VERMONT HISTORY

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The Work Journal of Albert Bickford, Mid-Nineteenth-Century Vermont Farmer, Cooper, and Carpenter

From age twenty-three to thirty-seven, Albert Bickford of Peacham kept a farm journal describing his work, the weather, and his wages for hiring out. In total, he wrote 350 entries over a fifteen-year period. Although parts of the journal are repetitious, the rhythm of the work and farming year become strikingly evident in these brief entries. In addition, he described coopering and carpentry, religious and political issues, and social concerns during the early years of the cash economy in Vermont.

Edited with an introduction and epilogue by LYNN A. BONFIELD

On March 5, 1848, twenty-three-year-old Albert Bickford of Peacham, Vermont, set pen to paper and made the first in a series of journal entries that would eventually stretch out over the course of fifteen years. This young man, born in 1824 on his family's farm in the north part of town, began, almost four decades after the town's founding, the earliest extant Peacham farm journal and one of the few primary sources describing farming in the area. In 1840, 80

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percent of Peacham adult males were farmers or farm laborers. "Agriculture," Peacham historian Ernest Bogart wrote, "was the chief and in most cases the sole occupation of the inhabitants."[1] Preserved at the Peacham Historical Association, Albert's journal was donated prior to 1980, when formal accession records began, and therefore the provenance is unknown. At the top of the first page, the place where the journal was kept is identified simply as "Peacham."

Peacham is located on the east side of Vermont in Caledonia County and was settled in 1776. In the years that followed, many New Englanders migrated north to the new community. Among these were Benjamin Bickford and Bridget Keys of New Hampshire, who married in Peacham in 1820.[2] At that time, Peacham with a population of 1,294 was the second largest town in the county. It boasted the county grammar school, a growing church, eight stores, and industry including gristmills, sawmills, a carding shop, a blacksmith, a tannery, and at least one saddle- and harness-making shop.[3] Beginning in 1818, Benjamin Bickford purchased land located on the Centre Road, later called Penny Street, which climbed Cow Hill on the northwest side of Peacham.[4] By 1850, the Bickford land, suitable for raising sheep and cattle and for growing hay, corn, wheat, and other grains, also had a flourishing orchard of apple and plum trees and a sizable sugar bush.[5] It was on this farm that Albert, the family's second child and first boy, lived until he married and left in 1862.

The Research Process

Identifying the journal writer was the first research challenge. No name appears on the journal. Searching the entries for internal evidence such as family names, important dates, place identifications, and local activities produced useful clues pointing to Albert Bickford. The location of the farm where Albert kept his journal was found using town records and the 1858 Walling Map of Caledonia County that specified farm owners. The most northern farm on Cow Hill lists the name "B Bickford," Albert's father. The town genealogy, *People of Peacham,* provided vital dates for Albert Bickford, his parents, and siblings.

Once the name of the journal writer was known, it became the key to unlocking town records, such as the annual grand lists with property descriptions and listers' financial evaluations of real estate and personal property. Knowing the journal writer's name enabled other records to be searched, including church and school records. The town of Peacham has relatively complete records, having suffered no fires or other disasters in the town offices. This is also true for the Caledonia County Courthouse, which holds probate records that can add to the biography

of a person the property at death and sometimes an inventory of personal belongings.

The next step was to put Albert Bickford's life as recorded in his journal into the context of the times—family, community, town, county, state, region, and nation. This is the challenge for historians who work with primary sources, including journals, which must be fleshed out in order to realize the full meaning of the entries, or, "to catch the atmosphere," as Ernest Bogart uniquely stated in 1948.[6] Peacham is fortunate in that there are several hundred letters and dozens of diaries of nineteenth-century local families that complement Albert's farm journal. Especially useful for this project were the letters and diaries of the Watts and Walbridge families of Peacham,[7] contemporaries of Albert Bickford. Local newspapers with reports of village and county activities such as agricultural fairs, political meetings, voting records, and social events are another good contextual resource. In Albert's time, Peacham residents could read the weeklies published in Danville and St. Johnsbury. When Albert wrote in his journal that he went to Danville, the newspapers for that week point out what was going on in town at the time—events that might have piqued his interest enough to have him make the twenty-mile round trip. On August 27, 1848, Albert wrote, "I went to the Caravan at Danville last Tewsday." Two weeks earlier, *The North Star* announced the coming of the "Menagerie" with "30 Carriages of Animals, drawn by One Hundred Horses" and the recent arrival of "The Asiatic Rhinoceros." Albert did not note if he watched the caravan from the side of the road or if he paid the twenty-five cents admission to see the exhibition and the performance of the "Lion Queen," a Miss Adalina, who entered "the den of the Fiercest Animals."[8] The news story broadens the understanding of Albert's one-line entry.

Of great importance in this process of adding flesh to the bones of Albert's journal is the Peacham Historical Association, founded in 1921 by long-time residents. Among its activities is a commitment to collect and preserve local records including diaries, letters, and reminiscences; photographs and other visual materials; the archives of churches, schools, and local organizations; the records of stores and industry; copies of articles about Peacham;[9] and artifacts including tools, textiles, and domestic items. Another step taken by the Historical Association to preserve local history was its cooperation with the Vermont Historical Society in 1948 to publish a town history by summer resident and Ph.D. economic historian Ernest L. Bogart. *Peacham: The Story of a Vermont Hill Town* continues to be the major source on the development and changes in the town from its beginnings into the twentieth century.

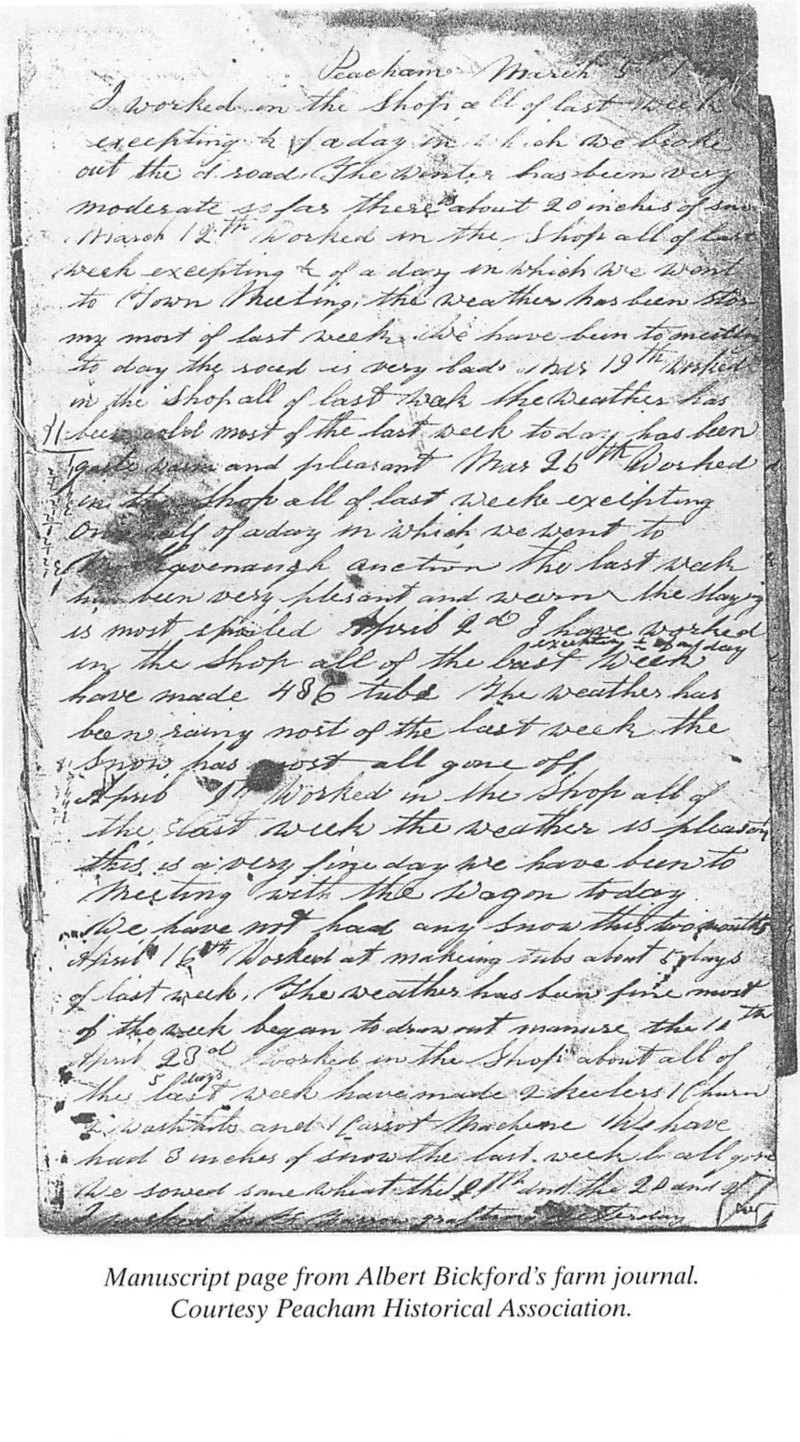
These sources are available to help unravel the mysteries of private writings. What on the surface appears to be a rather dry journal with a minimal list of activities can provide a broader and deeper historical perspective. In the case of Albert's journal, the life of a young man born on a farm unfolds as he describes the chores of farming. Albert's seasonal, as well as daily work, could have been written by many a New England farmer at the time. In addition to farm life, Albert offers insights on carpentry and coopering, religious practices, political issues, and social concerns of the time. The journal describes the transitional period of time when skills used on the farm translated into work for wages, in other words the commercialization of rural work. In this research process, a simple document grows into a three-dimensional picture, revealing details and a sense of a past that has completely disappeared.

The Journal

Albert gave no reason for starting to keep a journal. He did not admit to making the obviously homemade volume or receiving it as a gift. He never referred to the bound pages as a journal, diary, or record book, but since he clearly wrote it for the purpose of keeping a record of his work, it may best be described as a work journal.

Albert penned his work record in a hand-made journal divided into two parts. The first pages are on off-white paper measuring 8 × 13 inches; the last pages are on blue-ruled paper measuring 8 × 10 inches. All twenty-five pages are held together by thick tan thread stitched about an inch apart down the spine. The journal has no cover or back. Albert's entries follow one after another in run-on style, the left-hand margin having no significance in terms of placement of date. There is little or no space between dates, and sometimes not even between years. There are no crossed-out words or sentences and the writing is simple, lacking literary flair.

In the early years, Albert wrote weekly entries, mainly after returning from the Sunday church service, which he and his Peacham townspeople called "meeting." His family must have been aware of his journal keeping because he began the practice in winter when he would have sat in the warm part of the house with others. As the years went by his entries became less regular, and from 1856 on, he wrote fewer than ten times a year. During these later years he often worked away from home, and the gaps in the journal suggest that he left it behind and summarized his activities when he returned home. Spelling and sentence structure throughout are indicative of his basic but limited education, which amounted to the district school for the early years and at most three terms at the highly regarded Caledonia County Grammar


Peacham March 5 [illegible]
I worked in the Shop all of last week
excepting ½ of a day in which we broke
out the [illegible] road. The Winter has been very
moderate so far there is about 20 inches of snow
March 12th Worked in the Shop all of last
week excepting ½ of a day in which we went
to Town Meeting, the weather has been stor-
my most of last week we have been to meeting
to day the road is very bad. Mar 19th Worked
in the Shop all of last week the weather has
been cold most of the last week to day has been
quite warm and pleasant Mar 26th Worked
in the Shop all of last week excepting
One half of a day in which we went to
[illegible] auction the last week
has been very plesant and warm the slaying
is most spoiled April 2d I have worked
in the Shop all of the last Week excepting ½ of a day
have made 486 tubs The weather has
been rainy most of the last week the
Snow has most all gone off
April 9th Worked in the Shop all of
the last week the weather is pleasant
this is a very fine day we have been to
Meeting with the Wagon today
We have not had any snow this two months
April 16th Worked at making tubs about 5 days
of last week, The weather has been fine most
of the week began to draw out manure the 11th
April 23d Worked in the Shop about all of
the last week 5 days have made 2 keelers 1 Churn
2 wash tubs and 1 Carrot Machine We have
had 8 inches of snow the last week it all gone
We sowed some wheat the 21th and the 22 and [illegible]
I worked [illegible] yesterday

Manuscript page from Albert Bickford's farm journal.
Courtesy Peacham Historical Association.

School, called the Peacham Academy.[10] His short entries record the facts and serve the purpose of presenting his work life.

Albert mentioned his father only in journal entries such as "worked for Father," and he made no mention of his mother. Nor did he refer to his older sister, Emily, although her husband, whom she married in 1847, is noted in sixteen entries, such as "worked for James R. Kinerson." Albert referred only once to his brother Russell, two years younger. On September 23, 1849, he wrote that Russell "started for Lowell," with no explanation that the trip might be for visiting or going off to work in that New England industrial center.[11] No entries introduced Albert's younger brothers, Harvey and Charles, or his younger sister, Caroline. Daniel Bickford, who hired Albert off and on, is identified simply as "Uncle Daniel" with no clarification of his family connection. In this journal, family members and family life are largely ignored.

After beginning the journal, it took three months before Albert referred to a social or leisure activity. That entry simply stated "went a fishing." It is one of the few non-work related activities mentioned. Thus his entries differed from contemporary diarists who described a variety of activities, added opinions, and often reflected on life, including religious beliefs. The first words in Albert's first entry, "I worked," make it clear that he planned to record his work. It is not clear, however, why he wanted a record of his work; nor is it clear if the record was for his own use or a way of convincing others, maybe his father, that he was working hard. In only one entry did he reveal that he might be writing for his father, when he listed "your tubs" in a financial accounting in July 1851. Another Vermonter, Benjamin Harwood, who lived on a farm near Bennington, had his son Hiram take over in 1810 the keeping of a diary for financial transactions and farm production. Harwood hoped to instill a well-disciplined work ethic in his son, who was twenty-two. If Benjamin Bickford had a similar goal for Albert, the journal does not express it.[12] For whatever reason, Bickford stuck with his journal, writing almost weekly for eight years, and then sporadically for another seven years.

Journal Themes

Almost every entry in Albert's journal begins with the words "I worked" or "Worked," usually followed by a short description of the work and, if hired, the name of the person paying his wages. Of the 350 entries in the journal (see Table 1), only nine do not note the work Albert has accomplished since his last entry. Keeping a journal, or diary with specifics about work, was common practice among Peacham farmers. After the Civil War, local farmers Ira Jennison, Charles A. Choate,

TABLE 1 Subjects and Number of Journal Entries by Albert Bickford

Year	*Number of entries*	*Days "work" noted*	*Days "weather" noted*	*Days other activities*
1848	45	44	27	11
1849	46	44	24	4
1850	51	51	17	7
1851	44	40	21	17
1852	39	39	30	6
1853	38	37	20	3
1854	38	38	25	6
1855	22	22	20	2
1856	9	9	7	0
1857	6	6	4	0
1858	5	4	2	0
1859	3	3	1	0
1860	1	1	1	0
1861	2	2	0	0
1862	1	1	0	3
Totals	350	341	199	59

and Isaac N. Watts kept daily records of work accomplished. All of these diaries or journals served as an account of their work and that of their hired hands, the latter used for calculating wages.[13] Farm work required labor, and Peacham farmers often hired extra help, especially during haying and harvesting. When not helping his father on the family farm, Albert hired out to work for neighboring farmers. Thus Albert's work journal gives a detailed record of Vermont farm life at mid-nineteenth century.

After work, the theme most noted in Albert's journal was a description of the weather, an uncontrollable factor that strongly influenced success or failure of the farm and was carefully watched and documented.[14] He noted the weather in 199 entries, far fewer than the number of work entries but still a notable figure. Weather was either "bad" or "good" for haying, and spring was either "forward" or "backward," as were crops. Albert always recorded the date when the first frost hit, the ground froze, and the first snow fell. In spring he recorded when the ground thawed and the date "Cows get there living out," meaning grazing in the fields as opposed to the winter months when farmers had to feed stock in the barn with hay and corn fodder raised on the farm or purchased. Adequate feed was a major consideration for farmers because a winter could last six months or more, and the supply might not

be sufficient, necessitating the sale or slaughtering of livestock. In 1855 after two years of little rain, Albert lamented that "the past year has been hard for Farmers and for all People genarly," making clear the link between successful farming and the quality of life for all Peacham residents.

The connection between weather and transportation was another theme Albert described, noting when "slaying is good" or "spoiled," and when it was not "good wagoning." His father did not own a carriage during the time Albert kept his journal,[15] so all trips from the family farm down Cow Hill, with an elevation of 2,566 feet, were by wagon, sleigh, horseback, or on foot.

Interspersed among comments on work and the weather, Albert occasionally added a few words describing his other activities, such as "attended meeting," "got my teeth filled yesterday," or "went to the Cattle Fair." When he traveled beyond Peacham he often noted the destination and purpose, such as in 1849 "to Irasburge after Cows" and in 1851 "to Danville to court." One day in June 1855 he rode to Danville, giving no reason for the trip, although two possibilities are suggested by *The Caledonian,* a local weekly newspaper. It reported on a "most destructive fire" at Danville that burned down entirely the Wetherbee Tavern and "the [Caledonia] Bank house" where only "the brick walls and chimneys are left standing." Albert certainly might have wanted to view that scene, but he may have also attended the County Agricultural Society meeting on that day, where it was decided "without a dissenting voice that the County fairs be localized for five consecutive years," limited to Barnet, Danville, Cabot, Ryegate, Groton, and Peacham.[16] This appears to have been an attempt to counter the dominance at the previous county fairs of St. Johnsbury, the fastest-growing town in Caledonia County, soon to be the county seat and the terminus of a major railroad line.

Health was another subject Albert often mentioned in his journal. In 1851 he "had the Doctor ten times" in October, another "13 times" in November, and later in 1858, after two weeks of being unwell, "had the Doctor three times." Throughout the nineteenth century, Peacham was fortunate to have trained physicians in town. Dr. Asahel Farr would have attended to Albert from 1849 to 1854, when Dr. Luther F. Parker, who studied at the Dartmouth Medical School, moved to Peacham and took over Farr's practice. The charge for house visits during this time was fifty cents.[17] Through the years of his journal, Albert suffered with "the rheumatis in the feet," probably arthritis, which sometimes kept him from working for long stretches. He apparently missed the epidemic of winter 1854–1855, when the newspaper reported "about 100 cases of Measles in Peacham."[18]

Family Farm

As the oldest son, Albert must have shouldered much of the farm work for his family. According to his journal, he worked steadily from spring "plowing" to fall "harvesting." Spring work, as farmers labeled it, started around the first week of May when Albert recorded "began to work on the land." He ploughed, harrowed, and sowed wheat and other grain, planted potatoes and corn, blasted rocks and made stone walls. One of his chores was "grafting" and "trimming" the orchard, and he usually recorded the dates when the plum and apple trees "are blown" or "blown out," expressive vernacular phrases. Then he turned his attention to "heaping up manure," "drawing posts," and "Shearing Sheep." Next it was time for "howing" the potatoes and corn. Haying began mid-July and ended mid-August and the hay was mowed by hand scythe, about an acre a day.[19] Most years Albert recorded the total number of wagon loads of hay brought to the barn. The farm had eighty-five loads or

Beginning and Ending Dates of Haying		*Number of Wagon Loads*
1848	July 11 to August 12	90
1849	July 9 to August 24	58
1850	July 16 to August 20	85
1851	July 21 to August 23	total not noted
1852	July 15 to August 23	"3/4 of a usual crop"
1853	July 14 to August 12	93
1854	July 16 to August 11	60
1855–62		not noted

more in 1848, 1850, and 1853, years of ample rain and sunshine, but there were poor years too, and in 1852, he "had about 3/4 of a usual crop." Fortunately the corn that fall was "more than a common yeald" with "93 bushels of ears of sound corn from one acre." After haying, Albert noted harvesting the wheat and other grain. Finally in September, he dug potatoes and carrots, got in the corn and "husked it out," plowed, picked apples, drew out manure, and began working in the woods, an endless job of providing wood for cooking and heating. From Thanksgiving into the new year, he "killed the Hogs" and wrote of "makeing Meat tubs," probably used to preserve the pork. When he was not specific about his work, he was "puttering." Some chores, such as taking care of the animals, must have been so routine that he rarely noted them in his journal, even though he is listed in the Peacham Grand Lists beginning in 1856 as the owner of a horse. Albert's farm work entries could have been written by almost any Peacham farmer, so representative are they of the seasonal work each performed at the time.

Peacham farmers did not pay their sons for farm work; they provided food, shelter, clothing, medical care, and education. However, once a boy reached twenty-one, accepted as the age of majority, he could make his own decisions and keep his wages. In 1855 Moses Martin, the son of a third-generation Peacham farmer, negotiated his farm wages with his father for the summer after his twenty-first birthday. Another example of independent decision making was Isaac Watts, who volunteered for the Union army, against his father's wishes in 1863, the day before his twenty-first birthday.[20] It is not known what arrangement Albert made with his father or how the farm work was divided among his brothers. In a short financial summary in the journal in 1851, Albert listed as credit "Work & Chorse 6.50," which might indicate wages from his father. On the debit side, he listed "Board 25.50," perhaps a payment to his father. In any case, as Albert's work at carpentry increased, his work on the family farm decreased but never stopped entirely. Albert remained an essential contributor to the necessary work on his father's farm.

Peacham Farm Sales in the 1850s

Due mainly to westward migration, Peacham's population began a steady decline after 1840, when it peaked at 1,443. By 1850 the population was down to 1,377; by 1860, to 1,247. Many Peacham farmers sold out and went west in search of cheap, fertile land with a longer growing season. The local newspapers were full of farm sales and auctions. Even Albert's father, Benjamin Bickford, ran an ad in *The Caledonian* on his farm in the summer of 1858 when he was fifty-four years old:

> FARM FOR SALE. The subscriber, being out of health, is wishing to sell his farm containing 150 acres which is divided by durable fence into ten lots, five of which is in pasture all of which is well watered: there is a large house and two large barns, a granery and convenient sheds on the place; a plenty of good water running to the house and barn. Said farm has on it a large orchard most of the trees being young and thrifty; there is about 25 acres of woodland on the farm with a plenty of young sugar trees. I will sell the farm cheap to any one wishing to purchase, and if the purchaser wishes I will sell my stock consisting of 25 herd of cattle and horse kind and farming tools. Said farm lies both sides of the Centre Road, leading from Peacham Corner to Cabot Branch, a little over two miles from the corner.[21]

At his age and in poor health, it is not surprising to learn Benjamin's plans for selling his farm. It is doubtful that he thought of going west, but he may have planned to use money from selling his farm to retire, possibly to a house at Peacham Corner, as did several other older farmers during this period.[22] In any case, Benjamin Bickford began selling off

his land, and by 1860 his property on Cow Hill included only a house and six acres.[23]

The big mystery is why Albert's father wanted to sell while Albert and his brothers were adults still living in Peacham. In most farm families only one son took over the house and land when the father became less active or died. Often this was one of the younger sons, as the older boys often reached maturity when the father was still active.[24] In the Bickford family, Albert, the eldest son, never mentioned in his journal any thought of taking over his father's farm; nor did he reveal any such plans by his younger brothers. Although Albert must have been aware of his friends and neighbors going to the California gold mines or catching "western fever,"[25] he noted no desire to go west. He stayed put in Peacham, hiring out and saving his money. His hard-working habits were valued by friends and neighbors. He may have found that nineteenth-century goal of contentment that Peacham mothers like Roxana Watts hoped for their children: an acceptance of the role given them.[26]

Changes in Farming

Albert Bickford's journal is a good source for documenting rural life in New England at mid-nineteenth century. He recorded subtle shifts from a localized, agrarian economy with its emphasis on family and community obligations to an economy based on market capitalism, featuring money exchange and profit.[27] During the years of Albert's journal, when market capitalism began to prevail, cash was received for goods, as seen in his income list of debt and credit in mid-1851. Albert noted the signs of the new money economy, as he favored working as a carpenter with its higher wages than that of a hired farm hand. Through his work journal, he clearly saw his wages in terms of cash, for cash had become the common compensation for work.

A change slowly taking place at this time in Peacham and most of Vermont was the reliance of farmers for their sustenance less on sheep and beef cattle and more on dairy cows. In 1848 when Albert began his work journal, he noted "Shearing Sheep" in June when the Peacham Grand List recorded thirty-one sheep on his father's farm. By 1850 the Bickford farm had only two sheep, and through the next ten years, the Grand List never recorded more than six sheep for Benjamin Bickford. Hazen Merrill, who farmed in the same district as the Bickford family, had forty-six sheep in 1848 but by 1852 had stopped raising sheep altogether.[28] *The Caledonian,* reporting on the sheep population on April 23, 1853, noted a large decrease after 1850, and historian Ernest Bogart documented the sharp decline in the number of sheep in Peacham from 1840 to 1860, blaming it on the loss of tariff protection

on wool and increased western competition. A similar story is the decline in numbers of beef cattle raised in Vermont. After years of successful butchering, as seen in Albert's journal in the winters of 1849 through 1853, he and other Peacham farmers recognized that feeding cattle was cheaper in the West with its longer growing season; in 1840 western corn could be bought for ten cents a bushel, as compared to the Peacham price of seventy-five cents. The 1850 Grand List had Albert's father with twelve dairy cows while his neighbor, Hazen Merrill, had only eight. By 1859 Benjamin Bickford had seventeen and Merrill had increased his cows to twenty-five, signaling that dairy farming in the Peacham area was becoming singularly important.[29]

As the number of dairy cows went up, butter production increased, and after midcentury it became a cash crop for many Peacham farmers. This increase, well beyond the need of the family and even the community, plus the completion of the railroad to the area and the expansion of markets to southern New England and New York, brought the demand for more butter production in Peacham. Local newspapers started running ads such as those from John Martin's store on June 3, 1854: "Cash for butter." Farmers sold their butter to local merchants who served as middle men,[30] shipping it by rail to Boston and other urban areas, especially after the Barnet train depot opened, only a few miles distant, in 1851. Albert never mentioned the railroad in his journal, but others realized its importance as an impetus for increased agricultural production. Newspapers began printing as many as five columns of business cards from out-of-state companies, and it was reported that the St. Johnsbury freight depot was "full of potatoes, butter, hops, grass seed, &c."[31] At the end of July 1856, Roxana Watts, on a farm on Peacham's east hill, bragged that with only eight cows she had already "made 500 pounds of butter."[32] In his journal, Albert ignored the production of butter on his father's farm, even in 1850 when the farm produced 2,200 pounds, according to the U.S. Agricultural Census. Butter production may have been carried out entirely by his mother and sisters, being thought of as women's work, while selling the butter was probably in the hands of his father.

A further sign of the advent of a cash economy is Albert's estimate in October 1852 that the colt he had to kill after it broke its leg was "worth about eighteen Dollars." Animals were now seen not only in terms of work, breeding, and sentimental value, but also in terms of work potential, replacement cost, and sale value. When spring was late in 1855 and hay was needed to feed the cows, Albert listed the market rate of hay at "12 to 15 dollars pr ton," again reflecting recognition of the new money economy. Albert's journal documents economic changes for

farmers, coopers, and merchants in New England, a time of adjusting to new practices.

Coopering

For nineteenth-century Vermont farmers self-reliance was critical to success. In addition to a wide variety of skills, farmers learned some rudimentary carpentry and coopering practices that filled vital needs in their agricultural operations. Barrels, sap buckets, butter tubs, wash tubs, boxes, and churns were used daily, most often made by the farmer himself. Peacham farmer Ira Jennison recorded in his diaries, 1869–1873, a variety of items he made, such as milking stool, knife box, sap "yoak," hoops, "clos" press, cake board, "berils," "pailes," and all sorts of tubs for water, butter, meat, and "draw tub."[33] In a barter economy, debts were sometimes paid with hand-crafted items, such as the barrel-topped trunk covered in deer skin and decorated with leather initials given to Lyman Watts in 1829 "in consideration 4 bushel of apples."[34] Occasionally a man would be so suited and skilled at this production that he would set up his own shop and manufacture items in bulk. Such a man was Albert Bickford.

It is not clear from the journal how Albert developed his cooper skills, but it is clear that his specialty was making butter tubs. He gave no description for these tubs as to size, proportion, or capacity, but basically the butter tub was a bucket without the bail handle. The tub could be made in varying sizes to hold from ten to fifty pounds.[35] The only fact about the tubs in Albert's journal comes from an early 1852 entry when he wrote that he went to the mill and "bought 2000 butter tub staves in blocks," suggesting that he was buying stave blanks that had been rough sawn to length and width at the mill. He would shape and finish them by hand, then assemble the staves, the bottom round piece, and the hoops that held the staves in place.[36]

In 1848, the first year of his journal, Albert reported making 436 tubs. His highest output occurred in 1853 when he made 500. Over the six years he tallied his production, he averaged 433 tubs. When he gave an accounting of his finances in 1851, he listed on the credit side two noteworthy payments: "tubs to Martin 15.25" and "tubs to Brown 23.00." These two men, long-time local merchants, John M. Martin at Peacham Corner and Ephraim C. Brown at Peacham Hollow, each owned a store in one of the centers of town.[37] Both

Number of Butter Tubs Albert Bickford Made Each Year

1848	436
1849	not noted
1850	416
1851	320
1852	490
1853	500
1854	not noted
1855	440
1856–62	not noted

stores advertised in *The Caledonian.* In early May 1849, John M. Martin & Co. appealed to "Butter Makers," announcing "400 first rate Butter Tubs for sale," and two weeks later he raised the number to seven hundred.[38] In all likelihood, Albert made some of these tubs.

The debt column in Albert's July 1851 account where he noted "6 tubs 1.20" suggests that each tub brought twenty cents. If this is a correct assumption, Martin's store received around 76 tubs from Albert, and Brown's, 115. There was a lively market for butter tubs in Peacham.

During the winter months, Albert's entries began with "Worked in the Shop about all of last week." Almost every farmer had an outbuilding used for making and sharpening tools, fixing harnesses, carpentry, and storing objects that might be useful later. Albert never mentioned the location of his shop, although his father's farm had two barns and three sheds, any one of which might have served well for a shop. He went to his shop often and obviously considered it his place, not his father's or brothers'. When working in the shop, he always used the pronoun "I," never "we." Albert worked alone in his shop.

After 1857 Albert no longer reported making butter tubs. It may be that the butter box, better suited for railroad travel as it could be easily stacked and returned empty, replaced the market for tubs.[39] Fortunately, Albert did not limit his production to butter tubs. Additional items he listed in his journal included: keelers, churns, wash tubs, "1 Carrot Machene," sled, meat tubs, cart body, ox yoke, "an axeltree to wagon," and cart wheels. His wide range of coopering skills was so highly regarded that in 1858 he was appointed to the committee to judge "First Class Mechanics' Work" for the annual fair of the People's Agricultural Society of Caledonia County, an honor usually given to well-known farmers or merchants.[40]

Carpentry

In addition to being a cooper, Albert took up the carpentry trade. In the early years of his journal he noted projects on his father's farm such as "putting a sill under the house," "makeing a Buttery," "makeing Shingles," "covering the Barn," and "clabbording the house." Soon his carpentry was recognized by his Peacham neighbors, and he was hired to work "makeing a cellar" and "laying down Stable floors." By 1853 he was so skilled at building that he rarely described specific projects, referring instead to jobs in general terms such as working on a house or a barn.

Carpentry was another skill critical to farming, as farmers needed to build sheds, raise barns, and underpin buildings. These are exactly the projects Isaac Watts described in his 1865 diary when he returned from

serving in the Civil War and took up farming in a serious way on Peacham's east hill. He also noted "tearing down the old Blacksmith shop at the Hollow and drawing part of it up" to the Watts farm for a sugar house which he then framed and boarded.[41] Isaac had gone through the Peacham Academy and taught school for several years, but when he took over the farm from his ailing father, he needed to perform carpentry jobs. Albert perfected carpentry skills, but not only for his father's farm. He began to hire out as a carpenter.

As he recorded this transition, he wrote in 1854 of working several weeks at "J Goodel in Cabot on his house," then eleven weeks on Franklin Bailey's house in the west part of Peacham, followed by at least a week on Ira McClary's house at the Corner. By the end of 1856, Albert was fully committed to "the joiners business." Counting the names of people in his work journal for whom he performed carpentry that year, he worked on at least eight houses, mainly in Peacham. Once he realized the added wages for carpentry, he hired out less as a farm hand and more at his new trade.

Working for Wages

With the western migration and California gold rush in the 1840s and 1850s, Peacham, like many rural areas in New England, suffered a scarcity of hired help as many men left for economic opportunities elsewhere. Albert never had trouble finding work, first as a hired farm hand and then as a carpenter. Early on, he noted more than two dozen farmers he worked for, usually for a few days during haying and harvesting. The common wage for farm work at mid-nineteenth century in Peacham was a dollar a day.[42] Although he did not keep his financial record in his journal, it became clear that as Albert grew older and the money economy took hold in Peacham, wages were important to him, and higher wages were a goal.

As he became known as a carpenter, and presumably his younger brothers took on the farm chores at home, Albert hired out as a builder for periods of a month or more. In his journal he noted working "at the joiners business . . . at $1.25 per day." Albert began to ply his trade as often as he could. One of his steady employers was his brother-in-law. On August 28, 1853, he reported, "I worked two days at home and four days for James R. Kinerson the last week on his Barn and expect to work more but have got to work at home a while at harvesting now." Albert was finding it hard to balance his duty to his father and his desire to increase his personal wealth by earning wages.

In 1854, around his thirtieth birthday, he started to make a distinction in his weekly entry between "worked for Father" and "the rest of the

time for myself." In July he tallied his recent work and found that he worked at home sixteen days the past winter and more than thirty days in the spring and early summer. Only once did Albert express a hint of resentment about time spent working for his father. This occurred in May 1861 when he wrote, "have been at home about two and one half months of this winter and about the same last winter and have worked enough to pay my way should think."

He seized upon another good economic opportunity in 1857 with "the Farebanks Co." at St. Johnsbury where, according to his journal, he "worked about 2½ months this last summer." The E. & T. Fairbanks & Co., the largest manufacturer in the county, made scales for weighing material ranging from one-tenth of a grain to five hundred tons.[43] In 1859 the local newspaper reported the company was making 2,350 scales per month, employing 248 hands with a monthly payroll of $7,400.[44] It is not clear what kind of work Albert did for the company—manufacturing scales or erecting additional buildings[45]—but in any case his wages would have been higher than those received for farm work, even though he would have added the expense of boarding away from home. For this reason or another, Albert often chose to remain close to Peacham, where he was hired as a carpenter except during haying time, when all hands were needed in the fields, first at his father's farm and then hired out to others.

In the 1860 Peacham Grand List the personal property of Albert Bickford amounted to $1,800, a good sum at that time. In fact, of the 398 people listed, he was one of only thirty-four who had more than $1,000 in personal assets, separate from real estate. His journal provides no indication of what he planned to do with his money, but he clearly saved it.

Religion

In the early years of journal keeping, Albert wrote his entries on Sunday afternoon and often noted if the family went to meeting earlier in the day. He reported more on the weather in relation to transportation—wagon or sleigh—than on the sermons whose Biblical text he might list, but usually without comment. In February 1851 Albert noted attending the installation of the Rev. Asaph Boutelle, the third pastor of the Peacham Congregational Church, founded in 1797. Surprisingly he made no mention of the death in 1850 of the beloved second minister, David Merrill, whose brother Hazen continued to farm the Merrill property at the foot of Cow Hill. Albert's journal showed no outright religious sentiment, and he was not a member of the church. In addition to Sunday meeting, he noted going to the district "camp meeting"

in September 1850 at the farm of Hartwell Hooker near Cabot, at which *The Caledonian* reported that "great solemnity pervaded the whole congregation" during the preaching three times a day.[46]

On April 6, 1851, the spring "fast day," a traditional day of prayer and fasting proclaimed by the Vermont governor, Albert reported on a sermon by the resident Methodist minister, the Rev. A. G. Button. The subject he noted was the "fugitive Slave law." This passed the U.S. Congress in 1850 but recently had been amended to punish by a fine of $1,000 and six months imprisonment anyone guilty of helping escaped slaves. Again, Albert made no comment, but since he had attended the Free Soil Convention at the Corner in August 1848, it may be assumed that he supported abolition. Peacham was a strong abolitionist center, taking its lead from many citizens, especially a former Academy student, Thaddeus Stevens, who had become a national voice against slavery. There was some controversy in Peacham, however, over the right to disobey a federal law, despite the opposition to the Act by the Vermont General Assembly. Historian Bogart noted the "displeasure of some the townspeople" when Leonard Johnson, a local farmer and staunch abolitionist, rang the Peacham church bell for an hour on December 2, 1859, when John Brown was hung.[47] Albert made no mention of this incident.

Political Issues

Albert went to town meeting without fail, although he rarely reported on any concerns. The one exception was the liquor license law, which temperance supporters put forward to restrict the sale of intoxicating beverages "except for medicinal, chemical or mechanical purposes." This came to a statewide vote almost annually from 1845 to 1853, as recorded in *The Caledonian.* Peacham voted to restrict liquor licensing every year by wide margins, including 1849 when, according to the newspaper, the vote was 202 to 4, although Albert in his journal and the town meeting minutes had the vote at 202 to 5. The previous year *The Caledonian* reporter was amused that only twenty-five years ago, "there were 25 distilleries of potato whiskey" in Peacham, although through this period, Peacham became known as a "Banner town" for temperance. This may have been partly due to the preaching of the Congregational minister, Rev. David Merrill, who served as secretary to the Caledonia County Temperance Society from 1844 until his death in 1850. In 1853, when Peacham voted 122 yeas to 86 nays, the state finally gave the counties the authority to restrict liquor licensing.[48]

Albert "went to the Presidential Elections" on November 7, 1848, but did not record his choice in his journal. He effectively concealed his

partisan attachment and ignored election results, even in 1860, when of Peacham's 186 votes, 138 favored Lincoln.[49] Most diarists of this period commented on the firing on Fort Sumter in April 1861, but the outbreak of the Civil War was not a subject for Albert's work journal.[50] He limited his entries mainly to his work activities; political events went unnoted.

Social Life

As Albert ignored political issues, so he also neglected social occasions. Although he regularly attended agricultural fairs in the fall, which he sometimes referred to as "cattle fairs," he never mentioned the singing schools, huskings, apple-paring bees, oyster suppers, quiltings, or sugaring-off parties frequently mentioned in letters and diaries as times when young people gathered. He ignored the Academy, established in 1795, and apparently never went to its frequent public exhibitions, lectures, or concerts. The only classmate he introduced in his journal was Luther Parker, whose wedding he attended in June 1850. A year earlier, Albert left his father's farm two separate weeks to go to Lowell, Massachusetts, and Rumney, New Hampshire. The purpose of these trips are unstated and unknown.

In June 1848 Albert went fishing, his only mention of any sport, although he did it on "training day," missing an event when young men used the occasion of military drilling to have a rowdy time. The Fourth of July, often celebrated with great flair in New England, rated a journal entry twice. In 1851 he wrote "worked . . . one half a day at the picnic" but gave no location or description of activities. In 1854 he "went to Wells river ½ of a day to celebrate the 4th" which was the only town in the area offering fireworks, according to the local newspaper, which described "17 displays in total."[51] He added "visiting" to his list of week's activities only twice, once in April 1854, with no description other than that the week followed a late spring. He may have suffered from being house- and barn-bound. His second mention, later in September of that year, noted that "friends," meaning family at that time, came from New Hampshire, the birthplace of his parents. He did not note reading books or newspapers, gave no criticism of or compliments to others, described no feelings or emotions, noted no food or drink, did not speculate on plans for the future, commented on no friendships, and ignored family birthdays, including his own.

Albert's seeming lack of interest in local social events makes the journal reader unprepared for his last journal entry, which includes his simple announcement that he "was married" and had bought a farm. His journal keeping ended here. As a married man, he was no longer accountable to his father for his work.

Transcription of
Albert Bickford's Work Journal

[1848][52]

March 5th I worked in the Shop all of last week excepting ½ of a day in which we broke out the ol[d] road.[53] The winter has been very moderate so far there is about 20 inches of snow **March 12th** Worked in the Shop all of last week excepting ½ of a day in which we went to Town Meeting, the weather has been stormy most of last week. We have been to meeting to day the road is very bad. **Mar 19th** Worked in the Shop all of last week the weather has been cold most of the last week to day has been quite warm and pleasant **Mar 26th** Worked in the Shop all of last weeke excepting one half of a day in which we went to Mr Kavenaugh auction the last week has been very plesant and warm the slaying is most spoiled **April 2d** I have worked in the Shop all of the last week excepting ½ of a day have made 436 tubs The weather has been rainy most of the last week the snow has most all gone off **April 9th** Worked in the Shop all of the last week the weather is pleasant this is a very fine day we have been to meeting with the Wagon today We have not had any snow this two months **April 16th** Worked at makeing Tubs about 5 days of last week. The weather has been fine most of the week began to draw out manure the 10th **April 23d** Worked in the Shop about all of the 5 days last week have made 2 keelers 1 churn 2 washtubs and 1 Carrot Machene[54] We have had 3 inches of snow the last week b[ut] all gone We sowed some wheat the 12th and the 20 and 22 I worked for F Farrow grafting[55] yesterday **April 30th** I worked at making tubs most of the last week **May 7th** I began to work on the land the 1st of May We planted the potatoes the 2d and the 3d **May 9th** Planted corn **18th** finished sowing the weather is cool with great rains **21st** We worked at makeing fence on the hill three days last week, I worked [for] James Kinerson one day. The weather is very warm and wet. Corn is coming up the Trees are leaved out **28** We worked at picking up stone and underpining the Barn most of the last week **June 4th** Worked at heaping up manure and picking stone, drawing posts, for Hooker 1 day, and makeing spout for the Barn[56] choping wood and Shearing Sheep **June 11th** We worked on the road[57] and piled up manure made a churn &c last week. Howed the corn the 5th. the weather is rather cool with abundance of rain. Went a fishing training day **June 18th** We drew dirt into the yard[58] howed the Potatoes and Corn and dug Stone last week **June 25th** We worked at making Wall[59] 3½ days of last week. I worked for Mr Merrill one day the weather is good for vegetation, heards grass begins to head out **July 2d** We worked at makeing

Wall 2½ days One day at makeing board fence and two days at howing last week. **July 10th** I worked one day at whitewashing[60] two days for Uncle Danel and three days at putting a sill under the house the weather has been stormy and quite cool the most of the last weeke **July 16th** We commenced haying the 11th[61] got 6 loads the weather is bad for haying. Grain is fine Corn is tassaled out **July 23d** We worked at haying all of the last week got in 27 loads last week the weather is good **July 30th** We worked at haying all of the last week the weather was bad most of the week we got in 13 loads at home and 12 for James. **Aug 6th** We had four good hay days last week We got in 20 loads for James and 8 at home. **Aug 13th** We worked at haying all of the last week we got in 36 loads at home we finished haying the 12th commenced harvesting the 12th the weather was good all of the week. We had 31 loads of hay on the Lee Place and 59 at home 90 in all. **Aug 20th** The weather was rainy most of the last week. Went to the Free Soil Convention[62] last Wednesday at the Corner **Aug 27th** We worked at harvesting the most of the last week. I went to the Caravan at Danville last Tewsday. **September 3d** We worked at harvesting and at clabbording the house and with the Thrashing machene[63] the last week. We finished harvesting the 31st of August. We had 5 loads of wheat a[nd] 2 of Buckwheat and 12 of other grain. **Sept 10th** I worked one day for J R Kinerson One day and one half at drawing out manure[64] one half day at Election[65] and made a cistern &c the last week **Sept 17th** We worked at makeing wall diging potatoes &c the last week we have had frost. **Sept 24th** We began to plow the 18th, we worked at makeing wall two days of the last week the weather has been wet and cold with some snow the last week **Oct the 1t** I worked one day for C P Blake the last week. We dug the carrots got in the Corn and husked it out, put up the eaves spout went to the Cattle Fair[66] the last week **Oct 7th** Worked at drawing Posts from Cabot and drawing wood with the Horses and Plowing &c the last week and makeing wall. the weather has been rainy one half of the week **Oct the 14th** I worked one day at drawing Boards and Timber from the sawmill. We plowed and picked the apples the rest of the week the weather has been pleasant most of the week **Oct 21t** We worked one day and a half at makeing wall and 1½ days makeing Boxis in the cow stable[67] and the rest of the time at puttering; the weather is cold and wet, has been a frost about evry night for six weeks **Oct 29th** We worked at getting out manure and dirt into the Barn yard and makeing wall the last week **Nov 5th** Worked at makeing a Cistern and makeing wall and to work on the road the last week We have had abundance of rain and cold weather this fall. **No[v] 12th** We worked in the woods part of the last week at chopping. The ground froze about the 8th. We

went to the Presidential Election the 7th[68] I have worked at Sawing and Splitting timber 1½ days **19th** Worked in the woods most of the last week **Nov 26th** We killed the Hogs the 21st worked at makeing a Sled two days &c. **Dec 3d** I worked two days at makeing Meat tubs[69] and one day at finding Timber. We have no Snow yet **Dec 10th** I worked about three days in the Shop last week. We have had some snow and much rain **Dec 17th** Worked about three days in the Shop last week and three days at drawing logs to mill[70] **24th** I worked in the Shop all of the last week the weather is cold now with little snow yet **Dec 31t** I worked in the Shop two days the last week and drew wood and logs the rest of the week. The slaying is good now.

[1849]

Jan 7th Worked in the Shop 4½ days the last week **Jan 14th** Worked at drawing Wood and buchering two days the last week, the rest of the time in the shop. 21 Worked at gitting out logs 1½ days the last week **28th** Worked in the Shop five days the last week and one day at drawing logs to Mill. the snow is about 1½ feet deep Jan 4th worked one day for J R Kinerson drawing logs **Feb 5th** We worked for J R Kinerson today at getting out logs **Feb 6th** I started for Lowell **13th** came home. The weather has been very cold all of the month **Feb 25th** I went to Irasburge after Cows[71] two days the week worked the rest of the week in the Shop The weather has been very cold all of this month untill now. We have not [had] more than 1½ feet of snow yet, the sleying has been good all of the winter **March 4th** I worked in the Shop about all of the last week, the weather has been plesant all of the week. **March 11th** I worked in the shop about 5 days last week went to Town meeting the 6th Vote for no lisence 202 to 5 licence the weather is very cold and the road is drifted up today **March 18th** I worked in the Shop all of the last week the weather has been pleasant about all of the week **March 25th** Worked in the Shop about five days the last week. We have had a thaw last week **April 1t** I worked in the Shop about 5½ days the last week The weather has been warm most of the week the snow has most gone off **April 8th** Worked in the Shop most of the last week. The Snow is all gone off excepting the drifts. **April 22d** I worked in the Shop about all of the last two weeks. the weather is cold for the time of the year, the snow is all gone except the drifts. we have not began to work on the land yet. **April 29th** I worked in the Shop 4 days the last week and two days in the Shoogar Place of JRK and made 54½ lbs.[72] **May 6th** We began to draw out manure the 26th of Apr began to plough the 2d of May Sowed oats the 1t sowed wheat the 5 of May The weather continues cold with freezing nights **May 13th** I worked at drawing Lumber from the mill 2½ days the last week with the Horses.

We finished sowing the 12th have sowed 18 bush of oats and 4½ of wheat **May 20th** We worked the last week at drawing out manure and plowing makeing Gates drawing stone &c the weather is warm and plesant now the Wheat is up Cows git about half of there living on grass **May 27th** We planted the Potatoes the 21st and the corn the 22d We worked at makeing fence four days the last week **June 3d** We worked at makeing Fence makeing Churning machene and 1½ days for James the last week. The weather is warm and wet now Plumb Trees are blown Corn is up grass looks well Cows get there living out **June 17th** I worked for C Blake one day the last week, and the rest of the [week] at takeing down the Lee House and makeing a Cellar. The weather is warm the Apple Trees are blown out **July 1st** We worked at makeing a Cellar and putting up the Lee House most of the last two weeks. The weathe[r] has been warm and dry for the last two weeks **July 8th** Worked at howing and laying down Stable Floors the last week. **July 15th** We commenced haying some the 9th the grass is very small not one half of an avrige crop dry all of the last two weeks and a prospect of no rain still there has not been more than two inches of rain since the first of June.[73] We got in six loads of hay the last week **22** We got in nine loads of Hay the last week and worked two days at makeing Shingles[74] the weather has been very warm with some rain yesterday **29th** We worked at makeing Shingles and haying howing and on the road the last week. We got in 4 loads of hay the last week. The weather is warm yet with considerable rain **Aug 5th** We worked at haying all of the last week and got in 14 loads. The weather is warm without any rain the last week **Aug 12th** We worked at haying four days the last week and got in 11 loads. We have had a great rain the last two days[75] **Aug 19th** We worked on the Barn shingling two days the last week and at haying cut some Wheat the 15th We got in nine loads of hay the last week **26th** We finished the 24th haying We have had 58 loads **Sept 2d** We worked at harvesting for James and mowing over the pasture the last week **Sept 16th** We finished harvesting the 10th Crops of grain are very small We worked the last week at gitting out manure and clearing up the Swamp **Sept 23d** We worked at Plowing and gitting out dirt on to the Land on the Hill the last week. Russell started for Lowell the 17th of September **Oct 7th** Worked at Plowing and tharashing harvesting the Corn and the Rowin the last two weeks **Oct 14th** I went to Rumney the last week was gone 5 days **21st** We got in the Carrots and the Apples and got out the manure the last week. We had about 150 bushels of Potatoes 100 of Carrots 150 of Apples **Oct 28th** We worked at Plowing gitting out manure and blasting Rocks the last week. **November 4th** We worked at gathering Leaves[76] makeing Wall gitting dirt into the yard makeing

gates and killing Hogs the last week. We began to feed the Cows with Hay the last of October **Nov 11th** Worked at makeing Wall and blasting Stone the last weeke. **Nov 18th** We worked diging and drawing of Stone and gitting in Leaves and Plowing the last week. the weather is good **Nov 25th** We worked at gitting out Stone and makeing Wall most of the last week. the weather is good yet **Dec 2d** I worked at ditching[77] three and one half days the last week the ground froze 30th Nov **9th** Worked at ditching and gitting up muck the last week **16th** We worked at Chopping and gitting up wood and butchering the last week **23d** Worked two days at gitting Timber from Cow Hill the last week and the rest of the week at gitting up wood **Dec 30th** We worked most of the last week at gitting up wood. The snow is about 20 inches deep

[1850]

Jan 6th We worked at gitting up wood three days the last week **13th** I worked in the Shop most of the last week at makeing Tubs and splitting Timber.[78] **20th** I worked in the Shop all of the last week **27th** I worked in the Shop all of last week **Feb 3d** Worked in the Shop 5 days the last week. Went to Cort[79] one day **Feb 10th** I worked in the Shop five and a half days the last week. I have made 113 Tubs. The weather is warm now have had a thaw, the snow was about three feet in depth **17th** Worked in the Shop all of the last week **24th** Worked in the Shop most of the last week **March 3d** Worked in the shop all of the last week. **March 10th** I worked in the Shop five and one half days the last week. We went to Town meetting the 5th **16th** I worked in the Shop five days the last week. The snow is about four feet deep. there has been a rain the last week which settled the snow about 6 inches **24th** I worked in the Shop 5½ days the last week. The weather is cold and windy **March 31st** I worked in the Shop five days the last week. Have made 300 Tubs. **April 7th** I worked in the Shop 5½ days of the last week and one half day in the Shogar place. The slaying is spoiled the snow is about 3 feet deep yet in the woods **14th** I worked in the Shop 5½ days of the last week **21st** Work 5½ days in the Shop the last week the weather has been very cold the last week We lost a cow the last week the Whicher cow[80] **28th** I worked in the Shop 4 days the last week. The weather is warm now began to plow yesterday I finished makeing Butter Tubs the 25th have made 416 this winter. We began to Plow the 27th **May 5th** We worked the last week plowing gitting out manure makeing cart body ox yoke[81] trimming Apple Trees &c. Sowed oats the 3d and wheat the 4th **12th** We worked at gitting out Stone sowing plowing ditching &c the last week the weather is cold with freezeing nights **19th** We worked at Plowing and Sowing and gitting out manure the last week **26th** We worked at gitting out manure plowing and sowing &c the last week planted corn

the 23d. Sowed about two acres of wheat and 4½ of oats **June 2d** Worked at filling ditches and picking stone most of the last week. Planted over some corn the 1t of June the trees are leaving out Plumb trees in bloom Went and got my teeth filled yesterday[82] **9th** We worked at makeing wall grafting trees gitting in wood &c the last week. The Apple Trees are blown Went to Dr Parkers Wedding the 6th of June[83] **16th** Worked at diging stone out of the door yard and leveling it off howed corn the 14th worked on the road the 15th **23d** Worked the last week at howing and makeing wall the weather has been very warm most of the week **30th** I worked two days for Chas Blake the last week at moveing his House the rest of the week we worked at plowing and howing and pileing up manure **July 7th** Worked the last week at plowing howing &c The weather has been very warm and wet the last week **14th** Worked four [days] of the last week at covering the Barn **21t** We began haying the 16th the weather very wet and bad for haying. The grass is good the crops of all kinds looks well **28th** Worked at haying all of the last week and got in 27 loads **Aug 4th** We worked at haying most of the last week and got in 11 loads the weather has been bad for haying the last week. **11th** Worked at haying all of the last week and got 20 loads the weather good most of the week **18th** We worked at haying most of the last week and got in 17 loads of hay **25th** We finished haying the 20th had 85 loads of hay. We cut some wheat the 20th I worked for Harvey Lee four days of the last week at haying. **Sept 1t** I worked two and one half days for H Lee and two days for D Bickford the last week. **7th** We worked the last week at harvesting and ditching. Finished harvesting the 9th the weather is wet and cold **14th** We worked at plowing and makeing a Buttery and attending a camp meeting last week **Sept 21t** We worked at diging potatoes gitting out manure and plowing this week I went to the Fair at Bradford the 18th[84] **30th** We worked at plowing and gitting out manure the last week. Father started for Oswego the 23d[85] **Oct 6th** We worked at gitting out manure plowing and harvesting the Corn the last week. Father came home the 5th **13th** We worked at plowing diging potatoes and picking apples the last week **20th** Worked at tharashing picking apples drawing up muck and plowing the last week **27th** We worked at plowing gathering the ternups drawing dirt into the yard drawing stone and gowing to meeting the last week The weather is warm with great rains **Nov 3d** Worked at makeing wall most of the last week **10th** We worked at gitting out manure gitting up muck[86] plowing and a going to meeting last week **Nov 17th** We worked at gathering leaves cutting timber &c the last week. The weather has been warm most of the last week **24th** We worked at gitting logs from Cow

hill two days the last week and at chopping wood the ground froze the 22[d] **Dec 1** Worked at chopping most of the last week killed the hogs the 19[th] of Nov 8[th] Worked at chopping and drawing wood the last week Thanksgiving[87] the 4[th] **Dec 22** We worked at chopping and drawing wood most of the last two weeks **29** I worked in the Shop 4 days of the last week The weather has been very stormy and cold the last week with 2 feet of snow

[1851]

Jan 5[th] I worked five days in the Shop and one day for Mr Merrill at thrashing. The weather has been very cold and stormy the last two weeks **Jan 12** I worked four days in the Shop and one day at breaking roads and butchering and one day went to Danville the weather has been moderate all of the last week **19[th]** Worked about four days in the shop went to Barnet one day last week **Jan 26[th]** I worked four days in the Shop and one day at gitting up wood **Feb 16** I worked in the Shop all of the last three weeks excepting about three days went to the installation of Mr. Bowtel last Thursday **23** I worked in the Shop all of the last week. **March 2** I worked in the Shop about five and a half days the last week **9[th]** Worked in Shop about five days of the last week and the rest of the week at splitting wood and brakeing colts.[88] **16[th]** I worked in the Shop five and one half [days] the last week went to town meeting last Tewsday **March 30** I worked in the Shop about 11 days of the last two weeks. The weather is warm and the slaying is about spoiled have made 320 B [Butter] Tubs **April 6** I worked in the Shop five days of the last week. We went to meetting Friday fast day Sermon by Mr Button Luke 10.27 on duty of man to his neighbor, and the fugitive Slave law. A temperance meetting in the afternoon with adresses from the Ministers and others **13** Worked in the Shop five days of the last week and went up to the Sawmill one day and bought two logs of Lilly for 1.75 He is to help saw them **April 27[th]** I worked in the Shop all of the last two weeks excepting two days in which I worked at sawing and splitting timber. Began to sow the 23 got out some manure last week The weather is very dry with freezing nights **May 4[th]** Worked about two days in the Shop went to St Johnsbury one day and worked at makeing wall plowing &c the last week The weather continues cold yet with some snow and rain and some freezeing nights **11[th]** I went to Cabot one half of a day and worked for Mr Bailey five days the last week The weather has been cold with some snow the last week **May 18** I worked at home three days and at Baileys three days the last week The weather is warm and wet now **May 25** I worked at home all of the last week We planted corn the 14[th] the potatoes the 23 and finished sowing the 24[th] The corn is comming up turnips

are up Trees are leaving out grass and grain looks well. **June 1** I worked one and a half days makeing tubs the last week. **June 8** I worked about five days of the last week at makeing tubs and went to court one day **June 15** I worked at Bailies all of the last week **22** Worked at Bailes 5 days and at Hendrys one day the last week **29** I worked five days of the last week at Baileys and one half day at home and one half a day at the picnic[89] **July 6** I worked on the road four days of the last week and one day on the Barn **13th** I worked three days on the Barn and 1½ days at makeing Tubs and one day at hoing the last week The weather is warm with abundance of rain. Crops of all sorts looks well **20th** Worked two days at makeing tubs the last week

Debt		**Credit**	
Boards	3.99	Work & Chorse	6.50
6 tubs	1.20	tubs to Martin	15.25
Shave[90]	2.66	tubs to Brown	23.00
Clothes	7.50	Your tubs	9.00
Work	6.50		53.75
Board	25.50		75.00
	47.35		128.75
			−47.35
			81.40

Aug 3 We commenced haying the 21 of July The weather has been quite bad for haying most of the two past weeks. **Aug 10th** We worked at haying most of the last week. The weather has been bad for haying all through the seasons. Went to meetting the text was the 4th Commandment last Sunday it was the 3d by Mr. Bouttall **Aug 13th** I am not able to work today on account of a lame ancle the weather is warm with showers. We spent two half days at hunting for a lost boy which is found now to have run away.[91] **Aug 17** We worked at haying all of the last weeks and got in 21 loads of hay. it rains almost evry day. I have been to meetting to day Mr. Bouttall pr [preached] **Aug 24th** We worked at haying most of the last week Finished the 23 cut some wheat the 21. The hay and grain crops are very good this year but backward Corn has a great groath but is late. I staid at home to day. We have been five weeks at haying with abundance of bad weather. **Sept 7** I worked six days for Mr. Wheeler at haying the last two weeks and about three days in the shop makeing tubs. We went to Dr. Shedds funeral today[92] **14th** We worked at harvesting most of the last week. The weather has been very warm most all of the week Grain is very stout and heavy Today is very cold there was some frost last night with a fair prospect of some to night. We went to meetting today The text was Thou shalt not kill in which all manner of suicide was included by Mr. Boutell[93] **Sept 21** We

worked at harvesting and plowing the last week we finished harvesting the 20th The ground is very dry there has been but little rain for six or seven weeks. **Sept 28** We worked the last week at harvesting the corn gitting out manure brakeing colt and at work for the neighbors **Oct 5th** We worked at gitting out manure and thrashing the last week had 525 bushels of oats and 12 of wheat **Oct 12th** I worked out two days the last week the weather has [been] warm and dry for about two weeks. We got in the corn and worked at husking a part of the week **Nov 3** I have been sick with the Rheumattic feaver and confined to the house for the last two weeks and have had the Doctor ten times. I am gitting better now. **Nov 10th** I have been confined to the house three weeks now and have had the Doctor 13 times **Nov 17th** I have got so that I can ride out and do some lite work. **Nov 24** I have got quite well now and worked some the last two weeks. The sleighing is good now the ground froze about the 10 of this month. **Nov 30** Worked the last week at buchering brakeing roads &c. The weather so far has been very cold and snowy **Dec 7th** I went to Danville to Court last Tewsday the 2 of Dec. The roads have drifted up as bad as ever was known. **Dec 21** I have been at Danville most of the last two weeks[94] came home last Thursday. We began to draw up wood. Friday the snow is about two feet deep in the woods The weather has been very cold all of this month **Dec 28th** We worked at gitting up wood about all of the last week The winter has been very cold so far without any rain of any concequence untill today it rains some

[1852]

January 11th I commenced work in the Shop about the 1 of Jan at makeing Butter Tubs. We have been to meeting to day The weather has been very cold and Stormy this winter with only one rain storm since the middle of November **Jan 25th** I have worked in the Shop most of the last two weeks at makeing Butter Tubs. The weather has been tremendus cold for the last two weeks but is quite comfortable today We have been to meetting today and had a deacons meeting[95] this afternoon Mr Bouttell was unwell but preached in the forenoon I went over to Bruces mill the last week and bought 2000 butter tub staves in blocks and paid him six dollars for them all. **Feb 8th** I worked in the Shop most of the last two weeks makeing Tubs the weather has been quite comfortable for two or three weeks. **Feb 22** Worked week before last at makeing tubs and taking care of the cattle and last week at makeing tubs **29th** I went after timber over to Bruces mill two days of the last week This has been a very Stormy day so that we could not go to meetting **March 28th** I have been confined to the House for almost three weeks now with the rheumatism but have got better now so that I go out

some. There has been 15 inches of snow the last week **April 4th** I began to work some the last week worked about two days of the last week in the Shop The weather continues cold with frequent snow storms There is a great quantity of snow on the ground the drifts are larger than ever **April 11th** I worked about three days in the Shop the last week I am so lame that I cannot do much work yet This is a pleasant day we can go to the Corner with the Sleigh about all of the way on snow yet the snow is 4 feet deap in the woods. **Apr 18th** I worked in the Shop about one half of the last week We have been to meetting with the sleigh today 18 inches of snow fell during a storm the last week makeing it very bad to git around now **April 25th** Worked in the Shop all of the last week. The snow has settled about one foot the last week. I am quite lame yet with the rheumatism so that I cannot do but about one half of a days work in a day. **May 2** I worked in the shop all of the last week. The snow has settled about one and a half feet the last week. Commenced to git manure the 1st of May The ground is about half covered with [snow] yet and the weather continues cold People are almost out of hay with a poor prospect for cattle to get there living on grass very soon I have worked at Butter Tubs about three months and made 350 Tubs. **May 9th** I worked 5 days in the Shop and one day on the land last week **May 16th** I worked on the land about five days of the last week. We worked at sowing gitting out manure and plowing the last week The weather is rather cool and dry This is a late spring We began to sow the 8 of May. **May 23d** Worked all of the last week on the land. We planted corn and potatoes the 20th 21st and the 22d the weather is cool and dry **May 30th** I worked about two days in the Shop the last week makeing Tubs. The weather is quite cool and dry yet. We have been to meetting to day and attended Mr Paterige funeral this afternoon[96] **June 6th** Worked on the land two days of the last week It continues cool and dry yet with a prospect of poor crops this year **June 13th** I worked in the shop most of the last week. We have large quantities of rain now which was very neadfull as the groung [ground] had got to be very dry corn is up but is very bacward and so is grass **June 20th** We worked one day on the road and done the howing got in the wood and I worked one day in the Shop the last week. We have had some very warm weather and considerable rain the last week **27th** Worked in the Shop about four days of the last week. I am some afflected [with] the rheumatis in the feet yet which troubles me about traveling about yet besids a hard cold. The weather is cool and rather dry **July 4th** Worked at plowing and howing the last week. The weather is cool with considerable rain Grass and corn is small. It has ben a very cold and dry season so far. **July 11th** I worked at plowing three days and three days at

A hired hand works on a spring-tooth harrow breaking up sod after plowing. Albert Bickford probably has seed of some kind in the pail. The field is on Ha'Penny; the line of trees in the background goes up Penny Street. Albert's daughters, early amateur photographers, may have contrived the scene as the field does not appear ready for sowing. Date, ca. 1885. The editor thanks R. M. and Lorna Quimby for caption information. Courtesy Bickford Album, Peacham Historical Association.

makeing tubs the last week, the weather has been very warm the last week with one shower of rain **20th** I worked in the Shop about 4½ days of the last week made 490 tubs and the rest of the week at howing &c **Aug 1** We have worked at haying most of the time for the last two weeks The hay crop is light averigeing about 2/3 of a crop on account of the dryness of the season have had considerable rain the last week. **Aug 15th** We worked at haying most of the last two weeks. We got in 34 loads of hay the last week which was a good week for haying Grain is gitting ripe the weather is very warm and dry **Aug 27th** We finished haying the 23d had about 3/4 of a usual crop The spring and summer has been very dry but have had a great rain the last week **Sept 19th** I worked about 6 days makeing tubs the last two weeks. **25th** Worked at plowing most of the last week went to Danville to the cattle fair on Wednesday. **Oct 3d** I worked at plowing 3½ days of the last week We have had some hard frosts the last week the weather is warm now. We cut up the corn week before last which is very good. We have began to feed the cows some[97] **Oct 10th** We worked at plowing diding [digging]

potatoes gitting out manure &c the last week the weather is very rainy now **Oct 17th** We worked harvesting the corn and potatoes most of the last week. We had 93 bushels of ears of sound corn from one acre which is more than a common yeald. We have had some snow yeasterday and today with a hard freeze last night **Oct 31st** We worked the last two weeks at plowing gitting out manure gitting dirt into the yard picking apples &c. the weather has been dry and cool. I have plowed 22 acres this fall with the horses and harroed about all of it We had to kill a colt which broke its leg worth about eighteen Dollars. We have been to meetting to day the funeral of Daniel Webster was preached by Mr. Bouttell.[98] **Nov 7th** I worked one day at makeing tubs and three days at gitting up wood and at town meeting one day the last week The ground has been froze part of the week **Nov 14th** I worked one day for James the last week at hewing timber and two days in the shop and two days at drawing up wood. There is 4 inches of snow now we went to meetting with a sleigh to day **Nov 21** I worked in the shop 1 day and at gitting home ash[99] one day with the horses. We done the tharashing the last week and had 305 bushels of oats **Nov 28th** I worked in the shop about 4 days of the last week went to meetting the 25th which was Thanksgiving We had a thaw that spoilt the sleighing the last week went to meetting with wagon today **Dec 5th** I worked in the shop 4 days of the last week and two days at gitting up wood I worked 9 days in the Shop in the month of Nov. **Dec 12th** I worked five days in the shop the last week and one half day killing hogs and ½ day went to Bruces Mill The weather has been warm for the last two weeks without freezeing scarsley at all **Dec 19th** I worked 4 days in the Shop and 2 days at gitting up wood the last week **Dec 26th** I worked in the shop all of the last week

[1853]

Jan 9th I worked in the Shop most of the last two weeks The winter has been very mild so far the snow is 1 foot deep **Jan 23d** I worked in the Shop all of the last two weeks except one day at butchering The winter has been very mild so far with only about one foot of snow now **Jan 30th** I worked in the Shop about 4½ days of the last week and the rest of the week at sawing timber **Feb 6th** I went out to St Johnsbury one day of the last week and the rest of the week worked in the Shop. This is a very rainy day so that we do not go to meeting **Feb 20th** I have worked most of the time for three months back at makeing Butter tubs and have made about 400 This winter has been very mild so far with but little snow and cold weather **Feb 27th** Worked in the Shop all of the last week. The weather has been very cold most of the last week and windy **March 13th** I have worked in the Shop most of the last two

weeks. The weather has been very stormy for the last two weeks the snow is 3 feet deep now **March 20th** I finished makeing tubs last week and have 500 this winter. **March 27th** I commenced to work for Mr Kinerson the 21t of March and have worked one week at the joiners traid **April 10th** Worked at Mr Kinersons the last two weeks excepting two days **April 17th** Worked at fraiming the last week at Mr Kinersons The snow is going off fast now **May 1t** I worked the last two weeks at Mr Kinersons excepting 2½ days which I worked for Mr Burnum The weather has been very warm part of the last week but is very cold today for the time of the year the snow is almost gone and the weather is dry **May 15th** Worked for Mr Kinerson the last two weeks excepting one day in which was unwell **May 29th** Worked for Mr Kinerson the last two weeks excepting one half of a day in which made an axeltree to wagon for Father. The weather is very warm and wet and grass and grain are growing fast now **June 5th** Worked 4 days for Mr Kinerson last week and was unwell two at home **J 12th** Was at home all of the last week unwell am better now **July 3d** finished at Mr Kinersons yesterday **July 10th** I went to Walden after cattle 3 days of the last week and worked in the Shop some **July 17th** I worked at haying 3½ days of the last week the weather is dry and warm has been no rain for most two weeks. The hay crop is rather lite but better than last year. **July 24th** have had a good rain the last week which was very much needed as the ground had got to be very dry. the weather continues good for haying. I done one days work at haying the last week am quite lame with the rhematism but feel quite well when I lay still but work brings it on again **July 31t** I worked at haying 4 days of the last week The weather is very warm now with some rain **Aug 7th** I worked at haying two days of the last week The weather has been bad for haying the last week I have been at home now one month lame not able to work all of the time but am getting better now **Aug 14th** I worked at haying 4½ days at home and one day for James the last week we finished haying Friday the weather is very warm with showers We finished haying the 12th of Aug and have had 93 wagon loads. The crop of hay very good much better than we expected that it would be a month ago. The weather is very warm and wet now with much thunder We worked for James yesterday at haying and cutting wheat **August 21t** I worked for James one and a half days and for John B. Kinerson three days of the last week Commenced cutting grain the 15th the grain is backward this year but good. The weather is quite cool and comfortable to work now but has been very hot for about two weeks before this so as to be very uncomfortable to work **August 28th** I worked two days at home and four days for James R. Kinerson the last week on his Barn and expect

to work more but have got to work at home a while at harvesting now. We have got about 18 acres of oats to cut yet **Sept 4** I worked at home 5 days of the last week and one day for James We got in 30 loads of oats the last week **Sept 11th** Worked for James 1½ days and for J How 4 days of the last week. We finished gitting in the grain the 9th had over 40 loads **Sept 18th** Worked for JRK 4½ days and went to Montpelier one day the last week **Sept 25th** I worked for Mr Richardson all of the last week **Oct 9th** I worked for Mr Richardson most of the last two weeks have finished now **Oct 16th** Worked for Mr Merrill all of the last week **Oct 23d** Worked for Mr Merrill 2½ days and for J Cowls 3¼ days the last week. The weather has been warm and dry the last week **Nov 5th** I worked at J Cowls and Mr Kinersons the last two weeks. The weather is cold now with some snow the ground is frozen **Nov 27th** I worked at James Hows 16 days the [last] three weeks worked at home yesterday which is my first work at home since harvesting The weather is cold now the ground froze hard the 24th have had several snow storms but it is most all gone off and had a great larg quantity of rain **Dec 4th** Worked 3½ days of the last week for Father and the rest of the week for myself **11th** Worked in the Shop about 4 days of the last week at buchering ½ day thanksgiving was the 8th The weather is very mild for the time of the year with out any snow of consiquence the ground is froze hard quite good wagoning **Dec 18th** Worked in the Shop most of the last week worked ½ day at putting up oats ½ a day at the town &c the weather was warm all the week without any snow Cattle and sheep get part of there living on grass. **Dec 25th** Worked at gitting logs to the mill and gitting up wood 3½ days of the last week

[1854]

Jan 1t I worked 4½ days at drawing wood and brakeing roads the last week this has been a stormy week the roads have drifted very bad the snow is 1 foot deep in the woods now and keeps comming almost evry day **Jan 8th** Worked 1½ days at drawing wood and the rest of the week at gitting home timber &c **Jan 22d** Worked in the Shop most of the time worked one day at drawing wood and killing cows **February 19th** I worked in the Shop most of the time for the last four weeks **March 26th** I have worked in the Shop most of the time for the last five weeks. The weather is cold and blowing today and we are obliged to stay at home this is very cold weather for the time of the year **April 16th** I have worked at gitting home timber from Bruce mill two days at painting 1½ days and the rest of the last two weeks at makeing tubs and visiting **April 23d** Worked five days of the last week at makeing tubs and one day at painting. This spring is backward the weather is cold most of the time and the snow goes off slow **April 30th** I worked all of

the last week at makeing tubs We have done nothing on the land yet the snow is going off fast now we have much rain the ground is very wet **May 7th** I worked in the Shop five [and] one half days the last week and went to the corner one half of a day began to work on the land here the 2inst have had some warm weather but it is very cold today this is a late Spring **May 14th** I worked one half of a day at grafting the rest of the week in the Shop The weather has been quite warm the last week **May 21t** I worked three days at planting corn and potatoes and two days in the shop. The weather is good for vegetation now grass and grain look well now the trees are leaving out. I planted corn the 15 and 16th sowed wheat the 15th **28th** I worked ½ of a day on the land and the rest of the week in Shop. Corn is up and every thing looks well now **June 4th** I worked one day out on the land the rest of the week in the shop. The ground is very dry there has been no rain 10 or 12 days **June 10th** Worked for myself two days of the last week 3½ days for Father on the house and shead **June 18th** Worked on the house 4 days and at howing corn ½ day of the last week the rest of the week went to meeting &c the weather is warm and dry with cool nights and very smokey[100] **June 25th** Worked on the house 4½ days last week **July 2d** Worked on the shead and house all of the last week The weather is very warm and wet now and crops of all kinds look well. **July 9th** Worked for Father 5½ days of the last week and went to Wells river ½ of a day to celebrate the 4th the weather is very warm and dry now I worked for Father last winter at gitting wood and lumber and other work 16 days. Worked for Father this spring on the Farm and House 31½ Worked at makeing Butter Tubs the last winter and spring about 5 months **July 16th** I worked for Father at howing painting &c 4½ days of the last week The weather is very warm and dry now there has been no rain for more than two weeks and without any prospect of any now **July 23d** We worked at haying all of the last week got in 21 loads of hay the weather has been very warm and dry. there was a little rain last night which is all we have had for more than three weeks **July 30th** We worked at haying most of the last week and got in 9 loads I worked 4½ days Went to Bruces mill one day after boards **Aug 6th** We worked all of the last week at haying there has been no rain of consequence for more than 5 weeks **Aug 13th** I worked for Father 4½ days of the last week finished haying the 11th We had about 60 loads of hay **Aug 20th** Worked for Father two days of the last week and tow [two] days for John Shaw and Harvey on the tharashing machene The weather continues dry yet with warm days and cool nights. **August 26th** I worked 4½ days harvesting and gitting out manure the last week the weather continues dry yet and very smoky with cool nights **September 3d** Worked all of the

last week for James How The weather has been dry for nine weeks untill yesterday when we had quite a shower. Grain of all kinds is quite small also corn and potatoes. the hay crop was quite good The streams are lowest ever known on this place fiers [fires] have been running in evry direction the pastures are dried up very bad. **September 10th** Worked one day for Father and two for J How and the rest of the week attended State election meetting[101] and visited with friends from Nh [New Hampshire] We had a good rain friday which was just ten weeks since we had as much **17th** Worked for J How 5 days and for Moses Clark one day the last week. **Sept 24th** Worked for Clark all of the last week. The weather has been cool with heavy frosts the last week **Oct 1t** I worked for Mr Clark five days of the last week and went to the cattle fair one day. the weather is cool and dry now **Oct 7th** Worked for Mr Clark all of the last wek. The weather is warm and dry now **Oct 22d** Worked for Mr Clark all of the last two weeks. The weather is cool have had a ½ foot of snow which is all gone except the drifts **Oct 29th** I worked for Mr Clark all of the last week excepting from 2 oclok Saturday in which time I came home **Nov 12th** I worked for Mr. Clark all of the last two weeks excepting from 2 oclok Saturday the weather has been very cold most of the last week with snow it has gone off now had a

Albert Bickford wearing thick warm mittens stands in the barnyard with a single work horse used for "twitching" out logs. Date, ca. 1885. Courtesy Bickford Album with photographs presumed to be by Flora and Mary Bickford, Peacham Historical Association.

heavy rain last night **Dec 3d** I have been at home all of the last week getting to gather timber splitting it up. The weather is cold with a little snow I have worked for James Howe 13 days and for Moses Clarke 54½ **Dec 17th** Worked for Father 4 days of the last two weeks the rest of the time for myself and running about &c The weather has been quite warm the last week and very cold the week before I have worked at gitting up wood 2 days the sleding is spoilt now **Dec 24th** I worked 2½ days at gitting up wood last week the rest of the week for myself &c **Dec 31t** Worked two days of the last week at gitting up wood and the rest of the week for myself

[1855]

Jan 7th Worked in the shop most of last week the weather is quite warm now the Slaying is most spoiled **Jan 21t** I worked in the shop most of the last two weeks The weather mild we have had more than 1 foot of snow last week **March 11th** I worked 2½ days at drawing wood and on sawframe[102] the last week have worked 8½ days for Father at gitting up wood &c this winter the rest of the winter at making B [Butter] Tubs have made about 250 I have worked for myself about 12 weeks since I finished at Clarks **March 25th** Worked 5 days of the last week at makeing tubs and one day for Harvey at sawing wood also 1½ days on saw frame the week before. The weather is very cold now **April 1t** I worked in the shop most of the last week. The week has been very windy and drifting The snow is about 3 feet deep have had no rain last month hay is worth from 12 to 15 dollars pr ton and evry thing else in proportion [to] this the past year has been very hard for farmers in this section **April 22** I have been unwell considerable for the last two weeks have worked a part of the time. The weather is warm now the snow is gowing off Fast the roads are impassable we have done no work on the land yet here hay is almost used up and is high so is evrything **April 30th** I have left off makeing tubs have not made any for two weeks have made 440 We have been to meetting with a wagon today at B [Barnet] **May 5th** the weather is cold and windy and has been for one week past most of the time I have worked part of the time the last [week] have not been very well but am much better now think I shall be able to work all of the time soon. We sowed two acres of wheat the 1t of May the ground is quite dry now. We want some rain and warm weather very much to start the grain **May 13th** I worked about all of the last week the weather is cool and dry and has been for two weeks and more. Planted potatoes the 8 and 9 planted corn the 12th **May 20th** I planted corn two days and turnips one day and worked for Charles Homes one day the last week The weather continues dry had a little rain the last week grain is up grass is small the trees are leaving out **June 3d** We have

hard rain today and yesterday which was very much needed We have been without rain five weeks I worked on the road two days and at grafting two for Father and two days for myself **June 10th** Worked one day for Charles Holmes and the rest of the week at triming Apple trees at home excepting one half day This has been a rainy day We stayed at home on account of the rain which has been heavy and has washed down the corn some **June 17th** Worked 2½ days at splitting stone howing corn and at work on cart wheels. Went to Danville one day. The weather has been cold all of the last week and rainy the ground is full of water now more so than it has been for one year past **June 24th** I worked all of the last week for J Goodel in Cabot on his house the last week has been quite warm and rainy We have had a great rain today. Crops of all kinds are small but are growing fast now. This has been a very backwary [backward] spring dry and cold as was the last winter and the last summer very dry. The past year has been hard for Farmers and for all People genarly **July 8th** I worked all of the last two weeks at Goodels in Cabot excepting one day The last two weeks have been very warm and rainy today it is cool again Crops of all kinds are doing well now. **July 15th** I worked at Goodels all of the last week The weather has been warm and rainy the last two weeks and more grass and grain of all kinds looks well now **July 22d** Worked at Goodels last week the weather has been warm and wet the last week with heavy thunder showers **Aug 12th** I have worked a haying most of the last four weeks for Charles Holmes This has been a very wet hay season **Aug 26th** I finished working for Charles Holmes the 25th have been there five weeks in all and worked at haying 24 days. This has been a very wet season much hay has been got in damp and will heat some I should think[103] **Sept 2d** I worked for Franklin Bayley on his House 5½ days of the last week The weather has been quite cool most of the week with frosts **November 11th** I have worked eleven weeks ending Nov 10th for Franklin Baley on his House the weather is warm and pleasant now **Nov 18th** Worked for Ira Mclary all of the last week on his House This month has been mostly warm and pleasant The ground froze yesterday and some snow last night

[1856]

Jan 27th I commenced to work for Mr Choat the 13th of Dec and have evry day since excepting ½ day **April 12th** I finished at Choate the last of Feb have been at Holmes 4 weeks since the snow is a going off fast now **April 26th** Worked at H Hand 9 days of the last two weeks the snow is almost gone the weather is quite warm **May 11th** I worked at I McClaryes eight days of the last two weeks. This spring is quite forward **June 22d** I have worked at Truman Martins most of the last two weeks

on House The weather is very warm now the crops of hay and grain are looking well now **Aug 4th** I finished at Martins two and more weeks since have worked at home 11 days since at haying The weather has been very warm for three or 4 weeks back **Aug 17th** Worked three days of the last week for J R Kinerson at haying the last week and at Miners on house the weather is cool with rain often **Sept 7th** I worked at Miners Mrs Browns and Hendrys the last 3 weeks The weather is quite warm now and dry **December 21t** I have worked [for] H Fullers and at A Veries about all of the last three and half months Have worked at the joiners business ever since last winter at $1.25 pr day and have earned $300

[1857]

Jan 19th I have been at home for the last 4 weeks have been at work a part of the time at gitting home hay drawing wood &c. The weather is cold the snow is 3 ft deep **April 5th** I have been at home most of the time since the 20th of Dec have worked at makeing Buckets Tubs for three or four weeks past The weather is warm now the snow is going of[f] quite fast **May 3d** I have worked for Charles Holmes the last two weeks the weather has [been] cold through the month of April **May 10th** Worked for Mr Boutell all of the last week **Sept 6th** I have worked about 2½ months this last summer at St Johnsbury for the Farebanks Co. finished there week before last. This has been a very warm summer since the 1t of July and very wet with much thunder **Sept 19th** I have been about home for the last two or three weeks have worked at makeing a Grainary one week Have worked at Hatchs 37 days at Hookers 24½ days

[1858]

Jan 9th I have worked at home at gitting up wood and logs to mill &c about eight days of the last two weeks **March 24th** I have been unwell for two weeks past a had the Doctor three times am better now **May 30th** have worked at H Walkers 3 weeks past on house the weather is warm now this is a late spring the trees are just leaving out **Nov 27th** finished at Walkers worked 169 days **Dec 12th** at J Kidneys 7 days of the last two weeks. The weather is cold with about 1½ feet of snow the ground froze about the 10th of Nov and the weather has been cold ever since

[1859]

April 17th I have worked about half of the time this winter in the Shop health not very good. This has been a long winter the weather is cold now the snow is two feet deep yet. This road is not passable for slaigh or wagon we are under the necesity of staying at home from Church today **July 3d** Worked for Ira Mclary 60 days of the last three months on store[104] **July 18th** have worked for Liberty Hooker 3½ days of the last week

[1860]
July I have been at work for Ruben Clark in Cabot and for Charles Holmes most of the spring and summer thus far This has been quite a dry season so far the hay crop is rather small most other crops are good
[1861]
Feb 18 I finished work and came home the last of Jan May 5th Worked 7 days of the last two weeks for Mrs Merrill[105] have been at home about two and one half months of this winter and about the same last winter and have worked enough to pay my way should think
[1862]
May 11th I have worked at my traid most of the last year finished and came home the 6th of Feb and was married the 11th and went to Mass [Massachusetts] was away 3 or more weeks came home and worked for JR Kinerson 7 or 8 days then bought the West Farm and took posession Apr 1

Epilogue

On February 11, 1862, Albert Bickford and Augusta Merrill were married in Peacham. Albert was a thirty-seven-year-old farm hand, carpenter, and cooper with a limited education who lived with his parents until his marriage. Augusta was a member of the remarkable Merrill family and one of the best-educated women in town. At age thirty-two, she was considered "still in the market" or "on the shelf," as unmarried women at that time were characterized.[106] Augusta had been born and raised on the Merrill farm at the foot of Cow Hill, which Albert would have passed each time he made the trip to Peacham Corner.

As noted in the last entry of his journal, Albert "took possession" of the West Farm after his marriage. This house and barn on about one hundred and twenty acres was located adjacent to the Merrill farm. According to the Peacham Land Records, Hazen Merrill had owned this land for some time, with John W. West living there and "improving the property." On March 27, 1862, six weeks after his daughter's marriage, Hazen Merrill sold the property to Albert Bickford for one thousand dollars.[107] Within a few years, Albert began building a new house next to the old Merrill home where Augusta, a third generation of Merrills on that land, was raised. The new house was completed in 1868, the year of Hazen Merrill's death, and Albert, Augusta, and their two daughters took up residence. Thereafter, the surrounding property of about 300 acres became known as the Bickford farm. Albert raised cows and hayed. He kept horses and had a carriage and sleigh. He nurtured a large apple orchard, the remnants of which still stand at the turn of the twenty-first century, as does the house he built, located at the crossroads known today as Penny and Ha'Penny streets.[108]

Carte de visite of Albert Bickford and Augusta Merrill at the time of their wedding, February 1862; photographer T. C. Haynes, Railroad Street, St. Johnsbury. Augusta's dress with its stripes and plaid silk was fashionable at mid-century with bell sleeves worn over lace or embroidered muslin undersleeves. She updated the look by wearing a narrower collar, popular in the 1860s. Her full skirt is worn over hoops, and as she leans against Albert's chair, the hoops are pushed off to the opposite side a little. Her hair is worn low over her ears, an 1860s style. Albert's coat has a velvet collar and his vest is silk; a watch chain drapes through a buttonhole to the watch in his pocket. His whiskers are fashionably styled for the 1860s. His well polished boots, instead of new leather dress shoes, show what a practical man he was. This common wedding pose, the man seated and the woman standing, allows Augusta to show off her dress. The editor thanks Lynne Z. Bassett, historic textile consultant, for this description. Photograph courtesy Lois F. White.

The farmhouse Albert Bickford built in mid-1860s, still standing, with old Merrill home to the left, now gone. Date, ca. 1885. The farm is located at the corner of Penny and Ha'Penny, foot of Cow Hill. Courtesy Bickford Album, Peacham Historical Association.

Three weeks after his marriage, Albert was elected at town meeting to the position of "fence viewer," the settler of boundary disputes, often at that time part of the Peacham selectmen's responsibilities. In 1865 he became one of two petit jury members for Peacham.[109] He joined the church in 1868, Augusta having joined in 1850, long before her marriage.[110]

In addition to farming his land, Albert continued to help his neighbors. Laura Bailey, an unmarried seamstress whose father had once hired Albert for farm work and house repairs, noted in her diary the times "Mr Bickford finished our cistern" or "put on our windows."[111]

Augusta died in 1887. Her obituary in *The Caledonian* described her as "an intelligent cultural woman" and "a loving wife and mother." Albert stayed in the house, living with his daughters until his death in 1897. His obituary summarized his life: "Mr Bickford had been one of the staunch citizens of the town, a solid man."[112] In the probate records compiled at his death, the household inventory for Albert's estate listed "Chest, Carpenter & Cooper tools" evaluated as worth $26.00.[113] Remarkably, the frugal man of modest beginnings and a limited education rose to some civic prominence and left behind an estate valued at $29,905.25, administrated by the most noted Peacham citizen of the time, Charles A. Bunker, principal of the Peacham Academy.

Notes

The editor thanks Allen F. Davis, William (Bill) Ferraro, Elsie Freeman Finch, Karen R. Lewis, Lorna Quimby, and Frank G. White for commenting on the manuscript, and Janet B. Smith for transcribing the Bickford journal.

[1] Ernest L. Bogart, *Peacham: The Story of a Vermont Hill Town* (Montpelier: Vermont Historical Society, 1948), 303, 305.

[2] Jennie Chamberlain Watts and Elsie A. Choate, comps., *People of Peacham* (Montpelier: Vermont Historical Society, 1965), 29. Catherine Bickford Fahnestock, *Three Hundred Fifty Years of Bickfords in New Hampshire* (Cottonport, La.: Polyanthes, 1971), 492 and scattered.

[3] Bogart, *Peacham*, 254–277.

[4] Peacham Town Office. Peacham Land Records: Book 6, p. 473; Book 7, p. 236; Book 8, pp. 483–484; Book 9, p. 350.

[5] Peacham Town Office. Peacham Grand Lists, 1848–1862. *U.S. Agricultural Census, State of Vermont, 1850* (Washington, D.C., 1850), microfilm at Vermont State Library.

[6] Bogart, *Peacham*, Preface.

[7] Some of these letters and diaries are quoted in Lynn A. Bonfield and Mary C. Morrison, *Roxana's Children: The Biography of a Nineteenth-Century Vermont Family* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995).

[8] *The North Star* (Danville, Vt.), 14 August 1848.

[9] For a collection of articles and photographs through the years on Peacham, see Lynn A. Bonfield, comp., *The Peacham Anthology* (Peacham Historical Association, 2003).

[10] Card file of names of Academy students, Peacham Historical Association. The catalogues from which these cards were made were not printed on a regular basis until 1846. Therefore Bickford's school record might not be complete.

[11] *U.S. Census, 1850,* does not include Russell among the members of the Benjamin Bickford family so he made a permanent move from home.

[12] Robert E. Shalhope, *A Tale of New England: The Diaries of Hiram Harwood, Vermont Farmer, 1810–1837* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 140–142. There is no indication that Benjamin and Albert Bickford differed in their perceptions of "manliness" or even concerned themselves with that concept, as Shalhope describes for Benjamin and Hiram Harwood.

[13] Ira Jennison, Diaries, scattered 1869–1923; Private Collection. Charles A. Choate, Diaries, scattered 1879–1896; Private Collection. Isaac N. Watts, Diaries, scattered 1866–1876, Watts Family Papers, Special Collections, Bailey/Howe Library, University of Vermont, hereafter cited as Watts Family Papers, UVM.

[14] For an excellent discussion of weather and farming, see David Demeritt, "Climate, Cropping, and Society in Vermont, 1820–1850," *Vermont History* 59 (Summer 1991): 133–165.

[15] Peacham Grand Lists, 1848–60. In the nineteenth century, town officials called listers prepared a detailed description of each farm; this listing was a public record.

[16] *The Caledonian* (St. Johnsbury, Vt.), 26 May and 16 June 1855. Bogart, *Peacham*, 317–318.

[17] Ibid., 233–236.

[18] *The Caledonian*, 24 February 1855. The editor is indebted to the staff of the St. Johnsbury Athenaeum, especially Dorothy Fagen and Lisa von Kann, where the newspapers are preserved.

[19] Estimate of amount mowed by hand in David Warden, editor, *Robert Remembers: Rural Life Memories of Robert L. Warden of Barnet Center, Vermont* (Published for Warden Family Collections by Civil War Enterprises, Newport, Vt., 2003), 84. These memories include good farming detail from diaries of Robert Lackie Warden (1906–1988), his father Horace (1852–1923), and his grandfather William (1806–1882). Another good source for haying is Allen R. Yale, Jr., *While the Sun Shines: Making Hay in Vermont 1789–1900* (Montpelier: Vermont Historical Society, 1991).

[20] Information on Moses Martin is from Maxine Martin Long, "A Yankee Argonaut," manuscript, 1995, Peacham Historical Association. Isaac Watts's younger sister Alice described his situation in her diary 15, 16, and 26 August 1863; Private Collection.

[21] *The Caledonian*, 3 July 1858.

[22] Examples of retired Peacham farmers moving to the Corner are Ralph Blanchard and Leonard Johnson. See Lorna Quimby and Kristin O'Hare, "Blanchard Family Papers in the Peacham Historical Association," *Vermont History* 67 (Summer/Fall 1999): 95, and Oliver Johnson, "An Ernest Letter to Lyman Lee [dated 12 July 1869]," *The Vermonter* 39 (May 1934): 142–143. The Corner is one of several crossroads in Peacham where houses, and in the early years industry, were located. In Albert's time, the churches and Academy were located at the Corner.

[23] Peacham Grand List, 1860. Benjamin Bickford is not listed in the *U. S. Agricultural Census, State of Vermont, 1860,* so he was no longer farming.

[24] Hal S. Barron, *Those Who Stayed Behind: Rural Society in Nineteenth-Century New England* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 94; Shalhope, *Tale of New England,* 3. Isaac Watts,

the youngest of the three Watts brothers, took over his father's farm as Lyman Watts's health declined.

[25] For reference to Vermont men going west, see Harold S. Russell, *A Long, Deep Furrow: Three Centuries of Farming in New England* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1982), abridged, 233–234; Lewis D. Stilwell, *Migration from Vermont* (Montpelier: Vermont Historical Society, 1948), 149–151 and scattered; Harold Fisher Wilson, *The Hill Country of Northern New England: Its Social and Economic History, 1790–1930* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936), 56–66; William J. Gilmore-Lehne, "Reflections on Three Classics of Vermont History," *Vermont History* 59 (Fall 1991), 240 and scattered.

[26] Barron, *Those Who Stayed Behind,* 104 et seq., argued that those who were most "content" remained in Vermont. For the meaning of contentment in nineteenth-century Peacham, see Bonfield and Morrison, *Roxana's Children,* 16, 47, 91, 184.

[27] Christopher Clark, *The Roots of Rural Capitalism: Western Massachusetts, 1780–1860* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990), 146–155, 195–227, 309–313; John L. Brooke, *Heart of the Commonwealth: Society and Political Culture in Worcester County, Massachusetts, 1713–1861* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 308–309; and Steven Hahn and Jonathan Prude, *The Countryside in the Age of Capitalist Transformation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), scattered.

[28] Peacham Grand Lists, 1848–1860.

[29] Bogart, *Peacham,* 310–311 on sheep, 309 on beef cattle, 278 on price of corn, and 350–352 on increase in dairy farming. The greatest increase in dairying for Peacham came after the Civil War. By 1860 Benjamin Bickford was no longer farming; thus the use of 1859 figures.

[30] Allen F. Davis, "The Simpson Ledgers," *The Hazen Road Dispatch* 24 (Summer 1999), 20–24, told the history of an East Craftsbury country store where James Simpson became "a middleman" between local farmers and urban markets after the railroad connected the area to Boston. Using the store ledgers, Davis could report that cash transactions at the Simpson store were rare in the 1840s but increased in subsequent years, probably a pattern close to that found in the stores of Peacham where, unfortunately, few early store records remain.

[31] Bogart, *Peacham,* 316; Russell, *Long, Deep Furrow,* 189; Gilmore-Lehne, "Three Classics," 238 and scattered; T. D. Seymour Bassett, "A Case Study of Urban Impact on Rural Society: Vermont, 1840–80," *Agricultural History* 30 (January 1956), 1: 30; *The Caledonian,* 18 January and 13 September 1851, 12 November 1853 and scattered.

[32] Letter, 27 July 1856, Roxana Watts to son-in-law; Walbridge-Gregory Family Papers, California Historical Society, San Francisco, hereafter cited as Walbridge-Gregory Family Papers, CHS.

[33] Ira Jennison, Diaries, scattered 1869–1873.

[34] *The Caledonian-Record* (St. Johnsbury, Vt.), 29 September 1990, article by Lynn A. Bonfield on the acquisition by the Peacham Historical Association of a nineteenth-century trunk from the Watts family.

[35] Ira Jennison, Diary, 1873, memoranda at back of diary lists his making 197 butter tubs for ten buyers in this year. Mainly these tubs held from ten to thirty-five pounds. The payment for the thirty-five-pound tubs appears to have been forty cents.

[36] Frank G. White, Curator of Mechanical Arts, Old Sturbridge Village, e-mail and letter to the editor, 18 and 20 February 2003. Letter to editor, 22 March 2003, from Barbara S. Van Vuren, author of *Butter Molds & Stamps: A Guide to American Manufacturers* (Napa, Ca.: Butter Press, 2000), an excellent reference book.

[37] Bogart, *Peacham,* 274; *Walton's Vermont Register, Business Directory, Almanac and State Year Book* with entries for Brown's store in 1846–1852 and for Martin's through the 1860s. The Corner was the main center of town, and the Hollow was at the crossroads to the east, in the twentieth century called East Peacham.

[38] *The Caledonian,* 5 and 19 May 1849.

[39] The editor has been unable to locate an actual butter tub from the 1840s or 1850s at the Vermont Historical Society, The Billings Farm, Peacham Historical Association, or Old Sturbridge Village. Farm manuals of the period speak of "firkins"; Gurdon Evans, *The Dairyman's Manual: Being a Complete Guide for the American Dairyman* (Utica, N.Y.: John W. Fuller & Co., 1851), 146–147, and promotional brochure published by Porter Blanchard & Co., *An Essay on Butter & Butter Making* (Concord, N.H.: Steam Power Press of McFarland & Jenks, ca. 1852), 7–8. None of the Peacham primary sources from the period call butter carriers firkins. Butter boxes dated after the advent of the railroad are common; Van Vuren, *Butter Molds & Stamps,* 120–121.

[40] *The Caledonian,* 22 May 1858.

[41] Isaac N. Watts, Diaries, 29 May 1866, 10 and 17 June 1867, 15 May and 20–27 October 1868, Watts Family Papers, UVM.

[42] Bogart, *Peacham,* 282. Letter, 11 August 1847, Henry Walker, Peacham, to Leverett Hand, Acton, Ma., Peacham Historical Association, where Walker reported that "wages have been high

here $1.25 per day in haying." Since this letter includes many teasing remarks, it is hard to know how accurate these figures are. T. M. Adams, *Prices Paid by Vermont Farmers for Goods and Services Received by Them for Farm Products, 1790–1940; Wages of Vermont Farm Labor, 1780–1940* (Burlington: Vermont Agricultural Extension Service, Bulletin 507, February 1944), 88, listed farm wages per day with board as 75¢ in 1840, 67¢ in 1850, and 89¢ in 1860.

[43] Edward T. Fairbanks, *The Town of St. Johnsbury Vt.* (St. Johnsbury: The Cowles Press, 1914), 413.

[44] *The Caledonian*, 2 July 1859. There is little documentation of the impact on Caledonia County of the Panic of 1857. *The Caledonian*, 10 October 1857, referred to it as "a commercial crisis" and a week later as "hard times," but no examples of local hardships were reported. Money was particularly scarce through the 1840s and 1850s, blamed almost entirely on the flood of cheaper products from the West; Bogart, *Peacham*, 308–311.

[45] The editor thanks Allen R. Yale, Jr. for suggesting in an e-mail, 2 April 2003, that Bickford might have worked as a carpenter on the many new buildings and factory additions that Fairbanks constructed during this time, including housing for workers. Yale wrote that in 1858 the average pay for Fairbanks workers was $1.15 per day; carpenters probably were paid more.

[46] *The Caledonian*, 7 and 21 September 1850.

[47] Ibid., 20 and 27 March 1890, obituaries for Leonard Johnson include his bell ringing. Bogart, *Peacham*, 220, may have taken this quote from C. A. Clark, "Capt. Leonard's Confession," *The Vermonter* 43 (September 1938): 132.

[48] *The Caledonian*, 1 April 1844, 6 January 1845, 10 January 1846, 13 and 27 March 1847, 8 May 1847, 11 March 1848, 10 March 1849, 9 March 1850, 12 February 1853. Bogart, *Peacham*, 215–216. Bassett, "Case Study," 31. This was not the end of this subject which was to plague the state and the nation for many years. For the no-license view, see the 1853 diary of Mark Cone of Hartford, Vt.; Alice Cone Perry, "A Village Merchant," *Vermont History* 10 (July 1952): 201–204.

[49] Bogart, *Peacham*, 221.

[50] Bickford's younger brother, Charles B., enlisted on 16 September 1862, months after the end of the Bickford journal; Bogart, *Peacham*, 325.

[51] *The Caledonian*, 11 June 1848, 6 June 1854, 1 and 8 July 1854.

[52] The following editorial practices have been followed. Original spelling, punctuation, and capitalization have been retained, except that commas separating dollars and cents in figures have been silently changed to periods. For ease in reading, journal entry dates have been printed in bold and entries have been separated, replicating the run-on style of the autograph journal. Each year identification has been broken out in bold by the editor, and other year identifications have been silently deleted. Material added by the editor has been placed in brackets.

[53] The Bickford farm on the old road up Cow Hill, now called Penny Street, climbed north and then west to Cabot, not always passable in winter months. "Breaking" or "breaking out" were terms used for opening the roads in winter so sleighs could ride through. This was done by driving a team or teams of oxen pulling a sled, in addition to shoveling through the larger drifts.

[54] A carrot machine was probably a grater used for making carrot water which would be added to the butter to give it a yellow color. This practice was common in winter when the butter's natural color was pale; Scott E. Hastings, Jr. and Geraldine S. Ames, *The Vermont Farm Year in 1890* (The Woodstock Foundation, 1983), 78. The editor thanks Curator Robert Benz at The Billings Farm for pointing out the carrot graters in that collection, 12 September 2003.

[55] Grafting trees, especially apple, became popular at midcentury with branches from young trees being grafted onto older ones for increased production or even a more desirable type of apple. In Albert's time, apples were mainly grown for cider; Wilson, *Hill Country*, 217.

[56] Farmers bored wooden logs to create pipes for delivering water to the barn. In his 1858 farm ad, Benjamin Bickford noted "good water running to the house and barn," probably due to the pipes his son made. Isaac N. Watts wrote in his diary, 22 October 1866: "Have commenced boring logs for water works"; Watts Family Papers, UVM.

[57] In Albert's time, taxes for road repair in Peacham were worked out in labor. Usually farmers like Albert worked on the roads after mud season in the spring and when farm work lessened in the fall. It was not until 1887 that the Peacham road tax was paid in cash and not "worked out"; Bogart, *Peacham*, 384.

[58] Frank White, a native of Peacham, suggests that this was presumably the barnyard, churned up by cattle's hooves, which was very muddy from the June rains noted by Albert. Farmers put dirt on the yard to level it and dry it out, hoping to prevent hoof rot.

[59] "Making wall" meant building stone fences from the many rocks found in the fields. "Dug stone" was Albert's phrase for clearing stones from the field by lifting them onto a stone boat used to haul rocks to the edges of the field where stone wall fences were erected. As he noted in his journal, some stones were so large that he had to first blast them, and some stone fences needed gates, which he built.

[60] It is hard to tell what Albert was whitewashing. Farm women whitewashed their buttery; Alice Watts Choate, Diary, 2 June 1873; Private Collection. Frank White suggests Bickford may have whitewashed a shop interior.

[61] Haying began mid-July and continued about a month as seen in Albert's journal; see Table 2 accompanying this article for number of loads brought to the barn each year. Rowen, the term for the second cutting, was noted only on 7 October 1849.

[62] *The Caledonian*, 12 August 1848, reported on a large meeting in Peacham of Whigs and Locofocos, all against extending slavery to new states entering the Union. The fact that Albert called this meeting a Free Soil Convention might indicate his allegiance to this new party, formed in 1848, with a stronger antislavery platform than the Democratic and Whig parties.

[63] Bogart, *Peacham*, 313, reported that the threshing machine, invented in Windsor, Vt., in 1822, was drawn by two horses, and the driver and four men could thresh and clean 25 bushels of wheat an hour. This machine was not widely used in Peacham until late in the 1850s. Albert noted using a "thrashing" machine 3 September 1848 and 20 August 1854. Albert used the word "machene" for three different devices in his journal: "Carrot Machene," "Thrashing machene," and "Churning Machene."

[64] Manure was taken from the barn, where the cows had spent the winter, and was spread as fertilizer on the land; Bogart, ibid., 317.

[65] In Vermont the first Tuesday in September was election day for statewide offices. At the 1848 town meeting no candidate for Peacham town representative to the state legislature received a majority due to a three-party race among Whigs, Free Soilers, and Liberty Party members—all antislavery but differing on issues of tariffs, extending slavery into territories, and how to treat the Southern states.

[66] *The Caledonian*, 7 October 1848, reported on the Caledonia County Agricultural Fair at the Danville green on 28 September, listing a premium of $10 for "best 5 yoke of oxen to individuals of the town of Peacham" and citing a fine exhibition of stock and butter with premiums in both going to Peacham farmers.

[67] Bickford was probably making feed boxes for animals.

[68] This is a meeting of the freemen of Peacham for the purpose of casting votes for electors who will represent Caledonia County in Montpelier to choose the U. S. president. *The Caledonian*, 11 November 1848, reported that Peacham voted 74 for Martin Van Buren, 73 for Zachary Taylor, and 54 for Lewis Cass.

[69] Albert may have used his meat tubs for preserving pork from slaughtering the pigs the week before. Bogart, *Peacham*, 237, published a recipe for beef and pork brine from an old undated account book kept by Peacham native John Ewell (died 1905). This calls for packing the meat close in the tub, then pouring on the brine of soft water, good salt, brown sugar, and saltpeter. "Let it remain in the tub untill salted through then smoke if pork bacon or Dry if beef & it is Excellent."

[70] Albert hauled tree logs to the mill for planing; he also drew logs to be cut for use in wood stoves. This was a winter job for farmers when oxen could most easily pull logs from the woods. Albert noted often going to Joseph Bruce's place where he had a sawmill, shingle mill, and clapboard mill located at the outlet of Peacham Pond; Bogart, ibid., 356, 370.

[71] Farmers were beginning to increase their herds and would travel some distance in search of good cows. In addition to this entry when Albert goes to Irasburg, he noted on 17 July 1853 going "to Walden after cattle."

[72] Albert noted working in sugar houses for both his father, Benjamin Bickford, and his brother-in-law, James R. Kinerson. He reported low figures, so either others completed the job or these farmers made few pounds compared to most Peacham farmers. Bogart, *Peacham*, 315, reported that maple sugar was a profitable industry in Caledonia County with Peacham ranking high among the towns in the county producing large numbers of pounds. In 1840 Peacham made 21,180 pounds according to Zadock Thompson, *History of Vermont, Natural, Civil, and Statistical* (Burlington: Chauncey Goodrich, 1842), 138.

[73] *The Caledonian*, 30 June 1849, reported the area was experiencing "the hottest weather ever known—for so many consecutive days—by the 'oldest inhabitant.'"

[74] Albert noted making shingles in 1849 during the weeks of July 22 and 29. Finally on August 19 he indicated the use of these for shingling the barn.

[75] *The Caledonian*, 18 August 1849, reported two days of almost constant rain which was "too late to benefit hay crop and much of the grain" but would be of "great service to corn, potatoes and the fall feed."

[76] In November 1849 and 1850, Albert noted that he was gathering leaves, probably for bedding the cows in the barn during the cold months.

[77] Frank White suggests that ditching was needed to drain water from the low-lying fields. Albert continued "ditching" in May, June, and September 1850.

[78] Frank White thought that Albert may be splitting out thin pieces of wood that he then planed down to use for the sides of the butter tubs.

[79] At this time the county court was held in Danville, about ten miles from the Bickford farm. In 1856 the shire of the county was moved to St. Johnsbury. It is not clear why Albert went to court, as he had noted neither jury duty nor legal problems. He may have been merely a spectator, having little work on the farm at this time.

[80] "Whicher cow" may refer to an owner who paid to have the cow boarded with the Bickfords or to the man from whom the cow was purchased. At the time there was a Frederick Whitcher in Cabot; *The Caledonian,* 17 January 1850. Charles A. Choate noted in his diary a J. Whitcher dealing in cows, 13 January and 19 December 1881.

[81] *U.S. Agricultural Census, State of Vermont, 1850,* listed Benjamin Bickford with two "working oxen."

[82] It is unclear where Bickford went to have his teeth filled, as *The Caledonian* had no ads for Peacham dentists, but possibly Dr. Farr served as dentist as well as medical physician. At this time, tooth aches were usually treated by having the rotten tooth pulled, as seen in the Journal of Alfred and Chastina W. Rix, California Historical Society, hereafter cited as Rix Journal, CHS: on 20 November 1849 Clara Walbridge "had two rotten teeth pulled," and on 27 January 1850, Sarah Walbridge Way went "to the Dr.'s & got a tooth pulled."

[83] Although Chastina Walbridge Rix did not attend the wedding of her close acquaintances, she did commemorate the day by writing on 6 June 1850: "Luther Parker & Louisa Martin = 1"; Rix Journal, CHS. At this time it was customary for only family members to be present at the marriage ceremony, which was usually held at the bride's home. Louisa's close cousin, Augusta Merrill, would have attended. It is a mystery why Albert attended.

[84] *The Caledonian,* 28 September 1850, reported that Caledonia County had insufficient funds for a fair this year. Albert went to the Orange County fair in Bradford, where an exhibition of 300 pairs of working oxen was the hit of the show.

[85] There is no information about Benjamin Bickford's trip to Oswego, N.Y. He may have gone west to see if he wanted to move to a place with a longer growing season or simply to visit friends who had moved there. In any case, he returned in twelve days.

[86] "Gitting out manure" means removing cow waste from the barn while "gitting up muck" seems to refer to clearing waste in the barnyard. Isaac N. Watts made a similar distinction in his 1867 diary when he noted "drawing manure" much of the month of May and "got it plowed in" on the corn fields. At the end of June, after several hard rains, he was "drawing muck" and "fixing the barnyard"; Diary, 16, 17 May and 25, 26, 27 June 1867, Watts Family Papers, UVM. The distinction between "manure" and "muck" is not always clear.

[87] During this period in Vermont, the date for Thanksgiving was set by the governor as it was a state holiday. The date varied through November and early December, often not coinciding with the date set by other New England governors. In 1863 President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed Thanksgiving a national holiday to be celebrated on the last Thursday of November.

[88] "Brakeing colts" refers to training young horses for work or riding with saddle.

[89] This entry may be misdated as the picnic most likely occurred on July 4th.

[90] Frank White suggests that this is a "drawshave" or draw knife that Albert used in the shop.

[91] As an example of community working together, diaries and letters of nineteenth-century Peachamites occasionally note that a child is missing and people in the town immediately begin searching. On 11 November 1849, Chastina Walbridge Rix at the Corner wrote of a similar experience: "it was noised abroad that a boy was lost in the woods . . . a hundred or more . . . people . . . went to the ground. They were about starting into the woods when lo the lost one appeared in sight. Young Carter had lain in the woods all night, but in the morning found his way out & came home;" Rix Journal, CHS.

[92] Dr. Josiah Shedd, a long-practicing doctor in Peacham who became a trustee and benefactor of the Academy, died September 4, 1851; Watts and Choate, *People of Peacham,* 273; Bogart, *Peacham,* 132, 234; *The Caledonian,* 13 September 1851. Alfred Rix, principal of the Academy, summarized Shedd's life: "He was a fine old fellow in many respects—hard business man but a good neighbor, citizen & philanthropist." After his funeral Alfred added: "If a poor man dies nobody has a word to say against him if he has kept clear of the State Prison—while if a rich man dies he is cursed anyhow & sent to hell if he has not acted in all things like a saint. . . . Dr. Shedd has left a blank which could not be fairly filled by all the tribe of snivelling shit-asses who are now barking over his grave. Let them go to work with the same energy & faithfulness as he did & they will have less leisure for & less inclination to indulge in envious gab at the Dr.'s memory"; Rix Journal, CHS, 4 and 7 September 1851.

[93] Cases of suicide were often noted in the local newspaper. By mid-nineteenth century, the obituaries of suicides did not include negative comments as seen earlier in the century. They often explained that the person "was no doubt temporarily insane," as they did for Augustus Walbridge;

The Caledonian, 11 November 1881. The most famous Peacham suicide was nineteen-year-old Harvard law student, George Mattocks, son of John Mattocks, governor of Vermont, who killed himself in 1844; *The Caledonian*, 29 January 1844. The editor is indebted to David E. L. Brown for pointing out that August–September may have been a period with no prescribed sermon lessons, thus Boutelle might have used the commandments for a series of sermons.

[94] According to *The North Star*, 13 December 1851, the Caledonia County Court was in session in December when Albert spent a day and later in the month two weeks in Danville, possibly attending court. The newspaper reported "a trial of rather a novel character" concerning the widow of a man who died at Sheffield when the stagecoach he was riding in overturned. Citing the legislature's law "making towns liable for accidents of this kind, when they occur from bad roads," widow Lucy Flanders requested $5,000 in damages. This was the first case under the new law, and the newspaper, 20 December 1851, gave the account that "after a long and patient trial, accompanied by able arguments of counsel on both sides, the jury could not agree." This is the kind of case that would have interested Albert and any other farmer who used town roads. Following this, the freemen at Peacham's town meeting, 6 March 1855, voted "to pay S. B. Hooker the damage he sustained by the loss of his horse in breaking out the highway"; Town Meeting Records: Vol. 2, 1845–1865, pp. 67–68. It seems that judgment on who was responsible was going to be determined on a case-by-case basis.

[95] It was called a deacons meeting when a preacher was unavailable and one of the deacons read a published sermon. Most attendees found these services dull.

[96] Lyman Pattridge, a Peacham farmer, died 28 May 1852; Watts and Choate, *People of Peacham*, 242–243 and *The Caledonian*, 12 June 1852. Chastina Walbridge Rix wrote 30 May 1852: "Mr. Lyman Patridge was buried. Died of cancers in his eyes"; Rix Journal, CHS.

[97] Frank White points out that Albert may "simply [be] chopping up the corn stalks and feeding them to the cows. In the 1830s some farmers cut off the tops of the corn stalks to use as cattle feed . . . the most important aspect of raising corn was to harvest the ears that would be husked, dried, shelled, and then ground into meal both for animal feed and for human consumption. They did not turn the corn into silage until a bit later." Isaac N. Watts wrote that he cut off corn stalks in diary entries: 11, 13 and 14 September 1867, and 3, 8, and 18 September 1868; Watts Family Papers, UVM.

[98] It was common practice for ministers to preach funeral sermons after the death or on the anniversary of the birthday of notable American men. Peacham's first minister, Leonard Worcester, preached such a sermon for George Washington on the first birthday after his death; Leonard Worcester, *An Oration Pronounced at Peacham, in Commemoration of the Death of the Late Gen. George Washington, February 22d, 1800* (Peacham: Farley & Goss, 1800). There is no record of Boutelle's sermon for Daniel Webster, who died 24 October 1852, although *The Caledonian* reported on funeral sermons for Webster in Boston churches. One interesting fact Boutelle might have noted in his sermon was that the childhood minister of Webster in Salisbury, New Hampshire, was the brother of Leonard Worcester; *The Caledonian*, 13 November 1852.

[99] Ash is a durable wood probably used in making butter tubs.

[100] Usually "smokey" refers to the haze of early autumn, when the air is no longer clear and bright, as he noted on 26 August 1854. This entry is written in June when the warm and dry weather with cool nights resulted in a smoky mist. Isaac N. Watts wrote in his diary 29 July 1868 during a hot spell: "Is pretty smoky today"; Watts Family Papers, UVM.

[101] See note 65. No candidate received a majority for Peacham town representative to the state legislature in 1848, 1851–1853, and 1855; Bogart, *Peacham*, 466.

[102] Frank White describes a sawframe and Albert's use of it: "The saw blade is attached to the end pieces of a rectangular frame and is stretched taut by a tensioning device; can be a handsaw, a saw mounted in vertical guides with a table and a treadle, sort of like a large jigsaw. Sawmills had large reciprocating saws mounted in frames. The fact that he worked this week and the next suggests a large frame, possibly in a sawmill."

[103] Then and now, farmers are fearful of putting wet hay in the barn as there is a good chance of spontaneous combustion.

[104] Bogart, *Peacham*, 274, 380–381, wrote that Ira L. McClary's store was in business in 1860 at the Corner. He described it as "a small building on the lot next to his house, a unique structure on Maple Street with two Greek Doric pillars in front, which was built for him by Silas Burnham. The store building was later moved across the road by Irving Hobart and used as a garage." The editor notes that in 1999 the street became South Main. *Walton's Register* did not list stores in 1859, but did include McClary's in 1860, one of five merchants listed in Peacham, the only year that store appeared.

[105] Mrs. Merrill is Miriam Eastman (1816–1895), married on 21 February 1856 to Hazen Merrill, his third wife; Watts and Choate, *People of Peacham*, 103, 211. The Merrills lived at the foot of Cow Hill.

[106] Bogart, *Peacham*, 180, on "the remarkable Merrill family." Augusta Merrill was educated at the Peacham Academy and spent a year at the Bradford Seminary. "Still in the market" is a phrase

from a letter, 29 May 1853, Roxana Watts, Peacham, to son-in-law, Walbridge-Gregory Family Papers, CHS. The editor is indebted to Lorna Quimby for the phrase "on the shelf," summer 2001.

[107] Peacham Land Records: Book 13, p. 439.

[108] The editor is indebted to Jeremy Packard for a tour of the Albert and Augusta Bickford property and to Russell Kinerson for a tour of Cow Hill; fall 2003.

[109] *The Caledonian*, 7 March 1862 and 9 June 1865.

[110] *Manual of the Congregational Church in Peacham, Vermont* (Jericho: Roscoe Publishing House, 1890), 20, 23.

[111] Laura Bailey, Diaries, 25 August 1864 and 8 December 1866; Private Collection.

[112] *The Caledonian*, 17 February 1887 and 9 April 1897.

[113] Caledonia County Probate Office: Volume 62, pp. 565–566. The editor thanks Janet Paige for bringing records out of storage while the courthouse in St. Johnsbury was being renovated.

"Far from Idle": An Early-Twentieth-Century Farm Wife Makes Do

A neighbor remembered three things about Carrie Somers: "One, she was efficient; I mean practical. She built her kitchen, you know. Two, she was a good woman, very religious. And three, she was strict."

By LORNA QUIMBY

How short a time what a woman does lasts! The kitchen she plans so carefully will be rearranged and redecorated by the next owner, who cannot imagine how her predecessor put up with this awkwardness or that inefficiency. Every woman marks her territory, especially her kitchen, by some distinguished touch, which in turn will be removed or altered by the next inhabitant when she makes her imprint.

There yet remains one house in Peacham that bears unmistakable signs of its former occupant, although this soon will be gone as the home where Caroline Knight Morrison Somers lived from around 1900 to 1965 is now for sale. For years it was lovingly cared for by her daughter and known throughout the town for Carrie Somers's kitchen and the other rooms in the old farmhouse, all full of the vitality and artistry of this Vermont woman.

"What do you remember about Carrie Somers?" I asked a former South Part neighbor. "I remember three things," the woman replied. Succinctly she listed them. "One, she was efficient; I mean, practical. She

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Caroline ("Carrie") Knight Morrison Somers at age 64, (1938). Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Marilyn Hagen Petrie.

built her kitchen, you know. Two, she was a good woman, very religious. And three, she was strict."

It is interesting that the first trait this neighbor listed was Carrie's efficiency. Most people said, "She was a good woman" when asked the same question. Carrie was known as a devout, deeply religious woman, who started her days singing hymns, kept the Sabbath, and welcomed and fed the lonely, hungry wayfarers who came to her door. She nursed the sick and made a home for an elderly friend. Part of her goodness was the strictness she was also known for. "She was meek, but she was strong. She couldn't be swayed at all."[1]

Carrie was also known as a "good worker," high praise in a community that valued the contribution a good worker made. Other women in the community also carried that badge of distinction, but, "she built her kitchen, you know." A woman in the early twentieth century who did her own carpentry made an impression on her neighbors. This impression stemmed from her kitchen and its construction, and it is part of her children's memories of their mother as well.

The Somers family had not always lived on the farm in the South Part of Peacham. On October 30, 1901, Lee Somers and Caroline Knight Morrison were married; Carrie, as she was called, was twenty-seven years old. They started their family on a farm in the town of Groton,

The Somers family farm house, in South Part, Peacham. Note the sun porch on the right and the small porch over the front door left. Photograph by Marilyn Hagen Petrie, 2002. Courtesy of the photographer.

not far from the Groton-Peacham line. By 1915 they had eight children, three boys and five girls.[2] In November of 1913 they bought the farm in Peacham, for Peacham's schools were better than Groton's. The South Part school stood just down the hill from this home. When they reached the higher grades, their children could drive a horse or walk to the Peacham Academy. A three-mile walk to the academy was considered acceptable, for children at that time were expected to walk a mile to school as a matter of course.

The new house was large, with seven bedrooms for their growing family, but the kitchen was small. As the family grew, the kitchen seemed smaller and smaller.

One day in the early 1920s, accounts of the exact year vary, Carrie decided she needed more kitchen space. "She said to Dad, 'I want you to put a floor and a ceiling out in the woodshed.'"[3] Little did Lee realize what would come from that quiet request.

The oldest girls worked in the barn, for farming was labor-intensive. Every hand was needed. Carrie herself had helped with the milking until the children grew big enough to help. When the two middle girls became old enough to work, Carrie insisted that Ruth and Neverlie help her in the house. These young girls did the kitchen work while their

mother was building the kitchen. Her tools were the simplest: "a hammer, a hand saw, and a square and nails, and that was it."[4]

"Do it yourself," she told her children. "Don't wait for someone to do it for you."[5] Carrie brought windows, boards, and doors from their former home for use in her new kitchen. Also, "Dad cut his own trees for lumber and usually had a big stack so Mom could help herself."[6] Carrie put some of the windows in the back of the kitchen and used others for doors for her china closet. She made the drawers underneath the counters. She installed barrels on rollers for flour and sugar. She used cupboard doors from her old kitchen for her new one. She salvaged the iron sink, too, so she had a big iron sink—at least four feet long—and a second smaller one. "Mother didn't want the men washing up in the sink where she did the dishes—though she used to clean the vegetables in the sink where the men washed."[7] She located the sinks near the stove, no small consideration when all water had to be heated on top of the stove. Later on, a coil in the stove heated the water, which was then stored in a tank.

In the corner by the big wood-burning cookstove, Carrie built two settees—places to sit near the heat—with a woodbox under one and a place for boots under the other.

Next Carrie decorated her kitchen walls. She painted designs over the base coat on the walls, not with stencils but by hand. White flowers with green leaves and stems grew from brick-red flowerpots at regular intervals over the creamy tan background. The design allowed the viewer to see where the boards meet under the paint.

Carrie's new kitchen was a large, cheerful room, with counter space for the endless cooking, places to sit near the stove, and a dining area.

Carrie built the family's first indoor bathroom by dividing their former small kitchen into a bathroom and a closet for everyday coats and boots. As soon as the plumber finished his work, Carrie painted the bathroom with a design of white flowers with a red dot in the center, placed hit-or-miss over the blue background. Again she did this freehand, without using a stencil. The finishing touch is the border of white lacy lines that look like a crocheted border around the top of the walls. No other house in Peacham sported this artwork.

"You can do anything you want to if you want it badly enough,"[8] she would say. Carrie wanted a summer porch. It isn't hard to imagine what it was like in summertime in the kitchen with the wood-burning cookstove adding its extra warmth to the heat of the day. So, the summer before the flood of 1927, Carrie built her sunporch on the westerly side of the house. It opened from the kitchen, and all summer long the family

Carrie Somers's kitchen. The china closet and cupboard incorporated windows and doors from the family's previous farmhouse. Photograph by John Somers, 2003. Courtesy of the photographer.

gathered there for their meals. She also enclosed the back porch and later added another over the front door.

Lee remarked, "I'm always glad the woodshed was between the barn and the house, or she would have built the kitchen right out to the barn."[9]

Carrie needed a covering for her sunporch floor. A worn carpet, twelve feet square turned upside down, gave her a sturdy canvas base on which she painted a background coat and then a design. A coat of varnish finished her floor covering. When one design wore off, she painted another.

"Mom used to tell Dad and me what she wanted to accomplish. Then she would start right in."[10]

Carrie always tried to improve her children's home and make living easier for them. She decorated the rooms, hanging wallpaper and painting the floors. Some of her floor decorations were simple spatter repeat patterns, others had squares with leaves, birds, or flowers alternating with the plain squares of the colored background. She took three surrey

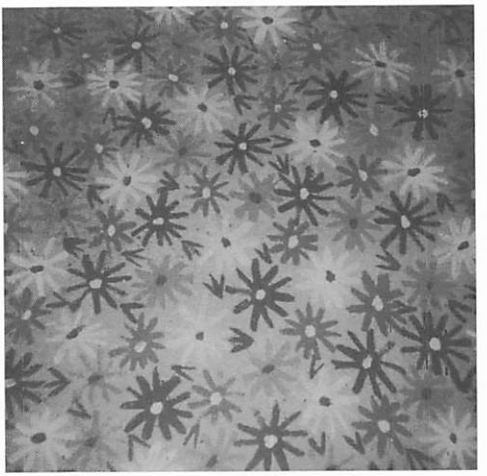
For her new kitchen, Carrie Somers built two settees and hand painted the walls. Daughter Gwendolyn Somers Hagen stands in the doorway. Photograph by John Somers, 2003. Courtesy of the photographer.

seats to the blacksmith, told him what she wanted for irons, and put rockers on them. She then made cushions. Carrie's descendants still rock on the sunporch on the seats she made, and when the house is sold, they will take these rocking settees to their homes.

In the 1930s she built their lawn chairs and a seat around one of the maple trees in front of the house. She drew her own patterns for these. She made a lawn glider, and how fascinating this was to visiting children! She painted all these pieces of lawn furniture a pure white to contrast with the green lawn.

Carrie also drew or copied pictures that took her fancy. Her daughters and one son have the pictures of flowers, landscapes, and horses she created. Carrie also decorated the cards she mailed to her varied correspondents.

Her carpentry and art work made Carrie stand out in the neighborhood. Peacham farm wives took it as a matter of course that they made



Details of Carrie's hand-painted wood floors: a simple pattern in the dining room (left) and a more complicated pattern with leaves, birds, and flowers and geometrical designs (above). Photographs by John Somers, 2003. Courtesy of the photographer.

all the children's clothes, sewed sheets out of strips of unbleached muslin, made patchwork quilts, and braided and hooked rugs using traditional designs. Carrie, however, created her own designs for her rugs and quilts. Here again, she used the material at hand—old coats and skirts too worn for wearing, remnants left from dressmaking, all those bits that were too good to throw away. She also made her own mattresses

out of ticking stuffed with hay, straw, and corn husks. Carrie sometimes worked late into the night to finish a project.

Her "projects," as her family called them, were done piecemeal amid all the daily and seasonal chores of a farm wife, in the intervals between visits from relatives and neighbors and interruptions when she was away tending the sick.

Along with the hammering, sewing, sawing, and painting went the cooking, the housework, tending the garden, raking the hay in summer, and doing milking occasionally when her husband was absent.

The cooking itself was a formidable task. Her daughter Ruth remembers a Saturday's baking:

> We baked eight or nine loaves of bread, two kinds of cookies (molasses and filled), eight pies (fresh or dried apple pie, pumpkin pie, custard pie, and berry pies in season), a pot of baked beans, steamed brown bread, and two cakes in a huge rectangular pan which would hold about four of the cake recipes of today. There were six eggs in each cake. We also fried doughnuts. After doing all that cooking on Saturday, we got up on Monday and started all over again![11]

How good those cookies tasted—soft ginger cookies with a sweet raisin filling. Her oldest daughter Gwen cherishes the cookie cutter Carrie used: a 3½-inch can cover with "Bake it Best with Absolutely Pure Davis" imprinted on the top.

And her doughnuts! Carrie would bring a plate heaped with her doughnuts, warm, fragrant, and dusted with sugar, to the children playing in the front yard. Carrie was famous for her doughnuts. "Someone would telephone to say 'we're having an auction. We need five hundred doughnuts,' and Mom would cook them."[12] When the doughnuts grew stale, Carrie steamed them and served them with a sour sauce for a dessert. "We kids can still remember the flavor."[13]

Carrie mixed her bread dough "in the biggest dishpan I ever saw," her daughter-in-law writes.[14] She used potato yeast that she made herself, using a bit from the last batch as a starter, the way other women made sourdough yeast. She scooped her flour from the barrels she had installed. All were baked in the big oven of the Home Comfort range, which made the kitchen toasty warm in winter and unbearably hot in summer.

This was just the baking. Carrie and her two helpers, her middle daughters, cooked three square meals each day. For breakfast, she prepared oatmeal, steaming on the back of the stove, fried potatoes, eggs, "a foot-high stack of toast,"[15] and pie, if anyone had room for it. The grandchildren remember the taste of the leftover buttered toast, which Carrie put to dry in the warming oven over the range and which the children could eat for snacks. At noon the family ate another big meal.

In summer Carrie served peas or string beans cooked with new potatoes, sometimes cooked with salt pork. The family picked from the vines and shelled a bushel of peas for one meal. Carrie added thick Jersey cream and butter to the cooked vegetables. The family had the usual produce in summer: radishes, lettuce, cucumbers, squash, carrots, and beets. In the evening there was supper, as it was called then, with fried potatoes and vegetables. In the fall Carrie served tomatoes for supper and "added bread to increase the quantity so there would be plenty for all of us."[16] At every meal, pies, cakes, doughnuts, and cookies filled in any empty crevices. Her daughter-in-law remembers "how flabbergasted I was to find glass jars full of doughnuts and cookies on the table at all times. A doughnut or a cookie could be popped in one's mouth at any time."[17]

The family didn't eat much meat. Few farm families in Peacham did. Sometimes they had pork from the pigs, served as the ubiquitous salt pork, and "Dad bought meat with bones in it from Ray Cooley who came around with the butcher's cart."[18] Carrie cooked the meat off the bones and served it in gravy. For another source of protein, Carrie made "milk gravy," which cookbooks of the time placed in the section for recipes under "medium white sauce." Each Peacham farm wife had her variation on the basic combination of butter, flour, salt, and milk. Some made the equivalent of paste in taste and appearance. Others served their families an attractive, tasty sauce with golden flecks of butter and specks of pepper, or the secret spice they used to make a special dish, floating on the snowy surface. On one memorable occasion, Carrie served her family a small pig that she stuffed and roasted whole.[19]

Although fresh produce was available in the market most of the time, Carrie and Lee raised all the fruits and vegetables their family ate during the year. "Dad planted the big stuff—peas, beans, corn, squash, potatoes, and cucumbers. Mom planted the beets, greens, lettuces, radishes, tomatoes, and string beans."[20] That is to say, Lee planted the beans that were dried for baking. Carrie prepared her garden herself, digging out the sods, because a wall came too close to her plot for plowing with the horses. As Carrie dug out the "witch grass,"[21] the children dragged it away for her. Carrie used the turf and the stubborn grass to build a terrace while she was freeing her garden of weeds. She set out raspberry and strawberry plants. Marilyn Hagen Petrie, one of Carrie's granddaughters, remembers getting up in the morning and going in her bare feet on the cold wet grass to where her grandmother was working in the garden. Carrie rose at the "crack of dawn"[22] and worked in the cool outdoors, her clear soprano voice raised in a hymn of praise, until the men and the girls who helped in the barn had finished their chores and were ready

Carrie and Lee Somers's family, ca. 1918. Back row: Gwendolyn, Leeland, Dwight, Beulah; Front: Ruth, Lee holding Gilmore, Eunice, Carrie, Neverlie. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Marilyn Hagen Petrie.

for breakfast. Both gardens were large, for Carrie canned for the winter. The neighboring women described with awe the hundreds of quarts "Carrie Somers and her girls" had canned.

The family slept in six double beds and two twin-sized beds in the seven bedrooms. A household of eight children and at least two, most of the time three and four, adults produced a mountain of laundry: clothes, used towels and washcloths, and bedding. Wash day on Monday for Carrie meant boiling and scrubbing by hand. Later she scrubbed clothes with an EasyWasher from Sears, Roebuck and Company. In this laborsaver, a woman pushed her clothes back and forth in a galvanized tub with a wooden agitator. "Easy" indeed! In 1940 her daughter Gwen gave her mother a washing machine run by a gasoline motor, for it was not until 1946 that the Rural Electrification Act brought electric power to the farm. Carrie looked askance at the modern contraption. "Give me a good wood stove and an old scrub board, and I can keep things clean."[23]

After the washing on Monday, Carrie ironed on Tuesday. She heated the irons on the Home Comfort stove. The irons were called "sad-irons," meaning that they were solid, not hollow—not that they made the user unhappy. She ironed all the sheets and folded them. "She was

particular about a lot of things. The men's shirts had to be folded just so."[24] How many times her daughters heard:

> All that you do, do with your might.
> Things done by halves are never done right.[25]

On Friday, Carrie went through the house, washing, scouring, and dusting. "One time Mom put on a pedometer, just to see how far she walked doing housework. She found she averaged seventeen miles a day."[26]

"Make your head save your heels,"[27] she used to say. When painting designs on the floors, Carrie lay over the seat of a chair with its back gone, reaching the floor from this horizontal position. She sat down on one of the rockers on the sunporch while she peeled the potatoes for a meal—and how many there were to peel! No sooner had she finished the chore than she would say, "I must stir myself and get busy."[28]

Besides her weekly chores, her carpentry and other big projects, Carrie made all the children's toys: rag dolls, stuffed animals, and toys out of spools. She sewed all the girls' dresses, coats, and underwear. She made their white graduation dresses. She ordered the material from the Sears, Roebuck or the Montgomery Ward catalogs, which many farm wives pored over, searching for the best buys.

There were no well-child clinics in those days. The doctor was called only when all else had failed. Carrie tended her children when they were sick. She used home remedies: catnip tea for upset stomachs, garlic for colds, and sugar and turpentine for pinworms. "In the spring of the year she gave us a tonic of sulphur and molasses. The sulphur made the molasses foam, and the molasses covered up the sulphur taste."[29]

Carrie "was far from idle."[30] Her life was busy, but not frantic. Her day's work changed with the progression of the week, the wheel of the seasons, interspersed with time to pray, to sing, to play with her brood. As Peacham's highest praise for anyone goes, "She was a good worker." As well as her house and its kitchen, Carrie Knight Morrison Somers left her children a legacy. They, too, are known as doers, for they know from their mother's example "You can do anything you want to if you want it badly enough."

Notes

[1] Marilyn Hagen Petrie, granddaughter, interview by author, Peacham, Vt., 21 February 1983.

[2] Jennie Chamberlain Watts and Elsie A. Choate, compilers, *People of Peacham* (Montpelier: Vermont Historical Society, 1965), 278.

[3] Ruth Somers Chandler, daughter, born 8 March 1911, interview by author, St. Johnsbury, Vt., 8 June 1983.

[4] Eunice Somers Jurentkoff, daughter, born 12 October 1915, interview by author, West Barnet, Vt., 3 May 1983.

[5] Chandler, interview.
[6] Neverlie Somers Murray, daughter, born 11 December 1912, letter to author, 14 June 1982.
[7] Gwendolyn Somers Hagen, daughter, born 18 May 1907, interview with author, Peacham, Vt., April 1982.
[8] Chandler, interview.
[9] Hagen, interview.
[10] Murray, letter.
[11] Chandler, interview.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Beulah Somers Gormley, daughter, born 30 June 1909, interview by author, Lyndonville, Vt., 22 June 1983.
[14] Dorcas Wheeler Somers, married to Carrie's first child Leland, born 25 March 1904, letter to author, undated (1982).
[15] Ibid.
[16] Gormley, interview.
[17] Somers, letter
[18] Jurentkoff, interview.
[19] Chandler, interview.
[20] Gormley, interview.
[21] Ernest L. Bogart, *Peacham, the Story of a Vermont Hill Town* (Montpelier: Vermont Historical Society, 1948), 315. Witch grass was introduced early into Peacham from England to provide good feed. Unfortunately, it was practically impossible to eradicate and became known as the farmer's curse.
[22] Hagen, interview.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Gormley, interview.
[25] Chandler, interview.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Murray, letter.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Gormley, interview.
[30] Murray, letter.

The Campaign

Everywhere my father speaks, in the living rooms of unpainted farmhouses, on bandstands on rainy village greens, people respond positively to what he has to say. Have enough people heard his message?

By ELIZABETH RABY

My father and mother, Andrew E. and Edith W. Nuquist, came to Burlington, Vermont, in 1938, when my father was hired as an instructor in political science at the University of Vermont. My father was glad to have found a job during such difficult economic times. Natives of Nebraska, my parents did not then suspect that the move to Vermont would be permanent.

To make the trip to Burlington from the University of Wisconsin, where he had been a student in the Ph.D. program, my father purchased an ancient truck. Mother remembered with considerable embarrassment the final labored climb of the old truck, backfiring and spewing exhaust, up Pearl Street to the apartment my father had rented for his family. Everything they owned was crammed into or tied to the top of the overloaded vehicle.

When my father arrived in Vermont, his field of interest was international relations. Very soon, however, he became fascinated by his adopted state. Although he always retained his internationalist outlook, he became a specialist in the local and state governments of Vermont. Among his publications are Town Government in Vermont (1964) *and, with Edith*

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ELIZABETH RABY, who currently lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico, writes nonfiction and poetry. In 1998, she wrote an article for *Nebraska History* about the unsuccessful 1934 campaign for governor waged by another member of her family, her grandmother, Maud E. Nuquist.

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W. Nuquist, Vermont State Government and Administration: An Historical and Descriptive Study of the Living Past (1966).

What follows is a chapter from a memoir that, in part, details my family's Vermont experiences.

Burlington, Vermont, primary election night, 1946: My father, Andrew E. Nuquist, has challenged the incumbent Congressman, Charles A. Plumley—the recumbent incumbent, as my father's supporters called him in their politer moments—for the Republican nomination. In 1946, Vermont went through the formality of a follow-up two-party election, but the primary *was* the only real election. During the campaign, Congressman Plumley gave a speech in which he told the audience that some of his friends supported the proposed bounty on beavers, while some others of his friends were opposed to such a measure. And where did he stand on the merits of the issue? "I'm for my friends," said Charlie.

My father has been approached by a group of prominent men who think it is well past time for a change. "I can't afford a campaign," my father tells them. "How much do you need?" they ask. "Five thousand dollars," he answers, and it has been provided.

My mother gives up her position as president of the Burlington League of Women Voters to manage my father's campaign. She has no experience running a campaign, but my father has long depended upon her organizational skills. My father worries that he is still considered a newcomer to the state, a flatlander, having lived in Vermont for only eight years, and he has the misfortune of teaching at the university. He's heard that people think he's Jewish because of his thin beak of a nose and his strange name.

The five thousand dollars has seen to the printing and distribution of cards, posters, and advertisements for the newspapers and the radio stations. It has purchased a used car, pre-World War II model, that carries us from one campaign appearance to the next. Its frequent failure has made my father late to many events. The radiator overheats; fan belts and hoses disintegrate; the headlights fail.

I remember the oncoming lights and roar of a bus on an otherwise empty road late at night. My father steps into the road, waving his brown felt fedora like a signal flag. The bus rumbles to a stop. My brother and I stumble up the stairs, Mother close behind, into the curving gray plush interior, the few sleepy, curious faces roused momentarily by the row of lights the driver turns on for us.

The drama of my father's ghostly white shirt disappearing as the bus pulls away, and every snore, whispered conversation, and scent of dust and tobacco is intensified by a new phrase, "unscheduled stop," and a

VOTE FOR

ANDREW E. NUQUIST

FOR

Representative to Congress

REPUBLICAN PRIMARY
AUGUST 13, 1946

INDEPENDENT INFORMED
YOUTHFUL

"Sober Consideration of All Legislation"

(*over*)

VOTE FOR

ANDREW E. NUQUIST

FOR THE RECORD

- I believe that permanent peace can come only with United States leadership.
- I believe in equal regulation of both industry and labor.
- I believe in improving the position of Vermont farmers by the completion and use of the power resources of the St. Lawrence sea-way.
- I believe in the conservation of our natural resources.
- I believe in keeping land in farms and not in lakes.

BACKGROUND

1. Associate Professor of Political Science U. V. M.
2. Chairman of Vermont State Chamber of Commerce Committee on Local Finances and Affairs, 1941-1943.
3. Public Panel Member, Regional War Labor Board, 1943-1946.
4. President Vermont Association for the Crippled, Inc., 1942-1946.
5. Director Town Officers' Educational Conference, U. V. M.
6. Lecturer Town Officers' Conferences, 1939-1941.
7. Honorary State Farmer Degree awarded by Vermont Future Farmers of America.
8. B.A., Doane College, 1927; M.A., 1936; Ph.D., 1940, University of Wisconsin.
9. 3 years short term missionary teacher in China, 1927-1930.
10. Married. 2 children, 40 years of age.

(*over*)

Campaign card for Andrew E. Nuquist, 1946. Courtesy of the author.

new hour, midnight. The silent driver stares ahead into the darkness, his face a waxy candle lit by the glow from his cigarette.

I don't know when or how my father got home. I don't remember the long dark walk up the hill from the bus station to our house on Cliff Street.

On another memorable occasion the floor of the car bursts into flame. A carpet covering a gaping hole has worked its way down onto the road and friction has turned us into a bonfire. My father, in his good suit, leaps repeatedly over a fence, past startled Jersey cows, and fills one little paper cup after another with water from a fortuitously placed stream.

One day we attend a Sunday rally in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont. We rise early, Mother packs a picnic basket, and we set off on our long drive. A clank and a jolt and something is wrong with the car once more. My father gets out to raise the hood and stare helplessly at the engine. His curses rise again and again to audible level. "Now, Andrew," my mother says each time. "Now, Andrew," and he subsides. Finally a farmer comes by and patches us up somehow so we can continue, inching forward slowly, while ominous noises rumble out of the motor.

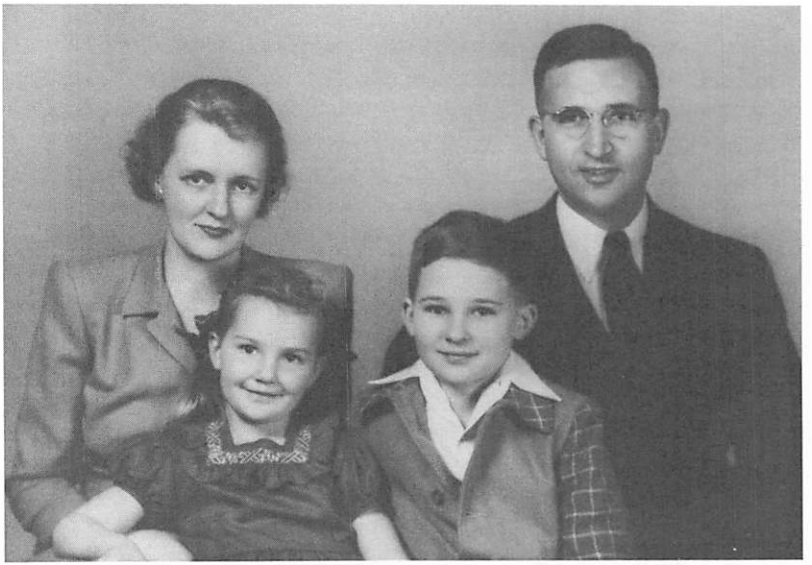
At last we arrive. Here is something I have never seen. An unpainted farmhouse, torn screens, and a front yard of unmown grass that rises above my knees. Under a tree on a trestle table rest a big jug of lemonade, redolent chicken pot pies, coleslaw, and heaps of fresh strawberries. There is a tethered pony with many children waiting to ride. They know how to do it! They know each other.

Mother tells us to go play, but not to take any food. She says it has been too much work for these women, and too much expense, for strangers like us to have the benefit. My father moves off, shaking hands and talking to people. Mother follows him. My ten-year-old brother has become invisible to me. My five-year-old self presses against the trunk of a tree.

Finally it is time for Daddy's speech. Grown-ups crowd into a dark parlor. Somewhere in the middle of the crowd, I sit on Mother's lap. My brother sits beside us. Daddy stands beside the round stove. Everyone looks at him while he talks. I am so proud. Afterwards we climb back into the car to begin the creeping, rattling, apprehensive ride home.

Everywhere my father speaks, in the living rooms of unpainted farmhouses, in grange halls, on bandstands on rainy village greens, people respond positively to what he has to say. Have enough people heard his message? Mother tells my brother and me not to expect Daddy to win. He's running to show that old Charlie is not invincible. That in the *future,* with more time and money, someone will beat him.

My mother gives over the campaign to a newspaperman, a convert to



The Nuquist family, 1946. Left to right: Edith, Elizabeth, Andrew S., and Andrew E. Nuquist. Courtesy of the author.

the cause with more experience and good connections. Tonight, however, election night, they both think my father has a chance. The early returns look good. He is ahead.

Every room on our first floor is crowded with men who cluster around radios, tuned loudly to different stations. Someone sits in the front hall by the telephone that rings again as soon as the receiver is replaced. The house fills with cigarette smoke, the rise and fall of voices, shouts, cheers, oaths, all to the delight of my brother and myself. We are at first underfoot, watching the chalked tallies, the slips of paper as they are torn from the adding machine, the men running from room to room with new bits of information. Then we are banished to the top of the stairs, where we watch and listen as best we can through the bannisters.

This has been the most exciting summer of our lives and this, by far, the most exciting evening of all. At midnight our father is ahead. Unbelievably we are both sent to bed. I nurse profound feelings of disappointment and injustice for the five minutes before I fall asleep.

When I awake the house is quiet. The scent of coffee and bacon has joined the stale odor of cigarettes. I run downstairs where my parents are moving quietly about. They both look tired. For a minute I hesitate to ask the question.

"I lost," my father says. "I didn't expect to win, you know."

"But you were ahead," I say. "You were winning."

"I didn't have time to get to everyplace," he tells me. "I lost where they didn't have a chance to hear me. If I'd gotten into the thing sooner, I might have pulled it off. But I'm still an outsider here."

I feel like crying but I don't want them to know. I'm afraid I will hurt their feelings. I pretend it's nothing much to me, and I don't ask any more questions. I feel sad to an extent probably unimaginable to my parents. I'm just a very small girl.

There is very little further discussion then or ever. I don't know how my brother feels. He doesn't say. My father reveals no emotion about the loss. He doesn't talk about it at all for awhile. He sells the car as junk. Some time later my mother says she is glad we don't have to move to Washington. She didn't really want to leave our house. She likes Burlington.

Two years later, the same men approach my father to consider another attempt. They tell him that he showed the state that Charlie Plumley could be beaten. This time, they say, he could do it for sure. This time they don't offer to pay. My father turns them down. He never runs for office again, nor does any other member of the immediate family, but to this day the tallying of any election stirs my blood.

BOOK REVIEWS

Freedom and Unity: A History of Vermont

By Michael Sherman, Gene Sessions, and P. Jeffrey Potash (Barre, Vt.: Vermont Historical Society, 2004, pp. xx, 730, $34.95; paper, $24.95).

Freedom and Unity: A History of Vermont is a long-awaited achievement, the product of years of work by its authors and decades of planning by its supporters, who first envisioned such a work as far back as 1976. It is indeed the child of much promise: At one time or another many of the most prominent historians in Vermont have fostered its growth. Remarkably, under all the pressure of many expectations, Michael Sherman, Gene Sessions, and P. Jeffrey Potash have produced a book that will fulfill all the hopes of its well-wishers.

Many are the standards by which this book will be judged: Academic historians will look to see how effectively it integrates the latest and most provocative research in their own fields (and for their own names in the index); local historians will want to see how their own towns and institutions are represented; students will look for simplicity and clarity; general readers will ask for a good story. To an extraordinary degree, the authors have satisfied all these demands. They have managed to make *Freedom and Unity* a remarkably usable book—a scrupulous work of scholarship *and* an entertaining read.

Throughout its nearly 700 pages, the authors have successfully balanced the need to be all-inclusive with the demand for narrative coherence. Never bogged down in abstractions, the pages are alive with individual stories. (Useful reference materials are consigned to the appendices.) The authors write with a clear vision; explicitly rejecting the exceptionalism that has characterized many Vermont histories in the past, they

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embrace instead a ruling idea of Vermont as a "border area" of "kaleidoscopic diversity," in the words of T.D. Seymour Bassett.

One of the most important features of *Freedom and Unity* is its reflection of this "kaleidoscopic diversity." One will encounter here the traditional looming figures of Ethan Allen, Justin Morrill, and George Aiken; but one will also encounter Lydia E. White of Topsham, who raised money for the Christian and Sanitary Commissions during the Civil War; James E. Burke, Burlington's first non-Yankee, Irish-American mayor, elected in 1903; and Verandah Porche, one of the founders of Total Loss Farm in the 1960s.

Sherman, Sessions, and Potash have reached beyond the traditional political narrative to include a wide variety of different stories. One can read about the political structure of the Republican Party in its heyday—but also about opera houses, music festivals, and trolley cars. As befits a work sponsored by the Vermont Historical Society, the authors make excellent use of visual materials drawn from the Society's collections: Broadsides, paintings, and postcards are generously scattered throughout the text. Often these illustrations give a voice to people who have traditionally been left out of Vermont's mainstream histories: Rockwell Kent's haunting poster advertising a New York City rally to support the 1935–36 Vermont Marble workers' strike, for example, shows a woman and her children turned out of their company-owned housing in the depths of the Depression.

In retrospect, the nearly thirty years during which the book was not completed may have served it well. This book could not have been written in 1976. The authors have so successfully integrated the groundbreaking research of the past generation of Vermont historians into their narrative that their version of Vermont history is a distinctly new one in many ways. Chapter 2, "Struggle for Empire, the Vermont Crossroads," for example, tells a story that would be barely recognizable to historians of previous generations. Here the traditional French and British actors share the stage with Abenaki, Sokoki, Mohawk, and Huron forces—no longer anonymous "Indians"—on a freewheeling and violent frontier in a desperate struggle for control of land and resources. In Chapter 3, "The Lure of the Land," we encounter the Green Mountain Boys, to be sure, but they are a far more complex and diverse group than earlier stories tell. New research suggests that, far from being free thinkers like Ethan Allen, the vast majority were evangelical Protestants who had found southern New England insufficiently pious. Even more interesting, as many as one third of the Green Mountain Boys came not from New England but from the Hudson River valley in nearby New York; when they came to the New Hampshire Grants they

brought with them their experiences of struggling with New York authorities over land tenancy. Such new information forces us to re-think the old easy generalizations about "Yankees" and "Yorkers."

In the twentieth-century chapters, too, the authors present a perspective that has been shaped by new research. They point out that Vermont in the early twentieth century was already perceived as a bastion of old-fashioned virtues and values. But their Vermont is no pristine Yankee kingdom, holding fast to its egalitarian traditions; it is a Vermont where citizens were imprisoned and hounded from their homes for speaking out against American policy in World War I; a Vermont where the Ku Klux Klan gained a foothold in the 1920s; and where Vermont Governor Philip Hoff received racist hate mail in response to his 1968 program to bring white and black teenagers together.

Nevertheless, the authors do not discount the power of myth. Vermonters' perception of themselves—the "imagined community" to which they have belonged—plays a key role in this narrative. The authors outline the facts about Vermont's response to the 1927 flood, for example: immediate and large-scale monetary assistance asked for and received from the federal government; increased state bureaucracy and taxes. But in the same chapter, they trace the development of a myth about these events—that Vermonters had rejected all outside assistance—which became for many years almost as politically important as the facts themselves.

Freedom and Unity, in short, is a real triumph: articulate, balanced, comprehensive, and readable. It is a book whose appearance is truly a cause for celebration for all those who played a role in its creation.

DONA BROWN

Dona Brown is an Associate Professor of History at the University of Vermont, and the Director of the Center for Research on Vermont.

Women's Work in New England, 1620–1920. Annual Proceedings of the Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife, volume 26.

Edited by Peter Benes (Boston: Boston University Press, 2003, pp. 224, $25.00 paper).

Women's Work in New England, 1620–1920 is a collection of fourteen essays on women's household production, paid employment, and other forms of labor. Each year, the Dublin Seminar for New England

Folklife organizes a conference around a different theme. The present volume publishes selected papers from June 2001, when the theme was women's work. It was inspired in part by the traditional English rhyme

> Man's work lasts til set of sun
> Woman's work is never done

True to the adage, the essays in this volume cover the wide range of women's work, from daytime activities such as washing and tending cattle, to those done after "set of sun," including midwifery, healing the sick, and knitting.

The volume is organized around seven sections describing different kinds of work. Section One, "Women and Washing," focuses on the importance of household linens in the early seventeenth century, and the process of soaping, "bucking," and batting them. Section Two, "Women and Agriculture," contains essays detailing seventeenth-century women's management of cows and household dairy operations and the early-twentieth-century life choices open to women in a rural Vermont town. Section Three, "Women as Producers of Textiles and Clothing," treats women as consumers of material goods and examines the differing meanings ascribed to women's work by men and women in the early national period; it also looks at Maine handknitters and their communities in the early twentieth century. Section Four, "Women in Industry and Communications," describes the work of New Hampshire pre-dial telephone operators. Section Five, "Abolitionists, Missionaries, and Memory Makers," tells the stories of a Massachusetts woman's journey toward abolitionism as a result of her evangelical convictions, a New England missionary's life in a log cabin in Oregon, and the women of Nantucket who chose to document their community's whaling past. Section Six, "Gendered Roles in Healing and Childbirth," explores the medicine-making, "watching," and childbirthing roles of women's medical practice in the colonial period. The last section, "Children and Servants," describes the work and life of domestic servants in the Revolutionary period and then in the Gilded Age mansions of Newport, Rhode Island.

Two of the essays are of particular interest to Vermonters. The first is "Constance Strong's Diary: Women's Work in North Pomfret, Vermont, 1910–1920" by Cameron Clifford. Clifford uses Strong's diary, part of an independent archive, as a way to examine the life choices open to rural women at this time. By noting different women who appear in the diary and using additional research to fill out their roles, Clifford is able to show that Constance Strong had multiple possibilities before her, even in the small town of North Pomfret. Clifford shows how Strong's mother took in summer guests; how one of her extended family worked as house-

hold help; how one townswoman and her sisters had taken over the family farm; how the single King sisters worked in a Massachusetts hat factory in winter and lived in North Pomfret in the summer; and how one woman left her husband and took up housekeeping for another man until her fellow citizens made life intolerable for her. Clifford makes a convincing case that even in tiny North Pomfret, women in the early twentieth century could choose from a range of different life paths.

Mary Beth Sievens's "'The Fruit of my industry': Economic Roles and Marital Conflict in New England, 1790–1830" also gives an interesting portrait of life in Vermont. Sievens argues that while we know a fair amount about the kinds of women's work in the early national period, we have relatively little knowledge about how men and women thought about that work. To answer this question, Sievens draws on over 1,500 desertion notices published in Vermont and Connecticut newspapers. She argues that husbands saw themselves in terms of the legal and economic power granted them by common law, as heads of households entitled to their wives' labor. For example, Asa Goodenow of Rutland denied his wife the use of his credit because "she refuses to labor." By contrast, wives saw themselves as producers in their own right. Sievens quotes Sarah Hall's statement that her husband had "ever since our unfortunate marriage, lived by the Fruit of my industry principally." Sievens concludes that men and women thought about work in very different terms, and that women did not accept their stated legal status as *femmes couvert.*

Women's Work in New England, 1620–1920 is a fascinating look at many aspects of women's life and work over the course of three centuries. It is especially interesting because of the different vocations of its contributors: academics, museum curators, public historians, historical interpreters, and oral historians. These multiple traditions, along with the many subjects they illuminate, provide a rich and varied set of perspectives on women's experience.

WODEN TEACHOUT

Woden Teachout is a lecturer in the History and Literature Program at Harvard University.

Yankee Singing Schools and the Golden Age of Choral Music in New England, 1760–1800

By Alan Clark Buechner (Published by Boston University for The Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife, 2003, pp. viii, 158, paper, $30.00).

This seminal work was first written as Buechner's doctoral thesis at the Harvard School of Education in 1960. Until the present publication it was only available for perusal at Harvard, but, notwithstanding, it greatly informed the research of other scholars of early American music such as Richard Crawford, David McKay, Gilbert Chase, Karl Kroeger, Nym Cooke, and Warren Steel.

Consider the state of choral music and congregational singing in New England around 1720. Virtually all literate contemporary observers agree that congregational singing has degenerated to a very low level. There are no functioning choirs and virtually no one in the congregations can read music. The only available congregational songbook is the *Bay Psalter,* whose latest edition contains but thirteen tunes, without harmonies. Most congregations do not even use all of these tunes, and they are sung in the long, tedious lining out fashion in which a deacon first intones the melody of each phrase, after which the congregation attempts to repeat, usually with no two voices singing in unison. No instruments are allowed to support the singing, not even a pitch pipe to set the key. One observer complains of the resulting "Discord and lengthy Tediousness which is so often a Fault in our singing of Psalms." Another observes that singing "is a Task that so few are capable of performing well that in Singing two or three staves, the Congregation falls from a cheerful Pitch to downright *Grumbling,* and then some to relieve themselves mount an Eighth above the rest. Others perhaps a Fourth or Fifth, by which Means the Singing appears to be rather a confused Noise, made up of *Reading, Squeaking* and *Grumbling,* than a decent and orderly Part of God's Worship."

Now consider the situation eighty years later at the turn of the nineteenth century. Virtually every town and village has its own choir, comprised largely of children and young adults. Most of these singers have learned at least the rudiments of music reading in the ubiquitous local singing schools, led by itinerant singing masters, and supported by local subscription and tuition. Many of the choirs are even supported by public funds voted by the towns. The singing schools and choirs can draw on several hundred different locally published songbooks, containing a

wide variety of psalms, hymns and anthems by local composers, some of great polyphonic complexity. Frequently choirs from surrounding towns will join together to perform at important public events, often with newly composed topical songs to match the occasion. In short, choral singing is highly regarded and integrated into community life.

How this remarkable transformation was effected in such a relatively short time is the subject of Buechner's book. The first step was to articulate a critique of the existing state of affairs and propose an alternative. The primary protagonists in this effort were a group of prominent, mostly Harvard-trained, Boston-area ministers, including Cotton and Increase Mather, among others. Far from being anti-music, most of these Puritan ministers believed that vocal music was among the most precious of God's gifts to man and ought therefore to be dedicated to His greater glory. They published a number of sometimes quite polemical tracts attacking the degeneration of what they called the *Usual* way of singing and proposing in its place to establish *Regular* singing, meaning singing from the written notes with measured, ordered rhythm. Two of these men published instructional songbooks to aid in this campaign. John Tufts's *Introduction to the Singing of Psalm Tunes, In a plain and easy Method* (ca. 1714) contained a brief course in the rudiments of music followed by a collection of thirty-seven tunes in three-part harmony. His "plain and easy Method" dispensed with conventional music notation entirely and instead used a system of letter notation wherein the pitch of each note was represented by one of the four fa-sol-la-me solmization syllables currently in use, and the duration of the notes by dots and slurs. Thomas Walter's *The Grounds of Musick Explained* (1721) was a much more extensive coverage of basic music theory, including key and time signatures, used conventional music notation as well as the fasola solmization system, and also included twenty-four tunes in three-part harmony. These two books provided the basic curriculum for the community singing schools for the next forty years.

Initially the campaign for Regular singing encountered fierce opposition. Many older singers clung to the embellished lining out style, they felt the youth were too light, airy, and vain in learning to sing by rule, and many even thought it blasphemous to sing the fasola syllables to the sacred tunes. The reformers decided to aim their campaign primarily at the young. Gradually singing schools were established in almost every community in New England (except for Rhode Island, where the predominantly Baptist congregations frowned on singing in church), sponsored sometimes by the parishes and sometimes offered independently by the singing masters themselves. They met in tavern common rooms or in the local schoolhouses, frequently with children's sessions

in the afternoons and sessions for teenagers and young adults in the evenings. Over the next decades, under the leadership of the singing school graduates, nearly every church abandoned lining out and adopted Regular singing.

In 1767 Daniel Bayley of Newburyport, Massachusetts, printed the first American editions of two influential English songbook collections: William Tans'ur's *Royal Melody Compleat* and Aaron Williams's *Universal Psalmodist.* By 1774 these collections had been reprinted eleven times. As Buechner writes, these two songbooks

> provided New England psalm singers with their first introduction to some of the major forms of choral music such as canons, fuging tunes, anthems and occasional pieces. So great was their impact that within a few years after their appearance a number of Yankee singing masters began composing choral music in the forms and styles included in their pages, and the regular singers who heretofore had been dispersed throughout their respective congregations began agitating for the right to form themselves into choirs. It would be no exaggeration to state that these collections were responsible in large measure for initiating the great flowering of choral music which took place in New England between 1760 and 1800.

The stream of new compositions by Yankee singing masters became a flood; by 1810 around 287 books of singing-school music had been published. Responding with enthusiasm to these new musical forms, the singing schools became ever more widespread and popular. As long as the repertoire had been limited to the homophonic, rhythmically simple harmonizations in Tufts's and Walter's collections, it was possible to sing these songs with the participation of the whole congregation. But these new, more complicated forms, particularly the contrapuntal fuging tunes and the longer through-composed anthems, were much too difficult for congregational singing, except with extensive preparation. So, not surprisingly, enamored with these new forms, the singing school graduates began agitating for the right to form themselves into separate choirs with their own designated seats in the churches. This development also initially engendered much opposition. One of the strongly held tenets of the Congregational churches had been that the singing should be entrusted to the entire congregation rather than to a separate choir which smacked to them of popery. But, once again the enthusiasm of the youthful singers (and perhaps the power and quality of their renditions of the new music) swept away the objections, and by the end of the century nearly every town had its own recognized choir.

Buechner's book contains other fascinating information: regarding the lives and methods of some of the typical singing masters and the organization of their singing schools; on the composition of the singing

school participants; on the music theory contained in the tunebooks; on the details of the financial support from parishes and towns. One of the most interesting aspects of the book is the extent to which Buechner demonstrates that the singing schools and the newly forming choirs were almost overwhelmingly a youth movement. As he summarizes:

> Although organized for the purpose of studying sacred music, the singing school was not an institution which was characterized by a pious, dignified, other-worldly atmosphere. Rather it was an institution which was characterized by the enthusiasm and vitality of youth. As the traditional agency for bringing the younger persons of the community together for wholesome recreation, it was in fact a kind of youth movement in which both the sacred and the secular purpose were realized.

This strikes a chord with me in my present-day work with hundreds of young singers in the many ensembles of Village Harmony, where we still sing a lot of songs from the early New England tradition. I find that most of them are looking for a spiritual as well as a social experience, and they find this in singing together.

This is a beautifully bound and printed book, filled with illustrations, long quotations from contemporary sources, and a host of interesting tables in the appendices. The wide, two-column pages enable the songbook facsimiles to be reprinted at nearly full size. Perhaps influenced by his sources, Buechner writes in a charming, slightly old-fashioned style. I will keep coming back to this book again and again for inspiration and reference.

LARRY GORDON

Larry Gordon leads Village Harmony youth choirs and other community choirs in central Vermont. He is a long-time student of early American psalmody, a regular leader of the annual New England shape-note singing convention, and co-editor of Northern Harmony, *a collection of songs from the New England singing school tradition.*

Diary of a Christian Soldier: Rufus Kinsley and the Civil War

By David C. Rankin (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp. xxi, 281, $30.00).

Vermonters have long clung to two cherished and somewhat contradictory myths about slavery: that the Green Mountain State was solidly abolitionist from its founding, and that a secret army of Underground Railroad operatives, at great peril to their own safety, conducted large numbers of fugitive slaves through Vermont to freedom in Canada. The latter myth has been effectively challenged by Raymond Zirblis in his *Friends of Freedom: The Vermont Underground Railroad Survey Report* (Montpelier: Division for Historic Preservation, 1996). The former myth is harder to challenge, since few reliable measures of public sentiment are available for the nineteenth century. But those who have devoted much time to reading the letters and diaries of Vermont's Civil War soldiers know that the abolitionist in arms was a rarity, especially before the implementation of the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863.

David C. Rankin brings one of these rare crusaders to life in *Diary of a Christian Soldier: Rufus Kinsley and the Civil War.* Kinsley (1831–1911), of Fletcher, Vermont, enlisted in the Eighth Vermont Infantry Regiment in the fall of 1861 and served as a corporal for nineteen months before accepting a commission as second lieutenant in the Second Infantry Regiment, Corps d'Afrique (later the 74th Regiment, U.S. Colored Troops). Both regiments served in the Department of the Gulf of Mexico, where Kinsley recorded his thoughts and observations during nearly four years of service.

Rufus Kinsley carried to New Orleans his fervent hatred of slavery, based on an evangelical interpretation of the Bible, and a conviction that educating freed slaves was vital to their hopes of achieving true liberty. He found the white inhabitants of the Crescent City hostile, and the feeling was clearly mutual. "I thank God I live to see the day when the South is beginning to burn," he wrote on January 21, 1863, "and that it is my privilege to help kindle the fires." He did not enjoy "scenes of desolation, burning villages, and starving women and children," but believed that such destruction was the inevitable consequence of the slaveholders' sins (p. 119). Championing the rights of African Americans, along with condemning those who drank liquor, won him few friends among the white natives or his fellow soldiers. Even among the white officers of black regiments Kinsley found few who were so passionately opposed to

slavery. In December 1863, he described the new colonel of the Second Regiment, Corps d'Afrique, as "a genuine pro-slavery cotton-hearted negro hater" (p. 140). But the Vermont abolitionist found many friends among the fugitive slaves who flocked to the Yankee camps, and he labored to teach them reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Kinsley's diary is unusually cogent and detailed. He was a perceptive observer of events, attitudes, and human nature—despite his judgmental tendencies—and an excellent writer. He recorded important details about military operations, though much of his information was second hand; special assignments and disability limited his combat exposure while he was with the Eighth Vermont, and the black regiments were given few opportunities to fight.

Rankin, who currently teaches at the University of California, Irvine campus, has written extensively on slavery and the Civil War era, with much of his work focusing on New Orleans. Clearly, he knows his subject. The 85-page introduction to *Diary of a Christian Soldier* provides a rich context for understanding Kinsley's writing and a knowledgeable analysis of his attitudes toward slavery and black soldiers. The book is well illustrated and Rankin's notes are copious and detailed. Some minor errors reveal a certain unfamiliarity with Vermont, such as his placing Burlington in Franklin County (p. 16), and a curious reference to Grand Isle as a "desperately poor" county in the 1860s (p. 58). Similarly, Rankin's apparent unfamiliarity with the military command structure produced minor solecisms such as a reference to John W. Phelps as "a brigadier general in the First Vermont Volunteers" (p. 28). Phelps served as colonel of the First Vermont Volunteer Regiment until it was disbanded in the summer of 1861, and later commanded a brigade.

Historians might wish for more discussion of the attitudes of Vermont soldiers and civilians toward abolitionism. Kinsley's diary, Rankin writes, reminds us "that while the Civil War may not have been a war of religion, it was for many soldiers a religious war" (p. xiii). This is undoubtedly true, but for most Vermonters, the source of that evangelical devotion was a desire to save the Union, not to free the slaves. Nevertheless, David C. Rankin has done a superb job of editing and interpreting Rufus Kinsley's diary. Good Civil War diaries are hard to find, and this one, so skillfully handled, is among the best.

JEFFREY D. MARSHALL

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Log Drives on the Connecticut River

By Bill Gove (Littleton, New Hampshire: Bondcliff Books, 2003, pp. 245, paper, $29.95).

When we ponder the value of America's navigable rivers as transportation corridors open to public use, various images of ships, tugboats, barges, and other river traffic typically come to mind. Bill Gove's book reminds us that water commerce can have a very different meaning. Picture instead a crushing, undulating, steadily drifting surface of logs stretching bank-to-bank across a wide river and extending upstream far into the distance, vanishing from view. A small army of rivermen, ever alert, moves perilously across the logs, prodding, coaxing, and riding them into swift currents. A single misstep is likely to be fatal, and each year the river exacts a human toll.

The setting is New England's longest river, its headwaters found among the four Connecticut Lakes in the northern reaches of New Hampshire. Such log drives were the most practical way to move timber harvested in northern New Hampshire and Vermont during winter months to mills downstream after the spring thaw. Until 1915, when the drives of long logs ended, this advancing swell of timber halted all other river uses in its path. Once set in motion, these log drives became an irresistible force, no more able to reverse direction than could the waters carrying the logs. Intentionally or not, Gove tells a story that is also an allegory of forest use in America, similarly incapable of altering course.

On the surface, the book provides a comfortable diversion for readers, who will easily become absorbed by the exploits of the lumber barons, loggers, and rivermen whose legacy is folklore at its best. George Van Dyke, owner of the region's major log-driving firm, the Connecticut Valley Lumber Company, is a dominant figure, and his drives at the turn of the twentieth century are at center stage. Yet the rivermen who work long hours in icy water, endure blistered feet treated with white lead or lard, sleep on river banks, move with constant agility simply to stay alive, and, remarkably, return year after year, claim most of the attention. Expendable to company bosses, these acrobats appear to be Gove's heroes, just as they were to the young boys who lived in villages along the drive.

The story moves easily from forest lumber camps to downstream mills, and Gove uses the river as an effective organizing device. Each sequence of the journey reveals yet another important aspect of the driver's trade, from landing logs streamside in winter, to flushing ice surfaces, to clearing

log jams, to building booms that control the direction of floating logs toward mills or away from eddies. Readers are also introduced to a rich folk vocabulary, adding zest to the narrative. Sluicing (to be avoided), wanigans, pannikins, and bean holes (culinary terms), camp inspectors (derogatory), kersey (clothing), and reading shirts (related only indirectly to clothing) are all good examples, but many others are equally descriptive.

The author matches his writing style to his subject, and the work should be accepted at face value, an interesting story abundantly illustrated. After viewing many of the images, one can easily understand how words such as "log jam" have become part of ordinary vocabulary. When jams did occur, typically at bridge abutments or rock ledges near rapids, logs were driven into a chaotic mass, often wedged high into the air by strong currents. This caused delays in a drive, and workers sometimes spilled into towns unfortunate enough to be located nearby, causing upheavals of an entirely different nature. These tales, too, add spice to the river's language.

Although log drives for short pulp wood, four feet long, continued until 1949, Gove's book is mostly about a culture of rivermen who began to vanish from common memory long before mid-century. In all likelihood, their skills are gone forever, and readers should consider the book in this context.

Despite Gove's compelling view of these intrepid adventurers, he never quite confronts the strong undercurrent of prodigal forest use in America, or at least in New England, that inheres in his story. True, there may be little to add at this point to an already enormous body of writing about the history of timber extraction. Yet the drives were an important part of that story, and to see the process occurring in the images that Gove provides is to understand that history on a vast scale. Gove credits the Connecticut Valley Lumber Company with policies that rejected complete clear cuts, and some of the lands formerly owned by Van Dyke's firm are now part of the northern forest managed by a coalition of conservation organizations and state agencies. Nevertheless, this unwieldy subject stands square in the middle of the river and is much too large to ignore. Better, instead, to carefully integrate that important context into the narrative without damaging the story of the men who worked the drives.

ROBERT MCCULLOUGH

Robert McCullough is assistant professor of historic preservation at the University of Vermont and author of Landscape of Community: A History of Communal Forests in New England.

Historic Guide to Burlington Neighborhoods, Vol. III

By David J. Blow (Burlington, Vt.: Chittenden County Historical Society, 2003, pp. viii, 166, paper, $16.00).

When looking at that old 1892 directory, have you ever wished you could send a letter back in time to the property owner at the address of the building you want to know more about? With the third volume of the *Historic Guide to Burlington Neighborhoods,* you can do the next best thing. Dip into these pages and meet the people who lived, worked, worshipped, and played at hundreds of specific sites in the Old North End, South Union Street, and a few "random" spots in Burlington from the early 1800s to the present. Make the acquaintance of Vermont governors, noted Burlington businessmen and women, owners of neighborhood corner stores, prominent builders and architects, firefighters, University of Vermont professors, laborers, teachers, farmers, steamship employees, railroad workers, families, and even a bootlegger (see pages 42 to 44 for the details).

The foreword in the first volume of the series notes that in 1987 the Chittenden County Historical Society set the goal of celebrating Vermont's bicentennial of statehood by writing and publishing a much-needed history of the City of Burlington. In the 1970s the society had commemorated the nation's bicentennial with the "Look Around" towns in the county series. Volume one of the guide to Burlington neighborhoods was published in 1991 and volume two followed in 1997. Now this great labor of love has been completed, with the third volume coming out in 2003. The team of David Blow as researcher and author, Lilian Baker Carlisle as editor, and Sarah Dopp as photographer has been with the project from beginning to end. Sylvia Bugbee and Jerry Fox compiled the comprehensive twenty-nine-page index for the new book.

This series has painted a vivid picture of life in Vermont's Queen City by looking at neighborhoods, individual buildings, and the people who inhabited them. The final volume starts with a brief history of the nineteenth-century development of the Old North End, including an explanation for all the oddly shaped blocks and housing lots, and a detailed timeline from the 1650s to 1996. Individual chapters for each street are jam-packed with information about individual buildings and land parcels, from the first European settlements to modern times.

As you browse through these pages you can see the rise and fall and rise again of neighborhood parks; how members of ethnic, religious,

and neighborhood groups worked together to build social, educational, or mutual aid clubs; how the railroad and trolley car lines came to be; the role of the corner store; the rich history of the Intervale from the original inhabitants to Ethan Allen and farming now and then; the evolution of power generation; and the trend of large single-family homes being converted into apartments.

David Blow tells us about many of the important builders and architects in the city, including the prolific Roby family, Frank Lyman Austin, and John Roberts, who on August 8, 1894, mysteriously walks out of the city and the last entry of this book. These pages also are inhabited by the founders of some of Burlington's oldest businesses, including jeweler Louis Fremeau (p. 34) and a partner of Blodgett Oven, begun in 1854.

Did you know 29 North Union Street was the birthplace in 1873 of A. Atwater Kent, future manufacturer of telephones, "the first successful ignition system for automobiles" (p. 48), and radio receiving sets? Particularly refreshing are the entries for what the index classifies as "Women of Stature" (p. 166), such as Mary Farrell Cassidy, a housekeeper for the Lund family who became an exclusive dressmaker and later an architect and writer, historian, and antiquarian Lilian Baker Carlisle.

The book does not have endnotes or a bibliography, but most entries make note of specific sources. A street map would have been helpful for those not familiar with the city, or for future researchers in case some of these streets are renamed yet again.

This three-volume series is a wonderful achievement. People who love researching local history know what a painstaking and time-consuming, but fun, effort it is to dig up this kind of detailed information and how challenging it is to put the facts together and make them come alive. The Chittenden County Historical Society and especially David Blow, Lilian Baker Carlisle, and Sarah Dopp deserve our hearty congratulations and thanks for their dedication in taking on and completing this project. They have documented a vibrant city and the people who made it that way. May the stories and lessons learned from these books inspire Burlingtonians of today and tomorrow to sustain this vibrancy. Now we can only wonder what great project the society will tackle next.

ELSA GILBERTSON

Elsa Gilbertson, a regional historic site administrator for the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, was assistant editor of the Division's books on the architectural history of Addison and Rutland counties and co-author of Staten Island Walking Tours.

The Tormented President: Calvin Coolidge, Death, and Clinical Depression

By Robert E. Gilbert (Westport, Ct.: Praeger Publishers, 2003, pp. vii, 288, $67.95).

Vermont's only elected president, Calvin Coolidge, presents a puzzle to some historians and is dismissed as a joke by others. Recently, he has been getting a little respect and serious attention. Speeches he wrote over seventy-five years ago are mined for the gold they contain. His 1929 autobiography is, arguably, the best presidential memoir after that of President Grant. New books include two biographies and a compilation of quotations. A novel, *Seeing Calvin Coolidge in a Dream,* by John Derbyshire, while not "about" Coolidge, offers an accurate view of his character. The documentary film, *Things of the Spirit,* continues to be eagerly anticipated.

The Tormented President: Calvin Coolidge, Death, and Clinical Depression presents a diagnosis of depression as a Rosetta stone, or the skeleton key that unlocks the Coolidge enigma, answers all riddles, and, in the words of the old preacher, "unscrews the inscrutable." Northeastern University Political Science Professor Robert E. Gilbert is right. Our thirtieth president was clinically depressed following the death of his son in 1924, compounded by "unresolved" grief from earlier losses. This retrofitting of a contemporary diagnosis is a unique contribution. However, I contest Gilbert's assessment of the degree to which that depression "impaired" the president or "altered" his presidency.

Biographers have all touched upon how deeply Coolidge felt the death of Calvin, Jr. "He lost his zest for living" was how Mrs. Coolidge put it. However, from *The Tormented President* you might conclude that there was nobody in residence at the White House, from the second week of July 1924 until March 4, 1929. Here I part company with Gilbert. He has overstated his case. Coolidge soldiered on in the face of painful loss; his presidency was not vastly different from what it might have been had his son lived.

Some historians see Coolidge's laissez-faire presidency as a cause of the Great Depression. Gilbert sees clinical depression as the cause of the minimalist presidency. But President Coolidge was politically consistent with his past. In 1914 he famously urged Massachusetts legislators to "Do the day's work." As president, he did that. He also said, "Don't hurry to legislate. Give administration a chance to catch up with legislation." In the 1920s legislation very much needed to wait upon administration. The

nation, just over the Great War, was still readjusting to peace. Women voted for the first time, bringing a welcome but wrenching change to the status quo. Prohibition was the untried law of the land. America had been tossed in a storm and needed smooth sailing. Jefferson wrote about limited government; Coolidge showed us what it looked like.

Gilbert's diagnosis so impairs his view that he sees only darkness. His tormented president is a miserable creature: cruel, sadistic, rude, irrational, jealous, and a petty tyrant. Most of those qualities were undoubtedly found in Coolidge but he had other, better qualities, too. Excellent notes direct you to the sources. One frequently cited is White House Physician, Dr. Joel T. Boone. A decorated hero of the Great War, Dr. Boone was a good friend to the president's surviving son, John Coolidge. He loved and respected Grace Coolidge; his relationship to her seems not unlike that of Lancelot to a Guinevere matched with a most unworthy King Arthur.

Dr. Boone's memoirs can be read on-line at *Prosperity and Thrift: The Coolidge Era and the Consumer Economy, 1921–1929.* In the months and years after the death of Calvin, Jr., the president is sometimes described by his doctor as "jovial," in "good spirits," in a "happy frame of mind" with a "broad grin," or in "excellent spirits playing with a dog." Often "affable," on February 23, 1928, Coolidge "laughed uproariously until it hurt his sides." Gilbert quotes none of those entries. In his account, the tormented president never laughs or grins; if he talks to a dog it is to only to avoid speaking to people. Gilbert is similarly selective from the memoirs of Col. Edmund Starling, the president's Secret Service bodyguard; and he never quotes the White House seamstress and maid, Lillian Rogers Parks, in her recall of her mother's fond observations of the Coolidges. No recollection of an involved or active president is ever cited. Memoirs are culled for cruelty, dysfunction, napping, and inaction. Yet, each year, Coolidge crisscrossed the nation, averaging more speeches than Presidents Harding, Wilson, or Theodore Roosevelt. He traveled to Cuba. He maintained his schedule of twice-weekly press conferences.

Coolidge was a dreadful husband by today's standards. As a father, I'd put him in a class with Abigail Adams as a mother. Both were primarily concerned with how *they* would look if their sons failed. Mrs. Adams preferred a dead son to embarrassment. Coolidge never went that far and, somehow, both sons came to understand that their parents loved them.

JIM COOKE

Jim Cooke is an actor. He researches and performs solo histories of several cranky Yankees including John Quincy Adams, Calvin Coolidge, and Daniel Webster.

Civil Wars: A Battle for Gay Marriage

By David Moats (Orlando, Fla.: Harcourt, 2004, pp. xiv, 288, $25.00).

Civil Wars tells an important story well. The clash over same-sex marriage in 1999–2000 was a decisive episode in recent Vermont politics and a key battle in the struggle for gay rights in America. With a keen eye for telling detail and with narrative skill, David Moats, an editor for the *Rutland Herald,* brings to life the critical players in this drama and explains the local and national significance of their actions.

In the tradition of journalist-historian J. Anthony Lukas, author of *Common Ground,* a riveting study of the Boston busing crisis, Moats stresses human stories in his recounting of the recent past. He describes how gay newcomers to Vermont in the 1970s and 1980s such as William Lippert sought a niche in a thinly populated state lacking the anonymity of big-city life. He shows—almost step by step—how gays became increasingly visible in Vermont in the last third of the twentieth century. In 1994 Lippert himself became a state legislator from Hinesburg. And in 1997, three same-sex couples, Holly Puterbaugh and Lois Farnham, Nina Beck and Stacy Jolles, and Stan Baker and Peter Harrigan, whose requests for marriage licenses had been rejected by town clerks, turned to the Vermont courts for satisfaction. Spearheading their legal fight were two effective, determined Vermont lawyers, Beth Robinson and Susan Murray, of the firm Langrock Sperry & Wool. As Murray said, "Finding a partner, finding a mate, and getting married, is a basic human right. The state of Vermont should not be allowed to step in and tell two consenting adults that they cannot marry one another" (p. 108).

Moats also delivers an inside view of how the Vermont Supreme Court, headed by Chief Justice Jeffrey Amestoy, wrestled with the state's attorney's claim that the state had constitutionally restricted marriage to a man and a woman, and Robinson's and Murray's contention that denying gays and lesbians the right to marry violated the state's constitution. Ultimately, with the *Baker* decision in December 1999, the state supreme court reversed a lower court decision limiting marriage to heterosexuals and turned to the state legislature to find a constitutional remedy.

The plaintiffs had fought hard for a decisive judicial ruling, but the legislative branch would now shape the final resolution. And it is here that Moats's story reaches a dramatic crescendo. The state supreme court's ruling was hardly a welcomed "Christmas gift" (p. 152) for the state's citizen legislators. Unlike the judges, they were elected, and they knew that few issues were more controversial among voters than gay marriage.

Traditionalists, led by Bishop Kenneth Angell of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Burlington, quickly mobilized to lobby the legislators. So too did supporters of gay marriage. Tensions soared in early 2000 as outsiders such as Randall Terry, an anti-gay activist from New York State, ventured to Vermont to join the fray. Yet despite the strong passions, Moats reveals that the legislators focused on their work. Fortified by an emotional, spellbinding speech by Bill Lippert at a critical juncture ("the greatest speech I've heard in thirty years," according to one veteran legislator [p. 218]), a majority, first in the House and then in the Senate, ultimately voted for the concept of "civil unions," a parallel to marriage for same-sex couples but without the label so draped in tradition.

To gay activists and their allies, this was not the preferred outcome; to opponents of same-sex unions, this action signified a moral collapse. But, as Moats suggests, the civil unions formula represented a victory of representative democracy: A majority of legislators, many of whom did not initially favor innovation, responded to the moral claims for fair treatment.

Moats offers more than a compelling narrative; he enriches the story by setting it in contextual layers. He places the battle over gay marriage within the arena of shifting Vermont politics, especially the "Take Back Vermont" movement. He shows how this struggle represented a critical chapter in the evolving gay liberation movement that first erupted in the uprising over police treatment of gays at the Stonewall Inn in New York City in 1969. And, suggestively, Moats links the fight over gay rights with the earlier movement for civil rights for African Americans. The broad influence of Martin Luther King, Jr., is palpable, and Moats contends that many of the tactics and arguments marshaled by gay rights advocates reflected those employed by civil rights crusaders during the 1950s and 1960s. The logic of judicial decisions, moreover, against the prohibition of interracial marriages (most notably, the U.S. Supreme Court's 1967 decision in *Loving* v. *Virginia*), undermined restrictions on same-sex marriage.

Moats's command of his subject flows from thorough research and his own participation in the contest over civil unions. His insightful and constructive editorials for his newspaper on the controversy earned him a Pulitzer Prize in 2001. The perspicacity he displayed then is again revealed in his book that explores more recent developments in the battle over gay marriage. While other showdowns loom on the horizon, the clash over civil unions in Vermont marked a pivotal point in the history of Vermont and equality in America.

JAMES RALPH

James Ralph is a professor of history at Middlebury College and the president of the Henry Sheldon Museum of Vermont History.

Howard Dean: A Citizen's Guide to the Man Who Would Be President

Edited by Dirk Van Susteren (South Royalton, Vt.: Steerforth Press, 2003, pp. viii, 245, paper, $12.95).

This series of essays on Howard Dean by a team of reporters from the *Rutland Herald* and Barre-Montpelier *Times-Argus* was rushed into print in late 2003, when Dean was the presumptive Democratic nominee for president in 2004. Within weeks of the book's publication, the Dean campaign had imploded. Even though the book will not have the market its publisher intended—voters outside Vermont who want to know more about the Democratic presidential candidate—this collection of essays is a useful contribution to the historical record of the Dean governorship.

The nine authors who contributed chapters to this book include both veteran Vermont journalists and reporters with national political experience who have relocated to Vermont in recent years. Together, they have assembled a remarkably consistent set of essays about the man who was governor of Vermont for more than eleven years. Although bracketed by chapters on Dean's youth and education, and his presidential campaign, the bulk of the book consists of a series of studies of Dean as governor, organized according to major policy areas such as budget and tax policy, environmental issues, and the struggle leading up to passage of the civil unions legislation in 2000.

Some of the elements of Dean's political style that caused him trouble on the national campaign trail—particularly his tendency to give off-the-cuff responses to reporters' questions that came back to haunt him—are certainly evident in this book, and, indeed, appear to have been part of Howard Dean's persona as early as his secondary school years. Dean also is portrayed as a very private person, for whom time with his family was an essential respite from the duties of governing. The contrast between the reserved governor described in these pages, a man who sometimes had the physician's detachment from the people with whom he worked on a regular basis, and the candidate on the platform in Des Moines on the night of the Iowa caucuses, shouting, "and then we're going to Washington, D.C., to take back the White House! Yeahhh!" could not be more apparent.

Yet, after reading this book one wonders if Dean would have gone farther on the presidential campaign trail had he presented himself to the voters nationally not as the scourge of the Democratic Party, ready

to pounce on his rivals' every vote or campaign contribution, but as an experienced governor who left his state in arguably the best fiscal position of any state in the country when he left office in January 2003. The state income tax rate was lower at the end of his term than when Dean was inaugurated and millions of dollars were set aside in a rainy-day fund during the boom years of the 1990s. Vermonters did not have to go through the painful process of budget cutting in 2003 that was endured by citizens of many other states. National polls show that the economy was the most important issue on voters' minds as the presidential campaign of 2004 opened. Dean could have responded to these concerns by emphasizing his frugal management of Vermont, in contrast to the fiscal profligacy of the Bush Administration and the Republican-controlled Congress.

Dean had a strong record of expanding state-supported health care programs in Vermont. While his initial desire for a comprehensive single-payer system did not come to fruition—as was the case with a similar program put forward by Bill and Hillary Clinton at the same time, in the early 1990s—Dean worked systematically and doggedly to expand the number of Vermonters covered by Medicaid, Dr. Dynosaur, and other state health programs. He tried to accomplish as much as the state could be expected to do to hold down the cost of prescription drugs for seniors. With health care just behind the economy on the voters' list of important issues, Dean could have again run on his record on this issue, and coupled it to his professional background as a physician.

The Howard Dean Vermonters knew over a political career of more than two decades—starting with his election to the House of Representatives from Burlington in November 1982 and ending with his leaving the State House in January 2003—was not the Howard Dean that the press or the voters in early primary states saw. The Dean Vermonters knew was the governor who accomplished the passage of the civil unions bill by working quietly and effectively behind the scenes. While the bill was unsatisfactory to the most ardent advocates on both sides, the bill Dean signed probably represented the best consensus solution possible after the Vermont Supreme Court's ruling in *Baker* v. *State*. Would Howard Dean have done better in the presidential race had he ran on his record as governor rather than as the angry outsider who would bring Washington to its knees?

ERIC L. DAVIS

Eric L. Davis is professor of political science at Middlebury College and a frequent commentator on political campaigns for Vermont and national news organizations.

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Allen, David, *Early Maps of Brattleboro, Vermont, 1745–1912, with a Narrative History: Published on the Occasion of the 250th Anniversary of the Chartering of Brattleboro.* West Chesterfield, N.H.: Old Maps, 2003. 76p. Source: The publisher, P.O. Box 54, West Chesterfield, NH 03466. List: $17.95 (paper).

*Belding, Russell J., *From Hitching Posts to Gas Pumps: A History of North Main Street, Barre, Vermont, 1875–1915.* Barre, Vt.: Potash Brook Publishing, 2003. 315p. List: $24.95 (paper).

*Blow, David J., edited by Lilian Baker Carlisle, photographs by Sarah L. Dopp, *Historic Guide to Burlington Neighborhoods, Vol. 3.* Burlington, Vt.: Chittenden County Historical Society, 2003. 166p. List: $20.00 (paper).

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Gilbert, Robert E., *The Tormented President: Calvin Coolidge, Death, and Clinical Depression.* Westport, Conn.: Praeger Publishers, 2003. 288p. List: $67.95

*Gove, William G., *Sky Route to the Quarries: History of the Barre Railroad.* Williamstown, Vt.: Quarry View Publishing, 2004. 97p. List: $21.95 (paper).

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