

Glastenbury: the History of a Vermont Ghost Town

Reviewed by John R. Howard

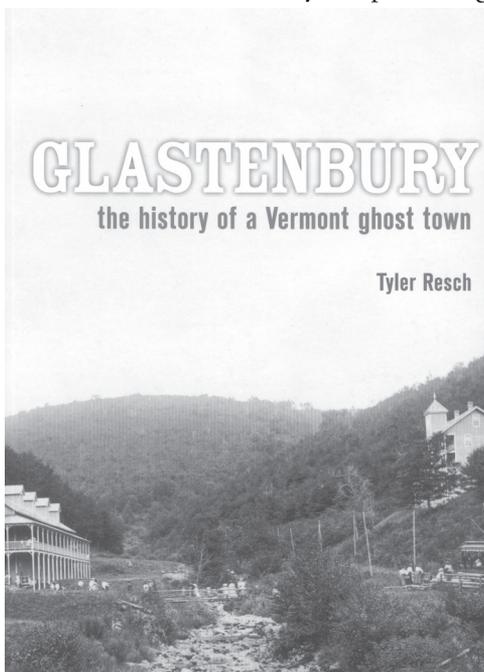
In his recent *Glastenbury the History of a Vermont Ghost Town*, Tyler Resch has given us a vivid and fast-moving account of an area that has always seemed vast, remote and somewhat mysterious to most of us. Artfully supported by an impressive variety of pictures and maps, the text itself incorporates numerous and appropriate excerpts from other sources to make the reading a lively, almost conversational, experience.

Reaching briefly back to King Charles II and the naming of New York and then to the dealings of Governor Benning Wentworth, Resch skillfully reveals how they, along with the disruptive uncertainties of the French and Indian Wars, the American Revolution, and Vermont's independence and early statehood, all impacted upon what might otherwise have been a more orderly settlement and development of this rugged, untamed wilderness in southern Vermont.

Especially refreshing is the book's unwavering adherence to its subject. Whether describing the complexities of post Civil War charcoal production in South Glastenbury, or pondering the distant origins of the moss-

covered cairns found at the crest of Glastenbury Mountain, or detailing the land interests of the McCulloughs, or the Sterbas, or the Mallorys, or any of the town's other prominent figures, it maintains a scrupulous objectivity. The shooting, perhaps murder, of John Harbour and the later disappearances of Middie Rivers and Paula Weldon remain just what they have been and perhaps always will be: long-unsolved mysteries.

Neither does the author fall back on superstition nor turn to the supernatural (as have many before him to explain the disappearances) in telling his story.



Adhering to the principles that have served him throughout a highly successful career in journalism, Resch remains both factual and focused from beginning to end.

As a result we learn more about the once-busy Bennington and Glastenbury Railroad, the long-gone hotel and casino in South Glastenbury and, of course, the still-curious remnants of the area's many charcoal kilns. We get to know more too about Fayville, Trenor Park, Bolles Brook and the Crowley murder and the color they add to a long history.

Also a hiker, a skier, an outdoorsman, an elected official, and a concerned citizen, the author readily reveals his love for his subject at every turn, a love which is never so apparent as when he reports at the end that today over 95% of Glastenbury lies in the Green Mountain National Forest and, therefore, belongs now to you and me.

Glastenbury: the History of a Vermont Ghost Town
by Tyler Resch; Charleston, SC: History Press, 2008. Paperback, 128 pp.