VERMONT HISTORY

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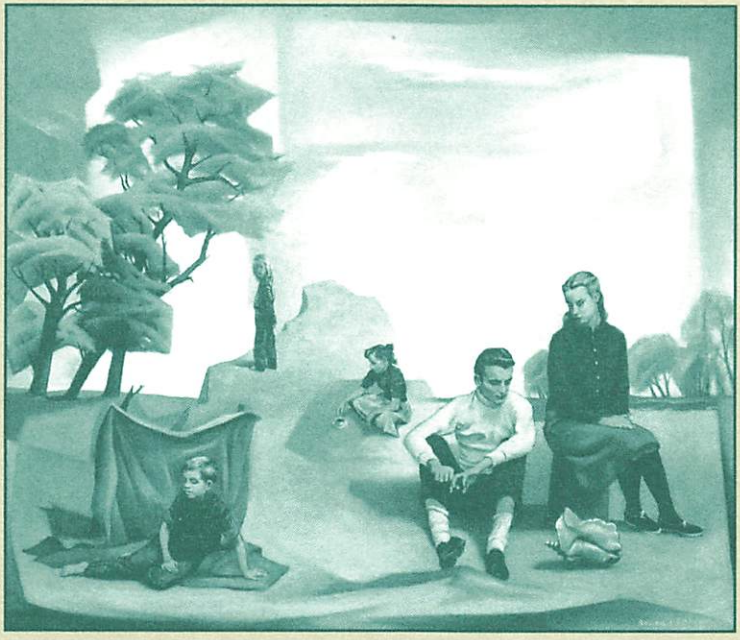

The Journal of the Vermont Historical Society

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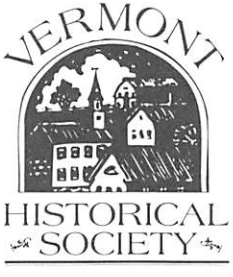

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Vermont History

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VERMONT HISTORY

Vol. 76, No. 2 Summer/Fall 2008

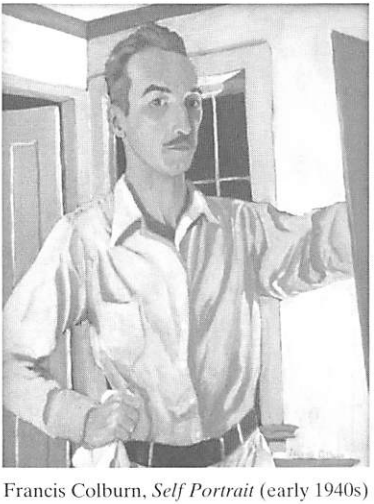
Book Reviews

About the Cover Illustration

Francis Colburn Paintings at the Vermont Historical Society

Francis Colburn (1909–1984) taught art at the University of Vermont. He was a beloved teacher and famous storyteller; his distinctive artwork is prized by its owners. In the past two years the VHS has acquired four Colburn paintings through the generosity of Mrs. Ruth Bogorad and VHS Board Member, J. Brooks Buxton.

Colburn was born in Fairfax, Vermont. After graduating from the University of Vermont in 1934 he studied art with Stefan Hirsh at Bennington College. Hirsh encouraged Colburn to apply for a scholarship at the Art Student's League in New York City, where he received a one-year scholarship and studied with Yasuo Kuniyoshi and Henry Sternberg during 1936. In 1939 Colburn received recognition for his work when one of his paintings was chosen to represent Vermont at the World's Fair. He returned to Vermont in 1939, working as art supervisor of the Barton and Orleans schools. His career at UVM began in 1942 when he was appointed resident artist. When he retired twenty-two years later he was a full professor and chair of the Art Department. UVM awarded him an honorary degree and in 1977 named the Francis Colburn Gallery in the Art Department's Williams Hall. During his career his artwork was shown at the Whitney Museum, Art Institute of Chicago, Corcoran Gallery, and Boston Institute of Contemporary Art. Shows exclusively of his work were presented at Dartmouth, Smith, and Williams Colleges, and at the University of Vermont.



Francis Colburn, *Self Portrait* (early 1940s)

The four paintings in the VHS collections represent three different types of Colburn's work: a portrait, imaginary landscapes, and still life. *Self Portrait,* painted in the early 1940s, shows Colburn as a vigorous

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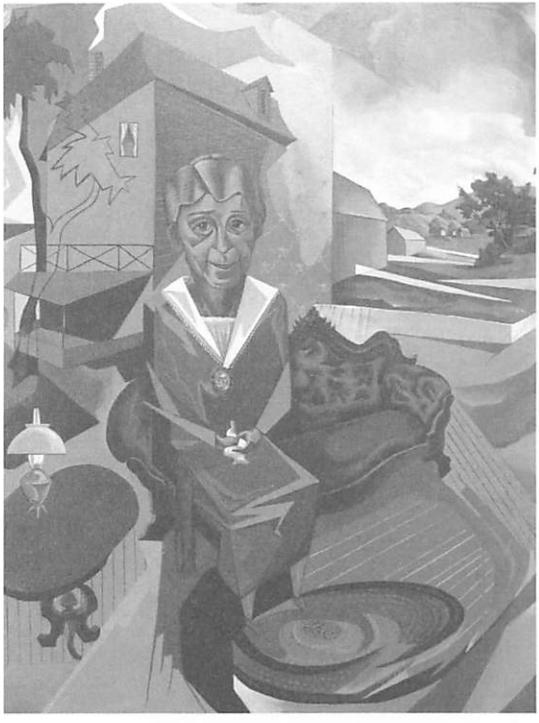
and dominant figure with a bright color palette and realistic style. *Social Security* (1947) combines portrait and landscape in what would become Colburn's personal variations and combinations of the Realistic, Surreal, and Cubist art styles. *Ephemera* (1957) is a still life of found and collected object: driftwood, seashells, and milkweed. This publication's cover shows *Variations on a Theme* (1958), one of many paintings that Colburn referred to as his "nostalgia" or "memory" paintings. In UVM's 1984 retrospective exhibit *Francis Colburn: This I Remember,* his wife, poet Gladys LaFlamme, wrote:

> In an imaginary landscape Francis depicts the isolation of the individual. Though the figures appear to be all together, the pervading silence in the painting suggests that each is alone. In the left foreground sits David McArthur. In the center is his mother, Jerry McArthur. On the right are David Colburn and Kathi Finnery. Standing on the rise of land is Betsy Evans.

Social Security is on exhibit at the VHS Museum in Montpelier. *Self Portrait* and *Variations on a Theme* can be seen in the library at the Vermont History Center in Barre. The VHS hopes to acquire more Colburn paintings, as well as others by Vermont artists of the twentieth century.

— JACQUELINE CALDER
Curator



Francis Colburn, *Social Security* (1947)

A Trace of Arabic in Granite: Lebanese Migration to the Green Mountains, 1890–1940

Illustrating the presence of Middle Easterners and their descendants in Vermont shifts one's perspective on state history, an especially timely endeavor in light of contemporary American culture and politics.

By AMY E. ROWE

Walking through a graveyard in Vermont, one would hardly expect to see Arabic lettering gracefully marking polished granite stones; yet this is what one sees on select family tombstones in St. Monica's cemetery in Barre and St. Joseph's cemetery in Burlington. These commemorative pieces stand as testaments to Arabic-speaking settlers in the state. The words inscribed on these stones have the potential to facilitate remembering, to serve as a text to plot the social history of a small immigrant community.[1] The gravestones are objects that have an afterlife, a post-text, because they serve to organize remembrance of the cultural history that gave rise to them.[2] Observing these objects in the landscape opens questions about the history of these families: When did they arrive in the area? Why did they

AMY E. ROWE received her B.A. from Colby College (1999) and M.T.S. from Harvard Divinity School (2001). She taught for three years at the Vermont Commons School in South Burlington. In 2004 she was awarded a Gates Scholarship through a trust established by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to support graduate research at Cambridge University in England. She is currently completing her Ph.D. in Social Anthropology at Cambridge. Ms. Rowe is a native of St. Johnsbury, Vermont.

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leave the Middle East? What factors led them to choose Vermont as their new home?

My aim is to trace the early history of Arabic-speaking immigrants in the state, with particular focus on what economic niche they filled and why they settled in particular areas. Today we would call the Ottoman-era Arabic-speaking immigrants "Lebanese"; many of their descendants in the state today either pointedly embrace a Lebanese identity or warmly acknowledge a Lebanese heritage and ancestry. Yet, as this essay reveals, early efforts to officially name these immigrants were fraught with debate at the national level. Lebanon was not a separate country when the Arabic-speaking people settled in the Green Mountain State; it was instead part of Greater Syria. Thus migrants were not referred to as "Lebanese" but rather as "Syrian." Changes of familial names to Anglo-sounding ones, common for many immigrants at the time, also makes it particularly challenging to track the early history of Lebanese in the state.

Given name changes of people and of nations, this group has been relatively invisible in the historical record of Vermont. Very little written evidence exists in either Arabic or English. The majority of first-generation immigrants were illiterate in both languages, thus they themselves left little record. This makes turning to evidence in the landscape such as tombstones especially appealing; monumental sites like these can contribute to tracking the presence and longevity of this immigrant community. A tombstone can stand as an initial relic enabling a researcher to glean information from the past; it functions as gateway into a network of Lebanese families, whose stories passed down from their ancestors can serve as a basis for the social history of the group. People of Lebanese ancestry represent the past through storytelling, ritual, and shared memories. This type of discourse, sometimes interpreted as unrealistic or unreliable, actually has the potential to structure and encode history.[3] Social memory is, therefore, a helpful tool when external evidence of these people and their history in the region is absent from official written histories.

I draw on these oral histories, memories, and objects in the Vermont landscape to develop a historical narrative against an otherwise incomplete documentary record. The presence of Arabic-speaking Christians from the Middle East whose descendants live around the state today runs counter to a certain understanding of Vermont, and indeed New England, history. To be sure, gravestones in Arabic are emblematic of how Vermont's past is perhaps not quite what it seems. Illustrating the presence of Middle Easterners and their descendants in Vermont shifts one's perspective on state history, an especially timely endeavor in light of contemporary American culture and politics.

Information for this essay is drawn from a larger anthropological project centered on the contemporary experiences of descendants of Arabic-speaking immigrants in Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine. Following social science conventions to make sense of social behavior, I have used several methods to collect information; these range from semi-structured oral history interviews to use of archival materials to the quintessentially anthropological participant-observation. In some cases I use family names and examples, though in others I am careful to remove these specifics out of respect for requests for privacy. Therefore, at moments the text is punctuated by individual, distinctive voices and in others a generalized point is drawn from various sources.

Ottoman Origins

"Born in Syria" or "Born in Mt. Lebanon, Syria": These are common inscriptions chiseled into family gravestones (see Figures 1, 2, 3). This geographical reference points to the Ottoman Empire, the place of origin for Arabic-speaking immigrants in Vermont. Mt. Lebanon was a small quasi-independent district in the province of Greater Syria within the Ottoman Empire in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[4] Lebanon as a political entity did not exist at the time these migrants left, thus they did not leave Lebanon but rather "Syria." However, Kamal Salibi cautions, "[B]y the nineteenth century, something we might call Lebanon already existed with inherent attributes making of it a unique social rather than political phenomenon in Syria and the broader Arab world."[5] It is worthwhile to consider briefly the social and economic conditions in Mt. Lebanon during this period to shed light on why people left and to note how family testimonies today provide a bridge back to the empire their ancestors left.

There are competing opinions among academics as to what fueled the departure of people from Mt. Lebanon in the decades prior to World War I and which factors were most influential. It is beyond the scope of this essay to investigate in great detail the important historical shifts that took place in the mid to late nineteenth century that resulted in many people (the majority of whom were Christians from agricultural villages) seeking opportunities overseas. Broadly speaking the growth of the ports in the region, educational reform, contact with Europeans and Americans, exposure to wage labor, a shift in feudal class-based alliances, and alterations to the system of land ownership all affected the social and economic structure within Mt. Lebanon.[6] The rise in rapid transportation (especially steam navigation) and worldwide communication helped urge people to look abroad for opportunities. Four important points tie Vermont Lebanese to the larger story of the Middle

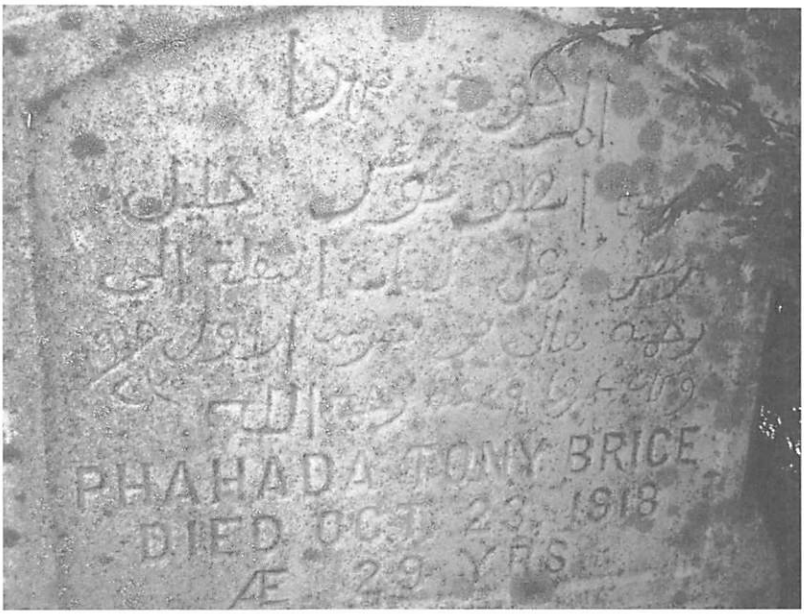


FIGURE 1. *Brice gravestone, St. Joseph's cemetery, Burlington, Vermont. The Arabic states that this is the grave of Fahad Anton Khalil who died October 1918 (his English name is Phahad Antony Brice). All photographs in this article courtesy of the author.*

East and international migration at the turn of the twentieth century. The first two relate to the role of Christianity in Mt. Lebanon and the second two are "push" factors cited by the Lebanese in Vermont.

Starting in the early nineteenth century the Ottoman leadership opened its Mediterranean ports to European interests for the purpose of incorporating technology, knowledge, and new ideas into the empire.[7] This opening also facilitated the movement of missionaries, both European and American, into the region. American Protestant missionaries took a strong interest in the region and made it their goal to spread their evangelical zeal to the local people. In particular, New England religious leaders spread their influence in the Holy Land. One of the most prestigious universities in the Middle East today was founded by a missionary from Georgia, Vermont, named Daniel Bliss; he hailed from a farming family and was educated at Amherst and Andover Theological Seminary. The university he founded in Beirut in 1870 was originally called the Syrian Protestant College, and today is the American University of Beirut (AUB). Thus, some of the influence that later

FIGURE 2. *Reverse side of the Brice stone, with the name Anthony K. Brice (perhaps a brother or cousin). Note he was born in "Mt. Lebanon, Syria."*

FIGURE 3. *Habeeb gravestone, St. Monica's Cemetery, Barre, Vermont. On the top of this stone a prayer in Arabic reads: "Have mercy on me oh God, and keep me in your company." The bottom portion in Arabic states that this is Lena, the widow of Hidder Habeeb from Blouza. The portion in English states she was "Born in Syria."*

drew Arabic-speakers out of Mt. Lebanon came from New Englanders initiating activity in the Holy Land.

Although in the long run few converts were gained to Protestantism, contact with American missionaries was particularly important. While not directly encouraging emigration,[8] the general exposure to American ways of life—English language, American customs, stories of home—as well as the educational opportunities most missionaries provided created important changes in Mt. Lebanon. Missionaries set about developing schools, medical facilities, and an Arabic printing press,[9] thereby

providing important foundations that supported the movement of many people from Mt. Lebanon into an international migrant network.[10]

The status of indigenous Christians in the Ottoman Empire also played a role in encouraging migration. Tension between various Christian sects and other religious groups in Mt. Lebanon, especially between Christian Maronites and the Druze,[11] are most frequently cited in the literature as prompting Christians to leave their homeland. Between 1840 and 1860 there were many violent clashes in the region, culminating with the worst sectarian violence in 1860. The violence was both inter- and intra-communal (due to fractions along Druze/Christian lines and along class lines of peasantry/landed elite). Persecution of Christians during this era has commonly been cited in the academic literature as a primary "push" factor as to why Lebanese Christians (not Druze or Muslims) emigrated. It is also a common point of reference amongst Lebanese Vermont families, nearly all of whom are descended from Christian Maronites.[12] However, some scholars argue that this rendition of events does not reflect the warring dynamics on the ground.[13] They suggest that Christian suffering was overplayed by Christians in the diaspora to gain sympathies in their new context and to show the violence permitted under the Ottoman regime.[14] The violence in the region undoubtedly affected many families, Christian and otherwise. Yet widespread migration did not begin until thirty to forty years after the violence ceased. Assuredly tensions and fear of violence remained, along with memories of violence and displacement for some,[15] but religious persecution was not the direct cause of migration.

Around the time the sectarian struggles were quelled, a significant change occurred in the silk industry. In the nineteenth century many peasant families in Mt. Lebanon entered the broader market economy by raising silk worms and maintaining mulberry trees to feed them; a small but vibrant cottage industry for production of silk emerged. French investors supported this venture and, in some instances, employed young peasant women outside the home on a limited basis.[16] As some historians argue, these touch points with the international economy and wage-labor prepared Lebanese men and women for immigrant labor in the United Sates.[17] The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 meant that Syrian silk could not compete with the quality of silk coming through the canal from East Asia and sales of Syrian-made silk began to decline.[18] A silkworm disease also contributed to the decline. These events had a major impact because those in Mt. Lebanon who were heavily involved with the silk industry had ceased to grow their own food and used their wages to purchase food imported from other parts of the empire. When the silk sector began to decline there were few other comparable

industries to turn to and thus the cash flow dried up for wage earners. With local agriculture no longer able to support the population and no cash to buy food from elsewhere, problems ensued and people began to seek opportunities elsewhere. In this way, Mt. Lebanon was tied to the world market via this cash-crop and suffered due to its fluctuations. In particular, some people had become accustomed to an elevated standard of living provided by a wage income and were inspired to emigrate to retain this lifestyle.[19] Though increased demand for raw silk for finishing in factories in France buoyed the Syrian industry for a few decades, in the long run the industry declined and spurred movement of people out of the Mountain.[20]

Several Vermont Lebanese families related lore about a grandparent whose job was to tend to silk worms. Many emigrants recalled being responsible for feeding mulberry leaves to the worms as young children and told these stories to their children who were born in America. As an excerpt from a 1916 autobiography by George Haddad, a Lebanese immigrant living in Rutland, relates, "Almost every family in Barook, when I was a boy, raised silkworms in a least one room in the house. I used to feed the worms and helped my mother at it a great deal. When I went in to feed them I had to carry a candle as the room was always kept dark."[21] Haddad also noted that during a return trip home in 1908 (to bring his American-born children to see their grandmother) he took his family to tour a silk factory. I did not hear stories emphasizing economic hardship and being forced to leave as a direct result of the decline of this industry, but it is clear that the lives of Lebanese families that came to Vermont were bound up with silk production.

A final item that came up consistently during interviews was the decision made by young men to leave their home villages for opportunities overseas rather than be conscripted into the sultan's army. In 1907 the Turkish army began conscripting young men from Mt. Lebanon. While military service was not an uncommon requirement for citizens in the empire, Christians in Mt. Lebanon had historically been exempt from service.[22] There was widespread fear among Christians that their young men would be put on the front lines during battles and be more exposed to danger than their Turkish Muslim counterparts—i.e., they were more expendable citizens.

It was common for the Arabic-speaking immigrants from Mt. Lebanon to travel to several areas before arriving in Vermont; it was equally common for them to leave and return to Vermont several times before the start of World War One. Most Vermont Lebanese reference Beirut as their departure port (though some left from Sidon, a city further south on the coast); many had a stopping off period in Marseille, France, or

Alexandria, Egypt.[23] Two families from the Winooski/Burlington area had ancestors who lived first in El Salvador before working their way north, crossing from Mexico to the U.S. and eventually making their way to Vermont. One family from Island Pond first traveled to Cuba, and then to St. Louis, Missouri, before heading to northern Vermont.

The Shadroui family from Barre provides an interesting example of the settlement patterns of Christians from Mt. Lebanon in this era. By combining information from an oral history tape held at the Aldrich Public Library[24] and interviews with three second-generation family members in 2005, it is possible to ascertain just how mobile these immigrants were. They did not make a single journey to a new place with the goal of permanent settlement; instead their lives were characterized by movement.

The great-grandmother of my second-generation informants traveled to Egypt in the 1880s and then Mexico for work (she was accompanied by a male relative). While in Mexico she met and married a Lebanese man and they had four children—one boy, Joseph, born in Argentina in 1888, one girl in Puerto Rico, and girl twins in Mexico. Later the great-grandmother and her children returned to Lebanon (the great-grandfather had passed away). Joseph, the grandfather to my informants, came with his mother (leaving the other children behind with relatives in Mt. Lebanon) and some other relatives to the United States in 1901. They came first to St. Johnsbury, Vermont, and later to Littleton, New Hampshire; eventually Joseph's mother settled in Burlington, but he returned to Lebanon. While there in 1906 he met his future wife. She was born in South Africa to Lebanese migrant parents; the family had recently returned to Lebanon when she met Joseph. They married in 1907, had one daughter in Lebanon[25] and decided to move to the United States. The couple settled in Barre, Vermont, and after this time they never traveled again, though they kept in touch with various relatives in foreign countries.

The Significance of Naming

Here I wish to address the issue of "who" is in transit in this story. Ottoman citizens or Christian peasants might be answers, but the question of "who" these people were became significant in a new way when they arrived in the United States. There are two levels to this inquiry. First, what official classification were they given as a group by the state —i.e., what nationality or ethnic label was given, and subsequently used as shorthand by Americans for these new arrivals? Second, what personal names (family names, nicknames) did the Lebanese come to use for themselves in this context? Both questions have implications for

identifying the Lebanese in Vermont across the twentieth century in that passing family surnames through the generations and a group name become the key ways to track one's "heritage" or "ancestry" over time.

Two state structures were involved in the official classification: the Ottoman state and the United States. Both had the authority to categorize citizens, especially those who were moving across state borders. The immigrants from Greater Syria who entered the United States were traveling on Turkish passports as Ottoman citizens, yet they did not speak Turkish and certainly did not think of themselves as "Turks." Yet from the point of view of people in America they were generally called "Turks" because of their legal relationship to the Turkish state and the sultan. When records were taken at points of entry into the country and by the decennial census this group was classified as originating in "Turkey in Asia" (as compared to "Turkey in Europe"). Thus while they were marked as non-European, the overall name designated was "Turk." Many references from both my informants as well as various writings on early Arab-American history note that the immigrants were particularly resentful of being called "Turks" as they felt the Turks were their oppressors and were part of the reason why they had left Mt. Lebanon.

Despite the relationship to the Turkish Ottoman state, not every immigrant traveled with documentation and it was often unclear to immigration officials exactly where these Arabic-speaking arrivals hailed from. Entry documents, naturalization papers, and census records variously refer to them as Turks, Armenian, Greek, Assyrian, Asian, Syrian, Arabian, or as being from "Turkey in Asia."[26] This mix-up in consistent record keeping shows how little the U.S. officials knew of that part of the world; these misunderstandings mean that today it is impossible to know just how many people from Mt. Lebanon really arrived in U.S. ports. In the same manner, as the immigrants spread throughout the U.S. they were variously called by the same assortment of names in local historical records, newspaper articles, and similar documents. Sometimes the migrants from Mt. Lebanon were mistaken for Jews. In 1899 U.S. immigration officials added the category "Syrian" to their roster because it had become clear that so many individuals were coming through U.S. ports from that specific region within the Ottoman Empire.[27]

Given their resistance to the label "Turk," many of the immigrants opted to use the term "Syrian" and occasionally "Arab,"[28] though these were vaguely understood to be cultural identifiers and not referencing nationalistic loyalties (and especially not with any corresponding politicization).[29] Most people thought of themselves in terms of family and religious sect, not in terms of a specific nationality or political alle-

giance. This was primarily due to the organization of the multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire. The Turkish Muslim rulers developed the *millet* system whereby *dhimmis* (non-Muslim minorities) were allowed to have their own legal courts pertaining to personal law (as long as it did not conflict with the legal code enforced by the sultan). This system permitted localized religious law and political control; strong nationalistic ties and Arab nationalism only developed as full ideological concepts after the dismantling of the Ottoman system, after most Lebanese migrants had left.[30] The immigrants from Greater Syria thus learned by default to call themselves "Syrian" in the United States in order to render a name other immigrant groups and American citizens would understand; yet among themselves, kin and village loyalty were the main way they connected and identified.

It is especially important to outline this self-understanding because it depicts the loyalties beneath the generic term "Syrian" and marks how the people were named according to a wide geographic territory. It also shows that they thought in sectarian terms rather than nationalistic ones. It was only after several decades in the U.S. and substantial political changes in the Middle East (the creation of the state of Lebanon in 1943, with full independence gained in 1946) that a new name appeared for the group: Lebanese. While in some circles people readily adopted the name "Lebanese" to reflect their loyalties and their origin from villages in this new nation, overall it took some time for a full shift from "Syrian" to "Lebanese" to take hold. In the interim, as people adjusted to the shift from Syrian to Lebanese, the hyphenated term "Syrian-Lebanese" was frequently used. For example, in the 1930s Syrian-American social clubs were particularly popular around the country. A Syrian-American club in New England changed its name to the Syrian-Lebanese American Federation of the Eastern States in 1936 specifically to incorporate a reference to Lebanon. A newspaper clipping held in the Aldrich Public Library notes that the Federation held an executive board meeting in the Barre-Montpelier area in the early 1950s, including cocktail parties, Arabic dancing, and the screening of an Arabic film at the Savoy Theater in Montpelier. The clipping highlights that Vermont Lebanese were active in such regional clubs.[31]

The essential point here is to demonstrate that just when a boundary starts to close around this group of migrants, in this case a collective name for the group of people from Ottoman Mt. Lebanon, sociopolitical shifts prevent the use of a single descriptive term. There is no stable reference against which the cultural practice of naming can be worked out.[32] This makes it especially difficult to establish a continuous regional presence and trace the group from a historical point of view.

Many Arab-American historians observe this as the case at the national level as well. It contributes to the group seeming to be "hidden" and "invisible"[33] within the American population as it is difficult to write about a group when they do not have a consistently *named* history and presence in the documentary record over time.

Scholars must also consider personal and familial names of the Arabic-speaking immigrants. Names are always implicated in social relations; they serve to structure and facilitate discussion about those relations. They are also thought to historicize the self in complex ways. Names have the capacity to facilitate memory and allow for a genealogical account of social time; name changes place individuals in specific points in time as well as in sets of social relations.[34] For Lebanese migrants the family surnames their ancestors adopted, were given, or modified when they traveled to America typically mark the beginning of their "American" family history because there was typically a rupture with ways of naming used in Lebanon. The new naming also facilitated the forgetting of those old ways of naming.

Modification of personal names of non-English-speaking immigrants to the United States was commonplace in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was often done under pressure to swiftly assimilate into American life, the idea being that if immigrants shed their names (and aspects of their cultural selves) they would be better accepted and understood in American society. Both immigration officials and the Lebanese themselves modified their names on official documents and in common parlance. Some people interviewed mentioned that their ancestors altered their names primarily to avoid being targeted by nativists, thus expressly to avoid discrimination and keep a low profile rather than to assimilate.

The majority of the people interviewed for this study have modified Arabic family names to varying degrees. Some names remained, just shifting from Arabic lettering into English but retaining the basic sound and quality of the Arabic name—for example: Shadroui, Ziter, Deep (or Deeb), or Shatti (see Figure 4). In other instances the Arabic name was translated to an approximate English-sounding name. For example, in Vermont the Allen family was the *al-'alam* family (see Figure 5), and the Handy family was the *al-henda* family.[35] In other cases the kinship group name was dropped and replaced by the patriarchal given name such that the father's "first name" became the "last name" of the son (or daughter). This change was partly based on the longstanding tradition in the Middle East (and in Mt. Lebanon in particular) of adopting the father's given name as a middle name by the son, but also to foreground the biblical Christian names of the Maronite tradition in order

FIGURE 4. *Shatti gravestone, St. Joseph's Cemetery, Burlington, Vermont. The Arabic indicates that this stone is for Youseh Romanos Shakti who was born 15 February, 1888 and died in 1936 (the "6" of the date 1936 somewhat unclear in Arabic, but the English on the reverse side confirms 1936). In the Lebanese dialect Shakti is pronounced as Sah'ti, which sounds very similar to the English spelling "Shatti." The Arabic also states that the home village in Lebanon is Hadshit.*

to be more recognizable to the receiving culture.[36] It also relates to the practice of stating a name in its full Arabic form— e.g., Jibreel/Gabriel ibn (son of) Maroon/Charles ibn (son of) Ibrahim/Abraham ibn (son of) Jijris (George) and so on. The Arabic family names did not correspond to the classification system common in the United States whereby a person is expected to have just one surname. Thus when the immigrants were stating their names they were often given their father's first name as surname because it was the second thing they said after their own given name.[37] In some instances names were translated properly from Arabic to the English equivalent (Yusuf to Joseph, for example). The Joseph family from Island Pond is an example of how the name of the immigrant's father, Joseph, became the new last name for the immigrant and his descendants in Vermont.

FIGURE 5. *Allen gravestone, St. Joseph's Cemetery, Burlington, Vermont. This stone is for Nijmeh Sam'an al-'Alam. Nijmeh (also pronounced Najma) means "star," suggesting a possible direct translation of her first name as Stella, which also means "star." Sam'an means Simon, but is not noted in English. The third name, "al-Alam," means "flag" in Arabic, and when spoken sounds similar to the English "Allen," which was adopted as the last name in this instance. The Arabic also indicates she was from Hadid al-Jibba, Lubnan (Lebanon).*

FROM MOUNTAIN TO MOUNTAIN

Thus far the examination of relics in the landscape and understanding state classification of citizens and immigrants assists us to develop a historical narrative for the Lebanese in Vermont. Yet ultimately family oral traditions provide the structure and substance for such a history. Personal descriptions, memories, and stories passed down highlight why their ancestors chose Vermont and how they created a new home for themselves in the Green Mountains.

Perhaps the best place to start when considering "why Vermont" is with the common association made between the mountains of Lebanon

and the mountains of Vermont. Many explain that their ancestors would have had a natural affinity for the place because it resembled the terrain in and around their home villages. The following discussion may highlight where this sentiment originated.

> From what I understand, from what was told to me, there was a Syrian banker in New York City who would meet people right as they got off the boat at Ellis Island. He would tell them they ought to go to a mountainous place to live and work, seeing as they came from mountainous terrain . . . [T]his banker would help them start peddling by giving them the initial cash. Then he would send the people out by way of the major railroad routes into the north country. This made it easier so that when the Lebanese were peddling they could go back to New York City to the garment district to pick up clothing and needles, thread . . . and then follow the train lines back up here to sell the new goods to the farmers. This is how my family got started, and ended up in Vermont—this would've been in 1908 or 1910.[38]

This description shared by a second-generation man in his seventies from Barre, Vermont, was repeated in one form or another by the majority of the Lebanese with whom I spoke. Some versions of this story note that it was a Lebanese banker or merchant, others that it was a Jewish wholesaler who got the new arrivals into the peddling trade.[39] Sometimes the story suggests that the financier (or *simsar* in Arabic[40]) was someone from their home village. During an interview in 2005 two second-generation Lebanese women said they thought the last name of the Syrian banker was "Shaw." A 1976 oral history tape from Barre records the "Faur" family as the Lebanese banking family that supported people coming to Vermont. Finally, one study from New Brunswick, Canada (where some New England families had relatives and business connections), describes the Faour Bank of New York as the main provider of small wares on consignment for newcomers to sell and argues that this bank directly encouraged Syrian migrants to take up peddling and facilitated the process.[41]

The "Syrian banker" in New York took into consideration what part of Lebanon people were from when he sent them into new territories to peddle. Those from southern Lebanon near Sidon and Tyre were sent to the southern Atlantic states such as South Carolina and Georgia (as members of one Vermont family whose mother came from a southern Lebanese family confirmed), while those from villages at a high altitude in Mt. Lebanon were sent north to mountainous places like Vermont. The result of this story is that Lebanese families today have a strong sense that their villages of origin in Mt. Lebanon have a terrain akin to the mountains of Vermont because they were sent to this part of the United States for that reason by their New York liaison. This resonance between the environments of the two places provides a sense of belonging and brings the seemingly very distant parts of the world together in their family narratives.

While the specifics may vary from story to story, the motivations and attributes of these financier(s) are consistent: They would supply the new migrants with some initial wares to sell on credit and instruct them to send the profits back to New York, at which point new supplies would be sent for them to continue peddling (again often along railroad lines, and later via major trucking routes). Sometimes people explained that their migrant ancestor came to a specific Vermont town because they already knew someone there, typically a relative from the home village, not because they intended to peddle. Yet even in these cases I could often work out by looking collectively at local stories that the "original" group of Lebanese in a given area had some touch point with a peddling financier in a major city (occasionally Boston or Montreal were also cited as origin cities from which people set out to peddle). In a study of Syrians in New York State, peddlers are cited as responsible for the initial movement into the state.[42] Research findings suggest the same is true for Vermont, where Lebanese peddlers were always the originators of the communities, the initiators of a chain migration pattern. They encouraged others to join them, with the secondary wave sometimes taking up different occupations.

All this suggests that someone clearly had a vision for sending peddlers into these northern states, and received commission on their work for several years. While efforts to track down who exactly was supplying the migrants in this way have to date yielded no further information, these narratives do at the very least connect to larger studies of Lebanese peddling across the United States. These studies identify New York City as the parent peddling community, sometimes called the "Syrian colony" in the literature, and find that key merchants actively recruited fellow villagers into their peddling network.[43] Alixa Naff notes that the process was replicated once a veteran peddler had established independence in a new city or town, he would send for relatives or friends and become the local supplier for new arrivals: "Soon kin drew kin and villager drew villager until a peddling settlement developed around the supplier's leadership. . . . By 1900, a network of supplier's settlements filled the nation, providing opportunities for thousands of newcomers and distributing Lebanese all over the United States. By 1910, Syrian-Lebanese were reporting destinations in all the states and territories."[44] The new arrivals, then, swiftly developed a network across the region based primarily on village alliance and mutual support.[45]

Earning a Livelihood in Transit: A Closer Look at Peddling

The discussion thus far demonstrates how and why Arabic-speaking people traveled to Vermont and how village and kin-based networks

were established to support one another. Yet the activity of peddling itself must be considered in more detail. Sometimes the occupation is called "pack peddling" or "back peddling." When first starting out it was most common for peddlers to walk carrying goods on their backs or holding suitcases in each hand; later, if enough money was earned, they would invest in a wagon (and later trucks) to help deliver goods. Lebanese peddlers traveled into farming communities and logging camps selling rare goods and staples that people did not have the time to travel to obtain. This was often referred to as "selling notions." For example, they would sell clothing such as men's suits, undergarments, and sewing accessories; cooking implements, cigars, and tobacco products were also common. Sometimes goods from the "Holy Land" were offered, emphasizing the proximity of Mt. Lebanon to Jerusalem and the shared Christian religion. George Haddad of Rutland, on several return trips to the Middle East, ordered "oriental goods" and had them shipped back to New York City where he collected them to sell in Vermont.[46] In areas that were newly opening to settlement or separated by long distances with limited transport (especially remote logging camps) no large-scale infrastructure existed for the distribution of household goods.[47] Peddlers played a vital role in this context.

Many people of Lebanese ancestry in the state today have stories of parents or grandparents traveling and selling goods door to door; it was a common topic of discussion growing up in a Lebanese household. Today they often express a sense of amazement that their parent or grandparent carried suitcases and walked all over the region selling goods. They are impressed by their ancestors' endurance, and their willingness to walk miles for just the potential of a sale. Many of the peddlers gained a specific route and over time developed a trade relationship with certain farm families. These relationships eased the burden somewhat, and sometimes meant that if a storm came up unexpectedly or a person was traveling late at night he or she would be offered food and possibly shelter for the night at a client's house.

A nice discussion of the peddling system developed by members of the Handy family was recorded in the transcripts of an interview done by Jane Beck with Ned Handy in January 1998. After mentioning that the New York City liaison sent members of his family to Newport near the Canadian border (it was a cold climate that they would appreciate because they were from the mountainous part of Lebanon), Ned provided the following commentary:

> When they got to Newport, they lived together, they pooled together, they worked together. They worked for a couple of months on the railroad. Then there was a couple of months that they worked in a

> sawmill. But then they took the notion to be backpeddlers. Each, my aunt, my uncles would each have 4 suitcases, they packed 2 on their back and one in each hand, and they would walk, they each had their own route, they would walk from one farm to the other selling for a profit naturally. The first couple of times before you adjust yourself to the farmer and you acclimate yourself through your acquaintance was very difficult. Some of them after 4 o'clock they're looking for a place to sleep. And if they're lucky a lady would find a place in a shed or in an attic or in a basement, and gave them a blanket and for a bar of soap or package of razor blades you get your supper and your lodging and your breakfast the next morning. But after a fashion, after you get adjusted and real friendship, then you have no problems at all because they knew who you are . . . The third week of the month they'd all congregate back to the apartment [in Newport]. And then they would restock, and then they would go back on their route. And if however you order something they don't have, they'd jot it down and try to have it for you the next time they go around.[48]

Along similar lines, Sadie, a second-generation woman from Barre,[49] related that her mother had been a peddler throughout central Vermont. She had carried suitcases door to door in the 1930s and 1940s. She would often stay the night with farm families because it was such a far distance to travel back home in the evening. Sadie found that when she went to work at a state office in Montpelier many of the women she worked with had grown up on farms in places like Plainfield and Marshfield. They often told stories of their lives on the farm and vividly recalled Lebanese ladies coming to the door to sell their goods. To them, the Lebanese peddling women looked very strange, they were all dressed in black with their kerchiefs over their heads. Sadie often thought of her mother when they spoke, and wondered if in fact her mother had visited the farms of her co-workers.

One excerpt from the recent publication *Men Against Granite,* a compilation based on interviews and information gathered under the auspices of the Federal Writers' Project from 1938–1940, includes a chapter about a Syrian woman peddler—Peddler Jenny. The interview describes how she peddled around the Winooski valley in the summertime, rolling a carriage filled with various wares. Using the carriage "is better than to carry the suitcases, they pull the arms out of me."[50] She sometimes only brought the suitcases on journeys to smaller towns, keeping the carriage in Barre. She declared that she had friends in "every town," and thus a network of places where she could both stay the night (she had no permanent residence) and sell her goods. Peddler Jenny avoided certain affluent streets in Montpelier and Barre because some residents were disapproving and did not want to buy her goods. Even some Syrians are disapproving of her: "To my own people, the

Syrians here, I don't go so much. We see different. They're high class, I'm low class. They don't say so, but I feel they say so in the minds. In town, down the other end, is a pretty good bunch of Syrians. They got fruit stores or grocery stores, most of them. They stay in one place, them, and they build a house and a family."[51]

The involvement of women raises another fascinating dimension to this trade. The fact that both men and women participated in this economic activity is especially notable given the strict gender codes in Lebanese society (and among immigrants in the diaspora) during this era. Recent scholarly literature demonstrates that it was common for both Lebanese men and women to peddle.[52] Lebanese women traveling to the U.S. either with brothers or husbands sometimes were peddlers alongside them, and sometimes peddled alone. One of the arguments for women peddling separately was that Yankee housewives would be more receptive to a woman knocking on the door selling wares rather than to a man, and hence more likely to purchase items. The employment of women outside the home, and hence outside of the range of patriarchal protection, began in Greater Syria and continued in the diaspora. These changes challenged codes of honor prevalent in most Arab families. Women's honor defined *'ird* (family honor) and women were expected to follow *hasham* (codes of modesty).[53] Modification to the honor code was necessary for women to peddle, though they often remained under the guardianship of a patriarch in the broader peddling network. Women often chose to work together in pairs and not to stay overnight at customers' homes in order to safeguard their honor.[54] Widowed women or older (post-menopausal) women may have faced fewer constraints from the honor code and could operate a bit more independently as merchants.[55] Despite stories of hardship, and pressure from nativist and charity groups to stop immigrant women from peddling, most continued to do so. American-born Lebanese women did not typically engage in peddling.[56] Many second-generation Lebanese related how their grandmothers and mothers would peddle even long after the men in the family gave up the trade to open full-time establishments such as grocery stores.

This discussion demonstrates that these immigrants had some familiarity with finance, trade, and a money-based economy. People I interviewed often stress that their ancestors were subsistence farmers who had no familiarity with trade and commerce prior to entering the United States. Yet the fact that they could and did enter into the peddling trade suggests that the migrants had some commercial skills in addition to their farming background. Peddling also uniquely linked them to urban city centers and remote villages; the scale of their operations was small

on an individual level, but the network they were part of was vast, and the flow of information and money through it quite remarkable.

As previously discussed, Mt. Lebanon and Greater Syria underwent significant economic changes during the late nineteenth century. Professions such as banking, transportation, and insurance were on the rise,[57] while traditional craftsmen, artisans, and merchants found it more difficult to secure employment. With an increasingly unfavorable balance of trade with Europe many such craftsmen traveled to other parts of the Middle East, especially Egypt, and to the Americas.[58] Many of these people were already migrants (moving from villages to cities in Lebanon, where women found employment in silk factories), and familiar with the growing cash economy in Lebanon. Sarah Gualtieri calls attention to this "step migration," the one that precedes the transatlantic one, as foundational for the economic activities they later launched in North America.[59] One interesting hypothesis suggests that those involved in the export and sale of silk were paid in foreign currency. Thus when the silk industry fluctuated they were in a better position to go abroad during these stages as they had international currency in hand to fund their voyages.[60] While it is difficult to ascertain the specific economic background of those who settled in Vermont and neighboring New England states, there is strong evidence to suggest that they may have developed skills and familiarity with petty economy exchange prior to their migration and that this may have been the main cause (or at least a supporting factor) in their migration to the U.S. rather than a consequence of their move.

Data from the U.S. shows that this particular immigrant community was slightly more skilled and had more ready access to cash than other immigrants. The 1911 report of the U.S. Immigration Commission highlights that among Syrian immigrants, 22.7 percent worked in skilled occupations and 20.3 percent in trade as compared to 20.2 percent and 19.1 percent for all other immigrant groups.[61] Most people made use of their trading abilities rather than enter into wage labor contracts.[62] A 1912 survey shows that one quarter of all Syrian immigrants were classified as "craftsmen" and one half were "laborers."[63] There are also some references to the ability of Christian immigrants (compared to Shi'a, Sunni, or Druze) to secure the funds for travel more easily (partially answering why most of the people who left Mt. Lebanon were from Christian and not Muslim sects). Easier access to money may be attributed to higher socioeconomic status of Christians over Muslim counterparts,[64] to assistance from Christian missionaries, or even to the recruiters for steamship companies choosing to assist Christians to come to the Americas over Muslims. Other studies note that the Syrian-Lebanese owned

homes in their countries and thus came from more stable financial circumstances when they immigrated and this enabled them to become relatively financially secure within the first generation.[65] The evidence for these latter examples is ambiguous, but it does point toward a migrant group with some ability to financially support their own migration and develop a trade diaspora internationally.[66] The Lebanese were prepared for commercial life abroad and swiftly became ethnic entrepreneurs, or a "middleman minority," based on the substantial number of members working in one commercially specialized sector.[67]

Mapping Lebanese Settlement

Having established what propelled Arabic-speaking immigrants to come to the U.S., it is useful to examine more precisely where they originally lived in Mt. Lebanon and where they eventually settled in Vermont. It is very rare that families have any documentation of where their ancestors were from in Lebanon. Sometimes naturalization papers have been saved or copies of such documents from microfilm have been recently collected from the archives in the process of doing genealogical research; however most of these list the point of departure, i.e., where the ancestor boarded the steamship, as the place of origin. For the majority this means that "Beirut, Syria" is recorded as the place of origin. Some people may well have been from Beirut, but the historical trends point to outlying villages. Many families I interviewed note that they have forgotten the specific name of a village where their ancestor(s) came from, and will often generally say something like, "we are from a village twelve miles outside of Beirut." The problem of transliteration also inhibits research into family history in the Middle East. Sometimes families have discarded paperwork in Arabic because no one could read it; more often than not the immigrants were not fully literate in Arabic and were unable to read such paperwork or letters.[68] Often immigrants did not have any documentation from Ottoman Greater Syria.

The absence of a Maronite parish in Vermont also means that an ethnic church did not serve as a repository for historical documents about the origins in Lebanon as it did in many other communities throughout America, and does not assist in documenting a local Lebanese presence. In other neighboring states Maronite Churches frequently held small historical collections and produced documents (anniversary celebration books, parish cookbooks) that contained information about where people were from in Lebanon. Because the Maronite rite is one of the liturgical rites in the Catholic Church, most Lebanese Maronites chose to attend religious services at Latin Rite Catholic churches. Yet some families maintained a strong Maronite tradition. In the 1910s Elias

Hendy, a Maronite priest and relative of several Lebanese in the state, spent time in Vermont and traveled around the state to conduct services in chapels adjacent to Latin Rite churches, or in private homes.[69] Thus although a Maronite Church was not available as a locus of memory and documentation, Maronites did periodically gather together for religious festivals and social gatherings.

Given this scenario, it is a strong oral tradition within families that has maintained the name of the home village in Lebanon. Difficulties arise in that they do not know how to spell the names in either Arabic or English; however, careful recording of phonetic names can be compared with other sources such as gravestones, reports from other settlements in Canada or the U.S., and historical studies of sending villages in Lebanon. Thus despite challenges, it is possible to piece together the main Lebanese villages that sent immigrants to Vermont. The Barre Ethnic Association notes that the two primary Lebanese villages for people in Barre were Blouza and Hadid (variously referred to as el-Hadid, Hadid al-Jibba, Hadith al-Jibba, Hadet ej-Jebbe, or Hadath El-Jebbeh). Wadi Qannoubine, Hadchit (Hadshit), Ser'eel (Siriil), Bcharre (Bsharri), and Diman were also villages of origin for Vermont Lebanese. There are a variety of ways to spell these village names in English, again accounting for translation from Arabic into English lettering. Most of these villages are in the Bsharri District and sit atop a mountainous ridge above the Kadisha (Qadisha) Valley. Some of these place names have been translated from Arabic writing on tombstones in St. Joseph's cemetery in Burlington and St. Monica's in Barre (to confirm spellings and family stories). Figures 6–11 provide examples of stones that list the specific home village of the deceased person or persons.

Many of the people leaving these villages and arriving in Vermont did so via New York City, as noted earlier. However, some came through Montreal and entered the state in Newport or other border towns. Island Pond was also sometimes listed as a point of entry to the United States on Declaration of Intent forms (to begin the process of naturalization), indicating that the travelers came from Canada by train and their first point of disembarkation was Island Pond. Boston was a port of entry for some, and a few came from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick (often living with Lebanese there for some time) via Maine to Vermont.

The very nature of peddling meant that people moved quite frequently. However, as peddlers established their own set routes and, given that many would travel to the garment district in New York City to collect more wares to sell, it was important for them to have a town on a railroad line that served as their home base. Research with descendants of the peddlers thus reveals that St. Johnsbury, Newport, Island Pond,

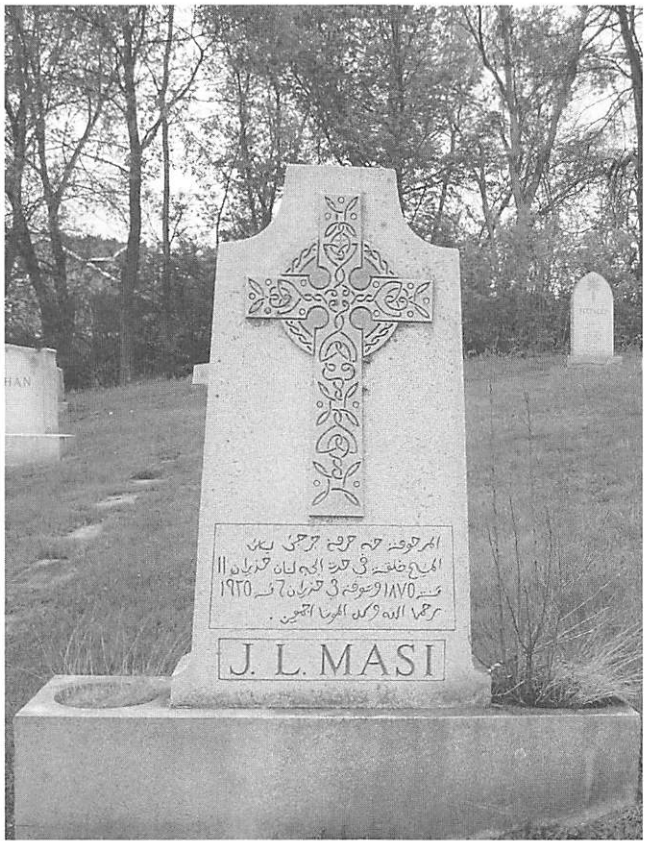


FIGURE 6. *Masi gravestone, St. Monica's Cemetery, Barre, Vermont. The Arabic indicates that this is the grave of the wife of Jirjis Elias Masih (George Elias Masih). The family name el-Masih is a reference to the messiah. She was born in Hadid al-Jibba, Lubnan (Lebanon) on June 11, 1875 and died in June 1925. A further part of the inscription reads "May God have mercy on her and all the dead."*

Rutland, Montpelier/Barre, St. Albans, and Burlington/Winooski were the primary centers where Lebanese settled.[70]

A look at federal census statistics of the foreign-born population in Vermont, including enumerators' reports that have been made available,[71] reveals a further dimension to the Arabic-speaking immigrants' settlement patterns.[72] It is important to bear in mind that many who came through the state and worked for several years may have eventually

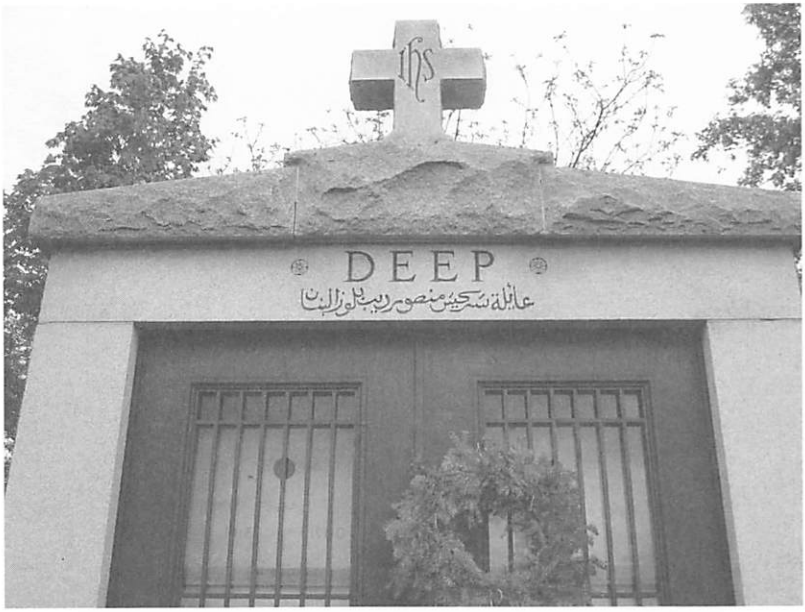
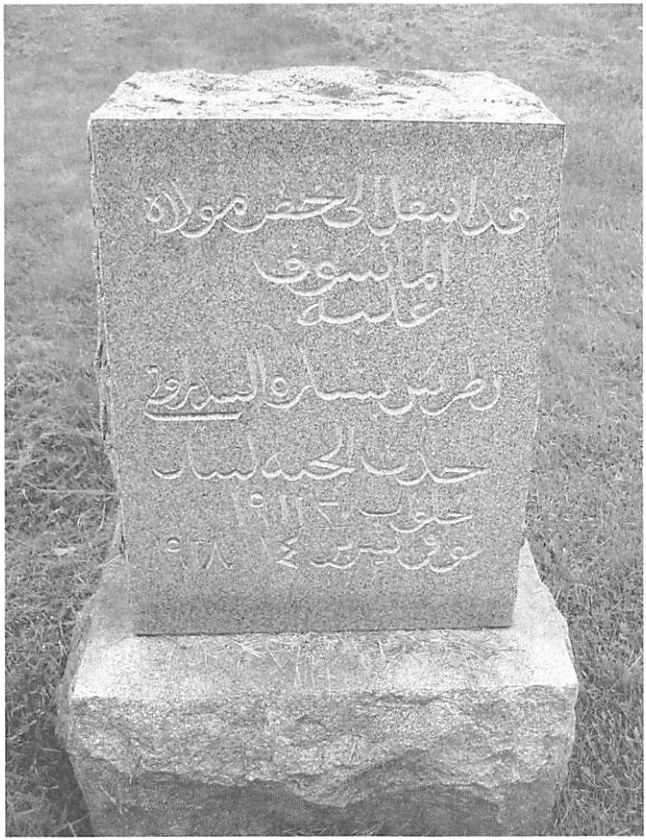


FIGURE 7. *Deep mausoleum, St. Monica's Cemetery, Barre, Vermont. The Arabic indicates this mausoleum is for Sarkis Mansour Deeb and his family and that the family hails from Bouza, Lebanon.*

settled elsewhere in the United States or Canada. The rate of return migration was quite high for this group prior to World War One as well. Estimates suggest perhaps as many as a third returned to Lebanon permanently, so many who lived in Vermont for a time may have eventually returned to settle permanently in their home villages. Finally, many of the peddlers had no permanent address and thus it is likely many were not counted in the census.

In 1900 the U.S. census counted anyone from the Ottoman Empire as being from "Turkey," not distinguishing between the vast areas (European and Middle Eastern) it encompassed. Twenty-two foreign-born people from Turkey were resident in Vermont. Even though in 1899 immigration officials had started categorizing people from Greater Syria as "Syrians," this was not the case at the Census Bureau. By 1910 foreign-born Ottoman citizens in the U.S. were counted as either from "Turkey in Asia" or "Turkey in Europe." Oddly, however, the records for Vermont still only list 220 foreign-born people from "Turkey" in the tables, not breaking it into Asian and European groups as was done for Maine and New Hampshire in that same year.[73]



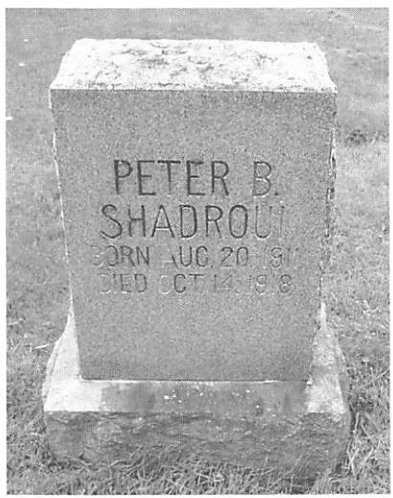


FIGURE 8. *Shadroui gravestone, St. Monica's Cemetery, Barre, Vermont. The Arabic side of this stone notes the same dates of birth and death, and that Peter was 7 years old when he passed. It also contains a prayer that translates: "He is moved (transported) to the lap of his Lord; the one we are sorry for; Hadid al-Jibba, Lebanon." Thus at the end they include the family's village in Lebanon.*

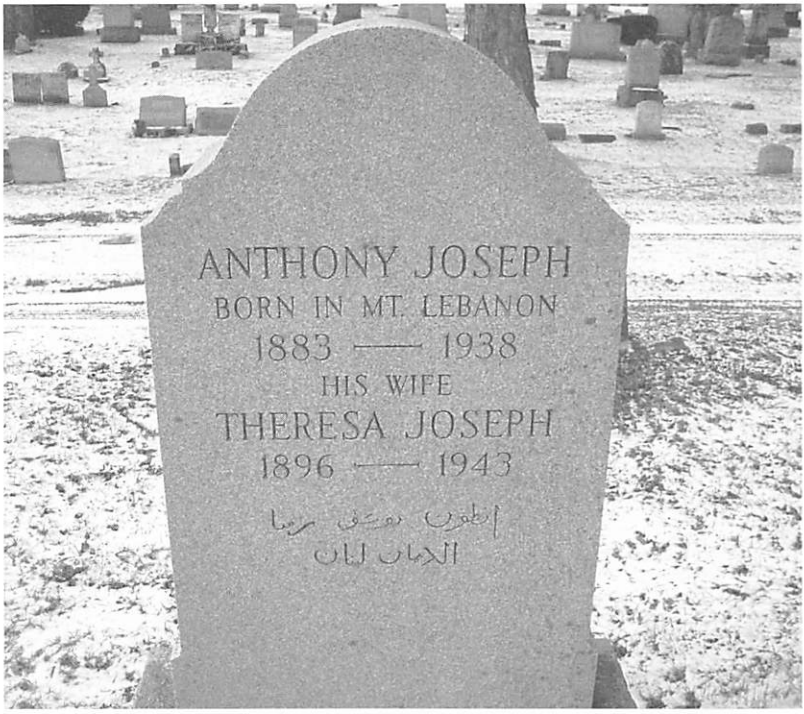


FIGURE 9. *Joseph gravestone, St. Joseph's Cemetery, Burlington, Vermont. The English portion indicates Anthony was born in Mt. Lebanon, yet the Arabic at the bottom more specifically states he was from the village of Diman, Lebanon. (It may be implied that the same is true for Theresa.)*

FIGURE 10. *Simon gravestone, St. Joseph's Cemetery, Burlington, Vermont. The Arabic writing under John Simon indicates that he was born in Hadchit, Lebanon, in 1874 and died in 1930; for Mary, the Arabic says exactly what is written in English.*

By 1920 the term "Syria" came into use at the Census Bureau to distinguish those from the historic province of Greater Syria (including Mt. Lebanon), which was under French Mandate rule by that time, from other foreign-born people from Asia.[74] In Vermont that year, 228 people from Syria were recorded with Barre, Burlington, and Rutland having the largest concentrations. Syrians were listed as living in all but four counties.[75] As a point of comparison, New England had 11,181 of 51,901 total Syrians in the United States at that time, or 22 percent. The

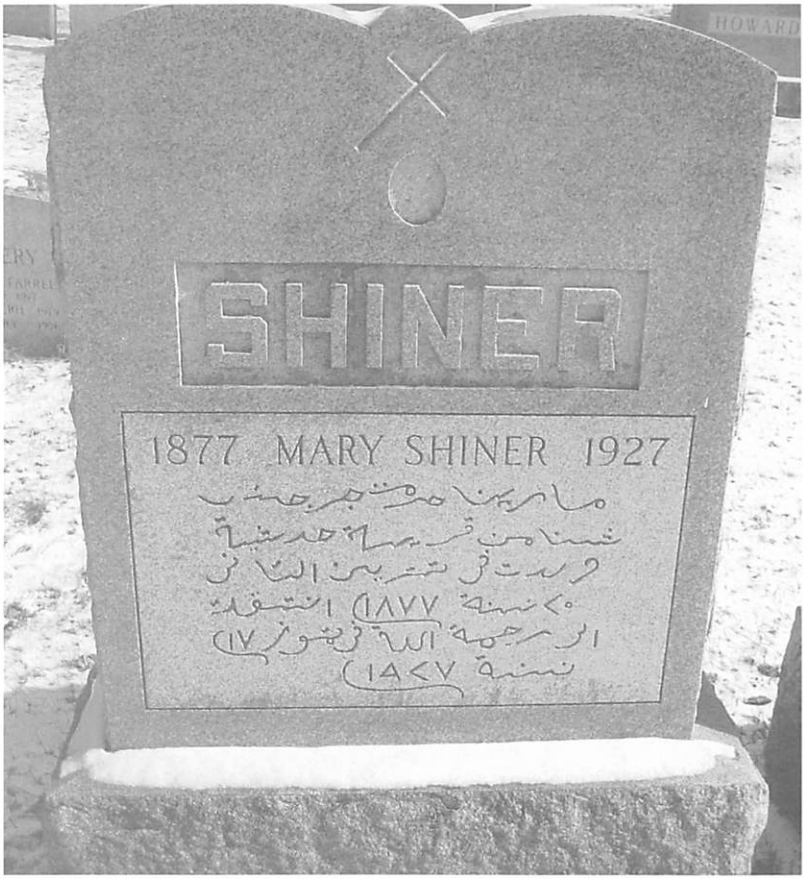


FIGURE 11. *Shiner gravestone, St. Joseph's Cemetery, Burlington, Vermont. The Arabic (the script and carving here is especially poor) indicates this is the grave for Marina, translated as Mary, who was born 25 November 1877 and died 17 July 1927. She was from Hadchit, Lebanon.*

228 Syrians in Vermont represented just 2 percent of the New England Syrian population in 1920, the smallest per capita of the New England states (New Hampshire: 4.7 percent, Maine: 5.6 percent; thus most Syrians resided in southern New England).

In the 1930 census people from Syria and Palestine were counted together, with a total for the state of 390. The majority of these were in Chittenden and Washington counties, and the cities of Barre (106), Burlington (94), and Rutland (10) had notable numbers of foreign-born

people from Syria and Palestine. The statistical abstracts for the 1930 census list 267 foreign-born from Syria and 384 children of foreign-born Syrian or mixed (Syrian and native-born American) parentage. By 1940 the children of foreign-born Syrians were no longer counted as such; they were included in the native-born white category only and are indistinguishable from all other native-born whites. In 1940 the foreign-born population from Syria in the state had fallen to 229, likely reflecting the change in immigration laws that restricted the number of Syrians permitted into the U.S. after 1924 to only 100 per year.[76] Some of the original migrants may have passed away or moved to other states; their descendants remained in Vermont, but no others from Lebanon migrated to the state after these restrictions were put in place (with a few notable exceptions of family members being allowed to join those already in the state).

Enumerators' reports for the census detail the place of residence for everyone surveyed so it is possible to see where the Syrian-Lebanese settled. In Burlington the three to four Lebanese families were living on the lower part of Maple Street in the 1920s. One family from Ser'eel, Lebanon operated their home as a sort of "welcome house" for any Syrian-Lebanese passing through Burlington. Many families that later moved to St. Albans or Montpelier or beyond originally spent a few months with the Lebanese already established on Maple Street.[77] Many families assisted new arrivals in Vermont in this manner, however the nature of peddling (needing to establish one's own route and customer base) often meant that settling in a sort of ethnic neighborhood or enclave happened very rarely. Certainly there were some concentrations of families, for example on Prospect Street in Barre, but this was not always the case. The overall small numbers of Syrian-Lebanese in the state as well as the occasional personal/professional competition among them meant they did not always strive to settle in proximity to one another. Yet they maintained extensive knowledge of where around the state Syrian-Lebanese lived, as they would often stay with one another when traveling for business or to socialize. Regular gatherings of Syrian-Lebanese were common in these early decades to share stories of home, exchange news, find suitable marriage partners, for special Maronite Catholic worship services, and to enjoy Arabic foods, music, and dance.

Peddling: A Path to Entrepreneurship around the State

While not all Lebanese became peddlers when they first arrived in Vermont, peddling itself can be thought of as the linchpin to understanding the reasons for travel to Vermont—either being sent there by

a client supplier or invited to join a family member already peddling there—and settlement patterns of Arabic-speaking immigrants around the state. A look at the peddling occupation also shows the progression from this itinerant sales work into other entrepreneurial endeavors.

Peddler Jenny's story from *Men Against Granite* highlights a transition moment as regards peddling as a full-time occupation. Her commentary indicates that some of her customers no longer bought from her because now they had cars and came into town frequently on their own.[78] As transportation systems throughout the state improved, home delivery of items became less profitable. Many Lebanese continued in their same line of business, but now opened specialized stores in town centers. Owning and operating dry goods stores, butcher shops, fruit stores, and general stores or 'mom & pop' style corner stores were the most common. A. & W. Josephs' dry goods store in Island Pond is a good example; the store sold clothes, shoes, rubbers, cigars, tobacco, fruit, confectionary, and ice cream.[79] Similar stores were operated in Barton and Brattleboro by Lebanese families; in Rutland, Burlington, and Barre, Lebanese had shops specializing in the sale of particular goods, for example, clothing, fruit, or meats.

Again census enumerators' records can provide information about the occupations and trades those born in Syria were engaged in around the state. Examples from Rutland in 1920 show Syrian-Lebanese in the following occupations: salesman of oriental goods, peddler of dry goods, laborer in a factory, bellboy at a hotel, and a barber in a barbershop. Listings for Burlington in 1930 include: proprietor of clothing store, peddler of dry goods, repairman in a furniture shop, barber in a barber shop, storekeeper in a grocery store, laborer in a brush factory, winder in a woolen mill, laborer doing "odd jobs," salesman at a fruit company. These are not exhaustive lists, but provide a sample of occupations for this cohort. Based on census and oral history findings, it is clear that some worked in factories (for example the woolen mills in Winooski, a veneer factory in Newport, and a few as granite cutters in the granite sheds in Barre), however, retail and merchant activities were the norm for most Lebanese.

One particularly unique venture for Lebanese immigrants—in Vermont and indeed across the country—was owning and operating ice houses around the state. In a time when peddling was the norm for Lebanese, Peter Handy purchased the Newport Ice Company in 1913. His descendants today do not have a clear idea as to how or why he got involved in cutting ice. The Handys had peddled in the Newport area prior to 1913, and Peter and his brother may have worked for the ice company before buying it. In any event, cutting ice swiftly became a

profitable business for them, and enabled them to bring more relatives from Mt. Lebanon to Vermont. As ice houses came up for sale in other towns, a member of the family would be given the initial investment to go and purchase them. It was particularly important that the businesses they bought were in towns with a creamery. Creameries were the biggest markets for ice, which they used to process the milk and send dairy products by train to Boston, a trip requiring eight to ten hours at that time. In this way the ice companies were shared and supported by an extended family business network. At one time or another between 1913 and the late 1940s, when this ceased to be a viable industry, members of the Handy family (or Lebanese who had married a Handy, and in one case a close friend) owned and operated ice companies in Montpelier, Burlington, St. Albans, Barton, Island Pond, St. Johnsbury, Lyndonville, Newport, and Littleton, New Hampshire.

After World War Two many expanded their businesses or started new ventures. Many Lebanese families owned and operated drive-in movie theaters, restaurants, beverage distribution companies, motels, auto dealerships, farm machinery companies, and real estate agencies. In some cases people went into business together, helping family members get started by expanding from one original business (along the lines of peddling). This is one reason many Lebanese went into the same type of industry, but another reason is competition. Some people explained that when one Lebanese person saw another enter into a new business venture and become successful, he or she would then scramble to get into the same business. Many informants noted that a strong sense of competition runs through and between Lebanese families when referencing the history of various family occupations and earnings.

Conclusion

An Arabic-speaking peddler, carrying a suitcase in each hand and a pack on his back, walking alone through valleys amidst the Green Mountains is not an image usually associated with Vermont. Indeed, Vermont is more often associated with a classic Yankee past, one that is preindustrial, representative of simpler times, and set in rural towns filled with Protestant Christians of primarily English ancestry.[80] Descriptions of Vermont in popular culture as ethnically pure and religiously Protestant mean there is little room left in the imagination for Lebanese Christians to have been part of town communities for over one hundred years.

This Yankee myth speaks to a wider phenomenon, one that affects the history of many ethnic communities in the state. To the extent that local industrial and economic histories and the corresponding population movements out of the state are camouflaged, groups like the Lebanese

are prevented from being visible. A recent article on ethnicity in Vermont notes that a limited understanding of ethnicity in the state is tied to a limited understanding of industries such as manufacturing, mining, and lumber. Indeed in cultivating a bucolic image, collective memory of such activities has receded and is not passed on to subsequent generations.[81] The prevalence of a Yankee myth is apparently not a new phenomenon. The following excerpt from Elin Anderson's 1937 book *We Americans,* from a chapter titled "The Myth of a Yankee Town," suggests that Burlington is imagined to be filled with Yankees or "Old Americans" as she calls them, but that this is not quite the case.

> [T]o a Yankee farmer . . . Burlington has a lot of foreigners. As he walks along the main street, he looks in vain for a few faces which remind him of the features of Calvin Coolidge. Going into a store he may be greeted by a proprietor whose short and stocky build little resembles the long, lean Yankee storekeeper of earlier days. While waiting to be served he may listen abstractedly to an animated conversation between the clerk and a customer only to realize suddenly that he is listening to a foreign language. "French" he probably decides, as he turns to give his order. He goes into another store to be waited on by the Jewish proprietor. . . . If he stays in town for lunch, he will have to look hard along the main street to find a restaurant which is not Greek, or Syrian, or Chinese, or run by some other "foreigner." It is only when he goes into the bank that he can breathe easily, knowing that here he is still on Yankee ground.[82]

This seventy-year-old work suggests that the reader (along with the Yankee farmer) would be surprised to find so many foreign-born people living and operating businesses in Burlington. Anderson was working as much with the Yankee myth as we are today, running the realities on the ground against a powerful regional narrative that does not include ethnics in the mix.

It is as though we are continually surprised by the presence of foreign-born immigrants and their descendants in the state, including Middle Easterners. The difficulty lies in the lack of a framework to sustain memories of historical realities. As Maurice Halbwachs writes, "No memory is possible outside frameworks used by people living in society to determine and retrieve their recollections."[83] Perhaps the solution is to work on adjusting our framework to acknowledge the industrial history of the state, which then enables memories of Vermont's immigrant and ethnic past to be sustained. Then the rituals and commemorative storytelling within families that has sustained collective memory to date, coupled with relics in the social landscape, could cease to be fragmentary and could fuse to form a more cohesive public history of the Lebanese in Vermont.

I offer that the Lebanese make a particularly interesting case study at this moment given the broad contemporary interest in Arab Americans in the United States. It must be noted that some Lebanese (in the diaspora and in Lebanon) do not affiliate with being Arab, or Arab American. Instead they insist on having a unique Phoenician ancestry (see endnote 28), or argue that the term "Arab" is most often associated with Islam, and since they have longstanding pre-Islamic Christian religious traditions they do not, therefore, wish to be classified as Arab.[84] Along similar lines, Lebanese in Vermont are also sensitive to being associated with the term "Syrian," even though for the first half of the Lebanese history in America they were called "Syrian" and they themselves embraced that term. Syria was an ally of the Soviet Union during the Cold War, while Lebanon had strong ties to the U.S. This often accelerated the shift from identifying as "Syrian" to "Lebanese" among the immigrants in the U.S.[85] Additionally, given Syrian involvement during the thirty-year-long Lebanese Civil War and continued interference in Lebanese politics, today people of Lebanese ancestry wish to distance themselves from the historical associations of being Syrian.

Recognizing the political and cultural implications of such categorizations, I maintain that the Lebanese story in Vermont is part of a broader Arab American history. The emigration of Christians from Mt. Lebanon to America is considered to be the origin point of Arab American history. The 1967 Arab-Israeli War is often cited as a moment of consciousness when many Lebanese Americans, including some from Vermont, became more politically active regarding the Middle East and began to affiliate as Arab American.[86] Further, many post-9/11 writings tie Lebanese Americans into a broader Arab American presence in the nation.[87] So, too, do official briefs that are based on the 2000 U.S. census ancestry questionnaire.[88]

Given that Lebanese Americans are continuously drawn into this historical narrative, that they are already part of the conversation, I offer that the voices of the Lebanese in Vermont deserve to be part of such a process. Tracing their history is particularly challenging given the name changes (both personal and those due to geopolitics in the homeland), absence of a Maronite parish, and the particularly mobile lifestyle of the Lebanese; many moved in and out of Vermont, and around the state, for years before settling. Yet there is a real need to understand the long history and presence of Arabs in all corners of America—and this makes the task of understanding the Lebanese in Vermont all the more compelling. This article is the first of what I hope will be many to add Vermont Lebanese voices to the national history of Arabs in

America and one that contributes to a more nuanced understanding of Vermont history itself.

Notes

[1] See for example: Edward Casey, *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987); Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (London: Harper & Row, 1980).

[2] Michael Ann Holly, *Past Looking: Historical Imagination and the Rhetoric of the Image* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 15.

[3] For literature regarding oral narratives and collective memory see the following examples: Joelle Bahloul, *The Architecture of Memory: A Jewish-Muslim Household in Colonial Algeria 1927–1962* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Andrew Lass, "From Memory to History," *Memory, History, and Opposition under State Socialism*, ed. Rubie S. Watson (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1994), 87–104; Elizabeth Tonkin, *Narrating Our Pasts: The Social Construction of Oral History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

[4] "Mount Lebanon" specifically referred to the mountainous region west of the littoral (occasionally in the literature it is simply called "the Mountain"). Greater Syria was the name given to a large administrative district that included parts of present day Turkey and Jordan, all of present-day Syria and Lebanon, and all of Palestine (which today includes Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip).

[5] Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1988), 164.

[6] Key texts that address these issues include: Leila Fawaz, "Zahle and Dayr al-Qamar: Two Market Towns of Mount Lebanon during the Civil War of 1860," *Lebanon: A History of Conflict and Consensus*, eds. Nadim Shehadi and Dana Haffar Mills (London: Centre for Lebanese Studies, in association with I. B. Taurus, 1988), 49–63; Philip K. Hitti, *The Syrians in America* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1924); Charles Issawi, "The Historical Background of Lebanese Emigration: 1800–1914," *The Lebanese in the World: A Century of Emigration*, eds. Albert Hourani and Nadim Shehadi (London: I. B. Tauris, 1992), 13–32; Claude Boueiz Kanaan, *Lebanon 1860–1960: A Century of Myth and Politics* (London: SAQI, 2005); Kemal Karpat, "The Ottoman Emigration to America, 1860–1914," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 17, 2 (1985): 175–209; Akram Fouad Khater, *Inventing Home: Emigration, Gender, and the Middle Class in Lebanon, 1870–1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Samir Khalaf, "The Background and Causes of Lebanese/Syrian Immigration," *Crossing the Waters: Arabic-Speaking Immigrants to the United States before 1940*, ed. E. J. Hooglund (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1987), 17–35; Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); J. Spagnolo, "Franco-British Rivalry in the Middle East and Its Operation in the Lebanese Problem," *Lebanon: A History of Conflict and Consensus*, eds. Shehadi and Mills, 100–123; Michael W. Suleiman, "Introduction," *Arabs in America: Building a New Future*, ed. Michael W. Suleiman (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), 1–21; Kais Firro, "Silk and Agrarian Changes in Lebanon, 1860–1914," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 22, 2 (1990): 151–169.

[7] E. D. Akarli, "The Tangled Ends of an Empire and Its Sultan," *Modernity & Culture: From the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean*, eds. Leila T. Fawaz and C. A. Bayly (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 262.

[8] Hitti, *The Syrians in America*, 55.

[9] Michael Suleiman, "The Arab Community in the United States—A Comparison of Lebanese and Non-Lebanese," *The Lebanese in the World: A Century of Emigration*, eds. Hourani and Shehadi; Evelyn Shakir, *Bint Arab: Arab and Arab American Women in the United States* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997). Shakir writes that Presbyterian missionaries from New England were perhaps the most influential and while they were not particularly successful as proselytizers, they made a clear mark as educators (*Bint Arab*, 22).

[10] Early on graduates of the missionary-run schools were the ones to make the journey to America for jobs or further education. As their initial reports of success and opportunity filtered home, it became commonplace for others (including the uneducated) to follow in their path. Relaying of messages and remittances, as well as information provided by those who returned from working abroad, accelerated the movement overseas for a large percentage of the population of Mt. Lebanon.

[11] A religious sect with origins in Ismaili Islam, but which also has drawn on other religious traditions to develop unique monotheistic beliefs; the Druze hold al-Hakim (an Ismaili caliph) to be divine. They are not considered to be Muslim.

[12] Every family I interviewed has a Christian Maronite background. There was one historical reference to a Greek Orthodox woman from Massachusetts marrying a Maronite man from Rutland, but otherwise I did not come across references to Lebanese from other Christian sects nor Druze nor Muslims settling in Vermont during the Ottoman period.

[13] See for example: Karpat, "The Ottoman Emigration to America, 1860–1914"; Fawaz, "Zahle and Dayr al-Qamar."

[14] In particular, new research by Akram Khater has brought this to light, as he noted in "Mahjar: The Rise of Lebanese or Syrian Nationalisms," a paper presented at the Politics, Culture, and Lebanese Diaspora Conference at the Lebanese American University, Beirut, May 2007.

[15] Many Maronites sought asylum in Beirut during the violence in the Mountain in 1860 and subsequently decided to stay. See: L. Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants in Nineteenth-Century Beirut* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 42.

[16] Khater, *Inventing Home.*

[17] Sarah Gualtieri, "Gendering the Chain Migration Thesis: Women and Syrian Transatlantic Migration, 1878–1924," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 24, 1 (2004): 68.

[18] Robin Cohen, "Trade Diasporas: Chinese and Lebanese," *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (London: UCL Press, 1997); Elsa M. Harik, *The Lebanese in America* (Minneapolis: Lerner, 1987); Khalaf, "The Background and Causes of Lebanese/Syrian Immigration."

[19] Khater, *Inventing Home,* 13.

[20] Firro, "Silk and Agrarian Changes in Lebanon, 1860–1914."

[21] George Haddad, *From Mt. Lebanon to Vermont: The Autobiography of George Haddad* (Rutland: Tuttle, 1916), 10.

[22] Exemption from military service was due to the semi-autonomous status (known as the Mutasarrifiyya) Mt. Lebanon gained after the violence in 1860.

[23] Some would stop in these ports for many months to work to earn money for the remaining part of the journey; others had to wait in quarantine before the steamship company doctors approved them for the transatlantic voyage.

[24] May 3, 1976, Hannet Shadroui Acker Oral History tapes, Aldrich Public Library, Barre, Vermont.

[25] This was Hannet Shadroui Acker.

[26] John G. Moses, *The Lebanese in America* (Utica, N.Y.: T. C. Peters Printing, 2001 [1987]); Elizabeth Boosahda, *Arab-American Faces and Voices: The Origins of an Immigrant Community* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003).

[27] Many researchers have worked with the limited records available to estimate how many immigrants came to the United States from Lebanon. "By 1940, U.S. official statistics indicated that about 350,000 immigrants were of 'Arabic-speaking' origin. About 80 percent of those immigrants are estimated to have come from what is today Lebanon; 15 percent from Syria and Palestine; and the rest from Iraq and Yemen" (Khalaf, "The Background and Causes of Lebanese/Syrian Immigration," 20). Estimates put the number of Arabic-speaking people and their descendants in the contemporary U.S. at three million (some of whom are in their sixth generation); this constitutes about one percent of the total population, see Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, *Not Quite American? The Shaping of Arab and Muslim Identity in the United States* (Waco, Tx.: Baylor University Press, 2004), 6. Importantly, estimates of the exact number of immigrants vary widely; publications by immigrant or ethnic activist groups commonly inflate population size (Andrew Shryock, "In the Double Remoteness of Arab Detroit: Reflections on Ethnography, Culture Work, and the Intimate Disciplines of Americanization," *Off Stage/On Display: Intimacy and Ethnography in the Age of Public Culture,* ed. A. Shryock (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 297.

[28] The relationship of the Lebanese migrants to the term "Arab" is a complex topic that extends beyond the scope of this article. The main issue to stress here is that from the earliest phase of migration there was some resistance to being called "Arab" among Lebanese immigrants. The noted historian Phillip K. Hitti in his book *The Syrians in America* goes to great effort to explain that the term "Arab" refers to a culture and "not a strain of blood," such that it has a linguistic rather than an ethnic connotation. The claim for a Lebanese separation from Arab-ness is also connected to the development of "Phoenicianism," an ideology created and supported by Lebanese nationalists to justify Lebanon as its own national community; see Asher Kaufman, *Reviving Phoenicia: The Search for Identity in Lebanon* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2004). This perspective has been especially popular with Maronite Lebanese in the diaspora. For some Lebanese, especially Maronites, the Lebanese state that was created after World War Two is a "natural" entity with the state boundaries reflecting a non-Arab cultural entity; this argument contrasts greatly with Muslim perceptions

of the Lebanese state as an artificial creation of European imperialism (Kanaan, *Lebanon 1860–1960*, 16).

[29] Alixa Naff, "The Early Arab Immigrant Experience," *The Development of Arab-American Identity*, ed. Ernest McCarus (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 25.

[30] Michael Suleiman, "Early Arab-Americans: The Search for Identity," *Crossing the Waters: Arabic-Speaking Immigrants to the United States before 1940*, ed. Hooglund, 41.

[31] The newspaper clipping was donated in 1978 along with other Lebanese memorabilia to the Aldrich Public Library in Barre, Vermont. While no exact date was given, based on when some of the speakers were in office it must have occurred in the early 1950s. Speakers at this event included: Halim Shebea, consul general of the Republic of Lebanon from New York, U.S. District Judge Ernest W. Gibson, Governor Lee E. Emerson, Mayor Reginald T. Abare of Barre, and Mayor Anson Barber of Montpelier. Mrs. Louis Nassif, president of the Eastern States Federation, was to give the farewell address. A photograph was included in the article listing the convention officials: Mrs. Anna Tash, Mrs. Josephine George, Joseph Corey, Dr. Ray Romanos, Mrs. Hannah [Hannet] Acker. Also mentioned were L. Romanos, John Shadroui, Peter Shadroui, Ray Ziter, Herbert Ziter, Louis Ziter, Edward Tash, and A. Corey.

[32] Thomas B. Hansen, "Where Names Fall Short: Names as Performances in Contemporary Urban South Africa," *The Anthropology of Names and Naming*, eds. Barbara Bodenhorn and Gabriele vom Bruck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 221.

[33] Nadine Naber, "Ambiguous Insiders: An Investigation of Arab American Invisibility," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 23, 1 (January 2000): 37–61; Joanna Kadi, ed., *Food for Our Grandmothers: Writings by Arab-American and Arab-Canadian Feminists* (Cambridge: South End Press, 1994).

[34] Barbara Bodenhorn and Gabriele vom Bruck, "'Entangled in Histories': An Introduction to the Anthropology of Names and Naming," *The Anthropology of Names and Naming*, eds. Bodenhorn & vom Bruck, 26.

[35] Name provided in many interviews with members of the Handy family. Also provided in the document of Handy family genealogy (given to me in August 2005) compiled in 2003 by one third-generation member of this large, extended family. Sometimes it is also spelled *al-hende*, and further "Hendy" rather than "Handy." People of Lebanese descent with both these surnames live in Vermont today.

[36] J. Ashton, "They got the English Hashed u pa bit: Names, Narratives, and Assimilation." *Lore and Language* 17, Part ½, (1999): 70.

[37] Sometimes when stating one's name a person would derive a surname from a father or ancestor; such names are called patronyms (Moses, *The Lebanese in America*, 18). The patronoymical prefix common to many Lebanese names is "Abu," "Abo," or "Abou" meaning "father." Examples include: Abounader or Aboushaheen or Abouboutros. This prefix was not common among the Vermont families but does occur frequently among North American families of Lebanese descent.

[38] Personal interview, August 2005.

[39] Peddling was a common trade among eastern European Jewish immigrants at this time. Some note that the Lebanese picked up old peddling routes from Jews as they moved into other trades (Albert Hourani, "Introduction," *The Lebanese in the World: A Century of Emigration*, eds. Hourani and Shehadi). Some of my informants stated that the Lebanese were not welcome in other trades or occupations (e.g., certain factories would not employ Lebanese), and that peddling was a "Semitic trade" (implying the Lebanese and Jews had a lot in common in this respect). During this research project, I did not come across specific references to Jewish peddlers in Vermont or evidence that the Lebanese took over old Jewish peddling routes. The most comparable activity for Jews in Vermont towns was working as "junk dealers." This involved collecting refuse, for example old cloth or tires, and reselling it in a different marketplace; yet this was different from peddling, an activity involving bringing new and rare goods to sell door to door.

[40] Hourani, "Introduction," *The Lebanese in the World: A Century of Emigration*, eds. Hourani and Shehadi.

[41] P. D. Murphy and B. Peters-McDermott (authors), J. C. Gabriel (editor), *As the Cedars Grow: The Origin of the Saint John's Lebanese Community in Canadian History* (St. John, N.B.: Saint John Canadian Lebanon Association, 2002), 30.

[42] Stuart G. McHenry, "The Syrian Movement into Upstate New York," *Ethnicity* 6 (1979): 337.

[43] Ibid. See also Moses, *The Lebanese in America;* Alixa Naff, *Becoming American: The Early Arab Immigrant Experience* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1985).

[44] Alixa Naff, "Lebanese Immigration into the United States: 1880 to the Present," *The Lebanese in the World: A Century of Emigration*, eds. Hourani and Shehadi, 146.

[45] There is ethnographic evidence from Vermont to suggest that for some immigrants a patron-client relationship developed with the original immigrant taking advantage of poorer kin or co-villager recent arrivals (who were less familiar with the town and American society). The latter

became dependent on the former (not unlike how the "Syrian banker" operated in New York) such that they remained in a patron-client relationship for their entire working life.

[46] Haddad. *From Mt. Lebanon to Vermont*, 65, 97, 114.

[47] Hourani, "Introduction," *The Lebanese in the World: A Century of Emigration*, eds. Hourani and Shehadi, 7.

[48] Handy, Ned. January 21, 1998. Interview with Jane Beck. Accession Number [TC1998.0001], Collection Number [VFC1995.0001.003], 4–6. Vermont Folklife Center Archive, Middlebury, Vermont.

[49] This is not her real name. The interview took place in October 2005.

[50] Roaldus Richmond and Mari Tomasi, *Men Against Granite* (Shelburne, Vt.: The New England Press, 2004), 123.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Shakir, *Bint Arab;* Gualtieri, "Gendering the Chain Migration Thesis: Women and Syrian Transatlantic Migration, 1878–1924," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 24, 1 (2004): 69–80.

[53] Paula M. Hajar, "Changes and Continuities in the Code of Honor among Syrian Lebanese Immigrants to the United States," (Harvard School of Education, M.A. Thesis, 1989).

[54] Gualtieri, "Gendering the Chain Migration Thesis," 72.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Many Syrians faced criticism by the American public for sending their women out to peddle. Syrians in general were seen as in need of "moral uplift" and "improvement," and thus confining women into a different set of "virtuous work" arose out of a desire to integrate into American life rather than as enduring Arab patriarchal tradition (Gualtieri, "Gendering the Chain Migration Thesis," 73–74).

[57] Karpat, "The Ottoman Emigration to America, 1860–1914"; Cohen, "Trade Diasporas: Chinese and Lebanese."

[58] P. Sluglett, "Aspects of Economy and Society in the Syrian Provinces: Aleppo in Transition, 1880–1925," *Modernity & Culture: From the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean*, eds. Fawaz and Bayly, 144.

[59] Gualtieri, "Gendering the Chain Migration Thesis," 69.

[60] Cohen, "Trade Diasporas: Chinese and Lebanese," 95.

[61] Karpat, "The Ottoman Emigration to America, 1860–1914," 180.

[62] Charles Issawi, "The Historical Background of Lebanese Emigration: 1800–1914," *The Lebanese in the World: A Century of Emigration*, eds. Hourani and Shehadi, 31.

[63] Khalaf, "The Background and Causes of Lebanese/Syrian Immigration," 23.

[64] Ibid., 21.

[65] Amir Marvasti and Karyn D. McKinney, *Middle Eastern Lives in America* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 7.

[66] Cohen, "Trade Diasporas: Chinese and Lebanese."

[67] "Middleman minority theories have been developed to explain the ethnic specialization of certain ethnic and immigrant groups in commerce, as well as to analyze the relations between the commercially specialized groups and their neighbors of other origins. They constitute a set of socioeconomic explanations of ethnicity and . . . are particularly applicable to such problems as the examination of the involvement of Arabic-speaking immigrants as self-employed businessmen in North America." Walter P. Zenner, "Arabic-speaking Immigrants in North America as Middleman Minorities," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 5, 4 (1982): 457.

[68] A common facet of family lore was identifying one person in the broader Lebanese community who acted as reader and translator for all the Lebanese in the region. Occasionally a letter would arrive from Lebanon and this person would be called upon to visit the house and read the news. Often such a person (examples of men and women were provided) had attended a missionary school in Mt. Lebanon before migrating and therefore knew how to read and write some Arabic (and possibly French and English).

[69] In the late 1990s land in Shelburne, Vermont, was donated to the Maronite Eparchy in Brooklyn and a new Maronite retreat center was established. The retreat center is for monks and other visitors to come and stay; in the house on the property there is also a small chapel where the liturgy is performed each Sunday. Many second- and third-generation Lebanese Maronites attend these services today, keeping the Maronite liturgy of their ancestors alive in the Green Mountains.

[70] George Haddad wrote in his autobiography that he especially liked Rutland and chose to settle there (moving away from North Adams, Massachusetts) because of its good railway connections.

[71] The enumerators were hired by the U.S. Census Bureau to conduct the census survey. They received instructions about how to canvass a neighborhood and ensure they accounted for all residents there (often in immigrant communities people had boarders or lodgers, and they, too, were recorded under the household within which they resided). The actual records (handwritten notes on

standardized forms) were then sent to Washington, D.C., for analysis and compilation in printed form. Due to privacy laws (because it lists personal details) the specific records (names of people, ages, place of birth, occupation, residence, etc.) are not available to the public until seventy years have passed. Thus I was able to access the original records for Vermont towns only for 1900, 1910, 1920, and 1930.

[72] Between 1890 and 1920 less than half of one percent of the total foreign-born in Vermont were from the province of Greater Syria.

[73] Consulting the "Composition and Characteristics of the Population" tables from Vol. III of the 13th Census of the USA, it is unclear why this record only references the foreign-born from "Turkey." This may in part be due to small numbers; regardless, it is not possible to distinguish those Arabic speakers from Mt. Lebanon based on this table. People from "Turkey" at that time could have been Armenian, Turkish, or Greek speakers, for example. However, for 1910 another statistic suggests that the foreign-born from "Turkey in Asia" in Vermont must have been counted because 102 males over the age of 21 from "Turkey in Asia" were registered in the state with 28 being naturalized and an additional 9 holding their first papers, while 48 were registered as alien and the remainder listed no citizenship (see Table 33, Chapter XI: "Voting Age, Militia Age, and Naturalization").

[74] Syria was listed as one category for foreign-born people from Asia. Other categories include: Armenia, Palestine, Turkey in Asia, China, Japan, India, and Other Asia.

[75] Addison: 2, Bennington: 17, Chittenden: 99, Essex: 12, Franklin: 5, Lamoille: 1, Orleans: 25, Rutland: 16, Washington: 48, Windsor: 3.

[76] Starting in 1921 the United States government introduced the Quota Act, which was highly symbolic of the new isolationist phase in American politics and in many ways is the final achievement of the nativist movement. The Quota Act, which took on its best known and most restrictive form in 1924, established quotas based on the national origin of entrants. It limited the annual entry of people of a certain nationality to a percentage of the foreign-born of that same nationality as recorded in previous censuses. "The Act 'limited the annual number of entrants of each admissible nationality to three per cent of the foreign-born of that nationality as recorded in the U.S. Census of 1910.' It was made more restrictive in 1924 when quotas were set at two percent of the 1890 Census, thereby drastically limiting the number of eligible immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean" (Gualtieri, "Gendering the Chain Migration Thesis," 68).

[77] Personal interview, Jim Fayette, February 2006.

[78] Richmond & Tomasi, *Men Against Granite*, 127. She also mentioned that several of her people, Syrians, were settled down with families at the south end of Barre. It is likely that in earlier years these Syrians were also peddlers, but the arrival of children and the accumulation of some wealth prompted them to open businesses in the city.

[79] As advertised on a 1920s sales receipt and photograph from the store (courtesy of a member of the Joseph family).

[80] See: Dona Brown, *Inventing New England: Regional Tourism in the Nineteenth Century* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995); Michael Hoberman, *Yankee Moderns: Folk Regional Identity in the Sawmill Valley of Western Massachusetts, 1890–1920* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2000); George H. Lewis, "The Maine that Never Was: The Construction of Popular Myth." *Journal of American Culture* 16, 2 (1993); James Lindgren, *Preserving Historic New England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Joseph Conforti, *Imagining New England: Explorations of Regional Identity from the Pilgrims to the Mid-Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Joseph Conforti, "Ice and Granite: The New England Character," *Maine Historical Society Quarterly* 28, 2 (1988): 92–109; Blake Harrison, *The View from Vermont: Tourism and the Making of an American Rural Landscape* (Burlington: University of Vermont Press, 2006).

[81] Joseph-André Senécal, "Nos Ancêtres Les Gaulois: Ethnicity and History in Vermont," *Vermont History* 71 (2003): 69, n14.

[82] Elin L. Anderson, *We Americans: A Study of Cleavage in an American City* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1937), 16–17.

[83] Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 43.

[84] Randa A. Kayyali, *The Arab Americans* (London: Greenwood Press, 2005), 62. Though they share the Arabic language, they argue that they are culturally separate from Arabs.

[85] Naff, *Becoming American*, 16

[86] Eric J. Hooglund, ed., *Taking Root, Bearing Fruit: The Arab-American Experience*, vol. 2 (Washington, D.C.: American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, 1985); Hooglund, ed., *Crossing the Waters;* Ernest McCarus, ed., *The Development of Arab-American Identity;* Gregory Orfalea, *The Arab Americans: A History* (Northampton: Interlink, 2006); Thomas Pulcini, "Trends in Research on Arab Americans," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 12, 4 (Summer 1993): 38. For how new Arab American immigrants in the 1960s and 1970s connected to the earlier wave of Arabic-

speaking immigrants, see Helen Hatab Samhan, "Politics and Exclusion: The Arab American Experience," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 16, 2 (1987).

[87] To provide two examples: The 2005 *Encyclopedia of New England* published by Yale University Press has no entry for Lebanese or Syrians in the immigrant section; you can only find them under Arabs in New England. Demographers and health specialists also posit Syrian-Lebanese ethnicity as a subset of Arab American ethnicity. See Andrzej Kulczycki and Arun Peter Lobo, "Deepening the Melting Pot: Arab-Americans at the Turn of the Century," *Middle East Journal* 55, 3 (2001): 459–473; Andrzej Kulczycki and Arun Peter Lobo, "Patterns, Determinants, and Implications of Intermarriage among Arab-Americans," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 64 (February 2002): 202–210.

[88] In the (voluntary) questionnaire people were allowed to check boxes indicating ancestry, and there were separate categories for "Lebanese" and "Arab" ancestry. For Vermont, 0.2 percent of the population indicated Lebanese ancestry and 0.2 percent Arab ancestry ("Ethnic Makeup of Vermont from the Census 2000 Summary Tables" [http://www.vt-fcgs.org/vt_2000_ancestry]). However, recent census briefs issued in 2003 (*The Arab Population: 2000*) and 2005 (*We the People of Ancestry in the United States*) define Arabs as people with ancestry based in Arabic-speaking countries or originating in parts of the world categorized as Arab (Kayyali, *The Arab Americans*, 57). While based on the 2000 questionnaire, these briefs collapse everyone into an "Arab" category; they report that 0.34 percent of the Vermont population has Arab ancestry ("The Arab Population: 2000" [http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/c2kbr-23.pdf]).

When Money Was Necessary to Make Dreams Come True: The Cost of the Trip from Vermont to California via Panama

Scores of Vermonters dreamed of striking it rich in the gold fields, but the cost of traveling to California was beyond the means of most. Some families not only raised the funds for the prospective miner's trip but also for his wife's when he asked her to join him in the land of opportunity. Chastina W. Rix of Peacham faithfully kept an accounting of the expenses on her 1853 trip, which totaled $408.64, equivalent to $11,312.18 in 2007 money.

By LYNN A. BONFIELD

When the discovery of gold in California was announced in 1848, many Vermonters, like men throughout America, dreamed of fortune. They planned to rush to California—only to find their plans unfulfilled for the lack of money. The cost of the trip was a hurdle often impossible to overcome. Diaries and letters of the time, as well as announcements for steamer tickets in the New York papers, placed the total cost at two to four hundred dollars for the sea

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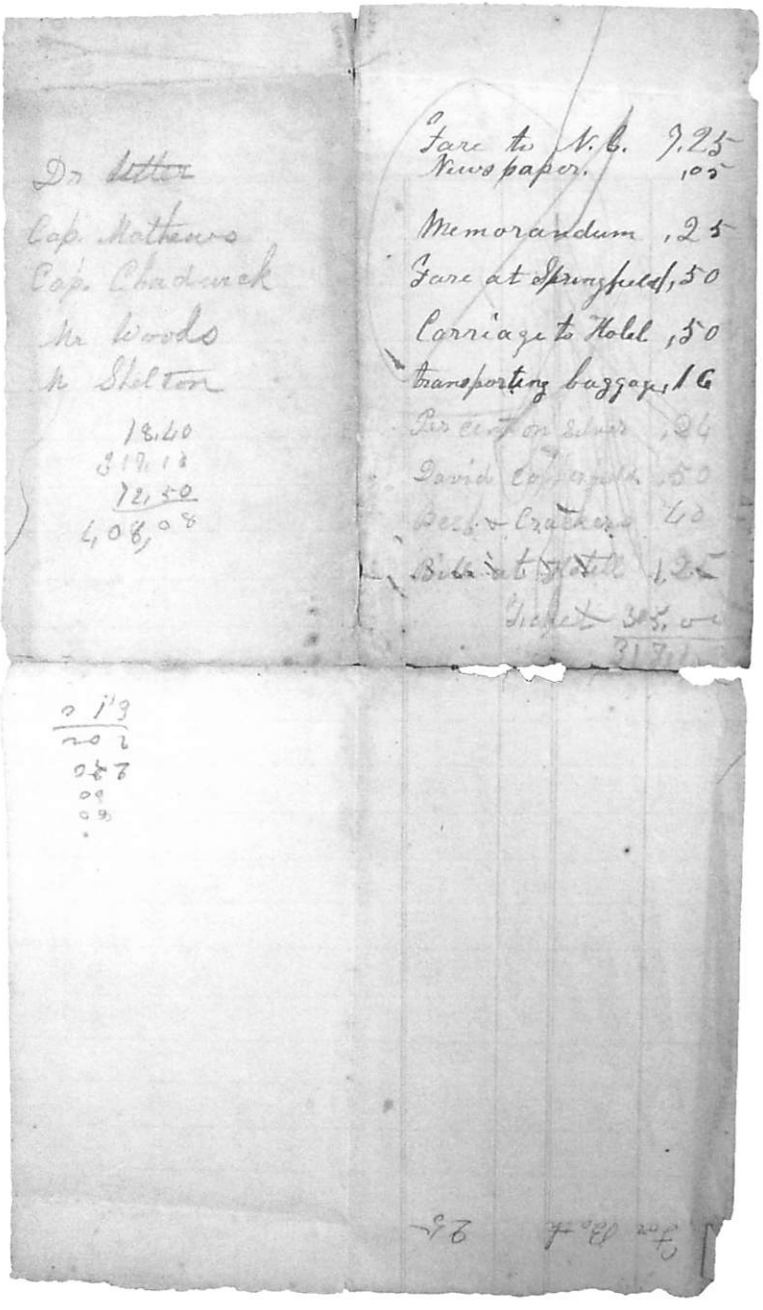
transit over the Atlantic and Pacific oceans and the land crossing of the Panama or Nicaragua isthmus.[1] The dream of success in California depended on raising the funds, often borrowing from family who must have thought the investment worthwhile, as a surprising number of them raised the necessary money for men to go by sea.[2]

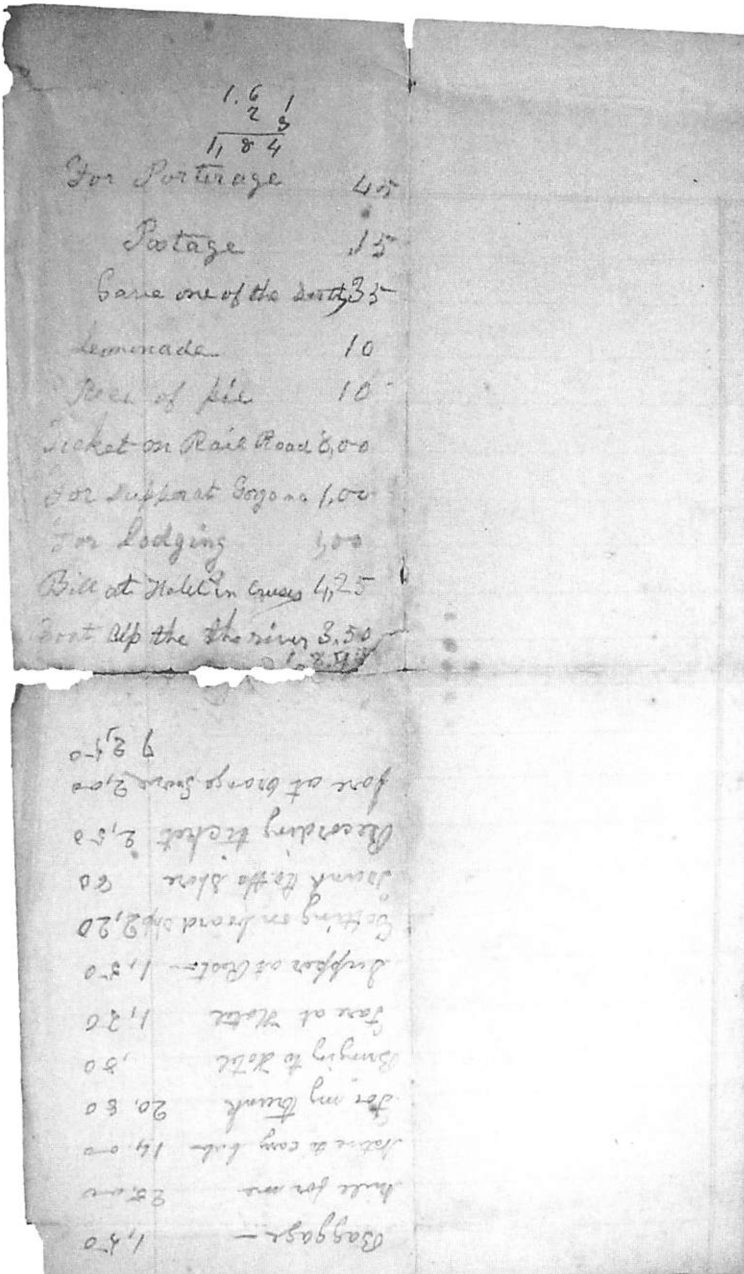
Some of these fortune hunters failed in the mines but saw other economic opportunities available in California and decided to remain in the West. Those that were married wanted their wives to join them. These entrepreneurs, now Californians, faced the dilemma of persuading their wives to come to the golden state. Not only did they request that their wives risk the dangerous journey but also they made it clear that the women would travel without their husband's protection. The expense for men to return home to accompany their wives more than doubled the cost, a sum beyond the means of most. To persuade reluctant wives to make the trip, husbands promised that together they would make a new life in California, one more comfortable than was possible at home. In June 1852, Alfred S. Rix of Peacham, Vermont, "invited" his wife, Chastina, to journey to San Francisco. Alfred, a teacher and lawyer, pointed out that the West offered many good opportunities with no rigid limitations set by "old blue partisans" committed to "the established notions and customs." Thus he described the "home" situation to his wife in letters urging her to join him.[3] After months of fretting over the decision, Chastina agreed.

Although the gold rush produced a volume of letters and diaries second only to the Civil War,[4] few detailed expense accounts from travelers to California have survived. One from Vermont that has been preserved was kept by twenty-nine-year-old Chastina Walbridge Rix. She left Peacham on January 17, 1853, and arrived in San Francisco on February 16. In the back pocket of her travel diary, Chastina tucked a sheet of paper, 4½ × 8 inches, folded in fourths, on which she logged in pencil each expense incurred on her trip to join her husband. Her account combined with scattered figures from correspondence of other travelers presents a good picture of the cost of the trip from Vermont to California.

Chastina listed her expenses roughly in order of payment, and although she did not date the items, her travel diary makes clear the date of each expenditure. She entered thirty-three items starting with "Fare to N.Y. 7.25," the cost of the trip by railroad from Barnet, Vermont, where she boarded the cars at the depot closest to her home in Peacham. Her last listed item, out of order, was "For bath .24" while in Panama. She recorded no expenses over the final leg of her trip by steamer to San Francisco, a distance of 3,500 miles.



Chastina W. Rix's financial account, Rix Family Papers, California Historical Society.



1.6 1
2 3
1,84

For Portrage 45

Postage 15

Game one of the sixty 35

Lemonade 10

Piece of pie 10

Ticket on Rail Road 8,00

For Supper at Gorgona 1,00

For Lodging 1,00

Bill at Hotel in Cruces 4,25

Boat up the the river 3,50

Baggage — 1,50

Mule for me 25.00

Native to carry bab 14.00

For my trunk 20,80

Bringing to Hotel ,80

Fare at Hotel 1,20

Supper at Rest. 1,50

Getting on board ship 2,20

Trunk to the Shore 80

Recording ticket 2,50

fare at Orange Grove 2,00

72,50

Account of Costs of Chastina Rix's Trip from Vermont to California, 1853

Fare to N.Y. [railroad]	7.25		
Newspaper	.05		
Memorandum [journal]	.25		
Fare at Springfield [hotel]	1.50		
Carriage to Hotel [N.Y.]	.50		
Transporting baggage	.16		
Per cent on Silver [changing money]	.24		
David Copperfield [book]	.50		
Beef & crackers	.40		
Bill at Hotel [N.Y.]	1.25		
Ticket [steamers]	305.00	[Total]	317.10
For Porterage [across isthmus]	.45		
Postage [letter to her mother]	.15		
Gave one of the party [for services]	.35		
Lemonade	.10		
Piece of pie	.10		
Ticket on Railroad [Aspinwall]	8.00		
For supper at Gorgona	1.00		
For lodging [at Gorgona]	1.00		
Bill at Hotel in Cruces	4.25		
Boat up the River	3.50	[Total]	18.90
Baggage [on boat]	1.50		
Mule for me	25.00		
Native to carry Bub [her son]	14.00		
For my trunk	20.80		
Bringing to Hotel [at Panama]	.80		
Fare at Hotel	1.30		
Supper at Rest[aurant]	1.50		
Getting on board ship	2.20		
Trunk to the shore	.80		
Recording ticket	2.50		
Fare at Orange Grove [hotel]	2.00	[Total]	72.40
For bath [added later]	.24		
		TOTAL COST OF TRIP:	$408.64

Three times on the month-long trip, Chastina totaled her costs: first, the trip from Vermont to New York with a one-night stay at Springfield, Massachusetts, and the steamer ticket all the way to San Francisco, including meals, for $305; secondly, traveling across the isthmus of Panama from disembarking in Aspinwall to taking the railroad to Barbacoas and the boat ride to Cruces and Gorgona; and lastly, traveling over the mountains to the city of Panama, accommodations for two nights, and the costs of boarding the steamer on the Pacific. The aggregate cost for Chastina of her trip from Vermont to San Francisco via the Panama route, using her addition, was $408.64, equivalent to $11,312.18 in 2007 money.[5]

The gold rush experience cost well above the average yearly income of Americans in 1850,[6] and some families provided the funds for the trip not only once for the male adventurer but often a second time for his wife. Married couples going to California were people of some wealth, often well educated and socially prominent like the Rixes.[7]

Expenses from Home to Isthmus

Chastina traveled with her two-year-old son, Julian, nicknamed Bub in the New England custom of calling first-born males Bub, meaning brother. Apparently, the boy did not need a ticket on the various modes of transportation taken on the trip—railroad, carriage, steamer, boat—as there was no accounting for him. Clara Walbridge, her twenty-two-year-old sister, also accompanied Chastina. Unlike her fastidious older sister, Clara did not keep a running financial record, although she noted some costs in the three letters she wrote home, two along the trip and one summarizing her travels after arriving in San Francisco.[8]

Although the cost of the steamer ticket was the largest expense of the trip, few travelers noted the actual cost in their diaries and letters. Women accompanied by men usually would not pay for services and therefore might not know the cost. Such was the case of Olive Colegrove of New York, who traveled to meet her husband-to-be, Cornelius Cole, in late 1852 with her brother and two of Cornelius's brothers. She wrote in great detail of the weather, steamer, meals, natives, and crossing the isthmus, but never mentioned specific costs.[9] Likewise Delia Marcella Hammond Locke of Abington, Massachusetts, omitted mention of the ticket cost in the reminiscence of her 1855 trip with her husband and his father. By then, the railroad across the isthmus had been completed, and the juggling of transportation modes experienced by early travelers, including Chastina, was no longer necessary. Although Delia did not list the cost of the steamer ticket, she did note the necessity of a ticket on the railroad because of an occurrence on the cars in

Daguerreotype taken in Danville, Vt., in September 1852 of Chastina W. Rix and her son, Julian, to be sent to his father, Alfred S. Rix, in California. From the author's collections.

Aspinwall. As she tells the story, a woman had put her ticket in her carpetbag that had been placed in storage so she could not produce it when requested. Delia's husband helped solve the crisis, the ticket was produced, but her account remains silent on its cost.[10]

Men going to the mines might not have mentioned the cost of the steamer ticket from New York to San Francisco because it may have been common knowledge. Local newspapers occasionally listed the

estimated cost, as did *The Caledonian* published in St. Johnsbury, which in February 1851 put the cost of going to the California mines at $350.[11] This is a smaller amount than Hale Rix of Dalton, New Hampshire, needed for the trip. His brother, Alfred, noted in his journal in early 1851: "In all I have been to an expense for Hale of about 475."[12]

Four gold seekers from Peacham, Chastina's hometown, wrote letters home but did not mention the steamer ticket price: John S. Way, who left in January 1850; Alfred S. Rix, Chastina's husband, who left in October 1851; Dustan Walbridge, Chastina's brother, who also left in October 1851; and Ephraim W. Clark, who left in December 1851. Fortunately, Ashbel Martin, who traveled with Ephraim, wrote that the steamer ticket for each was $185.[13] A Walden man, Andrew Roberts, who left Vermont in January 1852, wrote his wife, Mathilda, that when he arrived in New York, he "found Brother Ellis and Boardman and that they had bought our tickets as far as the Isthmus 35 dollars each." This must have been steerage passage. Once in Panama, Andrew wrote Mathilda that he expected "it will cost me about 200.00 hundred dollars to get from home through [to California]."[14]

Many men mailed their first letters home from San Francisco with its busy post office, or when they arrived at the mines, forgetting the cost of the trip as they assured their loved ones of their good health and high spirits. In fact, most letters from California noted health, conditions, and success rather than expenditures. The most common question asked from the home front was the date of the miner's return. Twenty-five-year-old Charles Jackson answered on June 10, 1854, this question posed by his sister: "This country possesses many advantages over Vermont in regard to money making." Charles added that he hoped their father would not sell any of the family land. "I'll try to pay him as fast as I can," Charles promised, expressing the burden of debt he felt toward his father, who must have supplied the funds for his trip. The amount of the debt was not mentioned.[15]

Another Vermonter, George Fisher, Jr., wrote from Marysville, California, to his father in Waltham on March 25, 1850: "I have made out to get to the end of my journey." He gave no mention of costs along the four-month trip that included five days crossing Panama and five weeks on the Pacific side waiting to buy a ticket north. His news of having dug three hundred dollars worth of gold in three weeks overwhelmed any other subject.[16]

Some women noted the cost of their steamer ticket as part of a compelling story they wanted to tell. Sarah Brooks of Boston remembered years later that she had paid $315, full price, in April 1852 for first cabin accommodations only to be told once on board the *Illinois* that she had

to settle for a second cabin place as the first cabin was full. She still lamented the loss years later when she published her reminiscence in 1894.[17]

In 1861, Julia Twist on board the *Ariel* found herself the only woman at the breakfast table the second day from New York because the rough seas had made most of the passengers sick. Julia, whose family originally lived in Milford, Connecticut, wrote in her diary on February 3: "The bill of fare is inviting but there are few to enjoy it. The Capt. says, I think you are a brave woman and deserve the premium. I told him after paying $200, I could not afford to lose my meals."[18] The cost of Julia's ticket in 1861 of $200 was much reduced from Chastina's ticket cost of $305 in 1853.

Henry Spiegel wrote more than a dozen letters to his family in Bennington during his trip with little mention of expenses. He did note that when the steamer he and his company traveled on encountered a severe storm on the Atlantic in April 1850, the men found after surviving the scare that they "have no fresh watter to drink as we lost a tank by salt watter getting into it when we had the Storm and we have to drink ale at 18 cents per glass which draws hard on the pocket but cannot be helped."[19]

The cost of transporting baggage was another expense of the trip. Alfred Rix, well aware of the high cost of carrying luggage, had written Chastina detailed instructions on ordering a strong box to send around Cape Horn. She did and filled it with "my all that has cost me so many hard days labor—to first earn & then make."[20] When Martha Fargo boarded a ship in New York in 1864, she was told her baggage was over the allowable rate. The official asked if she was related to Wells Fargo, the great express company, and she coyly answered, "yes," and her baggage went free.[21]

Upon landing in Aspinwall, Chastina wrote in her travel diary on January 31, 1853: "Began this forenoon to take off the baggage to the shore & passengers paid the natives $5.00 for taking them ashore—a most exorbitant price." She and Clara spent an extra night on their steamer, *Ohio,* thus saving the cost of one night's accommodation on land.[22]

On some trips, as the steamer approached the isthmus, the officials on board began to weigh the passengers' luggage, as reported by Martha Grover Smith traveling from Maine with her husband of one year. She wrote in her 1854 diary:

> The Officers of the Boat are weighing the Baggage preparitory to cross the Isthmus they charge 15 cents per lb for all Baggage we have got 58 lbs. This Company are a set of Pirates they will cheat you out of your last Dollar and then steal your Clothing.[23]

Julia Twist had a similar reaction. Writing on February 9, 1861, she told of the ship officers on the *Ariel* weighing trunks:

> Today our trunks are taken from our rooms, carried on deck, weighed and checked preparitory for crossing the isthmus. All over 50 lbs. we must pay 10¢ per pound, and many, not knowing this, have brought 3 and 4 trunks besides chests, which cost them quite a little sum. Mine weighed 75 so I had to pay $2.50. There is great dissatisfaction on all sides. Mrs. D. 140, consequently she had $9 to pay. Some paid $30, $40, and as high as $60. It is a swindling operation from the beginning.[24]

Expenses on the Isthmus

Once voyagers landed on the isthmus, they had to travel about sixty miles across land to the city of Panama on the Pacific. Using a combination of railroad, boat, and mule, the travelers had to meet necessary expenses for transportation, food, and overnight accommodations. Many letter writers noted these costs, but none described the kind of money used to pay the bills. In New York, Chastina spent twenty-four cents changing money, probably bank notes from Vermont to coins needed on the isthmus.[25]

After leaving the steamer at Aspinwall and taking the railroad to Gorgona, Emeline Day wrote in her diary on March 31, 1853: "Put up at the American Hotel very poor accommodations. There were several hundred stayed here paid 2.50 for supper, breakfast & lodging."[26] Eight weeks earlier, Chastina had paid only $1.50, but she too found the accommodations lacking: "We paid $1.00 each for a supper we could not eat & a dollar each for our lodgings—just a cot with no mattress."[27]

In a detailed letter on his Panama crossing, Henry Spiegel wrote in spring 1850 of his boat trip from Chagres to "a place called Daskenmanus, or in English Two Sisters [where] we could sleep in a cot for 50 cents, or on the ground for 20." In the morning "we drank a cup of coffee and bought a Bread Cake for a dime." When it was discovered that the river was low due to dry weather, he and other men from the Bennington company walked the last eight miles to Gorgona. "We hired a guide at 2 dimes each," and along the way paid seventy-five cents for "a good dinner."[28]

The last part of crossing the isthmus was over the hills into the old city of Panama, usually made by mule. Women often cited in their diaries and letters their fear of this ride. The reasons for this dread are unclear. Women may not have been used to riding on mules, or they felt isolated from their traveling companions, or perhaps they felt insecure on the unfamiliar narrow hilly path. Some rode side-saddle "as ladies do," in Chastina's words, and some, as Clara pronounced, "rode astride with my bloomer dress."[29] Emeline Day gave details in her 1853 diary:

> Suppose there were some six or eight or perhaps ten hundred crossed the isthmus today. Some on mules and some on foot. Besides them there were hundreds of pack mules, packed with two three or four large trunks. These the natives drove. The natives have huts or houses short distance along the road at which places they sell drink of all kinds to those who pay. We stopped at the halfway house and drank one cup of tea for which we paid two dollars a cup.[30]

Frugal Chastina must have foregone the drinks, as she does not list having tea crossing the mountains. Clara confirmed in a letter to her mother the price Chastina noted for this segment of the trip to Panama city: "25 dollars apiece for mules to ride and it cost us about 19 dollars each for our baggage."[31] Their baggage consisted of a small trunk carried by each sister holding only necessities for the trip. Mark A. Evans in August 1850 wrote his brother near Philadelphia that he had paid fourteen dollars for a mule to cross from Cruces to Panama:

> My mule give out about half way and I had to lieve it and walk the rest of the road there is nothing but one track or path across from Cruces to Panama. It is not worth my while to try to discribe it you can take the worst road you have ever seen and put it over the most hilly part of the country you have even seen and it can not be half so bad.[32]

For the Walbridge sisters, traveling two and a half years after Mark Evans, the price for hiring a mule had almost doubled, and fortunately their mule made the distance. Prices may have varied through the years but the conditions of the road did not. Henry Spiegel, traveling with Elizah White, also from Bennington, became "sick with the Dysentary," —he guessed from the food—so he and Elizah hired horses for twelve dollars each to complete the trip across to Panama, "traveling over the worst Road in the world which was covered with dead horses and muels and not a deasent House on it and nothing worth seeing."[33]

Once in the old city of Panama, Mark Evans admitted that he spent one-third more money crossing the isthmus than he expected. The travel writer, Ida Pfeiffer, who stopped in the city of Panama at the end of 1853, found that everything "is very dear, from the great number of passengers constantly arriving."[34] Clara too expressed alarm at the high cost at Panama and ended up borrowing ten dollars from Chastina. Like Ida, Clara attributed the prices to "so many people on the isthmus at once . . . I think it cost me 70 dollars to get across the isthmus."[35] This was a shocking sum for a Vermont teacher who had made ten dollars a month the previous year. The total of the expenses Chastina listed in her accounting on the isthmus was $77.45, which included $14.00 for a native to carry Julian over the mountains to Panama city. Historian Rodman Paul estimated the cost for crossing the isthmus in December 1849 as

thirty dollars.[36] By the beginning of 1853, the natives evidently had increased their prices.

Crossing a year earlier than the Walbridge sisters, Luther A. Greene of St. Albans wrote to his wife, Adelia, from Panama, where he was stuck for several days trying to secure a ticket up the coast:

> This is the greatest place for paying out money that you ever see I am now paying 12.00 dollars a weak for board rather poore at that but good for this place nothing taist natural but we have got good pluck and stand well.[37]

Emeline Day, however, found in Panama what she termed "good accommodations $1.50 per day."[38] The Walbridge sisters paid $1.20 for a hotel room in Panama and $1.50 for a supper Chastina "was so tired could eat but little." After a night cooped up in a windowless room listening to the moans of a dying miner in the next room, the sisters moved in the morning to Orange Grove, a hotel outside the city, where the fare was $2.00 but "we got a breathe of good air now and then."[39] Here Chastina paid twenty-four cents, according to her account, for what must have been quite a luxury—a bath.

Finally arriving in Panama, Henry Spiegel wrote home that "everything is high but Panama hats," so he bought two, one for Elizah, his traveling mate, and one "not quite so good" for himself. At the Fruit Market, Elizah bought twenty oranges for a dime, no doubt remembering his thirstiness on the voyage to the isthmus. Thirty-one-year-old R. C. Hunter, crossing Mexico to California, wrote to his wife in Rutland in March 1849 that "for supper [he bought] oranges 2 cts a piece large as two such as we commonly get in Vt."[40] Oranges in winter months must have been a treat to Vermonters.

After his long walk and horseback ride to Panama City, Henry Spiegel wanted his shirts washed. The cost was a dime each, he wrote, adding that this "is quite cheap as they have to fetch all the watter they use on muels about 7 miles from the country and the watter we have to drink is not better than the watter in Muddy Brook," a stream near his home in Vermont.[41]

While waiting in Panama for the Pacific steamer in December 1851, Mary Ballou of Alexandria, New Hampshire, put her needle skills to work and "earnt 12 Dollars while there making Pants." At the time Mary was in Panama, the expense of drinking water was borne by the travelers. The seamstress wrote "we paid ten cents a quart for water; it had to be brought a long distance on mules."[42] Also in 1851, Harriet Butler of New York spent four days in Panama. She enjoyed seeing the sites and attended mass. In her 1891 reminiscence she noted going "to

the Olde Nunery to get a drink of water paid two bits for it."[43] By early 1853 when Chastina and Clara arrived in Panama, the water situation may have improved for they do not mention paying for it. Knowing the sisters, they would have held tight to their purses and suffered.

Both were conscious of the high cost of the trip. Clara regretted that she had to borrow money from Chastina and wrote her mother that "I am sure I spent money only when it was absolutely necessary."[44] If this were true for Chastina, so often described as practical and frugal, there must be a good reason for her buying at the start of the trip a copy of the popular novel, *David Copperfield,* published in 1850. Chastina saw herself as a well-educated woman and may have wanted to carry a book to demonstrate her status. She thought she was intellectually superior to most women and looked critically at "the richly dressed ladies" and those people from New York "who monopolize every place that is descent on board."[45] Anyway, she paid fifty cents for this book in New York even though her earlier evaluation of Charles Dickens after reading one of his stories in *Harper's* was, "I cannot say that I admire Dickens' writing."[46] Not once on the journey did Chastina note in her diary or letters that she read anything, not even *David Copperfield.* Louise Ely, on the other hand, read every word of the best seller and wrote in her diary on July 4, 1858, "Finished *David Copperfield* this morning and feel quite lonely without him to go to." Louise may have had more time on her hands than did Chastina, as she traveled with her husband to the South Sea and China before landing in San Francisco.[47] Later in the year Chastina did share Louise's enthusiasm for Dickens. Once in San Francisco she and Alfred read aloud Dickens's *Bleak House* and were "all abundantly pleased with it."[48]

Expenses on the Pacific

Clustered together in Chastina's account are expenses associated with leaving Panama and boarding the *Golden Gate.* She paid eighty cents to get her trunk to the shore and listed "Getting on board ship 1.10," meaning both her trunk and her person carried by natives. Following this is an item, "Recording ticket 2.50," the system whereby the purser identified the names of travelers, which he passed on to the San Francisco newspapers who published lists of arriving passengers. A year after Chastina's trip, Martha Morgan boarding a steamer in Panama wrote in her diary, "Got our tickets and had to pay a tax of $2[.]00 for hospital fees."[49] It is unclear what Martha meant by hospital fees. The only way to board the steamer at this port was on top of the shoulders of a native, a scenario often resisted by women travelers but one they all had to accept if they were to go to San Francisco. Jonathan Dean Long of Brookline,

Massachusetts, described in his diary the process of boarding a steamer in Panama and listed these expenses in his entry for July 20, 1853:

> Had to pay $2.50 port charges, 20 cents to a native to carry [our baggage] to the water, then 10 cents to put it aboard and 50 cents to row it to the steamer. There is no wharf here and the vessels cannot come within 50 feet of the shore. All things that go aboard have to be carried on the shoulders of the natives, and the passengers run the risk of having to take a cold bath.[50]

Clara, in a summary of her trip written to her mother, reported what must have been a nerve-wracking experience without giving the details: "I paid a man 3 dollars to go back for my trunk and he got back to the steamer about 5 minutes before we started."[51]

On the steamer on the Pacific, Chastina listed no expenses. Other travelers, however, noted spending money on the trip to San Francisco. In 1861 Julia Twist described the drinking water on board as "yellow as rain water that had stood for some time and as warm as if it had been heated on a stove." So when ice was available for twenty-five cents a pound, she and three others purchased a pound for dinner. Traveling eight years after the Walbridge sisters, Julia's ship, *Uncle Sam,* broke a shaft and was forced to stop in Acapulco for repairs. Julia wrote of the new scene:

> The natives are not allowed on board, but come alongside in canoes . . . They bring oranges, limes, coconuts, eggs, coral, and sea shell. When you wish to buy anything they throw up a line attached to a basket. Down goes the money, and up comes your goods.

After being stranded for more than a week, the natives offered a service to the passengers: "Today we send out our washing. Price $2.50 per dozen." Julia added that "this draws on the purses of some poor folks on board." Continuing to object to the drinking water, she reported that "the natives make an earthen vessel which they call a monkey, which keeps the water very cool. We bought one today and give three bits for it and like it very much."

Passengers on the *Uncle Sam,* like many others traveling on the Pacific, enjoyed an unusual experience along the shore. Julia described it thus: "Just as we were leaving the shore, half a dozen little natives came swimming and crying [to] catch dimes. We threw a dime and down went the crowd and one caught the precious bit."[52] Chastina too was impressed enough to write a line on this spectacle: "Acapulco is dreary looking place even if it is in a tropical climate. The most attractive sight I saw was the native boys diving for dimes."[53] It is not likely that any were thrown by Chastina or Clara.

Raising Funds for the Trip

Upon landing in San Francisco, the Walbridge sisters wrote to their mother, Roxana, in Peacham, and she soon spread the news to her other children scattered throughout Vermont. "It cost the girls about 9 hundred dollars to go," she wrote a daughter in Hardwick, adding that "it will take some time for Clara to earn four hundred and fifty dollars [for the return trip] and take care of herself [there] beside."[54] Roxana may have exaggerated the numbers a bit, but she made it clear that she expected Clara to have her adventure, turn around, and return to Vermont. She had no hope that Chastina would return, as she knew a wife's duty to her husband was to go where he decided to settle.

How were the sisters able to afford the trip to California? For Chastina the answer is clear. In November 1852, Alfred sent her $250 to augment what she had from their work in Vermont. In addition, after Alfred left for California in October 1851, Chastina had continued to make loans at interest to several Peacham townsmen. Before leaving Vermont, she collected two loans totaling ninety-five dollars.[55] Clara, on the other hand, may have saved some money from her years of teaching, but it would not have been enough. The answer is revealed in a letter dated June 30, 1853, from her lawyer brother-in-law, Alfred, to her step-father, Lyman Watts, enclosing "a Bill of Exchange drawn in your favor for $200" from Clara and her brother, Dustan. The amount of the loan to each remains a mystery. Their benefactor, Lyman Watts, who had married their widowed mother in 1840, when Clara was ten and Dustan was eight, made earlier loans to each—Dustan in the fall of 1851 when he accompanied Alfred to California and Clara in early 1853 when she accompanied Chastina. It is unknown what part their mother had in these procedures, but probably it was substantial. By the time of Clara's trip, Lyman had not yet been reimbursed from Dustan, but as the owner of a large farm with no mortgage, he must have felt able to wait for his money. Alfred wrote:

> Dustan, you will notice, has paid you the ordinary California interest of 3 per cent a month, & if you consider yourself paid he is satisfied. He would write you himself but is very busy. But he asks me to say that he regrets that he has been unable to send you the money before—he could have done so but not with justice to himself. He feels thankful for the aid you afforded him & hopes he shall never have occasion to help you out of an equally tight place.

Alfred continued in his playful style that Clara "sends the principal only on her debt—She wants the privilege of sending the interest in her own time and way—She dont think it fair to patronize Adam's express altogether to the neglect of Eve's."[56] By June 1853, Clara had earned

enough money teaching and sewing to pay back her loan, minus the interest.

Few male travelers noted in detail where they found the money for the trip to California, but some who sent money home clearly were paying back their families. Sons of Peacham farmers, Ephraim Clark and Ashbel Martin each sent money regularly from California, paying off their loans and then some. Alfred Rix and John S. Way, who also left from Peacham, traveled at their own expense with no debt to others. M. B. White of Topsham caught "California fever" in early 1849, as he wrote to a friend, and was "determined to cast in my lot among the adventurers; I think that I would not meet with quite as much opposition from my friends as I anticipated."[57] This wording may have been an indication that along with good wishes, his family was going to help him financially. Addison Pollard and Lyman Sheldon from Plymouth arrived at the diggings around Mormon Island, California, on November 8, 1853, and according to a diary kept by Isaac Pollard, Jr., they each

> got a good supply of money, about $155 each which beats me all to nothing. I tell them they have so much money that they will do very well to go home now, their pile is large as many have that have ben here 4 years. But they think they will stay a while and see if they can make it a little larger before they return. They spent since they left home, including fare ($50) about $125 each. It cost me to get here $250 and I had left when I got to Mormon island about $35.

Not much is known about Isaac, but he was good at giving the overall picture of the mines. When he set to return to Vermont in May 1855, he wrote Addison from San Francisco "to let him know how much we paid for our tickets and when we sail."[58] Unfortunately, he did not list in his diary the actual cost of the ticket.

Although most women's diaries and letters are silent on the subject, many women traveling to California relied on family members to fund their expenses. While Chastina was struggling with the decision to make the trip, she investigated the possibility of traveling with Alice Locke, the promised bride to her husband's brother, Hale Rix. In September 1852 when Chastina began to formalize the trip arrangements, Alice told her she could not go as "her brothers [in California] had not yet sent her the money."[59] One woman who spoke directly on the subject of paying the expenses, Jessie Anderson from Scotland, borrowed $341 from her brother for the trip. Once in California, she wrote her mother that she had decided not to return the full amount, considering how poorly he treated her on the trip where she took special care of his young daughter who was accompanying them. In fact, she wrote that she ended up paying him only $150.[60]

Historian Brian Roberts has pointed out in his path-breaking book on the gold rush that many of the white men who went to the mines were middle class in origin, status, and values.[61] His sample consists of literate men whose families preserved their letters and diaries. In fact, most of the stories by Vermonters who went to the California gold rush are the tales of men and women able to raise the funds necessary for the trip, usually from family members, whether they be husbands, brothers, fathers, or even step-fathers. Only those who could afford the trip or could borrow the money were able to travel to California during this exciting time. The Walbridge sisters, Chastina and Clara, were no exception.

Notes

The author thanks the readers of this article whose suggestions are greatly appreciated: Allen F. Davis, William (Bill) M. Ferraro, Gary F. Kurutz, Karen R. Lewis, and *Vermont History*'s anonymous reader. Editorial practice: Quotes from letters and diaries retain the original spelling, capitalization, and punctuation; words added to the quotes have been placed in brackets and words left out of the quotes are indicated by ellipses.

[1] Oscar Lewis, *Sea Routes to the Gold Fields: The Migration by Water to California in 1849–1852* (N.Y.: Knopf, 1949), 238. Few Vermont men took the overland route to California, a distance of more than 3,000 miles.

[2] From the Peacham area, more than two hundred men left for California by sea from 1850 through 1853, the dates considered the common years for the rush for gold. Lynn A. Bonfield, "Ho for California! Caledonia County Gold Miners," *Vermont History* 74 (Winter/Spring 2006): 5–47.

[3] "Daily Journal of Alfred and Chastina W. Rix," 30 June 1852, Chastina wrote that Alfred "invites me to come." Alfred wrote his description of the leaders of Peacham, 14 June and 27 August 1850. The journal is in the Rix Family Papers, California Historical Society; hereafter cited as Rix Journal.

[4] Gary F. Kurutz's introduction in Fern L. Henry, *My Checkered Life: Luzena Stanley Wilson in Early California* (Nevada City, Calif.: Carl Mautz Publishing, 2003), v. Kurutz is the foremost bibliographer of the California gold rush.

[5] www.measuringworth.com. Chastina must have meant New York City when she wrote "NC" on her expenses sheet. In her travel journal she wrote, "we paid for our tickets to N.Y. $7.25."

[6] Brian Roberts, *American Alchemy: The California Gold Rush and Middle-Class Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 22, gives the average American's wages as between $200 and $300. Ernest L. Bogart, *Peacham, the Story of a Vermont Hill Town* (Montpelier: Vermont Historical Society, 1948), 282, gives the average farmhand's wages in 1854 as $13 a month or $156 a year. Most men from Peacham going off to the mines worked as agriculture laborers and did not own property. Lewis, *Sea Routes*, 11, writes that "$1,000, or even $750, was no inconsequential sum by the standards of the day."

[7] In this article, the author cites fourteen women who made the trip to California including four wives who joined their husbands and one woman who went to join her husband-to-be. All were from families of means, usually husbands in business or, as was the case with Alfred Rix, in law. In her research, the author found only one wife, who when asked did not agree to join her husband in California. Eliza Calder Brown, married to Chester Brown in 1847 and awaiting his return after his departure in 1851, refused to leave her family and comforts in Peacham. Lack of money was not mentioned. Alfred S. Rix, San Francisco, 26 June 1852, to Lyman and Roxana Walbridge Watts, Peacham, Edward A. Rix Collection, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

[8] Letters, Clara Walbridge to family in Vermont: from New York, 19 January 1853, private collection; from Steamer *Ohio* on the Atlantic, 28 January 1853, private collection; from San Francisco, 27 February 1853, Edward A. Rix Collection. For more information on Chastina and Clara Walbridge, see Lynn A. Bonfield and Mary C. Morrison, *Roxana's Children: The Biography of a Nineteenth-Century Vermont Family* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), 63–95.

[9] Mrs. Cornelius Cole, "To California via Panama in 1852," *Annual Publication of the Historical Society of Southern California* 9 (1914) 3:163–172. Olive Colegrove married Cornelius Cole the evening of her arrival in San Francisco. Cornelius Cole, *Memoirs of Cornelius Cole, Ex-Senator of the United States from California* (N.Y.: McLoughlin Brothers, 1908), 99. The author thanks Tanya Hollis at the library of the California Historical Society for help in identifying sources for this article.

[10] Delia Marcella Hammond Locke as told by Delia Marcella Thorp Emerick, "Across the Isthmus," *The Californians* (May/June 1988): 58.

[11] *The Caledonian* (St. Johnsbury, Vt.), 8 February 1851. The author thanks the staff of the St. Johnsbury Athenaeum for preserving this newspaper.

[12] Rix Journal, 22 January 1851; this figure may have included expenses other than the steamer ticket, often referred to as "outfitting" the miner. Alfred Rix also helped his older brother, Oscar. Alfred sent Oscar's note for $125 to Chastina, which she recorded in the Rix Journal, 9 October 1851.

[13] Maxine Martin Long, "A Yankee Argonaut," manuscript, 1995, Peacham Historical Association.

[14] Andrew Roberts, Panama, to Mathilda Roberts, Walden, Vt., 28 January 1852, "Letters from the Past," *Vermont Quarterly* XX (January 1952) 1: 46.

[15] Charles Jackson, Montezuma, Calif., to Sarah L. Jackson, Vt., 10 June 1854, Special Collections, Bailey/Howe Library, University of Vermont. The town in Vermont where his family lived is not noted in the letter. The author thanks Sylvia Bugbee and Chris Burns for help in researching this article.

[16] "A California Letter," *Vermont Quarterly* XX (October 1952) 4: 307–309.

[17] Sarah Merriam Brooks, *Across the Isthmus to California in '52* (San Francisco: C. A. Murdock and Co., 1894), 13.

[18] Julia S. Twist, Diary, 3 February 1861, California Historical Society. The steamer ticket included meals.

[19] Henry V. D. Spiegel, Panama, to John Spiegel, Bennington, Vt., 8 April 1850, Special Collections, Bailey/Howe Library.

[20] Rix Journal, 16 November 1852.

[21] Fargo-Rose Family Papers, California Historical Society. This story was in the undated commentary on Martha's diary written by her granddaughter. There is no mention of the family being part of Wells, Fargo & Company.

[22] Chastina W. Rix, "Journal of my Journey to California," 31 January 1853, Rix Family Papers, California Historical Society. Hereafter cited as Chastina Rix, Travel Journal.

[23] Martha Ann Grover Smith, Letter-diary, 11 October 1854. California Historical Society.

[24] Twist, Diary, 9 February 1861.

[25] The author thanks Robert J. Chandler, senior research historian for Wells Fargo Bank, for information on money exchange and the need for coins in Panama. He wrote in an e-mail, 16 February 2007, that Chastina probably used "worn Spanish/Mexican coins" as that would have been "the prime circulating medium" on the isthmus.

[26] Emeline Hubbard Day, Diary, microfilm copy, 31 March 1853, The Bancroft Library. As the first two pages of the diary are missing, her home town is unknown.

[27] Chastina Rix, Travel Journal, 1 February 1853.

[28] Spiegel, 12 April 1850.

[29] Chastina Rix, Travel Journal, 2 February 1853. Clara Walbridge, 27 February 1853.

[30] Day, Diary, 31 March 1853.

[31] Clara Walbridge, 27 February 1853. These fees were comparable to those reported by other travelers. Lewis, *Sea Routes,* 186.

[32] Mark A. Evans, San Francisco, 8 August 1850, to his brother near Philadelphia, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library. The author thanks reference librarian Tom Carey for referring her to this letter.

[33] Spiegel, 12 April 1850.

[34] [Ida R. Pfeiffer], *A Lady's Visit to California 1853* (Oakland, Calif.: Biobooks, 1950), 69.

[35] Clara Walbridge, 27 February 1853.

[36] Rodman W. Paul, *California Gold: The Beginning of Mining in the Far West* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1947), 31.

[37] Luther A. Greene, San Francisco, to his wife, St. Albans, Vt., 7 February 1852, Vermont Historical Society, Barre.

[38] Day, Diary, 31 March 1853.

[39] Chastina Rix, Travel Journal, 2 February 1853.

[40] R. C. Hunter, Gulf of Mexico, to Lorette Hunter, Rutland, Vt., 7 March 1849, Special Collections, Bailey/Howe Library.

[41] Spiegel, 12 April 1850.

[42] [Ballou, Mary B.], *"I Hear the Hogs in my Kitchen": A Woman's View of the Gold Rush* (Printed for Frederick W. Beinecke at the Carl Purington Rollins Printing-Office of the Yale University Press, 1961), 7. This quote is from her diary entry 25 December 1852 remembering the previous year's stay in Panama with her husband.

[43] Harriet Hitchcock Butler, Autobiography, 1891, California Historical Society. This was written at the request of H. H. Bancroft, mainly for her reminiscence of early San Francisco.

[44] Clara Walbridge, 27 February 1853.

[45] Chastina W. Rix, on board the *Ohio* on the Atlantic, to her mother, Roxana Walbridge Watts, Peacham, Vt., 29 January 1853, Edward A. Rix Collection.

[46] Rix Journal, 22 April 1852.

[47] Louise Foote Ely, Diary, 4 July 1858, California Historical Society.

[48] Rix Journal, 6 December 1853.

[49] Mrs. Martha M. Morgan, *A Trip across the Plains in the Year 1849, with Notes of a Voyage to California by Way of Panama* (San Francisco: Pioneer Press, 1864), 25. Diary, 19 January 1854.

[50] Jonathan Dean Long, "A Journey from New York to San Francisco in 1853, via the Isthmus of Panama," *The New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 91 (1937) : 318.

[51] Clara Walbridge, 27 February 1853.

[52] Twist, Diary, 15, 19, and 21 February 1861.

[53] Chastina Rix, Travel Journal, 11 February 1853.

[54] Roxana Walbridge Watts, Peacham, Vt., to Sarah Walbridge Way, Hardwick, Vt., 29 May 1853, Walbridge-Gregory Family Papers, California Historical Society.

[55] Rix Journal, 1 December 1851, 9 October 1852, 1 May 1853. None of these small loans made by Chastina were to men trying to get to California. In her recollection of traveling to California, which she wrote in their journal after it arrived in San Francisco, she noted receiving $250 from Alfred before she left Peacham.

[56] Alfred S. Rix, San Francisco, to Lyman Watts, Peacham, Vt., 30 June 1853, handwritten copy from private collection. Adam & Company's Express, established in December 1849, provided express service for mail as well as a system of transferring money for a fee from its offices to locations in the East. J. S. Holliday, *The World Rushed In: The California Gold Rush Experience* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981), 331. Wells, Fargo, & Company became a competitor in July 1852 and continued after Adam & Company failed in February 1855. Robert J. Chandler, *Images of America: Wells Fargo* (Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2006), 9 and e-mail, Chandler to author, 11 February 2008.

[57] M. B. White, Topsham, Vt., to "Friend Chase," unidentified place, 4 February 1849, Raynors Historical Collectible Auctions, Catalog, 15 June 1906, 169. The author thanks Jeffrey Marshall for pointing out this item.

[58] Typed manuscript, "References to Addison Pollard in the Diaries of Isaac Pollard, Jr.," Vermont Historical Society.

[59] Rix Journal, 21 September 1852. With no hint of who sponsored her trip, Alice Locke appeared in San Francisco in May 1853. She later married Hale.

[60] Jessie Anderson, Mount Pleasant, Calif., to her mother, Scotland, 2 January 1853, California Historical Society.

[61] Roberts, *American Alchemy*, 3, 5, 275–276.

Writing Home from Around the World, 1926–1927

A keen and amused observer, Tom Johnson is an articulate and conscientious letter writer. The reader has the feeling he was writing for himself as much as his family as he makes sentences and paragraphs of his impressions of the world at the height of colonialism.

By THOMAS H. JOHNSON
Edited with an introduction by LAURA JOHNSON WATERMAN

My father, Thomas H. Johnson, the writer of these letters, was born in 1902 on the Connecticut River Valley farm known as Stone Cliff, located one mile north of the village of Bradford. In 1926, upon his graduation from Williams College, Tom Johnson embarked on a world cruise that was to last the length of a school year—September to May. He had been invited to teach Elizabethan Drama and American Literature (subjects he soon found to be not particularly relevant) on the first ever student travel experiment. This was launched on a large scale with over fifty faculty and four hundred and fifty students, one hundred and twenty of them women. A. J. McIntosh, president of the University Travel Association, saw this as an opportunity to combine formal education with travel, and organized the adventure by reaching out to colleges across the country. The project became known as the Floating University and was considered

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important enough to be covered nearly weekly by the *New York Times,* as well as other newspapers from coast to coast. "The most significant movement in modern education," ex-governor Henry Allen of Kansas called it, who was in charge of the course on journalism.

Tom Johnson took with him a brand new typewriter with the intent of documenting this marvelous opportunity for his family, who at that time lived on Marvin Street in Montpelier. In all he wrote thirty-four letters, the first begun on Sunday afternoon, September 19, 1926, "First day at sea," Tom writes, ". . . new typewriter . . . glorious weather . . . so glorious that even a confirmed but rapidly-becoming-educated landlubber almost doesn't feel the heavy swell." The last was penned from the Strand Palace Hotel in London on Easter, 1927, after attending Bach's St. Matthew Passion where he had recognized the Rev. A. Reginald Crewe, the minister from Bradford, who having left some years ago in apparent disgrace, was now without clerical collar and living in London. My father did not spell out what had happened to the Rev. Crewe nor did he speak to the minister as was his initial inclination, yet this unexpected encounter with one from home must have made the world feel surprisingly and suddenly smaller.

All the letters are addressed to his mother, Myra Burbeck Johnson, and were meant to be shared with the family. This included his father, Herbert Thomas Johnson, Adjutant General of the State; his younger brother Edward ("Ned"), headed for a military career, but who was to die tragically of illness in 1928; and his older sister Ruth, married and the mother of twin girls—"the babes"—as they are called in the letters.

A keen and amused observer, Tom Johnson is an articulate and conscientious letter writer. The reader has the feeling he was writing for himself as much as his family as he makes sentences and paragraphs of his impressions of the world at the height of colonialism: the politics and religions of these far-flung places with a much broader sweep of history from the home scene he has left behind. Tom gives his family much more than a travelogue. He gives them a world view in the letters he posts from every port as the ship makes its way from New York to Cuba, through the Panama Canal to stop at Los Angeles providing Tom with an opportunity to visit his Avery relatives, Vermonters now living on the west coast. From there the ship struck out for Hawaii and on to the Far East, spending from November to January in Japan, Shanghai, Hong Kong, the Philippines, and Bangkok where the whole Floating University were special guests of the king. Then on to Java, Ceylon, and India before leaving the East for Aden, Cairo, and Jerusalem, with the last three months spent in Europe. Wherever they went they were

entertained royally, often by royalty, and made welcomed by government and university officials. At the end, Tom writes of feeling "that new forces of adjustment were at work." He writes of the "ambitious self assurance of such countries as Japan, Italy, France and probably Germany," and sees these countries, as well as the United States and England, aligning themselves in a way that would spell World War II.

Tom Johnson went on to a lifetime of writing, scholarship, and teaching. His field was Colonial Literature, though his primary contribution was as editor of Emily Dickinson's poetry and letters. He taught from 1937 to 1966 at the Lawrenceville School in Lawrenceville, New Jersey.

The letters presented here are selected for their color, readability, and connections to Vermont, as Tom sought images from home, like the Bradford Fair, to bring what he was seeing to life for his family.[1]

Manuscript

Thomas H. Johnson's letters to his family, addressed to his mother, September 1926 to April 1927. Ms. letters; size varies; some handwritten, but most are typed. The collection is arranged in one flip-top archival box and consumes .5 linear feet of shelf space. Aside from the letters, there are clippings from the *New York Times* and photographs.

These letters are part of the Thomas H. Johnson Papers, 1916–1933, MSA 441. Ethan W. Bisbee prepared the finding aid.

Gift of Laura Johnson Waterman, East Corinth, Vermont, September 2006.

The Letters

The S.S. Ryndam *left New York on Sunday, September 19, 1926, heading for Miami as first port of call and just missing a hurricane, about which Tom writes,*

Going through Panama Canal, Tuesday
Morning, 27 September 1926

In the first place, if I had thought soon enough, I would have cabled you from there [Havana], because probably you were worrying about us on account of the Miami tragedy. I really don't know what happened, except what appeared in the ship's paper, and that was only a statement of figures, which seemed very awful; the papers that we got in Havana were much too interested in the coming Dempsey-Tunney fight to give space to a mere hurricane.

Leaving Havana the ship passes through the Panama Canal and into the Pacific to dock next in Los Angeles. Here Tom visits his Avery relatives

who had moved from Vermont across the country to California before he was born.

16 October 1926

They [Aunt Mary and Uncle Albert] were so glad I had come and were so eager to hear about Vermont and the families. He hadn't seen Father since Father was 7 years old, and spoke of him as a pretty little boy. Aunt Mary is a very dear woman. She said "You know, it's very hard to love people if you've never seen them, but afterwards you can". Once Uncle Charlie [Tom's father's brother] had gone there with Grandma Johnson [Tom's grandmother on his father's side], so they did know him a little. Aunt Mary is small and quick and the subtle manager, very intelligent and very lovable. Uncle Albert looks very much I imagine like his father; he is getting blind and says that could he see he would come to visit Vermont, but he can see so poorly now that to come would be a distinct disappointment. They have a very pretty house, and seem to be nicely off. Uncle Albert was very nicely dressed and very

"Leaving New York, September [19], 1926." Photographer unknown. The caption on the reverse (not in Thomas Johnson's handwriting) incorrectly dates the photograph as September 18. This and the following photos are from the Thomas H. Johnson papers, Vermont Historical Society, Barre, Vt., MSA 441, folder 06.

straight for his eighty-five years: thin white hair, smooth shaven except for a drooping white mustache. Aunt Mary has two school teachers there – women she enjoys – as roomers, because she says – and I remembered hearing this before – the house seemed so empty that she couldn't stand it unless she could hear people coming and going and helping to keep her in contact with the world. They have given up all their farming and have just hens enough for what they want, and fruit trees enough for their needs. Originally they were on the outskirts of the city, but now they seem to be near the center, and his land must be quite valuable. Cities spread out so in California. Of course he took me out and showed me all around. I picked an orange from a tree in his back yard, pealed [sic] and ate it there – a unique experience. Hazen's death [Aunt Mary and Uncle Albert's son] was about the heaviest possible blow and they never have and never will recover from it; for now there is no more Avery family, since he had no children, though his widow comes to see them occasionally and is not remarried. They want so much to have you visit them, and feel that you should go out there. As far as that goes, so do I and I know you will sometime – only don't wait too long. Southern California (and people speak of it as an almost separate state from northern) is a very very beautiful place. There are no hills there, only mountains that are mountains, rising out of very desert looking plains. Where there is irrigation, the foliage is rich green and beautiful to see. But quite honestly between us, I would hate living there. Even Los Angeles itself, which is a lovely place, of growth not too rapid to be substantial, has no attraction for me. It is incredibly enormous in extent, and takes hours to go from one place to another, even in the center of the city. I can understand how they feel that the East is cramped. But then, I am an Easterner. To visit it is delightful beyond necessity. The movies have made Hollywood and Pasadena residences among the most beautiful that I have ever seen (of course the architecture is generally of the low, stucco Georgian or Spanish variety). But for myself, and I am speaking perhaps as a person of 24 rather than as one of your generation (though I am sure You will agree with me), New England, godbless all her horrid inclemencies, is worth twenty Californias: where all you can do is gape in aw-struck [sic] wonder and say Aint Nature Grand. As I read Wordsworth, and as I think of Vermont, I feel a kind of inner tear of joy in picturing the mists rising on gorse hills in the changing October, and feel the real nearness and the real livableness of trees that turn, and the colors of grey and brown and yellow and red and purple that are far too subtle for the mind not trained in New England to feel. California is made for the minds that need the spectacular to impress them. I am sure there is very

good reason why New England has been the home of so many Thoreaus and Emersons.

Well, enough. You will accuse me of homesickness or, worse, of "boosting". Neither I think is honestly the case. The fact that Panama and Southern California did impress me so, and the fact that the Orient will, I know, and Egypt, is proof that I want to live where I am not continually shouted at by a glittering or thunderous or torrential God. I am vaguely afraid I will lose my heart to Italy and England – probably England – because I know already how I will feel, as Browning did, about "that gaudy melon flower".

But California is gorgeous and the depravity of the way in which it lavishes its flowers and its vistas upon you is positively immoral. . . .

By the way, I almost forgot one interesting bit of news. The old expression that the world is a small place after all proved true in Los Angeles. Several of us went to hear Luise Homer at the opera Friday night, and while I was walking in the foyer I passed a woman unmistakably my former ancient history teacher Miss Shute. [Tom had attended the high school in Montpelier and this is probably what he is referring to.] She is now a Mrs. Dwight and still teaches school though her husband, a plain person, farms. She didn't recognize me at first, but after all, I hadn't seen her for several years and there was no reason why she should. She inquired for everyone and particularly wished to be remembered to you and Ruth. She looks exactly the same, but wondered where I came from, naturally enough.

By early November they have seen and left Hawaii and truly entered the Far East. Tom writes on 4 November 1926, "This morning I got up very early, because we are supposed to be coming into port sometime late today, and I found it very hard to act really natural on the day that I go to Japan!" In Japan an incident happened that very nearly ended the cruise and Tom gives a full account:

13 November 1926

Five hundred boys cooped for fifteen days on the ocean would be a problem in any country. In a foreign country they made a considerable one. I will leave the description of the country and my own wanderings to tell a story and moralize. I have no idea really how much the American papers played up the fact [It was unsparingly covered in the *New York Times.*] that as soon as the boat docked and the boys had time, many of them proceeded to get drunk and disgrace themselves, the Cruise and the nation. What happened was this. One of our trips took us by rail – a four hour journey – to Nikko, the center of beauty in Japan. I can conceive of a different beauty, but of no greater beauty. But I mustn't

digress. Many drank considerably on the trains or at the stations where it can be bought on the platform. The result was that one or two when they were being shown a certain crypt which no human hand or foot had touched for 900 years not even the Emperor's, jumped into it. No one knows exactly who it was that did it, because few happened to be there at the moment, and those who do know of course say nothing, but it made a terrific consternation among the priesthood. If it had happened in a country as fanatic in religion as India the man couldn't place much value on his life, but Japan is different. That was not all. Someone took an image from one of the shrines. Some being entertained in private families, took other little "souvenirs". The result was that on the Sunday that we went from Yokohama to Kobe a mass-meeting was called. By this time the deans had managed to get Phelps [Unable to identify; possibly with the University Travel association.] to promise unlimited support: that is, to allow them to send boys home if they so chose. Yesterday in the charge of one of the Phelps force, nine were started back to the United States. As might be expected these were the nine most troublesome on the scholastic score, and contained some whom the deans had wanted to send back from Havana, but couldn't at that time because Phelps wouldn't allow it. I do not blame Phelps. He knew nothing about college discipline and had to learn exactly as all have to, by the experience of it. Another year all this could never happen. But the worst thing was that we were guests of the Japanese. The Japanese have been the most perfect hosts imaginable, lavishing everything upon us without stint and with the utmost goodwill and generosity. The government put the railroads at our disposal; the universities her students as guides and her professors as lecturers. Some of the most distinguished men in the country gave their time to come to certain places to lecture. In fact you see it was a pretty rotten way to treat them – and of course such treatment came from a very small minority: probably all the damage was done by the nine that were sent back, but that didn't help us much. For a time we were afraid we couldn't continue to Kobe. The conduct of the drunkards was nothing to the desecration of the shrines or the filching of "souvenirs" by guests of families. And in Japan it is a very unusual thing for the home to be open to strangers. Moreover it seemed that the general effect on the Japanese students must be a terrible disillusion, for the Japanese student has always held American colleges and universities in great reverence. The height of their ambition is to go to an American college; the only language spoken in general besides Japanese is English, and they are all crazy to learn it. I have come to have a feeling that they really do look up to the United States, and all this talk of Menace is a darned sight farther off

than common belief has it. Well, you might think that I had exaggerated the effect of the work of these few if it weren't for the fact that the American ambassador sent word to Gov. Allen [Ex-Governor Henry Allen of Kansas, in charge of the course on journalism and editor of the paper published daily on shipboard and sent to forty-eight U. S. newspapers.] that that vandalism had done more to hurt the relations between the two countries than anything that had happened for fifteen years. Oh, we may talk of Huns and of the Yellow Peril and of Barbarians of any sort you wish, but I have now such a shame because of my own countrymen that I shall in the future boast with care. To be sure there is another way of looking at it which I think is correct: We are the richest country on the earth. We have all the mechanical advantages of all the ages summed up at our finger tips. We are by nature aggressive – eager to see things and do things and experiment. In consequence of all these facts, certain of us have had a chance to do an entirely new thing – in a body travel around the world as a group of some sort of standing – as a University. But it is a fact also that with money and machinery and desire to experiment does not necessarily come wisdom or sense of responsibility or regard for the rights of others. It can probably be said that the best of us are among the finest that ever lived, and that among the worst of us are some of the worst. But with the advantages which the worst have (and they are the same advantages as the best) they are capable of doing a damage that can impede the progress of civilization and peace and international goodwill [for] at least a generation if not for a century. The problem of such a cruise as this is to weed out with every possible dispatch those who have not developed and who will not develop a sense of responsibility. Unless we grow spiritually and mentally at the same pace we grow mechanically we will be destroyed by the same machines that we have made, and that is a fact. To my mind the profanation of that shrine was not caused by drunkenness. People do not do when they are drunk anything which is a violation of all that is best in them; that they never intended to do consciously or subconsciously when they were sober. The person that did that is a person, I feel, who has nothing fine in him, who has no true feeling for holiness of beauty. If you could only see Nikko you would appreciate what I mean. Wasn't it Bryant who said that the woods were God's first temples. The Japanese know it; feel it. On a hillside thickly studded with those trees nearest related to the red-woods, called cryptomeria, they have erected various temples with a care for good taste and loving zeal, that make the spot one of the present seven wonders of the world. In order to reach the place, you must walk some distance – that is, make a pilgrimage – and when you have reached it you find the silence of all

time to turn each man's thought upon himself and on eternity. Gorgeous birds are there, and in some of the temple spots sacred deer run in large flocks as tame as sheep. The workmanship in the temples is an example of the best from a country where nothing but the best is satisfying. In fact it makes our garish Catholic and Episcopal churches look pretty tawdry. Always in good taste; never too much; love of the simple effects; understanding that natural surroundings are the most moving medium in [which] to place the things they hold sacred; all these things the Japanese feel and express. At Nikko the temples happen to be Shinto. At another place it might be Buddhist – as at Kamakura. In some places their shrines may be more ordinary; their worship may be perfunctory and superficial, but tell me, has that not occurred in Christianity? The important thing is that it is theirs, they love it, and in some cases rather, in many cases, the places of worship are divinely beautiful and the man who does not feel it is either a bigot or an imbecile. After all, how severely can you censure a boy for taking a God Buddha from a shrine when an ordained Protestant minister says to a student standing near the box where the worshippers [sic] come to toss their hard earned pennies: "Toss me one; I'll take it to my congregation to show them how the heathens get their collection". Well, I have aired my feelings on that matter. I will only add that to me it was great good fortune that we were to have three more days in Japan in which to redeem ourselves if possible from the stigma of ingratitude, theft and irreverence toward a people who had received us eagerly and with both hands; and I really feel that as far as restitution can be made it has been, and as far as a new type of conduct could condone for the past, it has been made to do so; however, the consul at Kobe said that if one other act of depredation were reported while the Cruise is on, the boat would be recalled immediately to New York by the United States government. With which decision I am in hearty agreement, but I have hopes now for this "cross-section of American life": and heaven knows the members of the cruise are that all right.

Tom loved Japan and, despite the disrespect shown by some of the students, had a wonderful time there, or perhaps because of it, or how the Japanese handled it. Here is how he ended his letter:

I have already told you of going to Nikko – the glorious shrine spot of Japan. It is there that the Red Lacquer Bridge is situated. On this bridge only the emperor ever rides. It is the last word in simple but extravagant beauty. I haven't spoken of Nara which we saw two days ago. This is the quietest, most livable town in Japan, and considered by the Japanese the spot they love best; and no wonder. When Rome was a

"Nikko, Japan, Sacred bridge—Lacquer." Photo and description by Thomas H. Johnson.

desert, sacked by Huns, Vandals, Goths, etc. ruled by vicious popes, when France was a feudal land without unity, governed by counts and impotent king, before Charlemagne brought to it education, or enlightenment, while England was still Saxon and ruled by the legendary Arthur, before the American continents had even been dreamed of by an unborn Columbus, Nara was the center of one of the greatest civilizations that the earth can boast. This was in 720-760 A.D. and here was Japan's first capital. Only one building remains to connect the ages, fire and storm and earthquakes have done their worst, and the buildings remaining are very new – built some of them, as late as 1600 perhaps! But the contours of the land, of the hills and forests are the same, preserved that way, and the dust that you must flick from your boots, or the mud you must scrape, is the same as that which the weary pilgrims have dusted and scraped from them for many, many generations. In the park there are thousands of these tame deer, called by a bugle to their meals, and here is an atmosphere of worship that comes as much from veneration of what has been, and the thought of what others have loved, as from its own divinely pastoral self. The famous Buddha there is, I think the largest figure in the world, weighs tons, and is filled with gold and silver to unbelievable value, but it is not impressive. Quite the contrary is the Namakura Daibutsu (Dy-boot-zu). You may find pictures of it. It is enormous but so perfectly proportioned that its size is not realized. It sits against the sky, brooding, seeing into past, future, eternity, calm,

serene, and ages may came and go, men may struggle, live, die, but this figure will always remain as the symbol of spiritual permanency. I think I shall see no other that will appeal to me so much.

On coming into Manila Bay on Friday, November 26, Tom begins: "I don't wonder that Dewey picked a fight here; it is just the place to do it; all kinds of room and placid water." Admiral George Dewey was born in Montpelier in 1858. Twenty-eight years before the cruise arrived, Dewey had directed the spectacular victory over the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay, thus transferring control of the islands to the United States. Tom would have had a particular interest in this since his father had led a regiment to Cuba in 1898 during the Spanish-American War.

The letter Tom writes between Bangkok and Singapore seems the heart of the collection in the sense that the experiences Tom Johnson has in Siam (present day Thailand) at the end of 1926 could never again be duplicated. Time is about to sweep away absolute monarchs as well as a world that permitted a tour like this one.

10 December 1926

Our guides were either young men from court or chaps who had been at some time sent to America or Europe to study and therefore could speak perfect English and were highly educated. I have never seen better organization for three days than was evident there. That may be the result of an absolute monarchy and where there is one person in charge. Everything from the beginning went like clock work – not an easy thing to have happen in dealing with five hundred students. I will say for the students that they were properly impressed enough to realize the importance of good behavior. The plans had been made to house the students in the dormitories of Vajiravudh College, giving the Siamese students an early Christmas holiday so that all the facilities of the college might be at the disposal of the students. The college itself is a former palace of the king's turned over for the education of the Siamese. Naturally it is a delightful spot and though small in comparison to some total colleges in America, large for the Orient and beautiful in structure. There meals were served to the students and they were waited on by the Boy Scouts of the City – called Tiger Whelps – who arrived each morning between three and four to do it. We were all of course, the special guests of the king, and as such got most astonishing attention from the people. No merchants were allowed to come around to the hotel where the faculty were, or the college to annoy or make the students feel, as it was expressed, any obligation to buy things. We of the faculty were quartered in the Phya Thai (Pee-ah Tie) Palace Hotel. That is a special hotel of the king's; also a former palace – used in fact

up until two years ago as the official residence of the late Rama VI who died a year ago. It is of marble, which means a great deal in this part of the world, and is a beautifully built thing. Our rooms were the sort you would expect in a palace, enormous and luxurious. In the rear of the building was a miniature garden of Versailles, with certain Oriental touches, such as fountains of demons and dragons rather than fountains of graces and cupids; statues of Buddhas rather than of Jove or Apollo, though the scheme of the place was western in influence. We arrived from Paknam in time for a late tea. I wish you could have seen us piled into the train. The engines are tiny things that burn wood and go like the devil. The cars are also tiny – so little that with our bags there was scarcely room for us. I sat on my bag on the forward platform right next to the engine. Though they went fast there seemed to be a certain leisureliness about the trainmen – one stood near me and carried on a long conversation with the engineer over the wood box. The road bed lies over a country as wild and jungly as you can believe. The fact is that

"Mr. Howes took this in Bangkok in the gardens at the rear of the Phya Thai Palace hotel. I have several others but I'm only sending these of myself. The statue is of some Buddhist deity and the monument is in distinctly Siamese style—the decorations on it, I mean. Just in back of the fence is a very muddy, tropical stream—the one we got a native to row us about on to see the houses, fishing natives, etc." Description by Thomas H. Johnson.

jungles spring up over night if they are not kept down constantly. The farther east we have gone the narrower the bridges have seemed to get. They were as narrow as I ever want to see them there. The streams are hopelessly muddy, yet the people bathe in them and live by them all their lives. The country is foremost in rice growing, which means that there is a great deal of arable land always under water (this is the dry season, so there wasn't quite so much). Hence the mosquitoes are in their glory there. It is very lucky that they are not disease carriers or we would all be dead – I have never been bitten so much. They don't begin till evening – too hot for them in the day – but at the dinner table it is terrific. Most of the women are given bags to put their feet in; men are supposed to have trousers long enough, but they just fail and the two inches between shoe and cuff contain a very sufficient hell. But mosquitoes aren't all. There is every variety of moth and other bugs that ever lived. Two or three in your glass mean nothing, nor are you to be surprised when you see the chameleon lizard, four inches long crawling along the walls and ceiling near the lights. Our meals were all served there – and many courses.

That evening – Saturday evening – various entertainments had been arranged at the university for 21 o'clock (9 pm). A marionette play on the Punch and Judy order, called The Hun, or marionette, was given in one booth. It's a very old art there and very excellently studied. I have no idea what the plays given were but that really didn't make any difference. Another type was also given. You see they had the whole campus divided up into booths where all of these was [sic] taking place at the same time and we were supposed to move from one to the other. There was the Nang or Shadow Play which gave two very old plays that are seldom presented called "Takrau" and "Krabee Krabong". A large screen is erected with lights so arranged to throw the shadow of certain manipulated objects onto it. It was not as entertaining to me as I imagine it would have been had I known the science of the art, its excellence or the stories. In addition to these entertainments, stalls were erected here and there for the different kinds of music of Siam. I have come to find Oriental music enormously fascinating. The whole basic structure is different from western music and arresting as you become accustomed to it. It is not sinuous, but it is complicated and requires a study and talent and an ear for a peculiar type of rhythm even, as I suppose, American jazz does.

Sunday morning – it seemed the least like Sunday of any day in my life – we started on the real excursions. We visited a rice mill, a hospital – which is part of the Rockefeller foundation and the Wat Arun. A Wat is a Siamese Buddhist temple. It is often circular, decreasing in diameter

as it rises, till it comes to a point at the top, a hundred and fifty feet above the ground. In a flat country of low buildings, these wats are remarkably impressive, largely because you have little expectation that they will be. They are solid and correspond to the Japanese pagoda. Generally there are steps going up to a considerable height from the outside, and there you can see over the city. Wat Arun is nearly as old as the city of Bangkok – which is very young – only 150 years old. It is of some cement composition with this remarkable addition: that all over its very extensive surface small bits of colored, unevenly broken china have been attached in pattern, giving it from a distance the appearance of a shining jewel or a vast dome of many colors. We were taken to the Pasteur Institute and the Chulalongkorn Hospital. The latter is named for the present king's grandfather, a famous old warrior of the old school, and the founder of the more modern Siam. These were chiefly interesting for the modernity of their equipment, and I heard the dentist and doctors go into ecstasies over them. Here they keep a large pen of cobras for manufacturing a snake antitoxin. They were a horrible sight. While we were there one of the doctors entered the pen and extracted some venom. He would grab a snake with a forked stick in back of its head, then squeeze the venom onto a little glass dish. All the doctors have to learn to do it. One boy dropped his camera into the pen, and I don't think ever did recover it. Cobras are as common there as mice are in America. About a thousand people are bitten a year, but not a life has been lost since the discovery of the antitoxin. With the King Cobra it is a different matter. Fortunately there are almost none in the country; but they grow to a length of from 15 to 20 feet and do not wait to be disturbed to attack. When they come their head is reared four or five feet above the ground and their bite is inevitably fatal. That afternoon there was also a trip to Wat Benchamabopitr (as it looks so it's pronounced). That is built in a typically Siamese style – roof edge rising above roof edge, steeply, with the corners flared and pointing upward – to impinge the demons and evil spirits as they fly about. Now comes one of the really thrilling events: an audience with the King.

At five o'clock that day all the faculty assembled in the Throne Hall a large marble hall built in the style of the Congressional building, in Renaissance architecture and barrel vaulting. I felt only one regret: that Siam has tried to bring western architecture there rather than magnify its own extraordinary type, but the past recent kings have greatly admired western things and have been eager to imitate I suppose. Outside the students and tourists were arranged in a semi-circle. We of the faculty stood in a long line waiting for the curtains at the far end of the room to part and for the king and queen to come out. It was exciting I

can assure you. At last they came. He is a very small man, we were told a consumptive (the royal family has intermarried for so long that physically it is in a bad way and all of them die quite young) but very intelligent looking and both he and his wife speak excellent English. He came down the line with Dean Lough [Dean Charles Edwin Lough of New York University] to introduce us to him, and both he and the queen shook hands with every member of the faculty. Then he passed out onto the lawn where he addressed the students in a very charming manner – they gave a cheer for "The King" then for "The Queen", and the afternoon was over. But it is rare for him to grant audiences and he never does it to crowds. The queen is a pretty little woman who always dresses with extreme simplicity and prefers western cut clothes to Paris creations. The kingdom, as I said before is an absolute monarchy, and in the hands of the family that has held the rule for several generations, is by far the most successful sort that could possibly be used there. Though his word is law in theory and in fact, and though he is head of church as well as state, the king is wise enough to have a great number of all kinds of advisors whose opinion he respects, and in whom the people have confidence. He has voluntarily cut his own salary in half – no doubt a great sacrifice! – and is always very generous in public matters; on the whole a very wise and capable ruler much loved and respected by the people and the foreigners as well. The country appropriated I was told 25,000 ticuls (about $12,000) for our entertainment, and the king feeling it wouldn't be enough will add what is necessary from his own income. On Sunday evening we went to the assembly hall of the University where certain lectures and movies were presented. Raymond Stevens, Esq., the king's advisor lectured on the government of Siam. He is by the way a Vermonter[2] – I find them in every port – (there was also a D U [Delta Upsilon, Tom's fraternity at Williams] who has been there for several years) and the successor to the lawyer that married one of Wilson's daughters, I can't think of his name – a Williams man. The king has always had for many years as legal advisor an American. You see of the great nations, United States is the only one really disinterested there. The British in India and the French in Cambodia cancel each other and don't get along any too well diplomatically there. Then too United States has been the first to make certain advantageous ratifications in diplomatic relations to Siam which the other nations have followed, and that makes it better too. The Siamese are really the one Oriental nation I have seen in which you feel that "never the twain shall meet" is not true. They seem to think and be fundamentally constituted as westerners are. Though I loved the Japanese, they are eons apart from us. Not so the Siamese. They don't make you feel that in going

west to study, they are merely taking what the west has to offer for their own particular advantage, but because they like it and can be benefited in their own individual natures better by it than anywhere else. There was also a lecture on the rice industry and one on teak, with movies to illustrate it. The evening closed with cinemas (as they call it) of the coronation of the present king which took place almost a year ago to the day, and of the Royal Cremation of the late king, which occurred last March. Can you imagine the particular and unnamable feeling on seeing pictures of such oriental splendor, which at ordinary times would seem ever and ever so far away, in the very spot on which it took place, amid the people who participated in or witnessed it? Furthermore in our trip through the Museum we were taken to the stables where the magnificent and very old funeral carts – the ones we saw in the movies are kept. The Cremation ceremonies are as elaborate and important as the Coronation apparently.

The next day the government railways were chartered for taking us into the interior to Lopburi, the ancient capital of Siam – a spot to which tourists almost never go, about 150 miles from Bangkok. That was the capital from about 500 A.D. till 1650. Today it is a ruined city being excavated from a jungle. Wild (though tame) monkeys play about in a huge banyan tree, and the sense of a vanished though never greatly impressive court, is everywhere about. It was a nine hour train trip (both ways counted) and really not worth it, compared to the Nikko trip, etc. but it is not fair to say so, for it was a special desire of the king that we should go there and there is a great beauty in the place if considered merely as a ruin. I will not go into a description of it except for saying that it was in the period when Buddhism was beginning there and the images are strangely mixed up with Brahmin influences from Indo-China and Cambodia – it is sometimes spoken of as the Cambodian period – with Buddhas sitting on coiled cobras whose five heads fan out even as their hoods do, and forms a back and covering for the seated Buddha. There are numerous images in all stages of preservation. Many of the ruins are not yet dug out and so remain huge piles of rice-made bricks and mortar. Some of the temples have been in the process of excavation only the last month that they might be ready for our visit – such is the hospitality of kings. . . .

The two next events I shall describe were, I think by far the most impressive things we did there, and each alone would make a trip around the world worth while. Of course after this journey to Lopburi we were tired – it was so hot and nine hours on a train anyway – well, it was a Royal entertainment given at the command of the king in the royal theater which is never used except at his command and in which very few

foreigners have ever been entertained. It is not large – that is, about the size of the regular New York theater, but of course beautifully decorated, richly, not ornately. What we would call the stage is used only for the orchestra – women all simply dressed uniformly in blue sitting cross legged. It was the peculiar Siamese music at its best, given by the best players in the land. The actors, who interpret all the action by means of highly specialized dancing, appear on a dais much lower than the apparent stage which extends open on three sides into the center of the theatre with the seats for spectators arranged around and above it in boxes. The king and all his court were there – a very great honor – with all the diplomatic corps present. One of the princes addressed a few words at first, explaining how the plays were given, their great antiquity, the fact that no word is spoken by an actor but is sung or chanted by specially [sic] vocalists who are part of the orchestra. It is the actors duty merely to interpret the thought in dance. Before all this started the Glee Club sang, and at the king's request, two members of the cruise danced the Charleston for the audience. It received a great ovation and had to have an encore.

Finally the plays started. There were two. One was called the Lagon performance and is given by a company of actresses and a Corp de Ballet. These girls were all very young and very lovely. They are trained, and the reason is not hard to guess after seeing the great intricacy of the dances, from childhood. Their costumes are elaborate and rich beyond anything I have ever seen off the stage or on. In fact, that greater reality may be given to the whole thing, their costumes are sewed onto them – a process which requires two hours and expert seamstresses. It would require a better understanding than I have to interpret the dances to you so you would understand them, but I can say that the combination of music and costume and dance, as presented there by these consummate actors was a thing that probably can never be duplicated in my experience again. One woman who is on the cruise and who has spent her life traveling said that in all her life she had never witnessed a more royal, courtly, or kingly entertainment than that nor did she believe it could be duplicated or equaled by any living ruler today. The second performance – and heavens knows it was only the tremendous impressiveness of the whole thing that kept me there for we had risen at five-thirty that morning and the plays did not end till twelve-thirty — was called a Khon performance. This while possibly less beautiful – if a comparison can be made – than the first, had more action and is a play almost never given, and again only at the command of the king – you see what was done for us. It presents a portion of the Ramayana, one of the very oldest bits of drama in existence, peculiar as there given, to Siam,

and rarely given because it is so expensive to give. It originally was given only as a part of the Coronation ceremony, but more recently has been used as amusement rather than religion. The posturing requires great muscular training and finesse – years, in fact. . . . In Japan if you remember, women do not act in the best theaters. In Siam, both men and women do, but not together in the same play. The second play was given by a company of men.

The last day we went to the museum and the palace temples. I am surprised that writers have not made more of the place than I had been able to find. I have learned that the reason is that most tourists are not admitted there. In one of the more common Wats where all can go there is the famous Sleeping Buddha – 150 feet long, of bronze covered with gold; it is startling but not graceful or impressive – merely enormous. But in the Palace temples – the temples in which only the royal family worships – there are some of the most superb bits of craftsmanship ever come from the hand of man. The intricacy, richness, color, size, minuteness of designs, general good taste and essential artistry of the whole place is maddening. No adjectives can be used. You are really and completely overcome. The variety is endless. It is a miniature city of gold and silver and precious stones; actually true too, for instance, one large floor has a matting of silver thread and that sort of thing. The most famous jewel there is a Buddha about the size of a large doll called the Emerald Buddha. It has been stolen often, but I guess they have it fairly safe this time. The amusing thing is the way it has three changes of clothes for the spring, summer, and winter seasons. It is now wearing its little winter suit of gold, and a cunning little cap to keep its ears warm. Even the Siamese seem amused, but their attitude is much like mine: what difference does it make anyway, and if the thing has been done for generations why change. It ceases to be childish – it is really childlike, and why make it grow up since nothing better can be done anyway. Finally we were granted the summum bonum of honors – we were admitted to the Coronation room – the room in which the first and most private of the Coronation ceremonies are performed by the Brahmin court priests. There is no Brahmin religion in Siam, but these priests are a hold over from a very early time when there was. We were told that only two Americans had ever been in the room before and very few foreigners. It was not a remarkable room – merely rich and full of the tradition of kings. The little coronation chair is pathetically plain and simple, and the seven tier umbrellas under which the king sits at the time seem very old and frayed.

We went through the museum so rapidly, and by this time had seen so much that I will have to refer to the catalog later to remember what I

saw there, but I think we all left feeling that it had been an entertainment which may never be duplicated, given us with perfect hospitality and taste from the king down to the meanest of his subjects. We were told that as his special guests, all citizens of Bangkok had been asked to watch out for us, see that no one got lost or in anyway mistreated and wherever possible accorded privileges.

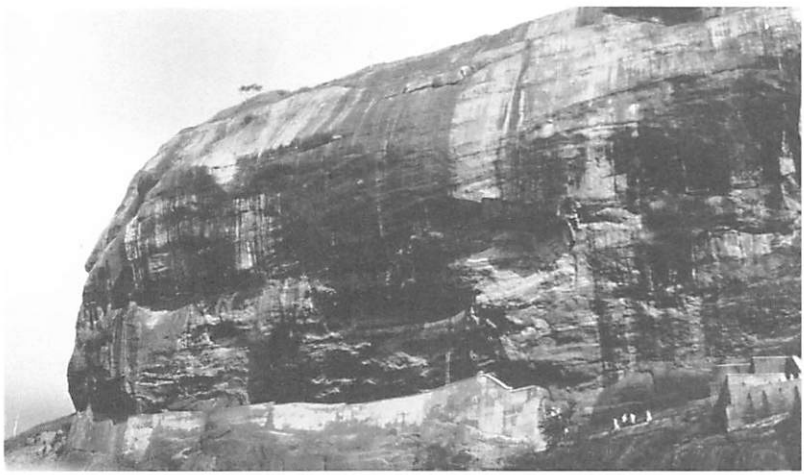
. . . That afternoon we set out for Singapore, and this week I have been giving final examinations, studying Buddhism and have read Morley's "Thunder on the Left". My letter from Singapore may not have a great deal to say; to all appearances it is an uninteresting city – particularly so after what we have had: entertainments as guests of one of the few Absolute Monarchs in the world.

The cruise spent Christmas on the Indian Ocean, between Batavia and Columbo, and Tom writes on 23 December 1926, "But I suppose you realize too how odd it seems. This is not the Christmas part of the world." One doesn't have to read too far between the lines to catch a bit of homesickness. . . .

I occasionally wake up mornings to wish that I might see a newspaper that is new; I wonder what can be going on at home, or in Williamstown or in New York, and I am more and more certain that the United States is the only place I want to live. You see, they do things there the same as I like to do them, and they speak the same language and they aren't odd, with funny manners and customs and dress, and it isn't hot there at Christmas time, at least in New England, and they have families there that belong to you and friends as well! But this is just what I am thinking and doesn't mean that I would change under the circumstances for a minute – or perhaps for only a minute. I think it would be a little better if I could get some more mail; there was none in Batavia and I haven't heard since Manila . . . we have been the last few weeks in that part of the world where it takes longest for a letter from America to go – they average from forty to forty-five days.

But all trace of homesickness is gone when he writes on New Years Day, 1927, of his experiences in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and the trip he makes to Sigirya to see the famous and ancient Rock Fortress:

We were at Ceylon during the very best time of year, and I have become so accustomed to the heat that it really only seems warm to me when I discover that the temperature is ninety in the shade. A gentle and steady monsoon always gives a breeze, and that means everything. I went directly there by train, instead of returning from Kandy with the group, and was met there by three other boys who had come by auto



"Sigiri Rock (close view). Where King Kasyapa ruled at Sigirya about 40 miles south of Anuradhapura. The younger son of King Datu Sena, he rose against and murdered his father (A.D. 511). Sinhalese= 'sinha', a lion. In the national chronicle, the Mahawaura [Mahavamsa—more accurately, the Culavamsa, or "Lesser Chronicle," written in the 13th century, A.D.], is said that Kasyafa "built galleries in it (Sigiri) ornamented with figures of lions, wherefore it took its name of Sihagiri [Singha Giri](the Lion Rock). View showing stairway winding around toward the north and the projection on which the 'Lion's Mouth' was built." Photo and description by Thomas H. Johnson.

from Colombo and they brought my mail up, so I had the unique experience of feeling particularly near home there, seeing the ruins, enjoying the sun and air and atmosphere of the place with your letters in my hand reading snatches as we rode from place to place – to the annoyance of the rest – but I had to read the letters. We had a very early lunch and set out from there in the car for Sigirya and the very famous Rock Fortress. We four were the only ones to get to Sigirya, and that in itself was a triumph. I think you can follow the course we took on the map I sent from Colombo, and you have a picture of the great boss of rock as it rises out of nothing to its great height. The story of it is very thrilling. Though once all the country about was cleared, today, as far as you can see from the summit stretches jungle; we had to ride through a hundred miles of it to get there: with every now and then monkey bands scurrying across the road in front of us, every sort of bird imaginable around, water buffalo wallowing in mud holes, the hot sun making a

vivid glister on the foliage, and strangely, with most excellent dirt roads to ride on. The story of the rock is important. In 511 A.D. Kasyapa, the younger son of the reigning king at Anaradhapura, King Datu Sena, murdered his father and for fear of the vengeance of his elder brother fled the city. It is supposed that the reason his brother pursued him instead of setting up to rule in the capital was because Kasyapa took with him the symbol of kingship, the Sacred Tooth – the one which reposes in the last of the Sinhalese capitals, Kandy. Kasyapa seems to have been able to gather quite a following and went with it into the jungle – to the place now called Sigirya. That word in Sinhalese means Lion's Mouth, and it was only recently that archeologists have discovered the reason for the name. He conceived the idea, this king, of building a fortress which would be well neigh impregnable, on the top of this enormous rock, and apparently with the best engineers of the time set about doing it. To this day the whole process remains a marvel, for they seemed to know the only possible way of erecting means of getting to the top and on the top they built an enormous palace – a thousand feet above the low lying lake, on a plot of ground covering over four acres, and covered the whole of it. Now there remains only quantities and quantities of disintegrating bricks, figures carved in the living rock, baths sunk into it, seats and steps to make passages from level to level; above it all was probably a superstructure of wood, since there is nothing to show of the buildings themselves. At the base of the Sigiri Rock are the foundations, also in living rock, of halls, baths, reservoirs, pulpits. Half way up is a natural platform, which before the work of reconstruction was undertaken about 1890, was covered with falling bricks and stone crumbled somewhat. When the workers dug that out they discovered whence the name, for beneath it appeared the claws, done in brick, of a mammoth lion and it was between these and up through the lion's mouth that men must go to reach the top. And this was the only way. Only the claws now remain, and they have had to be restored in part, but the effect is startling and one has good cause to feel a thrill as he goes between them. Here the King Kasyapa ruled all that there was to rule of the land of Ceylon, and the great jungle vistas of today were cleared land then, with lakes (so the land formations show), rich with flowers, formal gardens, tribute cities and parks. They were among the glorious days of Ceylon civilization, and it is probable that civilization was higher there then than at almost any other spot on earth. In the year 511 England was under the rule of Arthur, the Briton king who was trying to help a hardy race to self government and fight the barbarians from the north, a task in itself. Clovis, the founder of the Frankish kingdom has just died, and his four sons were attempting to set up a unified state. They

failed. There was no Germany, nor even yet a Holy Roman Empire. Scarcely thirty years before Odoacer had sacked the last of what remained of the Roman Empire, and Rome was a desolate enough place with no rule except what the reigning pope, St. Hormisdas, could establish in the city. What did remain of Rome, as we understand the term, was then under the rule of Justin the first, at Byzantium, a sorry enough place by then. Japan, with its Nara kings and rule was not yet to come for two hundred years, and the only two spots where civilization might be said to flourish were in parts of India and China. I mention this historical background, not to mix you up, but to show that at the very lowest ebb of world civilization, there was a robber, murderer king, living in despotic grandeur, surrounded by the best scientists of the day (not mean ones at that), living in true luxury, on the island of Ceylon. But as is apt to be the case where men gain power by such means, he had but a short and probably very uneasy time. He ruled for 18 years only, when he was killed, either by his own hand or that of his brother in a fight with his brother, at a time when he had been forced to come down from his rock. But as I sat on the rock seat which overlooks a view unequalled, which had been built for him no doubt (some say as a council seat to receive his subjects – I am more inclined to surmise that he built it for the view and for meditation) it seemed to me that connection between the past and the present was very close, and very necessary, too; that all

Thomas Johnson at Sigiri Rock, Ceylon. "so-called Audience Hall or seat where king received visitors on the summit." Description by Thomas H. Johnson.

that is worth living for is a tradition and that we have failed unless we can harvest the stupendous richness of experience, example of the lives before us that have made our lives possible; that mere contemporaneousness is a chance happening and that it is quite possible and in some cases much more worth while to make the past, or phases of it, as vital as things that happen to us every day.

Tom's next letter, typed on the ship between Bombay and Aden, describes his experience in India, especially his pilgrimage to the Taj Mahal.

13 January 1927

I will not enter upon a description of it – there are already too many accounts of its sheer radiance, its gem-like qualities, of its simplicity and freedom from the usual ornateness of such times, of its profusion of inlaid jewels, of the canopy of pearls which were laid over the catafalque each year in memory of her [Mumtaz-i-Mahal, the young and beautiful wife of Shah Jahan, who left bereft by her death, built this mausoleum.] birthday. The pearls have long since disappeared, and the gems have even here been replaced by stones of no quality, but its dignity and beauty do not need them. It alone, as all people say, would be worth a trip around the world to see. It can never, it should never, be duplicated. Pictures of it give you its form and structure, but no picture can quite show you the perpetual sapphire of the Indian sky over its minarets and domes, its burning whiteness in the noontime and its silver at sunset or under the stars. We were at Agra from six that morning till ten that night, so had a chance to see it in all moods. My first view of it was from the Fort where it lies shrouded in a faint mist a mile away. From there no details are visible, but the mass of it unforgettable. One can understand how Jahan could love it and want to see it every day, and die content. And one does muse a little, wondering how much truth Mumtaz-i-Mahal's mother must have felt in the prophesy of a gypsy before her nomad daughter was born that the daughter should be the wife of a king and that her memory would be eternal. Thus does fate play with mortals. But as I looked at it, now steadily, now at intervals, now from a distance and now closely, I wondered at its power. In the first place, I suppose it is perfect; and for every spire, minaret, and dome placed here, there is another identically placed there. Its themes in the octagon are repeated endlessly inside and out. The marble screen, two inches thick that surrounds the tomb looks more like delicate lace, flawless, than stone. The proportion and balance and rest of it are impeccable – almost that is its weakness. Its restraint and taste in luxurious magnificence are its glories, but I am rather sure that the very first view of it tells all that it has to say. It has not the brooding rest, the Oriental rest,

the rest of Nirvana – it is not Oriental. Neither is it Western. The Greeks would have demanded more movement of it – even though it is a tomb; the Lombards or the Normans would have preferred some slight incompletion: to show that the aspiration was greater than the power of achievement; and the true Oriental would have made way for some shadow, some darker line or stone to relieve the scintillating brilliance of its polished marble. But, after all, we westerners reason too much, and demand too much for the mind, and surely this is the one building in the world which must not, cannot be reasoned about.

In early January the cruise sails into the Gulf of Aden and stops at Port Said, the entrance to the Red Sea and the Near East. Tom gives his impression of this hot, primitive place, and closes this letter with a discourse on the colonialism he had been witnessing in the last several months:

Aden is said to be the hottest spot on the earth, though this month is its one bit of relief. They say that in the British army, two years there equals three anywhere else, and you can understand it. The town, or city, or whatever you can call it must have existed from time immemorial, for its location makes it a strategic spot – connecting the Occident with the Orient. Rain falls there only once in two or three years and then it falls in torrents. There is absolutely no sign of vegetation, and as it happens, the point on which the town is located is a long since extinct volcano, so that earth cliffs rise out of the water. Located at random and on different levels are the buildings – they look for all the world like shacks in the movies of a Montana mining town. The Red Sea is so briny that salt is manufactured here – salt for all the world, I guess, and water is so scarce that it has to be imported from Cairo and costs the Europeans, the few that are there, fifty dollars a month. I had imagined there would be nothing for us to do or see there (It is a coaling station, though the ship didn't coal) but the American Consul arranged two trains to carry us into the real Arabian desert to an oasis city twenty miles inland, called Lahej. Like so many things we have done, it was unique. Tourists never go there, and this was a special arrangement for us. The British control there has only a fifteen mile limit, and outside of that is a sort of Arabian No-Man's-land. Lahej is ruled by a local sultan. Since the law is so primitive, they wouldn't let us get off the train, for if anything happened nothing very much could have been done about it. We are supposed to be the first foreigners that have ever been there in anything like numbers and I have no doubt that it was a great day in the lives of the Arabs. I can't tell you how primitively they live. They have nothing and live on it. Every bit of cheap jewelry they owned they brought down to sell, rings, anklets, daggers (and all carry and wear

them). It is seldom safe for Europeans to venture out there alone, for there seems to be no love lost between the races. As it was, someone had to go there the day before to tell them we were coming and were not going to disturb or fight them. I happened to go in the afternoon group, but in the morning the sultan had received some thirty of the faculty, and talked to them with an interpreter. It must have been interesting for both sides. Why the railroad runs there, I can't find out. It only goes seven miles further anyway and is seldom used for anything. The Arabs won't let it go farther for fear of British encroachment and because they don't want it anyway. If there were Arab horses around, I didn't see them, but you do see dozens and dozens of camels – just like a picture, with a turbaned, brown skinned Mohammedan riding him, or leading him with a load of some sort on his back crossing the sands. And this sand extends in every direction as far as eye can see looking just the same: It would be too easy to be lost in the desert to be funny. It was at Aden, they tell me, that three thousand years ago the Queen of Sheba came to meet Solomon. How the British have every strategic spot in the world. They have concessions in Shanghai, they own Hongkong, Singapore and part of Borneo. Besides India, they have the Mediterranean and the Red Sea bottled at both ends. Where ever you find them, you find them hated by those they rule, but you always find a cleaner, healthier spot. The people ruled by the English feel just as the Filipinos do, that even though they are better off materially, they would rather have less and go to hell in their own way. My sympathy is with the natives as far as their desire for self determination goes, and as far as they are right in feeling that the foreign nations want them merely as a tool, but on the other hand, the world is getting so small now, and so close together, that a federation of some sort is necessary for the mutual benefit, and assurance of international safety of life. No one can be a dog in the manger any longer. But the point where helping to free the world from the dog in the manger attitude leaves off and imperialism begins is not a straight line easy to see at all times.

We have now left the Orient and what is the impression? Well, somewhat chaotic. Japan is nearly westernized politically; they have seen what they want at last and are going to get it, but if they become aggressive it will be in China and nowhere else. Their problem is much what England's was centuries ago – how to assure staple products to themselves for an increasing population on an island that is nowhere near to supplying the demand. They have in addition a problem that is their own more or less – what to do with a population that is increasing at a terrific rate. Governor Allen whom I have talked to and who knows as much about the subject, I think, as any man convinces me that if there is any

clash it will be with China in Mongolia, for even there, westward the course of empire goes. China is in too great a state of upheaval [to] be able to think clearly. The Young China is breaking out, so to speak, even as Young India is; it is the attempt to reach a stable equilibrium in a world that has so changed in the last three centuries that the old order simply broke down. It will be many centuries I believe before they have found it, for they are a combination civilization and barbarity that is found scarcely anywhere else – and they must be unified in spirit before they can be in government. Siam is unique. Geographically they have nothing to offer other nations seeking a strategic foothold and so have been left alone. With the French in Cochin-China and the English on the other side of them in India, they are beautifully fixed to play them off against each other. Naturally they are happy and well to do. They love their king and have no food or population problem. They are satisfied to have their king an absolute monarch and he is wise enough to know how to be one. I shall always think of Siam as the best spot on earth from one point of view. Java, under the Dutch, is just beginning to be self conscious, as is the Philippines and India. Though the Dutch won't leave for a long time yet, it is interesting to note that that feeling of nationalism is in evidence in almost every spot in the world. We were there at a time when it was highest – I believe there were some demonstrations just before or just after we left, though of a peaceful sort – but it is brooding. Ceylon is at present in complete rest. It is perfectly contented with British rule and lives to itself apart; but it might be noted here that Ceylon and Siam are the only two countries in the world that are entirely Buddhist. They have seemed to be able to unify themselves, even with the coming of modern and different ideas, without a struggle and a need of a new equilibrium. What does it all mean? Well, who knows – just living I suppose – and how interesting, how vitally interesting it all is.

From Cairo he writes on 20 January 1927:

Today I shall have one of my early wishes gratified – have my fill of mummies – and the *best* mummies!!

On January 30, writing from the Sea of Marmora Tom begins:

I am positively in a state of dreading to write letters to you from now on. The task seems insurmountable. When we were in Japan or even in Siam and Java, it seemed as if I could scarcely begin to knock the bloom off the geographical and historical peach, so to speak, but here we are in the very cradle of the world, with so much necessary background for an intelligent survey or thought about things that I have almost given

up the task. In Egypt I thought it was bad, but when I got to Palestine and realized that I didn't know my Bible any better than I did, and now that we are getting to Greece and the Aegean Sea, where every one of the myriad islands through which we are passing has a history as vital as life itself; where you need to know your classics and your religions and your archeology, etc. it's impossible to try to keep a head above water. I spent the forenoon trying to look up the history of the Galipoli Campaign while we were passing through the Dardenelles – oh, the feeling about it! we could see the graves of the valiant Anzacs they were so near the water – vast cemeteries to stand as long as the world does to the memory of the greatest and most glorious defeat in the history of men; and from that to the traditional site where Leander swam the Hellespont, and we could see too, dimly, the ruins that are being uncovered of great Troy. I was driven to find Rossetti's "Troy Town", and then to read again Byron's "Bride of Abydos" and the lyric from Childe Harold: "The isles of Greece, the isles of Greece: Where burning Sappho loved and sung . . .", past Rhodes and Tenedos, Paphos and Patmos (where Revelations was written, wasn't it?) and so on endlessly. But tomorrow we will be in Constantinople. It is evening now; I just went on deck to see the lights of the city in the distance glimmering through the clear cold air (The days are chilly now) and wonder still how it is so possible to thrill to things as I did at the beginning – even more perhaps!

In his previous letter, written from Jerusalem, he provocatively had begun, "In one way I rather think a man could remain a better Christian by staying away from Jerusalem than by coming here." He explains why in his January 30 letter:

My first seeming disappointment of the trip came when I saw the Christian churches that have been built over the holy spots in Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Nazareth. It seems that several hundred years ago, in the sixth century, Queen Helena, the mother of Constantine, got the Discovering Bug. She had a great deal of money to spend, and it evidently seemed to her that she would be able to enjoy it all much better if she could corner the rock, for instance, from which Christ got his send-off when he went to Heaven. I ask pardon for this vulgar way of speaking about it, but when you see, not the rock at all, but a great many flamboyant Christmas tree hangings and cheap lamps and candles in a dim and smelly cavern, when you ought to see – well, what? nothing, But perhaps, that is the impression that you feel those people had when they went to work preserving the places. It is in one sense as far from anything you feel as sacred as anything could possibly be. Thus have they preserved the manger, Calvary, in fact, every holy spot. And

the Mediaeval Crusaders needed just that tangibility, just that necessity for having a spot cataloged to touch.

I realize that in every case the edifice has nothing whatever to do with the ideal qualities of the religion or with its vitality or with its essential aspiration; it has only to do with the people whose talent or taste have erected the Church, and *their* interpretation of salvation and union with a deity. I marvel that the great cathedrals of Europe – or even Santa Sophia here in Constantinople – are so glorious when I realize that much of this taste came with the Crusaders, and that many of these foundations of tangibility were laid by the mother of Constantine. But after all I find that where once I might have thought it less that all this city and taste for its churches was fought for and built with the sword and fire, I now think it more. Isn't it essential in religion; isn't it the same spirit that prompted the Thracian women to roam the Greek wilds in frenzy, with a torch in one hand and a bit of raw meat in the other? But for us who love the Palestine hills that still bear the little town of Bethlehem asleep forever as it was nineteen hundred years ago, that have rebuilt the most distressed Jerusalem twenty times, that have furnished the greatest prophets and the greatest Savior and nurtured them against the teeth of every adverse wind, for us there is not the need to have the mere churches there appeal to us; we can like the sects and the squabblings and the bad taste still raging there for the same reason that we love any conviction of spirit even when we feel that the purpose to which it is put is unworthy or abortive; it is for us and will remain for our children's children a shrine that turns our hearts fervent in spite of, perhaps because of, what we find unnecessary. There could be no greater test of vitality.

What I have said I am afraid is not canonical; I don't feel about it as I expected, though as I think it over, I think it means much much more to me than I had ever imagined. I am sick, as many of us are, of sentimental pap in religion. There is, I am sure, as much real holiness in the frenzy of the Greek women as there is in any human emotion; it was wrongly directed perhaps, but no more so than much of ours. The basis of holiness in religions is not in its ethics, though surely ethics are important; nor is it in art; though that is equally important; it is in the heart's attitude toward God which can experience fear, bravery; love, hate; ecstasy, depression; majesty, abasement; deep thought, mystic contemplation, at various times, with equal force, forever. Such has been, such continues to be, in its varying stages the contribution of Palestine to the Western world. I'm all for it.

The cruise is now in Europe where they will spend the next several months. Tom writes on February 2 from the ship traveling between

Constantinople and Athens, "It will probably seem to you that I am just around the corner now you are getting letters with some regularity – it does to me when I find one from you at every port."

The cruise crisscrosses the Mediterranean, stopping in Venice, Malta, and Naples, as well as the North African ports of Trieste and Algiers, with visits to Gibraltar and Malaga in Spain. In his letter penned on February 22 from the Fischer's Park Hotel in Rome, Tom writes about passing up an audience with the Pope: ". . . some of the Cruise went to have an audience with the Pope – I could have gone, if I had made arrangements before hand – but I didn't and don't feel I missed much, except something to talk about afterwards – and that doesn't attract me."

He goes on to recount his experiences in Nice and Monte Carlo, and describes an encounter that was of more interest to him—meeting Mussolini.

3 March 1927

Dean Lough had some time previous suggested to the American Ambassador, Mr. Fletcher, that we would like to meet the Italian Premier and Mr. Fletcher had replied that the thing was impossible; that it would be easier to get an audience with the Pope or the King than with Mussolini; but when Governor Allen was told that, he said something about probably that could be taken care of, so he arranged it himself. As Professor Brown (editor of the Binnacle and professor of journalism in Dartmouth – he came there the year I left) said Gov. Allen has much more influence everywhere than any private citizen has any right to have. He had been over in Europe four or five years ago to attend the international opium conference. He is a man that never fails to pull the right string and never fails to tie a knot in any piece of string that he may get hold of. He is a politician of the better sort, though a politician nevertheless. I don't think he is a statesman. He never makes enemies and he makes friends with all. That comes as near a reason for distrusting him essentially, as any. No man can do that and either Be Himself, or have an essential honesty. I admire him for his canny instincts, but I don't find him an interesting man – merely a valuable one as a means toward an end. He remained in Italy for two days after we left, as a guest of the Italian government and to be there for the opening of parliament. I have to smile when I think that there are many people who would spend months and try to pull all kinds of wires to meet Il Duce, and who perhaps never will, while I, who didn't particularly care about it, had the chance thrust upon me. He allowed himself to be photographed with us, and I find I am in the picture – I shall get one of course – they are quite too rare not to have to pull out casually and say Well, when my friend Mussolini and I were photographed together . . . All

sorts of precautions were taken however. All Italian houses of any size are called palaces, and he lives in one called the Chigi (Kee-gee) Palace. The rooms are extensive, the walls hung with paintings and tapestries, and frescoes. We all gathered in the courtyard below, to start with and there were enough guards there to discover any suspicious looking persons. Some had to open up their cameras or declare any packages they may have had. Then we went upstairs. We passed from one room to another, always with people at the doors to look the entrants over. Two of the deans stood at one to be sure that only members from the Cruise got in. There were several Americans unconnected with it, who tried to pass with us, but I think they were sent back. Finally after innumerable windings through various outer rooms we came into one particularly large where Mussolini stood, quite unconcernedly shaking hands, sometimes looking at the person received, and sometimes not. His left hand was posed on thigh, elbow akimbo, feet wide apart – always the individualist. When all had passed, he walked very jauntily over and stood in front for the picture. In it, his head is thrown very high, for the man has his Roman vanities only too obviously. After the picture, he stepped out from the line, both hands on his thighs turned toward us most theatrically, and raising one arm above his head to give us the Roman salute, said Goodbye, and that was all.

On March 10 Tom writes, "We are back in the Atlantic now—after five and a half months of other waters." He describes Lisbon and cruising up the coast of France to arrive in Paris. From the train between Rotterdam and Hamburg he writes about his time in Paris, concluding, "Were anyone to tell me that I had to live there, I would be very disappointed because I have no desire to but the hope of going back will always be strong." Always interested in politics, Tom continues this letter, written on 25 March 1927, by predicting World War II.

It is common knowledge that Italy and France are waiting only for the right moment to go at each other's throats and I really feel convinced that such will take place within an incredibly short time. I have little doubt of another world war in less than ten years and I think a nation blind that chatters peace. Nations are always healthiest when they are at war, and the damage done by the last one has had the least stultifying effect upon the European continent of any. The world was far worse off after Napoleon, and certain plagues than it is now. I have felt all through the Orient that new forces of adjustment were at work; the last war was only a prelude, like an earthquake before a volcanic eruption. You can't see the needs, the health and the ambitious self assurance of such countries as Japan, Italy, France and probably Germany

even today, without realizing that the person who talks peace, without at least preparing for war is allowing the wool to be pulled over his eyes in the most simpleminded fashion. There are going to be very interesting things from now on – in fact they have already begun to happen – such as France and Italy not interested in any more peace conferences – why? because their minds are pretty well made up, and why go through the unsettling and foolish process of talking peace when they have nothing to gain and everything to lose by it. Personally at such moment I feel a great anger at both those countries, and a feeling that I am glad I happen to be an American and a member of one of the really powerful nations of the world. If things don't ultimately and very shortly line up with Japan, France and Italy against England Germany and the U.S., I shall badly miss my guess. Ah, well . . . but even if I am talking through my hat, I am as sure that everyone else is, and I am equally sure that peace talk never was more out of place in the world than today, or that the world needed a man who understands things. . . . Well, enough of this. I'd like to know how Dad feels about it.

From Germany they traveled to Denmark, then to Great Britain with a stop in Edinburgh and on to London for Easter. Tom writes from the Strand Palace Hotel on April 15, "London is Boston & Philadelphia thrown together, added to, and made three times as old."

The last letter, handwritten on Easter after attending Bach's St. Matthew Passion, breaks from his travelogue-with-commentary format to recount a single anecdote. Tom knows he will be seeing his family soon but he has one last story. . . .

Dear Mother

I have one of the nicest little pieces of gossip that is likely to be my lot or experience for sometime to come. It's the sort that you will eat up, and, if I had more to say about it, might sit down after, like a full meal, to digest and regard in retrospect – think over and digest, saying that such another is not due you for at least the year. Are you excited?

There are scarcely any preliminaries and when I have finished, there will be no post mortem. Two ships, as it were, have passed in the night, and the one knows not the destination nor the port of departure of the other.

. . . about six, planning to walk back to the car stop where one gets the bus going to Greenwich (we are moored there) I noticed as I passed a certain church that at 7. Bach's St. Matthew Passion was being sung. Not being able to resist the wiles of Bach (you know my weakness for his wails – very good ones too) I decided to drop in. I did. I took a seat and watched various faces as they entered, when one face suddenly

caused me to stop meditating – stop thinking, in fact, because it was so real to me. I had even thought about that face before that day, wondering if London still contained it; where it was; what it was doing. No other person than the reverend Reginald Crewe had taken the pew in front of me![3] My first impulse was to speak to him but the service had begun, and I must wait. He turned around soon and looked at me. I had expected some sort of recognition. There was none. Then I remembered that it had been ten years since he had seen me, and I was then considerably more of a lad. The more I thought about it, the more I began to wonder what I would say if I *did* speak to him. I couldn't talk Bradford history. It might be painful to him. At least, if it wasn't it should be; I couldn't mention Mrs. Crewe or Muriel – and after all, what was there?

So before the *Passion* was over completely, I slipped out to avoid the meeting and shall never know what he is doing or why or where.

Details about him? Well, he is younger looking if possible with hair just as black as ever and a face now *slightly* inclined to be full – slightly. His hair, which he used to wear full in back now is quite clipped – more than is necessary even for a business man. The clerical black has given place to lighter tones – a sporty grey hat and coat – in fact, so much of my childhood recollection was altered that I felt quite sad about it.

There is no question but that it was he. The same nose and eyes and mouth – the same smile and voice – and when he opened the Bible to follow it was done as by one who knows it well. Ah me, sic transit gloria mundi.

Tom

NOTES

[1] I would like to thank Larry Coffin of Bradford for the note on the Rev. Crewe, the Librarians at the Vermont Historical Society for the information on Raymond Stevens, and Michael Sherman for his expert editorial counsel.

[2] Raymond Bartlett Stevens was born in Binghamton, NY, then moved with his parents to Lisbon, NH. Harvard Law School trained, he enjoyed a distinguished career in the practice of law, was a member of the State house of representatives from 1913 to 1915, delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 1920 and 1924 until appointed advisor in foreign affairs to the King of Siam. Accident of his birth aside, Stevens appears a New Hampshireman through and through. Tom was apparently incorrect to call him a Vermonter.

[3] A. Reginald Crewe was the minister of the Congregational Church in Bradford between 1912 and 1917. Tom attended that church with his family and would have been fifteen when the Rev. Crewe left. The scandal was his leaving with a woman who was not his wife. Muriel was his daughter.

Book Reviews

Mr. and Mrs. Prince: How an Extraordinary Eighteenth-Century Family Moved out of Slavery and into Legend.

By Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina (New York: Amistad, 2008, pp. 256, $24.95).

This outstanding book has two stories to tell. First, and foremost, it is the riveting account of a remarkable African-American New England family, whose history until now has been veiled in myth and legend. Second, it is a recounting of the challenges Gerzina (a professor of English at Dartmouth College) and her husband, Anthony—who acted as her research assistant—faced while uncovering the lives of Lucy and Abijah Prince, who were among the early settlers of Guilford, Vermont.

Of the two, Lucy Prince is the more familiar name to students of Vermont's early history. Considered by many as the first American black woman poet, she is best known as the author of "The Bars Fight," an account in verse of a 1746 Indian attack on the town of Deerfield, Massachusetts, where Lucy had been a slave. But this feisty woman is also remembered for her eloquent public defense of her family's rights as landowners in the newly established state of Vermont.

Many versions of Lucy Prince's story have come down to us. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, published accounts began appearing that relied heavily on myth and tradition. More recently, David Proper,

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in his book, *Lucy Terry Prince: Singer of History* (1997), began the separation of myth from fact.

But *Mr. and Mrs. Prince* is the first thorough exploration of the story of the Prince family. Gerzina and her husband spent seven years combing a wide variety of sources, from letters, newspapers, and account books to tax, court, and church records, all written in "crabbed or scrawling" handwriting, which had to be deciphered—including the abbreviated Latin medical records of a doctor frequently consulted by the Princes (pp. 102, 104).

If many of the details of the Prince legend handed down through the generations were wrong, the Lucy of that legend remains in Gerzina's hands the same magnetic, eloquent woman with a gift for words. Most revealing is what the author has uncovered about Abijah. Traditionally described as a respected, hard-working man, Bijah, as he was called, emerges here as a thoroughgoing entrepreneur, who, as Gerzina puts it, longed for the same basic things all men of his time wanted: "property, family, independence" (p. 32).

In addition to telling the story of the Princes, Gerzina also provides her readers with a clearer picture than we've been shown before of early African-American society in western New England, pointing out that black history, especially in the North, is not separate from white history but found within it. In Deerfield, for example, where Lucy belonged to a prominent white family until she was freed sometime after her marriage to Bijah in 1756, slaves were part of the white communities in which they lived. They went to church with white people (although they sat in separate pews), and their children were free to attend the local schools. None of this, however, implies that northern slavery was a benign institution. The high suicide rate among black slaves in towns like Deerfield easily disputes that notion (p. 44).

By contrast, free blacks enjoyed all the rights of citizenship, including access to the judicial system, and it is of this right that Bijah—in his capacity as a landowner in Guilford—took full advantage. Soon after he and Lucy and their six children left Deerfield in 1775 to live on the fertile Guilford acres Bijah had purchased with hard labor, a white neighbor began harassing the Princes, hoping to drive them off their land. But, as Gerzina points out, Bijah was remarkably skillful in navigating "the white-controlled world despite a hostile neighbor who resented his presence" (p. 151). At the same time "all the representatives of the law whom the Princes encountered . . . took their right to equal protection under the law seriously." In the end, their neighbor "had no choice but to accept the situation" (p. 160).

For the most part, Gerzina discovered, it was Bijah, not Lucy, who

confronted the Guilford authorities with complaints of harassment. But as the provocations grew more violent, threatening the family's very livelihood, it became necessary to ask for protection from the state. In June 1785, it was Lucy, long recognized for her fluency of speech, who petitioned the governor and council in person for redress of grievances. Her words had their desired effect and the state's leaders recommended that the town of Guilford take measures to protect the Prince family.

While *Mr. and Mrs. Prince* is much richer and more complex than earlier accounts of the legendary African-American woman and her family, its author is not a historian, and the reader might wish for a fuller rendition of the Vermont context. Also, the geography can sometimes be confusing: The town of Jericho is not near Vergennes and Middlebury (p. 190). These quibbles aside, not only does this book tell us more about Lucy and Bijah Prince than we've known before, but, like all good biographies, this remarkably full account of one black family succeeds in giving us a better understanding of the broader picture: what life was like for both slaves and free blacks in eighteenth-century New England.

DEBORAH P. CLIFFORD

Deborah P. Clifford is the author of The Passion of Abby Hemenway: Memory, Spirit and the Making of History *(Vermont Historical Society, 2001). Most recently, she is the co-author with Nicholas Clifford of* "The Troubled Roar of the Waters": Vermont in Flood and Recovery, 1928–1931 *(University Press of New England, 2007). Ms. Clifford died in July 2008.*

The Sea Captain's Wife: A True Story of Love, Race and War in the Nineteenth Century

By Martha Hodes (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2006, pp. 384, $15.95).

The town of Morristown is included in an exciting recent study of nineteenth-century America all because a woman named Eunice Stone spent much of 1866 with family in Vermont. *The Sea Captain's Wife,* by New York University historian Martha Hodes, tells the story of Eunice Robinson Stone Connolly, a Massachusetts-born woman plagued throughout most of her life by poverty and disappointment. Eunice arrived in Morristown a war widow after her first husband (a fellow New Englander) was killed while enlisted with the Confederate Army during the Civil War. William Stone's death left Eunice a widowed mother of two without any resources or a home of her own. Like so many other

women in her situation, Eunice had no option but to rely on the support of family and friends. Melissa and Moses Rankin—her deceased husband's sister and brother-in-law—quite willingly offered what they could, so Eunice traveled from Massachusetts to their home in Morristown (and briefly to Cabot) to grieve and, we can assume, to mull over her options. Three years after her stay in Vermont, Eunice made the startlingly unconventional decision to marry a man of mixed race, a "colored" sea captain from Grand Cayman Island. Although his race marked Smiley Connolly as inferior by white American standards, he was far wealthier than Eunice or her family, and by joining him on the island, Eunice Connolly finally found a stable and comfortable home. Two daughters were born of that happy second marriage, but Eunice's contentment came to a tragic end when the entire family was lost at sea during a hurricane in 1877. Just where, when, and how Eunice met Smiley Connolly remains a mystery and is the great unanswered question of Hodes' story.

Eunice's poverty—and her consistent effort to escape it—marked her life in New England and likely had much to do with her first husband's eventual decision to fight for the South. In most ways, Eunice's life was average, defined by experiences common to poor New Englanders in a region undergoing industrialization. She worked in the textile mills in Manchester, New Hampshire, and married a man who shared her desire for a better life. Home for the family consisted of a series of rentals, as her husband tried his hand at several kinds of work without finding one that offered greater stability for his family. Relatives had found work in Mobile, Alabama, and so Eunice and her family joined them there, finding that Mobile offered work for her husband and, it seems, a culture and economy that he found worthy of defending. Eunice left the South just after the start of the war, homesick for her family in New England and uncomfortable with the foreign culture of Mobile. She was seven months pregnant and unchaperoned when she and her young son, Clarence, made the trip north. Back in New England, Eunice gave birth to a daughter and eventually found herself a grieving and often sick widow living with relatives and earning money as a domestic when her health allowed.

An archived collection of 500 surviving family letters provided the primary source for recreating Eunice's fascinating life. But there are gaps in the letters and like any such collection, they do not come close to revealing everything about Eunice's story. In her quest for answers about an average woman who eventually crossed the color line—how did Eunice meet Smiley, how did she conceptualize race, what did she think of the slavery she witnessed in the South?—Hodes crossed her own historiographic line, traveling to the various places Eunice called home and being willing to use oral history and genealogy to make sense of Eunice's

life. Such willingness to take her research outside the archives is somewhat unusual in traditional academic circles. In particular, Hodes's efforts to track down and ask questions of Eunice's and Smiley's heirs—an activity more commonly associated with non-academic history—suggests something about her confidence in and dedication to the research project. Hodes's effort to connect with Eunice's physical world took her from the old mill towns of New England to the Caribbean and Alabama, and in many of those places she was able to pinpoint spaces associated with Eunice: her mother's rental house, the tiny bungalow in Mobile that Eunice had briefly called home, and the likely spot on Grand Cayman where Smiley had built a large frame house for his new bride. But even as Hodes visited houses and stood on street corners that Eunice had known, she found few places that Eunice would have immediately recognized; widened roads, corner gas stations, and fast food restaurants successfully blurred Hodes's view of those same places as they had appeared during the nineteenth century. She traveled the path of Eunice's life but Eunice nevertheless proved elusive.

Hodes came closest to getting a feel for Eunice at the rural crossroads of Morristown Corners. The built environment of the rural crossroads has changed little since Eunice and her four-year-old daughter Clara arrived at the Rankin's house over 140 years ago. The small house still stands, its white and green clapboard exterior relatively unchanged, and Hodes was able to visit with the current owner and view the interior space, which has undergone significant renovations. She ran her eyes over walls that had known Eunice's gaze, but even that experience failed to produce a sense of Eunice. Today Morristown Corners is a small residential area of mostly nineteenth-century houses clustered together on small lots; in the mid-nineteenth century, Morristown Corners had been more diversified, the domestic dwellings joined by small industrial structures like Moses Rankin's blacksmith shop and the crossroads storefront that housed the post office. That store building still stands, currently undergoing renovations but otherwise a building that Eunice likely would recognize, the weathered clapboards of its vernacular Greek Revival exterior making it possible to imagine Eunice as she walked through the cold winter weather to mail letters to family in southern New England. Did letters to or from Smiley Connolly pass through that post office? If Eunice already knew Smiley Connolly by the time of her stay in Vermont—and Hodes presents that as one likely scenario—the two probably would have exchanged letters during the winter of 1866. That theory proves an exciting one, lending the rural crossroads that Eunice had described as a "little out of the way place" a special allure for Hodes and for her Vermont readers in particular (171).

It was cold and snowy during the part of Eunice's stay in Morristown that she mentioned in surviving letters and we do not know how often she left the Rankins' home or the extent of her involvement with the Morristown community. Eunice was a Universalist and most certainly attended services at the local Universalist church in the village two miles away. Hodes cites the ten-dollar gift given by the women of the church as a gesture of assistance intended both for Eunice and for the Rankins, who had taken on a financial burden when they welcomed Eunice and Clara into their home. Through Eunice we learn not only about the kindness and generosity of the Rankins but also a bit about the neighborhood. In one letter, Eunice described the elderly neighbor woman who boiled the winter slush from her yard into tea water, writing of that particular habit, "Melissa and I think we shall not take tea with her untill the snow drift is gone" (173). The humor with which Eunice related that incident suggests that her stay in Vermont was punctuated by moments of lightheartedness. At other times, though, Eunice seemed trapped by her sadness and grief, as she declined to join a social sugaring party in the Morristown woods for fear that the event would be too much for her to bear. The Rankins were good to Eunice but it seems fair to conclude that she was contented but probably not particularly happy while in Morristown.

Hodes has received high praise for her study of Eunice Richardson Stone Connolly, and deservedly so. *The Sea Captain's Wife* is a fantastic book and Hodes is a great storyteller. At least one reviewer has criticized her for becoming too involved in Eunice's life story—much of the book's final chapter details the relationships that Hodes formed with surviving family members whom she encountered during her research—but that criticism seems unfair. Like other historians, Hodes clearly cares about the people she has studied. If anything, that interest in Eunice and her family is contagious, and the reader is left with other unanswered questions. Missing from Eunice's archived letters is a strong sense of her role as a parent, and I was left to wonder not only about the daily care of young Clara as her widowed mother grieved, but especially about the elder child Clarence, so often left in the care of others as his mother struggled to get by. Although a story about family, *The Sea Captain's Wife* is really a love story about the unlikely and not entirely accepted union between a working-class white woman from New England and a more affluent man of color from the Caribbean.

Smiley Connolly is clearly the Prince Charming of Hodes's story, not only rescuing Eunice from a life of poverty and despair but steadfastly kind, attentive, and loving toward Eunice and her children. Hodes makes light of Smiley's first marriage—a union that possibly overlapped his re-

lationship with Eunice—as she does the existence of an illegitimate, or "outside," infant son, a baby not much older than Eunice's own children with Smiley and one conceived, we are encouraged to imagine, while Smiley was actively courting Eunice. We will never know how Eunice felt about Smiley's complicated past, details of which she left out of her letters to family; but it seems safe to assume that marriage to Smiley required her not only to negotiate her way across the color line but also to rework her definition of the middle-class respectability she had craved all her life.

JILL MUDGETT

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Beyond Depot Square

By Thomas C. Davis (Barre, Vt.: Thomas C. Davis, 2006, pp. 138, paper, $15.95).

In his second book of memoirs (the first, *Out from Depot Square,* was published in 2001), Tom Davis has provided his perspective of growing up in and around Barre during the 1930s, '40s, and '50s. It is a reminiscence that will appeal mostly to those who recognize the Barre residents of whom he speaks—some who made brief appearances on the Vermont scene; some who have had a lasting impact. These portraits are punctuated with italicized vignettes of Barre's earliest settlers and growth.

Of special interest is Mr. Davis's recollections of the private life of his father, former Republican governor of Vermont, Deane C. Davis. Even before the environment was a "hot button" political issue, Gov. Davis championed responsible development in Vermont by promoting and implementing Act 250, which stopped the beginnings of the rape of the Vermont landscape in the early 1970s while our neighboring states to the south saw Levittowns and strip malls pollute their former pastoral scenery. On the other side of the political spectrum, Mr. Davis recalls Cornelius O. "Kio" Granai, the late Barre lawyer and father of one of Mr. Davis's boyhood friends, Ed Granai, himself a well-known political figure who unsuccessfully ran as a Democratic candidate for governor. Kio, with whom I had the qualified pleasure of co-counseling cases in the twilight of his career, is described by Mr. Davis as opposed to

chain stores and the death penalty, and a champion of working-class of Vermonters.

Mr. Davis grew up in what can be considered the upper middle to upper class of Barre. The Davis family was part of the "Aiken wing" of the Republican Party, the more socially conscious portion of the Party. Their association with Jews, "Negroes," and unwed mothers separated them from the more socially conservative members of the community. However, even the more liberal wing of the Republican Party in the 1930s and '40s was not prepared to accept the social programs of the Roosevelt administration. The author recalls that his father's discussions about topics other than family matters concerned the advantages of the free enterprise system and the disadvantages of President Roosevelt's New Deal and social programs. The poor and disadvantaged, Deane Davis argued, could be better served if people were more like his mother, who helped such people before the advent of FDR's social programs.

From my perspective of both living and working in Barre for much of my adult life, Mr. Davis was wearing rose-colored glasses when he painted the idyllic picture of the compatibility among the various ethnic groups while growing up in Barre. Although the violence had subsided from the shooting of the legendary granite sculptor Elia Corti, in a clash between the Socialist immigrants from northern Europe and the Anarchists from the countries along the Mediterranean, before the author's birth, feelings still ran strong against Barre's French Canadians during the author's boyhood. That animosity was created by the importation of French Canadians from neighboring Québec to serve as "scabbers" to fill the jobs of the striking granite workers and break the strikes in the early twentieth century.

The vignettes of Barre history that the author intersperses between his recollections and minibiographies cease far before the rise of the granite industry, which has made Barre, in the words of its own tourism promotion, "The Granite Center of the World." If Mr. Davis continues with his series of his own recollections together with the history of Barre, he will find himself having to deal with the "labor/management controversy" (p. 23), which is all he says about the turbulence arising out of working conditions in the granite sheds that made granite big business in late-nineteenth and twentieth-century central Vermont.

By the time that Mr. Davis was growing up, a tuberculosis/silicosis epidemic was raging among the Barre area's granite workers caused by the inhalation of granite dust resulting from the deplorable working conditions in the granite sheds and quarries. While I was teamed up with Kio Granai, trying cases with him in literally every court in the northern part of Vermont, virtually no day passed without him recalling the atrocious

effects of the granite dust on the men he knew who had worked in the granite industry, barely able to walk the few hundred yards to board the trolley, or dying decades ahead of their times.

This "labor/management controversy" ultimately resulted in the declaration of martial law in Barre with the Vermont National Guard patrolling the city's streets armed with machine guns to intimidate the striking granite workers. If Mr. Davis continues his writing, and finally gets to this turbulent period of Barre's history, it will be interesting to see how this author who grew up in a Republican household but became part of the state's Democratic gubernatorial administrations deals with this battle, which was pivotal in Vermont's very own class warfare.

CHARLES S. MARTIN

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A Love Affair with Vermont Weather: A Selection of "Weatherwise" Columns Published in The Herald of Randolph

By Miriam Herwig. *Edited by* Kevin P. Doering (Rutland, Vt.: Sharp & Co. Printers, 2007, pp. xi, 82, paper, $16.00).

I was greatly pleased to review this love affair because I carried on a similar one in Northfield, Vermont, for twenty years as a Cooperative Observer for the National Weather Service just a few miles north of where "Mim" Herwig kept her eye on the weather in Randolph Center. There's just no question about it: Our Vermont weather patterns are totally fascinating with their quirky twists and turns. Never a dull moment.

Mim wrote 1,250 columns from 1978 to 2003 for the newspaper, *Herald of Randolph,* and Kevin Doering has kept "Weatherwise" going since 2003. The book is a selection from her columns arranged chronologically by the months of the year. While most of the writing is chosen directly from Mim's own words, the editor has added much background information and numerous footnotes to elaborate and explain the text, so it does appear that Doering is more of a co-author than simply the editor.

This is the sort of book that's best read in snatches rather than from cover to cover. Avid weather watchers will appreciate the large margins on all pages where they can scribble in their own notes and observations. The book is printed in an attractive typeface on good-quality heavy-stock

paper and is illustrated with paintings and photographs. Nancy Stone's paintings provide an authentic vision of the unique qualities of our Vermont weather and the photographs, mostly by Doering, add a touch of the rural charm of Randolph Center, where all this action took place.

Mim's writing imparts an impressionistic character to her observations. Consider this from October 1980: "The remnants of fall foliage lie like a faded paisley shawl draped over the shoulders of the hills" (p. 64). Or from May 1980, "Buckeyes are opening green leafy fingers to the sky, swamp maples are decorated with red lace and poplars and willows dot the landscape with their bright yellow-greens. Forsythias, which usually bloom only below the snow line because of our severe winters, are putting on a special golden glow" (p. 29). Words like these certainly describe a love affair with Vermont weather. On the other hand, we have from January 1982, "Winter has become our mutual foe—to be conquered by heat at home and skill on the road. Filigrees of frost adorn our windows and smoke curls up from our battle stations. Let the faint-hearted flee—we will continue to resist the elements." Mim calls our attention in 1994 to the "Winter Haters Club" with these words: "It has been rumored that the subversive group called Winter Haters Anonymous has reformed in the vicinity of Randolph Center. The group first formed in 1979, a landmark winter, but recent mild excuses for the season caused the organization to atrophy. Now the winter of 1993–94 has re-energized the worthy group. Sworn to eternal vengeance against the forces of evil which block driveways with snow and cause tempers to boil, members have vowed to publicly burn postcards or any communications from erstwhile friends frolicking in such balmy climates as Florida, California or worse yet, Hawaii. . . . As the wind howls around the eaves, the winter haters howl around the fireplace, raising glasses to the early end of winter. . . . The motto, like the fraternity oath, is unprintable" (p. 5).

Mim calls the reader's attention to unusual atmospheric phenomena such as "sun dogs" or "parhelia." These are sometimes seen, especially in winter, near sunrise or sunset, as a rainbow effect on either side of the sun. They are caused by the refraction of sunlight through a myriad of tiny snow crystals high in the atmosphere. Some weather watchers claim that sun dogs are the precursor of a storm.

As I have suggested in the above excerpts from Mim's writing, this book is not a catalog of climatological observations with temperature, precipitation, and wind speed numbers all ranked in boxes. For that information one will have to turn to the National Weather Service databases. Mim and Kevin Doering are to be commended for their work in preserving these delightful nuggets of our sometimes exasperating, but never boring Vermont weather.

The book is available at the Vermont Historical Society, and a few Vermont bookstores; it can also be ordered directly from Kevin P. Doering, P.O. Box 97, Randolph Center, VT 05061; $20.00 postpaid.

WILLIAM E. OSGOOD

Bill Osgood is a retired librarian living in Shelburne, Vermont.

Barn Building: The Golden Age of Barn Construction

By Jon Radojkovic (Erin, Ontario: Boston Mills Press, 2007, pp. 192, $35.00).

This recent work by Ontario photographer and barn preservation advocate, Jon Radojkovic, easily fits into the coffee-table book genre. Its wide page format, eye-catching glossy cover, and magnificent color photographs printed on coated stock, all reinforce this positive impression of a book that could be prominently displayed in one's home or be well received as a gift.

Although not intended as scholarly research work, the text clearly shows that the author has acquired a broad understanding of historic barn types through his extensive travel in search of historic barns in rural northeastern North America. The narrative is mainly a first-person account of these various discoveries, enriched with information provided through conversations with barn owners and others encountered during this pursuit.

The chapters are generally organized by barn type, following a chronological sequence that runs from the 1600s to the mid-twentieth century. Within these chapters, characteristic construction techniques are discussed and illustrated with line drawings and photographs of hundreds of eye-catching barns and their distinctive features.

Nearly half of the photographs are reproduced on full pages, giving the book an informal and accessible feel. One can open the book at virtually any point and be drawn in by Radojkovic's wonderful color images. By casually leafing through the pages it almost seems as if one were driving down a winding rural road that leads to amazing barns around every bend.

Vermonters may find a special connection with this book, as dozens of picturesque Vermont barns are included in this magical journey. In fact, there seem to be more photos from Vermont than from anywhere else. Maybe this should not come as a surprise, but rather as an indication of

how Vermont's remarkable resource of surviving historic farm buildings can help contribute to our understanding of the rural heritage of North America.

Perhaps most refreshing is how this book so comfortably embraces the cultural heritage of the farming region that extends from Ontario to Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Québec. Examples include English barns in New York, Ontario, Quebéc, Pennsylvania, and Vermont; Amish bank barns in Ontario and Ohio; and round barns in Michigan, Ohio, Québec, and Ontario. Some of the most intriguing examples, however, are the many polygonal barns scattered across this broad region, including the amazing 1882 Walbridge barn with its twelve red gables radiating from a center core, located just north of the Vermont line in Mystic, Québec.

By moving beyond the typical confines of national parochialism, this work offers tangible proof of the common threads that have long connected the hopes and heritage of those who have worked the land. This book also provides a wonderful inspiration to explore the back roads of this trans-border region in search of the many treasures—both architectural and cultural—that await discovery.

THOMAS D. VISSER

Thomas D. Visser directs the graduate program in historic preservation in the department of history at the University of Vermont and is the author of Field Guide to New England Barns and Farm Buildings *(1997).*

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Books

Aikenhead, Steve, compiler, *Weathersfield Tales: A Treasury of Stories from a Vermont Village.* Weathersfield, Vt.: Summer Hill Books, 2005. 182p. Source: Town of Weathersfield, P.O. Box 265, Perkinsville, VT 05151. List: $5.00 (paper).

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*Indicates books available through the Vermont Historical Society Museum Store.

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Paige, H. Brooke, *History of the Vermont Farm Machine Co., Bellows Falls.* Washington, Vt.: The author, 2008. 8p. Source: The author, Town Road #17, Box #41, Washington, VT 05675. List: Unknown (paper).

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*Wells, William, and Anna Richardson, edited by Elliott W. Hoffman, *A Vermont Cavalryman in War and Love: The Civil War Letters of Brevet Major General William Wells and Anna Richardson.* Lynchburg, Va.: Schroeder Publishing, 2007. 544p. List: $45.00.

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