# VERMONT HISTORY

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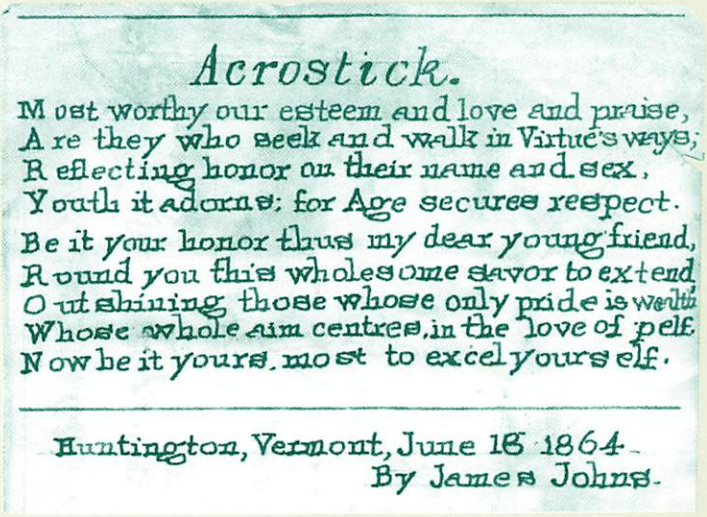

Acrostick.

Most worthy our esteem and love and praise,
Are they who seek and walk in Virtue's ways;
Reflecting honor on their name and sex,
Youth it adorns; for Age secures respect.
Be it your honor thus my dear young friend,
Round you this wholesome savor to extend
Outshining those whose only pride is wealth
Whose whole aim centres in the love of pelf.
Now be it yours most to excel yourself.

Huntington, Vermont, June 16 1864.
By James Johns.



**The Journal of the Vermont Historical Society**

# VERMONT HISTORY

*The Journal of the Vermont Historical Society*

Vol. 79, No. 2
Summer/Fall 2011

VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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VERMONT HISTORY

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# Book Reviews

# About the Cover Illustrations

## James Johns: Fastidious Vermont Chronicler

James Johns (1797–1874) was an intriguing, inventive, reclusive Vermonter living in the first half of the nineteenth century. Like Wilson "Snowflake" Bentley two generations later, Johns was a Vermont farm boy with a single-minded devotion to an art form. For Bentley it was photographing snowflakes; for Johns it was pen printing. Bentley became famous in his own time for his accomplishments and is widely celebrated today; Johns was known to only a few historians and collectors during his life and today is an obscure figure in Vermont's colorful past.

Johns grew up on a farm in Huntington and lived in that town most of his life. One of six children, he had little opportunity for more than a district school education. Johns, like Bentley, spent most of his life eking out a living as a farmer. Johns, again like Bentley, began his lifetime avocation in his early teens when he began to issue small hand-lettered publications designed to resemble printed works.

Johns's early pen printed work included the "newspaper," *The Vermont Autograph and Remarker,* which he wrote and distributed from as early as 1833 until 1873. In 1857 he acquired a small hand press and used it to publish several small books but abandoned it by the 1860s, returning to printing by hand. He produced the final issue of his newspaper on August 28, 1873, eight months before his death at age seventy-six in Starksboro.

Although the newspaper was Johns's most widely distributed item, his pen-printed output consisted of obituaries, poetry, short stories, essays, sermons, speeches, music, acrostics, and local history. The content of many of these publications was very precise and particular. Johns seemed most comfortable recording the minutiae of his day and of his forbearers. Sometimes he combined several forms to create a unique document. For example, he created "obituary verse" in which he memorialized the deceased. Some of these poems were pen printed and a few were published on his letter press. His acrostics (front cover) are poems in which each letter of an individual's name is the first letter of each line of the poem.

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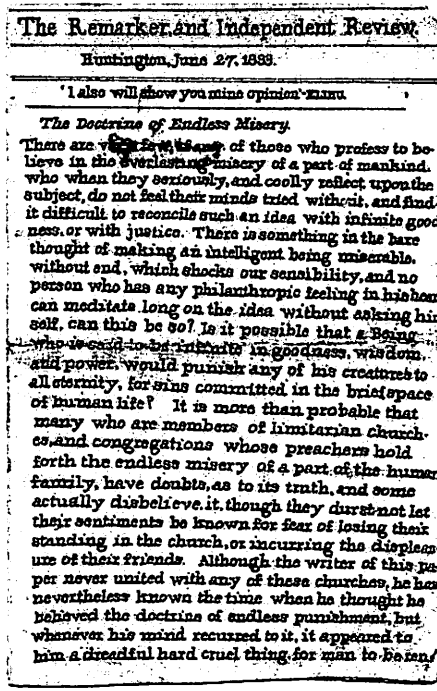


The Remarker and Independent Review.

Huntington, June 27, 1833.

'I also will show you mine opinion'—Elihu.

*The Doctrine of Endless Misery.*

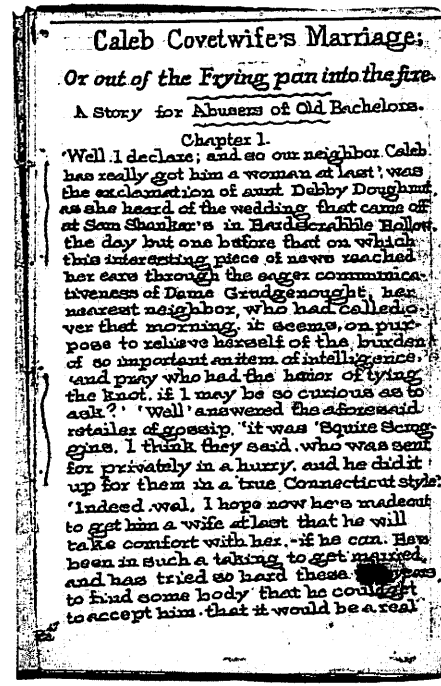
There are very few, I think, of those who profess to believe in the everlasting misery of a part of mankind, who when they seriously, and coolly reflect upon the subject, do not feel their minds tried without, and find it difficult to reconcile such an idea with infinite goodness, or with justice. There is something in the bare thought of making an intelligent being miserable, without end, which shocks our sensibility, and no person who has any philanthropic feeling in his heart can meditate long on the idea without asking himself, can this be so? Is it possible that a Being who is said to be infinite in goodness, wisdom, and power, would punish any of his creatures to all eternity, for sins committed in the brief space of human life? It is more than probable that many who are members of Unitarian churches and congregations whose preachers hold forth the endless misery of a part of the human family, have doubts, as to its truth, and some actually disbelieve it, though they durst not let their sentiments be known for fear of losing their standing in the church, or incurring the displeasure of their friends. Although the writer of this paper never united with any of these churches, he has nevertheless known the time when he thought he believed the doctrine of endless punishment, but whenever his mind recurred to it, it appeared to him a dreadful hard cruel thing, for man to believ

The Remarker and Independent Review, *the predecessor of a newspaper pen-printed by James Johns, June 27, 1833. James Johns Papers, Vermont Historical Society Library, Barre, MS 61B:8.*

Johns also recorded history, using his talents to document the unfolding history of his rural town. In a series of diaries from 1830 to 1873, Johns chronicled the weather, local accidents, births, deaths, and marriages of Huntington as well as personal events. The diaries, which Johns called variously *Weather Journal, Minutes,* or *Yearly Chronicle,* are handwritten and bound in brown paper, often with a pen-printed cover title. Johns pen printed annual lists of the members of the Vermont legislature from 1796–1843 and made handwritten copies of votes in the 1840s on various Vermont legislative issues that interested him.

Johns also used his historical knowledge and interest to create short stories, such as the one shown below. According to biographer Robert W. G. Vail, writing in *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America,* "As Johns left the Green Mountains only once or twice in his life time, his inspiration was entirely local. But he was well informed on the history of his state and read everything he could find to supplement the tales he had learned in his boyhood from the veterans of the Revolution and the War of 1812 who had been his father's neighbors."

The Vermont Historical Society's Leahy Library has what is thought to be the largest collection of James Johns's work in a research repository. Both of the two great builders of the VHS collections in the twentieth



Caleb Covetwife's Marriage;

*Or out of the Frying pan into the fire.*

A Story for Abusers of Old Bachelors.

Chapter 1.

'Well I declare; and so our neighbor Caleb has really got him a woman at last' was the exclamation of aunt Debby Doughnut, as she heard of the wedding that came off at Sam Shanker's in Bardeerabble Hollow, the day but one before that on which this interesting piece of news reached her ears through the eager communicativeness of Dame Grudgenought, her nearest neighbor, who had called over that morning, it seems, on purpose to relieve herself of the burden of so important an item of intelligence, 'and pray who had the honor of tying the knot, if I may be so curious as to ask?' 'Well' answered the aforesaid retailer of gossip, 'it was 'Squire Scroggins. I think they said, who was sent for privately in a hurry, and he did it up for them in a true Connecticut style.' 'Indeed, wel, I hope now he's made out to get him a wife at last that he will take comfort with her, - if he can. Has been in such a taking to get married, and has tried so hard these [redacted] to find some body that he could get to accept him, that it would be a real

*"Caleb Covetwife's Marriage; or Out of the Frying Pan into the Fire," an example of a short story by James Johns, no date. James Johns Papers, Vermont Historical Society Library, Barre, MS 61:18.*

century had a hand in assembling this remarkable collection. Trustee and librarian Dorman B. E. Kent acquired the core of the Johns collection from the influential Rutland antiquarian book dealer Charles E. Tuttle and gave them to the Vermont Historical Society in 1920. In 1957 additional items, largely Johns's poetry, were acquired as part of the large collection of Vermontiana bequeathed to the VHS by Dartmouth librarian Harold G. Rugg.

A complete description of the James Johns collection at the VHS, written by volunteer Priscilla Page, can be accessed on the Internet at www.vermonthistory.org/documents/findaid/johns.pdf. Additional biographical information on Johns can be found in *The Vermont Encyclopedia* (2003):171 and in *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* (27, pt.2 [1933]):89–132.

PAUL CARNAHAN, *Librarian*

*Front cover: Acrostic in honor of Mary Brown, an example of poetry by James Johns, 1864 (James Johns Papers, Vermont Historical Society Library, Barre, MS 61A:10).*

*Back cover: Ambrotype of James Johns, ca. 1850. Gift of Alice Benjamin Keith, 1958.*

# The Strange Career of Benjamin Franklin Prentiss, Antislavery Lawyer

*A nineteenth-century genealogist alleged that Prentiss, the young St. Albans amanuensis of Jeffrey Brace's 1810 memoir,* The Blind African Slave, *practiced law in Richmond, Virginia, and ran a plantation in Wheeling, West Virginia. Although this curious story may have emerged from a confusion of two generations of the same name, the verifiable traces of Benjamin Franklin Prentiss's life offer a haunting glimpse into the tragedies and possibilities of 1810s Vermont.*

*By* KARI J. WINTER

Under a glass case in the Special Collections Room of the University of Vermont's Bailey/Howe Library rests a small book with rough, decaying edges. If you are permitted to hold it in your hands, you will find that it smells of dust and decay. If

KARI J. WINTER is Professor of American Studies and Director of the Gender Institute at SUNY at Buffalo. She is the author of *The American Dreams of John B. Prentis, Slave Trader* (University of Georgia Press, 2011) and *Subjects of Slavery, Agents of Change: Women and Power in Gothic Novels and Slave Narratives, 1790–1865* (University of Georgia Press, 1992, 1995, 2010); the editor of Jeffrey Brace's 1810 memoir of slavery, *The Blind African Slave* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2005); and has published many articles on slavery, race, gender, and class in the Atlantic world from the eighteenth century to the present.

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you open it, its breath will mingle with yours, and you will run the danger of becoming entangled in a conversation between an odd couple—an elderly African man and a young New England lawyer—who were kindred spirits. The manual labor of a teenaged newspaper apprentice painstakingly created the physical artifact, the relic. Its living soul emerges from the human imagination.

Amid the scattered archival fragments that document the existence of Benjamin Franklin Prentiss, the only remnant that still throbs with life is this book, this conversation with Jeffrey Brace, published in 1810 under the title *The Blind African Slave: Or Memoirs of Boyrereau Brinch, Nicknamed Jeffrey Brace.* While researching the memoir for its first republication in 200 years, I uncovered a wealth of information about Jeffrey Brace but was able to find only minimal traces of Prentiss, which I summarized in my introduction.

> *The Blind African Slave* gives no indication of how Jeffrey Brace and his amanuensis-editor Benjamin Franklin Prentiss met or why they agreed to collaborate on the memoir. Admitted to the Franklin County Bar in August 1808, Prentiss apparently made almost as little money as a lawyer as he did from sales of the book. On June 5, 1811, he was residing in the household of Luther Whitcomb in Milton, a small town south of St. Albans [Vermont], when the town selectmen directed the constable to warn him and his family, along with Whitcomb and five other families, to leave town . . . . Benjamin Prentiss thus appears to have been a young man with little social or financial support in the 1810s, and thereafter he disappears from the historical record.[1]

I wondered what motivated a young white lawyer of meager financial means to help an elderly black man tell his life story when he himself was struggling to establish a career and support a fragile family, but my efforts to glean more information were stymied until January 2006, when Marjorie Strong, an assistant librarian at the Vermont History Center, led me to an obscure genealogical book, *The History and Genealogy of the Prentice, or Prentiss Family, in New England, Etc., from 1631 to 1883,* in which Charles J. F. Binney asserts that Benjamin Franklin Prentiss owned a plantation near Wheeling, Virginia, and practiced law in Richmond, which was almost 250 miles south of Wheeling. Binney also alleges that Prentiss died in Richmond in March 1817.[2]

Genealogical sources are often helpful in historical research, but they are notoriously unreliable. While I had good reasons to doubt the veracity of Binney's claims about Prentiss, I found the mystery of his life even more intriguing. I embarked on a fresh round of research that took me to Virginia, Vermont, Québec, New York, and Ohio in hopes of finding more clues to Prentiss's story. In this article, I closely read

the archival traces of his life in conjunction with the social conditions within and against which he lived.

Benjamin Franklin Prentiss was an heir to all of his names. In keeping with the inattentive spelling customs of his day, his surname was recorded as Prentice, Prentis, or, most often, Prentiss. The name emerged from a social station of manual labor, apprenticeship. Its meanings include: To send or put to prentice; to bind as apprentice. A learner generally; a disciple. An apprentice at law. A prentice-boy, -girl, -lad, -years; often implying inexperience as of a novice or beginner (adapted from the Oxford English Dictionary). His first name was a nod to an uncle named Benjamin but his full given name, Benjamin Franklin, was a tribute to the printer, scientist, philanthropist, statesman, and author of *Poor Richard's Almanac,* who was already, at the time of the baby's 1774 birth, the most famous American in the world, although his most important achievements in diplomacy and literature were yet to come. The name Benjamin Franklin Prentiss thus expressed Enlightenment values of hard work and public spirit.

Benjamin's father, Dr. Jonathan Prentiss, was the son of a wealthy English farmer who had immigrated to Massachusetts and a "doctoress" who was the granddaughter of Earl Gilbert, a Scottish peer. Dr. Prentiss married Margaret Daniels, the great-granddaughter of a Scottish aristocrat, Lord Edgecombe, and she gave birth to their second son, Benjamin Franklin, on July 29, 1774, during a high pitch of Revolutionary fervor in New London, Connecticut. Like many eighteenth-century Americans, the Prentisses were nomadic. During wartime and postwar chaos, the Prentisses moved from one New England town to another. In 1779, they were in Wilbraham, Massachusetts, when their third child died at the age of two. In 1790, Margaret gave birth to her tenth child in Lempster, New Hampshire. Jonathan and Margaret had thirteen children in all, most of whom survived into adulthood. After moving time and again, the family joined a flood of immigrants to the booming frontier state of Vermont. They settled in St. Albans, a port and trading entrepot located on a bay of Lake Champlain near the Canadian border.

Although a cultural outpost, St. Albans was roiling with national and transatlantic controversies when Dr. and Mrs. Prentiss arrived with their large family of teenagers and young children. Lake Champlain, stretching for one hundred twenty miles between the Adirondack Mountains of New York and the Green Mountains of Vermont, served as a vital trade route for lumber and other goods that were transported via connecting waterways north to Montreal and south to New York City. The lake bustled with steamboats, sloops, schooners, canoes, and

other vessels during every season except winter, when much of its surface froze. In 1800, St. Albans comprised 121 households with a population that the U.S. census counted as 901, a number that included an active military company but did not include Indians, whom early U.S. census takers did not count. Despite their official invisibility, hundreds of Abenakis lived in the region. Dozens of free blacks also lived in the area, as did French Canadians or Acadians and other diverse peoples. The borderlands were religiously, linguistically, and ethnically heterogeneous, rife with Anglo-French, white-Indian-black, and American-Canadian collaboration and conflict. The village of St. Albans clustered along Main, Lake, Fairfield, Congress, and a few other streets dotted with log cabins, colonial frame houses, three or four general stores, a drug store, a bank, a tannery, saw mills, barns, stables, a woolen mill, a grist mill, an ashery, a park, and a cemetery. Sailors and visitors were plentiful enough to support three boarding houses or hotels in St. Albans.

Dr. Jonathan Prentiss was described by contemporaries as "thick set, square, remarkably spry, and powerful" as well as "quick-tempered and persistent."[3] He developed a stable practice as a physician that necessitated travel to neighboring villages and backwoods farms. The family's persistence in the area suggests that they prospered. Historian Jeffrey Potash found that in Vermont "there was a strong correlation from 1795 to 1806 between persistence and wealth."[4] At the age of seventy-six, it was said, Dr. Prentiss could still outjump the smartest young men. His wife Margaret was a "shortish, plump, smart, neat, very industrious, very worthy, and genial person, of lively, pleasant wit, and always feeling well."[5] The couple's sons entered various professions and their daughters married respectably, establishing a clan whose branches extended throughout the northern Champlain Valley, from Burlington to Milton and St. Albans, where Dr. Prentiss would continue living until his death in 1833.

At the turn of the century, Benjamin Franklin Prentiss, in his mid-twenties, was reading for the law and living in Granville, New York, a small town near the Vermont border. In February 1801, at the age of twenty-six, he married a nineteen-year-old Bostonian, Elizabeth Warren Chase, in Whitehall, New York, across the state line from Poultney, Vermont, where the sixty-year-old Jeffrey Brace was living at the time. Elizabeth was the daughter of Elizabeth (Begnell) and Thomas Chase, a Revolutionary War general who had died in Boston in 1787, shortly after Elizabeth's seventh birthday. Within six years of her marriage to Benjamin, Elizabeth gave birth to five children, only two of whom survived into adulthood: their third child, America Frances Arabella Prentiss, usually called Arabella, born in New York on April 17, 1804,

and their fourth child, Joseph Gilbert Prentiss, born in New York on April 8, 1807.

With these two children in tow, Benjamin and Elizabeth Prentiss relocated to St. Albans, where Benjamin was admitted to the Franklin County Bar in August 1808. As the shire town of Franklin County, St. Albans housed the county courthouse and supported a burgeoning legal profession. But as an aspiring young lawyer Prentiss faced stiff competition. At least ten lawyers were already practicing in the town, the most formidable of whom was Cornelius Van Ness (1782–1852), who had moved to St. Albans from Kinderhook, New York, in 1806 with an inherited fortune of $40,000. He was thriving as a lawyer, businessman, banker, and politician and would be elected governor of Vermont in 1823. Prentiss's chances at a strong professional start were further diminished by the fact that the economic boom of his parents' generation was collapsing. The era was economically and politically turbulent. Britain's abolitionist movement had succeeded in getting the transatlantic slave trade legally abolished in 1807, and the United States followed suit in 1808, but the trade continued illicitly. Thomas Jefferson had enjoyed several years of popularity in Vermont; by 1807 his party had won Vermont's governorship for the first time, a majority in the general assembly, and many seats in the United States House and Senate. However, when President Jefferson decided to impose an embargo banning trade with Canada as well as Great Britain, he was vilified throughout New England, where the embargo caused extreme economic hardship, inflamed sectional politics, and intensified resentment against Virginia's federal dominance. New England's hatred of slaveholders grew after the South gained power from the three-fifths compromise, which enabled southerners to gain congressional representatives by counting the people whom they enslaved as three-fifths of a person. Anger at Jefferson and his power base enabled Vermont's Federalists to regain some seats in the 1808 elections. When the Jeffersonian Governor Israel Smith attempted to enforce the embargo by calling out troops to combat smuggling, he lost the governorship to his Federalist opponent, Isaac Tichenor. Some New Englanders were so enraged by the embargo that they advocated seceding from the Union. Northern Vermont in particular was intimately intertwined in economic and personal relationships with southern Québec. Although some Vermonters were able to profit from the embargo by developing local industries and/or trading illicitly with Canada, many others suffered severe economic disruption and hardship. The prices of daily necessities skyrocketed.

In St. Albans, the proximity of the Canadian border enabled lucrative and lively smuggling, which supporters of the embargo struggled to

thwart. Prentiss's Jeffersonian competitor-at-law, Cornelius Van Ness, devoted himself to prosecuting smugglers such as Dr. John Stoddard, a St. Albans merchant and owner of a general store who ran Lake Champlain's most infamous smuggling boat, the *Black Snake.* In contrast, while launching his career as a Franklin County lawyer, Benjamin Prentiss devoted himself to talking with Jeffrey Brace, who had moved to the area with his family a few years earlier. Prentiss took an avid interest in Brace's life story and spent countless hours interviewing him, transcribing his story, researching his African origins, and preparing the manuscript for publication. In brief, *The Blind African Slave* recounts the story of Brace's birth in West Africa around 1742, capture by slave traders in 1758, transportation to Barbados, service in the Seven Years War, enslavement in Connecticut, service in the American Revolution, and eventual freedom in Vermont where, despite many severe struggles with racism and poverty, he married an African widow named Susan (Susannah) Dublin, raised a family, worked as a farmer and laborer, and became a part of a multiracial evangelical network of antislavery agitators.

Although they had to pay mandatory religious taxes until 1810, St. Albans residents embraced heterogeneous religious doctrines and practices. Some people remained, by conviction, indifference, or force of habit, in their forefathers' faiths, which ranged from traditional New England Congregationalism and Episcopalianism to French Catholicism and Irish Protestantism. Some residents of St. Albans maintained or adopted world views that were interlaced, consciously or unconsciously, with Abenaki and African traditions. The deism advocated by Ethan Allen was popular in turn-of-the-century Vermont, and some people remained agnostic free-thinkers for life, while others eventually joined more conventional churches or were set ablaze by the passionate evangelism of Methodists and Baptists. In the spring of 1801, the first flames of the Second Great Awakening swept through northern Vermont, and revivals would continue to ignite and burn wildly for the next three decades. Freewill Baptists, who broke from Calvinist Baptists' cold doctrines to embrace a more democratic worldview, flourished in Vermont, becoming leaders in the movements against slavery and in favor of temperance and women's rights.[6] One of the converts to the Freewill Baptist faith was Jeffrey Brace.[7] Prentiss, who partially wrote and partially transcribed Brace's memoir, represents Brace's conversion sympathetically, but he does not identify himself as sharing Brace's religious views. Indeed, he distances himself from the memoir's abundant Biblical quotations by telling the reader that they were "inserted by the request of the narrator, and under his immediate direction."[8] The sections of

*The Blind African Slave* that we can identify confidently as contributions from Prentiss suggest that his interests inclined more toward the secular concerns of politics, farming, science, and geography than toward religion. The rhetoric he uses when speaking in his own voice is the Enlightenment rhetoric of natural rights, civil liberty, and religious tolerance.

*The Blind African Slave* leaves no doubt that Prentiss passionately embraced abolitionist and egalitarian politics. His introduction to the book is infused with outrage over slavery. He exclaims: "When we look at the custom of European and American nations of purchasing, stealing, and decoying in to the chains of bondage the negroes of Africa, and the custom sanctioned by the laws of the several governments; that public and private sales are legal; that they are bartered, sold, and used as beasts of the field, to the disgrace of civilization, civil liberty, and christianity; each manly feeling swells with indignation at the horrid spectacle, and whoever has witnessed the miserable and degraded situation to which these unfortunate mortals are reduced, in the West Indies and southern states of United America, must irresistibly be led to ask—Does not civilization produce barbarity? Liberty legalize tyranny? And christianity deny the humanity it professes?"[9] Prentiss concludes his introduction by asserting, "Whoever wishes to preserve the constitution of our general government, to keep sacred the enviable and inestimable principles, by which we are governed, and to enjoy the natural liberty of man, must embark on the great work of exterminating slavery and promoting general emancipation."[10]

Prentiss's indignation over the abomination of slavery inspired him to pour time and energy into helping Brace recount his experiences. Although sympathetic to the New England Federalist camp that was agitating against the power of southern slaveholders, Prentiss could not feel comfortable with their regional politics because Brace's story did not depict *Southern* slavery. It exposed *Yankee* involvement in the slave trade and, more explosively, called attention to the cruelty of slavery within respectable Congregationalist households. Antislavery sentiment had gradually prevailed in Northern states after the Revolution. "By 1804, every Northern state had committed itself to abolition, the result of a process that ranged from the efforts of the General Court of Massachusetts to establish gradual abolition laws in 1773 and 1774 to New Jersey's gradual emancipation statute of 1804."[11] Gradual abolition laws did not emancipate all slaves in the North, however. Some remained in bondage as late as the Civil War. Furthermore, "freedom" was viciously circumscribed for Northern blacks and Indians, who encountered innumerable obstacles to education, economic advancement, housing,

church membership, and social acceptance. Antislavery rhetoric often was infused with anti-black sentiment and worked hand-in-hand with racist social policies, economic practices, and legislation. Many antislavery agitators hated slavery in part because they hated blacks. Prentiss and Brace risked opprobrium and isolation by calling attention to the severe problems of racism in the North. They were insisting on opening a discussion that many northerners found intolerable.[12]

In addition to listening to and recording Brace's recollections, Prentiss read widely in the extant literature about Africa. The thematic concerns of *The Blind African Slave* indicate that he was deeply curious about African agriculture, flora, fauna, languages, governments, religions, laws, and customs. Aside from the Bible, the texts that Prentiss cites in *The Blind African Slave* can be divided into two groups: antislavery works and geographical or travel writings about Africa. They include the following:

"The Negro Boy," a popular antislavery song published in Washington, D.C. (1802)

"Help! Oh, help! thou God of Christians!" an anonymous, untitled antislavery poem published in the *Boston Weekly Magazine* (14 April 1804)

Cowper, William. "The Negro's Complaint" (first published in London in 1788 and reprinted often in the United States)

Damberger, Christian Frederick (pseudonym). *Travels through the Interior of Africa* (London and Boston, 1801)

Guthrie, William. *A New Geographical, Historical, and Commercial Grammar: and Present State of the Several Kingdoms of the World* (Philadelphia, 1809)

Hornemann, Friedrich, James Rennal, William Marsden, et al., *The Journal of Friedrich Hornemann's Travels, From Cairo to Mourzouk, the Capital of the Kingdom of Fezzan, in Africa* (London, 1802)

Morse, Jedidiah. *The American Geography; or, A View of the Present Situation of the United States of America* (London, 1792)

Shaw, Thomas. *Travels; or, Observations Relating to Several Parts of Barbary and Levant* (Oxford, 1738)

A well-educated man from an extended family of moderate means, Prentiss may have obtained reading materials from his family library, from bookstores or lending libraries, which were common features in Vermont towns, or from the University of Vermont, which was located about thirty miles south of St. Albans. His allusions to political events throughout the Atlantic world demonstrate that he read widely in the

newspapers and periodicals that were available throughout New England. He could have come across Olaudah Equiano's pioneering memoir of slavery, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African,* an American edition of which had been published in New York in 1791, but *The Blind African Slave* does not allude explicitly to Equiano.[13] Prentiss and Brace do mention "the pathetic and persuasive eloquence" of the ministers in the "African churches, in the cities of New York and Philadelphia," which suggests that they were aware of a network of African and African-American preachers, intellectuals, and activists that was spreading throughout the Northeast.[14] Closer to home, Prentiss and Brace may have heard the powerful sermons of the black Vermont Congregationalist minister, Lemuel Haynes. Brace himself was becoming a sought-after antislavery speaker who sometimes traveled with the black preacher, Rev. Charles Bowles.

The first book published in the town of St. Albans, *The Blind African Slave* was printed by an eighteen-year-old newspaper apprentice named Harry Whitney. Prentiss filed for copyright by depositing a copy of the book's title page with the clerk of the federal district court in St. Albans on June 20, 1810. The newspaper for which Whitney worked, the *Franklin County Advertiser,* advertised the book weekly between July and October. The newspaper's printing presses were housed in a new brick store located across from the courthouse on the town green. Vermonters were avid readers, and they most likely congregated often in the brick store, where they could purchase a variety of weeklies, periodicals, almanacs, and books as well as paper, pens, and groceries.

On October 18, 1810, the *Franklin County Advertiser* announced that *The Blind African Slave* would be "ready for delivery on Wednesday next" and that copies could be obtained from Prentiss and Whitney. Both men, along with Brace, most likely cherished dreams of distributing the book widely throughout Vermont, New York, Québec, the Northeast, and even the South through shipping to bookstores and selling to itinerant peddlers. Unfortunately, the *Franklin County Advertiser* went out of business within days of publishing the book. The hopes of all three men for brisk sales were dashed. Whitney moved on, searching for a position with another town's newspaper.[15]

Despite disappointing sales, *The Blind African Slave* did exert some influence on local, state, and national politics. In 1852, a black Vermonter named John W. Lewis asserted that Brace's "noble pious character had a powerful influence on the public mind in Vermont. . . . At Camp, Quarterly, or Yearly Meetings, Conferences, or associations of all denominations, an interview with brother Jeffrey, was eagerly sought

and enjoyed, by ministers and people."[16] Few explicit acknowledgments of Brace's influence survive in archives, but the careers of people with whom he or his life story intersected testify to his presence. For instance, Lawrence Brainerd, who arrived in St. Albans from Troy, New York, in 1808 at the age of fourteen with twenty-five cents in his pocket, developed an intense hatred for slavery while peddling walnuts and working as a clerk for thirty-four dollars a year in the little town, where he had many occasions to encounter the striking figure of the elderly blind African and to hear or read his life story. Beloved for his compassion, generosity, and commitment to social welfare, Brainerd would become celebrated as "one of the first citizens of his state to espouse the antislavery case."[17] He would prosper in St. Albans as the owner of a general store and eventually would be elected to the U.S. Senate. Brace's story also appears to have influenced the political views of Horace Greeley, who as a sixteen-year-old newspaper apprentice helped to publish and most likely wrote a detailed obituary summarizing Brace's life for the East Poultney newspaper, *The Northern Spectator.*[18] Shortly after publishing this obituary, Greeley left Poultney for New York City, where he became a powerful political force and founded the staunchly antislavery *New York Tribune,* the leading newspaper in the antebellum North.

During the years when Benjamin Franklin Prentiss was working on *The Blind African Slave* and attempting to establish himself as a lawyer, his closest brother, Jonathan, settled with his wife, Hannah Sparhawk, in Milton and gave their second son the name of Benjamin Franklin as a tribute to both the baby's uncle and the famous Founding Father. Benjamin's other siblings intermarried with some of northern Vermont's leading families. In 1804, Benjamin's sister Sarah married Heman Allen (1777–1844), who was the premier lawyer in Milton and a distant cousin of Ethan Allen.[19] A tall man of "commanding presence" who combined "massive strength of intellect with inflexible adherence to principle," Heman Allen gained a reputation as "the best real estate lawyer in the circuit"[20] and was elected as a Federalist to represent Milton in the Vermont legislature from 1810, the year *The Blind African Slave* was published, to 1822. In 1826 he would be elected to the first of five terms in the U. S. Congress. In 1810, Benjamin's sister Elvira married Curtis Holgate of Milton, who relocated his family to Burlington and made a fortune by building and selling the first wharf in the Burlington bay.

While Brace and Prentiss's collaborative work helped to foster the political sentiment that would make Vermont the most antislavery state in the Union, the book did not generate the income that Brace and

Prentiss desperately needed. By 1811, the year after *The Blind African Slave* was published, Prentiss had moved with his wife Elizabeth and their two young children to Milton, a village near St. Albans. He was not finding much success either as a lawyer or as a writer-editor, and financial difficulties apparently forced him to reside for a few months in his brother Jonathan's household.[21] Hard times in Vermont were exacerbated by the continuing embargo, which was drastically inflating the cost of both domestic and imported food. If Benjamin and Elizabeth imbibed their era's growing infatuation with material acquisition, they would have suffered serious disappointment as well as discomfort during this time. Prentiss's passion for social activism, however, may have encouraged him to rebel against the acquisitiveness of his age. Indeed, he and his wife appear to have participated in an egalitarian social experiment. In Milton they joined six other families living in the household of a twenty-eight-year-old man named Luther Whitcomb. Whitcomb (b. 1783) and his wife, Polly Hazeltine, whom he had married in 1807, were from Newfane, a village 165 miles south of Milton. They had been living in Milton since at least 1810, when the census listed Luther as the head of a household that included his wife, a male child under the age of ten, and a white man between the ages of 16 and 24. By the summer of 1811, Polly's mother, Mrs. Hazeltine, had joined the household, as had Jonathan Parker (b. 1785) and his wife, Sarah Ann Whitney (b. 1790), who were from Rutland, a large southern Vermont town, where they had married in 1809. Sarah probably was the sister of Harry Whitney, the St. Albans printer of *The Blind African Slave.* I have been unable to uncover any information about the other families residing in Whitcomb's household aside from the men's names and the fact that the entire group, seven families in all, was warned out of Milton on June 5, 1811.[22]

Why were seven families living together in the Whitcomb household? Whitcomb may have been running a poor house, but that explanation would not account for why he himself was considered undesirable by the town's selectmen. It is possible that Whitcomb's household was interracial or was connected to an interracial social alliance, because Jeffrey Brace was warned out of Milton in 1812, a few months after the members of Whitcomb's household. This Jeffrey Brace could have been either the elderly subject of *The Blind African Slave* or his namesake son, Jeffrey Brace Jr., who was seeking employment and may have been friends with Benjamin Prentiss, who was close to him in age. In sum, these warnings out hint at but do not flesh out an intriguing story.

If the members of the Whitcomb household were engaged in a communal experiment, they would have been part of a widespread, often

subterranean, cultural phenomenon. Since the late eighteenth century, many communes had been organized by idealists and discontents in America, Britain, and France. Historians have documented "several attempts to form a more perfect society in Vermont, and there must have been others" that disappeared without an archival trace.[23] Most communes were "dedicated to experimenting with new gender roles and family relationships."[24] For conventional Christians, disregarding property rights and challenging traditional definitions of marriage were logically interconnected, indeed indistinguishable, vices. Marriage legally signified the husband's possession of his wife's body. Most American religions upheld *possession* as a primary article of faith as well as the foundation of the social order. But some social dreamers searched for *a more excellent way.* Notions of possession and private property provided, after all, the legal and ideological foundations of the enslavement and dispossession of Africans and Indians. Prominent as well as obscure American intellectuals were devoted to imagining a more just, humane world. In the 1840s, Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune* advocated the formation of cooperative communities. Ralph Waldo Emerson asserted that, before quarrels broke out at Brook Farm, Massachusetts—the most famous communal experiment in antebellum America—the community had been "the pleasantest of residences."[25]

Critics of communes were mesmerized by the scandalous possibilities of non-possessive, non-hierarchical sex, with its terrifying and exhilarating overtones of anarchy, freedom, and pleasure, but they rarely contemplated the ways in which communal living could transform the relentless rigors of daily life, especially for women. Jeffrey Potash estimates that in order to meet their immediate needs for food, a five-member family in early-nineteenth-century Vermont required "three acres of wheat, two acres for orchard and garden, and ten to twenty acres of fodder-producing land. Animals necessary to support the family [included] five or six cows, two steers, three to four horses, five to six pigs, and a half dozen sheep."[26] In seasonal cycles Vermonters planted, tended, harvested, and stored corn, wheat, rye, barley, flax, potatoes, pumpkins, turnips, parsnips, beans, peas, onions, and herbs. They picked pears and apples from their orchards, pressing and fermenting many bushels of the latter into hard cider. They hunted for game, geese, ducks, wild turkeys, and other birds, fished in Green Mountain lakes and streams, tended domestic animals, churned butter, made cheese, chopped wood and maintained a wood pile. They cultivated or foraged for strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, blackberries, huckleberries, currants, grapes, cherries, and nuts, and tapped maple trees for syrup. With homegrown maple sugar or sugar from West Indian slave plantations, they made

preserves and canned vegetables for the long winter months. In brick ovens or over open fires they cooked stews and puddings, boiled meats and fish, and baked beans, breads, pies, and cakes. They spun yarn; made cloth; sewed, washed, and mended clothes; drew water; cured meats; scrubbed floors, changed diapers, wiped children's noses, tended the sick, and kept the home fires burning, a constant arduous task.

Communal life enabled people to divide and share daily chores, which lightened, sweetened, and varied the ceaseless grind. Precious hours were liberated for pleasures like reading, writing, art, music, conversation, or walking with a friend—activities that were confined to the Sabbath and holidays for many nineteenth-century women.[27] Whether or not they felt oppressed and dreamed of social revolution, the women in Milton, Vermont, lived hardscrabble lives and may well have found Whitcomb's communal household more rewarding than an isolated farmhouse or nuclear home would have been. The young ones, Elizabeth Prentiss, Polly Whitcomb, and Sarah Parker, could work alongside or split duties with the middle-aged Mrs. Hazletine and the household's other unidentified women. The seven families may have been forced to cohabit due to poverty, but since the Prentisses had many well-off relatives in Milton, St. Albans, and Burlington, it seems more likely that they chose to participate in a social experiment. New England was ablaze with dreamers. In the 1840s, Emerson told his friend Thomas Carlyle that almost anyone "you met on the streets of Boston might produce from his waistcoat pocket a community project for the reorganization of society."[28]

Experiments in communal living were hard to sustain, however. Predictably, Milton's selectmen found Whitcomb's group highly objectionable. Warnings out were a common method through which New England towns underscored social norms, absolved taxpayers of financial responsibility for indigent residents, and pressured "outsiders" or undesirables to leave. Individuals who had been warned out often found a way to remain in town, but some were forced to leave by the sheriff and others succumbed to the social pressure. Luther and Polly Whitcomb left Milton and returned to southern Vermont. Jonathan and Sarah Parker moved to Windsor, Vermont, where they both died around the time of the Civil War. However, the recurrence in Milton's nineteenth-century vital records of surnames of the other families in Luther Whitcomb's household suggests that some of them remained in Milton or in the surrounding countryside.

Since Prentiss was a member of an influential extended family, it is puzzling that his family connections did not prevent him from being viewed as undesirable in the eyes of Milton's selectmen. Did Heman Allen resent Prentiss's attempts to establish a law practice that might

compete with his own, or did he dislike Prentiss's antislavery politics? In 1818, Congressman Allen would join the Vermont Colonization Society, which sought to solve "the nigger business," as two Vermont newspapers called it, by relocating blacks from the United States to Africa.[29] Many antislavery Vermonters viewed slavery as a curse not because of its injustice to blacks, but because the proximity of blacks was "ruinous to whites," as J. K. Converse, a Congregationalist pastor in Burlington, would put it in 1832. Converse valued colonization because it promised to free the country not from slavery but from "the unnumbered evils of colored population."[30] Although racist sentiments were not typically as vehement in 1811 as they would become in the 1830s, anthropological theories about "Negro inferiority" were routinely taught in Vermont schools. In short, Milton's selectmen may have used the warning out as a form of censorship against the political beliefs as well as the social practices of the Prentisses and the Whitcomb household.[31]

In an era when racial stereotypes, invective, and epithets saturated Vermont's public discourse, Prentiss promulgated views that were antiracist as well as antislavery. The title he gave Brace's memoir, however, suggests that even Prentiss had difficulty imagining black people in terms that were not abject. He infelicitously chose to title the book "The Blind African Slave" although Brace was never blind during the years that he was enslaved. He went blind gradually in his old age, decades after he had obtained his manumission. Further, blindness is not a topic of any significance within the narrative itself. Although he was not a particularly skilled writer, Prentiss anticipated, in his unfortunate title, a trope that would come to dominate nineteenth- and twentieth-century representations of iconic blackness: the figure of the blind black man who is alternately or simultaneously abject, comedic, and exceptional.[32] As Mary Klages has shown, Western cultural traditions typically represented blindness as "the most severe affliction. The New Testament singles out disabled people, especially the blind, as particularly wretched outcasts who thus gain Christ's attention."[33] On this reading, the addition of "blind" to "African" and "slave" intensifies the severity of Brace's wretchedness. It is also possible that Prentiss, in his unfortunate choice of title, was referencing, consciously or unconsciously, post-Enlightenment discourses that recast blindness "as something understandable and curable," the result, for instance, of untreated disease, physical abuse, and malnutrition.[34] If so, this would have been a theme worth developing in the memoir.

Whatever the weaknesses of Prentiss's writerly achievements, he was distinctly on the most progressive end of the political spectrum in Vermont, and his views certainly would have been controversial. The

Brace family had other white friends—indeed, more powerful friends—in northern Vermont, so Prentiss was by no means anomalous, but he undoubtedly suffered some degree of social ostracism due to his outspoken views. It is probable that his law practice suffered as well. Brace, as narrator of *The Blind African Slave,* alludes to the price Prentiss risked by aligning himself with blacks. In southern Vermont around 1800, Jeffrey and Susan Brace had been forced to surrender Susan's daughter Bathsheba to a white woman who wanted her as an indentured servant. Blacks were widely viewed as incompetent parents, and Brace could not find redress against the white woman. He asks rhetorically, "what lawyer would undertake the cause of an old African Negro against a respectable widow in Manchester, who had many respectable acquaintances. None, for if there had been one willing to take up in my defense, he would have been flung out of business for taking up so dirty a cause against so respectable a personage."[35] This passage suggests that Brace and Prentiss were aware that Prentiss risked professional ruin by taking up Brace's "cause."

On June 18, 1812, a year after the warnings out, President James Madison declared war against Great Britain, plummeting New England's economy into an even deeper recession. In addition to suffering financially, many New Englanders found the war morally repugnant and were outraged by the decision to invade Canada. The Vermont-Québec border was a porous political construct that had done little to inhibit trading and social exchange in the northern woodlands and waterways. Over the next two years the United States suffered a series of military and financial blows. The region from Lake Champlain to Montreal was one of three major military fronts, and Vermont bore intimate witness to disastrous military campaigns. To make matters worse, during the course of one year (1813–1814) an epidemic of diseases, mostly spotted fever, killed 6,000 people in Vermont, including many residents of Milton. Grief and despair caused many people to lose religion and others to find it or to convert from one form to another. Many Vermonters, alongside other New Englanders, began to agitate for seceding from the Union.

Despite the war's unpopularity, many Vermont men served in it, including Benjamin's brother, Captain Jonathan Prentiss, who commanded a company that included fifty Milton men.[36] As is always the case with war, the upheaval that devastated thousands of lives proved lucrative to defense industries and military suppliers as well as to some farmers, merchants, industrialists, clerks, and lawyers. The peace in 1815 introduced new hardships due to fierce industrial competition across the Atlantic world. Many Vermont factories, mills, and quarries

were forced to suspend operations temporarily or shut down permanently as the prices of glass, cotton cloth, iron, and marble plummeted. The dismal economy received further blows in 1816, the year of no summer, when severe cold caused a famine throughout New England. In June 1816, a snowstorm dumped ten inches of snow in some regions of Vermont, and it snowed again in July and August. The summer's frosts and snows damaged all crops, and the weather continued to be unusually cold in 1817. Some families starved to death, while others attempted to survive by foraging for roots and berries. Famine and economic depression, coming on top of years of war and disease, exacerbated the tendency of Vermonters to turn to hard drink. A special committee of Vermont's general assembly reported in 1817 that Vermonters were spending over $1,000,000 a year on strong drink; a town of 2,000 inhabitants was expending approximately $9,000 annually on rum and other drinks, which was more than "the total expenditures for schools and all public expenses."[37]

The United States was rapidly expanding its territories westward, and the decade's hardships caused many desperate New Englanders to emigrate to the west and south. Benjamin Franklin Prentiss may have decided to search for a means to survive in a more prosperous region of the country. According to Binney, he died in Richmond, Virginia, in March 1817. However, Prentiss does not appear on Richmond's tax rolls, land transactions, or on any other extant records during the 1810s, '20s, or '30s. Nor does he appear after 1816 in the records of Vermont, New York, Québec, or any other place in North America, as far as I have been able to discover. If he did die in Richmond, he apparently had not acquired any taxable property. Binney claims that Prentiss worked as a lawyer in Richmond while running a plantation in Wheeling, but I have found no trace of him in Wheeling. The claim is implausible, in any case. Located on the Ohio River between the borders of Pennsylvania and Ohio in Virginia's slim northern panhandle, which would become the antislavery state of West Virginia during the Civil War, Wheeling was closer to Pittsburgh and Cleveland than to Richmond. It would have been difficult for Prentiss to maintain a law practice in Richmond while running a farm in Wheeling. Members of his family did move to Ohio, however, as Binney noted. Sometime after Benjamin died, his widow Elizabeth returned to Milton, where their daughter Arabella married Judah Throop Ainsworth in November 1830. Ten years later, Elizabeth accompanied her daughter, son-in-law, and four young grandchildren to Medina, Ohio, a small town south of Cleveland, where land was much cheaper than it was in New England. Widow Elizabeth Prentiss and the Ainsworths settled in Medina near

the home of Benjamin's brother, Edgecombe Prentiss, and his family. Historical archives do not tell us whether they were attracted or repelled by Ohio's harsh black codes, which attempted to bar free blacks from entering the state and viciously undermined the rights of blacks who already lived there.

Binney's curious story about the fate of Benjamin Franklin Prentiss may have sprung from a confusion between Prentiss and a namesake nephew. In the 1840s the nephew, Benjamin Franklin Prentiss II, divorced his first wife, Mary Hunter, in Milton, Vermont, and married an heiress named Milcena Minton in Richmond, Virginia. Her father was a military general and wealthy planter from whom Benjamin inherited a well-stocked plantation, $25,000, and twenty-nine slaves. When Benjamin moved to Richmond, he took with him a son from his first marriage, James Hunter Prentiss, and his brother, Jonathan Prentiss, who worked as an overseer on his plantation in Henrico County, on the outskirts of Richmond. Jonathan resided in Benjamin's household along with a twenty-eight-year-old free black farmer named Samson Williams, who apparently served as a second overseer or manager.[38]

On most southern plantations overseers were isolated figures who were ostracized by the master's family and despised by slaves. Whether or not Benjamin, whose marriage propelled him into Virginia's planter class, grew to disdain his overseer-brother, personal tax records reveal that as Benjamin gradually grew wealthier, Jonathan grew ever more impoverished. In the best of times, when Benjamin bought a gold watch, his brother could afford no more than a silver one. Over the course of time, Jonathan's personal property dwindled to virtually nothing. Meanwhile, Benjamin and Milcena had four children together, only one of whom, Benjamin Franklin Jonathan Prentiss, survived to adulthood. In October 1858, Benjamin Franklin Prentiss II, the joint heir of Vermont abolitionists and Virginia slaveholders, was thrown from his horse-drawn carriage and died. His brother Jonathan never married, and if he had children he did not claim them legally. He vanished during the Civil War, and his surviving relatives assumed he died in military service. Whether he fought for the Union or the Confederacy, for Vermont or Virginia, for slavery or against it, remains unknown.

In August 1865, shortly after the Civil War ended, a poet named John Trowbridge visited Cemetery Hill in Gettysburg, where he confronted the unspeakable horror of innumerable rotting corpses. Overwhelmed by anonymous carnage, he wondered how he could affirm the value of human life when he was watching "a veritable production line making stones lettered 'Unknown.'"[39] His response was elegaic; he sought for words to recognize and memorialize the Unknown—the stories of lives

and deaths that "I could never know; in this world, none will ever know."[40] Like many of the soldiers who fought to end or to perpetuate slavery, the fate of antislavery lawyer Benjamin Franklin Prentiss is shrouded in mystery. The incomplete information that can be pieced together from documentary evidence reminds us that "Unknown" aptly encapsulates the lion's share of human life. Benjamin Franklin Prentiss did not attempt to publicize or flesh out his personal story; rather, he devoted his youthful energies to writing Jeffrey Brace's story, not to create an icon but to help end an execrable social institution. Whatever his fate may have been after the book was published, his rare and strange achievement was that, for the months or years that it took to produce Brace's memoir, he managed to push aside the iron bars of the self and listen to the voice of another.

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## Notes

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[1] Kari J. Winter, "Introduction," *The Blind African Slave: Or Memoirs of Boyrereau Brinch, Nicknamed Jeffrey Brace* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005), 62–63.

[2] Charles J. F. Binney, *The History and Genealogy of the Prentice, or Prentiss Family, in New England, Etc., from 1631 to 1883* (Boston: Published by the Editor, 1883), 303.

[3] Binney, *Prentice Family,* 290.

[4] P. Jeffrey Potash, *Vermont's Burned-Over District: Patterns of Community Development and Religious Activity, 1761–1850* (New York: Carlson, 1991), 43.

[5] Binney, *Prentice Family,* 290.

[6] David M. Ludlum, *Social Ferment in Vermont, 1791–1850* (New York: AMS Press, 1966), 35.

[7] Jane Williamson's current research-in-progress on blacks in early Vermont indicates that many or most of the black farmers and town dwellers sprinkled around the state associated with Baptist churches.

[8] Brace, *Blind African Slave,* 183.

[9] Ibid., 89–90.

[10] Ibid., 90.

[11] Matthew Mason, *Slavery and Politics in the Early American Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 14.

[12] As late as the 1930s, when Richard Wright submitted his novelized autobiography *American Hunger* to Dorothy Canfield Fisher, the Vermont editor of the Book-of-the-Month Club, Fisher told him to cut the last third of the book that described northern racism. The book was published as *Black Boy*, a version that conformed to the formula of antebellum slave narratives in which slavery and racism were depicted as Southern problems in contrast to the egalitarian North, where blacks were "free at last."

[13] British editions of Equiano had been available since 1789. In 1791 W. Durell printed and sold the first American edition at his bookstore and printing office at 19 Q Street in New York City.

[14] Brace, *Blind African Slave*, 155.

[15] Whitney printed newspapers in several Vermont towns until the economic hardships of 1816–17 forced him to declare bankruptcy. He died the next year, near the age of thirty. The elderly Brace outlived both his young amanuensis and his young printer. Surviving into his late 80s, he died in Georgia, Vermont, on April 20, 1827.

[16] John W. Lewis, *The Life, Labors, and Travels of Elder Charles Bowles of the Free Will Baptist Revival* (Watertown, Ma.: Ingal's and Stowell's, 1852), 196.

[17] H. Clay Williams, *Biographical Encyclopedia of Vermont of the Nineteenth Century* (Boston: Metropolitan Engraving, 1885), 46.

[18] Most obituaries published in *The Northern Spectator* consisted of one line, which makes Brace's obituary all the more extraordinary.

> DIED
>
> In Georgia, Vt., Jeffrey Brace, an African, well known by the appellation of "Old Jeff," supposed to be nearly 100 years old. He was taken from Africa by a party of white kidnappers, when about 16 years old . . . and served in the American Revolutionary Army, for which we believe he received a pension from our government. He had for many years been totally blind, yet his mental powers appeared to be hardly impaired. The powers of his memory were frequently tested by repeating whole chapters of the scriptures nearly verbatim. He was formerly a resident of this town (*Northern Spectator* 9 May 1827).

[19] Heman Allen was admitted to the Franklin County Bar in 1801. See Abby Maria Hemenway, ed., *The Vermont Historical Gazetteer*, Vol. 1. (Burlington, Vt.: Published by Miss A. M. Hemenway, 1868), 93. He practiced law primarily in neighboring Chittenden County, as did one of Ira and Ethan Allen's brothers, who was also named Heman. The challenge historians face in constructing life stories from documentary fragments is dramatized in a biographical sketch written by George Allen, a son of Heman Allen and Sarah Prentiss, who became a professor of Greek and Latin at the University of Pennsylvania. Allen noted:

> Chittenden county may reckon, among its distinguished citizens, two, that bore the name of Heman Allen—both born the same year, both bred to the bar, both in public life together, long resident in adjoining towns, and afterwards in the same town, in earlier life opposed in politics, as Federalist and Democrat, but later of the same party, always personal friends, and even (although neither may have been aware of the fact) remotely related by blood. When members of the state legislature, they were distinguished on the roll, as "Allen of Milton," and "Allen of Colchester." When both came to live as neighbors, in Burlington, the latter, by his long residence as minister, in Santiago, had won the distinctive designation of "*Chile* Allen." (Hemenway, 602–603)

See Allen's sketch, "Heman Allen, of Milton, and Burlington," in Hemenway, 602–06.

[20] These descriptions can be seen as either authoritative or hagiographic, since they were written by Heman Allen's son, George (see note above).

[21] In 1810, the U.S. census identified the Milton household of Jonathan Prentiss, Jr. (mistakenly indexed as Jonathan Prentinger) as containing two white men of the ages of Jonathan and Benjamin, two white women of the ages of their wives (16–24), and three male children under the age of 10.

[22] State of Vermont

> To the constable of Milton in the country of Chittenden, Greeting. You are hereby required to summon Luther Whitcomb, Jonathan Parker, Emery Alexander, Mr. Heel, Shelden Buman, Mrs. Hazleton and Benjamin F. Prentis_ now residing with Luther Whitcombs family in Milton to depart said town together with their families and effects. Hereof fail not, but of this precept and your doings herein due return make according to Law__ Given under our hands at Milton this 5th day of June 1811.
>
> John Jackson
> Zebediah Dewey > selectmen
> Moses Davis

[23] Ludlum, *Social Ferment in Vermont,* 239.

[24] Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815–1848* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 6.

[25] Emerson continued: "It is certain that freedom from household routine, variety of character and talent, variety of work, variety of means of thought and instruction, art, music, poetry, reading, masquerade, did not permit sluggishness or despondency; broke up routine. There is agreement in the testimony that it was, to most of the associates, education; to many, the most important period of their life, the birth of valued friendships, their first acquaintance with the riches of conversation, their training in behavior. . . . What knowledge of themselves and of each other, what various practical wisdom, what personal power, what studies of character, what accumulated culture many of the members owed to it!" Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Life and Letters in New England,* in the Norton Critical Edition of *The Blithedale Romance* by Nathaniel Hawthorne, edited by Seymour Gross and Rosalie Murphy (New York: Norton, 1978), 264–265.

[26] Potash, *Vermont's Burned-Over District,* 82.

[27] I discuss communal households in a comparative regional context in *The American Dreams of John B. Prentis, Slave Trader* (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 2011), 143–145. I mention, for example, that in her 1898 memoir, Elizabeth Cady Stanton recalled the severe hardship of running a nuclear household in New England when she was a young wife. Her duties were so numerous and exhausting that all of her intellectual and artistic pleasures and aspirations "faded away in the struggle to accomplish what was absolutely necessary from hour to hour." She longed for a cooperative commune that would embrace egalitarianism and justice. Linking the fight against women's oppression to the fight against slavery, Stanton observed:

> I now fully understood the practical difficulties most women had to contend with in the isolated household, and the impossibility of woman's best development if in contact, the chief part of her life, with servants and children. Fourier's phalansterie community life and co-operative households had a new significance for me. Emerson says, 'A healthy discontent is the first step to progress.' The general discontent I felt with woman's portion as wife, mother, housekeeper, physician, and spiritual guide, the chaotic conditions into which everything fell without her constant supervision, and the wearied, anxious look of the majority of women impressed me with a strong feeling that some active measures should be taken to remedy the wrongs of society in general, and of women in particular. My experience at the World's Anti-Slavery Convention, all I had read of the legal status of women, and the oppression I saw everywhere, together swept across my soul, intensified by many personal experiences.

Stanton, *Eighty Years and More: Reminiscences, 1815–1897* (New York: Fisher Unwin, 1898), 149.

[28] Ludlum, *Social Ferment in Vermont,* 262.

[29] John M. Lovejoy, "Racism in Antebellum Vermont," *Vermont History* 69(2001), 52.

[30] Quoted in ibid., 52, 53.

[31] For a useful analysis of warnings out, see Alden M. Rollins, *Vermont Warnings Out,* 2 volumes (Camden, Maine: Picton Press, 1995, 1997).

[32] For an insightful analysis of this phenomenon see Terry Rowden, *Dancing in the Dark* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009).

[33] Mary Klages, *Woeful Afflictions: Disability and Sentimentality in Victorian America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 11.

[34] Ibid., 15.

[35] Brace, *Blind African Slave,* 171.

[36] Kathryn Jackson, compiler, *Milton, Vermont, 1763–1963: The Milton Story* (Essex, Vt.: Essex Publishing Company, 1963), 29.

[37] Ludlum, *Social Ferment in Vermont,* 64.

[38] The primary evidence for Prentiss's Henrico County plantation with 29 slaves is taken from 1850 Slave Schedules. I am grateful to Marjorie Strong for calling this source to my attention. U.S. census records identify Jonathan Prentiss, Samson Williams, a white woman, white children, and slaves as members of the household headed by Benjamin Franklin Prentiss in Henrico County, Virginia. Interestingly, Samson Williams outlived both of the Prentiss brothers. His descendants moved to Philadelphia sometime after Reconstruction. The 1930 U.S. census lists a probable grandson, Samson Williams, born in Virginia in 1880, as the head of a Philadelphia household that included his wife, Pauline (aged 48), and three grown children: Willis (32), Dorothea (24), and Elwood (19).

[39] David Blight, "Healing and History: Battlefields and the Problem of Civil War Memory," *Beyond the Battlefield: Race, Memory, and the American War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), 175.

[40] John T. Trowbridge, *A Picture of the Desolated States, and the Work of Restoration, 1865–1868* (Hartford, Ct.: L. Stebbins, 1868), 21–23.

VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# Guns for Billy Yank: The Armory in Windsor Meets the Challenge of Civil War

*During the Civil War, the Union army fielded more than two million men, armed with a million and a half Springfield rifles plus thousands of carbines and pistols. Documents that have recently come to light at the American Precision Museum help tell the story of how the majority of those weapons were made using machinery designed and manufactured in Windsor, Vermont.*[1]

*By* CARRIE BROWN

Henry David Stone had, metaphorically, beaten the swords into plowshares only a few years earlier. In a three-story brick factory building on Main Street in Windsor, a gun-making firm known as Robbins & Lawrence had designed and built state-of-the-art machines to make guns for the U.S. war with Mexico in the 1840s and for Britain's conflict in the Crimea in the early 1850s. When those wars ended, the machines—and some of the men who operated them—were set to work making parts for sewing machines and other peacetime products. Stone had helped design a double-thread

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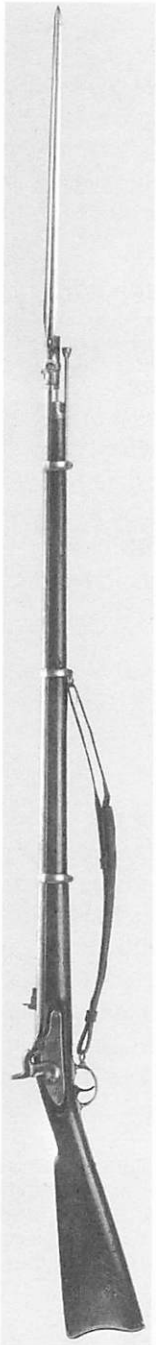


sewing machine known as Clark's Revolving Looper, and he was supervising the work of producing it in 1859 and '60. Then, the secession of seven southern states during the winter of 1860–61, followed by the attack on Fort Sumter in April, brought a new war. Stone now needed to convert the entire operation in Windsor back to guns, gun parts, and gun-making machinery.

Sales records for the Windsor armory—recently uncovered at the American Precision Museum—make it possible to assess what effect this one firm, in a small town in Vermont, had on the war at large. The impact would be enormous.

The Civil War brought unprecedented—almost unimaginable—bloodshed to America. In one day, at the Battle of Antietam, 23,000 Americans were killed, wounded, or missing, and about 4,000 died immediately—more than on any other single day in our history.[2] At Gettysburg, over the course of only three days, there were 50,000 casualties. As Drew Gilpin Faust has pointed out, the number of soldiers who died in the Civil War—about 620,000, North and South—totaled about two per cent of the American population at the time, the equivalent of six million today.[3] True, historians estimate that about two-thirds of them died of disease, but that means that more than 200,000 died of battle wounds.[4]

Many scholars have noted that the high casualties can be blamed partly on new weapons, more deadly than those that had been common in previous wars.[5] One of the most important advances was the rifled gun barrel, which first became practical during the mid 1800s. Rifling—the cutting of spiral grooves inside the barrel—causes the bullet to spin, greatly increasing its stability and, therefore, the gun's accuracy. The Minié ball, developed in France in 1847, loaded more quickly than older rifle ammunition and was specifically designed to

*Special Model 1861 Springfield U.S. Army rifle, made by Lamson, Goodnow, & Yale in Windsor, Vermont. The company produced 50,000 of these weapons. Photo courtesy of the Shelburne Museum.*

"catch" in those spiral grooves. While smoothbore muskets used by infantrymen in the Napoleonic Wars had an effective range of only about 100 yards, the rifled muskets of the Civil War were effective at 500 yards.[6] Some recent scholarship suggests that this increased range was more theoretical than real, and that Civil War battles took place at approximately the same range as battles in the Napoleonic Wars.[7] But even these scholars would acknowledge that at least the snipers and sharpshooters had a lethal benefit with the new rifles.

The Civil War also saw development of breech-loading weapons, which could be re-loaded and fired more rapidly than the standard muzzle-loader. By the end of the war, repeating weapons had appeared. The new weapons eventually inspired new tactics: fewer cavalry charges, artillery stationed at a greater distance from the enemy to avoid having sharpshooters pick off the artillerymen, less movement of masses of men across a battlefield, the development of trench warfare. But the tactics did not evolve quickly enough to avoid terrible carnage.[8]

Clearly, new weapons did change warfare. But another factor also drove the casualty numbers up: the sheer number of men *armed.* More than two million northerners and more than 800,000 southerners served.[9] At the beginning of the war, most men on both sides carried old smoothbore weapons; but by mid-1863, they were armed with new, rifled muskets and carbines.[10] By Norm Flayderman's count, more than a million and a half .58 caliber rifled muskets were made in the North during the war.[11] Richard Colton of the Springfield Armory estimates that the Confederacy manufactured 107,000 shoulder arms and imported more than 340,000.[12] Tens of thousands of pistols were also produced. How was it possible, in the course of two or three years in the early 1860s, to put that many weapons into the field?[13]

The answer lies in a network of machines and machinists that stretched across the northeastern states, with branches extending into the south and across the Atlantic, and with a strong, flourishing branch in Windsor, Vermont. As one of the teams that perfected the methods of "armory practice," Robbins & Lawrence had designed and built extremely accurate machine tools—milling machines, lathes, drill presses—that could produce gun parts, one after another, all alike and interchangeable.

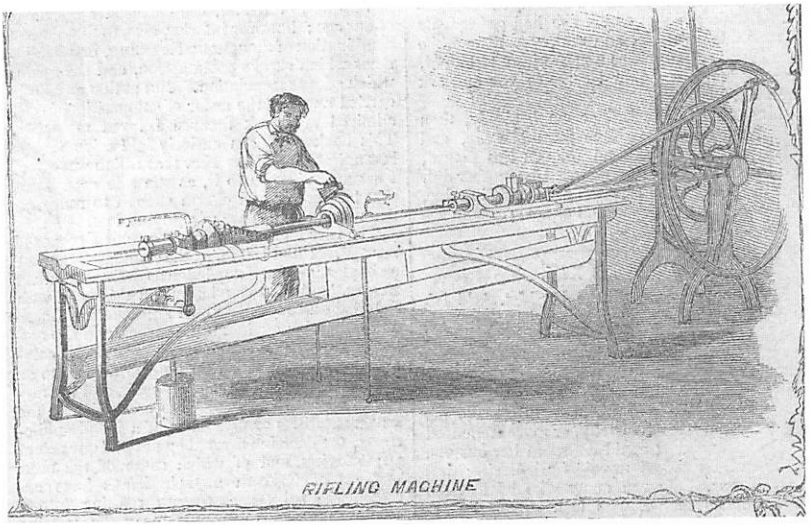
Robbins & Lawrence did not independently "invent" the new machinery. Gun makers, especially those in the federal armories at Harper's Ferry, Virginia, and Springfield, Massachusetts, had been working toward interchangeability since the late eighteenth century. Open-door policies in the government armories and among government contractors helped spread the improvements in machinery and systems. Machinists moved from one shop to another, developing friendships, mentoring

the young, and steadily improving the tools. With the Ordnance Department insisting upon precision metal cutting and efficient systems of production—and bankrolling the developing technology—new methods and machines evolved rapidly in the early nineteenth century. By midcentury, it would be possible for a single factory to produce as many as a thousand guns a month.[14]

In Windsor, Robbins, Kendall, & Lawrence (later simply Robbins & Lawrence) won a contract in 1846 for 10,000 rifles for the United States government. After finishing that order early, the firm received a second contract, for another 15,000 guns. Improving upon existing tools, adding their own innovations, and perfecting the methods of precision manufacturing, Robbins & Lawrence became a model for the new system. Contracts with the British for Enfield rifles and for machines to outfit Britain's Enfield Armory followed in the 1850s. American gun makers were also purchasing Robbins & Lawrence machines. Letters from the mid-1850s detail sales of a universal milling machine to the Springfield Armory; a drill press to Remington & Sons in Illion, New York; gun sights to Eli Whitney, Jr.; and rifling machines to a firm in Chicopee, Massachusetts.[15] Mid-nineteenth-century photographs from Colt show what are almost certainly a Robbins & Lawrence milling machine and drill press. As the company developed more products, the size of the operation grew, and more buildings went up on both sides of Mill Brook.

In the annals of the machine tool industry, Windsor innovators Richard Lawrence and Frederick W. Howe are better remembered than Henry Stone, and Howe was certainly the most brilliant machine designer of the group. Nonetheless, Stone's contributions were significant. In 1854, he helped develop a new rifling machine for making what he called "the English gun"—the Enfield rifle.[16] This machine could cut the long, precise spiral grooves all day long without tiring and without erring. And so Henry Stone helped proliferate those new rifled muskets that would prove so deadly in the 1860s. Stone had also worked with Howe on lathes to turn bayonets, and on a profile milling machine that could cut complex shapes such as gun triggers and lock plates. These profile milling, or "edging," machines were supplied to the Enfield Armory, and similar machines were made at the Springfield Armory, from Robbins & Lawrence drawings.[17] Most of the extant shop drawings from this period are signed and dated by H. D. Stone.

Someone in Windsor—probably Howe and Stone together—developed an early turret lathe. Working at this lathe, a machinist could perform one cutting task after another, simply by shifting a lever that rotated successive tools into position. He could cut the correct thread on a




*Engraving of a rifling machine at the Springfield Armory, from* Harper's Weekly, *September 21, 1861. Courtesy of the American Precision Museum.*

screw, shape the point, cut it off at the proper length, and then begin to thread the next screw without ever having to stop and change the cutting tool on the machine. It would be just this sort of efficiency that would accelerate production for the Civil War.[18]

By 1861, the Robbins & Lawrence Company had failed, and the building had passed through several owners. The founders had all gone their separate ways. Lawrence was in Hartford, Connecticut, running the Sharps rifle factory; Nicanor Kendall had retired; and Samuel Robbins had found other interests. Frederick Howe had gone to Providence, where he would spend the war years at Providence Tool Company, and where he would later become president of Brown & Sharpe. Other Robbins & Lawrence alumni were at Colt, Remington, and the Springfield Armory. But Henry Stone had remained in Windsor, raising his children, serving his community, and superintending the peacetime work in the former Robbins & Lawrence factory. In 1861, at the age of 46, he was running the shop.

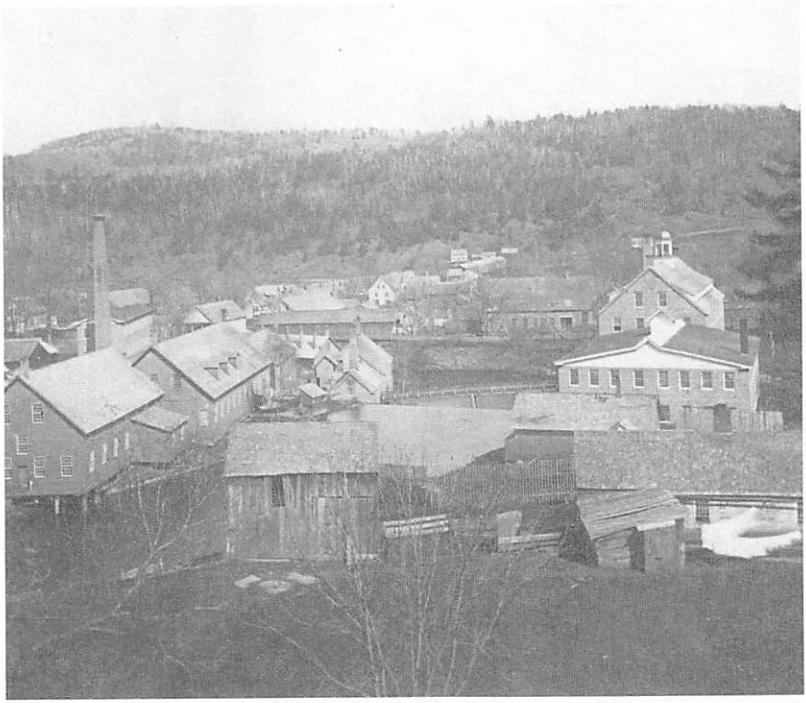
When the shooting began, the owners were Lamson, Goodnow & Yale. Based in Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts, these manufacturers of scythes and cutlery had developed an interest in machine tools, purchased the armory at a bargain price, and then added sewing machines to their product line. Ebenezer Lamson, who was responsible for the firm's operations in Windsor, happened also to be a fervent abolitionist. His

*Ebenezer G. Lamson, courtesy of the American Precision Museum.*

son, E. E. Lamson, wrote that their home in Shelburne Falls had been "a station on the underground railroad": "Sometimes I would find at our breakfast table a negro whom I had never seen before," he wrote in his memoir. "How or when he arrived or departed, and whither, I never inquired or knew. But I somehow understood that they were on the way to Canada and I hoped they would arrive."[19]

In the spring of 1861, there would be no question about which side Lamson was on. Recognizing the value of the resources in the former Robbins & Lawrence armory, he sold off the sewing machine business to Thomas White, and he set Henry Stone to work restoring and retooling the machinery for the transition back to gun making. Lamson also traveled to Washington, where he secured a contract for 50,000 rifles. He built a stockade fence around the entire factory complex, and together he and Stone began recruiting a larger work force.[20]

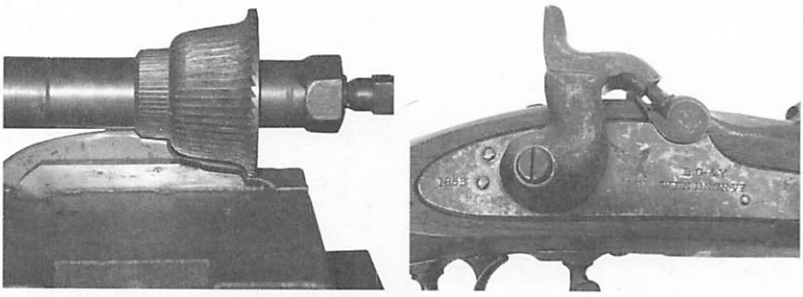
Experienced gun makers, young machinists, and apprentices were recruited not only from the local community, but from machining centers in New Hampshire and Massachusetts—perhaps even farther away, since Stone's network of colleagues extended at least as far as Connecticut and Rhode Island. On September 28, 1861, the *Vermont Journal* reported the upswing in activity at the largest factory in Windsor: "We



*The armory complex in Windsor around the time of the Civil War. Within this collection of buildings, Lamson, Goodnow & Yale produced gun-making machinery to supply most of the factories making rifles, carbines, and pistols for the Union Army. The tall building with the cupola, at right, was the original Robbins & Lawrence Armory, built in 1846. It is still standing today, the home of the American Precision Museum. Photo courtesy of the University of Vermont.*

understand that Lamson, Goodnow & Yale are soon to employ a force of three hundred men in the manufacture of arms, at the Windsor armory, and that as soon as the gas fixtures are put in, the machinery is to run day and night."[21]

The "arms" referred to in the newspaper report were Lamson's contracted 50,000 Special Model Springfield rifle-muskets. A variation of the more common Model 1861, this gun resembled the Enfield rifle that had been made in Windsor in the 1850s; and so it would have seemed a familiar and straightforward project to Stone and the other Robbins & Lawrence veterans, as they retooled the factory. They had made rifles by the thousands before, and they had made rifles under the pressure of



*Left: Lockplate milling machine, cutting the basic shape for a rifle or musket lockplate. Right: Lockplate on a Lamson, Goodnow & Yale Special Model 1861 rifle. Courtesy of the American Precision Museum.*

immediate military needs, for the Mexican War and for the Crimean War. If the Union Army would need more than a million rifles, and if the Windsor armory was to run shifts around the clock, why did they produce only 50,000 guns over the course of three years? The company's sales ledgers, analyzed alongside accepted production figures for the major military gun contractors, tell the story.[22]

In August, ten milling machines and one four-spindle machine for drilling out gun barrels went to the Starr Arms Company in Binghamton, New York. Later Starr would order a pistol rifling machine, drill presses, profile milling machines, and screw machines. Starr would make 32,000 Army revolvers between 1863 and 1865. The Sharps Rifle plant in Hartford also placed orders that August. Sharps ultimately would provide about 20,000 rifles and 80,000 carbines (essentially, a carbine is a short rifle) to the Army and Navy, including 2,000 rifles to outfit the famous Berdan's Sharpshooters.[23]

A young machinist from Massachusetts, William Hale Foster, arrived about this time expecting to work on the government gun contract. In a letter to his wife, who had stayed behind while he looked for lodgings for the family, Foster noted his surprise at what kind of work was actually most needed in Windsor: "I found things different from what I expected in regard to guns. Although the company have taken a contract as reported they will not strike a blow on guns for two or three months as it will take that time to get ready. Then they will make only a part of them here. The barrels, bayonets and trimmings are to be made at Northampton, Mass. The locks and stocks will probably be made here. The help that are here now will not have any thing to do on them as they have got all they can do and more to make the machinery for this and other companies."[24]

Foster also noted the long twelve-hour days, the close attention of the supervisor in his department, and the relentless pace of the work: "the man that I work for . . . is a very good employer but he makes us work every minute of the time. I never worked where every body worked so steady as they do in his room."[25] There was good reason for that hectic pace. After the Union disaster at Bull Run in July 1861, the government had to acknowledge that the war would not be won quickly, and that the Federal armories would not be able to produce enough arms and ammunition.[26] As the Ordnance Department placed large orders with private gun contractors, many of those contractors were turning to Windsor for the latest in gun-making machinery.

In September, a machine order came in from Remington: milling machines, rifling machines, barrel polishing machines, and more. Remington would produce 40,000 Springfield Model 1861 rifle-muskets, 12,000 "Zouave" rifles, and nearly 30,000 military revolvers. John Walter has calculated that Remington produced 35 percent of Federal handguns.[27] Frederick Howe at the Providence Tool Company also began to place orders in September: machine castings, milling and boring machines, and a complete set of machinery for making wooden gunstocks. Under his leadership, Providence Tool would make 70,000 Model 1861 rifle-muskets.

The growing power of the Federal war machine was reflected in the sights, sounds, and smells of the factory itself: the deep rumble of the great water wheel that powered the overhead line shafts and ran the machinery, or of the coal-fired steam engine that powered the factory when there was too little water in Mill Brook; the closer rumble of the overhead shafts, and the slapping of the leather belts; the screech of metal cutting metal; the smell of machine oil, gas lamps, tobacco, and sweat. Some of the machines were massive; others had delicate mechanisms; all had heavy cast iron bases to keep them steady and inflexible. Massive castings were produced at the foundry across Main Street, and finished tools were shipped out by rail.

But the atmosphere was not all brawn; the brain was involved as well. The men who designed, built, and operated these machines were the high-tech workers of their day. The designers needed to understand the geometry of a bevel gear, the characteristics of different kinds of steel, how to mill the flutes on a twist drill, and how to create a particular screw thread by controlling the length and speed of the feed mechanism and the angle of the cutting tool. They had to figure out how to design a machine that would be more accurate than its individual parts.

The operator also needed both skill and great care. He had to set up and service his machine. He needed to know how to place a cutting tool

just right, and how to keep it sharp, so that the parts produced would all be the same, hour after hour and day after day. William Foster wrote to his wife about the exacting standards at the armory: "They are more particular about their work here than in shops that I have been used to work in. I think that I can do it with a little extra pains."[28]

In October 1861, an order came in from Richardson & Overman, a Philadelphia company that would make nearly 18,000 Gallager Carbines. They wanted a variety of machines, including a "letting-in" machine with a 7 1/2-foot bed, to be completed in six weeks. The price would be $600, but there would be a bonus of $50 for each week trimmed off the delivery time. In November, Eli Whitney, Jr., began ordering machinery, and the Burnside Rifle Company ordered two milling machines for making a gun designed by General Ambrose E. Burnside.

It was also in November of 1861 that Lamson, Goodnow & Yale began to help transform the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company (AMC) from a textile mill into a gun maker. Established in 1807 in what is now Manchester, New Hampshire, Amoskeag had grown to become one of the largest cotton mills in the country. After the Civil War, it would become perhaps the largest in the world. But in the spring of 1861, when supplies of southern cotton dried up, the company determined to make guns. The AMC "agent" (plant manager), Ezekiel Straw, traveled to Windsor in July and persuaded a former New Hampshire man, Carlos Clark, to leave LG&Y and take charge of the arms operation at Amoskeag.[29] Straw also began planning to purchase machinery and tools from the Windsor firm. Though AMC had a well-equipped machine shop of its own, the rigid standards of a military contract were new to them. The contract with the Ordnance Department specified that the rifles must be "in all respects identical with the standard rifled musket made at the United States Armory at Springfield, Massachusetts and are to interchange with it and each other in all their parts."[30] In the end, Amoskeag arranged to make the same Special Model Springfield rifle that was being made in Windsor, and relied on LG&Y for their gun-making machinery. In addition to machine tools, LG&Y also produced the gauges that would allow constant checking of dimensions, to ensure that all parts would interchange, whether made in Windsor, in Manchester, or at the Springfield Armory.[31] Apparently there was only one model gun, shared among the three armories, and its parts were sent around by "Express" as each factory needed to see them.[32]

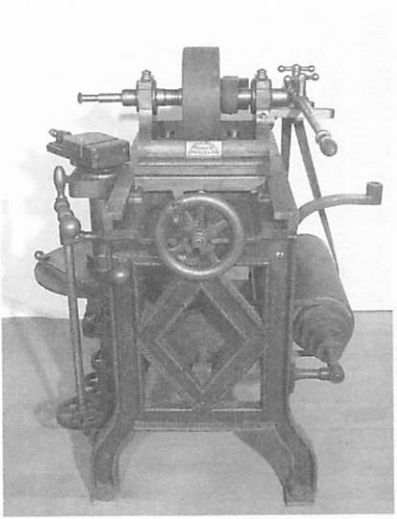
Lamson, Goodnow & Yale's first big order from Amoskeag came on November 20, 1861: a profile milling machine; a nut boring machine; a barrel trimming machine; rifling, milling, and screw-making machines. More orders would follow in February and March of 1862. Eventually,

the AMC machine shop began making its own machines, using LG&Y patterns and castings. Amoskeag's own records show that they also purchased machinery and measuring tools from Brown & Sharpe and lathes from Putnam Machine. They purchased some gun sights and bayonets from others, as well.[33] But the LG&Y ledger shows us that bayonets purchased by AMC from Bay State Hardware were made on LG&Y machines, and were held together with screws purchased from Lamson, Goodnow & Yale.[34] And so the Windsor influence came to Amoskeag from several directions. In all, AMC produced 27,000 Special Model Springfield rifles in just under two years.[35]

As the dual businesses of making guns and making machinery heated up, Ebenezer Lamson summoned his son, Eastburne, to help out. Eastburne later recalled that, "sometime in the winter of 1861 I, being then a sophomore at Brown University, was informed that the country needed my services, and father my help, in arming our soldiers. Some of my college mates had already left college to join their friends in the army." Eastburne went first to Shelburne Falls and then to Windsor, working as his father's private secretary. The young man seems to have had a greater interest in rifles than in machine tool sales: "The completion of special tools and fixtures took some months after my arrival. Then followed the real work of gun making and deliveries of rifles, at first 1000 at intervals of two or three weeks, then at shorter intervals—ten days—seven days—until the musket contracts were completed."[36]

January 1862 brought another large request from Richard Lawrence at the Sharps Rifle plant. He wanted a four-spindle drill press, an index milling machine, one or two smooth boring machines, and castings for nine other machines that he would finish in Hartford. The Sharps carbine was in desperately short supply. Since no carbines at all were produced in the Federal armories,[37] all Union carbines had to be produced by private contractors. LG&Y sold equipment not just to Sharps, but to other carbine makers as well: Massachusetts Arms, Burnside, Starr Arms, and Savage.

The year 1862 also brought orders from the Springfield Armory's Major Dyer, who needed forgings, a rifling machine, and a machine for cutting breech pins. Smith & Wesson ordered milling machines, rifling machines, and half a dozen lathes. E. Robinson in New York had a contract for 30,000 Model 1861 rifle-muskets, and he needed milling machines, a drill press, and equipment for making breech pins. Alfred Jenks & Sons, who produced more than 98,000 of the Model 1861 rifle, ordered a profile milling machine. The American Firearms Company of New York placed an order that came to nearly $4,000. Elisha Root at the Colt factory in Hartford ordered machine castings. Other pistol makers



*Left: Universal milling machine, designed in 1858 by Robbins & Lawrence in Windsor, Vermont and produced through the Civil War. Courtesy of the American Precision Museum. Right: The Robbins & Lawrence universal milling machine, shown here in a photo taken at the Colt factory in Hartford, Connecticut, around the time of the Civil War. Courtesy of the Connecticut State Library.*

also placed orders: J. Stevens & Company in Chicopee Falls; C. R. Alsop of Middletown, Connecticut; and the Connecticut Arms Company.

According to Merritt Roe Smith, the buildup of gun-making capacity in the north took a little more than one year: "By the fall of 1862, most of the Union's needs for arms were being met by the Springfield Armory and twenty-four private contractors headed by Colt, Alfred Jenks of Philadelphia, and the Providence Tool Company of Rhode Island."[38] While the Lamson, Goodnow & Yale records show Jenks, Colt, and the Springfield Armory making only minimal purchases, the ledgers demonstrate that most of the other contractors—including the Providence Tool Company—relied heavily on the Windsor machine tool firm. Altogether, as many as one-third of the Model 1861 rifle-muskets were made at factories with a large number of LG&Y machines, and the vast majority were made at facilities that had one or more. Add to that, tens of thousands of carbines, pistols, and bayonets made on LG&Y machines, and the impact of the Windsor firm becomes clear.

The men at Lamson, Goodnow &Yale (and as far as we know the employees were all men) had more on their minds than turning out

machine tools and rifles. Henry Stone was also one of the town's selectmen, and so he had responsibility for ensuring that Windsor filled its quota of soldiers. By the summer of 1862, the war was a year old and many Vermonters had already enlisted, answering the first call in 1861. When "Father Abraham" called for 300,000 more in the summer of 1862, Vermont's quota was nearly 5,000 men. Some were to be "nine months men"; others would need to sign up for three years. If the states could not raise enough volunteers, the Federal Militia Act of 1862 would require a draft. Vermont's draft was scheduled to begin in September,[39] but many Vermonters felt that a draft would bring disgrace to the state as well as to the individual towns. And so the pressure was on to find volunteers.

At town meeting in Windsor, the selectmen were authorized to borrow "a sum not to exceed $3000 for the purpose of paying one hundred dollars to each member of the uniform militia"[40]—but only to those who volunteered before the need for a draft kicked in. The "war meetings" were held in the town hall. Large crowds gathered; prominent men made patriotic speeches; the town cornet band played. According to the *Vermont Journal,* "the ladies were present in goodly numbers, manifesting the spirit of the mothers of seventy-six, in this critical juncture of our nation."[41]

While the guidelines for the draft allowed for some exemptions, merely working in a war industry job was not among them. And so the men at the armory were under just as much pressure to enlist as anyone else. At least two of the armory's machinists, and possibly more, answered the call that August.

William Hale Foster was among the first to come forward. Twenty-six years old, the father of two little boys, he had been in Windsor only a year. Early in his stay, he had commented to his wife Maria that Windsor was "a very patriotic place,"[42] and he found himself caught up in that patriotism in August. Charles F. Butman, another machinist, was just twenty-one and enlisted that same night. Selectman Henry Stone would have been there watching the young men enlist—his neighbors, perhaps some relatives, and men whose work he supervised at the armory. How he felt about sending them off to war, we cannot know. But off they went.

By October, the 12th Regiment had finished its training in Brattleboro and headed for Washington. According to the *Vermont Journal,* the 1,004 men of the 12th were "fully equipped and armed with the Springfield gun."[43] Certainly William Foster and Charles Butman knew they had had a hand in making those guns.

Foster became ill and was discharged that winter, and Butman would survive the war without injury. As the months and years wore on, other

Windsor men were not so fortunate. Samuel Fitch was wounded at the Wilderness; Joseph Bickford at Cold Harbor. Thomas Little, an African American from West Windsor, served with the 54th Massachusetts and survived the disastrous assault on Fort Wagner, but was discharged with some sort of disability right at the end of the war.[44]

Other Windsor men did not make it through. Horace Houghton was wounded at Lee's Mill in April 1862, survived his wounds, then died of disease six months later. Thomas Ensworth was wounded at the Wilderness and died after two days of suffering. William Carter Tracy was killed in action in Virginia in 1864. As Henry Stone and the workmen at LG&Y were shipping out crates of machine tools and boxes of rifles, these local boys were coming home in boxes. Other soldiers never made it home at all. Charles Gleason, James Stone, and Silas Worthing died at Andersonville Prison. Joseph A. Smith, killed at Petersburg, was buried at Flower's farm. Richard Rich died at Cedar Creek and was buried in Winchester. Henry Marsh was buried in North Carolina.[45]

As the lists of dead and wounded arrived and as the newspaper reported victories and defeats on the battlefield, the work of the factory went on. September 1863 brought orders from Smith & Wesson, Remington, Providence Tool, Sharps Rifle, and many others. Original shop drawings at the American Precision Museum, dated 1864, show new fixtures that were being designed for the profile milling machine—to shape triggers, hammers, and lock plates.[46]

In January 1863, in the midst of this frantic production of guns and gun-making machinery, Henry Stone's six-year-old son died of croup. One year later, his wife, Julia, died of pneumonia.[47] She left him with three children—a fourteen-year-old boy from his first marriage, and two little ones under the age of four.

Through much of 1864, the work remained relentless. There were now some 400 men on hand, running machinery around the clock.[48] Even before the original contract for 50,000 rifles was complete, Ebenezer Lamson had turned his sights on newer, more modern guns. The next big advances in military small arms would be breech-loading and repeating weapons. Loading the gun at the breech, rather than ramming the bullet down the far end of the muzzle, allowed soldiers to reload while lying on the ground, or crouching behind a breastwork, or mounted on a horse. Midway through the war, Lamson brought in William Palmer and Colonel Hiram Berdan to work on new designs for breech-loading carbines. Lamson had also purchased Albert Ball's patent for a repeating gun magazine and brought Ball to Windsor to design a repeating carbine for use by the cavalry. In February 1864, a representative from the factory went to Washington with a sample of a

repeating rifle that could fire ten charges in rapid succession.[49] As a result of these efforts, Lamson received government orders for 1,000 Ball carbines and 1,000 Palmer carbines.[50] Ball took charge of manufacturing guns,[51] while Henry Stone remained busy with the machines that made gun parts.

The autumn of 1864 brought the war even closer to home and increased the level of stress at the armory. On October 19, a small group of Confederate soldiers—who had crossed into Vermont from Canada a few days earlier—staged a raid on St. Albans, robbing three banks, killing one civilian, wounding several others, and attempting—but failing—to burn down the town. The citizens of Vermont were instructed to organize militias for the defense of their towns and to watch out for vagrants.[52] A small band of raiders could never carry off Windsor's cast iron and steel machine tools, but the factory itself might have been seen as a target. Earlier that year, one of the main buildings at the Colt Armory in Hartford had burned down, destroying a thousand lathes and milling machines and throwing 900 men out of work[53] Though no one seriously suspected sabotage, it was mentioned as a possibility. And then there were the LG&Y guns that might be stolen, Springfield rifles as well as the two new carbines. Guards around the armory were increased, and they patrolled day and night.[54] The extra precautions, however, proved unnecessary. No more Confederate raids followed the one in St. Albans.

During the winter of 1864–65, work at the armory began to slow. It was around that time that Lamson bought out his partners, Goodnow and Yale, and reorganized as E. G. Lamson & Company. Under that name, the last few Special Model Springfield rifles were completed, along with the Ball and Palmer contracts. Because most of the other arms makers were now fully equipped, machine sales were light. Some spare rifle parts went to the arsenal in Washington: barrels, gunstocks, lock plates, hammers, screws, springs, bridles, and butt plates. The Rollin White Arms Company bought a pistol rifling machine. Thomas White ordered some more sewing machine parts. In March, samples of the Ball and Palmer guns were shipped to an Ordnance Department inspector in New York for final approval. In April, Union troops occupied Richmond, and Lee surrendered at Appomattox. By the end of May, the war was over. There would be no more gun contracts from the government, and the market for gun-making machinery evaporated.

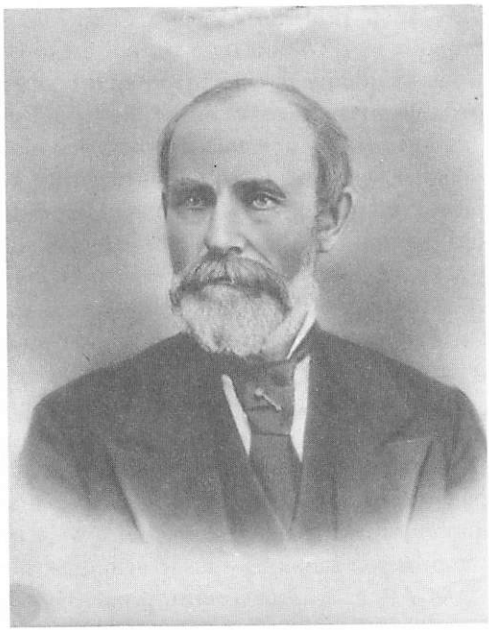
Ebenezer Lamson, now fifty-one years old, was not a man to give up or to retire early. By January 1866, he was sending samples of saw mill equipment to companies in Kentucky, Georgia, and Texas. His nephew, Ralph H. Lamson, who had served as an officer in the Navy and had

great success capturing blockade runners, took on the task of trying to persuade governments on the other side of the Atlantic—England, France, Prussia, Denmark—to order Palmer and Ball rifles. Colt Firearms in Hartford ordered 2,000 gunstocks and assorted breech screws and springs, perhaps for use on the guns they were making for the Russian government. Although Colt had sales in Russia, and Remington was selling excess carbines to France, young Ralph Lamson had little success interesting anyone in the Ball and Palmer guns.

Typically, E. G. Lamson had many other projects to take his mind off the disappointing gun sales. He was busy building up an inventory of peacetime products: forging machinery, saw mills, hand tools, general purpose machine tools, and another sewing machine. He also had Albert Ball working on a stone-channeling machine for quarry work. Unfortunately, that project led to a long, expensive, and painful patent dispute. When it became clear that Lamson would lose the lawsuit, Ball moved across the river to New Hampshire and helped found Sullivan Machine. In 1869, Lamson formed a partnership with Russell Jones, a textile manufacturer from Massachusetts, who turned the original 1846 armory building into a cotton mill. Eventually, Lamson's health was crippled and his fortune diminished by the business struggles of the 1870s and '80s. He moved to Boston and then to Martha's Vineyard, where he died in 1891.

As others drifted away, Henry David Stone remained, ever faithful to Windsor and to the old Robbins & Lawrence armory. Five months after the war ended, he married again. Laura Emmons Sylvester was a thirty-one-year-old widow when they married, and she helped raise Henry's children. She was active in church and charity work, and she was known in town as "the central figure of a bright and happy home."[55] Henry worked on more sewing machine designs as well as machine tool improvements. During the cotton mill period, he continued to supervise the Jones, Lamson & Company machine division in the shops on the other side of Mill Brook. In 1874, Stone received a patent for an improved power feed mechanism for the slide on turret lathes.[56]

By 1888, the company had been weakened by the failure of the cotton mill and by the stone-channeler lawsuit, and it needed an infusion of cash. Investors from Springfield, Vermont, came forward, purchased the company, and moved most of its assets, by oxcart, twenty miles to the south.[57] When James Hartness arrived at Jones & Lamson, in 1889, the Howe/Stone turret lathe was still in use. Building upon that machine, Hartness soon developed a much improved, flat turret lathe that became the basis for the growth of Jones & Lamson into one of the machine tool powerhouses of the twentieth century.[58] Most certainly, the



*Henry D. Stone, courtesy of the American Precision Museum.*

achievements of what came to be called "Precision Valley" were based upon the pioneering work of the men at the old Robbins & Lawrence armory, both before and during the Civil War.

Stone did not go along to Springfield. He was seventy-three years old and, again, he had an ill wife. Laura died in August 1889. Henry would live another eleven years. His long life had seen a good deal of sorrow: He had been widowed three times, had buried three of his five children, and had helped send dozens of his townsmen off to war. More than twenty of them did not return. A Lincoln Republican and a patriot, working for an abolitionist employer, he probably had no regrets about his role in arming the Federal troops. It is one of the eternal ironies of war that good people, doing what they perceive to be their duty, can help create such pain and tragedy. At the end of Henry Stone's life, he was remembered as a leader in his community—a stabilizing force at the town's largest factory, a selectman, a member of the school board, a director on the board of the local bank, a prominent member of the Masonic Lodge, and always an advocate for technological progress. In 1881, he had been one of the first people in town to put a street lamp in front of his home on Main Street.[59]

There had been many other inventive minds at the armory during the war, in addition to Stone, Ball, and Palmer. One D.M. Moore had

developed a ratchet wrench that saw its first use in Windsor. He patented it in 1864 and then moved on to other towns and other inventions.[60] Quimby Backus invented a bench vise, a bit brace, and an adjustable wrench. Later in life, he would develop a steam radiator and gas logs. William Henry Barber was also working at the armory in Windsor when he patented his bit brace with spring-loaded, adjustable jaws. George Henry Coates had entered the armory as a fourteen-year-old apprentice in 1863. A local boy, he stayed on a few years after the war, until he became a journeyman machinist in 1869. Later, at Ethan Allen Firearms, he would develop a self-cocking gun. By the end of his career, Coates held forty patents and owned a large company that made a variety of tools.

Such was the talent pool in Windsor during the war. In other shops, linked to Windsor through training, business, friendship, and competition, machinists were doing similar work: at Colt, Providence Tool Company, Ames Manufacturing, the Springfield Armory, and other tool- and gun-making centers, machines were built and improved as part of the process of making guns to arm the Union troops.

As Allen Yale has pointed out, Henry Stone and his earlier colleagues at Robbins & Lawrence had also—inadvertently—helped arm the Confederacy. Not only were many northern weapons captured on the battlefield by Confederate soldiers, who then put them to deadly use; but also the Confederate government managed to purchase guns from England—made on machinery patterned after the Robbins & Lawrence machine tools sold to the Enfield Armory back in the mid-1850s. Finally, the Confederate States imported gun-making machinery from England—again patterned after those Robbins & Lawrence machines at the Enfield Armory.[61]

Of course the war was neither won nor lost by the producers of guns or gun-making tools. Life and warfare are far too complicated for that. But the size of the armies, the course of the war, and the sheer magnitude of the carnage on the battlefield depended upon the ability of a president, an army, a nation, to put the latest weapons into the hands of more than two million soldiers. And the ability to make weapons by the millions depended upon the quantity production of machine-made interchangeable parts. The Lamson, Goodnow & Yale Company may have produced only 50,000 Springfield rifles, but they provided the machinery —precise, reliable, state-of-the-art machinery—that made it possible for other contractors to produce well over a million weapons, made to exacting military specifications.

The machine technology created for warfare in the nineteenth century —like much military technology in the twentieth century—would later

be used to deliver a profusion of consumer goods, including ready-to-wear clothing, factory-canned foods, bicycles, home appliances, and automobiles. The Civil War itself brought profound changes to American politics, government, and society. It is often said that the war shaped a new nation and created a new concept of America. The men at the armory in Windsor, led by Henry Stone and Ebenezer Lamson, helped shape the war itself.

## Notes

[1] I wish to thank Ann Lawless and the staff at the American Precision Museum for providing access to the shop drawings and sales ledgers in the museum's archival collections. Documents at the Connecticut Historical Society, the Rhode Island Historical Society, the Manchester Historic Association Research Center, and the Connecticut State Library also helped me piece together this story. The heirs of William Hale Foster have generously shared his letters with me. My research was, in part, supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, through a planning grant awarded to the American Precision Museum in 2008.

[2] Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), 66.

[3] Ibid., xi, 188.

[4] James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 485, 487.

[5] See, for example, Faust, *This Republic of Suffering,* 4, 41; McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom,* 475.

[6] Major Richard D. Moorehead, "Technology and the American Civil War," *Military Review* (June 2004): 61.

[7] See, for example, Earl J. Hess, *The Rifle Musket in Civil War Combat: Reality and Myth* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008); Paddy Griffith, *Battle Tactics of the Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

[8] Richard A. Gabriel and Karen S. Metz, "The Dawn of Modern War," accessed December 9, 2009, http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/gabrmetz/gabr001b.htm; Moorehead, "Technology and the American Civil War."

[9] Faust, *This Republic of Suffering,* 3. Estimates vary, but Faust uses the figures 2.1 million northerners and 880,000 southerners. By contrast, she notes that "During the American Revolution the army never numbered more than 30,000 men."

[10] Carl L. Davis, *Arming the Union: Small Arms in the Civil War* (Port Washington, N.Y.: National University Publications, Kennikat Press, 1973), vii; McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom,* 475.

[11] Norm Flayderman, *Flayderman's Guide to Antique American Firearms . . . and their values,* 8th ed. (Iola, Wisc.: Gun Digest Books, 2001), 465.

[12] Richard Colton, "Arms of the Confederacy," Springfield Armory National Historic Site, accessed September 22, 2010, http://www.nps.gov/spar, p. 2.

[13] For examples of previous scholarly commentary on "levels of weapons production never before imagined" see Gabriel and Metz, "The Dawn of Modern War"; Pauline Maier, Merritt Roe Smith, and Alexander Keyssar, *Inventing America,* 2nd ed., vol. 1 (New York: W. W. Norton, 2005): 504.

[14] There is much strong scholarship on the topic of the early spread of machining practice. See, for example, Felicia Johnson Deyrup, *Arms Makers of the Connecticut Valley: A Regional Study of the Economic Development of the Small Arms Industry, 1798–1870,* vol. 33, Smith College Studies in History (Northampton, Ma., 1948); David R. Meyer, *Networked Machinists: High-Technology Industries in Antebellum America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006); Merritt Roe Smith, *Harpers Ferry Armory and New Technology: The Challenge of Change* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977).

[15] "Records of Sharps Rifle Company, 1852–1898," various letters, 1855, Connecticut Historical Society.

[16] This design is credited to Stone in U. S. Department of Interior, *Fire-Arms Manufacture 1880,* rpt. 1992 (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1883), 29. The reference to "the English gun" comes from a shop drawing for a lock plate stud milling machine, signed by Stone, dated July 1855, in the collection of the American Precision Museum.

[17] Ibid., 66.

[18]The idea of the turret lathe may have originated in England, and Frederick Howe had probably seen such a machine at the Silver & Gay company in Massachusetts, before he moved to Windsor. Howe and Stone actually got a turret machine working sometime around 1850 and began to sell it to other gun makers. Deyrup, *Arms Makers of the Connecticut Valley,* 158; Guy Hubbard, *Windsor Industrial History* (Windsor, Vt.: The Town School District, 1922), 100–101; U. S. Department of Interior, *Fire-Arms Manufacture 1880,* 68.

[19]Eastsburne E. Lamson, "Ebenezer Goodnow Lamson," memoir written in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 1912, copy in the library of the Vermont Historical Society, 7.

[20]Hubbard, *Windsor Industrial History,* 129.

[21]*Vermont Journal,* 28 September 1861, 8.

[22]Numbers of weapons produced by the various companies listed below come from Flayderman, *Flayderman's Guide.*

[23]Flayderman, *Flayderman's Guide,* 170; see also "The Sharps," accessed March 1, 2011, http://www.civilwarhome.com/sharps.htm; "CIVIL WAR SMALL-ARMS," accessed March 11, 2011, http://www.nps.gov/archive/gett/soldierlife/webguns.htm.

[24]Letters of William Hale Foster and Maria Foster, 9 August 1861, private collection.

[25]William Hale Foster to Maria Foster, 21 August 1861.

[26]Davis, *Arming the Union,* iv, vi.

[27]John Walter, *The Guns that Won the West: Firearms on the American Frontier, 1848–1898* (London: Greenhill Books, 1999), 95.

[28]William Hale Foster to Maria Foster, 9 August 1861.

[29]"Carlos D. Clark, Inventor," *Manchester Mirror,* 19 October 1894, clipping in the collection of the Manchester Historic Association.

[30]Warren H. Hay, "U.S. Amoskeag," *The Gun Report,* 14 (June 1968): 11–12.

[31]Ibid., 12.

[32]"Amoskeag Machine Company Letter Book," vol. 15: 469, Manchester Historic Association Research Center. The gauges that were being shuttled around are mentioned in vol. 16: 6, in a letter dated 18 June 1862.

[33]Ibid., 5: 87, 79, 95.

[34]Amoskeag purchase of bayonets appears in "AMC Machine Shop Cash Book 1861–68," vol. 5, March 1863, 79, Manchester Historic Association Research Center. LG&Y sale of bayonets and bayonet clasp screws to Bay State Hardware appears in the LG&Y order book at American Precision Museum, entries for April 1862 and January 1863.

[35]Flayderman, *Flayderman's Guide,* 468; Hay, "U.S. Amoskeag," 13.

[36]Lamson, "Ebenezer Goodnow Lamson," 13.

[37]Davis, *Arming the Union,* vi–vii.

[38]Maier, Smith, and Keyssar, *Inventing America,* 1: 504.

[39]*Vermont Journal,* 16 August 1862, 5 and 8; Douglas Harper, "The Northern Draft of 1862," accessed September 23, 2010, http://www.etymonline.com/cw/draft.htm.

[40]*Vermont Journal,* 6 September 1862, 8.

[41]Ibid., 13 September 1862, 8.

[42]William Hale Foster to Maria Foster, 18 August 1861.

[43]*Vermont Journal,* 11 October 1862, 8.

[44]Service records for men credited to Vermont are available at http://vermontcivilwar.org.

[45]Information on which Windsor soldiers are buried in Windsor and which are buried in the south comes from "Vermont in the Civil War," http://vermontcivilwar.org/index/index.php.

[46]Drawings of these fixtures, dated May 1864, in the flat files at American Precision Museum.

[47]*Vermont Journal,* 30 January 1864, 8; Town of Windsor Vital Records, Book 4, 41.

[48]Leander Bishop, *A History of American Manufactures from 1608 to 1860* (Philadelphia: Sampson, Low, Son & Co., 1864), 691, accessed via http://books.google.com/books.

[49]*Vermont Journal,* 27 February 1864, 8.

[50]Hubbard, *Windsor Industrial History,* 129–30; Lamson, "Ebenezer Goodnow Lamson," 13; Bishop, *History of American Manufactures,* 690–91; Walter, *Guns that Won the West,* 89–90; Flayderman, *Flayderman's Guide,* 506, 517.

[51]Walter, *Guns that Won the West,* 89; Hubbard, *Windsor Industrial History,* 129.

[52]*Vermont Journal,* 12 November 1864.

[53]"The Fire at Colt's Armory," *New York Times,* 7 February 1864.

[54]*Vermont Journal,* 29 October 1864, 8; Hubbard, *Windsor Industrial History,* 127.

[55]*Vermont Journal,* 10 August 1889, obituary for Laura Stone.

[56]Hubbard, *Windsor Industrial History,* 137.

[57]"Hartness House—History, Observatory and Museum—Springfield Vermont Historical Landmark," accessed December 7, 2010, http://www.hartnesshouse.com/hartness-history.shtml.

[58] Joseph W. Roe, *English and American Tool Builders,* rpt.1987 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1916), 197–99; "The Hartness Mansion," http://www.hartnesshouse.com/hartness-history.shtml.

[59] *The Valley Farmer,* 17 December 1881, 7.

[60] Randy Roeder, "Millers Falls Bit Braces: Barber, Amidon, Parsons, etc.," accessed September 23, 2010, http://oldtoolheaven.com/brace/FeaturedBraces.htm.

[61] Allen Yale, "Vermonters Who Helped Arm the Confederacy: A Case of Unintended Consequences" (paper presented to the Civil War Roundtable, Newport, Vermont, March 2009, copy courtesy of the author); Roe, *English and American Tool Builders,* 140; Colton, *Arms of the Confederacy.* For more on sources of Confederate gun-making equipment, see Smith, *Harpers Ferry Armory and New Technology,* 320–22. For documentation of the number of tools that went from Robbins & Lawrence to Enfield, see Nathan Rosenberg, ed., *The American System of Manufactures: The Report of the Committee on the Machinery of the United States 1855 and the Special Reports of George Wallis and Joseph Whitworth 1854* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1969), 182–85.

# The 1917 Polio Outbreak in Montpelier, Vermont

*An examination of the history of the Montpelier polio outbreak in 1917 illustrates how interpretations of the epidemic and subsequent actions reflected prevailing cultural as well as medical beliefs about this disease and how to prevent it.*

*By* ELISHA P. RENNE

*There are now 19 cases of infantile paralysis in Montpelier and it is cropping up in other towns of Washington County. All public meetings are forbidden and tomorrow for the first time in 120 years or more no religious services will be held in Montpelier.*

—Dorman Kent diary, Saturday, June 30, 1917
Montpelier, Vermont

The 1917 outbreak of poliomyelitis (or infantile paralysis as it was then known) that occurred primarily in Montpelier, Vermont, led to 171 cases that year.[1] It exemplifies the beginning impact of the tremendous increase in paralytic polio cases among both children and adults in the United States in the early twentieth century. While not of the magnitude of the 1916 polio epidemic in New York City, when 8,900 cases of children and young adults with some form of paralysis were documented,[2] the responses in Montpelier to this mysterious

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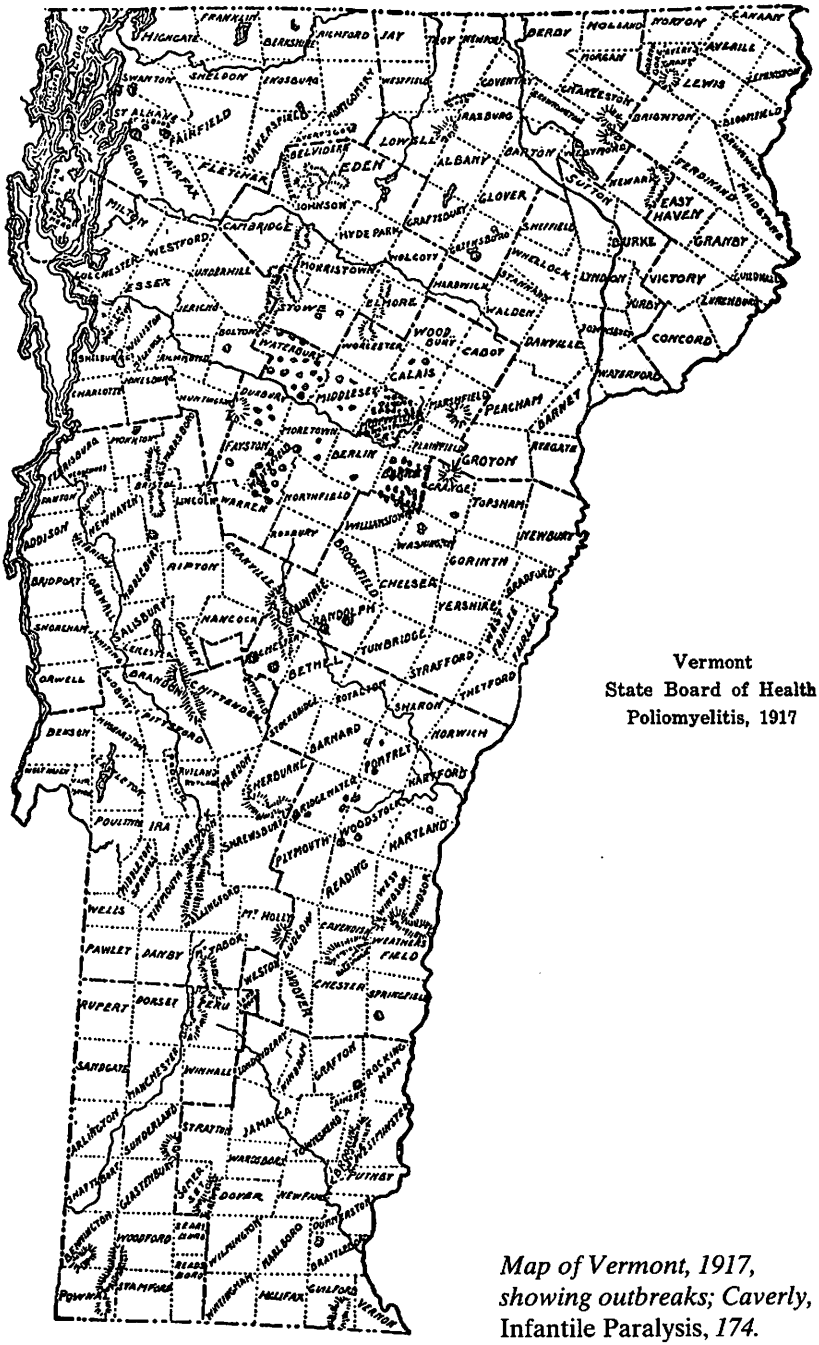


*Map of Vermont, 1917, showing outbreaks; Caverly,* Infantile Paralysis, *174.*

illness—the cause and means of transmission were then unknown—provide a particularly well-documented historical example of the early use of epidemiological methods to address a public health problem. A report of the 1916–1917 polio outbreaks in Vermont was published in 1918 by Dr. Charles Caverly, the Vermont physician who served as president of the Vermont State Board of Health from 1891–1924.[3] His meticulous epidemiological work provided the basis for subsequent documentation of poliomyelitis.[4] Indeed, Vermont and Dr. Caverly have a distinctive place in the history of poliomyelitis in the United States, as the first substantial epidemic occurred in Rutland County in 1894.[5] In the period between 1894 and 1917, Caverly continued to follow polio cases in the state, including outbreaks in 1916 in the western parts of the state bordering New York and in Montpelier in 1917.

As a result of this work, Caverly became convinced that the contagion of polio could best be contained through quarantine. On June 24, 1917, Dr. Caverly and the Vermont State Board of Health made the decision to recommend a quarantine restricting the movements of children in Montpelier, Barre, and Waitsfield in order to prevent the spread of the disease within the state.[6] As the number of polio cases continued to increase, the board decided to take further steps to limit public gatherings, including street fairs and the popular Chautauqua meetings that took place during the summer in many Vermont communities. One response to these measures may be seen in the resulting civil suit filed by Community Chautauquas.[7] In Montpelier, the trajectory of the outbreak was documented in quarantine notices and reports of specific polio cases that were regularly published in the *Montpelier Evening Argus.* However, it is the diary of the Montpelier insurance executive and historian, Dorman B. E. Kent (1875–1951),[8] that provides a unique local perspective on the 1917 outbreak in the city and its environs. In his entries Kent provided descriptions of new cases and of the progression of the disease, interwoven with comments about quotidian affairs, relaying a sense of the terrifying nature of this disease, which appeared to affect children randomly, as well as its consequences for everyday activities in the city.

Kent's diary also provides another perspective on the Montpelier outbreak and the subsequent quarantine. In the United States in the late nineteenth century, public health and medical practitioners generally subscribed to the filth (or miasma) theory of disease, which stressed the importance of controlling sources of filth or pollution in the environment. According to this way of thinking, particular diseases were attributed "to one or more causal influences, of which contagion might be

*Dorman B. E. Kent. Courtesy of Vermont Historical Society, Barre, Vermont.*

one" among many,[9] such as lack of proper sewage disposal and cleanliness in personal habits.[10] However, this conception began to be replaced by the germ theory of disease, as postulated by Robert Koch in the late 1880s, which supported the idea that infectious diseases were caused by specific entities, germs, which, once identified, could be contained without regard to environmental, social, cultural, or political concerns. The early-twentieth-century polio outbreaks thus came at a time of a shift in scientific thinking about diseases and the appropriate means for controlling them. Yet despite the changing theoretical understanding of disease, older ideas persisted, including an association of disease with the dirt of congested cities and the living conditions of impoverished immigrants and an association of health with nature and the sparsely populated countryside. The coexistence of these seemingly contradictory ways of thinking may be seen in the epidemiological work of Charles Caverly and in the actions of Dorman Kent. For Caverly, assumptions

about immigrants and poor hygiene are evident in his research and reports. For Kent, his thinking about contagion and about the healthful effects of the open air and less-populated countryside led him to move his two sons out of Montpelier shortly before a full quarantine was implemented. The reactions of both men suggest the ways that previous ideas about dirt and disease intersected with the newer germ theory. At the time of the 1917 polio outbreak in Montpelier, these earlier ideas persisted, in part, because the basis for polio infection was only partially understood by medical researchers. Thus, an examination of the history of the Montpelier polio outbreak illustrates how interpretations of the epidemic and subsequent actions reflected prevailing cultural, as well as medical, beliefs about this disease and how to prevent it.

## Early Knowledge of Poliomyelitis in Vermont

At the time of the Montpelier outbreak, little was known about poliomyelitis, including what would come to be understood as its source, an enterovirus, and its mode of infection through oral-fecal transmission. As was noted by Dr. Caverly in 1918, "While epidemics of poliomyelitis are not unknown or unrecorded, recent authorities speak only vaguely of their occurrence . . . The fact that poliomyelitis may occur epidemically, suggests, of course, an infectious origin, a view of the nature of the disease which has only been recently discussed."[11]

Caverly's point about vague reports of earlier outbreaks of polio reflects the endemic aspect of this disease before the twentieth century in Vermont. The poliovirus was ubiquitous in the environment and most children were exposed to it as infants, when still under partial protection of their mothers' antibodies. Thus many children acquired "natural immunity," with only a small fraction—one in approximately two hundred cases—having symptoms of paralysis.[12] While unknown at this time, improved sanitation—indoor plumbing, pipeborne water, and attention to cleanliness more generally—which had been effective in reducing other early childhood diseases resulting in lower infant and child mortality, actually contributed to the massive polio epidemics during the 1930s, '40s, and '50s in the United States This was because children raised under these sanitary circumstances were less likely to be exposed to the poliovirus as infants and hence had not acquired natural immunity through environmental exposure.[13] This situation was complicated by the fact that poliovirus infections later in life also predisposed older children and adults to more serious cases of the disease—which could include severe, irreversible paralysis and at times, death.[14] The pattern of more severe consequences of polio in relation to age was borne out in Caverly's data showing percentages of death from the disease during the 1917

outbreak (Table 1).[15] While only 3.19% of the 94 cases of children ages 0–4 years of age died, progressively larger percentages of those in older age groups contracted fatal cases of polio, even as the number of individuals affected diminished. The small number of cases in the 20–29 age range suggests that individuals born between 1888 and 1897 had acquired natural immunity through asymptomatic cases of polio as infants. Those who had not been exposed to the poliovirus as infants—either because they were living in households with improved indoor water and sewage systems or were living in remote rural communities without recent exposure to the poliovirus—had not acquired natural immunity. Not only were they susceptible when exposed to the virus, but they also experienced more severe cases of paralytic polio and sometimes death as they aged. Increased attention to household sanitary measures in subsequent years and reduced exposure to the poliovirus as infants led to the large epidemic outbreaks of paralytic polio and polio-related deaths in the twentieth century. Indeed, as Paul has noted, "The changing age incidence was a crucial event in the history of the disease, and the secret of the shift from *endemic* to periodic *epidemic* poliomyelitis was partially contained in it [italics in original]."[16]

Following the 1894 epidemic, outbreaks occurred in different parts of the state, which were meticulously documented by Caverly. There were smaller outbreaks during the period from 1910 to 1913, when 65 cases occurred in the Northeast Kingdom, centering in Hardwick (but also with cases in Barton, Glover, and Irasburg), and with 24 cases in Rutland. Caverly noted several characteristics of these areas that he believed explained outbreaks there: "These epidemic centers are all in larger river valleys with the exception of Barton; are all on main traffic lines except possibly Hardwick, located on a cross-state railroad."[17] In other words, the disease could be transmitted by a mobile population. Yet Caverly continued to believe that "while the disease is a communicable disease, it is one of low contagiousness"[18] based on evidence from families with one paralytic polio child.

Thus while Caverly considered the possibility of "an infectious origin" of polio, he did not see it as a highly contagious disease because, unknown to him and others at the time of the 1894 epidemic, a large proportion of cases were asymptomatic, with cold- or flu-like symptoms but without any signs of paralysis. In 1886 he wrote, "The element of contagion does not enter into the etiology either. I find but a single instance in which more than one member of a family had the disease, and as it usually occurred in families of more than one child, and as no efforts were made at isolation, it is very certain that it was non-contagious."[19] However, his view began to change after 1909, when Karl Landsteiner and Erwin Popper isolated the poliovirus as the cause of paralysis,[20] and

after Ivar Wickman's research in Sweden became known, which showed that asymptomatic and "abortive" cases[21] contributed to the spread of the disease.[22] By 1914, Caverly began collecting data on family members who showed what he referred to as "abortive" symptoms,[23] suggesting that they could have been carriers of the disease as well:

> A fact observed not infrequently, especially at Barton where such cases were of frequent occurrence in conjunction with paralyzed cases, was this—in visiting and examining a paralyzed case, one or more children in the family would be noted as not acting quite well. . . . That in all the communities where this disease appeared, there was a large number of such cases of varying degrees of severity, who recovered without any noticeable paralysis, there can be no doubt. These so-called abortive cases are surely important features of all outbreaks of infantile paralysis.[24]

While Caverly made the important observation of "abortive cases," as in any good mystery, there were also clues that were overlooked in favor of prevailing hypotheses.[25] In 1914, the largest and most severe epidemic occurred in the northern half of the state, starting in Barton, "where the 1913 outbreak had ended,"[26] and followed by a large outbreak in Burlington. Caverly noted that "towns, which have had epidemics of infantile paralysis, are thereafter largely exempt from the disease for varying lengths of time" (see Table 2 for this pattern in Washington County).[27] In hindsight, this situation may be attributed to the large proportion of asymptomatic cases that conferred immunity to polio to a town's population; but in the early 1900s this dynamic was still unknown, leading Caverly to refer to them as "mysterious exemptions."

Thus, precisely how the poliovirus spread and immunity was acquired remained unclear until the late 1930s, when accumulating evidence supported an oral-alimentary pathway for polio infection, rather than a nasal-olfactory one supported by researchers such as Simon Flexner of the Rockefeller Institute during the time of the Montpelier outbreak.[28] That it was a *lack of exposure* as infants to the poliovirus (mainly through human contact with feces-contaminated water) that led to more severe cases of polio when individuals without "natural immunity" were exposed as children and adults, countered the conflation of better health with better hygiene. As Rogers has noted, "Researchers were, not surprisingly, unwilling to believe that cleanliness itself might explain polio's epidemiological picture."[29]

The terror inspired by this puzzling disease, in which one member of a family might be severely paralyzed while other children had only a slight fever or appeared to be perfectly well, led to quarantines and other health measures (e.g., nasal swabs) in Vermont and in the United States more generally. Even after the source and transmission of this

highly contagious disease was known, widespread epidemic outbreaks occurred in the United States, including the 1944 and 1952 epidemics in which 19,000 and 57,000 cases occurred, respectively.[30] These experiences have profoundly shaped the ways that Americans view polio and reinforced their pride in having supported the successful development of the Salk and Sabin vaccines, making it difficult to imagine the uncertainty and fear surrounding infantile paralysis outbreaks in early-twentieth-century Vermont.

## The Outbreak of Polio and Quarantine in Montpelier

Beginning in June 1917, a large polio outbreak occurred mainly in Montpelier, and in the nearby town of Barre (see Tables 2 and 3), both of which had had relatively few cases before. As in earlier outbreaks in the state, public health officials kept records on all those who had distinct symptoms of paralysis, as well as those with "abortive" symptoms. Polio victims were sorted by age, sex, type of paralysis, outcome of illness, occupation of father, nationality of parents, and number of children in the family. Statewide, 171 individuals were affected—93 males and 78 females, ranging from under 4 years to over 40 years old—with 103 cases with residual paralysis, and an estimated overall death rate of 8.77 per cent.[31]

As the number of cases increased in Montpelier, the city council took measures to establish a quarantine that restricted the movements of children under sixteen years of age and prohibited them from attending all places of public gatherings such as theaters, schools, ball games, and churches.[32] However, with more cases being identified daily, the local board of health and Montpelier City Council decided to extend the quarantine by restricting the movement of children beyond their homes (see Dorman Kent's diary entry for June 28, 1917).[33] In addition to keeping their children at home, parents were advised to disinfect their children by washing their noses, throats, and mouths with a saline solution to prevent the spread of the disease.[34] This recommendation reflects the belief at the time that polio was spread through nasal mucous transmission rather than by oral-fecal routes, which were eventually shown to be the case.

The trajectory of the outbreak in Montpelier, beginning on June 20, 1917, and ending in late August, is dramatically documented in Dorman Kent's matter-of-fact diary entries for the period,[35] as the following selection of entries suggest:

> Wednesday, June 20, 1917: "Infantile paralysis broke out in town today. One case on Corse Hill, one on Elm St & a suspected case at Rob Blisses."

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## Thursday, June 28, 1917

All day in the office on the policy holders July service work. I don't believe Shep is much of a girl to turn such a job. I'm rattle brained. Mat Agnes at 4.30 & we came home. After supper I went to the Elks a few minutes & at 7.30 went to the City meeting. Only about 60 present.
Dean's proposed a extra tax of 15 cts & of course George Blanchard opposed as usual. He wanted to rob the sinking fund & accused the Council of extravagance & waste (indirectly) I asked him why he wouldn't put his shoulder to the wheel & take office.
The meeting adjourned at 8.30 & Mayor Mitchell George Almon & I went to Barre & back. Gone but an hour.
Tomorrow the town goes on a strict quarantine as far as public meetings of every sort is concerned & no children will be allowed in the streets.
Miss De Boer was married today in Albany New York.

*Page from diary of Dorman Kent, dated June 28, 1917. Courtesy of Vermont Historical Society, Barre, Vermont.*

Saturday, June 23, 1917: "The McKee child on First Ave came down with infantile paralysis today making five cases in the town thus far. People are rightly alarmed."

Tuesday, June 26, 1917: "More new cases of infantile paralysis again today. Some are very very ill."

Thursday, June 28, 1917: "Tomorrow the town goes on a strict quarantine as far as public meetings of every sort is concerned & no children will be allowed in the streets."

Saturday, June 30, 1917: "There are now 19 cases of infantile paralysis in Montpelier and it is cropping out in the other towns of Washington County."

Monday, July 2, 1917: "Found this morning that seven new cases of infantile had appeared yesterday making a total now of twenty six."

Wednesday, July 4, 1917: "Two more cases in town today. The boy of Will Theriault & a daughter of Charlie Booth in the Meadows."

Friday, July 6, 1917: "Geo Hunts child came down with the disease today. Newsboys forbidden to deliver any more papers today so did not get our Argus tonight."

Saturday, July 7, 1917: "Will Theriault's boy died of infantile paralysis this morning making two deaths thus far. No child under 14 now can leave the town or even its door yard." [See Table 4.]

It was not until August 8th that children who had remained in the town were allowed to move about Montpelier freely, although they were not allowed to leave the town until the full quarantine was lifted in late September, as Kent noted, Saturday, September 22, 1917: "The quarantine of children was fully lifted tonight at 6:00 P.M. Been on since about June 30. No new cases of polio in town for over a month."

## Responses to the Quarantine

The responses of parents to the Montpelier quarantine varied. Some parents and children remained and observed the quarantine. Others who could afford it left or sent their children to stay outside the city until the outbreak subsided, even though parents were discouraged from sending their children away from the city to avoid catching the disease. The local newspaper reported that:

> All members of the [health] board were agreed in their severe criticism of families who are taking their children out of the city, some to places where the physician has had no experience with the disease . . . Dr. Lindsay said he expected some of the health officers will send some of the children back home.[36]

Nonetheless, this criticism did not outweigh the fears of some Montpelier parents who proceeded to make arrangements for their children to stay outside the city for, as Dorman Kent noted on Wednesday, June 27, 1917, "Hundreds of children have left town & are leaving."

This strategy to protect their children from disease reflected ideas about the wholesome, healthful qualities of nature, along with fear of contagion associated with the city.[37] Dorman Kent and his wife, Agnes, made arrangements for their two sons to stay with the Lyford family on the Middlesex Center Road (west of Montpelier) and moved them there on June 27, immediately before the full quarantine went into effect. Kent wrote in his diary:

> Worked on policy holders campaign job. When I got home at noon, I called up Minnie Lyford and made arrangements to send the boys to their house for the summer. Went back to the office and at 3:30 got a team at Kent and Smiths stable. Agnes took the boys and carried them to Lyfords on the Middlesex Center road. . . .
>
> I took the horses back to the stable, telephoned the boys from the Apollo Club & came home. Did not go out in evening.[38]

The Kents regularly visited their sons on Sundays—although they kept their distance for fear of contagion—until they were forced to find another place for them in early July, this time near Calais, the Kent family's home town:

> Found the Lyfords could not keep them another night so I got a car . . . and went to Lyfords and got them. Took them through Putville [Putnamville] & Worcester to Wheelers. Found Julius at home & we waited for Mary to come home from Maple Corner. They said they would take them gladly. . . . The boys look fine & feel fine. Pray to God they'll keep so.[39]

It was almost another month, on August 7, 1917, before the local board of health in Montpelier recommended that the full quarantine be lifted the following day, allowing churches and movie houses to reopen.[40] While children were not allowed to attend, Kent noted that they "were however today released from their front lawns & great was the rejoicing,"[41] which was reported in the *Montpelier Evening Argus:*

> Yesterday was a great day for youths of 14 years and younger. They were out of quarantine, and they celebrated the event by coming down town in such numbers that it looked as if they all had come back from their vacation. At the same time it seemed like a reunion. There appeared to be a wireless telepathy that informed them that the quarantine was off. . . . It must be said of the parents of Montpelier children that they did splendidly. Only, occasionally, were there any complaints. Considering the fact there are a couple of thousand children in Montpelier the task of keeping them within ear shot of the kitchen door was by no means a small task.[42]

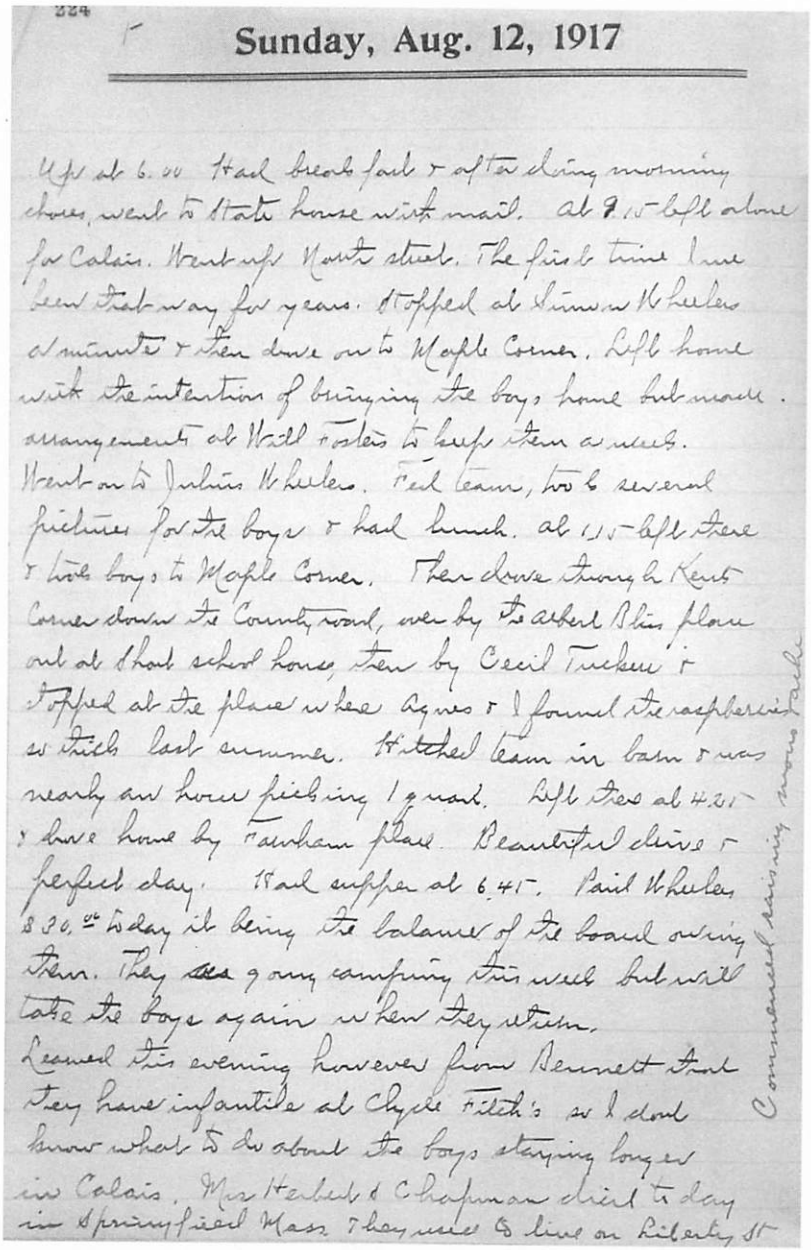
While Dorman Kent may not have been opposed to quarantine measures in theory, in practice he and his wife decided to keep their sons outside of the city during the height of the epidemic, thus "voting with their feet" against the quarantine ruling that was about to be imposed.[43] In his diary entries for July 1917, Kent makes frequent references to his sons' outdoor activities and good health, which seemed to reinforce the wisdom of his decision. However, in an entry dated August 12, he wrote that while he hoped to have his sons stay another week, he "learned... that they have infantile [paralysis] at Clyde Fitch's [in Calais] so I don't know what to do about the boys staying longer in Calais."[44] That children residing in an idyllic countryside could contract polio there, along with the ending of the full quarantine and declining polio cases in Montpelier, convinced the Kents to bring their sons home. Agnes Kent brought their sons back to Montpelier on August 13, 1917, with Dorman Kent noting that, "The boys have been gone 7 weeks come Wednesday."[45]

A little over a month later, with, as Kent noted in his diary, "no new cases of polio in town for over a month," a short notice appeared in the *Montpelier Evening Argus* announcing that, "Quarantine regulations, now in force, because of infantile paralysis are hereby declared released at 6 o'clock tonight, Saturday, September 22nd, 1917. W. LINDSAY, Health Officer."[46] Thereafter children and their families could freely move within the town and out of it.

## Quarantine Critics

In an article published on August 9, the *Montpelier Evening Argus* reporter mentioned that "Only, occasionally, were there any complaints" about the 1917 polio quarantine, although the content of these complaints is not specified. For parents with children who had no symptoms of the disease, quarantine measures restricting them to their homes during the entire month of July must have been difficult to maintain. Despite health officials' praise for the many Montpelier parents who did cooperate with the quarantine, some people criticized this action. Some, particularly medical professionals, viewed quarantines such as those used by health departments in Montpelier and Barre—which did not focus on a specific germ and its transmission—as outdated practices, as Naomi Rogers notes in her study of polio in the early twentieth century:

> The strict quarantine and sanitation measures extolled by health officials as part of their anti-polio campaigns were seen by some observers to cross the line from germ theory to the filth theory. . . . Similarly, a New Hampshire physician criticized "backward" city health



Sunday, Aug. 12, 1917

Up at 6.00 Had breakfast & after doing morning chores, went to State house with mail. At 9.15 left alone for Calais. Went up North street. The first time I have been that way for years. Stopped at Simeon Wheelers a minute & then drove on to Maple Corner. Left home with the intention of bringing the boys home but made arrangements at Ward Foster's to keep them a week. Went on to Julius Wheelers. Had team, two & several pictures for the boys & had lunch. At 1.15 left there & took boys to Maple Corner. Then drove through Kents Corner down the County road, over by the Albert Bliss place out at Shad school house, then by Cecil Tuckers & stopped at the place where Agnes & I found the raspberries so thick last summer. Watched team in barn & was nearly an hour picking 1 quart. Left there at 4.20 & drove home by Farnham place. Beautiful drive & perfect day. Had supper at 6.45. Paid Wheelers $30.00 today it being the balance of the board owing them. They will go camping this week but will take the boys again when they return.
Learned this evening however from Bennett that they have infantile at Clyde Fitch's so I dont know what to do about the boys staying longer in Calais. Mrs Herbert C Chapman died today in Springfield Mass & they used to live on Liberty St

Commenced raising raspberries

*Page from diary of Dorman Kent, dated August 12, 1917. Courtesy of Vermont Historical Society, Barre, Vermont.*

> departments, whose efforts, he believed, were guided not by calm scientific leadership but fearful physicians and members of the public in "bondage to the superstition and discarded theories of a prescientific age."[47]

While Charles Caverly in his position as president of the Vermont State Board of Health supported quarantine measures, some health officials in Vermont were opposed to the full quarantine eventually imposed; but they were overridden by city council members who in turn were under pressure from an anxious public to do something to control the spread of the disease, as was reported in the *Montpelier Evening Argus:*

> The members of the city council expressed themselves freely in favor of general closing while Dr. William Lindsay took the position that the move was too drastic at this time and was backed up by the recommendation of Dr. Dalton that the matter is well enough in hand, and that it seemed unnecessary to take so drastic a step at this period. . . . The public was strongly in favor of the greatest possible precaution.[48]

From Caverly's perspective and based on epidemiological evidence, the "germ" or virus that caused polio paralysis was spread—somehow—from person to person. Thus the quarantine of those with paralysis as well as children living in the immediate vicinity made sense, and he commended the strictly worded measures implemented by the Barre City Department of Health as responsible for limiting the number of polio cases in the town, noting that "Barre City's comparative exemption from the disease [prior to July 1917] is undoubtedly largely due to the stringent measures adopted by the local board."[49]

In addition to his support for quarantine measures meant to restrict contagion but without a clear sense of how the poliovirus was transmitted, two aspects of Caverly's report on the Montpelier outbreak reflected contemporary thinking about "dirt and disease" in general and polio in particular. First, in noting that 38 out of the 171 cases of polio in 1917 occurred in stone-working families,[50] he made an indirect reference to the Hardwick outbreak of 1913 and an explicit connection between the sanitary habits of these families (many of whom were Italian immigrants[51]) and disease: "The Hardwick outbreak . . ., after the experiences of these other stone-working towns, is noteworthy. The connection, of course, may be sought in local sanitary defects, or habits of the men who are engaged in stone working, rather than in anything inherent to the work itself."[52] Second, during the 1914 polio outbreak in Burlington, while Caverly assumed that cases would be found in the more unsanitary areas of the city, he observed that while three-fourths of the cases occurred in one district, "most of the cases in this section *did not* occur in the worst portion of this section [italics in original]."[53] Thus,

while the evidence suggested that cases of infantile paralysis occurred in areas of the city with better sanitation, his views on the relationship of disease with crowding, filth, and slums made it difficult for him, as well as others, to conceive of a connection of cases of polio with cleanliness.

## Conclusion

In 1917, uncertainty about how polio was transmitted led to various measures including quarantines of houses and communities, as well as treatments such as nasal and throat swabs with saline solution. Physicians such as Charles Caverly, who took up the new health paradigm represented by Koch's germ theory and the epidemiological tracking of individual cases of disease, nonetheless exemplified the transitional nature of this period, retaining to some extent earlier thinking about connections between dirt and disease. In a related way, the period of the Montpelier polio outbreak was also transitional in terms of the practice of public health in Vermont. With the shift toward a focus on specific agents for the spread of disease—germs—and the development of a methodology for tracking the spread of disease—epidemiology—Vermont State Department of Health officials who had initially served in an advisory role sought a more active, regulatory position for the department and for public health care in the state. Caverly's investigation of the first major polio outbreak in Vermont in the Rutland area in 1894 strengthened his claim that new and more rigorous public health measures needed to be instituted.[54] His subsequent leadership role in the Vermont State Department of Health, his epidemiological work on the continuing polio outbreaks in the state, and his support for the establishment of rehabilitation programs and clinics for those affected by polio, as well as isolation hospitals for the better treatment of those with infectious diseases,[55] reflected his role in promoting the "new public health" in Vermont.[56]

Yet the actions of parents suggest a certain lack of unanimity in this way of thinking, not only about disease transmission but also about the role of the state in matters of public health. While Caverly supported quarantine measures as the best way to stop the spread of polio in Vermont communities, parents' fears of contagion and uncertainty about the causes of infantile paralysis led some to counter public health directives. Thus, during the 1917 polio outbreak in Montpelier, some parents, such as the Kents, sent their children out of urban centers to areas where they believed their children would be safest from the disease. In this case, it was not an example of public health officials encountering resistance from working-class and/or immigrant parents.[57] Rather, it came from other educated professionals who believed that their own

judgment about the best means for protecting the health of their families was reinforced by public health physicians' inability to explain how polio was transmitted and how to prevent it. This dynamic may be seen in present-day anti-vaccination websites where parents discuss their fears of excessive vaccination undermining their children's immune systems and links of vaccines with autism,[58] leading some parents to refuse having their children vaccinated. The tension over whose judgment should prevail in matters of public and individual health with regard to vaccines and immunization continues to be a matter of public concern.[59]

TABLE 1 Percentage of Deaths by Age Range, 1917 Polio Outbreak, Vermont[1]

| *Age Range* | *No. of Cases* | *No. of Deaths* | *% Cases Ending in Death* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0–4 | 94 | 3 | 3.19 |
| 5–9 | 47 | 7 | 14.9[2] |
| 10–19 | 23 | 6 | 26.1[2] |
| 20–29 | 5 | 2 | 40 |
| Total | 169[2] | 18[3] | |

[1] Caverly, *Infantile Paralysis,* 165.

[2] Total cases for 1917 was 171; two cases not shown include one case aged 30–39 and one case aged 40+. For the age ranges 5–9 and 10–19 respectively, the percentages given for cases ending in death were 15.3% and 26.8% in the original table.

[3] Caverly noted that at least one and possibly two other deaths attributed to polio may have had other causes such as bronchial pneumonia (*Infantile Paralysis,* 165).

TABLE 2 1917 Polio Outbreak, Vermont: Cases by County and Month for the Eastern Side of the State[1]

| | *Jan* | *Feb* | *Mar* | *Apr* | *May* | *Jun* | *Jul* | *Aug* | *Sept* | *Oct* | *Nov* | *Dec* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Caledonia | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Essex | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| Orange | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | 2 | | | | 4 |
| Orleans | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | 2 |
| Washington | | | 6[2] | | | 44 | 32 | 35 | 15 | 5 | | | 137[3] |
| Windham | | | | | | | | 2 | | | | | 2 |
| Windsor | | | | | | | 2 | 3 | 8 | | | | 13 |
| Total | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 45 | 35 | 40 | 27 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 159 |

[1] Caverly, *Infantile Paralysis,* 173. Only twelve cases were identified in the western side of the state in 1917.

[2] All six cases from Waterbury (Caverly, *Infantile Paralysis,* 170).

[3] Montpelier City ($n$ = 54), Barre City ($n$ = 22), and Barre Town ($n$ = 16 cases) accounted for the majority ($n$ = 92) of the 137 cases in Washington County.

TABLE 3 Cases of Poliomyelitis, 1910–1917, in Washington County and the State of Vermont[1]

| *Year* | *Washington County* | *State of Vermont* |
|---|---|---|
| 1910 | 12 | 69 |
| 1911 | 1 | 27 |
| 1912 | 1 | 12 |
| 1913 | 0 | 47 |
| 1914 | 25 | 304 |
| 1915 | 1 | 44 |
| 1916 | 1 | 64 |
| 1917 | 137 | 171 |

[1]Caverly, *Infantile Paralysis,* 172.

TABLE 4 Deaths Attributed to Poliomyelitis, 1917, in Vermont by Town, County[1]

| *Town (County)* | *Population* | *No. of deaths* |
|---|---|---|
| Barre Town (Washington) | 4,194 | 1 |
| City of Barre (Washington) | 10,734 | 8 |
| Barton (Orleans) | 3,346 | 1 |
| Duxbury (Washington) | 648 | 2 |
| Enosburgh (Franklin) | 2,212 | 1 |
| Montpelier (Washington) | 7,856 | 2 |
| Moretown (Washington) | 886 | 1 |
| Stowe (Lamoille) | 1,991 | 1 |
| Waterbury (Washington) | 3,273 | 3 |
| Total | — | 20[2] |

[1]State Board of Health, State of Vermont, *Twenty-First Report of the State Board of Health of the State of Vermont, from January 1, 1916, to December 31, 1917* (Rutland, Vt.: Tuttle Company, 1918).

[2]This discrepancy in total number of deaths (see Table 1) may be due to an error in the published table or to the ambiguity surrounding the cause of death associated with poliomyelitis.

## NOTES

I would like to thank librarians of the Vermont Historical Society—Marjorie Strong, for her help with accessing the Dorman Kent diary, and Paul Carnahan, who kindly provided the photograph of Dorman Kent—and librarians at the University of Michigan for microfilm assistance. I am also grateful to the anonymous reviewers whose thoughtful comments greatly improved this work.

[1]Charles S. Caverly, *Infantile Paralysis in Vermont, 1894–1922* (Burlington, Vt.: State Department of Public Health, 1924), 164.

[2]Naomi Rogers, *Dirt and Disease: Polio before FDR* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 11.

[3]The report was first published in *Bulletin of the Vermont State Board of Health,* 19 (September 1918).

[4]Rogers, *Dirt and Disease,* 141.

[5]Caverly, *Infantile Paralysis,* 15–20; John Paul, *History of Poliomyelitis* (New Haven, Ct.: Yale University Press, 1971), 79–87. According to Paul, "The Vermont epidemic turned out to be by far the largest one (132 cases on the final count) that had ever been reported in one year anywhere in the world. And, as far as can be ascertained, it was the first epidemic to be studied by a full-time local public health official," 80.

[6]Caverly, *Infantile Paralysis,* 175. Quarantine restrictions were put in place in these three places as by late June 1917, the majority of the 50 cases of paralytic polio in Washington County occurred in Montpelier, Barre Town, and Waitsfield. While there had been six cases of paralysis in early March in Waterbury, a main transportation node in the area, and while Caverly suspected that there had been "some connection between the March cases in the town of Waterbury and the later severe outbreak in Barre Town, Waitsfield, and Montpelier" (Caverly, *Infantile Paralysis,* 169), at the time these quarantine orders were put in place there had been no further cases in Waterbury. An additional 87 cases occurred in Washington County in July through October 1917 (see Table 2).

Waitsfield, unlike Montpelier and Barre Town, was a small rural community and was not a large transportation node, although it was connected by road to Waterbury (by present-day Highway 100) and to Montpelier (via Moretown and Berlin by present-day Moretown Mountain Road and Highway 12). In 1917, Caverly noted a large number of cases relative to population in Waitsfield, which "had the most cases per capita of population of any other town" (*Infantile Paralysis,* 171), although he was unable to offer an explanation of why towns between Waitsfield and Montpelier (i.e., Berlin, Northfield, and Moretown) had relatively few cases. In hindsight, it is likely that Waitfield's relative isolation had resulted in many individuals—infants, children, and adults—without antibodies acquired from asymptomatic cases of polio. An asymptomatic child visiting the Waitsfield area or a Waitsfield farmer visiting the capital and who was exposed to the poliovirus could thus have spread the disease to this susceptible community.

[7]Caverly, *Infantile Paralysis,* 176–182; Montpelier *Evening Argus,* 24 July 1917; *Community Chautauquas, Inc.* v. *Caverly et al.,* District Court D, Vermont. 244 F. 893; 1917 U.S. District, LEXIS 1099. The quarantine was opposed by Community Chautauquas, Inc., groups that organized fairs, plays, and other educational public events in Vermont communities in the early twentieth century. Chautauqua representatives took Dr. Caverly, as president of the Vermont State Board of Health, to district court, asking that a restraining order against the quarantine be upheld. The court ruled against them.

[8]W. R. Cutter, ed., *New England Families,* vol. 4 (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1950): 1950.

[9]Stephen Kunitz, "Explanations and Ideologies of Mortality Patterns," *Population and Development Review* 13 (September 1987): 380.

[10]Thus, disease outbreaks among immigrant ethnic groups were often attributed to unclean, foreign habits. See Rogers, *Dirt and Disease,* 148; Alan M. Kraut, *Silent Travelers: Germs, Genes, and the "Immigrant Menace"* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 108–111. For a more recent example of this type of thinking, see Charles Briggs and Clara Mantini-Briggs, *Stories in the Time of Cholera* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

[11]Caverly, *Infantile Paralysis,* 28.

[12]Centers for Disease Control, "What is Polio?" Global Polio Eradication Initiative. http://www.polioeradication.org/disease.asp (accessed 25 August 2009).

[13]Paul, *History of Poliomyelitis,* 358. In the 1930s, a test was developed that showed immunity to poliomyelitis according to age by measuring antibodies in blood serum. In a study conducted in Baltimore in 1941, Thomas Turner and colleagues found that in the Eastern Health District, a poorer section of the city, polio antibody levels in blood serum increased with age after the initial protection from maternal antibodies wore off. See T. Turner, L. Young, and E. Maxwell, "Mouse-adapted Lansing Strain of Poliomyelitis Virus: Neutralizing Antibodies in Serum of Healthy Children," *American Journal of Hygiene* 42 (September 1945): 121. This pattern was repeated in studies carried out in other parts of the world with inadequate environmental hygiene, such as Cairo, Egypt, which resulted in widespread "natural immunity." See J. Paul, J. Melnick, V. Barnet, and N. Goldblum, "A Survey of Neutralizing Anti-bodies to Poliomyelitis Virus in Cairo, Egypt," *American Journal of Hygiene* 55 (1952): 402–413. With improved public environmental and personal hygiene by 1900 in the United States, exposure to the poliovirus and the subsequent development of antibodies came at a later age. In the pre-polio vaccination era (before 1955), older children without antibodies were more likely to experience paralytic rather than asymptomatic cases of polio, as the severity of symptoms increased with age.

[14]Paul, *History of Poliomyelitis,* 365.

[15]Caverly, *Infantile Paralysis,* 165.

[16]Paul, *History of Poliomyelitis,* 84.

[17]Caverly, *Infantile Paralysis,* 91.

[18] Ibid., 166.
[19] Ibid., 28.
[20] Paul, *History of Poliomyelitis,* 98.
[21] Abortive cases have been described as ranging from "illness in which a stiff neck and pain and stiffness in the back were evident to one[s] in which the only manifestation was fever lasting from one to five days"; Paul, *History of Poliomyelitis,* 91.
[22] Ibid., 91. Paul provides an excellent, detailed discussion of the early research on poliomyelitis which sometimes reads like a mystery thriller. It also provides several cautionary tales about medical research.
[23] Caverly, *Infantile Paralysis,* 99–100.
[24] Ibid., 104.
[25] Along with the distinctive age pattern in severity of polio symptoms, there were other early clues to explain the transmission of the poliovirus. In the 1911 outbreak, physicians' comments indicated that "several of the cases, as is usual under these circumstances, had been accustomed 'to go in swimming' during the hot weather;" Caverly, *Infantile Paralysis,* 63.
[26] Ibid., 111.
[27] Ibid., 115.
[28] Paul, *History of Poliomyelitis,* 243, 250. Dr. Simon Flexner, the director of the Rockefeller Institute of Medical Research, believed that the route of polio transmission was through the nose. He consequently recommended the use of nasal swabs to disinfect the nasal passageways to prevent the spread of the disease.
[29] Rogers, *Dirt and Disease,* 161.
[30] David Oshinsky, *Polio: An American Story* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 69, 161.
[31] Caverly, *Infantile Paralysis,* 165.
[32] *Montpelier Evening Argus,* 25 June 1917.
[33] Ibid., 28 June 1917.
[34] Ibid., 25 June 1917.
[35] Dorman B. E. Kent, *Diary.* Vermont Historical Society, Barre, Vermont.
[36] *Montpelier Evening Argus,* 28 June 1917.
[37] During the polio epidemic in New York City in the summer of 1916, more affluent families moved out of the city to rural areas to avoid the disease (Rogers, *Dirt and Disease,* 34). Consequently, in July 1916, the Vermont State Board of Health adopted a quarantine specific to children from New York City. The quarantine stated, among other requirements, that any child under 15 years of age residing within Vermont for more than 24 hours be reported to local health officers (Caverly, *Infantile Paralysis,* 157–159). Nonetheless, the movements of some individuals (probably those with asymptomatic cases) contributed to the spread of polio in parts of Vermont bordering New York State in 1916 (Caverly, *Infantile Paralysis,* 154).
[38] Kent, *Diary,* 27 June 1917.
[39] Ibid., 6 July 1917.
[40] *Montpelier Evening Argus,* 7 Aug 1917.
[41] Kent, *Diary,* 8 August 1917.
[42] *Montpelier Evening Argus,* 9 August 1917. In this news story and in the Kent diary entry of July 7, 1917, the writers note that the quarantine affected children who were fourteen years of age or younger, whereas the *Montpelier Evening Argus* story of June 25, 1917, reported that the Montpelier City Council voted to quarantine children under sixteen years of age. While the June 25, 1917, story appears to be correct, this discrepancy may have been the result of some people remembering the Vermont State Board of Health quarantine of New York City children under fifteen years of age, issued in July 1916 (see note 37).
[43] Marc Shell, *Polio and Its Aftermath* (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 2005), 39. Shell described a similar side-stepping of public health rules, as in Québec in 1953, when his parents were legally obligated to hospitalize their polio-afflicted son but did not, keeping him at home.
[44] Kent, *Diary,* 12 August 1917.
[45] Ibid., 13 August 1917.
[46] *Montpelier Evening Argus,* 22 September 1917.
[47] Rogers, *Dirt and Disease,* 157.
[48] *Montpelier Evening Argus,* 28 June 1917.
[49] Caverly, *Infantile Paralysis,* 185, 187.
[50] Ibid., 168.
[51] Patrizia Audenino, "The Paths of the Trade: Stone Masons in the U.S.," *International Migration Review* 20 (Winter 1986): 783. Italian stonecutters, such as those from Valle Cervo in the northern Italian Piedmont region, first moved to Vermont beginning around 1870. The "massive inflow of northern Italians" to quarry towns such as Barre occurred in the late 1890s, see Richard Hathaway, "The Granite Workers of Barre, 1880–1940," in *We Vermonters: Perspectives on the Past,* eds.

Michael Sherman and Jennie Versteeg (Barre: Vermont Historical Society, 1992), 229. This influx of northern Italian stonecutters coincided with growing numbers of outbreaks of poliomyelitis in Vermont.

[52] Caverly, *Infantile Paralysis*, 87.

[53] Ibid., 127.

[54] Marilyn S. Blackwell, "The Politics of Public Health: Medical Inspection and School Nursing in Vermont, 1910–1923," *Vermont History* 68 (Winter/Spring 2000): 61.

[55] Charles Caverly, "The Needy Child—From the Viewpoint of the State Board of Health," *Proceedings of the Second Annual Vermont Conference of Charities & Correction* (24 January 1917), 24.

[56] Blackwell, "Politics of Public Health," 60; Paul, *History of Poliomyelitis*, 87.

[57] Kraut, *Silent Travelers*, 112.

[58] Robert Wolfe, Lisa Sharp, and Martin Lipsky, "Content and Design Attributes of Antivaccination Web Sites," *Journal of the American Medical Association* (June 2002).

[59] Paul Offit, *Autism's False Prophets* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

# VERMONT ARCHIVES AND MANUSCRIPTS

*This occasional section alerts researchers to the rich resources acquired regularly by Vermont's historical repositories. News of accessions and openings of processed collections, as well as longer evaluative descriptions of research collections are welcome. Please send submissions to the Editor,* Vermont History.

## Vermont in the Civil War: Web Sites and Resources for the Civil War Sesquicentennial, 1861–1865/2011–2015

As we approach the second year of the five-year commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, several institutions have developed web sites and resources for researchers of Vermont's participation in the war and the war's effect on Vermont and Vermonters. Below are descriptions of several that are currently available. In future issues of *Vermont History,* we will keep readers informed of additional resources that come to our attention.

- The enormous **Vermont in the Civil War** site, www.vermontcivilwar.org, should be on any researcher's list of Vermont Civil War online resources. In fact it is the starting place for most people.
- The official site for the **Vermont Civil War Sesquicentennial** commemoration is www.vermontcivilwar150.com.
- **The Vermont Council on the Humanities** has a site that includes links to various resources: http://www.vermonthumanities.org/index_files/civilwarhomefront.htm. People can sign up for the "Civil War Book of Days" (a weekly e-mail of events 150 years ago that week)

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on a different page on that site: http://www.vermonthumanities.org/index_files/Civil WarBookofDays.htm.

## The Vermont Historical Society

The Vermont Historical Society has two web sites devoted to Civil War materials.

### *Civil War Transcriptions*

Many Vermonters who fought in the Civil War wrote letters home and kept diaries describing the conditions in which they lived. The Vermont Historical Society is proud to host a vast collection of Civil War manuscripts: letters, diaries, and other documents related to the war. Here we've provided online transcripts of some of the letters and diaries in our collection, arranged by the author's last name. Access the documents at: www.vermonthistory.org/cwtranscriptions.

### *Civil War Officers Gallery*

These images were collected by the Vermont Officers Reunion Society beginning in 1869. Work on the collection continued through at least 1894, almost thirty years after the war had ended. The images were originally at the Vermont State House but now are in the collection of the Vermont Historical Society. The images capture the likenesses of 859 Vermont Civil War officers, 63 percent of the 1,363 men who served as officers during the conflict. View the images at: http://vermonthistory.org/index.php/library/image-collections/civil-war-officers-gallery.html.

## Vermont State Archives

Vermont's state government records provide a rich resource for researchers studying the Civil War. As the country debated the issues leading up to the war, the state's responses to national events such as the Missouri Compromise of 1820 and the Dred Scott decision in 1857 are documented in executive and legislative records. See for example, "Vermont and the Dred Scott Decision" at the State Archives "Spotlight on Records" page: http://vermont-archives.org/research/spotlight/records.htm.

With the outbreak of open conflict, records detail the mobilization of the state, its support of the war effort, and the service of Vermont soldiers from 1861 to 1865. Finally, the legacy of the war is chronicled in later records related to commemorations and the financial costs of the war.

The Vermont State Archives has created an online guide to its Civil War-related holdings and encourages the public to come and explore these important records. As the state and the nation commemorate the

sesquicentennial of the war, we hope that a reinvigorated interest in this critical period of history will promote research and yield new insights into these events that forever changed Vermont and the United States. Access the online guide at: http://vermont-archives.org/research/civil_war/index.htm.

UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT LIBRARIES'
CENTER FOR DIGITAL INITIATIVES

*Vermonters in the Civil War Digital Collection*

Vermont soldiers in the Civil War wrote an enormous quantity of letters and diaries, of which many thousands have survived in libraries, historical societies, and in private hands. The University of Vermont Libraries' Center for Digital Initiatives' latest collection, "Vermonters in the Civil War," makes a selection of letters and diaries from the University of Vermont and the Vermont Historical Society available in a searchable database that includes images of the originals and full transcriptions.

The collection includes materials dating from 1861 at the start of the Civil War, and will grow with additional materials throughout the years of the sesquicentennial commemoration, from 2011 through 2015. The digitized materials provide a variety of perspectives on events and issues. The voices represented in the collection include private soldiers and officers, as well as a few civilians.

Subject content for the 1861 letters and diaries covers a great deal of ground. The many logistical issues involved in launching the war effort come to light in the letters of General John W. Phelps, while officers such as Lieutenant Roswell Farnham often made thoughtful observations on the events and personalities in the camps and in the field. The enlisted men occasionally described important events in detail, but more often wrote about everyday life and concerns. Eyewitness accounts of 1861 engagements at Big Bethel (June 9–10), Bull Run (July 21), and Lewinsville (September 11) reveal the motivations and expectations of the men in arms, while descriptions of living conditions, drilling, sickness, and political intrigue provide insight on the soldiers' experiences.

Visit the Center for Digital Initiatives at http://cdi.uvm.edu to see how the struggles of a divided nation come to life in the words of the men and women who lived through the Civil War and experienced the moments of triumph, comradeship, suffering and grief.

— PRUDENCE DOHERTY, *Public Services Librarian*
*Special Collections, Bailey/Howe Library*
*University of Vermont*

## Castleton State College Library

### *Conscripting Castleton: The Draft in a Northern Community during the Civil War*

Castleton State College history faculty and students in partnership with the college library have transcribed and digitized the town's Civil War enrollment roster and created a website, "Conscripting Castleton: The Draft in a Northern Community during the Civil War." The Castleton roster can be found on the college library's website at http://www.castleton.edu/library/civil_war_roster.

In 2007 the college library acquired the 50-page handwritten roster, which is the town's official record of the eligibility of men for service in the Federal army. Professor Andre Fleche, a Civil War scholar, and history students (now graduates) Brianna Gagne and Jake Richards transcribed the document, which can be difficult to decipher and interpret.

Fleche said, "The roster identifies more than 200 Castleton-area residents who served in the Union armies and all the military-aged men who lived in town, including those who were drafted, died, paid commutations, or relocated. This website will interest scholars, genealogists, and anyone interested in local history or the Civil War."

Library staff created web pages from the transcriptions and scanned the actual pages, so that visitors to the site can view the original roster.

Library director Sandy Duling said, "We're excited to be part of the Castleton roster project. It's often assumed that only major university libraries will undertake digitization projects. The Castleton roster demonstrates that even small libraries can make significant contributions to the preservation and distribution of our historical record."

The site contains a wealth of information about the ages, occupations, and health of men in Castleton in the 1860s. Heart and pulmonary diseases afflicted even young men. Some are noted as having "Gone West" or "Gone to Parts Unknown."

As a graduate student at the University of Virginia, Fleche worked on an extensive Civil War digital archive called "The Valley of the Shadow: Two Communities in the American Civil War."

Fleche said, "We plan to expand the Castleton site by adding information on individuals taken from the census and military service records, which will provide a rich profile of many town residents and allow researchers to make comparisons and draw conclusions about the social backgrounds of those who served, were drafted, stayed home, or paid fees."

For additional information and inquiries, contact: Andre Fleche, history professor, 802-468-6069; (May–September 2011: 802-683-0213); Sandy Duling, library director, 802-468-1396.

— Ennis Duling, *Communications Director*
*Castleton State College*

### Norwich University Archives

The Norwich University Archives and Special Collections unit at the Kreitzberg Library houses a variety of manuscripts, letters, photographs, and hand-written memoirs that document the experiences of our alumni, faculty, and staff in the Civil War. As the nation's oldest private military college, Norwich University produced hundreds of officers who served throughout the army's hierarchy. The personal papers of a number of these Civil War veterans can be found in our archives. Additionally, biographical files compiled by Norwich University staff include further documentation of Norwich men who served on both sides of the war.

Norwich University also played an important role in preparing the nation for war by providing military training to numerous Civil War volunteers. Institutional records, such as course catalogs, minutes of the board of trustees, and student newspapers, document aspects of this military training as well as campus climate during the Civil War. Finding aids and other more detailed information about our Civil War holdings can be found at: http://library2.norwich.edu/catablog/civil-war/.

— Gail Wiese, *Assistant Archivist*
*Norwich University Archives and Special Collections*

### The Peacham Historical Association

#### *Draft List of Peacham Men in the Civil War*

In commemoration of the 150th Anniversary of the start of the Civil War, Peacham Historical Association (PHA) has prepared a draft list of soldiers who lived in Peacham before, during, and after the Civil War. The list together with photographs, transcripts of letters and diaries, and other materials will be published in late 2011. You may review the draft list on the PHA website: http://www.peachamhistorical.org/?bd329370 .

To find out what other local societies have done to collect Civil War materials and put them online, use the Vermont Historical Society's links to local historical societies: http://www.vermonthistory.org/index.php/local-history.html.

## The Sheldon Museum of Vermont History

The Sheldon Museum of Vermont History in Middlebury has commissioned an original play on Addison County people in the Civil War, based on primary sources from the Museum's archives. "Remember Me to All the Good Folks," written and staged by Joan Robinson, head of education at the Flynn Center for the Performing Arts, will be presented at Town Hall Theater in Middlebury on the weekend of Sept. 9–10, 2011, and at the FlynnSpace in Burlington, on Sunday, September 18. There are plans for touring the show elsewhere in the state and producing a video at a later date. For more information, go to the museum's web site: http://www.henrysheldonmuseum.org/index.html.

— Jan Albers, *Executive Director*
*Henry Sheldon Museum of Vermont History*

# BOOK REVIEWS

## *We Go As Captives: The Royalton Raid and the Shadow War on the Revolutionary Frontier*

*By* Neil Goodwin (Barre: Vermont Historical Society, 2010, pp. xxii, 294, paper, $24.95).

Neil Goodwin's full and detailed study of the Royalton Raid has been published by the Vermont Historical Society in a professional yet accessible edition that will inform all future work on this formative event from the fourth year of the Vermont Republic. The author's original research in primary sources adds nuance to the story told by the raid's most famous captive, Zadock Steele, whose first-person "captivity" narrative was published in 1818, thirty-eight years after the raid (the 1815 publication date on p. 243 is clearly a typo).

Many will recognize the not-so-noble savage as a hoary myth, a stock figure typical of this "captivity" narrative, that uniquely American genre of morality play popular in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This was the final raid on the New England frontier by the dreaded Indians (Steele's other word for "savages"). Goodwin happily avoids "Native Americans" here, as political correctness would be anachronistic. When a Cornell University dean asked my friend Ron Lafrance, the Mohawk director of the American Indian Program, to rename it, replacing the taboo I-word with "Native," Ron simply refused, saying that it was common usage and not felt to be racist (I would add, how would Columbus's supposed navigation error derogate Indians? And he did find them in the Indies, after all).

Another stock character is Zadock Steele himself; but Goodwin shows him to be a forerunner of the free-thinking Vermonter, quoting

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his less-than-racist assessment of blame for the raid: "the destruction of Royalton . . . may with less propriety be attributed to . . . the savage tribe than to . . . certain individuals of our own nation" (p. 205).

Goodwin notes that Steele goes further, like many other captives, in his admiration of the unexpected humanity of his captors: "Scarce can that man be found in this enlightened country who would treat his enemy with as much tenderness and compassion as i was treated by the savage tribe" (p. 204).

We are introduced too briefly (pp. 54–55) to one man who could well be crucially responsible for this humane vision of his Kahnawake captors, namely the warrior, Thomas Orakwenton, who took charge of Steele as his personal captive. Goodwin (inexplicably) omits him from his extensive Cast of Characters (pp. 235–241), and (more understandably) repeats earlier misreadings of his name, as Thomo (for Thoma) and Orakrenton (for Orak8enton, with the standard digraph 8 [=ou] for modern w). He is presumably named in Steele's pension application, which Goodwin references but does not quote, alas; but he does quote the terse anonymity of Steele's introducing him in *The Indian Captive:* "The chief who came up to me could talk English very well—he became my master" (p. 54).

Where Goodwin's narrative excels is in his account of the signature drama of the raid, the plea of Hannah Handy to spare nine vulnerable boys, and British commander Lt. Richard Houghton's acquiescence to it, referencing both Steele and the oral tradition of Handy descendants (p. 41).

Witnessing this dramatic scene was Houghton's friend, Thomas Tehoragwanegen Williams, grandson of Eunice Williams. Her story is more fully told in two of Goodwin's secondary sources, fully cited on pp. 232–233 of his valuable fourteen-page bibliography (pp. 221–34): John Demos, *The Redeemed Captive: A Family Story from Early America* (1994), and Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney, *Captors and Captives: The 1704 French and Indian Raid on Deerfield* (2003). TTW's presence is poignantly telling, as Goodwin does not fail to point out: "When Eunice had been carried to Canada 76 years earlier, her captors had brought her up the White River past the very spot where Hannah and Lt. Houghton were now facing off while Eunice's own grandson looked on. Quite possibly, he was aware of the irony in witnessing a situation so like the one that had brought his own grandmother to Canada" (p. 41).

Incidentally, a missing index reference to TTW (not on p. 243, but p. 241) led me to an inconspicuous errata slip which corrects a whole series of typos in the index: all index references to pages 237–282 should

deduct 2, giving correct pages 235–280. [*Editor's note:* This is true only for the first printing; the index was corrected for all subsequent printings.]

An appealing feature of Goodwin's narrative is the number of unanswered (or unanswerable) questions he poses, giving the reader both food for thought and a better sense of what a professional historian really does. Goodwin lets his guests into the kitchen, and the feast is all the tastier for it.

ROY A. WRIGHT

*Roy A. Wright, ethnohistorian and etymologist, has been translating Jesuit mission records from Latin, French, and Mohawk for the Mohawk Council of Kahnawake. Trained in astronomy and linguistics at Harvard University, he has taught at McGill University, University of Toronto, Trent University, University of New Brunswick, Cornell University, Université Laval, Marlboro College, &c.*

## *Frontier Feminist: Clarina Howard Nichols and the Politics of Motherhood*

*By* Marilyn Blackwell and Kristen T. Oertel (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010, pp. 344, $39.95).

Clarina Howard Nichols was a surprisingly modern woman, born to the generation of families living just after the period of migration from coastal and eastern New England into the New Hampshire Grants and the American Revolution. Perhaps it was the revolutionary experiences of her grandparents' generation that influenced Nichols's interests, although Nichols wrote that she was drawn to political activism because she felt a strong desire "to cheer the despairing, to warn the headlong and speed the errand of mercy" (p. 55). Her nearly lifelong pursuit of women's rights and social justice is certain proof of this commitment, but, as co-authors Blackwell and Oertel have clearly demonstrated, her life was not without its ironies.

Aiming at a respectable, if prosaic, middle-class marriage, Nichols initially embarked on her adult life with a man whose errant sensibilities caused her anguish, embarrassment, and ended in a painful divorce. Her influential family facilitated her eventual return to respectability by legal machinations in the Vermont legislature, public rhetoric, and solid financial support. The life lessons garnered in her first disastrous marriage seem to have put Nichols on the path toward feminist activism based on her own harrowing experiences of spousal mistreatment and the fear she would lose her children to her negligent husband.

While her first marriage taught her the vulnerability of women, even of the middle class, in American society, her second marriage to a respected newspaper editor, George Nichols, opened the door to a new world filled with activist possibilities. Nichols never looked back. With her new husband, Nichols began to connect through her writing and travels with like-minded people, especially other women whose ideas and activities inspired her to ever greater involvement in political and public activism. Although reluctant at first to engage in public lectures on her developing repertoire of political motherhood, eventually Nichols overcame her reluctance to do public speaking and developed both skill and stage presence. Her newfound skills became an asset to the constituent advocates of women's rights, abolitionism, and temperance. These were heady associations for Nichols (Stanton, Anthony, Stone), who tried to temper her public association with the most radical impulses surrounding her by not committing to costume changes (bloomers) or radical legal proposals (easy divorce laws).

In fact, it was her congenial, somewhat reticent, and feminine demeanor that made Nichols attractive to men like Sherman Booth of Wisconsin, who invited her to lecture on a paid tour intended to promote the prohibitionist Maine Law in his state. She accepted with the zeal and energy of a missionary and later recalled the experience as one of her highest achievements. The trip also whetted her appetite for adventure and for western migration.

Nichols's western adventure began inauspiciously with the death of her father. His loss and the demise of the family newspaper set the stage for Nichols, her husband, and her children to remove to the Kansas territory in the midst of the Kansas-Nebraska debate. The process of transplanting her family and her politics to Kansas cemented her women's rights activism to the Free Soil agenda. From this, Nichols expanded her political influence in local, state, and national stages, although never straying from the pragmatic approach to "natural [civil] rights grounded in women's reproductive role" (p. 269).

The irony of Nichols's success as an activist was that it seems to have come at the expense of the very values she expressed in her lectures. Once launched in her professional career as a suffrage/temperance lecturer, her children lived at home with her family in Townsend or were in boarding school. Her daughter, Birsha Carpenter, acted as the surrogate to her younger half-brother George, while Birsha's brothers lived for extended periods with Nichols's parents. When the rest of the family made the move out to Kansas, it is not clear why Birsha remained behind in New Jersey, but perhaps she meant to avoid being drawn into her mother's household as an unpaid laborer again. So, while mothering

was the work of women like Nichols and that work was the rationale for having equal citizenship, Nichols did not always walk in the path she prescribed.

Over all, Blackwell and Oertel have created a solidly grounded, careful, and useful biography of a fascinating and genuine member of the Stanton and Anthony "noble band of women." Wherever possible, they have used her very words. At other places they have skillfully placed Nichols into a larger background of major historical events in a truly tumultuous time in American history. Readers may find that Nichols is not always drawn as finely as they might have wished, but the paucity of material for certain times of her life made a more nuanced rendering difficult. Finally, this study of Nichols is a solid contribution to the growing body of scholarship on feminism, suffrage, and nineteenth-century activism; at the same time this work also exposes some of the contradictions that are often rife in individual people's experiences.

SUSAN M. OUELLETTE

*Susan Ouellette is professor of history and American studies at Saint Michael's College in Colchester, Vt.*

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## *New England to Gold Rush California: The Journal of Alfred and Chastina W. Rix, 1849–1854*

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*Edited with commentary by* Lynn A. Bonfield (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011, pp. 400, $45.00).

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Historians are eager to access private journals from the past, for these sources provide a good sense of the pulse of everyday life in a particular time and place and often serve as a window into the emotional world of the author. Given the private nature of diaries, it is unusual to find one that includes the perspectives of more than one person, but that is just what Lynn Bonfield has found and carefully prepared for readers' consumption. In 1972, as curator of manuscripts at the California Historical Society, Bonfield began exploring a journal housed at that archive that chronicled the five-year odyssey of a young married couple from rural, northeastern Vermont who moved to a bustling California city during the gold rush. Alfred and Chastina Rix began their joint diary on their wedding day, July 29, 1849, in Peacham, Vermont, and penned their last entries as a married couple in the spring of 1854. Their

journal captures their work as teachers in small-town Vermont, their perspective as educated professionals on both local and national issues, and their evolving understanding of marriage and family relations. It also relays how their lives changed when first Alfred and then Chastina and their young son Julian moved west in the early 1850s.

Bonfield's attraction to this family journal may have stemmed from the fact that the gold rush forms its narrative center. While Alfred Rix was running the Peacham Academy, dabbling in the law and local commercial endeavors, and adjusting to life with his bride, other young men from the area were heading west in search of gold. In fact, Chastina's brother-in-law was one of the first local men to reach the goldfields of California and return home safely with his own little fortune. After hearing tales of adventure and success from others who had ventured to the far west, it became difficult for Alfred to resist the temptation to go. Tiring of the political scene in Peacham, he decided in September 1851 to leave his wife and infant son to travel to California. By October, he had organized a band of twenty-four other men from northeastern Vermont to join him in the journey. For the next sixteen months, the family journal was Chastina's alone to fill, while Alfred was away. The couple was reunited in February 1853, but not upon Alfred's return to Vermont, as both had expected. Instead, Alfred settled in San Francisco after an unsuccessful search for gold. He found work quickly as a teacher in the bustling city and, over the course of several months, persuaded his wife to say goodbye to her kin and make the difficult trip to the West Coast with their little boy. When Chastina prepared to travel to California, she packed up the couple's journal and their other valuable possessions in a box and sent them on a steamer around Cape Horn. When the journal reached San Francisco a few months later, the happy couple resumed their daily practice of writing in it.

At the heart of this tale is the drama of family separation and migration. The commitment of this nineteenth-century couple to keeping their journal makes it possible for readers to understand the whole bittersweet process of charting new courses and saying goodbyes. It provides a clear picture of the before, during, and after—of their experiences together in Vermont, Chastina's struggles as a lonely wife and mother both at home and abroad, the new opportunities they encountered as city dwellers in San Francisco, and the marriage's tragic end.

Bonfield has made it easier for readers to digest this long, detailed journal. She has divided it logically into twelve chapters, and the background information she provides in the general introduction to the journal as well as at the start of every chapter is valuable for understanding the issues that concerned this couple (education, temperance, antislavery),

the turning points in their story, and the numerous people who came in and out of their daily lives. She deepens our knowledge of the Rix family by incorporating useful information from family correspondence and other relevant materials from both California and Vermont. Bonfield's work also adds a new dimension to Vermont's local history, giving due attention to the interest that Vermonters had in the gold rush and the impact that this distant phenomenon had on families here in the East. Finally, while Alfred Rix may have charted the course for this particular family history, Chastina has as much if not more of a presence in this journal as her ambitious husband. Students of nineteenth-century social history will appreciate reading the perspective of this educated, professional woman who also took on (single) motherhood, a daring journey, and new work in a faraway place.

AMY F. MORSMAN

*Amy Morsman is associate professor of history at Middlebury College. She is the author of* The Big House after Slavery: Virginia Plantation Families and Their Postbellum Domestic Experiment *(2010).*

## *Williamstown, Vermont, in the Civil War*

*By* Paul G. Zeller (Charlestown, S.C.: The History Press, 2010, pp. 191, paper, $19.99).

Those interested in the sesquicentennial of the War Between the States and those who would create a written record of their town's involvement in the Civil War should carefully examine Paul G. Zeller's effort to do that for Williamstown, Vermont. Combining detailed biographical data from primary and secondary sources with anecdotes, letters, and pictures, Zeller has produced a treasure trove for both Civil War buffs and genealogists. Included are soldiers who enlisted at Williamstown, natives who served in the units of other states or the regular army, and even veterans from other places who settled in Williamstown after the war, 173 individuals total. The index of family names is comprehensive.

The material is well organized, following Vermont's brigade and regiment divisions. A brief history of each unit, condensed from George Benedict's *Vermont in the Civil War,* precedes each section. Sources utilized for each individual are cited by chapter at the end of the work. Zeller has consulted military service and pension records from the National Archives, town records, newspapers from the era, the *Revised*

*Roster of Vermont Volunteers and Lists of Vermonters Who Served in the Army and Navy of the United States during The War of The Rebellion, 1861–66* (1892), pertinent websites, and many additional sources to portray each soldier. A brief history of the construction of the local soldiers' monument and a poignant story recalling the last two Civil War veterans in Williamstown are included.

Those who desire an understanding of the Williamstown home front will be disappointed. In that sense, the title is misleading. Zeller's work is about the soldiers, most of whom performed ordinary service. He makes that reality very clear in the introduction. "These were common, ordinary men. Some were heroes and some were not, and most were somewhere in the middle" (p. 9). The heroic deeds of a few, such as Henry H. Rector and Francis H. Staples, are the exception. Zeller ponders if one veteran, John E. Clough, may have been suffering from what is commonly known today as post-traumatic stress disorder when he committed suicide by slashing his throat with a large jackknife. He relates at length the interesting saga of Major Isaac Lynde, who was dismissed from military service in 1861 following the surrendering of his post at Fort Fillmore, New Mexico, his one-day reinstatement in 1866 prior to retirement and, finally, a correction to West Point's *Register of Graduates* in 2010 regarding the nature of his surrender.

Zeller makes no effort to analyze or summarize the material, which he presents in a detailed and complete manner. Aside from pointing out that seventeen men who gave their lives for the Union cause have their names engraved on the Williamstown soldiers' monument, he does not attempt a broader picture of the cost of the war to the citizens of this Orange County community. Of the 173 men described by Zeller, seven were killed in action, ten died from wounds, and fourteen died from disease. It is unusual that more died from battles than died from diseases. Among those who survived, forty-two suffered wounds, several more than once. Twelve soldiers were discharged because of those wounds. Twenty-seven men were hospitalized from disease, and eighteen were discharged due to their illness. It is significant that nearly half of all the men suffered substantial harm as a result of their service. Six men deserted their duty, eight were captured by Rebels, and at least thirty-three veterans drew pensions for disabilities originating from their military service. Williamstown had a population of 1,377 in 1860. The fact that more than 10 percent of the population of the town performed military service is significant. Information regarding the bounties paid by Williamstown and the number of men who paid commutation are readily available and could have given the reader a broader understanding of Williamstown's role in the Civil War.

Although there is a plethora of data in the book, there are a few questionable facts. Was Martin Burnham really fourteen when he married Martha Martin in Williamstown in 1853 (p. 53)? And George Edgar Bruce's first wife, Sarah Seaver, died in 1870; however, it was his second wife, Malona R. Hanks, who died on January 29, 1904 (pp. 67–68). These are minor corrections when one considers the vast amount of information presented.

Williamstown is the fourth community in the last five years that has been the subject of a treatment of its Civil War soldiers (the others are Cabot, Waterbury, and Worcester). Each represents a different approach and all merit examination by other communities considering a similar project. Paul Zeller's work benefits the Williamstown Historical Society, as well as all Vermonters who wish to remember and honor those who served in America's most costly conflict.

J. DAVID BOOK

*J. David Book, a retired educator, is an author of books about Civil War soldiers in Cabot and Worcester, Vermont.*

## *The History of Brookfield: 2010 edition*

*By* Brookfield Historical Society (Brookfield, Vt.: Brookfield Historical Society, 2010, pp. 272, paper, $40).

First printed in 1987, this updated history of Brookfield opens with a condensed version of E. P. Wild's *History of Brookfield, 1779–1862.* It's a surprisingly thrilling start: The first section, "Geology," begins with a hanging and ends with an earthquake.

Wild was a native of Brookfield, a graduate of Middlebury College, a preacher, schoolteacher, and the legislative representative from Craftsbury in 1872, but this history was written in his early twenties, while recovering at home from an illness. This youthfulness may explain the sporadic mischievousness and choice of detail: People in Brookfield collide with bears, natives, and each other; they sometimes drink too much and earn a comeuppance on their vanity. We even learn a lesson in land values: "Amasa Hyde," Wild reports, "bought a farm of fifty acres . . . at the novel price of a single gun" (p. 29). Sometimes sober and sometimes sly, Wild recounts the town's general history, religious history, and the founding of public assets like the library and the schools, and closes with brief biographies of the town's early settlers.

Part two, "More Brookfield History," has been revised and updated

by a stable of local authors who bring both knowledge and affection to their work, so that, for example, a detailed history of the town's roads includes the pranks the crew members played—these invariably seem to involve lunch boxes—and even a first-person assessment of road quality in the 1920s: "[S]pongy and pleasant to walk on in bare feet, except for an occasional stone. We would mark out a hopscotch diagram and play, usually without any traffic bothering us" (p. 47).

Other offerings include a survey of building styles, individual houses, and the stories behind the evolution of Brookfield's schools, post offices, churches, farms, cemeteries, organizations, industries, businesses, entertainment, state park, and (of course) the town's unusual Floating Bridge. Kit Gage—a past principal at the Brookfield Elementary School—opens this part of the book with an account of a heavy truck forcing the bridge down into the water of Colt's Pond: "Whereas most of us remember getting our tires wet, not many of us ever saw water five feet deep on the bridge" (p. 82). Apparently the truck made it most of the way across before the bridge turned over and deposited its unwelcome load into the water. "Even though the bridge was submerged and then rotated sideways until nearly perpendicular," Gage says, "the state highway engineers could find no serious damage . . . It proved to be as tough and sinewy as the people who conceived of a floating bridge" (p. 83).

The final part of the book follows Wild's example and focuses on specific family histories, some of them extensive and richly detailed, others tending more toward a recitation of begats. Collectively, though, these family narratives give access to a sturdy rural culture, one that has maintained an oral history of community singing, swimming, store and inn keeping, farming, and marching off to war—the state and the country's history woven into the background tapestry of a single place.

*The History of Brookfield* is also full of historic and contemporary photographs—it's rare that a page doesn't have at least one, and often three or more, that link directly to the text. This makes the book more valuable and certainly a lot more fun, and has the curious effect of reminding the reader that, someday in the distant future, a digital picture taken in 2010 will be as resonant as the Civil War-era prints from glass negatives are today. And, with luck, there will also be an updated version of this engaging book, assembled by a new generation of inhabitants of Brookfield.

HELEN HUSHER

*Helen Husher is the author of three books. She lives in Montpelier.*

## *Castleton Vermont: Its Industries, Enterprises & Eateries*

*By* Donald H. Thompson (Charleston, S.C.: The History Press, 2010, pp. 160, paper, $19.99).

Donald Thompson tells a very interesting story about Castleton, Vermont. It's like taking a walk through the town and meeting the people who were responsible for its existence. Thompson interviewed an impressive number of people in his quest for information. He states in his introduction that the more he learned about Castleton, the more he wanted to know.

Thompson informs the reader of the grant of a thirty-six-square-mile tract of land in 1761 by Benning Wentworth, governor of New Hampshire. The journey of Colonel Amos Bird, Noah Lee, and a "colored servant" from Connecticut, who set out to survey the land in the spring of 1767, is quite an interesting story. After finally arriving in Castleton in June 1767 they built a log cabin.

On page 12 in the last paragraph, Thompson notes that before Bird and Lee came, the only humans in the area were the Abenaki Indians. This is unlikely. In their *History of Rutland County, Vermont, with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of Some of Its Prominent Men and Pioneers* (1886, reprinted 1993), editors H. P. Smith and W. S. Rann include the following account of the native people inhabiting the area:

> Commencing on the east side of the outlet of the lake, following the shore around, the various points of interest are as follows: The "Indian Fields" is a plateau of over twenty acres of sandy land, about ten feet above the level of the lake, on which many Indian relics have been found. This was the site of an Indian village, of which tribe we have no authentic record, yet some of the older settlers remember seeing Indian families return in the summer season to visit the homes of their childhood. The specimens were all upon the surface. (p. 40)

They noted that "the Mohegans possessed the territory in the Champlain and Otter Creek valleys" and "the territory also has been claimed by the Caughnawagas, a branch of the Mohawks" (Smith and Rand, pp. 46–47).

By 1770 other families began to arrive and in 1771, Amos Bird and nine men erected a sawmill at the outlet of Lake Bomoseen. As more settlers came, more businesses and shops were established to accommodate the growing community.

In the 1790s, two dams were constructed at the outlet from Lake Bomoseen to provide waterpower to run a forge and ironworks. In 1803, mills for various industries were built on the Castleton River. Sheep production, ironworks, and plow manufacturing were among the many industries in Castleton's past.

Amos Bird had died at an early age in 1772. Noah Lee became an outstanding community leader. He had fought in the French and Indian War, then joined the Continental Army and achieved the rank of captain. Returning to Vermont, he was a delegate to the Constitutional Convention in 1791. He died at the age of 94, having witnessed the growth of Castleton from a few settlers to 2,000 by 1840.

The building of the railroad encouraged the growth of the marble and slate industries as well as bringing visitors to area resorts. Apple production became an important venture for Castleton, and the author presents some interesting views of the businesses.

Thompson tells us that as early as 1786, a schoolhouse was erected for teaching and instructing, but it burned down in 1805. Other schools followed and the present Village School was built in 1952. In 1818 the Castleton Medical Academy opened, later called the Medical College. It closed in 1862. The Castleton Seminary opened in the 1830s, evolved to a normal school and finally to the present day Castleton State College.

Continuing the walk through Castleton, Thompson introduces the reader to the tragedy of many fires that consumed a great number of businesses. The pictures that accompany the text give the reader a view of businesses that once existed and the author describes which businesses survived or what replaced them.

The chapters on country stores and eateries really catch the reader's interest, as they bring the various owners to life through tidbits of various occurrences. Again the pictures are well selected. The treatment of the eateries along routes 4A and 30, however, was a bit tedious to read. The descriptions of the interiors and their entrees seemed repetitive, although the stories of the people involved kept the reader's interest.

Thompson nicely covers the recreational activities surrounding Lake Bomoseen throughout the years. He takes the reader from fishing to regattas and boating to the businesses that helped make everything happen.

In the final chapter, the author points out the difficulties of keeping Lake Bomoseen safe from pollution. Residents and officials alike are working to keep invasive plant life and development from overtaking their beautiful lake.

The acknowledgements and bibliography in this book are extensive and well organized. Thompson has succeeded in bringing the town of Castleton to life. Readers will find they will want to know more about Castleton.

HELEN K. DAVIDSON

*Helen K. Davidson is the author of a weekly column, "Tidbits from Then and Now," in* Sam's Good News. *She is secretary and research chair of the Rutland Historical Society.*

## *A Brief History of St. Johnsbury*

*By* Peggy Pearl (Charleston, S.C.: The History Press, 2009, pp. 158, paper, $19.99).

The author's goal in *A Brief History of St. Johnsbury* is to celebrate the town's past rather than examine it. An enthusiastic air of boosterism runs through the book. It is organized into a mixture of chronological and topical chapters, beginning with an account of the settlement of St. Johnsbury. Ethan Allen named the town after French diplomat Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, adding "bury" to distinguish it from the numerous other towns named St. John. The town's founder, Rhode Island native Jonathan Arnold, arrived in 1787. Arnold settled on the St. Johnsbury Plain, a flat expanse elevated above the town's rivers that is now the site of Main Street and the St. Johnsbury Academy. The author's immense interest in where prominent townsfolk are buried is established in this first chapter; she notes that next to the Arnold family plot in Mount Pleasant cemetery is the grave of a slave who had stayed with the family after Rhode Island abolished the institution.

The 1790 census showed that St. Johnsbury was considerably smaller than such nearby towns as Danville and Peacham. But the town sits at the conjunction of three rivers: the Sleeper, Moose, and Passumpsic. With plenty of waterpower, it was well situated to become a manufacturing hub, and there were a number of Early Republic manufacturing ventures. The history of St. Johnsbury only truly begins, however, with the arrival of the Fairbanks family in 1815. Pearl devotes the book's third chapter to the ancestry, immigration, successes, and philanthropy of the Fairbanks family, while detailing the rise of their company into one of the world's leading scale works. Readers looking for a critical examination of the Fairbanks family's century-long domination of St. Johnsbury will not find it here. The author wants the memory of the family to be

glorified. She describes each of the three Fairbanks brothers who founded the company—Thaddeus, Erastus, and Joseph—as possessing "sound values, good work ethics and compassion for those who worked for them" (p. 39). The family's legacy, she writes, has "beneficial roots for all to enjoy now and into the foreseeable future" (p. 43).

As ensuing chapters make clear, St. Johnsbury was only a bit removed from being a classic nineteenth-century company town. The remaining chapters are organized topically, on such subjects as "Houses of Worship" and "Fires and Floods." The wealth and power of the Fairbanks family is the common thread that runs through each of them. Other factories thrived in town, but a remarkable number of them were dependent on the E. & T. Fairbanks Company for survival. In many ways the town remains a material tribute to the Fairbankses, which is clear no less in the chapter on education than in the one on "Crown Jewels of St. Johnsbury." Many of the photographs scattered throughout these chapters will be a delight to those who already know St. Johnsbury, more for how little has changed from a century ago than for how much.

The author's account of some topics can be disappointing. The only material specifically on the town's Catholic population is confined to the section on churches. In other places the book is usefully informative; St. Johnsbury residents would be well served to read the chapter on schools, and thereby better understand the roots of today's educational issues. The book lacks a town map, which would have been a nice addition: Even those who are familiar with St. Johnsbury may not know where, for instance, the falls of the Moose River are.

There is a different book about St. Johnsbury waiting to be written, perhaps. The back cover of this book describes the town as "truly one of a kind." In fact, in many ways the story of St. Johnsbury is similar to that of the many other de-industrialized mill and factory villages that dot the landscape of New England and upstate New York. Largely on the basis of a single corporation, St. Johnsbury once prospered on a moderate scale. The main corporation declined, however, and the town's economy has come to depend largely on service industries and medicine, its ornate Victorian houses and proud public institutions attesting to that more prosperous past. In that way, St. Johnsbury's story is an instructive example of the evolution of its region. But that kind of appraisal was not Pearl's goal. Those seeking basic historical information on the geography, prominent buildings, important institutions, and significant citizens of St. Johnsbury will find this volume perfectly satisfying.

PAUL SEARLS

*Paul Searls is an assistant professor of history at Lyndon State College.*

## *North Williston: Down Depot Hill*

*By* Richard H. Allen (Charleston, S.C.: The History Press, 2011, pp. 157, paper $19.99).

North Williston, as author Richard H. Allen points out, is a community of a few dozen residents living in a handful of houses clustered near the Winooski River in the northeast corner of Williston town. In some ways it is a place that time forgot, for as other areas of Williston town have rapidly morphed into Burlington suburbs and a "big box" retail center, the handful of old houses that constitute North Williston remain a place apart, somewhat insulated from the forces of change by its riverside boundary on the north, its potential for flooding, and its distance from the interstate.

Thus in some ways a book on a hamlet that probably never had as many as seventy-five inhabitants may seem a curious subject for investigation, but Richard Allen, a retired teacher, shows us that from the 1860s to the 1930s North Williston was economically the most important section of town, its fortunes inextricably tied to the railroad. When the Vermont Central Railroad passed through North Williston in 1849, it made the little riverside community a freighting center, connecting markets in southern New England with industrial and agricultural interests in the Winooski River valley. Freight that once traveled by horse-drawn wagons through Williston village along the Winooski Turnpike (present-day Route 2) now moved by rail; and a number of industries found it convenient to locate their operations not in the village, but closer to the railroad line. North Williston was never populous enough to have its own cemetery or church, but as long as railroading remained important in Vermont it was a center of commercial activity.

Through extensive research in land records, old maps, and personal interviews, Allen has brought to light a picture of daily life in North Williston in its boom years of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The mosaic he paints includes descriptions of Roswell Brown's General Store, which functioned as the community's social center and post office; the old two-lane covered bridge that crossed the Winooski into Jericho and was destroyed by an ice jam in 1923; and of how parents of school-age children took turns preparing hot lunches each day to be brought to the little North Williston Schoolhouse. But perhaps more important than his vignettes about small village life is his documenting of the industries that the railroad spawned there. Chief among them was the Smith Wright Cold Storage Company.

Much of Allen's book functions as a biography of Smith Wright, a Williston farm boy with an entrepreneur's restlessness. As a young man in the 1840s through the 1860s, Wright farmed and then successively owned two general stores. These twin experiences showed him the utility of creating a cold storage facility where poultry, eggs, and cheese from local farms could be stored before being shipped by rail to market. In 1876, the Smith Wright Cold Storage facility was housed in a large building served by a siding of the Central Vermont Railroad. Under Smith Wright's untiring energy the business grew rapidly. At one point in the 1890s the North Williston facility was said to contain 750,000 pounds of butter, 150,000 pounds of antelope meat (where did that come from?), and many thousand dozens of eggs. So large did the company become that it had storage and distribution facilities in Iowa and Minnesota.

Wright's storage operation spawned other businesses in North Williston. The Chapmans, who owned a farm along the Winooski River, harvested ice each winter to supply Wright his refrigerant. There was also a cheese-making plant in which Wright was a principal; and in 1899 the Winooski Valley Dairy Cooperative opened there. All conjoined to make North Williston a busy place through the 1920s. But, just as the coming of the railroad had given North Williston a unique opportunity to prosper, the demise of railroading in the 1940s and 1950s relegated it to its former sleepy tranquility.

Thanks to Richard Allen, we now know of the once important role played by North Williston in the industrial and agricultural history of the Winooski Valley. I have just one bone to pick with his book, and it has nothing to do with the author or his work. Rather it concerns the publisher, The History Press. This South Carolina company is the spin-off of an English press that has found a niche in putting out books on local history and genealogy. But they do it on the cheap. Authors receive almost no editorial help—and it shows. To keep production costs down the books are kept brief, even when the subject deserves greater elucidation. Moreover, their layouts have a sameness about them that suggests mass production. Still, this must be considered a quibble, for without The History Press and Richard Allen, we would not have learned so much about North Williston.

VINCENT E. FEENEY

*Vincent E. Feeney is a retired businessman. His most recent book is* Finnigans, Slaters and Stonepeggers: A History of the Irish in Vermont *(2009).*

## *Headline Vermont*

DVD, produced by Daniel J. Lyons (Colchester: Vermont Public Television, 2010, run time 56:46 minutes, $19.95).

At a time of great challenge for the newspaper industry, Vermont Public Television has produced a lively hour-long history of Vermont newspapers, available on the competing medium of DVD. The subject offers its own challenges, because to treat it fully would require a series of several installments. One overall impression that remains after watching this program a few times is the very minuscule and local nature of the newspapers of Vermont, the next-to-smallest state, composed of a large number of small towns.

The program touches interestingly upon three important aspects of newspaper journalism in this state: substance of the news being covered, relationships of journalists to their sources, and mechanical processes of typesetting, printing, and distributing the product. Much attention is paid to issues of slavery and racism. Chauncey L. Knapp's *Voice of Freedom,* published in Montpelier, is retrieved for all to admire from the 1830s, an era when dozens of antislavery societies existed in Vermont. A 1968 incident of racial violence at Irasburg, and how it was handled—notably by the *Rutland Herald*—becomes a central focus of the program. The subject brings back the sense of discomfort that such an episode could take place in tolerant Vermont and acknowledges that certain editors and reporters admirably faced up to it. But regrettably the program neglects to note that other major papers worked with state police to discredit the black minister in question.

Eighteenth-century newspapers, whether in Vermont or elsewhere in America, require some interpretation for today's readers. The program explains why newspaper front pages in the 1700s offered reports from faraway places such as Paris, Naples, or Austria, plus much fiction and poetry, while minimal local news was buried inside. The explanation is that in Vermont's small communities, most everyone knew what was going on locally in an era without electricity, but people were starved for news from beyond their borders. The opposite is the case today, as the program points out with its emphasis on the very local *Commons* of Brattleboro, a paper based on the premise that people are inundated with national and international news and therefore need local news.

The viewer is reminded of one newspaper feature that is totally forgotten today, the personal column, a phenomenon that only disappeared some fifty years ago—well within my memory. Who visited whom for

the weekend, who "motored" recently to Troy, N.Y., or who is recovering from whooping cough: These were the kinds of brief personals from every town that filled thousands of columns of type in Vermont newspapers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. An amusing episode is recalled when competing Rutland papers vied for the most personal items, even to the extent of being caught stealing them from each other.

The evolution of the process of setting type itself, from hand-set letters to computers, is well documented. Particularly relevant to this reviewer were scenes (between 30:58 and 32:40) that demonstrate the workings of a linotype machine, a complicated mechanical marvel that drove inventor Otto Merganthaler crazy but also revolutionized printing of all kinds by the turn of the twentieth century. I can relive memories of myself as a six-year-old watching, hearing, touching, and smelling the three hot, clattering linotypes in the shop of my grandfather, Alvin H. Resch, who owned a twice-a-week newspaper, *The True Republican,* in Sycamore, Illinois. The Vermont program also follows long leaps in mid-nineteenth-century newspaper technology with the development of railroads, telegraph, and steam-powered rotary presses.

The shifting nature of the relationship between journalists and politicians is examined. There was a gregarious time in the 1960s when Montpelier was perhaps the most intensively covered state capital, but the mood changed after the Irasburg affair to a more formal, even adversarial, environment, followed in the early 1990s by a scaling back of coverage and resources. Several journalists active in earlier decades are interviewed, including Howard Coffin, Nick Monserrat, Tom Slayton, Ham Davis, and Chris Graff. Historian Paul Searls and other non-journalists add important context.

To a large extent the program reflects an anti-Banana Belt bias. While it touches base south of Route 4 by showing in detail how the weekly Brattleboro *Commons* covers its very local news, the film never mentions Anthony Haswell of Bennington, his Anti-Federalist *Vermont Gazette,* which began in 1783, his jailing for violation of the Sedition Act of 1798, or the paper that finally put the *Gazette* out of business after some seventy-five years, the *Bennington Banner,* which began as a Whig weekly in 1841. These papers were published throughout the entire history of Vermont statehood, while the one Bennington paper that gets attention is that of abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, whose *Journal of the Times* lasted barely six months in 1828 and 1829. The *Brattleboro Reformer* is mentioned only once in passing. The *Rutland Herald* is mentioned often, but its distinguished heritage as America's longest-running family-owned paper in continuous operation is overlooked. The *Herald*

was launched in 1794 as a Federalist weekly by Samuel Williams, who also wrote the first history of the state that year—worth noting in any history of Vermont newspapers.

The complex subject of a state's newspaper history is a daunting one and, while useful, this attempt to cover it in less than an hour necessarily leaves out an enormous amount.

TYLER RESCH

*Tyler Resch is the research librarian at the Bennington Museum, edited the* Bennington Banner *for a dozen years, and has served in editorial capacities on other southern Vermont newspapers.*

## *Scenes along the Rails. Rutland Railroad: Rutland to Bellows Falls*

*By* John W. Hudson, II and Suzanna C. Hudson (Loveland, Ohio: Depot Square Publishing, 2010, pp. xvi, 128, $44.95).

Let's say you have a time machine. Whenever you step out of it you find yourself in Rutland, Vermont, on some random day between 1890 and 1940. You spend the day enjoying the town and chatting with the friendly locals. That evening you have a hearty dinner at one of the better hostelries in town; tonight, perhaps, the Berwick Hotel. The next morning, after a good night's sleep and a country breakfast, you go down to the Rutland Railroad station and catch the morning local to the next stop east, North Clarendon. Once there you repeat yesterday's scenario. And so on at each hamlet along the line, all the way to Bellows Falls.

*Rutland to Bellows Falls,* a volume in the series, *Scenes along the Rails,* is that time machine, although it does not start out that way, since the book is both a history lesson and a period travelogue. The book's introduction is a rather long but well-written history of the railroad. It covers the 1842 Waltham, Massachusetts, railroad convention that mapped out a rail line from Boston, through Waltham and Fitchburg, across Vermont via Brattleboro and Rutland, and then on toward both Montreal, Québec, to the north and also the Great Lakes to the west. This is followed by a summary of the line's construction and early financial woes, and bits about the periods when the railroad was under the control of the Central Vermont, New York Central, and New Haven railroads. Lastly, there is at least one paragraph about each addition to the original 1849 main line.

Following that, the authors visit each station along the railroad,

offering the reader a trove of clear, crisp photographs and well-written captions brimming with interesting local history and enjoyable anecdotes. Many of the photographs are being published for the first time. The annotated bird's-eye photographs of the Rutland railroad yard, (p. xiv and p. 1), Bellows Falls railroad yard (pp. 78–79), and the Bellows Falls paper factories (pp. 96–97) are a brilliant touch.

Still, despite the best efforts of the Hudsons, the book has a few imperfections. A weakness in the history of the railroad is the introduction's reliance on Fitchburg Railroad history and the January 1842 railroad meeting to introduce the Rutland's charter and construction. Clearly the 1842 Waltham, Massachusetts, railroad meeting was relevant to the formation of both the Fitchburg Railroad and its Vermont extension, the Rutland & Burlington (R&B).

However, Vermonters had their own enthusiasm for railroads and their own conventions. In terms of the organization of the Rutland & Burlington, the Montpelier, Vermont, meeting of October 6, 1830, was at least as important as the later Waltham meeting. It inspired the state's first railroad charter issued in 1835, although as events turned out, the charter was a decade premature and the rail line stillborn. Nevertheless, because the charter's wording about crossing the Green Mountains was vague, it received huge support, being acceptable to all of the groups advocating for the various river systems connecting the Connecticut River and the Champlain Valley. Thus it generated enormous interest in railroad construction. Listed in this initial charter are the names of men who would later become R&B directors.

One puzzlement in the book is the use of a photograph of the Vermont Central Railroad's 1866 Burlington station (p. iv) over a caption that begins with a discussion of the Rutland & Burlington Railroad's first station. This is without a doubt a wonderful unpublished photo. But why highlight the depot of the R&B's arch rival? There are at least three bird's-eye views of Burlington that show the Rutland & Burlington depot. Admittedly it is not a photograph, but why not select one of those, make an enlargement of just the depot building, and use that?

The absence of endnotes was this reviewer's most serious difficulty. The idea of learning a lot more about the "blatant profiteering committed between 1898 and 1902 by former directors of the Rutland" (p. xiii) is very tantalizing. Someone needs to pursue this story.

But enough of this nitpicking. *The Rutland Railroad: Rutland to Bellows Falls* is a fine addition to the all too small list of Rutland Railroad titles. Both the rail fan and the local historian will appreciate this book.

Oh yes! Before leaving Bellows Falls and returning to the present, for an extra 15¢ you can take the Bellows Falls & Saxtons River Street

Railway to the delightful village of Saxtons River. While you are there, have Frank Taft take your picture on one of the trolley cars. Your grandchildren will love it.

GERALD B. FOX

*Jerry Fox is an independent researcher working in the areas of nineteenth-century Vermont industries, transportation, and town history. He lives in Essex, Vermont.*

## *Lost Ski Areas of Southern Vermont*

*By* Jeremy K. Davis (Charleston, S.C.: The History Press, 2010, pp. 159, paper, $19.99).

In his pictorial overview of now defunct ski areas in Vermont's four southern counties, Jeremy K. Davis provides a synopsis of skiing's evolution in Vermont. From the first rope tow (and now a lost ski area), The White Cupboard Ski Way in Woodstock, to larger ski areas with multiple lifts and modern amenities such as Maple Valley, Snow Valley, and Dutch Hill, the proliferation of ski areas reflects skiing's popularity as a recreation and sport and its importance as a community activity and economic engine. Davis attributes the closing of areas to "overinvestment, poor snowmaking, local competition, widely variable weather from season to season, changing skier habits, insurance costs and sometimes just plain bad luck" (p. 9). As he traces the rise and fall of ski areas in southern Vermont, he touches on the greater social impact of how losing these small ski areas affected the local community.

Davis defines a lost ski area as any area that offered lift service, organized skiing, that closed for good, and where skiing has been abandoned. Outlining the history of the seventy-four lost ski areas in Windsor, Rutland, Bennington, and Windham counties with chapters dedicated to hybrid and surviving areas, he begins each chapter with a list of ski areas not addressed in detail and then highlights five to eight areas with pictures, trail maps, and modern-day views of them.

There were two waves of ski area development: the 1930s and 1940s when Americans "discovered" skiing, and then the 1950s and 1960s when technological improvements made skiing easier and more accessible. Operated and maintained by individuals, families, schools, volunteers, or towns, the majority of areas used rope tows and offered some sort of ski school. However, the terrain, the skiers, the events, and the buildings gave each area its own distinct personality, well captured by Davis.

Each area had a colorful cast of characters, many of whom have contributed to this book and to Davis's website, www.nelsap.com. Much of the content of www.nelsap.com has been generated by Vermont skiers, a testament to the role these smaller ski areas played in developing lifelong skiers and ski industry professionals, in stimulating the local economy, and in providing entertainment for locals and visitors. A prime example is Bill Jenkins, who started in Vermont as Green Mountain College's ski program director in 1948. He then managed High Pond Ski Area in Hubbardton before founding Birdseye in Castleton in 1961, which he planned to run as the Vermont Mountain Park in the summer. He resigned in 1967 when snowmaking was not added to upper trails. Over his long career, he collected many images found in the book. *Lost Ski Areas of Southern Vermont* contains secondary stories of people, landscape change, fashion, and technology that will appeal to skiers and non-skiers alike.

The pictures taken in the last five years, interspersed with the historic images, stress that the story of skiing is still unfolding. The fourteen existing ski areas in southern Vermont are home to some of the state's most well-known skiers and snowboarders and most prestigious competitions, and to year-round recreation. Luckily, Davis is a young man (he graduated from Lyndon State College in 2000), because ski area development could shift again in response to the same pressures of weather, economics, and luck. Here's to the next fifty years!

MEREDITH SCOTT

*Meredith Scott is the director/curator of the Vermont Ski and Snowboard Museum, Stowe, Vermont. Along with volunteer Dick Collins, she spearheads the museum's lost ski areas project, which compliments Davis's work by focusing on partnering with local historical societies and collecting oral histories.*

## *To Life! A Celebration of Vermont Jewish Women*

*Compiled and edited by* Ann Zinn Buffum and Sandra Stillman Gartner (Manchester Center, Vt.: Northshire Bookstore, 2009, pp. 135, paper, $18.00).

"*L'chaim,*" "To life," is a Jewish toast of celebration, used at weddings and on other joyous occasions. This book is a celebration of the lives of twenty contemporary Jewish women in Vermont, one of whom died before the book was published. A pioneering effort to depict and record the lives of Jewish women in the state, the book is the product of

five years of oral history gathering and a project of Davar: The Vermont Jewish Women's History Project, founded by the authors. It accompanied an exhibit of the same name, mounted at the Vermont Historical Society's museum in Montpelier for the first six months of 2010 and at the Slate Valley Museum in Granville, New York, from July until the end of 2010.

The women, who come from all over the state, were interviewed between 2005 and 2009 and ranged in age at the time of their interviews from twelve to ninety-seven. The oldest, June Salander, who was 101 when she died in May 2010, was famous for her apple strudel and was instrumental in founding the Rutland Jewish Center. Elora Silver, of Windsor, was interviewed when she was 12 and preparing for her *bat mitzvah.*

Some were the wives or children of immigrants who arrived here in the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries as merchants, peddlers, or tailors. Some are the daughters or granddaughters of Holocaust survivors. Some are converts, some are in or are the products of mixed marriages.

Most of the women chose Vermont as a place to live and feel nurtured by its beauty and its culture of independence and strength. Coming from different backgrounds as they do, all chose to acknowledge and celebrate their Jewish identity. But they also express a sense of isolation in a state where Jews are few in number and scattered geographically. This has, perhaps, intensified their desire for Jewish community and their need to educate themselves and the broader community in the traditions and culture of Judaism. The result has been, as Penina Migdal Glazer of Hampshire College points out in her concluding essay, an ability for the different branches of Judaism to get along in ways not typical in areas where there are more Jews. Another result in some places has been the integration of Jewish practices into broader community life. In some towns, for instance, the Passover seder has become a community event, with groups writing their own script for this celebration of liberation and an immanent God.

Most of the women, of whatever age, are active in their secular communities as well as in their religious ones. Some, like Madeleine Kunin and Deborah Markowitz, are known throughout the state and beyond for their work in government service. Hinda Miller, a feminist and activist, is the inventor of the Jogbra. Diane Rippa is a family doctor. Susan Leader is a farmer and a potter. Each woman portrayed here exemplifies in her own life the "Jewish imperative" of *tikkun olam,* the need to repair the world. Zeesy Raskin, a member of a community of traditionally observant Jews in Burlington, reflects the outlook of all when she commits

herself to educate and nourish "people who can give to the world, make a difference in the world, make a change in the world" (p. 70).

It would be wonderful to have the space to introduce all twenty women, but I suggest, instead, meeting them in this book.

The book devotes one chapter to each woman, starting with an essay by the editors and then organized, using brief quotations, by the topics the subjects themselves chose. These quotations, along with the vintage and contemporary photographs that enrich each section, bring an immediacy and intimacy to the text.

*To Life!* is rich as oral history. Still, I would have liked a bit more information about method. How many women in all did the project directors interview? How did they select these twenty? How did they edit the interviews? Why did they allow the women to decide what topics to talk about? Do the subsections in the chapters correspond to those topics, or was there another rationale? And I want to know more about each of the women portrayed. In their rich variety, their devotion to the "imperative" of *tikkun olam,* and the joy they take in affirming their tradition and their faith, these women are indeed a celebration of Life.

ANN E. COOPER

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# More About Vermont History

## Recent Additions to the Vermont Historical Society Library

Books

*Allen, Richard H., *North Williston: Down Depot Hill.* Charleston, S.C.: History Press, 2011. 157p. List: $19.99 (paper).

*Allen, Sylvia Nichols, *The People Will Be Served: A History of the Vermont Transit Bus Company.* Essex Junction, Vt.: S. N. Allen, 2011. 139p. List: $14.95 (paper).

Badger, Robert L. and William C., *Fading Memories from a Vermont Hillside.* Manchester Center, Vt.: Shires Press, 2010. 103p. Source: Landgrove Historical Society, P.O. Box 734, Londonderry, VT 05148. List: Unknown (paper). Farm life in Landgrove.

*Barrett, Frank J., Jr., *Hartford.* Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2009. 127p. List: $21.99 (paper).

*Belding, Russell, comp., *Hidden History of Barre, Vermont.* Charleston, S.C.: History Press, 2011. 126p. List: $19.99 (paper).

*Brandon: Celebrating 250 Years, 1761–2011: A Retrospective of Brandon's Early Years to the Present Day.* Brandon, Vt.: The Reporter, 2011. 43p. Source: The newspaper, P.O. Box 51, Brandon, VT 05733. List: Free (newsprint). Commemorative supplement to the newspaper, May 25, 2011.

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

*Vermont History* Vol. 79, No. 2 (Summer/Fall 2011): 212–215.
 ISSN: 0042-4161; on-line ISSN: 1544-3043

Buckeye, Robert, *So Then: Genevieve Taggard and the West Rutland Marble Workers.* East Middlebury, Vt.: Amandla, 2011. 16p. Source: The publisher, Box 431, East Middlebury, VT 05740. List: $10.00 (paper). 1935–36 Vermont Marble Company strike.

*Burg, Thomas E., ed., *Green Mountain Steam: Photos from the Roy Campbell Collection.* Merrill, Wis.: Merrill Publishing Associates, 2011. 50p. List: $14.95 (paper).

*Bushnell, Mark, *It Happened in Vermont.* Guilford, Conn.: Globe Pequot Press, 2009. 151p. List: $14.95 (paper).

Cross, David F., *Vermont Brigade Casualties on June 23, 1864 at the Petersburg & Weldon Railroad.* Ferrisburgh, Vt.: The author, 2011. 136p. Source: The author, 38 Stone Meadow Lane, Ferrisburgh, VT 05456. List: Unknown (spiral bound). A revision and update of appendices C & D of *A Melancholy Affair at the Weldon Railroad: The Vermont Brigade, June 23, 1864.*

Fatherley, John A., *Proceedings of the Baptist Society of Bradford, Vermont and the Old Goshen Church, Inc., 1805–2010.* Chicopee, Mass.: The author, 2011. 400p. Source: The author, 28 Fredette St., Chicopee, MA 01022. List: Unknown (spiral bound).

Favreau, Francis, *Copley: A Hospital in Morristown.* Morristown, Vt.: The author, 2010. 388p. Source: Privately printed (spiral bound).

*Goodspeed, Linda, *Redfield Proctor and the Division of Rutland.* Charleston, S.C.: History Press, 2011. 155p. List: $19.99 (paper). Historical fiction.

*Haas, Jessie, *Revolutionary Westminster: From Massacre to Statehood.* Charleston, S.C.: History Press, 2011. 174p. List: $19.99 (paper).

*Haynes, L. Louise, and Charlotte Pedersen, *St. Albans.* Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2010. 127p. List: $21.99 (paper).

Henshaw, Jean, and Phyllis Lary, *Burlington Garden Club History, 1984–2009.* Burlington, Vt.: The Club, 2009. 69p. Source: Unknown (paper).

*Hinckley, Erik S., and Tom Ledoux, *They Went to War: A Biographical Register of the Green Mountain State in the Civil War.* Bloomington, Indiana: Trafford Publishing, 2010. 276p. List: $18.00 (paper).

*Lawson, Kenneth E., *For Christ and Country: A Biography of Brigadier General Gustavus Loomis.* Greenville, S.C.: Ambassador International, 2011. 415p. List: $16.99 (paper). Biography of religious soldier born in Thetford in 1789.

Lazaroff, Linda, *The Tunbridge Civic Club Presents . . .: 55 Years of Civic Club Show Memories, 1952–2007.* Tunbridge, Vt.: Tunbridge Civic Club, 2008. 174p. Source: The author, 104 Potash Hill Rd., Tunbridge, VT 05077. List: Unknown (paper).

Loso, Wendell Robert, *Boy: From Ox Carts to the Speed of Sound: A Memoir.* No publisher, 2009. 177p. Source: The author, P.O. Box 631, South Hero, VT 05486. List: $19.95. Boy from Marshfield grows up to work at Pratt & Whitney.

*Middleton, David, *Quite a Sightly Place: A Family Dairy Farm in Vermont.* Beverly, Mass.: Commonwealth Editions, 2010. 199p. List: $29.95 (paper). Farm in Danby.

*Norman, Dave, *White River Junctions: Empires of Flour, Steel, and Ambition.* Portland, Maine: F/64 Publishing, 2010. 328p. List: $16.95 (paper).

*Petit, Richard J., *Carlyle Goodrich, Stereoscopic Photographer, 1875–1881, Plainfield, Vermont: A Brief History of His Life and Work.* Fayston, Vt.: The author, 2011. 40p. List: $14.95 (paper).

*A Pictorial History of 18th and 19th Century Homes and Buildings in Peacham, Vermont.* Peacham, Vt.: Peacham Historical Association, 2007. 240p. Source: The publisher, P.O. Box 101, Peacham, VT 05862. List: $45.00 (hard cover); $35.00 (paper).

*Pictorial Souvenir of the Runaway Pond Bicentennial, June 4, 5, 6, 2010.* Glover, Vt.: Glover Historical Society, 2010. 54p. Source: The publisher, P.O. Box 208, Glover, VT 05839. List: $15.00 (paper).

Powers, Lawrence, *Paran Creek Memoirs: North Bennington Stories, Volume II.* North Bennington, Vt.: The author, 2001. 93p. Source: Unknown.

Robinson, Francis W., *Powerful History: The Archaeology of Native People in the Champlain Lowlands.* Rutland, Vt.: VELCO, 2011. 42p. Source: The publisher, 366 Pinnacle Ridge Rd., Rutland, VT 05701. List: Free (paper). Native American archaeological sites along the VELCO Northwest Reliability Project corridor in Chittenden, Addison, and Rutland counties.

Skillin, Rebecca and Francis Favreau, *More about Morristown, 1860 to 2010.* Morristown, Vt.: The authors, 2010. 568p. Source: Privately printed (paper).

*Tucker, Sarah, ed., *The Hale Street Gang: In Cahoots, a Collective Memoir.* Randolph, Vt.: The author, 2010. 215p. Memoirs of twelve senior citizens in Randolph.

**West Newbury, Vermont: A Remembrance of Her Past Times and People.* Hanover, N.H.: Dartmouth Printing Co., no date. Volume 2. List: $15.00 (paper). Collection of photographs.

*Wickman, Donald H., *"A Very Fine Appearance": The Vermont Civil War Photographs of George Houghton.* Barre, Vt.: Vermont Historical Society, 2010. 232p. List: $44.95 (hardcover); $34.95 (paper).

ARTICLES

Gillies, Paul S., "Ruminations: What He Said." *Vermont Bar Journal,* 36:1 (Spring 2010), 12–16. Judge Theophilus Harrington's statement about bill of sale from God.

Kandell, Jonathan, "Road Taken: A Venerable Vermont Byway Offers an Unparalleled Access to Old New England, from Wandering Moose to Robert Frost's Hideaway Cabin." *Smithsonian,* 41:2 (May 2010), 52–59. Route 100.

Majarian, Lynda, "A Century of Care." *Vermont Medicine* (Spring 2011): 12–17. Three generations of Barre physicians.

Rowell, Brent, "Water for Naulakha: Rudyard Kipling's Hot Air Engine: Letters to the Rider Engine Company, 1894–96." *The Kipling Journal,* 85:342 (June 2011), 40–53. Innovation in Kipling's Brattleboro home.

GENEALOGY

Adams, Maurice McAshan, and David Blakemore Adams, *The Genealogy of Peter Adams of Andover, Vermont, and Some of his Descendants.* Austin, Texas: The author, 2010. 147p. Source: The author, 2516 Wooldridge Drive, Austin, TX 78703. List: Unknown.

Murphy, Robert M., *Index to Burlington Free Press Vital Records, 1848–1870.* Barre, Vt.: Vermont Historical Society, 2010. 233p. Source: The publisher, 60 Washington St., Barre, VT 05641. List: $34.95 (paper, unbound).

Vermont French-Canadian Genealogical Society, comp., *Baptisms of the Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary, Middlebury, Vermont 1845–1943 and Saint Bernadette, Bridport, Vermont 1887–1949.* Burlington, Vt.: Vermont French-Canadian Genealogical Society, 2011. 475p. Source: The publisher, P.O. Box 65128, Burlington, VT 05406-5128. List: $45.00.


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