, some as accompaniment to sweet songs. It should be apparent already that this book is a find for scholars and amateurs alike.

The book clarifies at the outset that the term "reed organ" refers to a class of keyboard instruments "whose sound is produced by freely-vibrating reed tongues [rather than columns of air contained in pipes] . . . and activated by air under either pressure or suction" (p. 1). An introductory sketch of the slow-starting production of musical instruments in America observes that keyboard instruments were by far the largest part of the enterprise that developed between the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and then announces, "The reed organ was the answer to Victorian America's craving for aesthetic enrichment and social status through acquisition of manufactured goods" (p. 8). Roughly the first third of the book is devoted to fleshing out this thesis.

Waring artfully employs drawings and photographs of Estey organ cases, Estey advertisements, catalogs, sheet-music covers, parlor-song texts, and the like to demonstrate Estey products' conformity to Victorian ideals of opulence, embellishment, revived Rococo, Gothic, and other period styles for decorating possessions well beyond what was strictly useful, to provide "expansive associations and maximum emotional response" (p. 21) at costs not exceeding what the middle class could afford. The reed organ as a link between church and home, and as a medium for expression of an idealized feminine role, suggested domestic gentility. The generally simple style of reed organ music, however—renditions of popular songs, hymns, and simplified classical music—

presents somewhat more of a conundrum for Waring. Not finding Victorian elaboration and ornament in the music itself, he notes that "endless variations on themes of innocence, love, and death were metaphorical musical equivalents of the hundreds of styles of Victorian bannisters, wallpaper, drapery, and doors. Just as rapid construction methods and inexpensive cookie-cutter architectural millwork provided access to fashion that appeared upper class, songs of formulaic construction imbued with predictable fervor gave musical aspirants the feeling of cultivated, genteel accomplishment" (p. 68).

Up to this point, Waring's argument has been persuasive, but here some might see the interpretive overreach that so tempts writers of sociocultural analysis. (The renowned Harvard professor of American literature, Perry Miller, famously remarked, "Remember, *Moby Dick* is first of all a story about a whale.") In his thorough and fascinating appendix, "Sound Production with Free Reeds," Ned Phoenix characterizes the American reed organ as "a folk instrument, designed and built by common folk, to look, play, and sound appropriate for music made in common places by other common folk" (p. 234). This, too, is interpretive, but particularly as the parts of the book describing the people who worked at Estey suggest, Phoenix's remark is a valid counterpoint to Waring's Victorian theme. Indeed, Waring himself supplies less speculative but sophisticated reasons for the popularity of the reed organ in the few passages from his pen that discuss the instrument's musical qualities per se: that free-reed timbre "blends well with voices," giving the reed organ a "warm vocal quality that cannot be matched by the more percussive [though higher status] piano" (p. 54), and that "the organs were designed [through their various stops and swell capacities] to make simple arrangements of popular sacred and secular music sound complex yet emotionally satisfying" (p. 168). These qualities are beautifully revealed in the CD recording that accompanies the book.

Jacob Estey's life and the career of his company are splendidly recounted from a trove of primary and secondary sources, including interviews with former employees still alive. Originally, reed organs were made one at a time, but by the 1890s they were being turned out assembly-line style at a rate of more than 1,500 per month, though still requiring an artisan's skill. A constant stream of inventions and modifications was contributed by several generations of craftsmen. Jacob Estey himself was neither a musician nor an organ craftsman. Rather he began to abandon an expanding trade as a plumber when he became in 1852 a co-owner, salesman, and eventually manager of a small reed-organ firm that by twists and turns morphed into the Estey Organ Company. Waring cites Brattleboro chronicler Mary R. Cabot for the fact that during the

time that Estey was shifting his career, the old methods of making pipes and pumps "were being replaced with newer techniques," a possible factor in Estey's moving out of plumbing (p. 93). What Waring does not note is that these newer techniques featured the use of machines to produce interchangeable parts, beginning with "interchangeable pumps" manufactured by the National Hydraulic Company in Windsor, Vermont, founded in 1828 by gunmaker and inventor Asahel Hubbard, whose machines have been recognized as "real antecedents of today's line-type production" (Wayne G. Broehl, Jr., *Precision Valley: The Machine Tool Companies of Springfield, Vermont* [1959], p. 4). Some fourteen pages later in Waring we read about Estey's 1865 purchase of "a highly specialized machine that could mass-produce organ reeds" (p. 107) from its inventor, Josiah Davis Whitney, then of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, but who, we must add, had earlier spent seven years in the manufacture of organs in Springfield, Massachusetts, where was located the Springfield Armory, a firm that during the early nineteenth century had as a leading goal the interchangeability of gun parts, and that exercised a wide influence on the many artisans in the region who wanted to do business with it. One Sam Colt visited the armory before inventing the gun credited with greatly boosting the move of industry to interchangeable parts. The manufacture of the Colt commenced in Hartford, Connecticut, at one end of the "Precision Valley" that stretched along the Connecticut River from Hartford past Springfield, Massachusetts, Brattleboro, and Springfield, Vermont, to Windsor. Waring does portray a Brattleboro network of inventive makers of "melodeons" or early reed organs, but the larger geographic and technological context of the evolution of the reed organ begs for further historical investigation.

A reviewer is bound to look for lacunae in the material presented, but the truth is this reviewer found *Manufacturing the Muse* extraordinarily interesting and informative. He learned much about his own 1883 Estey organ and unsuspected dimensions of his enjoyment of it, about the history and people of Brattleboro, about a remarkable man whose contrast to too many present-day CEOs could not be more striking, and about a company that had few Vermont peers, past or present, for worldwide enterprise and reputation. Our few demurrers are but exceptions to what is overall a meticulously researched and lucidly written book. Persons of a variety of vocations and avocations will want to read it.

JOSEPH C. GRANNIS

Joe Grannis's wandering career includes majoring in American history at Harvard College, teaching sociology of education at Teachers College, Columbia University, and, currently, serving as organist and choir director at a church in Chester, Vermont.

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Ruth Page. Jules Older. Willem Lange. If you are a listener to Vermont Public Radio, you not only just identified each of the preceding individuals, but also conjured up a voice and, perhaps, a phrase or tag line. VPR regulars and those who enjoy short, tightly written essays will take delight in *Vermont Air.* That said, how should one review *Vermont Air* for *Vermont History?*

In terms of format and context, *Vermont Air* is an interesting challenge as a historical tool. The essays are hybrid documents containing elements of both written and spoken communication. Under VPR guidelines the commentaries must be written in a conversational style, covering a topic within approximately three minutes of speaking time. The essays may be edited by VPR and then recorded by the commentator. *Vermont Air* completes the loop by returning the broadcast commentary to written text.

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In her introduction Betty Smith compares the commentaries to a "vast New England Town Meeting." This suggests a more orderly sequence of point-counterpoint within a defined (warned) topic than is present in *Vermont Air,* which is arranged alphabetically by author. It would be an unusual town meeting where a citizen's comments on school size (Peg Devlyn, "Big Box Schools") elicited a response on a "passion for art" (Lois Eby).

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Roots of the Blackthorn Tree: The Irish Heritage

By Basil S. Douros (Rancho Murieta, Ca.: Five and Dot Corporation, 2002, pp. 232, paper, $15.00).

What is one to make of this book? Basil Douros set out to record some episodes about Shelburne's Barrett family—to which he is related by marriage—and ended up mixing ancient Irish history and family anecdotes, complete with fictional characters and imagined conversations. Indeed, in the preface Douros calls his work a novel rather than a family history. In fact, it is something between history and fiction, but it contains too much factual material to be described simply as historical fiction.

This criticism aside, there is much to commend to a Vermont audience in this slim volume. Through his many conversations with family members, Douros collected stories detailing the travails and successes of an Irish immigrant family in Vermont. We learn, for example, that the Barretts and Breens, neighbors in Ireland, fleeing the distress of the Great Famine of the 1840s, came to America together and settled in Underhill, where the Breens had a relative. At the time, Underhill Center had a large Irish community. Even today traces of this community remain with place names such as Irish Settlement Road, Casey Hill, and the Irish Cemetery. Douros gives us glimpses into the everyday life of the nineteenth-century Underhill Irish: the making of hard cider in the fall and winter, fixing a broken wagon axle at Fitzsimonds's blacksmith shop, and family ploys to get the younger generation married and settled.

In the 1880s the focus of the Barrett family shifted from Underhill to Shelburne, due to the carpentry skill of Luke Barrett, a grandson of the original immigrants. Having gained a reputation for designing and building bridges, he was hired by the owners of the Lake Champlain Transit Company (LCTC) and the Shelburne Shipyards to teach the basics of boatbuilding. Eventually, he became the foreman of the shipyards.

Mr. Douros's Shelburne anecdotes are more grounded in fact than his earlier stories, for his wife is the granddaughter of Luke Barrett and he must have heard numerous tales about the early days in Shelburne from the old folks at family gatherings. He tells us, for example, of the old Irish wedding custom known as "horning," in which friends of the bride and groom kept them exasperated on their wedding night by constantly banging on pots and pans outside their honeymoon retreat—a custom still popular at Barrett weddings in the early part of the twentieth century.

The book includes vignettes about Captain George Rushlow, one of

LCTC's legendary steamboat captains; references to "Doc" Patrick McSweeney, Burlington's resident healer to the Irish American community; glimpses of Father Jerome Cloarec, longtime pastor of St. Joseph Church in Burlington; and stories of life in and around Shelburne and the shipyards.

A section dealing with early Irish history is the weakest part of the book. Mr. Douros apparently wanted to tell the reader that the Barretts were of Norman-Irish stock. He devotes a quarter of the book to explaining who the Normans were, how they came to be in Ireland, and how the Barretts came to settle in County Wexford. For family members unaware of their ancient lineage, this background material might be useful, but to the average reader it is unnecessary. Moreover, he has some basic facts wrong. For example, he states that the Romans invaded Ireland in 50 B.C. and suggests that they stayed for 500 years. In fact, the Romans never got as far as Ireland, although they did give it the Latin name *Hibernia.*

But, in Mr. Douros's defense, he is not a trained historian, and his purpose in writing this book is to tell his family something about itself. This he did, if somewhat awkwardly. Had he done nothing at all, professional historians would be without much material that sheds light on daily life in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Vermont.

VINCENT FEENEY

Vincent Feeney is an adjunct professor of Irish history at the University of Vermont, and a past president of the Chittenden County Historical Society.

Postcards from Vermont: A Social History, 1905–1945

By Allen F. Davis (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 2002, pp. xiii, 326, paper, $24.95).

In *Postcards from Vermont,* Allen Davis has made available for enjoyment, research, and instruction a glorious array of over 360 very well-reproduced postcards—30 in color—drawn primarily from the author's collection with a few borrowed from library, museum, and historical society archives. The images are accompanied by text, ranging from one-line captions to essays, that provides both information and historical

context. Davis invites the reader to share what has been his passion since 1983 when he "first got interested in postcards as history quite accidentally." As a self-described "addicted collector," he enthusiastically communicates what he has learned about postcards and, in the process, about Vermont.

The book is both more and less than the title suggests. As Davis himself remarks: "This is a book about postcards and about Vermont, but it is not the usual book about either. It uses postcards to tell various aspects of the social and cultural history of Vermont from about 1905 to 1945, but in no sense is it a comprehensive history of the state during that time" (p. vii). In the epilogue Davis writes, "Most of the postcards in this book come from the 'golden age,' 1907 to 1915, but I also have included many from the 1920s and 1930s as well as a few from the 1940s" (p. 314).

Publishing *Postcards from Vermont* has been a monumental undertaking; the result is a fine book, which will serve several publics well. Vermont still shows ample evidence of its past, so visitors can buy this book as a souvenir that will provide context for what they have seen, and residents can use it to learn about layers of their local and state history to add to what they have experienced and heard about. Libraries and archives can make it a valuable addition to their reference collection for use by both patrons and staff. Postcard collectors will find useful information about Vermont cards, interesting historical information about deltiology, and an example from a fellow "addict" on how to put your collection to productive use.

Davis's excellent thirteen-page introduction includes: photographers by name, and the history of photography; the role of postcard manufacturers—many of whom are also named; and the history of postcards, especially during the golden age. The introduction to a chapter titled "The Postcard as Photojournalism" offers practical clues about dating postcards, and impresses upon the reader the value of postcards as sources of new information or confirmation for what is already known.

The main body of the book is organized into sixteen chapters. Each begins with an essay of from one to five pages, followed by an "exhibit" of fourteen to thirty-six postcards, one or two to a page, which are accompanied by both two-page mini-essays and individual captions of varying length and style. The introductory essay for the country store section of the "Country Stores and One-Room Schools" chapter gives the reader a particularly good context for the images that follow. The "Farm and Factory" essay is very interesting, although there is little in it after 1900. The railroad era boasts especially good pictures and the twenty-five images in the "Men at Work" chapter are simply spectacu-

lar! Individual captions range from mere identification to more substantial comments. At their best, the captions set an image in context and teach the reader skills for future use. On occasion, however, in a distracting change in style, the author asks if the reader recognizes the building or the family, or notices the photographer's technique. Sometimes Davis makes reference to his own father or grandfather, who ran the country store in Hardwick, where Davis still lives.

Geographic coverage of the state is quite good and an extensive index allows the reader to locate images by place as well as by proper name and subject area. Chronological coverage, however, is uneven. Almost half of the postcards are dated 1905–1915, and several of the approximately one-third that are undated may also be from that golden age of the postcard. Of the thirty-nine dated in the 1920s, fifteen are of Charles Lindbergh and The Flood of 1927.

Where Davis provides dates, a consistent explanation would have been welcome, i.e. "mailed on" (a certain date); "1910" if printed on the card; "estimated to be . . ." (with a rationale). Dates are especially sparse in the color section, even when correspondents had included them in their messages. Although *Postcards from Vermont* is organized thematically rather than chronologically, and dates are not indexed, more dating would have provided yet another way to use the book.

One of the author's goals is to help dispel the image of Vermont as a world in harmony and "pretty as a picture." He says, "Throughout the book I try to relate the myth to the reality, the ideal to the real" (p. viii). Readers will agree that, "Postcards don't tell us everything about Vermont history in the first decades of the twentieth century, but they do reveal a fascinating time, an era of paradox and contradiction" (p. 13).

Postcards from Vermont is doing good work revealing the layers of our state's history, demonstrating the importance of postcards when studying the changing landscape and changing styles, and motivating ourselves and future generations to keep on collecting.

TORDIS ILG ISSELHARDT

Tordis Ilg Isselhardt, president and publisher of Images from the Past, Inc., is also a preservationist and collector who focuses on regional and cultural history.

Vermont Air: The Best of the Vermont Public Radio Commentaries

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Ruth Page. Jules Older. Willem Lange. If you are a listener to Vermont Public Radio, you not only just identified each of the preceding individuals, but also conjured up a voice and, perhaps, a phrase or tag line. VPR regulars and those who enjoy short, tightly written essays will take delight in *Vermont Air.* That said, how should one review *Vermont Air* for *Vermont History?*

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Perhaps the better analogy would be snatches of overheard conversations. The speakers are self-selected, articulate, informed, and opinionated, but they are not, on the surface, talking to or debating with one another. They are talking to us, occasionally to persuade, or as often, simply to share reflections on anything from cockroaches and the weather to Vermont character and characters to the national debate du jour.

And yet in reading the essays as a whole, rather than listening to them over the course of days or months, dialogues and patterns do emerge that can inform historians seeking to understand Vermonters and their perspectives. Like all of us, many of the commentators reflect on the weather. When Cheryl Hanna, a lawyer, encounters black ice, she frames the experience within the context of Vermont's Good Samaritan law. Mathematician Don Rockmore's black ice experience leads to speculations about the "geometry of life." Willem Lange, driving through a snowstorm, comments on the hyperbole of forecasts, observing that "flourishing in this climate is such a good, moral thing to do."

Will Curtis's offerings on his (non-Vermont) memories of celebrating the Fourth of July and Christmas or of sugaring, touch on our nostalgic longings, while Nick Boke's sketch of rural democracy ("Confessions of a Vote Counter") recalls the paintings of Norman Rockwell or the poems of Walter Hard. The number of commentators who offer reflections on the natural world (whether Vermont's or elsewhere) suggests that VPR's listeners share environmental interests and concerns. It is notable that three essays touch on gardening but only one, and that a humor piece, comments on agriculture. Given the public dialogues of the past few years, it is not surprising that educational issues are a frequent subject. The civil union issue, however, is only discussed in two essays, Allan Gilbert's on "Profiles in Courage" and Cheryl Hanna's very personal account of a gay friend. Both add dimensions that can help understand at least one side of the debate (the limited number of civil union essays is because VPR limited the selections to 2000–2001).

Bill Seamans's comments on the "chatterati" ("Lexicon") not only contributes a perspective on the state of public discourse, but also offers a framework for considering the *Vermont Air* commentaries. Arguably the commentaries as a whole offer a left-of-center view, but there are hints of the larger Vermont dialogue. Peg Devlyn's commentary on a liveable wage or Ellen David Friedman's thoughts on globalization can be juxtaposed with John McClaughry's observations on government policies as barriers to local business ("Vermont's Coming Crony Capitalism"). As a compilation of written texts, *Vermont Air* occasionally suggests alliances that may not be apparent from the on-air com-

mentaries. Thus, one can draw a line from Ron Powers's celebration of one woman's efforts to embrace "problem kids" ("The Youth Problem") to McClaughry's fear that government programs are replacing individual responsibility ("The Rise of the Nanny State"). But then both essayists must contemplate Tom Slayton's "Peacham Tragedy," which recounts how even our celebrated Vermont humanity can be withdrawn with fatal consequences.

Is *Vermont Air,* then, an appropriate subject for review by *Vermont History?* Yes. It is a snapshot, perhaps more narrowly cropped than we would wish, of who we are as Vermonters. It touches on our humor, our observations of the world around us, and our hopes and fears. Indeed, one hopes that VPR will consider publishing a collection of earlier commentaries to complement those drawn from the 2000–2001 broadcasts covered here. Such a publication could broaden the snapshot back to 1988, before Act 60, civil unions, and other events reshaped our dialogues and self-understanding.

This is Gregory Sanford in the State Archives, the Soul of the Nanny State. I better get back to work.

GREGORY SANFORD

Gregory Sanford is, as he said, the Vermont State Archivist. He writes his own commentaries for Opinions, *the newsletter of the secretary of state, and for Vermont Public Radio, and is frequently quoted in Vermont media on issues in state government.*

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Recent Additions to the Vermont Historical Society Library

BOOKS

*Bennington Historical Society and Bennington Museum, *Bennington.* Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia, 2002. 128p. List: $19.99 (paper). Mostly photographs.

*Collins, Anne L., Virginia Lisai and Louise Luring, *Around Bellows Falls: Rockingham, Westminster, and Saxtons River.* Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia, 2002. 128p. List: $19.99 (paper). Mostly photographs.

*Davis, Allen Freeman, *Postcards from Vermont: A Social History, 1905–1945.* Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 2002. 326p. List: $24.95 (paper).

Freund, Barbara, *Among the Things that Were: Letters of a Vermont Farm Family, 1830–1874.* Fairfield, Penn.: The author, 2001. 366p. Source: The author, 8 Deborah Trail, Fairfield, PA 17320–8298. List: unknown. Family from Whiting and Starksboro.

*Graff, Nancy Price, *Looking Back at Vermont: Farm Security Administration Photographs, 1936–1942.* Middlebury, Vt.: Middlebury College Museum of Art, 2002. 112p. List: $30.00 (paper).

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Hormel, James E., *Community National Bank: The First 150 Years, 1851–2001.* No publisher, 2001? 36p. Source: Community National Bank, P.O. Box 1437, Montpelier, VT 05602. List: unknown (paper).

*Hubbard, Richard C., and Justin Crocker, *Industry around the Falls: A History of Early Middlebury and Its Industries.* No publisher, 2000. 82p. Source: The author, 180 Chipman Park, Middlebury, VT 05753. List: $11.00 (paper).

The History of Walker Motors, Inc. No publisher, 2002. 27p. Source: The publisher, P.O. Box 1166, Montpelier, VT 05601-1166. List: unknown (paper). Automobile dealership located in Montpelier since 1952.

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Larose, Thomas Earl, The Petroglyph Sites of Bellows Falls and Brattleboro, Vermont. 270p. Ph.D. diss., 2001. Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Va.

*Leach, Chester K., compiled by Edward J. Feidner, *"Dear Wife": The Civil War Letters of Chester K. Leach.* Burlington, Vt.: Center for Research on Vermont, University of Vermont, 2002. 231p. List: $18.00 (paper). Soldier from Fletcher.

Lippard, Lucy R., *States of GRACE: Vermont's Grass Roots Art and Community Effort Since 1975.* Hardwick, Vt.: GRACE, 1998. 32p. Source: The publisher, P.O. Box 960, Hardwick, VT 05843. List: $10.00.

Luigi Lucioni in the Collection of the Elizabeth de C. Wilson Museum on the Occasion of the Grand Opening 22 July 2000. Manchester, Vt.: Southern Vermont Arts Center, 2000. 66p. Source: The publisher, P.O. Box 617, Manchester, VT 05254. List: $16.00 (paper).

*Oliver, Peter, *Stowe: Classic New England.* Boulder, Colo.: Mountain Sports Press, 2002. 216p. List: $49.95.

*Peladeau, Marius B., compiler, *Burnished Rows of Steel: Vermont's Role in the Battle of Gettysburg, July 1–3, 1863.* Newport, Vt.: Vermont Civil War Enterprises, 2002. 523p. List: $75.00. Collection of printed and photographic material.

Raffo, Steven M., *A Biography of Oliver Johnson, Abolitionist and Reformer, 1809–1889.* Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 2002. 362p. Source: The publisher, Box 450, Lewiston, NY 14092-0450. List: $119.95.

Thomas, Peter A., *Contributions to Understanding Vermont Prehistory: The Chittenden County Circumferential Highway Archaeological Studies, 1983–2000.* Burlington, Vt.: University of Vermont, Consulting Archaeology Program, 2002. 171p. Report no. 204. Source: The publisher, 112 University Heights, Burlington, VT 05405. List: unknown (paper).

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*Waring, Dennis, *Manufacturing the Muse: Estey Organs & Consumer Culture in Victorian America.* Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 2002. 356p. plus 1 compact disc. List: $24.95 (paper). Company was located in Brattleboro.

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*Wheeler, Scott, *Rumrunners & Revenuers: Prohibition in Vermont.* Shelburne, Vt.: New England Press, 2002. 163p. List: $16.95 (paper).

*Williams, Bradley J., *The Complete Reference Guide to Cushman Colonial Creations: Furniture Made by the H. T. Cushman Manufacturing Company of North Bennington, Vermont, with Value Guide.* Robesonia, Penn.: Bradley J. Williams, 2002. 249p. List: $29.95 (paper).

*Wood, Phyllis, and Kathy Wendling, editors, *A South Woodstock Legacy: Vermont Foods from the Past.* South Woodstock, Vt.: South Woodstock Fire Protection Association, 1999. 212 p. List: $18.00 (paper).

Zeller, Paul G., *The Second Vermont Volunteer Infantry Regiment, 1861–1865.* Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 2002. 349p. Source: The publisher, Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640. List: $49.00.

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